That Neighborhood Menace, Spider-Man

by Blue (SocksandFluff)

Summary

Peter had only been in the gig of being Spider-Man for less than two years. He avoided the Avengers and other heroes like the plague, knowing that if they knew who he was and how old he was that they’d stop him from helping people.

Now Spider-Man is entangled in assumptions of character, and the fear that he is a vigilante that could go rogue and power-hungry, the Avengers are tasked at stopping him before he 'goes too far'.

This is a story about how Spider-Man and the Avengers finally meet -

- and how Peter might get more than he would ever ask for.

Notes
(I imagine this as Tom Holland's Spider-Man despite the complete divergence from his appearance to the movies)

An alternate take on how Peter might have met the Avengers if he was left to his own devices and wasn't noticed straight away...
Being on the Avengers Shit List

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

He was being chased by Iron Man.

He, Peter Parker - no, Spider-Man - was being chased by the billionaire Avenger Tony Stark through the streets of New York at two in the freaking morning like he was some common criminal.

Though, now that he thought about it, Iron Man didn’t do common criminals, that was more of his shtick.

Still.

He was being chased by the Iron Man, and it was hardly on his list of things that he wanted to do in his life. Not many people wanted an angry man encased in destructive armor plating with the ability to fly hunting them down.

Maybe Deadpool did, but he had that whole life/death complex thing. Spider-Man didn’t. Spider-Man very much had every intention to stay uncaught and very, very far away from the pursuing Avenger.

He swore wildly to himself as he swung through the streets as fast as he could, veering and zigzagging away from his pursuer like a frightened gazelle.

“Shit shit shit.”

This was not good. This was very not good. This was incredibly, very, extremely not good - shit.

This was all one incredibly huge misunderstanding. Yes, he had been avoiding the Avengers the moment that he realized that they were aware of ‘Spider-Man’ and his ‘vigilante justice’, and yes, perhaps his complete avoidance of them was doing nothing for his image, and yes, maybe he did let the press assume that he was some rogue mutant dealing out his own kind of home brew crime fighting...

However, if they knew him, they would understand. They would understand the steps he was taking, and understand why he didn’t want to meet them.

The Avengers were connected to S.H.I.E.L.D and connected to the government, and connected to all sorts of people that wanted all sorts of control over people like him.

He wasn’t stupid – he saw the news. He saw how people with different powers were treated. Saw the struggles of Professor Xavier’s’ school for mutants. Saw the struggles of Magneto and his rogue crew. He saw the struggles of the Avengers even, seeing how hard it was to do what was right when under a sort of choke-hold collar.

He knew that if it were known, who he was and what he was, it could - and probably would - come to a complete stop.

Spider-Man wouldn’t let that happen.

He had to be there for the city. He had to save people.
Even if it meant going under the stigma of being a ‘local menace’, knowing that he was all about protecting the little guys made all the difference.

He’d take a thousand insults his way if it meant saving one person from being hurt, or even killed, on the streets.

Spider-Man wasn’t about to let people in powerful places assume was was right for the little guy. He had powers now, and he was going to use them right.

Nobody had a say over that.

So; this was all a big misunderstanding – one that he unfortunately can never properly clarify. It was safer that way. Safer for him, safer for his aunt May. Safer for everybody.

It was just unfortunate that recently he was being painted in an unfavourable light by the police, the news, social media – no matter what he did.

These last few months sucked, and as far as he was aware, he had done nothing wrong.

He was only trying to help.

It was like there was some sort of city-wide vendetta against him, someone got it in their head that he wasn’t helping anyone at all, and it just caught on like wild-fire.

It just wasn’t fair.

It also wasn’t fair that a pack of rogue mutants decided to try to blow up a bank that night. It hadn’t been his fault that he didn’t know that the Avengers were on the case of this particular criminal organization, and it also wasn’t his fault that he decided to flee when he saw them – because he just couldn’t ever risk associating with them.

He just couldn’t.

Spider-Man’s mental ramblings cut to a halt when he nearly collided into the solid metal of Iron Man’s body. His spider-sense saving him at the last second, flipping in the air as he swung and used the hero as a spring-board to change directions like some deranged frog.

As he sped away rapidly, he heard Iron Man’s voice let out an exasperated, “Oh, come on!” before he, apparently, began to call for backup.

Even with super-hearing, he was too far away to hear who exactly the billionaire was calling, and his heart was way too far up in his throat for him to focus that hard anyway.

He just had to get away.

“Oh you done fucked up big time, Spider-Man,” he rambled to himself hysterically, as he turned the corner and tried to hide himself by winding through tight alleys, “You done fucked up real good.”

Why was this his life now?

He stuck to a wall for a second, taking a breather, and quickly reloading his web-shooters.

Spider-Man’s hands shook as he reloaded them, and he wondered through the thick blanket of panic just who Iron Man had decided to call to help capture him.

Captain America? Thor? The Hulk?
He half wondered if it would be the Hulk as he launched himself back into the air and began his mad attempt to hide himself away from the perusing hero. He wouldn’t mind if it were the Hulk - he was a pretty big fan of Dr. Banner’s work, and felt if he was going to be taken down by an Avenger it would be fitting if he were smashed like the spider he was.

A blast went off by his head, and he only just narrowly managed to escape it, sticking to to a nearby wall before dropping down and beginning to run before finding a place to start his swinging again.

“Shit man!”

He only realized out of the corner of his eye that it might not been aimed directly at him, but rather where he was attempting to stick his web - though the fact that the Avengers were actively firing on him was terrifying.

He was so screwed.

So, so screwed.

But swing like a madman he did still – despite feeling that his fate was rather set in stone knowing how desperately Iron Man was perusing him. It was only a matter of time before they caught him, and if not today – it would be sometime soon.

He decided that today just wasn’t going to fit his schedule.

Too much schoolwork. Too busy signing up for Universities. Too busy applying to internships. No time to schedule being captured by the Avengers.

In fact; his entire year was booked. Two years. Three years.

Forever.

He desperately swung as fast as he could, taking odd back alleys and streets that he knew all too well in his nightly travels. Nighttime streets were his forte, and he was banking on his more intimate knowledge of this to give him a slight advantage.

Spider-Man ducked into an alley that served as a garbage dump for the restaurants that backed onto it. The tight dark passage was laden with large rusty dumpsters that were fit to burst with food refuse, the stink wafting up in heavy miasma-like waves.

The bonus to this was that the rotting garbage generated warmth, and he was banking on the steam rolling off the garbage in the cold night air to mask his own body temperature. He had a suspicion that the Iron Man suit had the ability to see heat signatures.

He leaned against the wall, heaving breaths, but still keeping his senses at the ready.

There was no knowing who was going to leap out of the shadows at any given moment.

It could be Iron Man himself. Or maybe Thor?

Hawkeye?

Black Widow?

He almost wanted to laugh at the thought of him, Spider-Man, being chased down by Black Widow. Almost. He mostly wanted to throw up.
Spider-Man didn’t linger long standing in the alley. He grabbed the wall with both his hands and feet and took off quickly across it - skittering as silently and as quickly as he could.

He controlled his breaths, carefully crawling to the underside of a fire-escape, and right over top of an open dumpster of a local restaurant - the smell was gut-wrenching, but the heat hopefully helping him to stay hidden.

Peter held his breath, straining his already very sensitive ears.

He could hear chatter and clattering dishware from the kitchen of the restaurant, the door open just a fragment due to poor hinges. He could hear the pigeons roosting on the roof above him. He could hear the sound of traffic in the busy streets, even at this hour. He could the sounds of people talking tiredly through the windows of their apartments streets away.

He didn’t dare breathe a sigh of relief - or move an inch. He intended to stay as still as possible for hours if need be - maybe forever if it meant not getting caught by Iron Man and the rest of the Avengers.

It would be hours, or mere seconds before they found him.

It was mere seconds.

Just as his thudding heart started to slow down, and the adrenaline began to calm, his spider-sense screamed through his mind like an electric shock to the base of his spine.

Spider-Man didn’t think, he just grabbed the edge of the fire-escape he was stuck to the underside of and flipped on top of it, letting loose a web and rocketing up the side of the building half-pulling, half running.

“Holy-!”

He heard a startled shout from the man who had only been mere feet from catching him.

The one and only Captain America.

“They set freaking Captain America on me!?” he cried to himself as he crossed the line were wall met roof changing his vertical dash into a horizontal one.

“That was way too close, man. Way to close!”

Captain America was on his tail though, swift and mighty he was, and as Spider-Man jumped down again into another alleyway, hoping the man would assume that he swung away rather than planted his feet on the ground.

Captain America didn’t assume that. He was instead running around the corner, having correctly predicted Spider-Man’s play and had run straight around the building the moment he had escaped him.

“Oh shit!” Peter found himself swearing as he saw the hefty American Hero running toward him like a bull.

He gawked too long, and before he could shoot his web to get away from the man, his reflexes made him turn, his hands raising up defensively to catch the shield that was being thrown at his face.

“Holy crap,” Spider-Man squeaked, having only caught the shield mere inches from his face.
He was tackled to the ground before he could even register what happened, or even marvel in the fact that he was holding Captain America’s shield in the first place. Something a far more naive Peter Parker would have wanted to do during a much more innocent time.

“Omph!” Spider-Man felt the air being pushed out of his lungs, and his back bruise at the impact of him slamming into the concrete with a few hundred pounds of all American hero on top of him.

He wheezed, the shield dropping beside him and rolling to hit the nearby brick wall of the tight alley.

“You-” Captain America panted, “- are an incredibly hard man to catch.”

“And you -” Spider-Man breathed, voice tight, ribs aching. “- are very heavy.”

He lifted his head and saw Iron Man touch down a few feet behind them.

“Slippery thing, isn’t he?” Tony Stark said as he stepped out of his suit that gave way as easily as water. “Nice moves, by the way, the whole, wall-skittering thing. Sorta creepy - definitely get the Spider-Man thing now,” he said in a near-conversational tone. The undercurrent of it was hardly friendly though.

“Yeah - thanks. I try. Sorta my- my whole thing, y’know. Friendly neighbourhood Spider-Man.”

“Oh the reports were right,” Tony said as he stepped around them so he could better see Spider-Man. “You do talk a lot. Well that’s good, we have a lot to chat about,” he said, his voice casual but held that air of arrogance that just rubbed most people the wrong way.

It just scared Peter.

“If you wanted to chat,” he breathed, “You should have said so! We could have gone out for ice-cream. Or donuts. You seem like a donuts kinda guy. You wanna go for donuts? We can do donuts. Instead of - instead of this.”

“It’s a bit late for donuts,” Tony easily replied.

“Can’t blame me for trying - whoa!”

Captain America had flipped him onto his front, and had yanked him upwards and onto his feet, pinning both of his arms behind him. The grip didn’t hurt in the slightest, but it was absolutely uncomfortable.

At least he wasn’t on the concrete anymore.

“Thanks,” he muttered.

“So what do we do, Tony?” Steve Rogers asked the billionaire that was looking Spider-Man up and down, taking in all that he saw of the young hero.

“We stop wasting time and playing nice and we take him to the tower,” Tony replied after a moment or two of walking around the two of them, taking a moment to prod at one of the web-shooters that was on his wrist.

Not that he could fire them with his arms pinned as they were.

Peter felt the blood drain from his face at the mention of taking him to the tower, his heart leapt into his throat, and his ears began to ring.
No no no.

“No!”

“Yeah sorry - no choice. Steve?”

The tight grip on his arms began to tug him as if to lead him away, but he stayed rooted to the spot.

“No.”

Captain America tugged again, but it as as if he had been nailed to the concrete. He could hear the sound of incredulity as Steve made another tug on him.

Tony rubbed his own face in exasperation, “Come on, man. Make this easier for us.”

“I said no.”

“You don’t have a choice here.”

“Yeah I think I do,” he retorted, running his mouth despite him knowing that he should shut the hell up, “I’m not going anywhere. In fact, I don’t even want to have donuts with you anymore. You lost your donut privileges.”

Tony’s sigh was a long withering one as Steve tugged on him again, and again, and Spider-Man did not so much as budge.

He must have bewildered the American Hero, because he felt the grip on his arms re-adjust as if that was the reason why Steve was unable to move him.

It wasn’t as if he advertised all of his super-powers to the world. Super-strength was just one of the tricks he had up his sleeve; and if Captain America wasn’t using his full strength because he feared hurting him, then he wasn’t about to encourage him to do otherwise.

“Please,” Captain America implored. “I don’t want to hurt you.”

“Missed that stop back when you decided to tackle me to the ground, buddy,” he found himself biting back.

He felt the hero wince - muttering a kind of apology. Tony didn’t look sorry whatsoever.

“Look, Spider-Whatever, we can’t do this all night. It’s late, I’m tired. I have things to do. Important things. So why don’t you unglue your feet and make it easier for all of us?”

“Letting me go would make it easier for all of us,” Spider-Man tried, despite the icy fear that twisted his stomach.

Captain America spoke from behind him. “You know we can’t do that, I’m sorry.”

“Why not?” Peter asked, willing his voice to sound hard and controlled - not the strangled mess it had been just a few seconds before. He just barely managed it. “What have I done to you to get the attention of the Iron Man and the Captain America.”

“You know what you did,” Tony said simply.

“Yeah - no. Gotta run that by me again, ‘cause the last time I remember, I haven’t been up to any super-evil shenanigans. I know of a few guys though,” Peter continued, falling into the comfort of
his motor mouth, “One of them is really green, really, really ugly -”

“I think I like it when people I am trying to apprehend don’t talk.”

Spider-Man continued anyway, “You didn’t answer my question - why did you come after me? I’ve done nothing wrong.”

“Yeah cause you look totally innocent running from that exploded bank today,” was the sharp reply.

Spider-Man pulled experimentally on the grip that Captain America had on his arms. Yep. Still firm. It tightened at his attempt. “Yeah I didn’t do that - you saw those guys that were strung up outside, right? Maybe you should ask them -”

“- And the building in Queens that was nearly levelled last week...” Stark continued as if mentally reading off a grocery list.

“Again,” Spider-Man retorted, trying to keep the pleading out of his voice, “That wasn’t me. You guys seriously need to get better intel if you think that I look anything like a guy that has four robotic arms sticking out of his back -”

Tony was just continuing his list, “There are constant police reports about a web-slinging menace in the city.”

“The police are biased,” he spat in reply - and it was true. The number of times he had been aimed at by the police when he was trying to save innocent people was too many to count.

“- There were those deaths -”

The pit of ice in Peter’s stomach dropped. Low blow, Stark. Low blow.

“That wasn’t me,” Spider-Man felt himself yelling. “That wasn’t me!”

“Tony,” Steve’s voice warned.

Tony still continued, “There has been after report of an unchecked mutant vigilante in New York using their own brand of justice; and you wonder why we were chasing you after we saw you flee the scene of the explosion at the bank?”

Peter’s panic was reaching Spider-Man’s voice, “That. Wasn’t. Me. Seriously. Let me go!”

“Sorry - we can’t let you run rampant anymore. There’s rules to this business. We’ve given you enough chances to fix it.”

What chances!? This was the first time they ever tried to come close to him!

Sure, he had been actively avoiding them too, and maybe he wouldn’t have wanted to communicate if they tried to, but he certainly hadn’t been getting any signals from them that they wanted to talk at all.

“Please,” he begged, “You don’t understand. I am only trying to help people-”

“Tony -”

Stark ignored Captain America. “Like we haven’t heard that one before. Number one excuse, really.” Stark then added, as if to himself, “You know, these guys ought to get more creative with their excuses. Why not, ‘for the sake of the poor orphan puppies’ or something? It’d be refreshingly
different."

Peter didn’t find this funny at all. He pulled again at the Captain’s grip, giving it another test at it’s tightness. “Seriously. I’ve only ever tried to help people.”

“Again. Predictable excuse.”

“Would you listen?” Spider-Man demanded.

Tony’s expression turned hard, and he poked a finger into the embroidered spider-emblem on his front. “Innocent people don’t run,” he said simply, as if it were the truest statement in the whole world. “Innocent people don’t do the things you’ve been doing.”

What ‘he’d been doing’? he hadn’t done anything! What sort of misinformation were the Avengers getting on him?

This wasn’t about him being a vigilante in justice, this was because they assumed that he was actually a serious problem.

What did they assume?

“You don’t understand. Please. You said you wanted to talk - then fine, we’ll talk! Just let me go! Please!”

“Yeah, sorry. No can do. I’ve been burned too many times that way.”

Tony made a nod toward Captain America, who made another attempt at shifting Spider-Man from where he was rooted.

He refused to so much as shift.

“Please don’t make this harder than it already is -” Peter heard the super solider say carefully from where he was behind him.

Despite the fear, despite the mind-crushing anxiety, Peter found himself scoffing bitterly. “Harder than it already is? Well excuse me for making this so inconvenient for you Captain America - do you want me to sing the national anthem for you while you kidnap me? Would that lighten the mood for you?”

“Okay - I’ve had enough,” Tony stated sharply, “Let’s see who costumed smart-ass is.”

Tony’s hand moved to pull off the mask.

- and all he managed to do was lift it just over Peter’s chin.

Using his strength instead of previous innocent tugs, Peter wrenched his arms out of Captain America’s grip and kicked backward simultaneously, sending the super-soldier a good ten yards backwards with a startled cry.

Without missing a beat, he activated his web-shooters in the direction of Captain America and the Iron Man suit.

Tony leapt at him, but he side-stepped as the streams of web filled the inside of the suit as much web as he could manage, the other arm taking care of Captain America, liberally gluing him to the ground.
“Hey-!”

He side-stepped Tony’s attempt at him again, moving an arm to shoot a web to attach to the nearest building, and the other to glue Tony’s feet to the ground.

“Sorry.”

“You-!”

He would have left right then and there, but he turned to look at Stark, wrapping his wrist around the web.

“Whatever it is you think I’ve done. I didn’t do it.”

Then he left, swinging away while Captain America struggled to get out of the webbing, and Tony Stark quietly watched him go, unable to follow.

He had only avoided the Avengers to stop them from stopping him.

Spider-Man had to save people.

He never wanted this, any of this.

He certainly didn’t want to be on the Avengers shit list.

It was only a matter of time before they would catch up again, he wasn’t so sure he’d escape so easily the next time.

Peter was only fifteen after all.

Chapter End Notes

... Oh man, just what sort of hole has Peter fallen into?

Thanks so much for reading!

I was rather suddenly inspired to write this, and I want to get back into writing proper so I just let myself do this.

Please read and review - I’d very much appreciate any and all input!
Pay Attention to that Spidey-Sense

Chapter Summary

Peter takes a chance and lets Spider-Man out on patrol again.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Peter waited a full week and a half before he felt it was safe enough for Spider-Man to out on patrol again.

During that time, Peter was restless. Itching to go out, but unable to do so. Finding himself skimming newspapers, scrolling through social media, listening to the police radio despite knowing what it would do to himself.

Though his trolling through information of criminal activity did nothing to help with his desperate want to be out on the field again, Peter was emotionally flip-flopping.

One moment he would be resisting every urge to put on the suit and go swinging into the night to give justice to those that deserved it; and the next moment he would be under a crushing cascade of panic that made him want to curl up in a ball and hide in a corner for the rest of his life.

He wanted to save the day. But the Avengers.

He wanted to protect people. But the Avengers.

He wanted to help those who needed it! But the Avengers.

Peter hated this. So he had to make a choice.

Spider-Man would start his patrols again, on a strictly small-time crime basis. No big stuff. No huge bank robberies, no large-time criminals. Small stuff. The stuff he had originally started with. Stuff that mattered.

He wasn’t going to give the Avengers the chance of accusing him again of so-called ‘suspicious behaviour’, and hoped a few weeks of small-time crime solving would earn him enough brownie points.

Though if Peter was being completely honest with himself, he seriously doubted that anything of the sort would happen and that it was a fanciful thought to think that the Avengers would leave Spider-Man alone – but it was a nice thought.

Albeit of a naive notion he put too much stock into.

“You’re going out again?”

Peter looked up from where he had been stuffing an extra hoodie into a bag. His thoughts effectively interrupted by his Aunt May who was leaning against the doorway, arms crossed, eyebrows furrowed. She seemed concerned.
“Yeah,” he closed the bag, slinging it over his shoulder.

She watched him pass her as he headed out of his bedroom. “Are you sure it’s safe?”

Peter snuffed air out of his nose as she followed, hovering behind him as he went to the front door. “I’m absolutely sure it’s safe, Aunt May.”

She didn’t look placated in the slightest. “I’m not sure I like the company you’re keeping, Peter.”

“What? The company I keep is fine. You know that,” Peter assured, keeping his voice as comfortable and casual as possible. He didn’t want to belay the actual intense anxiety he had over going back out on patrol.

Usually she would sigh and agree, then let him on his way; because these conversations were common for the two of them. It wouldn’t be the first time they had this conversation, it wouldn’t be the last. But, this time was different, May was serious.

“Do I know that?” she asked instead, and her voice betrayed tight worry.

Oh. This was new.

Peter tilted his head, “What’s wrong? You’ve never worried this much before.”

She sighed, biting her lower lip. It looked like she was trying to find the right words to say.

Peter anxiously waited for her to speak, shifting from foot to foot as she found her words. She spoke with a careful sigh, “It’s this whole... Spider-Man business.”

Oh no.

Oh no. Peter controlled his expression, and swallowed. She couldn’t -? she didn’t -? He had been so careful! Still. He couldn’t assume.


May clicked her tongue, choosing her words very carefully. “Are you sure that he’s such a good person for you to be associating with?”

Relief flooded Peter. She didn’t know.

Despite what she may assume these words would have done to Peter, he felt nothing but relief flood through his veins. She still thought Spider-Man was someone else.

He took a breath and tried to sound frustrated, “Oh no, not you too Aunt May. I told you already, like, a hundred times. He’s a great person.”

“The news -”

Peter sighed loudly, “- The news is a pile of garbage, Aunt May. You know that. Fear-mongering. Really. Spider-Man isn’t that bad of a guy, and I’m – I’m one of the few people he’s decided to even talk to.”

His Aunt hummed, not really convinced. “He was in the news in the past week, fighting against the Avengers.”
“I’m sure it was a big misunderstanding.”

A big, messy, horrible misunderstanding that lead to bruises and a few sleepless nights full of terrible, terrible dreams that he preferred to not ruminate on.

“Still. I don’t know if I like him associating with you. You don’t really know him, Peter. As you’ve said, he’s never taken off his mask around you.”

“Aunt May,” he said, looking at her seriously, but with a smile. “I promise. I’ll be fine. You’ve met him too, remember? He carried your groceries once.”

She hummed, her hands gripping her crossed arms as whatever thoughts she had tumbled in her mind.

“I’ll be okay,” he pressed, “I promise. You know that.”

May relented, though Peter knew that she was still entirely unconvinced. She cupped either side of his face and kissed his forehead warmly.

“Right. Okay. I guess I can’t stop you. Remember the rule -”

“‘No telling Spider-Man my real name,’” he repeated with her as if it were the hundredth time. It probably was. “He still thinks my name is Tim Drake, and I am sure he wouldn’t care even if he suspected it wasn’t.”

“I know. I know. ‘Because he understands protecting identities’,,” she finally smiled. “Okay Peter. You have fun. Be safe.”

“Always,” he smiled, and he left their apartment.

She called to him down the hallway. “Don’t forget to have dinner!”

“I won’t!” he called back, and it was only when Peter turned the corner that he heard their door shut.

It had been about six months ago when he almost blew his cover to Aunt May. Six months since she almost found out that the vigilante hero Spider-Man was her one-and-only nephew. Six months since Peter pulled a complete lie out of his ass and somehow, through some demented miracle, managed to convince Aunt May it was the truth.

Perhaps it was easier to believe that he knew Spider-Man than him actually being Spider-Man.

There just was something, perhaps, unattainable to Superheros that it was hard to believe a family member was one. Whatever it was, the lie that he was merely friends with the hero was somehow easier for her to believe than the truth, and it kept his cover.

After walking several blocks, Peter ducked around a corner, pulling off his clothes revealing the spandex of Spider-Man costume underneath. He pulled the mask up and over his head, tucking it tightly and securely in place.

“Really ought to think of a way to my mask harder to remove,” he muttered to himself as he climbed the wall, bag slung over his shoulder, remembering how Tony Stark had pulled it over his chin.

That had been a bit too close for comfort.

Peter stuffed his bag into a gutted out air-conditioner that hung out of the window of an abandoned apartment, slamming down the make-shift hinged side to hide away any evidence.
Right.

Almost time to start the patrol.

Spider-Man climbed the rest of the way up the wall, flipping over the top of it, and then sat himself down on the edge of the building, his legs dangling over the side, his hands gripping the ledge.

The sunset that night was particularly beautiful.

So he took a moment to watch it as the skies darkened. Yellows and oranges bled into deep reds and purples, before they would recede into deep blues and then black.

He missed this.

Besides, Spider-Man could risk wasting time on the rooftop anyway. He needed the cover of darkness to ease back into being the hero. It also helped that’s when the frequency of crimes tended to skyrocket.

His spider-sense blared.

Speak of the devil.

“Aw man – come on,” Spider-Man groaned in annoyance as he hefted himself onto his feet. “The sunset isn’t done yet!” He exclaimed in annoyance, gesturing to the display in the sky as if someone was listening.

His spider-sense didn’t let up, so he was moving before he couldn’t complain any further.

“Time to work.”

He swung easily between the buildings, and he landed in a recently rained-upon back-alley.

“Yea’ we jus’ wanna talk to ya’.”

Spider-Man flattened himself to the wall before he was seen by the troupe of four thugs that were rounding on a person, herding them into the mouth of the alley that was several yards away from them.

“Yea’ jus’ talk.”

“S’all we wanna do.”

“Jus’ talk, buddy.”

“S’all we want! So what’chu so worried for!”

Spider-Man watched carefully.

The poor man they were shepherding was walking backwards, hands up defensively. “I don’t know-don’t know what you want with me. I don’t have a- any money.”

“Money?” the biggest of the group said, looking at the others, his shoulders shrugging. “Who said nuthin’ bout money? Jus’ wanna talk is’ all.”

“Yea’ talk.”
Spider-Man sidled against the wall, getting closer to the men.

Peter had learned early on that jumping into situations without preamble or examining it could make his - or someone-else’s - life that much more difficult.

He’s misread situations before; not noticed a knife, a crowbar, a gun. He’s also misunderstood situations; going after the wrong person, missing people that were laying in wait, even making things worse for the person he had been trying to protect.

In the beginning, Spider-Man had been much more sloppy, he was more careful now. He took his time. Watching. Waiting.

Crafting a plan like a spider would a web.

He could see that the biggest thug - maybe not the leader, but certainly was the pushiest of the group - didn’t seem to have a weapon. Perhaps he relied on his bulk, or perhaps it was the fact he had safety in the knowledge that the other three had knives.

Spider-Man could tell they did in the way that they shifted. The way their palms would brush the sides of a coat, a pant pocket, a sleeve.

“- Seriously - I... I don’t have anything...” The poor man was terrified.

Spider-Man silently pushed away from the wall, still unseen, and raised his arms.

The knives came out, flashing danger in the darkness along with greedy glinting eyes and flashes of bared teeth.

“You’s gonna be real surprised at th’ stuff we can find wit’ these -”

A cascade of webbing shot from the shadows, two streams on either side of the innocent victim, slamming into three of the four criminals.

Knives clattered to the ground; and before the bulkiest of the bunch, who missed most of the webbing, managed to make a break for it, Spider-Man let loose another shot of web, grabbing him by the foot and yanking it out from under him.

The thug smacked face-first into the concrete before he too was webbed to high-heaven just as his three compatriots were.

Spider-Man dusted his hands.

Their would-be victim was gaping at the sight of Spider-Man walking into the light of the streetlamps that just barely stretched into the alley. He was likely too shocked to comprehend what had happened in a mere matter of seconds because his mouth worked up and down, no sounds coming out.

“You okay?”

The man jumped at his voice.

The adrenaline and shock must have gotten to the man’s poor head because the only thing he managed to say was a stammered, “You’re a lot shorter than I imagined.”

Spider-Man stared at him. What?

“I- I... sorry I- I mean- Thank-” he was cut off by Spider-Man poorly contained snickers.
“Sorry,” Peter’s voice was tight, as he was trying to contain his laughter. He didn’t mean to laugh, but the way that the man had *said* it was so- so-, “Sorry. Sorry. You okay?”

The man blinked. “Yes. Yes! Yes. I’m okay. Thank you. Sorry I didn’t mean-”


The man rapidly nodded.

He didn’t need to be told twice to leave, and he did so quickly, shouting an apology and a thanks over his shoulders as he got himself to safety.

With the man gone, Spider-Man approached the criminals plastered to the ground, swearing lamely as they tried to free from their bounds.

Spider-Man put his hands on his hips and tisked. “You made me miss the sunset,” he chastised.

It took good thirty minutes before Spider-Man was up in the air and patrolling.

He had dragged the men out onto the sidewalk where the police would find them easily, stuck a note to the parcel for the officers to read, made a call to the police himself as an ‘innocent bystander’, and left scene.

Another thing that he had learned a while back; was that even though he had all the evidence of his own in the world to prove a crime because he saw it with his own two eyes, that it didn’t mean there was enough evidence to keep them off of the streets and harming innocent people again.

Peter had started to memorize where cameras were, and where they pointed. It was helpful when he was avoiding appearing on them, but also helpful when it came to providing evidence to the police.

Like tonight, he often would pin a note with a suggestion of looking at a certain CCTV camera for evidence of their crimes.

He was certain that that small shop across the street had caught enough of the men’s intimidating actions that the police would have more than enough evidence to do more digging into their backgrounds.

He hoped that it would be enough, and that the man would indeed call the police himself to help implicate them.

With that dealt with, Spider-Man continued his patrol.

The rest of the night was fairly quiet.

Save for a tickle of *something* at the back of his mind. It was kind of like his spider-sense, but every time he stopped to see what it was, it faded away as if he never felt it at all.

He was probably being paranoid. He was worried there would be another run in with the Avengers, so he was twitching at phantom warnings.

Despite the creeping feeling, there was only a few small-time burglars, a shop-lifter or two at a twenty-four hour convenience store, a few drunken arguments, and a domestic disturbance. Nothing big.
It was kind of nice easy for first day back after a little over a week.

He stopped on a roof, scratching the back of his head where the prickling sense was starting up again.

It was the tenth time now, and every time he stopped and looked around himself, it would go away. This time it was still there, prickling strongly as if something was going to happen.

He scratched there furiously. “Guh. Stop already.”

“You know, I thought you’d lay low for much longer than this.”

Spider-Man shrieked, shooting out a web to get away before he even turned to see who it was. He knew who it was.

His wrist was caught by Iron Man before his web could attach to a building.

“Interesting - you didn’t notice me this time. I thought you had eyes at the back of your head or something,” the Iron-clad hero stated almost casually. “Do you have eyes on the back of your head?”

Oh no.

Iron Man took off of the building, Spider-Man’s wrist still in his grip, causing him to dangle in the air, the web he had fired fluttering uselessly to the street below.

“Was it the way I approached this time?” Tony Stark continued continued to say, his grip tightening causing Peter to yelp in pain as he struggled.

He tried to use his other hand to work-apart the fingers that were gripping his wrist, pressing his feet against Iron-Man’s chest.

“- Or were you just not paying attention?”

Spider-Man trying to pry the hand off of his wrist.

“Yeah that’s not happening.” Iron man said, grabbing his other wrist and pulling it away. “The hand is locked in place. Just as if it were fused together. I saw how easily you got out of Captain America’s grip.”

Peter hissed as his other hand was put into an equally tight grasp.

He heard crunching.

“No no no! Hey! Stop!” he awkwardly tried to kick one of the arms as his web-shooters were crushed. “Hey stop that!”

“Saw you use these too. You have any idea what havoc your webs do to the delicate inner workings of my Iron Suit?” Iron Man chastised.

“Not my fault you left it wide open,” Spider-Man hissed, his voice warbling in fear.

“Touché, but we have you now Webs,” Tony Stark said in a self-congratulatory tone.

“I don’t think so,” Spider-Man replied, his voice maybe pitched too high for the attempt at non-nonchalance.
“You can’t get out of this one. You’re locked in.”

“Try me.”

Peter slammed his feet back onto Iron Man’s chest and wrenched his arms upwards.

If he was being honest with himself, he had no idea how strong he actually was, and he never thought he’d be using his unknown strength against an Avenger no less. He had no idea if he could pry himself away from Iron Man, but desperate times call for desperate measures.

“Holy shit!”

Sparks were flying, as he was practically ripping the arms off of the Iron Suit. Metal plating groaned, and the joints crackled with electricity. Though the metal of the suit couldn’t be bent, it didn’t stop from the seams from being a terrible weak-point.

In desperation, Tony Stark let go of one of his hands as he rocketed the both of them higher into the air. Spider-Man could hear the blaring warnings coming from the inside of the suit as he hooked his legs around Iron Man’s torso to keep himself steady.

He wedged his free hand into the closed grip of the Iron hand as their flying became erratic and violent jerking.

“I need backup! I need backup here!” Peter hear Tony call loudly as the world spun violently around them.

Peter pried at the metal of the inter-locked fingers, but he couldn’t manage to maintain a grip what with the demented roller-coaster ride that Tony Stark had become.

Peter was so scared he was numb.

He wasn’t even thinking anymore.

His mind was solidly on the single thought of getting away.


The grip closed tighter and Spider-Man let loose a shriek of pain as the metal of the web-shooters dug into his wrist.

“Stop stop stop!” He found himself pleading, pain lancing through him. “Oh my god. Oh my god stop.”

The grip his legs had on Iron Man’s chest was lost as the shock blindsided him, his fingers fumbled uselessly at the solid lock on his wrist.

It didn’t help that he was being thrashed in the air as well. His attempts to brake free were lost, and instead he wrapped his arm the one trapping him as so it wouldn’t snap his trapped wrist.

Tumbling in the air started it stopped.

He could hear his own pained panting, and the breathing of Iron Man through the suit.


Slowly, and every so cautiously, Iron Man touched down, Spider-Man dangling awkwardly in his
grasp.

Spider-Man breathed, pain lancing up his arm.

“Tony! That was one hell of an airshow,” He heard. He didn’t see, because his eyes were jammed tight as he worked through the shock. “You okay?”

“He nearly pulled off my arms!” Iron Man exclaimed. “Almost tore then straight off of the suit, wiring and all.”

“Holy shit.”

Peter took tight breaths, opening his eyes a fraction, and from his awkward position, he could see Hawkeye, Black Widow, and Captain America standing in the dark street.

He assumed it was Hawkeye that swore – Captain America didn’t seem the type.

“You going to let go of him?” that was Captain America.

He approached the two of them, looking at Spider-Man who stood at an awkwardly twisted angle.

“Hell no, I’m not going to let go,” Tony exclaimed. “You can see what this guy can do!”

“This seems a bit excessive.”

“Do I have to repeat, ‘nearly took off my arms’ to you?”

Peter’s thoughts started to slowly clear as he took stock of his situation.

His chances of escape were nearly at zero.

He breathed, willing to calm himself. He had to think. He had to think.

No web-shooters. He was in a literal iron-grip, he was injured, there were four Avengers around him, one of whom was a very pissed off Iron Man. Who, noticed, was not stepping out of his Iron suit, let alone flipping up his mask.

Spider-Man almost felt honoured that he warranted such a reaction.

“Is he hurt?” Captain America asked. There was a crease of worry in his brow, and his stance spoke of discomfort.

“Don’t care at the moment,” Tony blandly replied. “We need to get him to the tower. Now. I don’t want to risk being in the air with him again, you saw what he tried to do up there!”

“C-cause you decided to grab my freaking wrist!” he bit out without thinking.

Everyone turned to look at him.

Oh shit.

He kept his bravado. “I was just minding my own business, you know. You pretty much assaulted me. Look,” he gestured with his free hand. “I’m bleeding and everything.”

Spider-Man took a breath and continued before anyone could say anything else. “Don’t you- Don’t you have to like, have to see someone in the act of doing something before- before apprehending
people?”

“We’ve been following you,” Black Widow said, her voice even, trained, completely unreadable.

That explained the weird feeling he’d had all night. He thought it was just nerves.

How could he have been so stupid? He should of headed home the moment that he felt something was up.

“Then - then,” Spider-Man continued quickly, despite what their collective gaze was doing for his nerves. “You’d see that I had done nothing wrong. Zip. Nada. Zero.” He made an ‘o’ with one hand.

From what he could see in his awkward position, Captain America exchanged a look with Black Widow.

“Yes. See?”

His little speech didn’t move Iron Man. “It doesn’t change the past.” Tony looked up at Steve. “Some help here? This time maybe don’t take it so easy on him? I’m still picking webs out of my suit.”

“Ha,” Spider-Man said as Captain America approached him, and he tried to back away from him as much as his locked-down arm would let him. “I would have loved to see that. Did’ja need tweezers?”

It was an awkward stand-off, Peter with his arm in the locked outstretched grip of Iron Man, Steve Rogers standing with his arms in front of himself like he really wasn’t sure how to approach this situation.

Peter planted one foot on the ground and kicked out his foot lamely.

“No. Go. Shoo. Go away.”

Iron Man growled. “Don’t make me grab your foot.”

Spider-Man’s bravery was slowly coming back to him, “Don’t make me flip you over,” he cleanly retorted.

“As if,” was the clear reply. “If you’ve noticed, I’ve settled us down on gravel. There’s no way you can use your insane grip here.”

Spider-Man looked down at his feet, lifting one of them to look. “Oh. Huh.”

“See?”

The idea that had sprung forth in his mind was startlingly clear. It was insane, stupid really, and it was really going to hurt; but it was the only idea he had.

“I suppose that means you also don’t have your actual arm in your suit either then,” Peter asked innocently.

“What?”

“You pulled it toward your body, right?” he continued casually.

“Well of course I did!” Tony almost seemed insulted at the insinuation that he wouldn’t have thought
Spider-Man nodded. “‘Right right. Cool. Just gotta tell you one thing.’”

“What’s that?”

“Me throwing off Star-and-Spangles had nothing to do with my grip.”

“What.”

Peter flipped, and rammed his good arm into the underside of Iron man’s as he pushed himself into a forwards flip.

Up and over his head went Iron Man, landing flat on his back. Peter jammed a foot into the chest and pulled.

Sparks flew, and wiring snapped, and though he was tackled sideways by Captain America, he had done what he wanted to do.

Iron Man had let go.

He was slammed into the rough gravel by the all-American hero.

“W-we got to stop meeting like this,” Spider-Man wheezed tightly.

There was silence before an incredulous and clear-voiced Tony Stark took over that silence. He must have gotten out of his suit. “He flipped me over,” he stated, dumbly.

Peter felt Captain America’s knee in his back, pinning in in place.

“We saw.”

“You stood there... Just stood there; while he flipped me over.”

“He flipped you over before we could do anything.”

“He flipped me over.”

Peter was only half listening, his wrist being in a world of pain taking most of his attention.

“Ow ow ow ow - holy shit. Ow. Ow.” He hissed, holding his hurt wrist with one hand. “Oh my god.”

It didn’t feel broken, but that didn’t stop it from hurting to high-heaven. He had tugged pretty hard, pulling bones and stretching tendons that didn’t need to be stretched.

“Suck it up.”

“Tony.” Captain America’s voice was sharp.

Peter was barely focusing on them, he was trying to even his breaths as his body took over the healing process. The bleeding had stopped, but it didn’t mean that it didn’t hurt like hell.

Quick healing didn’t equal lack of pain.

“You know, I’m really thinking that this isn’t a good idea.” It was Hawkeye this time, Peter was sure, his head was clearing and the initial shock of pain was turning into a dull throb he could breathe
“Man that’s gunna scar...” Peter muttered quietly to himself as so they wouldn’t hear.

Not that they were listening.

“How do you mean?” Tony stark again. And though Peter's mind had cleared somewhat, he didn’t have a very good vantage of who was speaking, what with him being pressed into the gravel and it being so dark. He could only see their silhouetted legs. Thankfully everyone had a unique voice.

“I don’t think this is right,” Hawkeye finished.

Both he and Tony looked at him in surprise.

“I agree.” Captain America.

“Me too.” Black widow.

That was unexpected.

Chapter End Notes

Holy shit I am absolutely floored at the responce that the first chapter has gotten. I appreciate each and every review and I promise that I will spend time replying to each and every one of them.

I love writing this, and I am so glad that all seem to be enjoying it too!

Thanks so much for reading!

Continue to tell me what you think and feel, as oh man is it ever bolstering me to write till my hands go numb!

Thank you!
Chapter Summary

Cornered by the Avengers, what will Spider-Man do...?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was New York city, the night was dark, the air was cold, and on a secluded gravel-topped roof at some ungodly hour in the morning, were four of the Avengers and the Friendly-Neighbourhood Spider-Man.

Rain started to fall over the five of them, coming down in sheets as the situation unfolded.

Despite Spider-Man’s current position of being pinned to the ground by a super-soldier, and being surrounded by no less than three other Avengers, he completely understood the incredulous sound that came from Tony Stark.

In fact, Peter joined in with Tony Stark’s incredulous, “What.” that followed his stunned silence.

Because, really – what.

“What are you talking about?” Tony demanded as he rounded on the other three, his voice pitched in obvious surprise.

Spider-Man completely understood where he was coming from. The other three Avengers were defending him. Certainly not something that Peter thought would happen given his supposed track record.

... And the whole him avoiding the Avengers like the plague thing.

And the resisting arrest thing.

And maybe the whole probably destroying two Iron Suits while doing the whole ‘resisting arrest’ thing.

The fact that Captain America had his knee pressed into his back to keep him pinned in place didn’t help his image much either. Despite the fact that Captain America was one of the Avengers doing the defending.

So really, Spider-Man completely agreed with Tony Stark. Strangely enough.

“This whole situation feels off,” Hawkeye said, kneeling down near Spider-Man, but he looked up at Tony. “I mean, look at him.”

“And?” Tony wasn’t catching on, neither was Peter.

Hawkeye gestured. “Let him up, Rogers. I hurt just looking at him.”

Surprisingly, Captain America did just that. The knee keeping him in place stopped its pressure.
“Huh?” Spider-Man said blankly before he was pulled onto his feet.

He blinked when he was put upright, and turned his head to look at Hawkeye in confusion, then back to Captain America, who laid one of his hands on his shoulder.

“What are you doing?” Tony asked sharply in challenge.

“Good question,” Spider-Man agreed, rubbing idly at his arm. “Getting mixed signals here.”

When Tony didn’t get the immediate answer, he gestured back to the Iron Suit - one of it’s arms only attached now by a few scant wires. It was still sparking. “Do I have to remind you -” Tony started, “- that he has not only once, but twice, tried to rip off my arms? Today?”

No they didn’t need to be reminded, the evidence was there, plain as day. The open suit slowly pooled with water as the rain continued to cascade over them, causing spits and sparks, smoke rising from the near-detached limb.

Hawkeye continued, “I just think we should have approached this differently. This whole thing just feels, off. Like I said. It doesn’t feel right.”

Tony, sopping wet and frustrated-looking, continued to point at the suit. “Excuse me? Look at the suit. Hello?”

Clint’s hands were up in defence. “I just think it shouldn’t have come to that.”

Peter felt the hand on his shoulder squeeze and he glanced up to Captain America who was nodding in quiet agreement.

“Look. It doesn’t matter now. What’s done is done. We can deal with the situation we have now.”

Tony said, stalking towards Spider-Man, and the young hero failed to contain a flinch.

The hand on his shoulder remained firm. For some reason, Peter made no attempt to run. Too curious over what was going to happen, and perhaps in his naivete hoping it would all turn out fine for him in the end.

“We’re taking you to the tower,” Tony stated, levelling a cool look to Spider-Man.

He took a step back, bumping into Captain America. “Yeah, I don’t think so. I was only staying for the nice chat afterwards. I have things to do, you know. Like I said before. Busy. Also, it’s raining.”

“Oh for – would you please shut up?” Tony pinched the bridge of his nose, “- And Rogers, would you please put him in a proper hold? Him standing there with just a few fingers between him and escape his making me nervous.”

“Tony.”

“What?” was the sharp reply, frustration easy to hear over the heavy rain, “You want to let this guy go? Despite the fact-” Tony started up again, and they all knew here this was going.

The suit sputtered lamely in the distance, and Peter idly wondered how long it’d take for the billionaire to fix, instead of wondering why he wasn’t running.

“I never said I wanted to let him go.”

Spider-Man’s head whipped to look up at Captain America. Hold on.
Stark’s hands went to his hips. “Then what? What do you want to do? Hmn? We have him here. Right now. We can deal with this. Right now.”

“You know what I meant, Tony,” Steve said evenly.

Tony rolled his eyes. “- And you know what I mean. We can’t just let this guy go. It’s irresponsible. We can’t let a vigilante mutant in the streets doing whatever they please.” He turned to look harshly at Spider-Man, “Even if they keep saying they are just ‘trying to help’. It’s just not good enough.”

Spider-Man put up his good arm cautiously. “Can I have a say in this?”

“Shut it.”

He put down his hand. “Okay.”

Tony let loose a loud frustrated growl. “Look. Enough of this. Enough talking. We have him now. We can talk about all of -” he gestured, “- all of this later. For now, we’re taking him to the tower.”

“Do we have to?” Black Widow interjected, breaking her long silence.

Though she said little in the conversation aside from her earlier agreement, that didn’t mean she wasn’t carefully listening to them.

Now she was standing next to Hawkeye, looking at Spider-Man.

The way she looked at him did nothing to ease his nerves. Partly because he couldn’t read her in the slightest, but mostly because it was Black Widow and she was staring at him.

“Yes – I’m sure.” Tony looked fit to burst with anger and frustration. He pushed wet hair out of his face. “We are taking him in. End of discussion. Any more on this and we’re getting into serious redundancy territory. We’re done here.”

Tony turned around, pulling a phone from his pocket, the screen flaring to life.

“We should let him go,” Black Widow said imploringly toward Captain America.


She got a sigh and a sad shake of a head in return. “Natasha, you know we can’t; despite how we got to this point,” the hand on his should tensed, “We can’t turn back now.”

It was then that Peter felt the whole reality of the situation really sink in. Why was he just standing here listening to this? He should have pulled himself away ages ago. He should have been running. Something.

“Well you weren’t the one following him all night,” she nodded toward Hawkeye. “We were. He has done nothing to warrant being taken in by us.”

“He helped someone cross the street,” Hawkeye added. “Held out his arm and everything.”

“I am a gentleman,” Spider-Man offered, finding humour was the only way to keep his heart clawing out of his throat in sheer terror.

“I’m sorry. We have to take him in,” Captain America said seriously. “You know very well why.”

Tony looked up from typing in his phone. “First smart thing you’ve said all night, Rogers. Okay,
crew, the ETA on our pickup is just a few minutes. Once they are here we can take him in.”

Peter took a wild step back. “Whoa. No! No no no! I’m not going anywhere!”

Black Widow’s lips were tight, Hawkeye had his arms crossed against his chest. Tony didn’t even reply, instead pulling his phone to his ear, stepping away so he could speak to whoever was on the other side.

Peter looked back at Captain America. “Let me go. You heard what Black Widow said. Take it from me, us Spider-people are very smart and very clever, and are full of very good ideas all of the time,” he attempted, his voice shaking. “Like, you have no idea how good our ideas are. Like this one time I decided to put peanut-butter on-”

“I’m sorry.” Steve said, cutting off Spider-Man’s rambling, as he looked down at him, his expression was sad.

Trembling had set into his limbs, and it had nothing to do with the freezing rain that was falling all around them.

“Aw man,” he warbled, going for casual but failing, “I thought we had something going here,” he quipped, gesturing between them. “I thought it was the start of something new,” His ears were almost ringing, but his motor-mouth kept him from falling into full-blown panic-city. “It was kinda-kinda beautiful.”

“I’m sorry,” Captain America repeated, and Peter knew he meant it.

Spider-Man somehow felt more trapped than he had when Captain America had first grabbed him a week ago, and even more trapped than he had just a moments ago when he was careening in the sky with his wrist locked tight in Iron Man’s grasp.

He was just standing there too! He could have tried to escape ages ago, but it was like he was locked in place.

He was so scared.

Come on Peter, move. Why are you just standing there? Move!

“Natasha?” Steve said, his voice low.

He felt a flicker in the back of his neck.

His hand flew to the spot, and he looked up just in time to see the lights of the ‘pick up’ that Tony had ordered. His Spider-Senses likely warning him of impending danger.

His breathing increased, and a hand touched his own.

“Calm down.” It was Black Widow.


He was not. Why wasn’t he running?

He swallowed thickly. “I am so calm. So amazingly calm.” He took a heavy breath, “ - cause I’m not going anywhere with you guys,” he jerked forward out of Captain America’s grasp, and for some reason, Captain America let him.
He staggered.

Peter breathed, his head swimming.

... What?

His mouth felt dry, and the rain muffled.

Spider-Man’s hand went to the back of his neck where he had felt that prickle. “Ooh... wait...” he started to slur. “That... that... wasn’t my Spidey-Sense...” he turned on his heels, vertigo swelling, his coordination drooping as he tried to keep his footing.

A blurry Steve Rogers was walking toward him, hands outstretched.

“Tha’s cheatin’...” he slurred an accusation.

A soupy image of Black Widow was putting away something in her pack.

How dare she.

Spider-Man pointed lamely toward her he felt his knees buckle. Somebody caught him. “Spiders dun sting...! S’not... wh... we...” His thoughts were thick. “Should’a... should’a... called y’rself... Black -” he licked his dry lips, “... Black...” Ugh he couldn’t think. “Wasp,” he managed.

His head lolled backwards as he was pulled upwards into someone’s arms.

The world swam. Shifting and bubbling, voices were coming in and out of focus as if his head was being dipped in and out of water.

“- will keep him from getting hurt -”

“- still don’t like -”

“- sorry.”

Spider-Man blinked blearily upwards at the double-image of the man holding him. He reached out and patted a cheek lamely with his fingertips. “Your eyes... Did’ja know? They are... so, so blue. Even if -”

His hand fell limp to his side, eyes rolled back into his head, and he passed out.

Consciousness came to Peter many hours later.

Waking up felt as if he was trying to pull himself out of an impossibly deep hole. Or maybe it was more like struggling to drag himself out of sticky mud, or struggle to get to shore when the waves beat down on him, impeding his progress.

It didn’t matter much what it was like, because unconsciousness clung to him heavily, so much so that dragging his eyes open was almost enough to tire him right back into it.

Peter just barely managed though, his disjointed blurry thoughts slowly becoming coherent despite
the mind-wrenching pain that was electricity between his temples.

“Mmnfgf?” He groaned, head lolling to the side as squinted his eyes open. His mouth felt dry. He took a few steadying breaths.

Where was he?

It was dark, and for half a second Peter thought he was laying on a rooftop, having accidentally fallen asleep after a long-night of protecting the city. It wouldn’t have been the first time that he had done that.

Oh how scared Aunt May had been for him during those times.

But that wasn’t quite right. Generally he didn’t feel like he had his head selectively run over by a four-wheeler. So he couldn’t have been on a rooftop. Besides... hadn’t it been raining that night?

Or something?

Ugh. Thinking was hard.

He smacked his lips, and ran a hand through his hair and across his face.

Wait.

WAIT.

Peter gasped, sitting up abruptly.

Bad idea. Such a bad idea.

Head swimming violently, Peter resisted the nausea that threatened to bubble up his throat. He nearly fell straight back into the bed he was laying in.

He steadied himself instead, pressing the palms of his hands into his temples, hissing in pain.

Taking several breaths, and once his ears stopped ringing, Peter tried slowly opening his eyes again.

He took in his surroundings.

Peter was in a bed, for one, and mostly in his costume, for another. It was vaguely damp, and stuck to his skin. Though it was a comfort to see that he was still wearing it.

What wasn’t a comfort to him was that the distinct lack of both his gloves and mask.

His mind slowly showed him memories of what occurred before he had passed out, and he whined, pressing his face into his hands.

“Oh god.”

Right. The Avengers.

His mask was gone.

The Avengers took off his mask.

They saw his face.
Peter slowly, far slower than he wanted to, lowered his legs to the edge of the bed, willing himself to be calm. Because he had to think. This was no time to panic – he had to think.

Taking another breath, he noticed a glass of water sitting on the nightstand. It was one of the few things that decorated the sparse room and the picture of it sitting there so innocently and invitingly somehow managed to offended him. So much so that he briskly smacked it off of the table, causing it to shatter on the hardwood floor.

Peter breathed.

Calm down, Peter. Calm down.

“Get to the door,” he told himself. “Figure this out. Get to the door.”

Slowly, ever so slowly, he stood up, wobbling uncertainly.

Where was he anyway? Was it Stark Tower? That’s what Tony had said right? He wanted to take Spider-Man to ‘the Tower’.

Using one hand on the wall as support, Peter slowly worked his way from the bed to the door, taking calculated steps so he wouldn’t end up in a heap.

There wasn’t a handle to speak of. Even with his mind in as much of a haze as it was, it was clear to see that the door opened upwards and not like the typical door of a typical household. Of course.

“Come on...”

Peter resisted making another sound of distress, and instead turned against the door, smacking his hands against the smooth grey structure lamely. “Hey! Hey! Come on!”

It didn’t budge.

“Open up.”

Peter gave the door a swift lame kick for the effort before slumping to the floor, his back turning to hit a wall.

“You’ve done it now, You’re done for.” His hands making fists in his hair before sliding over his face. “You’re right where you... you can’t be. This is it.”

He groaned, pulling his knees up to his chest and he buried his face there. He preferred being unconscious.

“Hey. Hey. Wake up.”

“What’s wrong with him?” Peter blinked suddenly, eyes flickering, his head shooting upwards. “Oh shit...” he groaned, taking hold of his head again.

“There was a hum, “Not sure.” This voice, he didn’t know. It was a male though, the tone was soft. “It looks like tranquilizer that was used is both effecting him too much and too little.”

“Meaning?” Third voice. He was pretty sure he knew that one too.

“Meaning,” the soft tone continued, “- He is experiencing none of the effects we wanted, and all of
the side-effects we didn’t. Probably should make a note of that.”

Hands hooked under Peter’s arms and pulled him back to his feet. His head hurt too much to try to struggle, and he felt himself being guided to sit down on what he assumed was the bed.

His sleeve was pulled back.

“This should reverse the effects quickly.”

There was a sharp jab in the crook of his elbow.

“Hey!” he jerked his arm backwards, and despite the blistering headache, he opened his eyes to glare at the offender.

He stared.

“Dr. Bruce Banner?”

The man, who indeed was the Bruce Banner, chuckled slightly. “That’s me. Sorry about that – I’m trying to reverse the effects of the tranquilizer. Just stay calm. Breathe slowly. I know it hurts right now, but I suspect your body will make quick work of it now.”

Peter blinked at him, nodding slowly.

Two fingers touched his wrist. “Is your heart-rate usually so fast?”

Peter shrugged, looking past Dr. Banner to the silhouettes standing at the doorway.

Before he could comment on the fact that both Tony Stark and Steve Rogers were hovering in the threshold, a glass of water was pressed into his hands. “Drink some water. You’re a little dehydrated, and I don’t know how your system metabolizes drugs, this should help.”

He did as he was told, warily watching the other two.

“Well?” Tony spoke up after Peter took several long pulls of water.

“He’ll be fine,” Dr. Banner announced, and it was then that Peter realized the majority of his headache had cleared, as had his thoughts.

“Where am I?” his voice still sounded awful, dry and rough. He cleared it. “Where have you taken me?”

Dr. Banner was not one for lingering, or perhaps it was just protocol, because he was packing up his things and saying a quick, “Keep me updated,” before he swiftly left the room. Must of meant he was alright then.

“You’re at Stark Tower,” Tony said, taking a step forward. His tone was the least hostile Peter had ever heard, it almost sounded uncertain. “We aren’t going to ‘do’ anything to you, kid. We’re going to figure this out.”

Peter felt a tingle go straight up his spine as the gravity of the situation hit him like a ton of bricks.

He was in Stark Tower. The Avengers had him. They had unmasked him. He didn’t have his webshooters, he didn’t have his Spider-Man identity to hide behind, he was caught.

Scrambling backwards violently at this revelation, Peter backed himself up against and straight up the
wall.

“Shit, kid!” Tony crossed the room.

“Stay away!” Peter desperately shouted at him, his shoulders and head touching the ceiling as he clung there. “Stay away from me!”

Tony made to move closer but the arm of Captain America kept him in place. “We aren’t going to hurt you, son.”

“Then what are you going to do, huh?” Peter’s voice pitched. “You chase after me, you- you- grab me, you drug me, and- and- I wake up in a glorified jail cell! With a couch,” he pointed.

“Kid -”

“Don’t call me kid,” he hysterically replied his panic reaching a crescendo.

“Okay okay!” Tony put up his hands. “Calm down. Please.”

Peter’s breaths were short and quick, and he looked both his left and his right for any sort of escape. There was none. The two men were in the way of the closed door. Not like he would be able to open it without a pass-code of some kind. He already knew it didn’t have a handle.

“You need to calm down,” Captain America carefully said. “You’re going to hyperventilate.”

What was going to happen to him? Was he going to be locked up? Was he ever going to see Aunt May again?

Aunt May.

Did she know he was? Did she think he was missing? Dead?

Oh no. Oh no no no.

“Breathe.”

“I am breathing,” he loudly replied. “I am breathing. Just look at all these breaths I’m taking. So many breaths. I’m so very good at breathing!”

“Slower.”

Silence fell, just the three of them stuck in a strange kind of stand-off as Peter tried to stop hyperventilating on the ceiling.

Peter eventually broke the several-minute silence once he was sure he had his panic under control. “What are you going do to with me?” he asked, his voice small.

“Nothing,” Steve answered, voice clear and steady. “Nothing at all. We aren’t going to hurt you.”

Peter swallowed, his breath shuttering, and he looked down at the American Hero – now out of his usual uniform and in civilian clothes. “You captured me.”

“We did,” and he looked sorry.

“What do you want?”
Tony was sighing to himself, his hand running anxiously through his hair, muttering about ‘how he never intended for this kind of shit to happen’, ‘god, how old is he anyway?’ and ‘he’s just a freaking kid!’.

How much did he know?

“We want to talk.”

Peter’s attention snapped back to Steve over the pacing Tony, and he eyed him warily, and for the life of him he couldn’t find a single lie in the man’s stance, expression or voice.

“Just talk?”

“Yes. Just talk,” with an unspoken ‘for now’ lingering in the air.

“I’m not coming down from here.”

“That’s fine – you don’t need to be near me to talk.”

“I’m not not going to tell you anything. You know that right? Nothing. I’m going to be completely evasive and refuse to answer your questions.” Peter didn’t know why he was voicing that, but saying so made him feel like he had some thread of control over the situation despite knowing otherwise.

“But -”

Steve held out his hand to cut off Tony’s disagreement.

“That’s fine too,” Rogers easily agreed.

Peter nodded, swallowing again.

“Fine,” he relented, despite himself. “We can talk.”

The tension in the air broke.

Steve Rogers sighed before turning to his companion. “Tony can you do something for me?”

“What?”

“Get breakfast for him.”

“I’m not hungry,” Peter announced.

“Still,” Steve implored Tony, turning away from Peter. “Tony. Please?”

Tony looked from Peter to Steve, “Really?”

Steve just looked at him.

Tony glanced up at Peter with an unreadable expression before nodding, the silent look Steve had given him must have communicated something. “Right. Okay.”

Tony Stark opened the door.

Probably a bad idea.

Because screaming instincts telling him to ‘Go go go! Now’s your chance’, made Peter drop from
the ceiling.

Those same instincts made him duck from under a grab from Steve and slam himself to the floor in a slide to escape the closing door as Tony just wasn’t quite fast enough to lock it down.

They also helped to make him tune out Stark’s frantic calls to F.R.I.D.A.Y. to lock down the tower as he ran down the hallway.

So much for talking.

Chapter End Notes

... Oh Peter.

Can you really blame him?

Also... I am floored. Completely FLOORED. The response has been absolutely amazing and the comments and kudos are surely keeping me fueled to try to write the best I can. I am absolutely loving writing this, and all of you awesome people are keeping me going.

Thank you SO much.

Please keep on commenting on how you think and feel, it really, really helps to keep the fires burning.
Chapter Summary

Peter runs straight into trouble...
... because of course.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Running was not exactly the smartest thing that he could have done.

Peter had been given an opportunity to talk, an opportunity to clear things up, and he had instead run straight for an exit the moment that one opened up to him.

Not that he had been thinking when it had happened; it just happened. One moment he had every intention to speak to Steve Rogers, and the next he was flinging himself out of the room as fast and hard as he could.

Despite his actions, Peter really had meant it when he said he agreed to talk to Captain America. He had every intention to try to explain himself, to give the Avengers the bigger picture, to ask to be let go so he could go home...

... but his instincts had taken over.

That lead him to where he was right in that moment; hidden away in the shadows of a dark room, clinging to a ventilation pipe suspended in a high open ceiling of a seemingly abandoned lab with only the slow flash of a red warning light flooding the room every so many seconds for company.

Lucky finding a hiding place at all, really.

Given that Iron Man and Captain America had not chased straight after Peter the moment he ran, spoke volumes for their confidence in their abilities to recapture him.

Right when Peter had dived out of the room, and only just after he had barely registered Tony shouting for the building to be put on lock-down, the lights in the hallway had begun to dim.

A red glow took over instead, as silent emergency lights turned on in the wake of the others turning off, and in a cascade, windows and doors had begun to shut.

There had been only a few mere seconds of daylight – it must had been morning – before it too was locked out.

Peter had panicked when this begun to happen, staggering to a stop where two hallways met when he realized that no matter the direction he looked, that all the doors and the windows had a reinforced shutter lock down in place, effectively shutting off any and all ways of escape.

That is, all doors and windows... save for one.

Peter hadn’t at the time completely recognized why the door hadn’t been completely shut, only that
the metal shutter down one far end of a wing was still slightly ajar, the mechanism somehow not letting it completely lock down in place over the double-wide entrance to the large room beyond it.

It had been stuttering up and down a good foot off the ground, not completely able to connect to the locks in place, groaning and grinding as it tried again and again.

The moment Peter had spotted it, he ran for it. Knowing it was his only chance to hide; so the moment he had slid under it, he had gotten up and forced it shut, locking it down in place. Pushing it through - and not thinking about – the distinct warping of the tracks that the reinforced shutter was connected to.

Peter needed a refuge – and this had been his only option.

The room was dark – just as the hallway had become what with the windows all being locked down, and the same area-warning light slowly rotated across the room.

It was rather ominous.

So that’s where Peter was right then in that moment, just breathing, clinging to the large ventilation shaft’s tubing. Hanging a good fifteen feet up in the air, back facing the room. Though only a hiding place it could be - it didn’t look like there were any openings he could slink through either direction, that and he wasn’t exactly sure he wanted to be sucked into the ventilation.

Carefully, he pulled himself up and over the metal surface so that he lay on top of it instead of hanging under it, and he closed his eyes, pressing his cheek to the cool metal and just breathed.

Peter was a picture of absolute stillness, laying quietly, and staying completely still where he was perched. The red glow of the light may have washed over him every few seconds or so; but if one were looking up for him, he’d be almost impossible to find. The dim red light in the pitch cast the blue of his Spider-Man outfit into black, and the red became indistinguishable from the grey of the piping, blending him perfectly where he was hiding.

He was safe for now.

However, though he was that picture of stillness; on the inside, Peter’s mind was screaming.

His head reeled not only over his sheer exhaustion, his fear, his want to go home, is terror that he had further vilified himself – but also over the fact that his ‘spidey-sense’ had just not stopped crackling at the back of his mind.

It was hard to say what it was – often times whenever he was a picture of panic, his spider-sense overcompensated to protect himself, making him flinch and twitch at every little thing it felt posed a threat.

Those times were embarrassing, really. Causing him to have near heart-attacks over a group of pigeons flying away at a park, or this one time – a freaking kitten mewling at him from behind a dumpster.

But this? This was constant.

He needed to clear his thoughts.

He needed to think.

Peter kept his eyes closed, taking a few long steadying breaths, trying hard to focus on them so he
could clear his mind.

He needed to focus.

Focus was what was going to get him out of this mess, and focus was what he really needed right now. Not falling into heaps of anxiety and panic like he was a child.

It took ten of these breaths before he felt his mind was clear enough for him to take in his situation.

The first thing he noticed, upon opening his eyes again and training his senses to listen, was breathing - and it wasn’t his.

His own breaths caught in his throat, and he clasped a hand over his mouth.

How had he not noticed that he wasn’t alone in the room? How had the other occupant not noticed that he had joined them?

The other breathing was heavy, uncontrolled, guttural, a being was angrily pacing far on the other side of the large lab, a fair enough distance away from Peter that maybe they hadn’t heard him.

Peter swallowed, turning himself slowly on the metal pipe so he could try to see who else was in the lab. He couldn’t – it just was too dark, and the other must have been around a corner in the large space.

Other things started to catch his attention. Things that would have made him think twice about hiding in the seemingly abandoned labs if he had been paying attention.

The fact that the place was trashed, being a major sign.

Tables were overturned, desks were smashed, and equipment had been thrown against the wall cracked and sparking where they lay, broken. Paper littered the floor, and Peter noticed with a swallow that the metal plating on the windows must have been double-sided because one of the interior shutters had been torn off revealing shattered glass and another thick lining of heavily-dented plating just behind it.

This was why his Spider-Sense had been screaming at him this entire time.

It was not over the Avengers.

This.

It was over this.

Peter moved carefully across the pipe, trying to inch himself as close as he could to the door without being noticed.

He had to get out of there.

Not wanting to risk making any more sound by jumping to metal scaffolding or another pipe, Peter held his breath, carefully swinging himself around the pipe, dangling over the floor.

He listened.

The breathing faded somewhat into the background, meaning they had paced back into the furthest corner of the labs.
Now was a better time than any -

Peter slipped off of pipe, landing on his feet and hands -
-
- straight onto a sheet of glass.

Crack.

Shit.

Peter’s breath hitched, likewise did the breath of the lab’s only other occupant.

Not waiting to greet who it was in the room with him, or what they were going to do now that they were aware he was there, Peter stood up and ran for the door as a low guttural bellow broke out.

He was mere feet from the door before the Hulk let loose another loud yell and Peter had to throw himself to the floor to avoid being shoulder-slammed straight into the armour-plated door he had been running towards.

So that’s why it had been broken.

It was even more broken now, and any hopes that Peter had in lifting it up in short enough time to not get killed was mightily dashed.

Peter skittered on his back for a second before scrambling back onto his feet.

Even more enraged that he had not smashed what had angered him so, Hulk turned to look at Peter, eyes narrowing, nostrils flaring.

Peter took a few steps back, hands up. “Whoa whoa! Hulk! It’s nice to meet you! Big fan! Like, huge fan. Really.”

The Hulk turned slowly, chest heaving, fists clenching tightly.

“So man,” Peter continued, stepping backwards. “Did I interrupt something? Bother you? I didn’t meant to crash your party.”

The talking seemed to distract the Hulk, whose eyes narrowed as he took a step or two forward unsure of how to deal with the puny person before him.

“Again. So sorry. Did I say I was a big fan?” Peter continued quickly. “Huge fan.”

His foot made contact with a shard of glass with a sharp crack.

The Hulk twitched.

Oh no.

“So...” Peter started casually. “This... This has been nice but — I think... I think I might just be going now,” he thumbed behind him, though for the life of him where he was going to go he had no idea. “’Kay?”

Peter saw the Hulk’s lip curl. Yep. His cue to run.

Peter turned on his heel dashed wildly, running straight for the nearest wall while the Hulk let loose another angry bellow and went barrelling after him.
Peter sprung off of one wall, landed on a table, and then launched off of it to use the next wall as another springboard to get back onto the open-ceiling’s piping.

His fingertips just made purchase and with a yelp he pulled his body up as a table was flung at him.

“Whoa!”

He flipped on top of the ventilation shaft.

“Hulk smash!”

“How about Hulk not smash?”

Hulk grabbed another table and Peter wished he had his web-shooters as he lept for the next pipe over, just barely making the jump, catching it with fingertips as he dodged the furniture.

The table sheered through the tubing like a knife through butter, and crashed into the opposite wall, embedding into and shattering an empty fume-hood.

Peter gaped at the sight, and struggled to pull himself up one-handed before something else was flung his way.

The Hulk stomped closer. “Hulk,” he started, “Hulk smash puny Spider!”

“I’m not that puny!” Peter dashed across the pipe “I’m at least five-foot seven!” He ducked as a chair was thrown at him. “Okay- Okay- you got me - five-foot six and a half.”

Another chair came toward him with a bellow, and Peter dodged that too, making a running-leap to grip onto a higher beam.

“Have you heard of me then?” Peter asked. “Me? Spider-Man? Since you called me a Spider and -ngh!” A table caught his back.

“Gotta really learn to shut my mouth...” Peter wheezed on the floor.

He groaned, turning over onto his back as he grasped his sides, trying to breathe.

Hulk stomped over to where Peter lay, and he felt his face turn sheet-white.

“Hi,” he managed in a small feeble voice, raising one hand up in greeting.

A large hand grabbed him.

Please don’t squeeze.

Please don’t squeeze.

Please don’t squeeze.

Peter - gasping - came face-to-face with the Hulk, and briefly wondered where the other Avengers were, or if they were aware of what was happening at all.

He licked his lips. “So um... come here often?”

Hulk’s teeth bared, pulling back his hand and threw Peter.

Or he would have- if Peter hadn’t wrapped his whole body around the arm and stuck to it like his life
depended on it.

Because really, it sort of did.

Hulk blinked, looking at his hand and arm where Peter was stuck. “Huh?”

The Hulk shook his arm several times in an attempt to dislodge Peter - Peter’s poor head started to whirl at the abuse - and with a frustrated snarl, Hulk pried Peter off of him with another hand and then made his throw.

Instead of colliding with the wall painfully, Peter twisted his body mid-air so he landed on the wall like it was the ground.

No time to congratulate himself on such a good move, a table was coming straight for his face.

He rolled forward and off of the wall, the table just clipping his heels.

What was his life even?

It was hard to believe that less than twenty-four hours ago, he had been sitting his his room working on his homework while his Aunt fussed over him, worrying that he wasn’t eating enough.

Now he was fleeing from the Hulk; during an aftermath of having been captured, drugged and contained by the Avengers, *and* his subsequent escape from them.

It was too much.

He had enough.

Peter ducked and rolled again. “Stop!”

A broken table went soaring straight for his head again and he made a large vertical leap, grabbing onto a hanging light with his hands before dropping down again.

Peter was exhausted.

His spider-sense hadn’t stopped screaming in his head since he began the encounter with the Hulk, because, well it was the Hulk. The Hulk was just danger incarnate.

And it wasn’t like just because he was fighting away the Hulk his mind had forgotten about his predicament and his Aunt May - if anything, it had extenuated how utterly *screwed* he was.

“Stop!” he tried again, and he threw a chair back at his attacker, intercepting another bit of debris that was being thrown toward him.

A prickle went up his back, instinctively causing his head to turn in the direction of the door.

Banging. Loud banging and yelling.

They found them.

“*Help!*” he cried out as his foot was swept from under him, sending him crashing forward.

“- *augh!*” he was picked up again, by the leg this time, dangling helplessly upside down.

The banging on the door increased, and Peter could hear frantic shouting as they were trying to pull
the door upwards, and seeing as Peter suspected that door in particular had been made to keep out the Hulk when he was in a fit of rage, he doubted that it was going to be opening anytime soon. Especially with the severe damage.

Again Peter was hurled across the room, and instead of managing to stick to a wall, he crashed into a lab table, sliding over the top of it smacking into a shuttered and collapsing to the floor.

Peter groaned, holding his side, coughing.

“God...”

Heavy footsteps approached him. Peter swallowed, too hurt and tired to try and get up.

With effort, he turned himself over, looking up at the Hulk who loomed over him.

“Please...”

The Hulk reached down toward him with a growl, and Peter only put up his hands.

“Please!” he bit back a whimper. “Please stop! Please!”

Enough already. He had enough. He was so tired. He wanted to go home. He wanted his Aunt May. He didn’t want to be here anymore.

“Please...” he choked. “Enough. I’m done.”

It took a few seconds for Peter to realize that he hadn’t been snatched up again in those large green fists, that he was still laying in the rubble where he had been thrown.

Shakily, and slowly, Peter moved down his arms, swallowing back tears as he looked up at the Hulk that was peering down at him.

The Hulk and him exchanged a long glance before the beast pulled back his fist again.

Peter couldn’t help the sound that bubbled out of his throat and he covered his head once more, prepared to take the walloping of his life. He knew he joked about being caught by the Hulk to himself, about being mushed like a spider...

... he didn’t actually think it would happen.

His eyes squeezed shut, waiting for the inevitable.

“No... no...”

...

It didn’t come.

He just lay there though, unwilling to look past his arms to see what the Hulk was doing. He knew that if he looked up he would just see a fist of green and then nothing.

Peter idly wondered if he’d manage to survive a direct punch from the Hulk.

God, he wanted his Aunt.

Peter curled up on his side covering his face, biting back emotions that were flooding over him. He
was so done.

The punch still didn’t come.

Instead, through frustrated breaths, the Hulk spoke, “Spider not fight!”

Peter swallowed, eyes clenched tightly shut, “Don’t want to fight,” he said weakly.

“Spider... Spider not...” the Hulk grunted angrily, voice heaving, “Spider... not fight!”

“... I don’t want to fight.”

Shattering sounds followed Peter’s pleaded statement, along with loud angry yells as something was tossed across the room. Peter winced, curling into himself.

After a moment of things smashing and breaking, and the footsteps of the Hulk coming closer to him once more, something hooked under one of his arms, forcing him onto his back, and pulling his arm away from his face.

Peter stared up in terror as Hulk moved him with but a finger.

“Spider not... Spider not fight,” Hulk said again, looking at him oddly. “Spider not fight Hulk.”

Peter breathed, looking wide-eyed into Hulk’s curious green ones.

What was happening?

“Hulk fight Spider but...” The Hulk was struggling to find the words, eyebrows furrowing intensely as he tried to speak, “... but... Spider not fight Hulk. Spider... Spider quiet.”

Peter honestly didn’t know what to say because he never thought he’d be face-to-face with Hulk, let alone having him crouching over him and peering at him in a way that was so completely contrary to how he was just minutes before.

Peter didn’t know what to say, his voice was caught somewhere in the back of his throat.

Then, with an expression that Peter never thought possible for the large green beast to possess, Hulk tugged down Peter’s other arm. “Hulk... Hulk hurt Spider.”

What?

Peter’s voice found him. “I- I’m fine.” He pushed away the finger that held up his arm, trying to sit up. “I... I’m okay.”

Why was he assuring the Hulk?

God, he was more messed up than he thought.

What would his Aunt think-

His eyes squeezed shut. He resisted a sob. He was so tired.

He couldn’t see the expression on the Hulk’s face at this, as Peter struggled to keep his composure. He felt like a twelve-year old, unable to contain himself like this. He was supposed to be Spider-Man, not some weak kid on the floor.
“Spider... little Spider...” the Hulk mused quietly.

A huge fist grabbed him around the waist, and Peter yelped as he was yanked into the air.

In one terrifying moment Peter was afraid he was going to be thrown yet again. “H-hey! Don’t-”

“Hulk not fight Little Spider,” the green beast announced, hooking Peter under an absolutely enormous bicep. “Hulk not fight Little Spider,” he repeated, as if to himself.

“C-come on... put me down, man...”

Hulk stomped across the room, Peter tried to pull himself from the grip, but his body hurt and he was so tired that it was a fruitless effort.

The Hulk’s muscles tensed.

What was he going to do -?

Without warning the Hulk launched himself forward and burst through a wall, Peter tucked under one arm, tearing through wall, concrete and metal reinforcement as easily as if all three were merely aluminum foil or paper.

Peter’s arms flew over his head to protect himself from the flying debris having let loose a terrified scream.

Drywall, metal, glass and other debris rained down upon them all.

“- That, um - That works too -” it was Tony, Peter was sure of it, his voice was weak with surprise. “I guess.”

Peter opened his eyes, and saw both he and the Hulk were surrounded by the four other Avengers. Iron Man, Captain America, Hawkeye and the Black Widow, all poised and ready to fight the Hulk if needed.

Hulk’s nostrils flared and Peter was moved from under his arm to be held out by both hands like an offering.

The Avengers exchanged odd looks, standing down.

“Hulk fight Little Spider and Little Spider not fight Hulk back,” he announced.

Captain America approached the Hulk first, and Peter was lowered to the ground so his feet touched it - then he was pushed toward the American Hero.

Peter stumbled into Steve Roger’s chest.

“Spider just Little Spider. Hulk...” Hulk growled in frustration. “Hulk not fight little Spider.”

Strong arms caught Peter before he could fall over, Captain America’s arms hooking under his own. Peter’s forehead touched the man’s chest, completely unable to take in this turn of events.

“That’s good, Hulk,” Peter felt Steve say as much as he heard him. “That’s very good. Thank you.” The Hero’s attention turned to Peter. “Are you hurt, son?”

A hand was touching Peter’s back, he guessed it was Black Widow.
Peter just groaned.

“We need to have Dr. Banner look at him,” Natasha said. “To be sure. I don’t see any blood but -”

Peter felt Steve’s nod. “Hulk?”

A snort in reply.

“Hulk. We are very glad you brought him to us. Thank you. However, we need to speak to Dr. Banner,” Captain America asked, slowly and clearly. “We need Dr. Banner right now.”

There was a growl, and Peter tensed.

“Your ‘Little Spider’ needs to see Dr. Banner,” Natasha said.

Hulk was making indecisive sounds, and Peter could imagine he was looking this way and that, clenching huge green fists in deliberation of if he should do as they requested. Did it even work that way? Could they just ask for that to happen?

“Please,” Natasha insisted.

Maybe so, because loud crunching and grinding sounds filled the hall. The heavy grunting breaths of the Hulk receded into pants of a more average person, and low mutterings of a person swearing to themselves.

“I, I-” Dr. Banner’s voice shook.

“Later,” Steve’s voice cut him off before any apologies could fall from his lips.

“Needed to redecorate that lab anyway,” Tony was beside them now, speaking casually, once more out of his suit. “How is the kid?”

“No sure.”

Peter was moved, being supported at arms length so they could get a better look at him.

“Are you hurt?” Steve asked again.

Peter shook his head, gypsum dust fell from his hair in a cloud. He found his voice. “I - no. I don’t think so. Just thrown around a bit. I... I think. I’m actually not quite sure...”

Someone clicked their tongue in disapproval.

“Best not risk it and let him walk,” was Natasha’s suggestion. “Clint and I can take him back to his room. While you make sure that Dr. Banner stays Dr. Banner before we let him see to him.”

“I like that plan. I’ll go get both the kid and Bruce a change of clothing,” Tony suggested.

Steve Rogers agreed. “Right. Clint, you take him, both you and Natasha stay with him until Tony, Bruce and I return.”

“Right - Clint?”

“On it.”

Arms hooked under Peter’s legs and he was pulled easily into Hawkeye’s arms bridal-style.
Peter opened his mouth to argue, to make a quip, to say something, but he didn’t have it in him. He was done.

Defeated.

Instead he just let happen, only crossing an arm over his stomach to massage a bruise that twinged painfully at his side as he was carried back down the hallway.

“You met the big-guy,” it was statement from Hawkeye as they walked; not really a question.

“Yeah.”

“You hurt?”

“Dunno - not really.”

“You’re made of some tough-stuff Spider-Man,” Clint said. “Most people can’t be smacked around by the Hulk so easily.”

Peter didn’t reply, he really have much to say.

So for the rest of the walk back, it was quiet, and remained so until they re-entered the room.

“Sit him down.”

Peter was carefully levered into a sitting position on the bed, being propped up with a hand.

Peter let his head droop and his hands hang limply between his legs, looking to the floor. He didn’t have the energy to fight anymore.

The bed beside him dipped as Black Widow sat beside him, it was her hand that supported him, and Hawkeye squatted down in front of him, tilting his head so he could better see Peter’s face.

“You good?” Clint asked.

He didn’t say anything. He couldn’t say anything.

Peter’s hands started to shake, his breaths catching.

Small droplets of water hit the hardwood floor just within his line of sight.

“Whoa. Hey -”

Peter struggled to control his breathing, his breath catching, his hands balling into fists.

Keep it together Parker.

Keep it together.

Peter’s breath hiccuped and he was pulled into someone’s chest.

For a second, Peter thought it had been the Black Widow, she was sitting next to him after all. But it wasn’t. It was Clint. Having sat down beside Peter without him realizing, he had turned Peter and enveloped him into an embrace.

Peter gasped for breath.
Come on Parker. *Keep it together.*

“I get it,” he heard Clint say. “I get it. It’s fine.”

Peter’s hands instinctively grasped at the man’s back, breaths shuttering.

No no no...

He couldn’t -

He wasn’t -

“This doesn't make you a kid.”

Peter broke.

Harsh sobs wracked his body and a keening whine broke past every attempt he made to stop it.

Peter was pulled tighter into Hawkeye, so that his head was tucked under his chin, strong arms holding him securely while Peter’s own arms just weakly making fists into the rough fabric of the archer’s vest.

A gentle hand was on the back of Peter’s head, another on his back.

“I get it,” Clint breathed. “I understand.”

So he sat there and let Peter sob.

Chapter End Notes

... Because of course it's too much for Peter.
He's only 15...
Poor kid.

Also:

I want to emphatically thank each and every person that took their time to comment.

I am, as always, floored at the response, and I take pride in making sure I reply to each and every comment, from the itty-bitty short ones, to the great big long ones. Each and every one is appreciated!

This fanfiction has been so fun to write, like, my goodness. I am just as stoked about it as my readers are, and I think that's so important.

Updates will come as soon as I feel comfortable and in love with the chapter that I have produced, and seeing as I have so much time on my hands...

... shouldn't be too hard!

Thank you SO much - I promise to reply to each and every comment I get. No matter what.
Please comment your thoughts and feelings.

THANK YOU.
Starch in the Spider-Gravy

Chapter Summary

Things get unfortunately cleared up...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was quiet and the light was dim where Peter Parker lay, bundled up in warm loose sheets. Peter’s face was buried into a pillow as he slept dozily on his front, one arm tucked under his body, and the other slipped under the pillow to support his head.

Voices filtered from the hallway, pulling Peter just enough out of his deep sleep to register the sound.

“- You’re not exactly making this very easy for me to fix.”

Peter’s eyes opened, a yawn escaping him. Not yet fully aware, he blinked blearily at the headboard, confused and sleepy, and not quite sure what had woken him.

After a few seconds of half-asleep confused thoughts, Peter’s face dropped back into the soft warm pillow, wrapping both his arms around it, breathing in the scent of clean linens and revelling in the comfort of the bedding.

His mind began to drift -

“- I just don’t want you to overwhelm him.”

Peter turned his head, humming in his throat, one eye squinting. “Hm?”

“I’m not going to overwhelm him.”

Someone leave the TV on again...?

“Sure, showing him document after document about him isn’t going to overwhelm him at all,” the flat reply came. “This isn’t an interrogation, Tony.”

Documents? Interrogation?

What?

Peter shifted where he lay, only vaguely aware of the light nightshirt he was wearing and how it wasn’t exactly something he owned, or even had on earlier that day. He sighed sleepily, pulling his head up and away from the pillow. He pushed his hand through his hair, mussing up brown curls more than they already were as he blinked away the alluring pull of sleep.

Where was he again? His bed wasn’t usually this large, nor this comfortable...

“I know it’s not an interrogation, Clint. We need to clear this up.”

... and those weren’t voices of a television having been left on.
“Do I have to say it again? Those documents aren’t going to help.”

That was Hawkeye.

The other voice was Iron Man.

Oh.

Memories flooded back to Peter as well as dull throbbing pain right in the small of his back. Peter scrubbed a hand over his face. Right.

“Ugh. Sleep was so much better,” he muttered to himself, groaning as he pried himself from the face-down position.

He hissed in pain, holding his back as he did so, carefully putting a pillow or two against the headboard so he could delicately rest his back there.

After he had fallen into Hawkeye’s arms in hysterics - Peter couldn’t even think of that moment without wanting to cringe into the centre of the earth - Dr. Banner had paid him a visit.

It was an odd feeling, to have the man look over him; seeing as it was his alter-ego that had given Peter these most recent injuries in the first place.

No broken bones, however, and no internal hemorrhaging. Peter had been diagnosed with severe bruising and minor lacerations; most of which were located on his lower back.

Given how the others had hissed in surprise when Peter had pulled down his suit, so Banner could take a better look, Peter must have been a veritable rainbow of angry bruises of all shades.

He rubbed one spot in particular, where he remembered the corner of a table had clipped him. The skin was raised, but now felt like a day-old bruise rather than mere hours.

“- I said no, Tony.”

Peter perked, listening.

“Look, we can’t just coddle him - we have to get to the centre of this problem. Now. I’ve already put him in a nicer room. Which, if I might add, is even easier to escape from.”

Peter vaguely remembered being taken to a new room. That explained why the door was a regular hinged one, and the fact there was a window with drawn curtains.

“He’s not going to escape.”

A snort. “Sure.”

“We owe him some kind of comfort after the shit we put him through.”

The voices were low and whispered, but Peter’s hearing was exceptional when he focused, so he could understand them as easily as if he were standing beside them.

“What are you, his mom or something?”

“I said no. He tells us what he wants to tell us when he wants to tell us. We owe him that much.”

“We don’t owe him -”
A female metallic voice cut through the conversation. "Mr. Stark - your guest has woken up."

"Thank you, F.R.I.D.A.Y."

Peter jumped, looking around himself for where a camera could be hidden. He didn’t see one. Awkwardly, he smoothed back his hair.

Footsteps approached the door, and it opened.

He was right about the voices, it was Clint Barton and Tony Stark.

Hawkeye was the first to enter the room, Tony hung by the door for a second or two while the archer greeted Peter. "Hey - how do you feel?"

"Sore," he admitted. "How long have I been asleep?"

"A few hours - and I’ll bet you’re sore." Hawkeye pulled up a chair and sat down on it. Casually he put his feet up onto Peter’s bed and crossed them. "I saw the recording while you were asleep."

"The recording?"

Tony closed the door behind him. "Yeah. Of your encounter with big green. The whole thing was recorded on the security cameras."

"It was?" Peter asked. Though it made sense, Tony Stark was the literal figurehead of most things excessively technological, figures that there would be cameras in every room.

"Oh yes," Clint said. "Even with the infrared camera, it’s hard to see you move on the recording. I thought your acrobatics were due to just the webs," the archer made a gesture like shooting one, "But that was all you."

Peter’s face heated up at the compliment. "Er - thanks?"

"I’ll admit they were slick moves," Tony stated, his voice an attempt at casual.

"Still can’t get over how you managed to hang from the ceiling like that with one hand -" Clint continued to praise, moving his hand to mimic what Peter had done, "- by just your fingertips, even. Is that because of your suit or-?"

In lieu of a worded reply, Peter humoured Clint by putting his hand flat down on the sheets and lifting it up, taking the blanket with it like it had been glued there.

"No shit," Clint marvelled.

Even Tony looked interested, stopping in his pacing of the room to look at the minor spectacle.

"I can stick to things," Peter over-simplified.

"So you’re sticky?"

"Er - well, no. Perhaps ‘stick to things’ isn’t the right way to say it."

The blanket dropped as Peter willed it, and Clint took Peter’s hand and turned it over in his own, enthralled. "How does that work? You got glue sweat or something? How do you control that?"

"Pretty sure it’s has to do with scopulae and setules. Kind of. Well, something like that. I think."
He had absorbed every biology book on Spiders he could find since his ‘incident’, and that was the closest to an answer Peter had for even himself.

Clint looked up from where he was trying to squint closely at one of Peter’s fingerprints. Confusion painted his features.

“Like a real spider?” Tony said, surprised. “You’re shitting us.”

“I’m not ‘shitting’ you. I’ve looked at my hand under a microscope, you know. I don’t know how it works exactly. Thinking it’s a mix of that and my own special brand of weird. Not exactly a lot of people like me to compare notes with,” Peter explained.

He didn’t expect to have such a reverent response to his ability to stick to things. Even Tony Stark’s genuine interest was a surprise.

“I’ll say,” Clint agreed, and Peter gave Hawkeye something to further amuse him with - by taking his hand out Clint’s only to press them palm to palm and stick them together.

“That feels...” Clint stated, tilting his head and wiggling his own fingers so that Peter’s wiggled too. “So weird. Also-” Clint added, “You got small hands.”

“Rude.” Peter fake-griped.

Tony fell back into pacing the room after watching the scene for a few moments, and it didn’t escape Peter’s notice.

Peter unstuck his hand from Clint’s.

The billionaire was pacing the room, trying and failing to look completely composed. Peter had seen that walk many times before with other people. It was an anxious pacing, and the way that Tony was fiddling with his phone told Peter that there were a lot of things that the billionaire was keeping himself from saying.

Peter sat up more, ignoring his protesting back, pulling off his sheets so he could sit cross-legged on the bed.

“So. What do you want to talk to me about?” Peter finally asked.

Both Tony and Clint looked at him.

“Look. I know I’m not really a ‘guest’,” he made finger-quotes as he said it. “And I doubt you’re here just so you can marvel at me sticking to things. So... go on.”

“I was thinking we should wait till Steve gets here -”

“We don’t need him to babysit the conversation,” Tony snapped at Clint, who put up his arms defensively. “The kid will be fine.”

“Not a kid,” Peter instantly retorted.

Tony rolled his eyes and he flopped down onto the couch that was pressed against the wall, crossing one leg over the other, his arms draped over the back. The phone was still being fiddled with one hand.

“Oh really?” Tony asked, “Tell me, just how old are you?”
“I don’t have to tell you that.”

“Why oh why am I not surprised,” came the heavily sarcastic reply.

“Tony. That isn’t helping.”

Tony gestured to Peter with one hand. “It’s not like he’s making this easy for me!” he focused back on Peter, voice petulant. “What are you, twelve?”

Peter knew a jab when he heard one, and his hackles raised. “I’m not twelve.”

“Could a fooled me,” Tony replied coolly. He shifted in his seat, leaning forward on the couch and resting his elbows on his knees.

Peter glowered at him.

“What do you want -”

“Your age, kid.”

“That’s not happening - and I’m not a kid.”

“Sure acting like one.”

Peter felt his anger rising.

“You see? This -” Clint started, “- this is exactly why I wanted to wait for Steve -”

“Oh would you shut up?”

“I’m not going to ask you twice, Tony. Calm down already. You’re not helping anything by yelling at the kid.”

“I’m not yelling. Who said I was yelling? I wasn’t yelling.”

“You were getting awfully close to it.”

“If he would just tell me -”

Peter closed his eyes and took a breath. “Is this about those documents?”

“He doesn’t need -” Clint’s word died on his tongue and he looked away from Tony. “What?”

“The documents. You were talking about them outside the door.”

“Kid, we were whispering fifteen feet away from your closed door, how in the hell did you hear that?” Tony asked.

Peter tapped one of his ears in explanation. “Super-hearing. I’m right, aren’t I? You want to talk to me about some... document? Or something?”

Clint looked at Tony, who suddenly looked uncertain, biting his lower lip and glancing between him and Peter. The fiddling of the phone increased.

“Not really-”

“Oh come on. Look. I think I’m owed some explanation here,” Peter demanded. “You clearly don’t
really think I’m just ‘some kid’ considering the treatment I’ve been getting lately.”

That had a reaction that Peter hadn’t expected from the billionaire. Tony’s face lost a bit of his colour, and for a moment the man looked something akin to ashamed.

“Look. What’s your age?” Tony asked again, and it hardly held any of the bite as before.

Peter’s arms crossed. “Why do you even want to know? You’re going to suddenly feel sorry for how you treated me because of it? I don’t think that makes much difference. Being treated like garbage is still being treated like garbage, in the end. Young or old.”

“We need to know your age.”

“Why?”

“Please, kid.”

“Why?” Peter demanded. “Why do you want to know? You know what, while you’re at it, why am I here at all?” What had fuelled his fear before just fuelled his anger now. “I don’t think I’m asking for much here, either. I deserve to know!”

He was tired. He was hurt. He was exhausted.

He wanted to go home.

He wanted his Aunt.

He wanted answers.

The door opened.

“Am I interrupting something?”

Hawkeye had his head in his hands when Steve made his appearance, and prided his face away from them so he could say, “Oh we’re all just making friends here. This is going just swimmingly.”

“I... I see.” Steve looked at Tony. “Well I’m here now – you can go now.”

Hawkeye stood.

Peter turned. “You’re leaving?”

Clint nodded apologetically. “Yep. Sorry, Spider-Man. As much as I don’t want to,” he gave a hard look at Tony, “I do have some stuff to attend to.” He gripped Peter’s shoulder for a second. “Talk to you later.”

With a nod exchanged between Captain America and Hawkeye, Steve sat down in the seat that Hawkeye vacated and Hawkeye left the room with a promise to come back later.

Peter almost wanted to call out for the archer to not leave, but he bit the request back. It would do nothing for Tony’s mental image of him being a ‘kid’ if he acted like one.

No matter how oddly safe Peter felt having him there.

“So, what have you talked about so far?” Steve prompted once it was clear that Tony nor Peter were going to start up the conversation again.
“Nothing – because this kid refuses to tell me anything,” Tony replied, shooting Peter a look.

“I don’t really have much to say,” Peter shot back.

Steve sighed, though the look wasn’t entirely exhausted, there was even a hint of a smile. He muttered something like, ‘stubborn,’ under his breath, and it was completely unclear who he was talking about.

“I just want to know why I am here,” Peter started, addressing Steve instead of Tony. It was him that Peter had originally agreed to talk to. “And um – about me running earlier-”

Rogers put his hand up to cut him off. “No apologizes are needed if forgiveness doesn’t have to be given.”

“Bwuh?”

“It means, ‘it’s not your fault’, kid. When America incarnate gives you an out, you take it.”

Peter’s nose scrunched and he looked at Tony, who continued, “It’s not like we didn’t make the situation as it was. We sort of gave you ample reason and opportunity for you to run away. So you don’t have to apologize if the onus is on us.”

Peter stiffened. “Oh. I see. So if you’d just been more careful and I hadn’t run off -”

“That is not what I was saying,” Tony snapped angrily, standing.

Tony took a breath, pacing the room again, and he rubbed his hand over his mouth clearly trying to cool his temper. The phone spun in one hand.

Peter looked at Steve, a bit frightened and confused.

“Tony, try to stay calm,” was the American hero’s suggestion.

“I can’t – I can’t just calm down right now. Okay? I just can’t.”

“You being frantic is not going to help anything.”

Tony ignored Steve and turned to look at Peter. The man’s gaze was so hard and serious that Peter’s back straightened.

“Tell me your age, kid.”

Peter’s mouth opened and closed. More and more Peter was getting the impression that his age was more than whether or not he was ‘just a kid’. The man wouldn’t have been this demanding if that were the case.

“I - why? Don’t you like... like... have my face now? Can’t you just look it up in a database?”

“I already have,” Tony growled, turning so he could pace the room again. “You don’t come up in any of our databases. Not in any for known criminals, any databases for mutants or mutates...” Tony explained, “… I even cross-checked with other organizations databases. Richards’, Xavier’s, S.H.I.E.L.D’s... et cetera, et cetera...” Tony wheeled his hand in the air. “Everything I could think of and I came up with nothing. Nill. Nada.”
“Is that a... problem?” Peter uncertainly prompted.

“Hell yes it’s a problem.”

“Why?”

“Because considering the circumstances of why we went after you, shouldn’t not be in there.”

“I uh?” Peter blinked, his eyebrow rose. “You lost me. Like, I’m not an unregistered citizen, I was born in this country, so -”

“No!” Tony pinched the bridge of his nose “That’s not what I mean!”

“What do you mean then?” Peter asked, frustrated. “I’m not picking up what you’re trying to put down in front of me.”

“He didn’t say he checked civilian records,” Steve explained for Tony. “That’s not something we can easily do.”

“I – what? Why? Why not? Shouldn’t you be able to do that? Like, I dunno, use my face that you get on one of your hidden camera things,” he gestured, “and like, search the government’s files? Like passports or driver’s licenses?”

Not that Peter particularly wanted the man to do that – but the fact that Tony hadn’t was baffling. Peter always figured that the Avengers and other super-hero organizations had the ability to access any sort of personal data like that.

“Do you even have a drivers license?” Tony blankly asked.

Peter’s cheeks pinked. “That’s not important. Why haven’t you looked there if you want to know my age oh-so-much?”

“Because we don’t make a habit of snooping into the lives of civilians, and because you should have been in our other databases. Your face should have appeared somewhere – even if it were some other country.”

Wait what? Some other country? What was he talking about?

“Huh?” Peter furrowed his eyebrows. “But I’ve only ever lived in New York. Why should I be listed on records in other countries?”

“Were you listening? I said criminal records. Mutant and mutate records. Not civilian records. Look, there are billions of people out there, and if your face is not on one of our lists then you shouldn’t even be on our radar in the first place.”

“I am good at hiding my identity then?” Peter tried, “Also – like, I shouldn’t even be on a criminal list ‘cause I’m not a criminal.”

Tony pinched his nose again. “He’s not getting it,” he sighed, turning away for a moment. “He’s not getting it.”

“Getting what?” Peter looked between Iron Man and Captain America. “What are you talking about? What am I not getting?”

Tony turned back around. “Can I tell him, Rogers, or will you and Barton go all Papa and Mama bear on me and force me to keep my trap shut?” he asked bitterly.
Peter froze.

“Barton might not agree with me on this -” Steve said after a thoughtful moment, “- but I think you should at least tell him. He deserves to know. I think otherwise he’ll just be confused.”

Hell yes he was confused. “Tell me what? Know what?”

Without hesitation Tony flipped the phone in his hand, turned it toward himself with a grim expression, the screen flaring to life. Something about his expression made the hairs on Peter’s arms stand on end.

After Tony found whatever he was looking for, he glanced at Peter from over the top of the device before he began to read what was written there. “Mutant Records Number #07-0617. Spider-Man,” he started voice flat and serious.

Peter stilled.


Something deep in Peter’s stomach turned to ice. “What is this? What are you reading to me?”

Tony put up a finger to silence him as he continued “Assumed Age: Twenty to Thirty. Basic Information; Is an unknown vigilante that has taken up residence in New York. Alias believed to be a cover-up. Highly likely to be a known criminal mutant under a new moniker. Believed to be unstable and very dangerous. True identity unknown.”

“Known criminal mutant under a new moniker?” Peter parroted incredulously.

Tony continued.


“Armed and dangerous?” Spider-Man nor Peter ever held let alone ever used a firearm.

“Oh, here’s a blurb from a watch-list,” Tony said as if finding a particularly good coupon in a newspaper, “Spider-Man – Potentially dangerous mutant. Has been tied to criminal robberies, abductions, arson, destruction and defacement of property, unlawful use of force, concealed dangerous weaponry-”

“W-wait. That’s not me! That’s not me,” Peter interrupted. “Where is this coming from? I have never-”

“Here’s another,” Tony said, his tone cheerfully dark. “Let’s read this one too, shall we? Spider-Man; Unknown mutant. Age; Twenties. Dangerous. Do not approach. Is suspected to be tied to several incidents across the globe and is currently hiding under the Alias Spider-Man in New York.”

Peter’s mouth was completely dry.

“Th- this...”

Tony turned to face Peter, expression serious, grave.
“These are all files on ‘that Neighbourhood Menace Spider-Man’ that put you on our radar. All of these lack a face, but they all point to you. This is why -” Tony said, voice hard. “- I have to know real info about you. The real you.”

“B... but. I never,” Peter spluttered, “I... I’m not who they are saying I am!”

“You don’t think we are startlingly aware of that now?” Tony said, voice biting, “When I checked your face in the database, it should have come up with something. If this really is who Spider-Man is, you would have come up.”

Peter’s mind reeled as he grappled with the information. “I don’t... I don’t think I completely understand.”

He was getting why Clint didn’t want Tony to approach Peter with this in the first place. Peter felt like he had taken a solid punch to the gut.

“The person they are describing here is a dangerous mutant that has a history,” Tony explained, “and he’s believed to be the alias of someone else equally dangerous – and this so-called person is you. You are Spider-Man, aren’t you?”

“Well – yeah!” Peter said, voice high, “But -”

Tony just continued, pacing, “- When I was cross-checking all the databases to find a match with your face, I was hoping I could pin your face to a name. But you didn’t come up.”

Tony sat down heavily on the chair.

“And...?”

“And? Do you have any idea how bizarre that is?” Tony asked, “For your face to not show up anywhere? On any criminal or mutant databases? A twenty-year old mutant supposedly that dangerous? With that kind of prior history?”

“Should I have?”

“You should have. Goddammit, you should have. And you didn’t. You aren’t.” Tony said, gesturing to the phone. “Because you shouldn’t be. Spider-Man shouldn’t be.”

Steve interjected, “Ever wonder why we went after you in the first place? Why we were even interested in you?”

He had before, and Peter certainly was getting the picture now.

“Well, yeah,” Peter replied. “At the time just thought I kept getting caught up in the wrong place at the wrong time. Like with the bank. Also the whole avoiding-the-Avengers thing,” Peter added regretfully.

“That didn’t help, of course,” Tony bitterly added, though his anger was far away from being directed at Peter, “To us it just cemented the truth of these flagged notes on Spider-Man,” Tony tapped the screen of his phone. “But the fact of the matter is, kid, the more we got to know Spider-Man, and by that I mean when we saw your face... it started to become very obvious something was very wrong.”

Steve nodded. “I already was uncomfortable with apprehending you after we first met. You didn’t fit the profile at all. Then I saw you in action and then I saw your face – it just confirmed my feelings.”
“Why?” Peter demanded. “Why do they exist?”

“Hell if I know,” Tony replied angrily.

Peter breathed, closing his eyes for a second before opening them again. Just what the hell was going on here?

“And so you need to know my age because...”

“Because if such a crucial detail about you is completely wrong, then that means the rest of this is trash. You can’t be the dangerous vigilante mutant with serious history if you haven’t even been alive to do any of it.” Tony hissed.

Peter blinked.

The billionaire continued hotly, “Someone out there must have gone through great pains to make Spider-Man look really bad, kid. Enough so that you were put on our radar. Luckily for you they didn’t know your face either – otherwise this would be a very different situation.”

Peter swallowed. Different situation indeed.

“So please.” Tony turned to him, his anger draining to something akin to exhaustion. “How old are you? What’s your name? Where do you live? Have you been in the United States all your life? - because the more I have proving that are you not who they say you are, the faster I can scrub these records. I need facts. I can’t just waltz up and ask them to ‘pretty please fix these files’” Tony added then, darkly, “I also might want to find and wring the neck of the son-of-a-bitch that manipulated all of us.”

“I... uh...”


Peter’s mind buzzed.

Spider-Man was assumed to be a wanted and dangerous twenty-something mutant. He had been flagged; put on the Avenger’s radar.

Spider-Man had been caught, and now was plainly sitting before them not who they thought he was.

Now there was the problem of those database records, and why they existed at all.

Never once did Peter think he would want to tell someone his age, let alone the Avengers. He had mused to himself ages ago what they would think if they found out. Especially when he had started, when he was just in his mid-fourteens, and giggling to himself about ‘seeing the looks on their faces’ if they ever found out.

His age was something Peter always felt he had to hold to his chest, but things have changed.

Peter took in a slow and even breath, counting as he flexed his hands. He could do this. This was important.

He let out the air he was holding and announced, “Fifteen.”

His age was no longer something he could hold to his chest. This was no longer about him worried that the Avengers would stop him for being ‘too young’. This was much, much bigger. If this – whatever this was – was big enough that he got tangled into it, then he was going to do whatever he
could do to fix it.

He had to protect himself.

He had to protect his aunt.

Tony’s head snapped up. “What?”

“Fifteen,” Peter said firmly. “I’m fifteen. Look – I’ll tell you whatever you need to know if it means that you can fix this. Whatever this is.”

The two men in front of him were silent. Dead silent.

Steve Roger stared at him, while Tony Stark turned sheet-white.

Chapter End Notes

I absolutely refuse to apologize for the horrible mental-images that the title of this chapter has wrought because it is a terrible pun regarding to the plot and how it has thickened.
I refuse to apologize.
...
I’m sorry.

HUGE thanks to IndigoRose50 for just stopping everything to read this chapter when I was flipping out over it. I could never have done uploaded it without you ❤.

And to all the comments? THANK YOU SO MUCH ❤

I mean, seriously.

I am the kind of person to over-worry and over-stress about things I write. No matter how much I may like them myself, and to get this kind of AMAZING feedback just keeps me going, knowing that I am giving people a story they like to read AND that I love to write.

I appreciate each and every comment.

So please, keep commenting your thoughts and feelings.

❤
Chapter Summary

Captain America and Iron Man react and process that new bit of information...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The silence was unsettling Peter. Having the two men before him fall into complete and utter quiet after his announcement had not been the reaction he had been expecting. Sure, incredulity, or maybe some exclamations that he was, ‘too young to be Spider-Man,’ and even perhaps claims that he couldn’t do what he was doing anymore... But silence? Yeah. No. That wasn’t on the list. Steve Rogers was just... quiet, where as Tony Stark was turning a little grey past the sheet-white. “Um...?” he offered, looking between the two Avengers before him, absolutely puzzled. Suddenly, Tony stood up from where he was seated and just left the room. He didn’t say anything, look at anyone, he just stood up and left the room. The door slammed behind the billionaire with such force that it bounced back on its hinges not quite sealing back shut, letting a few inches of light from the hallway spill into the room. The action having caused Peter to jump, he slowly looked to Steve Rogers for some kind of explanation. A loud angry, “Fuck!” made Peter jump again, “Fifteen. Fucking fifteen? We’ve been dealing with... a fucking fifteen-year-old!?” Captain America was out of his seat and closing the door before more of Tony’s words spilled into the room. It wasn’t like Peter couldn’t still hear him, though. He didn’t even need his super-hearing to do so. “What the hell have we done?” Peter swallowed, feeling a little grey himself. “Um...” Steve sat down again in the chair, a tired sigh escaping him as he did so. He looked up at Peter. “I -” Peter shifted uncomfortably on the bed, “Er -”
“Fuck!” Tony sounded a little further away this time – he was stalking down the hallway as he ranted to himself angrily.

“It’s alright, son,” Steve assured slowly. “He isn’t mad -”

There was a loud bang outside as another door was slammed. Peter just looked at Steve with raised eyebrows.

“- at you,” was the following clarification.

“Is my age that much of a problem?” Peter asked with a high voice.

“It is,” Steve replied – Peter felt his stomach drop, “Not in the way that you are probably thinking – but it is a problem.”

Peter didn’t know what to say. He instead shifted on the bed uncomfortably, pulling himself so he was sitting cross-legged – ignoring the sting and pull of sore and bruised skin and muscle – and just... sat.

What could he say?

He couldn’t apologize for being fifteen — he just was fifteen. That wasn’t about to change any time soon, and it didn’t exactly change this past day either.

He licked his lips uncertainly looking over to Captain America who had fallen into silence.

“So,” Peter found himself saying after the silence was a bit too much to bear. “What do you think of me being fifteen?”

“What I think about it isn’t important.”

“Sorta feels like it.”

“It isn’t. This changes very little in the end. It’s a surprise, I can admit,” the American hero’s voice was almost sad.

“I’m just very mature for my age,” Peter quipped, trying desperately to lighten the mood.

Instead of a snort, he got a serious look instead. “You are.”

“U-un. Right.”

Silence fell between them again, and Peter’s mind toiled over both the reactions and the information revealed.

“What’s next?” he asked, pushing the conversation along rather than just waiting for the other to speak.

Steve let loose a breath, before looking back up to reply, “We are going to try and fix this.”

Peter nodded, swinging his legs over the edge of the bed. “Well that’s good - ’cause I sort of don’t want to be here forever.”

“Whoa, son,” a hand met his shoulder to stop him from standing. “You took quite a beating before, you shouldn’t be -”
Peter brushed off the hand and let himself stand. “I’m good - I’m good -”

He was. Standing didn’t hurt, much to Captain America’s surprise, who watched Peter stand up with both eyebrows raised.

“See?”

Peter stretched his arms over his head, pulling on the healing muscles into a satisfying stretch before folding himself down so his palms touched the floor. There were a series of satisfying cracks before Peter stood up, rolling his shoulders.

“Better,” he announced.

Steve Rogers had a bemused expression. “You’re something else,” he simply stated.

“I try,” Peter shrugged. “Sorry, I just — sitting there in silence was getting pretty awkward.”

“I apologize.”

He sat back down on the bed again, crossing his legs, tucking them under himself, and sitting close to the edge.

Again came the silence silence, and oh how Peter hated it.

It was too much.

There was so much that he had to process, even before all of the information had been dumped down on him by Tony Stark; and even with that new added information, the reaction that revealing his age was nearly the last straw.

His mind was practically numb now, just a buzz as it failed to come to grips with anything.

“Do you have questions for us?” the silence was broken by Steve this time. “You deserve answers.”

“If I could think straight – yeah,” Peter joked. “I, um - Sorry,” he rubbed a hand through his hair. “This is all a... a lot. I can’t -” he grumbled rubbing his face. “It’s hard to even think of where to start.”

“I see that.”

Peter let a long breath out through his nose, watching Steve Rogers carefully.

“So like – is my age that much of a surprise?”

“In a way.”

“Surely when you saw my face you knew I wasn’t a twenty-something, right?”

“Well, yes. However, fifteen...” Steve gestured.

“Why is that so shocking?”

“Because a fifteen-year-old should never have been put in the position as you have been,” was the serious reply, “You’re just too young.”

Peter felt that comment like a jab, and he opened his mouth to protest, but Steve continued with a
hand up in apology. “No matter what deeds you have done, or what you are capable of, it does not change the fact that you are practically a child – especially in the eyes of people as old as we are.”

Peter frowned. “So now you think I’m a ‘child’ you feel sorry for what you’ve done?”

Later Peter would feel sorry for the biting comment. It was a bit unfair of him.

But he was just so tired of all of this.

Captain America flinched. “I regret what we have done, fifteen or ‘twenty’. We have wronged you. No matter your age.”

Peter’s eyes flickered to look up at him, and the man looked so remorseful that Peter felt his stomach twist in guilt.

“Um – hey – like-” he squirmed, “I shouldn’t have -”

Blue eyes met his own. He was cut off by a question of, “Are you hungry?”

Blinking, Peter closed his mouth. Not exactly what he was expecting to come out of Captain America’s mouth next, especially given the conversation.

“Er...?”

“You haven’t eaten since you have been here, and it is nearing mid-afternoon. Are you hungry?”

“Well.

And that was how Peter found himself sitting on a stool, feet perched against the metal rungs of the seat, absolutely scarfing down a plate of spaghetti like his life depended on it.

He had been famished and he hadn’t even realized until the moment that the food had been put down in front of him. After he got over the shock that Captain freaking America was making him food – the lovely aroma of the food before him made his stomach flip with glee.

“Oh my god I love you,” Peter crooned, chewing blissfully. “So, so much.”

“Excuse me?” Steve laughed, pausing twirling his own pasta onto his fork.

“Shh,” Peter put up his hand, swallowing with his eyes closed. “Talking to the spaghetti.”

He had never tasted anything so beautiful in his life. Sure, it was likely due to the stress and the sheer hunger – he realized a while ago he seemed to need to eat more food – but it didn’t change the fact that it tasted so good.

“Would you like more?”

“Yes please,” Peter sighed, finishing off the last bite of the portion he had, and resisting every urge in his body to lick the plate.

Captain America got up, picked up the bowl and took it to the counter, giving Peter another sizable portion.

“Thank you,” he breathed. “This is amazing.”
“It’s reheated leftovers,” Steve insisted, “But if you like it, that’s good.” He settled the empty bowl onto the table.

“So good,” Peter hummed, and he stuffed more into his face.

Eating had been a good distraction.

It took him away from what was happening to him and just gave his mind something else to focus on. Not to mention that he was hungry, but also his mind was just so exhausted.

Peter didn’t have the energy to think about what was going on let alone ask any questions about it.

It also helped that he had been pulled into a conversation about one of his previous night-time adventures as Spider-Man.

“Uh - where was I again? Before I met this beautiful stranger?” Peter asked, gesturing to his plate.

A chuckle. “You were on the ceiling,” Steve prompted.

“Right! Right. So like, okay. I was on the ceiling, no big deal,” Peter continued his story, gesturing, “Like, perfectly reasonable right? To be on the ceiling. I mean, I had to be quiet, and the guys had no idea that I was above them.”

Steve sat down across from Peter, nodding so he’d continue.

“So,” He waved his hand as he explained, his other hand scooping up another large mouthful of spaghetti, “I’ve done a lot of reading about spiders, you know, ever since I sort of got those powers. So, like, I read about these spiders that weave webs and like, just drop down on their prey with it.” He added, “Net-Casting Spiders. So cool.”

“... Is that what you did?” Steve prompted.

“Heck yeah, that’s what I did! They didn’t even see it coming.” Peter took another mouthful of pasta and swallowed before continuing, “I was upside down, and I was basically quietly weaving away this sticky net, and they were below me, congratulating themselves on being so sneaky when I was hanging above them the whole time.”

“People don’t expect Spider-Man to be literally hanging over their heads.”

“Well yeah. True.” Peter acquiesced, “So anyway, I wait for them to get real quiet, and I just... drop the net on them.”

“What did they do?”

Peter barked a laugh at the memory, “Flipped their shit – er, I mean — they flipped. They were freaking out.” Peter explained.

Steve chuckled again. “And then?”

“I made quick work of ‘em. Stringing them up neatly into their own personal webs and hangin’ them from the ceiling.” Peter explained easily, taking another large bite of the pasta. “All in a neat little row,” Peter gestured, like he was pointing to them.

“The ceiling?” Steve asked.

Peter swallowed, “Yeah! They had guns and stuff on the table -” Peter noticed how Steve’s
expression changed ever-so-slightly at that comment, so he hurriedly continued, “- so like, I figured that I should keep their reach away from them.”

“And nobody was hurt?”

“ Heck no! I sort of take pride in not actively hurting anyone. The webs are even non-toxic,” Peter explained, chewing on a meatball, “So they might of had a bit of a head-rush as they waited for the police, but nothing any worse than that.”

Steve’s own plate was finished, his hands folded on the table. “I hadn’t meant them with that question; but, that is also good to hear,” the American hero praised. “It is a good self-imposed rule to follow.”

“I thought so,” Peter jammed more spaghetti into his mouth. “Sort of doesn’t do nothing for my image -” Peter explained between bites, “- if I hurt people. Ya’know? Makes me no better than them, really.”

Steve hummed in reply, eyebrows furrowing.

Not much was said after that, just a few surface-level questions from Captain America that were more for the purpose of keeping up idle chatter rather than really delving too deep into anything.

Peter was grateful for that, he needed the mental break. He needed to feel, even for just a few moments, like his life hadn’t gone completely into the gutter.

But as all things did, the meal ended.

“Much better,” Peter sighed happily when the plate was taken away from him, as he absently wiped his mouth with a napkin. “Thank you so, so much.”

“We should have fed you earlier, but – you’re welcome. I’ll pass the compliments to the chef.”

Peter folded his hands onto the tabletop and fiddled with his fingers as the other did the cleaning up.

Now that the food was gone, his hunger satiated, his mind was better able to unpack what had happened.

“So... where do we go from here?”

Steve closed the refrigerator, and slid a bottle of capped soda across the counter into Peter’s hand. “We talk. Figure this out.”

Peter nodded, and he uncapped the cool drink absently. “No chance of me going home now, is there?”

Steve sat down beside him this time, instead of across from him. He had his own glass bottle of soda in his hands, but he hadn’t uncapped it.

“You aren’t trapped here. You will go home, I promise you that.”

Peter was uncertain. “Really?”

“Yes. But just not yet.” Steve then asked, “Do you have someone we can contact?”

Well. Yes.

But -
“I... I don’t want them to know about this,” Peter frowned, “‘cause they sorta... don’t know about me.”

“They don’t know?” Steve asked, surprised.

Peter hunched a little more where he sat, and sipped the bottle giving him something to do before he answered. “Er. No. They don’t.”

“Why not?”

“Because I’m a freaking fifteen-year-old kid swinging around being Spider-Man – of course I haven’t,” Peter said, no heat in his voice. “If they found out, I’d be grounded for life and would never be able to fight crime again.”

There was no reply to do that, and Peter had to turn his head to look up at the man looking down at him with the most interesting expression.

It was almost fond, perhaps a little sad too.

“What?”

“Nothing,” Steve shook his head. “You just remind me of someone I know.”

“Oh. Who?”

“Me.”

Peter’s eyebrows shot up.

Steve snuffed air out of his nose and smirked slightly before uncapping his own drink and taking a quick swig.

“I can’t speak for the others,” Rogers began, “but after some thinking on it, I - I won’t stop you from being who you are. Whenever we get to the end of whatever this is -” Captain America explained. “- I won’t be in the way of you being Spider-Man.”

Whoa. What?

“Really?” Peter asked incredulously.

“Really.”

“Even though I am just fifteen?”

“Even though you are fifteen,” Steve repeated, the ‘just’ being left out feeling intentional.

Peter didn’t question why Steve was saying this, but he felt immense gratitude swell in his chest.

“So what do I do now? How do I get home? When?”

“We need more information. We need to make sure that we have enough before we can let you go.”

“Right. ‘Let me go,’” Peter repeated bitterly, turning the bottle on the counter-top. “Forgot I was captured.”

“I’m sorry.”
“Are you?” Peter genuinely felt no malice toward Captain America, but he couldn’t help but let the question slip.

“I am.”

Peter nodded - he knew that much; it was just nice to hear.

He replied, “You said before that you felt that this whole situation wasn’t quite right, even from the beginning. Why did -” Peter tried to carefully word it so he wasn’t directly accusing the man, but he still wanted to know. “- why did you let it happen then?”

“Because,” the Captain sighed, “It felt like it was the right thing to do.”

“Right.” Peter frowned.

“We’ve made a lot of mistakes - I am not going to just let myself forget that. No matter the reasons we had for it, it doesn’t excuse what we did, or why we did it. We hurt you.”

“I’m still here,” Peter said, and his voice was more bitter and sharp than he intended.

“You are.”

Peter didn’t take another drink, and he just watched beads of condensation slowly drip down the tinted brown of the glass, pooling down on the white marble of the counter.

“I’m scared, you know.” Peter said after a long moment. “Scared of what you guys are going to do, of what’s going to happen to me,” he admitted. “S’why I didn’t want to get involved with you guys the first place. I didn’t want anyone to know who Spider-Man was. Now that everyone seems to think he’s a monster....” Peter sighed, “... I have to give up a lot of stuff.”

“Like your identity,” Steve supplied.

“Yeah. Like my identity.” Peter rest his head in his hand, pushing the bottle around with other one. “I don’t have a choice in it either.”

“Don’t you?”

Peter looked at Steve, asking a question instead of answering his, “Are you going to let me leave with knowing just my age?”

Steve’s mouth drew to a thin line.

“Yeah. You see? I have to,” Peter muttered.

There were no words in response, just one of Steve’s comforting hands resting on his shoulder.

At least the other understood.

Peter took another sip of the soda - not really able to taste or enjoy it anymore.

“We will sort this soon.”
‘Soon’ came almost *too* soon.

Peter was hesitant to speak to Tony Stark - especially after the outburst - but here he was.

In the room.

With Tony Stark.

Alone.

He still had the bottle in his hands, even, though now it was empty.

So there he sat, in a chair, facing Tony, in the middle of a massive robotics lab that would make him slack-jawed had this been any other scenario but this one.

It would be silent, but the sounds of soldering of two automated bots punctuated their lack of conversation every few seconds or so.

They were putting the arms back onto the Iron Suit. Which didn’t help his rising anxiety.

Peter turned the bottle in his hands – it was completely empty – as Tony just *looked* at him.

This was awkward.

So awkward.

He’d rather be back in the room than right where he was now.

Hell, he’d rather be back with the Hulk.

Okay, that was a stretch.

But he was worried, and nervous and anxious, and his stomach felt like he had a ball of ice floating right up in the centre of it.

No matter all the assurances that both Steve Rogers gave him, telling him that Tony was not angry with him and that he wasn’t going to *do* anything to him – Peter was still nervous.

Even with the fact that Steve promised he’d be waiting just outside the door.

Peter knew he was being somewhat foolish, but just couldn’t predict what the man was going to do, and if he was being honest -

- he was always a bit scared of Iron Man.

Given the two encounters he had with the man already, it only cemented the fact that Iron Man was just someone you didn’t fuck with.

Ugh, the silence was killing him.

Tony Stark was seated on a chair of his own, sitting beside a white desk that had strewn papers, his phone, a computer and what Peter immediately recognized as his Spider-Man suit. It was the whole thing too, the mask and the gloves, and even the twisted shrapnel of what was left of his web-shooters.

“So,” it was Tony that broke the silence. “Lollipop?”
“What.”

Tony rolled his chair backward, reaching past his laptop to a pen holder and produced a sucker. “Want one?”

Was this supposed to be some sort of jab?

“No...?” Peter was unsure if he should be offended.

“Fine. Your loss.” Tony unwrapped it and stuck it in his own mouth.

“Um.”

“You’re probably wondering why you are here.”

“Yeah I am – a bit.”

“Thinking we could clear the air a bit here. Make things a bit easier,” Tony said, rolling the sucker in his mouth by an obvious means of self-distraction. “You know. Stop the hostilities.”

Peter’s brow arched. “I never was the hostile one.”

“... Right. Whatever. Look. We got to work together on this.”

“Okay?”

“We need to fix this.”

“Yeah we do.”

“And I need your cooperation,” Tony finished, pointing the sucker at Peter. “As much as you’re willing to give.”

Peter let his arms cross. “O-kay...”

Tony sighed standing up, spinning the sucker between two fingers before jamming it into his cheek so he could pick up a piece of the web-shooters; one of the cartridges.


Really? This is what they were talking about?

“I made it,” Peter explained, confused by Tony’s approach.

Tony looked impressed, turning the cartridge in his hand. “How many prototypes?”

“A few? Where are you going with -?”

“Breaking the ice, kid. Figured it’d be nicer this way than me just out-and-out demanding info from you.”

Peter begrudgingly admitted that this was better than that.

“So like, the spandex,” Tony continued, lifting up the mask. “Reason for that?”

“I can grip better with it,” Peter explained. “Leather just doesn’t work that well. Still haven’t found a
good way to keep the feet from getting worn through.”

“You have sticky-feet too?”

“Yeah.”

“Interesting,” Tony put the mask down. “So like, to quote a singer, you born this way or -?”

“Something happened.”

“Right. Something happened. Recently?”

“Yeah. Just before I turned fourteen.”

Tony paused and Peter could see the vaguely-horrified expression on the man’s face before it was covered up with a casual tone. “Oh. Huh. So less than two years.”

“... Yeah.”

Peter was equal parts frustrated and confused.

Frustrated because he almost wanted Tony Stark to get it over with and just ask him already, and confused because the man seemed genuinely interested.

“So like, what sort of laundry list of abilities do you got,” Tony asked, surprising him by not asking how Peter got his abilities. He really was keeping it light. “I know you have super-hearing, super-strength and you stick to stuff-”

Peter debated telling him, but felt it really couldn’t hurt. “Better senses. More flexible? I guess. I have better sight than I used to – needed glasses before – I don’t know if I have super-vision, but I am pretty sure I’m beyond twenty-twenty.”

Tony hummed at that.

“Anything else?”

“Super-hungry?” Peter said with a shrug. “Huh, I heal faster, I have great reflexes, better timing, I’m more acrobatic -”

“That,” Tony stated, “I’ve witnessed. If I didn’t know all the other stuff you could do, I’d have called you Frog-Man.”

Peter actually snorted. “Yeah. I don’t look good in green. Anyway, I’m not sure what else I have or can do. I haven’t tried to extend my abilities further than what I understand. Don’t want to draw much attention to myself. Also don’t want to mess something up and fall into a dumpster again or something.”

“Again?”

“It happens,” Peter shrugged.

Peter supposed there were worse ways for this conversation to start. He just didn’t think it would be so amiable.

The man was clearly containing himself, it had nothing to do with Peter’s powers, but he noticed Tony’s tense stance, his nervous pacing, and how he fiddled with things in his hands.
“How about we make a trade,” Tony said, sitting down in his own chair and scooting it forward with his feet so they were closer together.

“Oh?” Peter’s instinctively scooted his chair an inch or two back.

“Well. I guess, not a trade. Makes it sound like I’m holding it hostage - but - whatever,” Tony waved it off. “I’ll fix your web-thingies for you, and you can - if you like - tell me more about yourself.”

“Don’t you need me to do that anyway?”

“Well. Yeah. I do.”

“So why-?”

“Cause I feel like it, kiddo. Take it or leave it.”

“Um, sure. Thanks? I guess?”

“Awesome,” Tony pushed himself away from Peter and spun the chair so he could pick up one of the crumpled shooters. Peter winced looking how one of the levers dangled.

“Whenver you’re ready, kid,” Tony said, picking up a small screwdriver.

“Huh? Now?”

“Of course now. You want to sort this out, right?”

“... Right.”

“So — go on.”

“Oh. Um. Er -” Peter shifted in his seat. He wished he hadn’t finished the soda because he needed the distraction. “Um. My birthday is in August?” he started easy, “I was born in Queens.”

“New Yorker through and through?”

“Yeah. Pretty much.”

“I can respect that,” Tony said. “All your life?”

“All my life,” Peter confirmed.

Tony had parts of the web-shooter scattered on the bench, prying a crumpled sticky cartridge from as he spoke. “You got a name? Or is Spider-Man was how your parents dubbed thee?”

Peter swallowed. “Why aren’t you writing any of this down?”

Tony tapped his temple. “I might not have super-powers, but I have a great memory. Lay it on me.”

“Um.”

Tony sighed, putting down the things in his hands onto the countertop and he scooted his chair back towards Peter. This time their knees were almost touching.

“I don’t say this often – but we fucked up kid. We need to fix it. So please. Your name.”

“Um. Peter.”
Tony looked almost surprised that Peter had said it so easily – Peter was a bit surprised himself. “Parker. Peter Parker.”

“Peter Parker...” Tony said, as if testing the name. “Suits you, kid.” He rolled back to the desk and started to fiddle more with the pieces of the web-shooter, admiring the spring-release for the dislodging of empty cartridges.

“Thanks?”

“So. Parents names?”

“Don’t have any. I have an Aunt-”

Peter stopped talking because Tony let loose a groan – he almost looked like he wanted to bang his forehead on the desk.

“Of course he’s an orphan,” he hissed to himself under his breath. “Of course.”

“I have an aunt,” Peter let his voice rise. “May.”

Tony a long breath in and a long breath out, centring himself. He finally replied, “May Parker?”

“Yeah.”

“That’s it? Nobody else?”

“That’s everybody. All two of us.”

Tony’s jaw was set, his tone still oh-so carefully casual, “Right. So – we’re going to get you back to her, okay? I promise. I have a lot of behind-the-scenes fuckery to deal with, but it’ll happen.”

“How soon?”

“Soon,” Tony assured.

Ksshhhhhh -

Tony blinked, “...Oops.”

A long string of webbing shot out of the dented canister that he had absently started to fiddle with. He had started to tap it on the table when it had discharged.

The webbing trailed like a ribbon in the air, going a good ten-feet or so before fluttering to the ground.

“Huh.” Tony remarked, “Good distance.”

“It can go further,” Peter said, standing up from the chair to pick up one of the mangled shooters. It was where he had attached all his extra canisters, and there were one or two that hadn’t been completely crushed.

Peter turned it over in his hands, and then pointed it at the window that was a good thirty-feet away from them both.

Thwip!
A long thick string shot out from it, straight over Tony's shoulder, and stuck to the window.

Tony stood, pulled the strand with a finger.

“Good tensile strength...” he casually admired, “It’s sticky but... not as sticky as I thought.”

“I already can stick to things,” Peter explained. “I don’t particularly need this to be too sticky when my hands can grab on just fine.”

Tony walked the length of the line and he plucked it as he went, like testing a string of an instrument. He stopped at the window, using the back of the pen that had been tucked behind his ear to pry at where it was stuck to the glass.

“Intriguing. You designed this yourself, kid?”

Peter’s cheeks heated. “Yeah.”

“What kind of grades do you got?” Tony asked, “I assume you’re in school.”

“Um Straight A’s - I’m actually finished school pretty much. I skipped a few grades. Midtown Tech. I’m even done half a semester early.”

“Explains why you’ve been seen out and about more recently. Not doing homework,” Tony remarked.

“Uh. Yeah. I guess.”

“Midtown is no slouch school either,” Tony continued to comment, tugging on the web with one arm to test it.

Peter twisted the canister and the web cut from it, so Tony could play with the slack line. “Yeah I know - May put a lot of money forward to get me in there, so I did my best.”

Graduating early also cut down on the yearly fees.

“Hmn.” Tony gave the line another good tug, letting it support his weight.

“It dissolves in a few hours, by the way. Bio-degradable. I use a different kind for when it’s raining - but I haven’t really nailed down that recipe yet -”

“Hence the dumpster-diving?” Tony chanced a guess.

Peter actually laughed. “Yeah. Hence the ‘dumpster diving.’”

“That can be worked out,” Tony mused.

Peter idly adjusted a setting on the canister and he let another web spill out. This time it radiated out like a spray, creating cob-web like webbing that stuck erratically to the window, wall and floor beside Tony.

“I’ll be getting in contact with your Aunt,” the man said as he turned to his new object of interest, hooking his fingers through the fine webbing, gently tugging on it.

It stuck to his fingers, pulling away into wispy strands.

“Um. She doesn’t know - er- about me being Spider-Man.”
“I guessed that much.”

“Did you?”

“Doubt an Aunt in her right mind would let her fifteen-year-old nephew out and about stopping crime.”

Peter frowned. “No. I guess not.”![](image1)

“Don’t worry. Going to figure out what to say to her and why you are here. I’ll do my best to keep you out of trouble.”

“If it helps, er, I told her that I am friends with Spider-Man. She - uh - almost caught me once. That’s just the lie that came out, and she’s bought it ever since,” Peter offered. “If that helps.”

Tony looked up from his hand where he was experimentally sticking his fingers together. “It does.”

Peter felt relief, putting the canister back down on the workbench.

“For now, Steve can take you back to your room. Do you need anything?”

“Other clothes?” Peter asked, plucking at the nightshirt.

“Sure. I’ll get that sent up.”

“Thanks...”

His spider-sense tingled, instinctively his hands moving in front of his face to catch what had been flung toward it.

Peter lowered his hands, fingers gripping the smooth rectangle object.

“Starkphone. For something to do. Don’t try to call out on it or anything. Or like, message somebody – I’ll know if you do – but it can keep you entertained while I fix this.”

“Uh... thanks?”

Tony just nodded, his own phone pressed to his ear.

Peter looked at the phone in his hand, and snorted when he saw the background.

It was a spider.

Chapter End Notes

And so ACT 2 begins.

It’s hardly going to be an easy ride either - I think Peter will prefer his web-slinging through town away from the Avengers than what could possibly happen next...

And OH HO if the Avengers think Peter has instantly forgiven them. Ohhh noo......

AND AGAIN
HOLY COW.
THANK YOU.

Like? The response has been awesome?? SO FLIPPING AWESOME.

I read and reread every comment, and man did it keep me bolstered. Like, I know it sounds redundant, but really - it really keeps me going.

I still love this fic. I still love you guys.

And I promise to reply to each and every one of you.

STAY AWESOME
Chapter Summary

Aunt May comes for Peter.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

‘Awkward’ couldn’t even begin to describe the air of the current situation – but it was the best that Peter got.

Tony Stark, Clint Barton, and Peter Parker were all standing in an elevator, and not a word was being spoken between the three of them.

Peter idly gripped the backpack slung over his shoulder – it hid away his repaired webshooters and the rest of his costume – and plucked idly at the clothes that had been provided for him to wear.

Aunt May was coming to the tower.

She would be there in the next few minutes, and Peter was being brought down so she could see personally that he was okay; then she and him could go home, together.

He was vibrating with both anxiety over finally seeing her, and just how awkward he felt.

Peter had a lot of time to spend alone after he had been shooed away by Iron Man, and a lot of time to sort of realize that he was still feeling really bitter about all of this.

Peter wasn’t sure if it was him being petulant; but even though he had a decent enough conversation and meal with Steve Rogers - and awesome food - and even though he had a shockingly pleasant - albeit awkward - talk with Tony Stark...

... Peter couldn’t bring himself to completely forgive them.

He just couldn’t.

He tried.

Oh, how he had tried.

Peter had sat on the edge of that bed and willed himself to forgive them because of how hard they were trying to fix all of this.

Was it wrong that he couldn’t?

Was it wrong that even though those pleasant moments happened he still felt a bite of anger when he thought of Tony Stark, or a touch of hurt when his mind turned to the all-American hero?

Not to mention the Black Widow or Bruce Banner – he hadn’t seen either of them since the aftermath of the incident with the Hulk.
He didn’t know if that made him more or less upset.

He wanted to say something – but he found he wasn’t able to.

Was it because it was recent?

Were the wounds too raw?

At least Peter had some relief in discovering that he held none of this anger toward Hawkeye. He felt nothing but immense gratitude toward him.

Peter had no trouble forgiving him.

Not that it was that hard to do that anyway; he hadn’t slammed him to the ground, tried to crush his arms, refused to listen to anything he said, or drugged him. Clint had shown nothing but kindness from the get-go.

So Clint Barton was absolutely forgiven.

Despite this, Peter still felt like he was doing something wrong in him being unable to forgive the others.

He wished he could say something.

Instead, he stood in that elevator awkwardly next to both Clint and Tony, knowing without a doubt that both sensed his mood because of their own stiff postures.

Or was he projecting?

Did Tony know? Was the man just going to be angry at him because of this? Was he being some petulant teenager?

Peter worried his lip as these thoughts tumbled around.

The elevator door slipped open and all those thoughts evaporated with two simple uttered syllables, “Peter!”

Peter moved without thought. One moment, he was standing beside the others, and in the next, he was in the arms of his Aunt, hugging her tightly.

She grappled him like she just could not believe he was standing there before her – and a little part of himself couldn’t believe it either.

“Oh my god — you’re okay,” she breathed, voice shaking, “You’re okay!”

One of her hands was threaded through his hair, holding him like she was trying to contain smoke.

“Aunt May.” Peter gripping her equally as tight back.

“Don’t you ever do that to me again -” she pulled away only so she could hold his face in her hands, and one of her thumbs stroked away a tear. “Oh Peter.”

He was tugged into another hug, and Peter let her, burying his face into the crook of her neck and breathing in her scent.

She was home.
She was safety.

She was love.

“Oh thank god. Thank god...”

“I’m okay, I’m okay.”

“I was so scared -” she said, her voice fluttering, tucking his head under hers and just holding him close. “- So *so scared*. It could’ve been- I was so scared that- I was so afraid it was going to-” She kissed his hair. “That I’d get a phone call again just like I had with-”

Peter tightened his hold on her. “It’s not. *I’m not,*” he tightly assured. “I’m here.”

“I know. *I know.*”

They couldn’t get enough of each other. So they just stood there, arms wrapped around one another, for a good long time. Peter didn’t care less that they were being watched. Hell, the entire Avengers crew and their auxiliary team could be present and he could not have cared less. He could revel in this forever.

Eventually though, regretfully, they parted.

Peter absently rubbed at his face as his Aunt looked over his shoulder to the two men who patiently stood there.

Clint looked completely relaxed, Tony Stark looked like he was trying to keep an air of professionalism while failing miserably to hide his discomfort.

“You will be giving me an explanation for all of this,” Aunt May said, and to Peter’s surprise, it was levelled directly at Tony Stark himself.

“You will have it,” was the serious reply.

“*Good,*” she said, her arm wrapped around Peter’s waist, tugging him close to her. “Because it taking nearly twenty-four *hours* to get him back to me when you’ve had him since *last night* is absolutely unacceptable.”

Tony Stark just nodded, his mouth a thin line.

May eventually turned away from the man, her ire melting away.

“Let’s go home,” May warmly suggested, squeezing Peter’s side and looking at him with all the love in the world. “I’m so glad you’re okay.”

“Me too,” Peter murmured back. They began to walk to the waiting car - Clint was already there, leaning in the front passengers speaking idly to the driver - when Peter stopped.

“Peter?” his Aunt questioned.

He licked his lips. “One second,” he assured, “I need to take care of something.”

She searched his expression before replying, “Okay. I’ll be right here.”

He regretfully broke away from her and turned to walk back to Tony Stark.
The man cleared his throat, failing to hide his surprise that Peter approached him. He began to speak, assuming whatever it was Peter was about to do. “I promise you that -”

Peter cut him off with a quick wave of his hand. “It’s something else,” he explained quickly.

He took a breath – steeling himself – before digging into his pocket and pulling out the Starkphone that Tony had handed him hours before.

“Here,” he held it out to the man.

Tony looked at it grimly before saying, “Keep it, kid.” He didn’t even move to pick take it, both hands firmly in his trouser pockets.

Peter shook his head and pushed the device toward the man. “I can’t accept this,” he both did and didn’t want the man to understand the meaning of this gesture. “I can’t accept this right now.”

“But-”

“Take it,” Peter pressed. “I- I can’t accept this from you.”

Tony’s hand hovered over the device, not taking it. “You sure? It’s not bugged.”

Peter just gave a sad sort of shrug. “It doesn’t matter if it isn’t. I can’t take it.”

It was a flicker, just a flicker, but Peter saw the dawning realization in what Peter was saying before it was masked over with cool indifference.

Eventually, Tony took the phone that was being returned to him, slipping it into his blazer.

They looked at each other for a brief moment – Peter feeling like some weight had been lifted off of his shoulders, as well as a kind of guilt.

“I’m sorry, kid,” Tony said, not really looking at him anymore.

“I know.” Peter wasn’t looking at him either.

With that done, Peter hefted his backpack over his shoulder, returning to his Aunt.

Her arm wrapped back around him and even as he got into the car, she would not let go.

It wasn’t long before they were moving, and without looking, Peter knew that Tony Stark had stayed outside of the tower until they were far, far out of sight.

He didn’t know how to feel about that.

Instead of dwelling on it, he leaned over so he could rest his head onto his Aunt’s shoulder.

The ride was long – and quiet. It was explained for security reasons the car was taking long and bizarre routes back to their apartment.

Clint explained it was pretty much basic routine to his Aunt, but Peter knew that it was so a limited number of people had an idea where he actually lived in case it could be linked to Spider-Man.

Just because he was able to return home didn’t mean this mess was gone.

Far from it.
As they rode silently, Peter knew that his Aunt was watching him with a million questions dancing just behind the surface.

Things like: Where were you? What happened? Are you hurt? Why didn’t you call me? Why didn’t you tell me? Why couldn’t you tell me? What happened?

What happened.

Peter didn’t know what to say to any of those silent streaming questions.

He just kept his head against her shoulder and muttered a simple, “I’m sorry.”

She kissed his hair. “I know. I know that this is bigger than you can really say. I’m just so glad you’re okay.”

“I’m so sorry...”

“I know. I know.”

“I just - It’s hard to explain. I-”

“Peter. I forgive you. Whatever happened, I forgive you.”

What did he do to deserve such a wonderful person as her in his life.

His last bastion of strength.

The rest of the ride home was silent -

- and he was okay with that.

Time was a funny thing.

Peter mused over this fact to himself as he scaled a brick wall on naught but his fingertips.

Time was a very funny thing.

Those twenty-four hours had felt like eons. Like a never-ending sort of personal hell where Peter was not sure that he was ever going to go home again or see his Aunt.

Trapped in those hours, Peter had felt nothing would ever go back to normal, and his days as Spider-Man or even just being Peter Parker were over.

It had been two weeks since then.

Two weeks.

Fourteen entire days since he had been escorted with his Aunt, back to their apartment. He couldn’t believe that it had already been that long since everything had happened.

Peter would find himself just lying awake in his bed, completely baffled by the fact that he was even laying there at all. Having almost felt like the whole incident never happened.
He still had his Spider-Man outfit, he still had his web-shooters, he had his Aunt, his home, and his life again.

It was like those twenty-four hours were a dream - almost everything was back to the status-quo.

Not that everything had gone back to normal. There were changes.

For one, Peter had waited those entire two weeks before he brought out Spider-Man again.

Despite how much that Peter itched to go out almost immediately upon his freedom - he held out because his Aunt, for some time after getting him home, would look at him with such a look of pain that he shoved all his want to be Spider-Man to the back of his mind.

He could wait.

Though Peter eventually broke after two weeks, but not before Aunt May had finally calmed from the incident, stopped hovering over him like he’d disappear any moment, and started to take on her late-night shifts again.

Interestingly, Aunt May never asked him too many questions or specifics about what had happened.

Peter had assumed that once he and May had calmed, that the bombardment of questions would come spilling forth and Peter would have to dodge specifics like he was back for round two with the Hulk.

Aunt May only asked a few questions.

Like, “I was told this had to do with your friend Spider-Man, is this true?” Yes - that was true in a way.

And, “You weren’t hurt by him, were you?” No. And yes? Spider-Man was the issue, but Spider-Man didn’t hurt him.

Lastly, and the most often of all, she would take up his hand and look at him with those sorrowful eyes, “You know that no matter what has happened, I will always love you, right?” Of course he knew that. How could he not?

Peter knew that she loved him unconditionally straight to the depths of his heart; but it wasn’t hatred he feared from her – it was disappointment.

Her reassurances only made him worry about what she knew, leading him to eavesdrop on the rare phone calls that she had with Tony Stark.

His hearing was exceptional, and it was easy to hear her heated conversation with the man, demanding explanations for the, ‘awful treatment of her nephew,’ and explanations for, ‘why it took so long to tell her,’.

Peter overheard a lot of her worries then.

It made his guilt fester a bit more.

She had been scared.

So, so scared.

She had been eaten by guilt too, it seemed. Peter overheard her angrily telling Tony how she had at
first thought her nephew was just in bed and never thought to check him when she came home late that night.

How she had gone to his room that morning to find the bed still made like he had never slept in it - because he never had - the window still unlocked.

She had vented this all at Tony - Peter listening in - and detailed how she had felt like a failure of a guardian because she hadn’t realized till late morning that he was missing, and had spent the better part of the afternoon panicking.

“Do you have any idea what it’s like,” She demanded, “To make call after call and know in your heart that not a single person would be able to help you? What it feels like to be too scared to call the police because you fear that they will just find a body? Or worse - nothing at all? Do you?”

Peter couldn’t hear Tony’s replies in those moments, but his Aunt would fall silent and just say to the receiver of the phone, “That’s not good enough. That’s just not good enough.”

She was incensed.

In the end, she had called the police, and she had done so right around the time that Peter had woken up after his brawl with the Hulk.

Funny, all the Avengers had to do was turn to local television to find out who this mysterious person they had was – and yet – and yet -

No wonder his Aunt was so angry.

“It took you too long to get him back to me,” was one of the final things Peter overheard his Aunt say before Peter just couldn’t listen any longer without feeling twisting guilt. “You should have done better.”

Time was a terribly funny thing.

These two intervening weeks were both the shortest and the longest of his life.

Before he knew it, he was back in the saddle, overlooking a darkening city.

A dumb move, he was sure, but his Aunt had a graveyard shift and she wasn’t going to be back home until five or six am, and Peter just couldn’t hold in the desire to go out any longer.

Two weeks had been long enough.

No matter the immense guilt he felt as he slipped the uniform on, he couldn’t stop himself.

Spider-Man let loose a whoop as he swung rapidly through the city, being more loose and reckless than he had been in a long time.

Spider-Man let himself plummet several stories before catching himself and swinging again, grazing a mere five-feet above traffic, causing a cascade of honks and shouts after him.

He just laughed.

Spider-Man landed on a rooftop, breathing, the adrenaline and thrill coursing through his body.

He felt the prickle of his Spider-Sense long before the loud call of, “Help!” from down below.
“Showtime,” He said to himself, and he took a running leap straight off of a building, shooting out a web and making a sharp turn into a dark alley.

He kicked his legs out, slamming them into the back of a large man who was trying to make a getaway with a gym-bag of goods.

The man went sprawling to the ground as Spider-Man landed.

Giving the criminal no time to move, webs caught his ankles and his arms, gluing him in place so that Peter could easily grab the bag of goods.

“Tsk tsk. Really?” Spider-Man said, tilting his head to get a better look at the man under the dim moonlight. “Pantyhose?”

The man struggled. “What the fuck man!”

“Language too? If you don’t mind, I’m just gonna be taking this,” he hefted the heavy bag, that clinked and clattered - it felt like it was full of silverware or possibly jewelry. “You know. Rightful owners. Yadda yadda yadda.”

“Let me go!”

“Sorry - no can do,” Spider-Man cheerfully said, putting down the bag for a moment so he could fish out a small piece of paper from a hidden pocket and he began to scribble onto it.

“Come on!”

“Sorry... been busy...” Spider-Man dictated what he wrote, “...back now... Here’s a present from me... Love... your friendly... neighbourhood... Spider-Man.” He signed the paper and dotted the ‘i’ with a spider. “There!”

He knelt down next to the man.

“Come on, jus’ let me go,” the guy pleaded, even with his face awkwardly pressed into the concrete. “I'll - I'll do whatever you want.”

Spider-Man balanced on his heels, crouching beside the man’s head. He tilted his head as if interested. “Like what?”

“U-uh! Er -”

“Kidding - I don’t take bribes,” Spider-Man easily said, sticking the note to the man’s forehead. He shot a spray of web over the man’s mouth so he wouldn’t talk anymore.

The man struggled.

Spider-Man pat his cheek gently. “Look. Stay calm and behave, and the police will treat you real nice-like. Promise,” He paused. “... I didn’t hurt you when I topped you over, did I?”

Bewildered, the man stared at him, then slowly shook his head.

“Good!” Spider-Man stood. “Hope I don’t meet you again. Buh-bye,” he grabbed the bag, stuck out his hand shot a length of web, and swung away.

A few minutes later Peter watched on the rooftop as the police came and grabbed the man in the alley while the confused store-owner explained how he had found his stolen items stuck to his back
door by the webbing with the note to phone the police about the criminal in the alley.

He didn’t linger, he instead made his way back to the apartment.

He had many hours left in the night, but something in the back of his mind told him that he shouldn’t risk being out any longer, despite how much he really, really wanted to.

Peter found his alleyway stash, shoved on his clothes over his costume, and slunk back through his window, tugging off his mask and shoving it away.

Not that May ever was in his room – he always locked the door – but he never could be too careful.

He was just about to go to the bathroom so he could properly take off the uniform in privacy when there was a knock on the door.

His bedroom door.

Peter nearly jumped a mile.

What the hell?

May wasn’t supposed to be home for hours.

He stared at his door.

“Peter?” That was definitely his Aunt.

Peter swallowed. Why was May home? She said she was going to be gone until early morning!

“Peter,” she tried again, “I know you’re home.”

Peter felt the world drop from under his feet. Oh no. Had she seen?

Robotically, he moved to the door and opened it, revealing his Aunt.

“Yes, Aunt May?” he tried for casual, but his dry mouth made his voice croak.

“Peter,” she looked uncertain, rubbing her hands up and down her arms. “Peter... We need to talk.”

If that didn’t make that pit in his stomach get deeper - nothing else would. “About what? I... Can this wait till tomorrow?” he tried lamely, clearing his throat. He gestured behind him, “I was just about to go to bed and-”

“Peter,” her tone was both sharp and soft.

He swallowed. “Yeah?”

“This is important. Please.”

He nodded, licking his lips. “Um. Okay.”

“Thank you.”

Instead of being led to the kitchen like he normally would have whenever his aunt wanted to talk to him about things - serious or not - he was guided back into his room and sat down on his bed.

His Aunt sat next to him.
“First of all, Peter, you know that I love you, right?”

“I uh - yeah. Of course,” Peter rubbed his sweating palms on his jeans, “I love you too.”

“You know that I love you no matter what?” she pressed.

“Of course I know that.”

May didn’t look convinced as she pursed her lips. “I’ve been doing a lot of thinking since you went missing,” she started. “Before then, too.”

Peter could only nod, wanting her to continue. Not knowing where this was going, but being terrified that he had to take this ride.

“The point is,” she continued, clearly trying to keep her tone even, “I’ve done a lot of thinking. It’s all I’ve been doing lately. Thinking. Worrying. Wondering.”

Peter reached over and grabbed one of her hands, and she smiled at him sadly, rubbing her thumb over the back of it.

“I’m sorry.”

“Peter,” her fingers curled around his, “I can’t really play blind to what’s going on anymore.”

Peter froze.

Did she...?

“I know something is going on Peter. There is no possible way I can just keep on ignoring things when it’s so obvious that things are... different.”

“Oh...?”

“Don’t look at me so scared, Peter,” she said softly, and reached with her hand to cup his cheek like she has always done, even before he had come to live with her. It was warm, reassuring and loving. “I’m not going to eat you.”

“You- you sure?” Peter tried to quip, his voice rasping, “You always said that my bony body would make a good broth.”

She chuckled, letting go of his face. “Peter. I mean it. I won’t hate you for... whatever this is.”

“... whatever this is?”

She didn’t know, did she?

Did she?

Not knowing if she knew was killing him.

“Yes. You can’t believe that I haven’t noticed things over the past two years, have you? Little things. Gradual things.”

“O-oh?”

“For one,” she started without preamble, “Your glasses? Hard not to notice the fact that over a space
of a week you didn’t need them anymore. You baffled the optometrist.”

Peter flushed, that had been very early on after the spider-bite. The ‘symptoms’ had been gradual in their onset, not sudden, and he was still in the middle of being absolutely confused as to what was happening to him when his sight miraculously got better.

He remembered when at first they thought it was getting worse until he got the bright idea to just take off his glasses and the world came to him with crystal clarity.

“Well - yeah... okay. That’s a bit weird but -”

“Peter. You sleepwalk.”

What.

“Um...” What did that mean?

“You sleepwalk,” she answered his unasked question, “You used to do it more when you were younger. I never woke you up whenever you did it or told you because I thought it’d embarrass you,” Peter agreed, it would have mortified him, it was mortifying him.

“And this has to do with -?"

“I once caught you trying to put down a glass in the kitchen while you were half asleep.”

“Oh?” Peter tried for curious, but his voice was a squeak.

“It was sticking to your fingers.”

Oh.

“... Uh - that... school project. Er...”

“It wasn’t, Peter.” She squeezed his hand again. “I know it wasn’t. It wasn’t the only incident, there were meany, like another time when I caught you halfway up the wall while you were asleep.”

“Wait what.”

“Mind, this was a year or so back, you had a terrible fever that day and were tossing and turning all night. Instead of falling off the bed you... stuck to the wall? It was so bizarre!”

Peter gaped. “Y-you never said anything about this?”

“No! How could I? I didn’t know what to do, what to think. I didn’t even know where to begin to approach all of this. I didn’t want to do something wrong. Say something wrong. You seemed to be handling whatever it was yourself. You seemed happy -” she frowned, “That’s when I started to notice you disappearing at night.”

“You knew?” Peter asked, his voice small.

“Of course I knew, Peter! Of course I knew. No parent in their right mind would have their child disappear multiple nights in a row and not notice eventually.”

“O-oh...”

“And then there’s Spider-Man.”
Peter stiffened.

This was it.

She knew.

He waited for the inevitable onslaught.

“I figured that... you were going to him for help,” she said, her tone sad. “I knew you were struggling with... whatever this was - and I didn’t know how to approach it. So I - I just let it happen. I let you slip out because I thought this Spider-Man was helping you in a way I didn’t think I ever could.”

Peter stared at her.

She looked down at Peter’s hand in her own sadly. “I feel like I’ve not been the support you’ve needed Peter. I wish I could’ve done more. Maybe you wouldn’t have had what happened to you if -”

“No! No! You got it all wrong!” Peter exclaimed, “May, you didn’t do anything wrong!”

She her laugh was dry, “It’s hard to convince myself of that.” She looked back up to him, meeting his eyes. “As I’ve said, I’ve done a lot of thinking. I want to help you. To understand what is going on.”

“May, I-”

“Please let me do this? No matter what has been happening, and whatever it is that you’ve been hiding, please.” Her eyes were wet. “I love you Peter. I only want you to be happy.”

Peter crashed into her.

He held her tightly.

“I am happy,” he breathed. “I am happy. You’re the best. You’re the single most loving, understanding, caring, and wonderful parent I could have ever asked for. I mean it.” Every word. “I love you.”

She squeezed him back. “Then please let me help you.”

He squeezed her again before pulling away. “Okay.”

She smiled at him, standing up off of his bed. She took a few shaky breaths to even herself out. Peter did the same.

Once they had both gotten a hold of themselves, his Aunt turned to him, looking a bit sheepish. “I know that this is a bit sudden but – I have someone here that would like to speak to you.”

“What? Here?”

Now?

“Yes – I can tell them to leave, but – I meant for them to come earlier. It’s funny,” she snuffed air out of her nose, picking at her bracelet, “I meant for them to meet you two weeks ago.”

When the incident happened.
“Oh.”

“I think it’s better this way. Come on,” she gestured to the door.

Peter hesitated.

“Or I can tell them to go, I can -”

“No!” Peter stood. “No. I’ll - I’ll talk to them.”

She squeezed his hand. “Thank you.”

Peter followed her to the kitchen.

A man sat at the table, a pot of tea and a steaming mug in front of him as he looked out the window, watching the rain that had started cascade down the windows.

He was bald, crisply dressed and sitting not in one of their chairs, but rather a sleek mechanized wheelchair. On his lap, there was a soft-looking argyle blanket that contrasted with his well-kept appearance. There was an air of calm surrounding him.

The man smiled before turning his chair to look at him. “Hello Peter -” he greeted, his voice as kind as his smile. His eyes crinkled warmly at the corners.

Peter stared.

“- I’m Professor Charles Xavier.”

Chapter End Notes

Oh hey - it's that guy.

No worries my intrepid readers - the Avengers will reappear soon and all the fun-stuff therein. I just can't wait to reveal what the others thought of his age, but alas - Peter had to go home. He sort of deserves it, doesn't he?

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR THE INCREDIBLE RESPONSE.

I'd apologize for the slight delay in this chapter - but I shan't cause I took two days off of writing (seriously I've been writing this fic every day for two weeks straight - so I didn't burn myself out and start to hate the fic.

SO. I AM RE-ENERGIZED.

I STILL LOVE THE FIC.

I made sure to read the comments even when I was taking a break to keep me going.

JUST YOU WAIT TILL WHAT HAPPENS NEXT. Hoo boy.

(THANK YOU ALSO TO MY BEST FRIEND FOR HELPING ME EDIT.)
Rain pattered against the window as Peter stood gaping. Never, not in a million years, did Peter ever assume that he would have Professor Charles Xavier sitting in their kitchen.

Drinking tea.

“Would you like to take a seat, Peter?” Professor Xavier asked kindly – cutting through Peter’s bewildered thoughts – and he gestured to the chair directly across the table from him.

It took Peter a second or so to register that he was being spoken to, before he took the back of the suggested chair, pulling it out so he could plop himself down into it rather ungracefully.

His Aunt stood next to him encouragingly, and when Peter’s attention flickered up to her, she looked a mix of amused and reassuring.

“You do know who this is?” Aunt May asked, as if concerned that Peter misunderstood the man’s announcement.

Peter almost balked at her question, because of course Peter knew who he was – who didn’t?

Charles Xavier was not only a famous mutant but one of the most famous mutants on the planet. He was a known telepath, leader of the X-Men, and founder of Xavier’s Institute for the Gifted.

In his life before Spider-Man, Peter had known about mutants and mutates, and anything in between.

He had loved reading up on known mutants, powers, mutates and how their DNA worked. He had been a kind of a fan of various mutants too; mutants like Xavier, Wolverine and others when he had been much, much younger.

Peter’s fascination with Professor Xavier turned from childhood wonder to massive respect when Peter had become a kind of mutate himself.

“Are you alright?” May asked.

Peter realized he was staring.

“I — yes,” he replied smartly. It was taking a moment for the gears to turn in his head. “Um. That’s Professor Charles Xavier.”

“Yes... it is...” his Aunt replied with amusement. “I did ask for someone to come talk to you -”

“- You don’t understand,” Peter turned his chair to directly look at her. “That’s Professor Charles Xavier. He’s not just someone!” he retorted. He lowered his voice so only she could hear, “How did
you even make this happen!?”

“Calm down Peter,” she chastised quietly. “He didn’t come all this way to... to...” she paused, “- to be honest, I’m not sure why he came all this way. When I had called, I hadn’t assumed that he would be coming himself.”

Peter threw his arms into the air. “See!?”

Charles was watching the two of them sedately, calmly taking a sip of his tea and observing the two interact with mild interest.

“Professor Charles Xavier,” Peter repeated with a hiss – still completely unable to shove aside his shock.

Finally, the subject of Peter’s shock and awe spoke with a heavy tone of amusement, his voice rumbling with chuckles, “That is indeed my name, as I did introduce myself to you. I am quite sure that your Aunt is more than aware of who I am. However, I’ll have to admit I am flattered by your reaction to my presence. I ought to make house calls more often.”

Peter rapidly felt a kind of guilt for his childish behaviour, an embarrassed flush taking a firm hold on the back of his neck and cheeks. “I - er. Sorry.”

“It’s quite alright. It makes me miss being so youthful that seeing an old man warrants such excitement.”

Peter knew that Xavier knew perfectly well that he was not just ‘an old man’ by any means. Embarrassment still flooding Peter, he opted to just nod.

“He’s here to speak with you Peter,” May said encouragingly.

“... Right.” Peter willed himself to act normal. “You said in my bedroom -”

“Yes.”

“But -”

“You can relax, Peter,” Charles encouraged, and he picked up the teapot to fill another cup of tea and he slid it towards Peter encouragingly. “I’m only here to speak to you.”

Peter took the tea without a word. The situation still didn’t feel quite real, but his heart had stopped beating in the vicinity of his ears, so that was a start.

“I’d hate to ask this of you, but do you think you will be alright being left alone?” May asked.

Peter’s attention snapped up to his Aunt in an instant. “You’re leaving?”

“Yes. I’m sorry,” she squeezed his arm apologetically. “I wasn’t lying to you when I said I had work tonight, and I thought -”

“But-” Peter gestured to Xavier. “But-!”

May backpedalled quickly, “I can stay if you want -”

“- Another option of course -” Charles said softly from behind his mug of tea, “- Is that you can quite easily refuse. You’re completely within your right to say no, Peter, and I will happily be on my way.
I promise you, my ego will remain quite intact.”

Peter looked back to Charles Xavier, who kindly looked over his tea toward him. There was not a note of upset in his expression or demeanour, so he meant what he said.

“You would easily do that?”

“Quite easily.”

“Even if you came all this way.”

“Even if I came all this way,” Charles confirmed. “I would hope we would have a chance to speak in the future – and I could easily arrange a different time and venue if you wish it.”

Peter hummed. He knew that this Aunt wouldn’t have asked for someone to come if she didn’t feel it was absolutely important – even if she hadn’t expect the X-Man himself was the one who came in response. He also knew that she wasn’t about to suggest for Peter to be left alone unless she felt perfectly safe doing so.

Peter had a feeling that she had been talking to Xavier while he was... out.

“I’ll...” Peter said after a moment of careful consideration. “...I’ll be okay here.”

“Are you sure?” May asked, “You can always say no.”

“Yeah - I’m sure. Besides,” he added lightly gesturing, “This is Professor Xavier! I can’t miss this opportunity!”

His Aunt smiled before pressing a kiss to his head.

“C’mon man... in front of an X-Man,” Peter groaned good-natured to lighten her obvious concern.

He got a gentle cuff to the back of his head for that comment, Peter hid his smile with a fake scowl, rubbing the indivisible hurt with his hand.

“I’ll show affection to you whenever and wherever I like it, mister.”

“Geez.”

Charles started to chuckle as Peter shooed her to go get ready for work or she’d be late.

He wasn’t sure himself if he was too comfortable yet with the idea, but he would do this for her.

“Call me, if anything happens, or if you need me,” May said minutes later, standing at the kitchen entrance, keys in her hand.

“I will,” Peter assured. “I’ll be okay.”

“Drive safely now,” Charles bid her farewell.

She blew Peter a kiss and with that, she was gone.

The door closed with a click, and suddenly Peter Parker was very alone in the kitchen with Professor Charles Xavier himself sitting across from him.

The older man was nursing his steaming cup of tea, downing the last of it politely before refilling it
from the teapot.

Peter fiddled with his own mug, not drinking it, watching the man with interest.

“Did you have a good evening, Peter?” the man asked kindly as he produced a box of biscuits from seemingly nowhere.

“Um -” was Peter’s incredibly intelligent answer.

Xavier opened the box, sliding out the tray of cookies, and opened that too without a word. He settled it in the middle of the table for Peter to reach, took one for himself, and dunked it into his tea.

Peter just watched.

Seriously. Professor Xavier was eating cookies and drinking tea in his apartment.

What the hell.

Xavier didn’t seem perturbed at all by Peter’s lack of a proper answer, and just continued to speak, putting down the half-eaten biscuit beside his mug, “Do you often go out for excursions at night through your bedroom window?”

Peter stilled. “Uh -”

“Your Aunt has informed me that she has been aware for quite some time that you have frequently gone missing out of the window. Quite a feat, considering how high up we are,” the man idly said, lacing his fingers together.

Peter shifted uncomfortably. Not that the man was exuding anything that would warrant his discomfort. If anything; the man had the calmest and most comforting aura of any person Peter had the pleasure to sit down with.

It was almost like he feared disappoint the man with the answer to the question.

He worried his lower lip. “Er -”

Charles just smiled. “Peter, I can promise you that I am not here to berate you or tell you what to do. Or – might I add – I also am not here to tell your Aunt that you are Spider-Man.”

Peter’s world came to a crashing halt. “What.”

Xavier just chuckled and slid the tray of biscuits closer to Peter. “Have a biscuit, Peter.”

Peter moved automatically, grabbing one of the shortbread cookies.

“How?” he managed after a moment of fumbling with the cookie. “Did you? Did-” he tapped his temple with one hand.

Charles just shook his head. “I don’t need to go here -” he tapped his own temple in a mirror of Peter’s gesture, “- to know that you’re Spider-Man. For one - the cuff of your costume is clearly visible right now.”

Peter looked down and saw that the right arm of his hoodie had rolled up slightly, revealing the red and blue of his spandex.

Peter hastily tugged down the sleeve of his hoodie.
As if that would change anything.

“Secondly,” the older man continued, taking up again his half-eaten cookie, and dunked it. “There is much information going around about Spider-Man, and I am able to put two-and-two together.”

Peter watched as Xavier casually popped the rest of the cookie into his mouth, dusting off the crumbs from his hands.

“Is that why you are here?” Peter asked, setting down the cookie.

He already had a bad encounter because of ‘information about Spider-Man’. He pushed back his chair instinctively, forgetting both cookie and tea.

If the Avengers were willing to react to Spider-Man in the way that they did - Peter recalled that Tony had looked into ‘Xavier’s’ files - so no doubt that this man had the same information as they did...

... Who knew what the man before him would do.

“Is that the reason why I am here?” Xavier repeated. “Yes and no. Though I hardly think you’re going to believe me - since you are halfway out of your chair and look ready to bolt.”

Peter swallowed.

“I can assure you that I have not come here to harm you. My intent is as I stated at the forefront - I merely wish to talk to you.”

“Why?”

“Why? Because your Aunt had placed an inquiry to my institution to have someone come speak to you,” Charles explained patiently, not showing an inkling of annoyance at the distrust Peter was showing.

“Just because of that?”

Xavier snuffed with amusement. “You are quite quick. No. Not just because of that. You are right if you assume I do not generally make house-calls. No, after I had learned of your Aunt’s inquiries I was already curious; and then the incident between Spider-Man and the Avengers happened -”

Peter interrupted. “You know about that?”

Charles chuckled. “Of course I do. You hardly can think something like that would go unnoticed within certain circles, can you? Tony Stark himself called my institute to inform me about the tampered databases. He was completely beside himself with anger.”

“Was he?”

“Oh, he was,” Charles confirmed. “He also let slip that Spider-Man was not indeed a ‘twenty-something danger-to-society,’ but - and he put this in far harsher terms, mind you - ‘just a fifteen-year-old child.’”

Though Peter didn’t appreciate Tony just revealing to Xavier that Spider-Man was only fifteen, he did feel appreciation that Tony Stark seemed to be making some kind of effort to fix the databases.

“Is that how you finally realized I was Spider-Man? Because Mr. Stark revealed that Spider-Man was fifteen?”
“That was one of the reasons behind my connecting you and your alter-ego together, yes,” Charles confirmed. “I already had a fair good picture before your Aunt had called me, but that was rather the nice bow to the mystery.”

Peter sat back down in the chair. “... Oh.”

“Yes. Oh.” Xavier replied with amusement.

Peter hadn’t realized it, but through this part of the conversation, Peter’s hackles were no longer raised. Charles had done nothing aside from being incredibly patient and answering all his questions.

Not to mention, but his spider-seance had remained completely silent.

“What other things made you notice?” Peter asked. “Do others -?”

Charles shook his head. “Explaining every nuance into how I discovered who you are would take much time; but I can assure you that your secret is safe with me. My musings are mine, and mine alone,” he assured. Though his tone was soft, it was serious, “I have divulged my musings to no-one. As of right now, it is known between only you and I at this very moment.”

And, of course, choice members of the Avengers.

“And Aunt May...?” Peter questioned slowly.

Charles was silent for a moment, considering, “I believe that she knows more than she is willing to admit to herself.”

Peter didn’t know what that meant. “But does that mean -?”

Professor Xavier just gestured. “Drink some tea and have a biscuit, Peter.”

This time, Peter did as he was asked, he had a feeling that question in particular didn’t have an easy answer.

The last of the discomfort Peter felt slowly ebbed away as the two fell into silence, and Xavier calmly drank more of his tea as Peter took a couple more biscuits - they were alarmingly delicious.

Peter tilted the box toward himself so he could remember the brand, chewing thoughtfully on the cookie.

“What do you want to talk about then?” Peter asked, feeling braver, mimicking Charles’ move of dunking the cookie into the tea.

“You, mostly.”

“Like my powers?”

“You could take it that way, yes.”

Peter thought for a moment, not sure where to start, instead choosing to chew on a tea-soaked biscuit.

“How about,” Charles started, “we begin with the question; have you spoken to anyone about your mutant powers?”

“Not sure if I’m a mutant,” Peter replied. “I mean - Like, a Spider bit me. I got my powers afterwards, so I can’t say if I’m a mutant or not.” Peter shrugged.
Peter had good reasons for why he didn’t speak to anyone after the incident had happened.

He didn’t want to scare May, for one.

He didn’t want to be ostracized, for another.

And, if he was being perfectly honest with himself, he just didn’t feel he’d be taken in by the mutants anyway, given how he got his powers.

“My dear boy, the manner of which you gained your powers does not mean you are not deserving of any help you may have needed. Some mutants don’t acquire their powers straight away. For example, some don’t develop until after sexual maturity,” Xavier explained, “Others, for instance -”

Peter already knew all of that. “Yeah but I seriously doubt I had some dormant ‘mutant gene’,” he retorted. “I’m just... me. I’m not a mutant or anything. So -”

Professor Xavier was frowning, his tone mirrored his saddened expression, “I am sorry that you did not feel safe enough to speak to anyone about your powers. No matter if you did or did not feel as if you fit under the certain moniker of ‘true mutant’.”

“It’s not your fault,” Peter muttered, looking at his hands.

Perhaps - but it is still something I wish I could have done more to help, even though I am quite aware of my obliviousness to it at the time. That’s the failure of hindsight, I am afraid.” Charles dug into his breast pocket as he spoke. “Twenty-twenty and full of regret.”

He produced a card, holding it across the table for Peter to take.

Peter looked at the man questioningly before taking the proffered card.

He glanced down at it, before doing a double take.

No way.

“You are, therefore,” Charles explained seriously, “Welcome to come to me for anything, from now on. You deserve the same kind of guidance and support as anyone else.”

Peter stared at the card.

It did not only contain information on how to directly contact Professor Xavier himself...

... But it was a blatant invite to -

“Peter, you will be welcome to join our school if you wish it -” he continued despite Peter opening his mouth to say something, “- and even if you do not wish it - and I do not fault you for following your own set path - then know that we are here. Our facilities and resources are open to you.”

Peter swallowed hard, holding the card tightly. “Thank you.”

“I think it is I that should be thanking you, but I hardly think you’d understand the sentiment. For now; you’re welcome, Peter. You deserve this.”

“Geez...”

Charles smiled. “Now,” he clapped his hands together, “There is only one last thing I would like to discuss with you before we get onto lighter things. More of a suggestion, than anything.”
Peter looked up from the card in his hands. “One more thing? I thought you wanted to talk?”

“- I hardly wish to interrogate you. I am hoping that you will wish to speak with me more in the future. I have no intention of digging in every crevice of your life.”

In a way, that made Peter relieved. He tucked the card safely into his pocket. “What is it then?”

“Over these next few weeks, I would suggest that you contemplate the idea of telling your Aunt.”

Peter stiffened.

Charles put up a hand before Peter could protest. “I am not saying to do it right now, but I want you to think about it,” the man advised kindly. “Your Aunt loves you, Peter.”

“I know.”

“She loves you more than I think you understand,” Xavier explained. “She loves you as much as you clearly love her. I think you should think about telling her the complete truth so she can show you how much she really does care.”

Peter worked his lower-lip.

Tell her that he was Spider-Man?

He supposed it was coming to the inevitable end of the charade, but -

“All I ask,” Charles said kindly, “is for you to think about it; and I mean truly think about it.”

Peter nodded after a moment. He could do that. “I will.”

Xavier smiled, and he plucked another biscuit out of the tray. “Thank you. Now. Onto lighter things.”

“Like...?”

“Like, for instance, that video that has spread through my school of a blurry Spider-Man sitting cross-legged on the underside of a bridge...”

Mood whiplash much?

“What really? You want to talk about that?”

“Yes - Was it real?” was the simple answer.

Peter stared at the man before barking in laughter because Professor Charles Xavier was sitting before him, dunking a cookie, looking genuinely curious.

“Well?” the man prompted.

“Yes,” Peter grabbed another cookie. “That was me.”

“I thought so. Logan insisted it was false,” Charles added with a mutter. “Stated something about special-effects...”

Peter shoved back surprise that Wolverine and Professor Xavier had been watching and debating over blurry internet videos of Spider-Man.
“Yeah well, it was hot, and I wanted to sit down and not be bothered.”

“A better place could not be found in this city, I am sure.”

“Exactly.”

The conversation continued in this light tone.

For all that nervousness that Peter felt in the beginning, he felt none of it now. Professor Xavier was genuinely pleasant company, and he never pushed or prodded Peter in any way.

If anything, he was patient and showed no annoyance if Peter threw a question at him, no matter how many times he asked it, or how many times Peter double-checked to be sure that nobody else knew he was Spider-Man.

It was nice to have someone know who he was in his whole, and to just... talk to someone about it all.

Maybe he should tell May.

Maybe.

________________________________________

Spider-Man swung through the city with a renewed kind of vigour.

Time flew by as it always did, and though Peter hadn’t made direct contact with Xavier since being given the card and that strange late-night conversation, he felt safer.

Safer than he had felt since leaving the Avenger’s ‘company.’

Though he had left the tower on a strange sort of ‘good terms’ with the team of heroes – and even had been given his suit back, the knowledge of those incorrect database files was still there, and still burned at the back of Peter’s mind.

Like, why were the database files there in the first place? Who had done it? Had it been on purpose? By accident?

Was it a mistake?

Or was it something more... sinister?

Spider-Man swung up and caught a edge of a building, crawling up and over it to sit down on the ledge, peering down at the dizzying sight below him.

Somehow having contact with Xavier made him feel a bit safer.

Safe enough even to do a more unusual patrol route that neared the tall, tall buildings of the inner-city.

Stark Tower was visible in the distance.

It felt good to know that not everyone who saw those files believed every word of them.
Unlike how Tony Stark had done.

Spider-Man stood, surveying the city, and spotted off in the distance a car’s light flaring to life before it skidded away from the back of a building.

“Third time this week,” he groaned to himself.

He leapt off of the building, catching himself with a web and swung quickly after the car.

Were criminals getting bolder? Or stupider?

Crime patterns seem to go in waves as one bright idea one group passed onto the next, and the next, and so on, and so on...

One month Spider-Man might have to be dealing with a bunch of pantyhose-wearing, baseball-bat-wielding, black-jacket-covered thugs trying to break into a thrift store.

The next he might be dealing with idiots who made a fairly successful burglary attempt only to balls it up by speeding away by squealing the tires.

Just like now.

They also had a disappointing habit of being horribly predictable.

Spider-Man swung around the next corner, gaining on the back-alley speeding car.

“Don’t go to the main street, don’t go to the main street, don’t go to the main street,” Spider-Man muttered like a mantra, because he would hate to see people get hurt because of idiot criminals.

Cars were his least favourite thing to deal with.

They were big, heavy, and he didn’t want to give the people inside whiplash because he was trying to capture them.

As he was debating what to do, continuing his considerable clip to keep up with the vehicle, he spotted an advantage.

The car’s trunk wasn’t secured properly. It bounced up and down on its lock like some kind of cartoon, money fluttering out of it, leaving a trail of wealth.

“Seriously?” Spider-Man remarked as he got closer. “How cliché is this?”

He aimed as he moved, and shot one web toward the car as the trunk bounced open again.

He hit his target, yanking a large bag stuffed to the brim with cash out of the car in a swift movement as it drove on ahead.

Spider-Man stopped his pursuit, swinging to stick to the wall, and reeled up the bag.

For a few seconds, it seemed the thieves were none-the-wiser, continuing on driving ahead as if nothing had happened. Then the car stopped.

Spider-Man stuck the bag of money to the wall for safe-keeping, before swinging over to the bewildered criminals that had gotten out of the car.

The two of them stood around the vehicle, looking at the empty trunk in complete bewilderment.
“- I ‘eard it fall outta th’ back!”
“You didn’t close it right, you idiot!”
“I swear I did!”
“Now we got to go back for it...”

“Hello!” Spider-Man greeted, hanging upside-down on a line of web just a few feet behind the men. They both jumped, yanking out painfully pathetic-looking weapons wheeling around on their heels. Spider-Man waved when they made eye-contact.

“Oh shit,” said one. “It’s Spider-Man.”

“Oh, wow! You’ve heard of me? That’s nice. This isn’t my usual route, so...” he cheerfully explained. “... You know.”

The two men exchanged looks, and Peter continued, “Look, this is how it’s gonna go; you guys surrender nice and easy and without any violence or whatever, and all our lives will be much easier. Sound good?”

The two men looked at each other again, whispering among themselves before coming to an agreement, nodding.

As expected – Peter could hear their hurried conversation quite clearly - they dropped their weapons.

“We surrender.”

“Yeah. We ain’t stupid.”

“Awesome.” Spider-Man dropped from his web flipping easily onto his feet. “More people ought to cooperate like you guys. Fewer migraines for everybody.”

Immediately the two men held out their wrists so he could web them together; he did so straight-away. They may have agreed to come quietly, but that didn’t mean they wouldn’t have a change-of-heart later.

“Why can’t more guys like you come easily? I hate having to do the chasing and the fighting...” Spider-Man remarked as he tugged the bonds to make sure they weren’t too tight.

“I – um,” one of the men interrupted, sounding afraid, but wanting to speak up. “I know this outta sound real weird...”

“Yeah?” Spider-Man tilted his head.

“Imma big fan.”

Peter’s eyebrows shut up from behind his mask. “Are you?”

“Yeah! I mean – not a fan of you messin’ wit’ our business an’ the like. But y’ gotta admit, badass moves. Saw you once stop a car from makin’ a wrong turn an’ smashin’ into a little old lady,” the criminal explained. “I might be a crook, but I ain’t in the hurtin’ people kinda crook.”

“Huh... Well,” Spider-Man put his hands on his hips, considering the man before him. “Can’t say
that was entirely expected.”

Something cold pressed to the back of Spider-Man’s neck as his spider-sense *wailed*.

“I bet you’re gonna say this wasn’t entirely expected either,” a voice stated darkly.

Spider-Man ducked before the gun fired, saved only by the sheer reflexive reason to his spider-senses, swiping his leg under his would-be attacker.

Spider-Man whirled, heart thrumming in his ears.

“Mother *fucker*,” a red-and-black clad masked man sloppily shoved himself upright and back onto his feet. “Holy *shit* you kick hard for a little guy!”

Spider-Man needed no introductions.

Deadpool.

“That’s gunna seriously bruise...” the mercenary muttered.

“Deadpool?”

“You know what? I kinda deserved that though,” Deadpool rambled, half to himself, half to Spider-Man, rubbing the base of his spine with the hand that held his gun. “I spoke. I should’a just shot you. *Bang*. Shot you and be done with it.”

“Wait- w-what?”

The gun trained back onto Spider-Man. “Hasta la vista -”

With a flick of his wrist, Spider-Man shot the gun out of Deadpool’s hand with a steam of web.

“Aw *fuck* - come on.” He turned back to Spider-Man, gesturing to the gun stuck to the wall. “Really? Fuckin’ *really*?”

“Excuse me – but shoot me?” Peter asked, his voice pitched. “Why do you want to *shoot* me?”

“Simple,” Deadpool shrugged. “Cause I’m being *paid* to.”

Spider-Man took a step back and held up his hands, noticing from the periphery of his vision that the two criminals had long since bolted. Good.

“Paid?”

“Oh yeah. A lot of money. Someone *really* has it out for you,” the merc half sung. “Like. Super dead. To be fair – I don’t blame ‘em.”

Don’t blame...?

*What*?

A pit of fear and dread pooled in Peter’s stomach.

No. No no no.

*The Databases*. This had to be because of the-
He had to explain.

While he never had any direct interaction with Deadpool, and though he never agreed with the fact that he just went about killing people, he knew that Deadpool generally didn’t like killing completely innocent people so – so...

He had to -

Had to -

“L-look. We can – We can talk this out,” Spider-Man quickly argued, hands still held out. “Clearly there’s been a huge misunderstanding and surely -”

“Oh-ho, no no my webbed friend,” the merc interrupted with a waggle of a gloved finger, “If you think whatever bullshit you pulled over on the Avengers to get them to believe you’re a goody-two-shoes will work on me, that’s a no-go señor.” Deadpool reached for one of the katanas on his back.

“Come on – look – Let’s talk about augh-!”

Spider-Man had to make a violent duck as so his head didn’t get cut off.

His arm wasn’t so lucky.

He gasped in pain, grabbing his sliced shoulder, breath catching in his throat.

The pain of it exploded behind his eyes, and he desperately tried to blink away the dots that clouded his vision.

For a moment he feared it had been lopped off, but the pain lancing up his fingers told him otherwise.

“No time for chatting,” Deadpool added casually before his voice dropped darkly, stepping closer to the injured Spider-Man, “Sorta wanna get this deal done.”

Peter staggered back, white-noise filling his head, spider-sense screaming.

“I suggest you run. Or not. Either way,” the merc cracked his neck in preparation, and gently put the flat of the blade against Spider-Man’s uninjured arm. “This is going to hurt you a lot more than it’s going to hurt me.”

Peter numbly felt warm rivulets of his own blood stream down his arm and came to a horrible crashing realization.

He was going to die.

Chapter End Notes

Hey look! It's that OTHER guy!
Thank you all again for the wonderful comments and sticking with me now that this fic is getting longer and longer. I sure hope you are willing to stick with me on this tremendously fun rollercoaster ride that this has begun.

I sincerely want to thank every person that takes the time to comment even a little thing, to those who take the time to comment on every. single. chapter.

I love each and every one, and they seriously make my day.

I mean it.

Please comment your thoughts~

MORE TO COME SOON - I am having way too much fun to even THINK about stopping~
Run Spider-Man.
Run.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The air was cool in the dark alleyway as Peter stared straight ahead into the unforgiving mask-white eyes of the imposing figure before him. The cool flat of the blade pressed against his neck was ice-cold, the chill felt even through the mesh of his spandex.

Peter was definitely going to die if he didn’t do something right now.

But he couldn’t move.

He just couldn’t.

“So you gonna make this easier for me by not moving, huh?” Deadpool mused out-loud, tilting his head curiously. “Interesting. You know, I heard a lot of shit about you, and ’going down easy’ wasn’t one of them.”

Move.

Come on.

Move.

Was this some kind of bad dream? The kind where one was so afraid that movement was impossible?

The pain in his arm certainly told him it wasn’t a dream, the reality of having a katana near his throat certainly told him it wasn’t a dream.

Clenching his wounded arm with a hand to feel the flicker of pain was the final proof he needed to prove that this was a reality.

Not a dream.

Deadpool the mercenary was going to kill him.

Again, he willed – inwardly begged – for his legs to move, for his body to move, or even for him go just open his mouth and speak - but it was like he had been locked out of his own body’s controls.

Deadpool tilted his head the other way. “Ho shit - are you actually scared stiff or something?” Deadpool remarked, surprise lacing his tone, the masked eyebrows raising. “I didn’t expect that.”

Come on Peter.
“Though I do agree I am pants-shittingly terrifying -”
Shut up.
“- And handsome.”
Shut up.
“Where’s that Spider-Man fight I heard about?”
Come on, Peter.
Move.
Fucking *move* Peter!

He only managed a single step backward, his vision tunnelling, his breath so shallow he might as well not be breathing.

“Like, I heard,” Deadpool continued - for a man who wanted to kill him, he was being awfully slow about it, “That you kicked Captain America’s ass, and you almost ripped off Iron Man’s arms. Which, like,” he gestured with his free hand, “- whoa.”

Peter just barely caught onto what Deadpool was saying. He tried to focus. “What?” he managed, his voice hoarse. “You heard -?”

“Yeah. I heard. Can’t believe they let you go.” The blade moved to tip up Peter’s chin.

Spider-Man grimaced.

“So what was it then, huh? What sorta sob story did ya tell ‘em?” Deadpool asked coolly, “That you were mind-controlled? That you didn’t know what you were doing? That you really are just a precious superhero and they just got it all wrong? Boo hoo.”

This would have been an excellent time for him to *move*.

The Merc was only going to talk so long - it almost felt as if the mercenary was just waiting to see what he was going to do - so it was now or never.

Slowly, Spider-Man managed to slide his hand down his arm from his injury to his wrist.

Deadpool either didn’t notice or care as he had the clear upper-hand, apparently loving the sound of his own voice, just continuing to speak over the silence. “I really wanna know what you said or did. Because, I mean, those Avenger-guys have moral values as high as the fucking *stratosphere*.” Deadpool gestured vaguely over his head with his free hand.

Peter tried to speak, “*They-*”

Deadpool just continued, “I mean, I ain’t no saint - I literally murder people for a living - but like, even *I* got standards, so like, spill. I’m really curious. I’ll even let you live for a few minutes while you talk.”

Spider-Man just stared back at him, tilting his head back and away from the blade tipping up his chin.

“No takes on that offer?”
A long drawn-out silence fell between them. Both red-clad personas just looking at each other.


Spider-Man flexed his fingers, feeling the grasp of fear slowly loosen as adrenaline flooded his system.

“Well.” Deadpool blew out a puff of air. “This was incredibly awkward. Anyway, nice chatting with you - not.”

Deadpool swung back the katana.

Peter’s survival instincts won over his terror, and just like that, like a switch being flicked on, he had full control over his body again.

Spider-Man ducked down, the blade narrowly missing the top of his head, and rolled forward despite the howling pain in his arm. As he moved, he ripped off one of the canisters for his web-fluid and flicked off the top with his thumb.

“What the fuc-.”

Deadpool was overcome by the rapidly decompressing resin and polymer.

Web-fluid wasn’t designed to be released so suddenly, so violently, or so quickly.

Unlike how Tony had previously accidentally discharged a canister, this was a whole lot different. Steam rolled through the cold alley as Deadpool had a cascade of poorly-mixed resin and polymer overwhelm him.

“Fuck-gllrggg!”

Spider-Man dropped the canister and ran.

He wasn’t going to waste any more precious seconds in observing the mayhem.

With his good arm, he shot off a web, only just managing to grab a high enough balcony to propel himself further and deeper down the alley, turning a corner before he landed on his hands and feet, gasping for breath.

Quickly, he ducked behind a stack of wooden crates, and took stock of himself.

Peter hissed in pain, his injured arm gave protest as he looked it over, turning it carefully in the dim light to observe the wound. He hissed again when he saw the length and depth of the cut as well. It may have been dark, but it was easy enough to see the blood, and despite his healing abilities, Peter knew that wound wasn’t going to just seal shut overnight.

He lingered over the wound for not much longer than so many seconds, just spraying a clot of webbing over it. That would be good enough for now.

As for the rest of him, he seemed to be alright - just absolutely terrified - and he had two web canisters left.

Hopefully that was going to be enough to get his ass away from the insane killer.

Spider-Man turned his attention back to the alleyway.
He could just barely hear Deadpool’s muffled curses, and he knew that he only had a few seconds to think of what to do.

Peter closed his eyes, steeling himself, taking a few controlled breaths.

He inwardly prayed that he wasn’t going to lock up in fear again. It was unlikely that Deadpool was just going to allow him to stand there like an idiot for a second time.

“Mother fucker -”

His eyes snapped opened. That sounded closer.

Spider-Man’s breathing stilled, and he pressed himself to one of the crates, turning all of his attention to what he could hear.

“- Where the fuck are you, webs?”

Shit.

“You know, the worst part of this for me is,” the merc said as he continued to approach, “Is that people think that you were being mistaken for me. How fucked up is that? Ha. Me and you.” Again, Deadpool’s tone darkened, “We’re nothing alike.”

Just what the hell did he think Spider-Man was?

Also, Deadpool wasn’t just closer, but a hell of a lot closer. It was time to move.

Spider-Man looked up, and the dizzying height of the building the boxes leaned against was a daunting task indeed - especially with his wrecked arm - but it was the only direction he could safely go where it wouldn’t be so easy to follow.

He knew enough about Deadpool’s abilities to know the merc couldn’t climb walls.

“At least I hope he can’t,” Peter muttered to himself, and he stood up as silently as he could.

Spider-Man turned, planting both hands against the wall, grit his teeth, pushed past the white-noise-like pain that radiated from his arm, and started to climb.

Well, it was less than his usual graceful climbing, and more of a frantic scramble up the side of the building, heaving himself over concrete edges as he worked his way up the glass.

Were it any other moment than one as dire as life or death, he would have been amused by the fact he looked nothing more like a spider frantically trying to find a corner to hide in.

But it was a moment as dire as life or death, and so instead Peter focused on moving, and moving alone.

Spider-Man made it a good ten stories into the air before anything happened.

He had a moment where he thought that maybe Deadpool didn’t see where he went, that maybe he had been quiet enough and stealthy enough, that he wasn’t seen.

He had even managed to turn the corner as he climbed, hoping that Deadpool hadn’t caught any glimpse of red working its way around to the other side of the building.

Maybe he was in the clear.
Maybe -

A gunshot rang out in the cool night air, cutting through his cautious optimism as well as the glass he was climbing.

The window disintegrated beneath his fingers.

Both his grip and footing was lost.

He fell backward.

Everything was in slow-motion as the glass exploded, as he fell away from the window, as his hands scrambled for a grip that was no longer there.

Instinctively, as the world was in that state of complete slow-down, Spider-Man fired his web again, just barely catching the inside of the sill of the window that had been blown inward.

Time sped back up.

He slammed into the glass pane of the floor below it with a harsh *crack* and it shattered as well. Spider-Man was sent sprawling into the abandoned office in a tumbling heap.

Peter *gasped* trying to blink stars out of his eyes and staggered upwards onto his feet, his only saving grace in that moment being that the glass that shattered was tempered. Only gritty tiny pieces dug into his palms and shins instead of long thick shards impaling him.

Thank god for safety regulations.

He was probably a picture of bruises and cuts under the spandex, but he was *alive* at least.

“Aw man, I was looking forward to something more dramatic than *that*. Tempered? *Really?* Do you really not wanna have that much fun, god?”

Deadpool was crouching on the edge of the window, gun lazily draped over one knee, gesturing at the pieces of glass as if showing someone.

But *how* -

No time to wonder about how the merc had gotten to him that fast, as his gun trained on Spider-Man.

Peter wildly dove out of the way as shot was fired.

“Hoo-boy!” Deadpool whistled. “You’re a fast bugger, ain’t ya! That would have been a head-shot! They were right about your reflexes!”

Peter rolled onto his feet, and fired a web directly at the gun.

Deadpool unfortunately had learned his previous lesson, moving deftly away and saving the gun from being flung out of his hands.

“Ah ah,” Deadpool tsked, waggling a finger, “- I can’t let you ruin this one too, Charlotte. It’s my second favourite.”

Spider-Man took a few steps back firing another web at the gun before it could be trained back on him.
Deadpool dodged it again, having to duck down and roll forward. “Come on man!”

Spider-Man fired another web.

Deadpool had to jump to the side. “Rude!”

He took a few more steps backyard, and fired his webbing again.

And again.

And again.

Spider-Man kept firing those short, but strong, bursts of web at Deadpool’s gun while the merc dodged them.

It bought Peter just enough time to take in his situation.

The office lights weren’t on. It was closed. The building was closed. There were no civilians.

The whole building should be vacant at this time of night...

... Right?

He hoped so, because he had a plan in his mind, and little time to think over any more details.

Spider-Man shot his web again, this time aiming to the left of Deadpool’s shoulder. The merc dodged away, expecting it to be aimed once more at his gun, but instead Spider-Man blew straight past him, diving out the window.

He swung, kicking his legs so he moved in a sharp upwards arc.

Peter twisted in mid air - his body screaming in protest - letting go of the web and shooting it again, straight into where the first pane of glass had been broken.

He managed, just managed, to kick his momentum upward enough so he could get through that broken tenth-floor window.

Sliding across the floor harshly - the little bits of broken glass skittered around him - he was only stopped by hitting a set of conference chairs stacked against the wall.

Spider-Man got to his feet, and moved.

The only thing he could do at that moment was not act like how Deadpool expected him to act. There was no knowing what he knew - or didn’t know - about Spider-Man, so, he just had to not act like Spider-Man.

It was a stupid train of thought, but it was the only strategy he could possibly think of.

How else had Deadpool found him in the first place? How else had Deadpool managed to follow him at all?

So, clearly, Peter had to do the opposite of what Spider-Man would normally do.

Spider-Man would try to swing from building-to-building to get away. He was going to go in a building.
Spider-Man would try to go as high as he could. He was going to go down.

Peter hoped it was enough to throw Deadpool for a loop and give him more time and space to think properly.

It wasn’t a permanent solution, but it was something.

Spider-Man ran through a hallway, spotting a load of elevators as he ran past.

He stopped, bouncing on his heels in frantic thought before he ran back and slammed his hand on one of the call buttons.

Peter thanked all the gods he knew when it opened for him, and he ducked inside. He didn’t linger however, he only stayed long enough to press the button for the rooftop before ducking out again, leaving it to close without him.

Had to play the part, at least. Deadpool would assume he was going for the roof.

He hoped.

Oh how he hoped that Deadpool would take the bait.

He ran around a corner, the darkness and the unfamiliarity of the building making it akin to a dizzying nightmare.

Where to go. Where to go. Where to go.

Arbitrarily, Peter, picked the hallway that looked furthest from himself and he ran down it.

He took many turns like this, trying to reach the furthest side of the building he could guess before he was going to try moving up or down.

There was no knowing how Deadpool was going to try to reach him, but it was unlikely that he was going to use the stairwell furthest from him.

So when Peter came across the buildings far-side stairwell, it was perfect.

Carefully - despite how much Peter wanted to slam open the door - he slowed his pace so he could open as quietly as he could.

Peter only opened it just enough so that he could wedge himself through, and sprayed the inside locking mechanism with web so it’s shutting sound was cushioned.

His breath held tight as he let it close.

It didn’t even click.

He breathed out in deep relief, turning his attention to the stairwell.

There were about ten floors of stairs that he had to get down. It looked like there was maybe more, it appeared that the building had an underground parking garage.

He wasted no time in shooting a web some feet above himself, and once he was sure it was securely tethered, he climbed up and over the rail, web in hand.

There was a huge risk in walking down those echoing stairs. In his experience - his apartment
complex to be precise - Peter was well aware how thunderous even the smallest of children sounded in those stairwells.

He just couldn’t risk it.

So he carefully, and oh-so quietly, began to lever himself down.

If he was lucky, Deadpool was now stories above him, trying to ‘race’ him to the top.

If he was lucky.

Carefully he touched the floor of the parking level.

It was still no time to celebrate.

His heart hammered a wicked tattoo in his chest, and he knew that he might have outwitted the mercenary far now, but that didn’t mean this was the end of it.

Deadpool was unrelenting.

He was going to have to eventually do more than run to get him to stop his pursuit.

Once he was out of the building, he was going to have to aim for some sort of safe haven.

Doing the same as he did before with opening the stairwell door, Spider-Man slipped into the parking garage, aware of the cool moist air and chill that lingered around the vehicles.

A thought came to him.

The Avengers tower was close to there, wasn’t it? It had been quite close by even before this fiasco started, and if he was lucky, he could get to the tower and hopefully get their attention before anything else could happen.

That was something.

Yes.

He could do that.

New plan in mind, Peter kept his breath as slow and steady as possible, as every movement and sound felt echoed a-thousandfold.

Carefully, hand gripping his hurt arm, he walked quietly through the garage, looking over his shoulder every which way and listening for anything.

He moved slowly, freezing periodically as, for a split second, he was sure he heard the sound of someone walking or breathing. Peter’s breath caught each time, certain that he was going to hear the inevitable sharp bang of a gun.

Of course, nothing came.

Each time the sound was explained away by the drip of water, a clicking ventilation fan, or even just piece of paper caught underfoot.

Funny how he was more scared now that he felt he was getting close to being in the clear than he had up in that room.
Peter would stand there frozen for almost a minute, before his body relaxed just enough so he could move again, and he made that careful slow progress toward one of the drive-in entrances to the garage.

Suddenly *sound*.

So much sound.

So much that Spider-Man slammed his hands to his ears as fire-alarms blared through the building, the echoing cement of the old parking garage causing the alarms scrape against his eardrums.

Car alarms started to join into the crescendo and the sound nearly caused Peter’s knees to buckle.

“Gah!”

He moved without thought. Turning on his heel and making a break for the exit.

“Not so fast!”

“Nngh!” Peter was sent sprawling forward as something hit him sharply in the small of his back. Just barely managing to somersault to catch his fall, Spider-Man spotted the offending hub-cap rolling away.

Spider-Man turned on his heel to see Deadpool casually strolling toward him as the alarms blared.

“Thought you were *real* clever, didn’t cha?” the mercenary half-shouted over the din. “Thought you could sneak your way down there while I made my way up to the roof.”

Oh *god*.

Deadpool tapped his temple. “Well I’m a good mercenary for a reason, Web-head. Fire-alarms are everywhere. Also - you left a bloody fingerprint on a door. Stupid.”

Spider-Man just turned to run again. There was no conversation with the man. It was run or die.

He lifted his wrist, ready to fire a web -

*Bang.*

The canister of webbing on his wrist exploded.

Spider-Man was taken off of his feet as the force wrenched his arm forwards, and the flames that followed made him let loose a screech of surprise and pain as he slammed onto his side.

The flames died as quickly as they were set alight - the chemicals that made his webbing were designed to not be the best fuel for fire - but Spider-Man was still left on the concrete covered in thick strands of ill-formed webbing.

He struggled, reaching to flick the last canister he had in place.

Deadpool stepped on his wrist. “Nope. Don’t think so, buddy.”

Peter gasped.

Deadpool thankfully did not dig his heel any harder, instead keeping the tread of his boot firmly on the burned wrist. He knelt down, keeping the wrist pinned as he plucked the last canister of web-
“This shit is annoying as fuck. Did you make this?” Deadpool wiggled the canister in Peter’s view. “I always thought that you shot it out of your body or something,” Deadpool asked, turning the canister over in his fingers. “At least, that’s what the file says.”

Spider-Man struggled, trying to move, but the webbing stuck him to the ground firm and fast.

Deadpool tossed the canister away from himself, “Bang.”

It exploded as it too was shot, setting off another car-alarm to join in the deafening chorus of sound.

“...So,” the mercenary turned back to him conversationally, like they were just sitting down for tea or something, “Speaking of your file, I wonder if you got more than one set of eyes under that mask of yours,” Deadpool mused. “Like on the back of your head?”

An unbidden memory came to him, something Iron Man said in his own pursuit of him, ironically enough.

“I thought you had eyes at the back of your head or something. Do you have eyes on the back of your head?”

Just what were these files?

He struggled again, and Deadpool pressed his foot down, freezing Spider-Man in place.

“Humour me, would ya? Do you, or do you not, have more than one set of eyes?”

Spider-Man closed his eyes. Focus.

Focus.

He clenched his fist, and with all his might, wrenched his body against the webbing again. He felt tendrils snapping as it slowly gave way.

“You’re not going anywhere, buddy,” Deadpool cheerfully said. “I had to dislocate my own arm to cut myself out.”

Spider-Man just tugged again.

“Real determined, aren’t you? Okay, okay, here,” Deadpool cheerfully shouted, reaching for the katana on his back. “Let me help you.”

The webs had loosed just enough that when the blade came soaring down for his side, that he just managed to get out of the way. The katana sliced through the malformed webbing like butter, freeing him.

“Son of a bitch,” Deadpool groaned from the ground - Spider-Man had immediately, upon being freed, used a sweeping kick to take Deadpool’s legs out from under him. “I never fucking learn.”

Peter ducked behind a car.

“That’s it.” Deadpool grunted as he hefted himself up. Peter only just noticed that the fire-alarm had stopped because he could hear the cracking of the mercenary’s back. “That’s enough of Mr. Nice-Mercenary! I’m going to just straight up kill you now.”
“That was being nice?!” Spider-Man shouted back at him.

“He speaks!” Deadpool hesitated for a second. “You sound... Nevermind, nevermind,” Deadpool waved off. “And yeah - I normally just go ‘bang’- dead. I dunno why I keep not doing that. Must be the me being crazy thing,” Deadpool replied airily.

Peter gauged how far he was from the car garage exit, and were he could hear Deadpool. He took a chance, ducking and rolling to another car.

“Bang!”

Concrete chipped off the ground.

Fuck.

He was out of webbing. He needed to use something as a distraction.

He looked at the car mirror that was right by his head.

Perfect.

“Sorry -” he muttered a clipped apology to the unknown owner of the car as he wrenched off the driver-side mirror. “I’ll find a way to repay you... Or something."

He stood, and before Deadpool could train the gun on him, he threw the mirror straight for his head.

Startled, Deadpool fired at the object that was flung at him.

“What the fuck was that!?” Deadpool was distracted only for a few seconds, and that was fine by Peter, because he pushed himself to run so hard that he was already at the mouth of the garage before the mercenary even noticed.

“A mirror -? Wait. Where did you go?” Deadpool groaned. “Oh come on, I seriously gotta stop falling for this shit!”

Peter rounded the corner onto the empty street, pavement flicking at his heels as Deadpool voiced another round of shots.

Peter.

Had.

To.

Run.

His thoughts were of only that.

He couldn’t even be afraid of if he was going to make it out of this alive. He couldn’t project what the future was. He couldn’t even properly strategize.

He only had one thought.

Run.

So he run he did.
More gunshots rang out, and more debris of brick and concrete blew off of walls and the ground.

He turned a sharp corner, into an alley, and just kept on going, pushing his body at pace he didn’t even think he had.

His bloodied arm didn’t matter anymore, his burnt and ruined wrist didn’t matter anymore, his bruises and exhaustion didn’t matter anymore.

He just ran.

Spider-Man turned again, the wild angry curses of Deadpool following, and the lack of gunfire was plain that the man was reloading.

Dashing down in a tight alley that was a part of an apartment complex, Peter had to duck under a few low metal fire escapes as Deadpool chased him.


Peter skittered around another corner, hugging the same apartment complex, and Deadpool wildly swore again as he failed to turn as neatly as Spider-Man did slamming straight into a wall before following.

“Enough already!”

Spider-Man didn’t listen, eyeing the tall wall ahead of him marking a dead-end for most, but a life-saver for him.

He could see Stark Tower.

He only just had to -

Just -

A few more -

Three shots rang out.

Two sharp cracks of metal hitting metal sounded before a fire escape ladder - free of any restraints holding it in place - came crashing down.

Straight into his path.

The sound of his body hitting the harsh iron followed.

The only reason he didn’t collapse to the ground immediately, was that he tried to catch himself before he hit the ladder - his arm looped around a rung, just barely holding him upright

Peter’s mind swam, his vision blurring in and out of focus.

“Finally!” Deadpool breathed.

Pushed against a wall - Deadpool roughly pulled him away from the ladder and slammed him into the brick - all he could feel was a trembling ice creeping in his midsection.

Deadpool pushed him into the brick more with his forearm, pressing his gun to Peter’s temple.
“Ready to meet your maker?”

“May...”

“Wazzat? May? May I what? Sorry I can't understand you. Hold on. Let me -” The gun was pulled away just long enough so Deadpool could tear away Spider-Man’s mask from his face.

Deadpool discarded the mask sloppily behind him and the barrel of the gun was pressed into his temple. Peter shut his eyes.

“Adiós.”

The shot never came.

He kept his eyes closed.

No shot.

Maybe Deadpool was taking his time with this - despite everything he said about not doing that again - or maybe he just wanted to torture Peter.

But again, no shot came.

Carefully, wincing, Peter opened his eyes.

Deadpool was staring at him.

Peter could barely read the expression, his mind was reeling and his head was a cascade of pain.

“W... what?” he found himself saying anyway. “L-lost your gumption?”

Deadpool kept on staring. The gun was no longer pressed to Peter’s head, he noticed, just wilted at the mercenary’s side.

“Um...? Aren’t you - aren’t you gonna shoot me?”

_Shut the hell up Peter._

All of the sudden, Peter was dropped.

The strong arm that held him up was removed, his knees buckled, and he slid down the brick wall, his head skipping slightly against the thick bricks.

He groaned.

“No,” Deadpool reeled back. “No... No no _no._”

“W-what...”

“No. _FUCK. No!_”

“W-... What?”

“You’re a fucking _kid._”

“Wh-... what no. No I’m no-nng!...” Peter half curled into himself in pain, grasping onto his side.
“You’re a kid, you’re a kid,” Deadpool stated to himself like a demented mantra. For him, perhaps it was. “A fucking kid. How old are you?”

Peter didn’t dare answer, he just breathed. What hurt so much?


“I-I -”

“They said that you’d appear to be young but that you really weren’t. They said that- that- you’d... GOD. This isn’t fake. You’re a kid!”

“I’m n-not...”

“You are! Holy shit! You’re just a baby! A baby hero that can rip arms off of things! That’s the worst kind of baby.” Deadpool’s voice was growing more anxious, frantic.

Peter found himself falling to his side.

To his immense surprise, he was caught before his head could hit pavement.

“Shit. Fuck. Shit. First the webs. Then the eyes. Now this. What else is wrong about you, kid?”

Peter was finding it hard to focus.

“Fuck. Shut up. I know! Shut the fuck up,” Deadpool screamed to no-one in particular, and Peter felt the gloved hands of the merc lever him down on the ground, and one of them prod the webbed wound on his arm.

This woke Peter like nothing else did. His arm screamed in protest, and he was sitting up, holding his arm, and against the wall faster than he could think.

He also happened to kick Deadpool across the alley.

“... Ow.”

Peter breathed heavily, sweat pouring down his face.

He groaned, trying to push himself up onto his feet, but finding he was unable to.

He couldn’t.

Deadpool got up, and Peter struggled again to get himself onto his feet, but his feet wouldn’t listen. His thigh and shin muscles were fried, his middle was on fire, and even as Deadpool approached him again - stopping to pick up his gun - he just couldn’t move.

“No no no...”

Peter tried again.

He made it halfway up, before collapsing back down, slamming into his side, nearly winding himself.

“Shit. Shit,” the mercenary’s hands were on his shoulder and side.
Peter tried to kick him off, but his body was done.

He was done.

“I’m not going to kill you! Anymore! Not going to try and kill you anymore!” Deadpool said, his voice as frantic as Peter felt. “I don’t - I don’t fucking kill kids.”

Peter barely registered what was being said, his mind was slipping from him.

“- I might be a cruel sonofabitch,” Deadpool continued his frantic babble, forcibly turning Peter over onto his back. “But I don’t fucking kill kids.”

Deadpool suddenly stood, even causing Peter to jump.

“I know!” Deadpool yelled to himself, one hand gripping his own mask, the other wildly gesturing with the gun. “I fucking know they said that - that - he’d look - Shit. They said you would just look like a kid and not be a -” He looked down at Peter again.

“W... who?”

“The guys that hired me. Remember? Hired killer. They said you’d be faking being a kid. Said you’d try to use it to get to me. Though- though-” Deadpool started to pace. “You could be faking it,” the gun trained on Peter again.

Peter held up his hands feebly. “I’m not,” he croaked.

“But you could be.” Deadpool pressed.

“I-I’m really n-not. I swear. I’m... I’m fifteen.”

“They said you’d say that, they said you’d say that. But saying that and seeing -” Deadpool lifted the gun to scratch the back of his own head with it. “- Seeing is so much fucking different. You - this isn’t faked. You’re fifteen.”

Peter nodded.

“Shit.”

Deadpool was suddenly very, very close. “I fucked up. Let’s get you some help.”

“Whu-?”

Like that, Peter was being lifted up into the man’s arms roughly.

He struggled.

“Shit shit shit,” Deadpool muttered - again to himself, telling something to shut up. Later Peter would realize that he couldn’t have been taking to anyone via a microphone because Peter could hear hidden microphones. The man was literally talking to himself. “Shut up - I Know.”

“Put... Put me down!”

“Can’t - you’re bleeding out.”

What?
“Kid, I shot you.” Deadpool’s voice wharbled, “I’m about to break my no-killing-kids rule here if I
don’t get you help right now.”

“No you... didn’t... shoot...” Peter tried to protest, but words came to him like molassus.

Huh.

That was strange.

“Oh yes I did. You just didn’t notice it because you rammed face-first into a metal ladder. *Fuck,*” He
swore again. “*Shut up I know already.*”

He must have closed his eyes because something harshly smacked across his face.

Peter’s eyes flared open and his breath hitched as he gasped in surprise.


“How about handing him over to me?” A dangerous-sounding third voice thundered.

Peter’s awareness having been snapped awake again, he recognized that voice. “Captain -”

“Holy shit!” Deadpool whirled with Peter hanging in his arms. “Captain America, boy am I glad to
see *you* -”

The sound of metal cut through the air, as well as the sounds of breaking bones and shocked gurgles.

Peter was falling.

Then he wasn’t. Peter was thankful for that, because he didn’t think he could handle hitting the
ground for the umpteeth time. He already had such a tenius grip on conciousness, it just needed one
more thing to send him over the edge.

“I got you, son,” he heard rumble through the chest he was pressed into.

“Nmg...”

“Peter?”

Peter blinked open his eyes, and had just enough energy to look before him to see Deadpool
sprawled on the ground with Captain America’s shield embedded in his chest.

The mercenary didn’t look like he was going to be getting up any time soon.

Then, like a sigh of relief, there was nothing.
Don't screw this up!

-

Whew! After a holiday and being taken out by a rather awful cold I am back baby.

Happy New Year! I have a kind of gift for everyone!
I decided to draw what I saw Spidey's outfit looked like in this fic (I took cues from all of the Spider-Man movies) and uploaded it to my tumblr.

CLICK HERE FOR SPIDER-MAN GOODNESS

(The webshooters aren't visible though, that's the only difference, so imagine this is when he designs some more stream-lined under-suit ones)

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR ALL THE COMMENTS.
I read and reply to all of them. They keep me going.

HAPPY NEW YEAR
It was cold, dark and wet in the darkened forgotten corner alley deep in New York City. Rain had begun to fall, and Peter Parker lay on the hard unforgiving concrete gasping for air. He struggled with every breath, his mind a muddle of fear and confusion as every gasp he took did nothing to quell his body’s absolute starvation of oxygen.

Instinctively, Peter clawed at the ground as his chest lurched with each and every attempt he made to breathe.

“Stay with me, Peter,” a low voice called from somewhere above him. Peter was being held down by the owner of the voice - trying to keep him still, as others focused more on his injuries. “Look at me.”

“NG...”

“Stay with me.”

More hands pressed against him and shouts filled the air.

“- Quick I need -”

“- Shit. That’s a lot of blood -”

With choking, gagging coughs Peter’s eyes squeezed shut and he pressed the back of his head hard into the concrete. He reached up and grabbed the sleeves of the man holding him down in a silent plea for answers and for the pain of not being able to get enough air to stop.

Please make it stop.

“Peter. Breathe. Breathe Peter!”

He was trying. He was trying to, but he just couldn’t catch his breath.

A hand grabbed one of his own, fingers lacing tightly with his. “I got you. Breathe with me.”

“- Banner do something.”

Peter felt so cold.
The hand squeezed his, another pressed against the side of his face. “Stay with me, soldier.”

“S-s... Ste...”

“Don’t talk.”

What was happening? Why couldn’t he get any air? Why was every breath doing nothing for him?

“Oh my god– that’s too much- How is he even-”

“Banner don’t just gape at it, do something,” Tony shouted.

“I am!”

The world was twisting away from Peter.

His hand that was not being securely held by Steve’s dropped uselessly to Peter’s side. His breaths caught in his throat, his strength waning, choking gasps turning into bare puffs.

“Peter! Peter - No no no!” one voice gasped, “No no! Not now! No no no! He – he can’t! Please do something.”

“Calm down Tony - you’re not helping! I can’t think with you shouting!”

Peter’s head was tilted upwards off of the cold concrete. It was so hard to understand what was happening now. He felt so numb.

There was a pressure on his chest. “Come on, you still got a heartbeat. Come on.” His face was smacked. “Come on. Don’t give up.”

Peter managed, just barely, to part his eyes open.

Not that it did much - he could barely see a thing. Just vague silhouettes now, clouded by nothingness.

“... May...” Peter managed, voice barely above a whisper. “...T...ell...”

It was a miracle that they could even hear him.

“It’s not going to come to that, son.”

“Ple...ase...”

“Shut up kid, it’s not going to happen. You can talk to her yourself.” Peter could no longer tell if it was the one that was holding him or one of the other two in the distance that spoke.

It didn’t matter who it was.

He just wanted them to listen.

“...ase...”

“I will. I will tell her that and more,” came the assurance, “but it is not going to come to that, alright? Is that clear? That was an order, remember?”

Peter couldn’t even gather the energy nod.
He was beyond numb now. His hand slid uselessly from the other’s grip, and he was only vaguely aware of his head lolling to the side, eyes still half-lidded.

“Peter!”

“Shit!”

“Peter. Peter. PE-”

Peter’s eyes snapped open with a gasp.

It was not the face of a person that he saw, but the darkened ceiling of a dimly-lit room.

A dream?

Had that been a dream?

His breathing pitched as a stab of pain twisted in his midsection and he cried out, turning onto his side and wrapping his arms around his middle.

What was happening?

Where was he?

Peter squeezed his eyes shut, balling fabric into his fists as he tried to quell the wrenching pain in his abdomen.

What the hell?

A door slammed open, causing Peter’s eyes to fly open once more and he saw the hurried silhouette of two people approach surrounded by a bright - blinding - halo of light from beyond the doorway.

“Steve, turn him back over!”

Hands grabbed him, and Peter was turned onto his back once more, hands on both his shoulder and thigh to keep him from curling onto himself again.

What a goddamned wakeup call. Peter hadn’t even gotten the chance to gather his bearings before he was tossed into the deep-end.

“I got you.” The statement was familiar and warm.

Peter swallowed thickly, screwing his eyes shut with a nod.

“Hang on... Hang on -” the first voice said, sounds of rustling instruments clattered and clinked as they spoke.

“Got it?”

“Yes. Hold him still.”

Two pricks followed, one after another in the crook of his elbow and Peter couldn’t hold back a
whine at the feeling. It felt like ice had been pushed into his veins.

“There.”

“How long-?”

“Just a few seconds.”

“Take a few deep breaths for me.”

Peter did so, trying to match breath while the ice from the point of injection began to spread rapidly, reaching his fingertips and spreading down his arm. It fanned out across his chest and, most importantly, across abdomen, numbing any and all pain as it swept down across his legs and to his feet.

Peter sighed.

“- There.”

Peter relaxed, breathing out. The tension his body held melting into the mattress.

“Better?”

Peter swallowed, nodding. “M-much.” Whatever hot iron had been jabbed in his middle had been removed. “So much better.” There wasn’t even lingering throbbing left behind.

Just sweet, blissful, non-feeling.

Low voices murmured as Peter slowly came down from the shock of such a rude wake-up call.

“- So you really have no idea?”

“None. I assume it’s his biology but, seriously - I didn’t expect him to be awake at all.”

Peter took a few more steadying breaths before he opened his eyes again.

This time, he saw the ceiling of the room again and though his vision twisted and churned, there was no longer the haze of pain and raw memories clouding his understanding of it.

“Honestly it makes no sense,” the conversation continued without him, “His oxygen levels are far too low - his lips are blue for heaven’s sake - and yet he’s -”

Peter turned his head to see Bruce Banner hovering over a monitor of some sort, tapping the screen with the end of a pen and holding a clipboard in his hand, speaking as he did so.

“- and he shouldn’t be – Oh.” Bruce noticed Peter’s gaze on him.

“H-hey.” Peter dumbly greeted, weakly waving a hand.

Bruce approached his bedside.

The poor doctor looked absolutely harried. He was rumpled to the extreme, every inch of his clothing looking like it had been hastily thrown on, his glasses were even slightly askew as he peered at Peter with furrowed brows.

He picked up one of Peter’s wrists, pressing a thumb into it, mouth a tight line. He turned his
attention to the watch on his wrist, counting under his breath.

Peter recognized who the other person was in the room as they stood back to give Banner space to work, though he wasn’t surprised to see who it was. He had a feeling.

Steve Rogers watched, arms crossed. “Well?”

“He’s alive. That much I can say,” Banner finally said, putting down Peter’s hand and swiftly tucking it back under the sheets.

“W-what happened?” Peter managed.

Banner, who still was surprised to see Peter was even conscious, sighed and straightened his glasses, pushing them back up the bridge of his nose. “You nearly died. More than once, I might add.”

More than once?

Peter opened his mouth to speak, but he was cut off by a gesture from Steve. “Don’t worry about that now, son. What matters now is that you appear to be healing.”

“I- yes. Right,” Banner hastily agreed. “Yes. If everything plays out right, you should be on the road to recovery now.”

‘Should be.’

Peter squeezed his eyes shut as a wave of dizziness took over him. “How - how long have I been...?”

“A day or so,” Captain America replied, sitting down on the edge of Peter’s bed. “It’s about three in the morning right now. So little over twenty-six hours I think. Give or take.”

“Oh,” Peter licked his lips. “Is that why... Why you guys both l-look like crap? Have you both been – been up for that long?”

He got dual stares.

“...What?” Peter asked, looking at them with a tired cheeky grin. “Something I said? H-honestly it looks like... You two have been up for like... Days...”

Banner’s eyebrows raised so high his glasses slipped down his nose again.

Steve looked like he was biting back an incredulous bark of laughter.

“What?”

“You’re awake and joking and yet, and yet -” a third voice added at the door. “If they look like crap, I’d hate to think of what you look like.”

Peter’s head snapped up to see Tony Stark leaning against the door frame. The light of the hallway making his features hard to distinguish.

“But you’re right,” Tony digressed, “they do look like crap.”

Peter squinted, trying to look past the light and his own swimming vision to try to see Tony Stark better.

“We look like crap?” Bruce blankly shot back at Tony, putting down his clipboard.

Steve rolled his eyes.

Tony moved out of the light of the hallway, shutting the door behind him, and once Peter’s eyes adjusted to the much dimmer light of the room, he could see that the man looked as lost and as tired as the other two did. Even his clothes were rumpled.

“So you’re in the world of the living again, huh?” Tony asked, approaching with his hands casually in his pocket, appearing almost too calm. “If you’re joking already.”


Tony shook his head. “Now is not the time for explanations, kid. Just know that it’s all taken care of. You gotta rest. Heal. You know. That sorta stuff.”

Peter frowned. He wanted to know more, but the pitching of the boat was getting more violent and his chest squeezed tightly. Peter quietly sucked in a breath, twisting his hand into the sheets.

“R-right,” he stammered. “Rest.”

“Good.” Tony straightened. “I mean it. It’s all taken care of,” he continued to assure. “Deadpool -”

“Tony.”

Tony clamped his mouth shut. “Right. Sorry. Forget it.”

Peter stiffened. “What – what about Deadpool?”

“Don’t worry about him.”

“B-but-”

“I said don’t worry about him. It’s not important right now.”

How could he just say that?

‘Don’t worry about him.’

Especially when... When...

Steve turned to look at a monitor behind himself. “Bruce. Look.”

Peter wasn’t aware of this, but his breathing had increased, and he had pushed himself up onto his elbows as he looked at Tony.

“He can’t get to you.”

“Whoa... Kid. Calm down. I didn’t mean it like - He can’t get to you.” Tony quickly tried to placate with his hands up, he too glancing back at the now brightly flashing monitor.

Steve stood suddenly. “Bruce, should I get -?”

“Yes. Quickly.”

Steve dashed from the room.
“He- He-”

The room twisted as the memories of his and Deadpool’s encounter came to him. Not that he had forgotten, but his addled mind made them feel all the more real than just passing recollection.

The gunfire.

The chase.

The capture.

He remembered all too clearly Deadpool holding him against the wall, the smell of blood and gunpowder thick in the air - he could taste the blood on his lips even now. And Peter remembered the man had removed the gun from his temple only to take off the- the-

Peter lurched forward and upright, monitors began to *wail*. Tony descended on him to get him back down.

“He saw my face!” Peter exclaimed past the rasp of his voice. “He – He saw -”

“Kid.”

“*He saw my face!*”


“I- I- can’t be *calm-* not when-”

“- Bruce!” Tony shouted over his shoulder as he tried desperately – without success – to push Peter back down. “Some help here!”

“I have my hands full at the moment.” Bruce was scrambling to get a syringe ready.

Peter looked wildly between the two as various alarms began to cry out, just adding fuel to his rising panic. He couldn’t tell if they were coming from the room itself or the building as a whole.

But that didn’t matter - because why weren’t they focusing on the real issue here? Whatever it was they were shouting about didn’t matter.

Deadpool had seen his face.

Deadpool was a mercenary who could find and kill just about anybody he wanted to.

If he saw his face then all he had to do to get to Peter no was to – *no*.

Though it seemed impossible, more alarms began to wail.

“Shit, not *again* - breathe Peter!”

“Push him back into the *bed!*”

“I’m trying. Peter *breathe.*”

The others could have been talking to thin air for all that Peter was paying attention to them.

Because Deadpool could get to Aunt May.
It was that easy. That simple. Now that Deadpool knew Peter’s face, all he had to do to destroy what little he had left of the world was find out where he lived and take away the one thing that mattered to him.

He would be as good as dead then.

“Just take one goddamned breath kid!”

The corners of Peter’s vision began to cloud.

He collapsed.

What if he already found her?

What if he had known before?

What if she was already dead?

Something clamped over his face, and he was only vaguely aware of hurried voices above him and the sound of the door slamming open again.

The wailing alarms could have just been the ringing in his own ears for all that he was able to hear them.

“I’m here Peter...”

He choked.

Was he hearing things? Or was he actually dying this time?

“Peter I’m here.”

Was that it then? Was he dying? Had she been found by Deadpool? Maybe she was dead and now he was dying too.

“May...”

There should have been more light then, if he was dying, but maybe the stories of near-death were wrong.

“That’s right. I’m here....”

A soft warm hand grasped one of his own and he would have sobbed if he had the energy to.

“I’m so sorry,” he mouthed.

He must have failed her for her to be greeting him in death like this.

He should have done something to protect her.

“I’m here Peter.”
Light spilled from an open window, pouring past thin curtains and coating the floor and rumpled bed sheets when Peter next opened his eyes.

A cool breeze came with the light, gently blowing the thin curtains back and forth lazily, laying a comforting chill in the air.

Muzzily Peter thought that this felt a rather sharp juxtaposition, but it was pushed aside for how much like lead his whole body felt. From the top of his head right down to the tips of his toes he felt like he was anchored to the bed by some invisible weight.

Opening his eyes had been a chore enough, and despite a vague itch on his cheek, he didn’t muster any strength to reach up and itch it. Instead, he curiously tried to piece together where he was and what was happening.

First of all, he was perfectly aware how much more peaceful he felt than the last he was awake - though those memories were far, far away and he couldn’t quite come to grasp them.

He furrowed his brows, turning his head to look at the sunlight flickering off the glass of some distant skyscraper, trying to piece things together.

Blinking a few more times to be sure he wasn’t dreaming, he turned his head to the side.

What he saw caused him to freeze, and pushed to the forefront of his mind the last thing he remembered.

“May...” he breathed.

Maybe he was dreaming - or perhaps he really was dead - because there she was; his Aunt May.

She was sitting in a chair next to the bedside, holding a book open in her lap, head resting in her hand, her lower lip being gently chewed on.

She looked the picture of anxiety - her glasses far down her nose, and her eyes not moving across the page, ever the picture looking like she had just opened the book and never read further than that one page. The bookmark was still in place even.

It was such a lovely, wonderful and comfortingly familiar sight that Peter must have been dreaming. Or dead.

Maybe she was dead too.

Maybe they were both dead and this was how they were going to meet in the afterlife.

“... May...” he tried again, shifting.

She looked up, startled.

“Peter.”

With that, the book was dropped, page forgotten - not that it had ever been read.

Peter was surrounded by warmth, by the smell of home, and the soft touch of her all-too-worn - but favourite - cardigan.

Not even feeling made of lead could stop Peter from wrapping his arms around her as she held onto him with equal tightness. He didn’t even remember sitting up, just one moment she was there in the
chair and the next, he was in her arms.

“Oh thank god, Peter,” she breathed, her grip was firm against his back but oh-so-gentle. “Oh thank god.”

Peter pressed his cheek against the soft fabric of the cardigan.

This felt too solid and real for being the delusions of a dead person.

Maybe it was a dream then.

“Are you real?” he asked, on a chance and a hope that it was real and neither the afterlife or his imagination.

“I should be asking you that,” she wetly replied with a laugh. “Yes Peter,” she assured. “I’m real.”

Peter buried his face further into her shoulder and just breathed in the scent of her. “I thought... I thought that...”

“I know,” she simply stated. “I promise you that I am here. I am safe.”

Peter so wanted to believe it, “Prove it,” he replied.

May laughed a little. “Prove it?”

“Yes. Prove it.”

She hummed, stroking the back of his head with her hand. “How about this: if you ever pull an almost-dying stunt again I’m going to run for government just so I can make it a law that you are grounded forever.”

He squeezed her tighter as a whoosh of relief washed over him so thickly that he nearly wilted in her arms.

“- Was that good enough?” she asked, steadying him.

“Yeah.”

“Too bad - because Peter Benjamin Parker; if you ever scare the shit out of me like that again, I swear that you will have to bury yourself six-feet-under just to escape my wrath.”

Peter laughed.

“I mean it, mister;” she warned. Her tone held no bite whatsoever, it just warbled at the end.

“I know,” Peter hummed back.

Thank god.

She was real.

This was real.

Eventually - regretfully - and after a long period of what felt like hours, she pried herself away from Peter.

Peter whined as she did so, and just got a hush in response as she helped him lay back down,
adjusting the bed so he was less laying flat on his back, and more in a slightly inclined position.

“Dr. Banner said that you are allowed to sit up, but I still want to be careful,” she fussed after jamming the third pillow behind him.

Peter just watched her fuss with a lopsided-smile.

She sat down with a sigh, scooting the chair so close to the bed that her knees touched it and she took up his hand.

“I meant what I said, by the way,” she said. “I will ground you for the rest of your life if you do that again.”

Peter nodded. “That’s fair.”

“I mean it,” she stated, her voice stern. “Rest of your life. It will be law.”

“Yes ma’am,” he saluted roughly.

Her stern look was gone in an instant - she never was good faking being angry - and a soft look appeared again. She brushed away a lock of Peter’s hair from his face.

Looking at her better now, he could tell that she had certainly been crying.

Maybe not recently, but he could just tell.

That image was enough to make Peter promise to every god he knew - real or otherwise - that he would never make her worry like that ever again.

“So,” he cleared his throat, after a long moment. “We done being all gushy and stuff?”

She snorted. “We’re done being gushy and stuff.” Her hand never left the side of his face.

“Cool. Gotta keep up appearances and all that.”

“Oh yes,” she agreed.

“Can’t let you know how much I love you and stuff like that.”

“Of course not,” she kissed his forehead.

This felt good. This felt right. “So. Okay, I’m being serious this time. How long was I out for?”

“Three days,” she said, pulling back her hand to fuss with a pillow.

Peter’s eyebrows shot up. “Three? But I remember...” his mind tried to draw back to his first time waking up, but found his memories muddled. “... A day...? I think?”

He rubbed his temple with his fingertips.

“Three days since then,” she corrected. She licked her lips, worrying them again with her top teeth as she debated saying more.

“What?”

“It’s nothing.”
“No... seriously. What?”

She just avoided his eye contact, instead fussing with the pillow once more. “Later, Peter.”

He frowned, but knew by the look on her face that she wasn’t going to broach the subject with him till she felt it was right to.

There was a soft knock on the door. May looked immensely relieved.

“Come in!”

“I have some coffee for you - oh!” Banner was at the doorway, holding a large mug in his hand. “You should have called me if he was awake!”

The mug was settled down randomly on a table and immediately forgotten, as Banner rushed to Peter’s bedside, pulling out his stethoscope.

“I wanted some private time with my nephew.”

“Still! I would have liked to have known.”

May moved back so Banner had access to Peter, the cool metal of the stethoscope being pressed under his hospital gown causing him to flinch.

“Sorry,” Banner hastily replied. “That sounds good.” He moved it to another spot on his chest. “That sounds very good. Take a deep breath for me?”

Peter did as instructed.

“... That is remarkable.” Banner stood back, “Absolutely remarkable.”

“What is?”

Bruce folded the stethoscope so he could drape it over his neck once more. “For starters - your lungs and heart sounding as good as they do.” He shook his head, incredulous. “I still can’t believe the kind of recovery you’re making.”

May looked delighted. “So that means the last batch did its job?”

“Looks like! I’ll still have to tweak it - but now I have a good blueprint to use in a pinch,” Bruce said with a smile. “In case anything like this ever happens again.”

May shot Peter a look. “Oh, it won’t be.”

Peter weakly held up a hand in confusion. “Excuse me - what are you talking about? Blueprint? Batch?”

“Oh! Sorry,” Banner quickly stated. He took up May’s vacated chair as she went to fetch her abandoned mug of coffee, and pick the book off of the floor. “I should explain. Um. First of all - how are you feeling?”

“Er... Groggy? Heavy.”

“In pain?”

“A little? I guess? I’m not sure.” Peter was aware of a sort of distant pain, but it felt like it was almost
someone else’s pain rather than his own. “My abdomen maybe?”

Banner reached, “May I?”

Peter nodded. “Go ahead.”

Bruce pulled back the sheets - revealing Peter to be in a sort of gown not too dissimilar to that would be in a hospital - and pressed down in a couple places, watching Peter’s expression as he did so.

Peter winced when he hit the centre of where it felt there were the thickest wrappings of gauze, though it wasn’t quite pain, more of a pressure than anything else.

“Yeah. There. It’s not really pain though. Just... Pressure? Or it kind of feels like it’s in the background.”

“Good. Good.” Bruce looked pleased, pulling the sheets back over Peter, and carefully tucking them around his side.

“So, um,” Peter glanced at his Aunt then back to Banner. “What were you talking about. What happened?”

Banner adjusted his glasses, looking back at Peter.

He looked far less rumpled than the last time Peter had woken. He looked freshly showered and clean-shaven, though there was no mistaking those tired dark-circles around his eyes.


Peter gaped, and Bruce began to explain misinterpreting Peter’s silence for confusion, “That’s when...”

“I know what that is,” Peter said, cutting him off. “How much?”

“How much?”

“How much blood did I lose?”

Banner glanced behind himself to May, who was definitely listening, holding the mug of coffee in one hand while the other was wrapped around her middle.

Bruce sighed, turning back to Peter. “Seeing as one of your major arteries had been shredded by your bullet wound, more than forty percent.” He finally revealed.

Peter froze. “Oh, shit.”

“Yeah. ‘Oh, shit’.,” Banner agreed tiredly. “That’s an understatement. It might have even been fifty-percent. At one point I stopped trying to keep track and just tried to keep the rest in. Your unusual biology also comes with increased blood-pressure and heart-rate, which exacerbated the issue.”

“H-how?” How the hell was he still alive?

“By the sheer force of advanced medicine, your bizarre biology, and I think a miracle or two. The fact you are even as well as you are now is nothing short of a miracle. Seriously.” Banner said. “I could write papers on this case for the rest of my life and make a career of it.”

“Dr. Banner is an amazing doctor, Peter. You owe him your life.”
Banner immediately dismissed that with a shake of his head. “He doesn’t owe a thing. It’s what I do. If anything -” he addressed Peter, “- you should be thanking Steve.”

Peter tilted his head, “Why?”

“Because without him you’d be very, very dead.”

Peter glanced at May who nodded from over Bruce’s shoulder.

“But - aren’t you the doctor?” he asked him.

“I am - but there was the unfortunate snag of your unusual biology...”

Oh?

Oh.

More aware than ever that his Aunt was in the room - and now that he thought about it, he wasn’t sure what she knew about the whole debacle - he suddenly wanted to change the subject. Just in case.

“Um -” Peter licked his lips. “You know, maybe we can talk about this later?”

Bruce looked puzzled looking between Peter and his aunt before settling on Peter. “Is it because your Aunt is here? Peter, she already -”

“I’m going to go find the others,” May suddenly said, cutting off Dr. Banner.

“Oh. Um...?”

“I am sure that Mr. Rogers, Mr. Stark and the others would love to know that you’re awake,”

“I guess?” Peter replied, “is Clint here?”

Bruce shook his head. “Sorry no - he’s not. If he had a choice he would be though,” his tone spoke volumes.

Peter tried to not show his disappointment, and just nodded his understanding instead.

May approached the bed, and swiftly bent down to press a kiss to his forehead. “I love you, Peter.”

“Love you too.”

She swiftly left the room, leaving Banner and a bewildered Peter.

“Right,” Bruce said, turning away from the door, back to Peter, his hands clasped before him. “Where were we?”

Peter had a feeling that there was going to be a lot he was going to have to talk to his Aunt about, but gladly accepted the conversation with Bruce as a distraction.

“Me having weird biology,” Peter offered.

“Right! Right. Very ‘weird’ biology,” Banner agreed. “Both your friend and your enemy in this case.”
Peter could get why it was his friend - it was no mystery to him how he was healing so quickly. But, “How was it my enemy?”

“Well,” Bruce folded his hands in his lap. “You’re no longer human-compatible.”

Peter looked at the doctor blankly. “What.”

“Your blood is completely incompatible with the average human. So don’t go around donating blood, okay? You’ll have to keep your Good Samaritan act strictly to web-swinging.”

“Wait. How am I incompatible...?”

“Your DNA. Something about it is just... Not quite human.”

“Wait wait wait,” Peter gestured. “If I’m not compatible with human blood, what the heck did you do? I lost forty-percent of my blood volume -”

“More than.”

“Exactly! What did you do?”

“Well, I should have been more specific. Regular humans. I noticed back when I had to reverse the ill effects of the tranquilizer on your system, that your blood had vaguely similar qualities to a person who has been affected by the super-serum.”

Peter said nothing, urging him to continue.

“Which is odd, because I figured it’d be more akin to a mutant’s, but I digress...”

Peter filed that tidbit away for later. “So... What did you do?”

“So,” Bruce explained, gesturing to an IV bag that was held aloft, and Peter followed the gesture to see what was clearly something akin to blood, not quite. “We had to synthesize something else.”

Peter looked back down. “And how long did that take?”

“Too long to use straight away,” Bruce admitted. “But we used Steve at the start. That bought us enough time.”

“Used Steve-?” Oh.

‘*If anything, you should thank Steve.*’

“He donated -? Holy shit. How much? Is he okay?”

Bruce chuckled. “He’s fine. He can handle quite a severe loss, but I promise we didn’t take any more than was necessary. I was able to create a rough replacement with what he gave us to keep you going until I could synthesize something better.”

Peter frowned, but nodded. “You sure he’s okay?”

“Positive. We didn’t take it one-for-one, Peter. I’m a doctor, not a madman,” he stated.

“Sure thing, Dr. McCoy,” Peter quipped without thinking.

Banner looked delighted, and Peter couldn’t help but grin back.
Peter prompted, “I heard something about ‘batch’?”

“Oh yes. Well, it was a finicky thing to make. The solution I had to make wasn’t as cut-and-dry as just separating out plasma and voila viable blood. I had to do a lot of chemical trickery to make your body accept something that wasn’t your own blood.”

“I guess that makes sense. I’ll have to ask you more about it later.”

“I’ll answer any questions you have. I also want to get into ‘deep-science’ of what makes you tick,” Banner said. Then, he paused, as if a thought came to him swiftly and suddenly. “Oh! Speaking of! Want to know something absolutely fascinating about yourself that I discovered?”

“Uh? Sure?”

Bruce rambled, “I doubt that it’ll come in handy in any situation, but you have another odd quirk about your biology.”

Peter hummed, “Er, lemme guess first. Er. Let’s see. Um - I have the ability to lay eggs now? Oh! I’ll grow another four limbs? Oh oh! No, wait! Pincers. Please tell me I’m going to get pincers.”

Bruce snorted. “No - you’re a male. No, I don’t think so, and no - no pincers.”

“Aw.” Peter stuck out his tongue.

“But you are poisonous.”

Peter blinked. “Wha? Poisonous?”

“Yes. Poisonous,” Banner said. “You - Peter Parker - if you were ever to be eaten, would be absolutely deadly to whatever consumed you.”

“No way.”

“Since we live in a rather cannibalism-free world, I doubt this ‘ability’ would help you much in any sense but - there it is; you’re toxic to eat.”

Peter barked an incredulous laugh. “You got to be kidding me!”

“Your bright colours are quite accurate Spider-Man,” Bruce chuckled. “Displays rather nicely to the amphibian and insect word of, ‘I’m toxic! Don’t eat me!’.” He then amended before anything more could be said, “I know, I know, arachnid does not equal insect – but the point still stands.”

Of all the abilities that Peter thought he would get with the spider-bite, he never thought that becoming literally poisonous was one of them. Peter wondered what other strange or odd features he had now that he was apparently less human than he thought he was.

“Dude,” Peter breathed. “That’s so cool.” A silly thought came to him, and he blurted it as soon as it popped into his mind. “Can someone lick me and they’d be poisoned too? Or, get high? Like a frog?”

It was Bruce’s turn to laugh incredulously. “What? No!”

“Bummer,” Peter half-pouted.

Banner just shook his head.
“So like, does that mean if someone bites me they can get sick?”

“Quite sick. If they swallow your blood or any bit of you for that matter. I’m not about to run tests on the toxicology of your flesh though.”

“Please don’t - that’s still really awesome though,” Peter remarked. “I’m poisonous.”

“That you are.”

Bruce got up from the chair, and took up Peter’s wrist in a familiar gesture, turning to look at his watch.

“Better?” Peter asked carefully, noting the frown on Bruce’s face.

“Better,” the doctor said. “Not where I want it to be - but better.”

He put down Peter’s hand and reached out, turning Peter’s face gently so he could look at it from all sides. “Your lips are still a little blue, and you have a temperature. But you’re miles ahead of what you were before.”

“Thank you.”

“It’s no problem-”

“I mean it,” Peter pressed. “Thank you.”

Bruce smiled, pushing his glasses back up. “You’re welcome.”

The silence was comfortable, but Peter was fully aware he was alone with another Avenger, and he might not have the chance to ask this question before his Aunt came back.

“I have to ask you something,” Peter started, taking a quick look to the door to be sure she wasn’t about to come into the room at any moment.

“About? You being Spider-Man?”

Peter furrowed his brows, confused. “No. Well. Sort of? I mean - I want to ask about Deadpool.”

Bruce stilled, going from looking casual to looking immensely cautious in a matter of seconds. The doctor turned his head to look behind himself, and Peter had no idea what he was doing until those faded memories of the last time Deadpool was brought up came to his mind.

“I’m not going to freak out!” Peter said, putting up his hands. “I’m okay now! Less… confused. I want to know what happened.”

Bruce hummed, still not looking sure, turning back to face Peter. “What do you want to know?”

“Everything. I know what happened. I remember what happened. I remember him saying he was being paid to kill me,” Peter said. “Where is he now? What happened after all of that?”

Peter recalled flickering memories of Deadpool’s subsequent freakout - which confused him - and his prone form laying on the ground.

“We can talk about all of that later.”

“But -”
Bruce put up a hand. “Not because I want to withhold anything from you - but as much as you think you are well enough to have a conversation, I’m going to say no. For now.”

Peter frowned.

“I promise you that the conversation will happen. Just. Not right now,” Bruce promised. “Okay?”

Peter sighed. “Okay. I… I guess.”

“Good. I’m sorry.”

Peter shrugged.

“Peter!”

Both looked up at Steve Rogers at the door, Aunt May standing beside him.

“That’s my cue to leave I guess.” Bruce smiled, standing as he spoke. “ I don’t want to crowd you - and I have some more things to do in regards to your recovery.”

“More creepy experiments on my blood?” Peter teased.

“Absolutely.”

“Find out if I am poisonous when licked please.”

“… No.”

Peter stuck out his tongue. You’re absolutely no fun, you know that?”

Bruce paused at his bedside before he leaned over and ruffled his hair in such a gesture of fondness that Peter was left flushing slightly when he retracted his hand. Peter awkwardly tried to smooth his hair back in place.

“See you later,” Bruce said, smiling.

“Yeah. Later.”

As Bruce left, Steve was across the room and in the vacated seat almost immediately. He looked the most excited that Peter had ever seen him. Peter stopped fussing with his hair and returned the bright smile.

“Hey.”

“I am so glad you’re awake,” the American hero said, “How are you feeling?”

“Er - exhausted, sore, but… good. I feel really surprisingly good.”

“That’s good.”

“I heard what you did for me,” Peter said. “You did quite a lot actually.” Peter looked briefly at the hero’s arm, wondering if he could see the ghost of a bandage wherever blood had been drawn.

“I would do it again if I had to,” he seriously intoned. “I mean that.”

“Thank you.” Peter meant it. Without Steve - he wouldn’t be sitting where he was right now.
“You did good, soldier. You held on like I told you too.”

“Well,” Peter said after a long moment, and gave him a lopsided grin, “You gave me an order, didn’t you?”

Steve looked surprised that he even remembered. “That I did.”

“I mean, I have to follow orders.”

Steve smiled, nodding. “That you do.”

Chapter End Notes

Do not, in fact, lick a spider.

Just because people keep asking:

(Also fyi - Banner means that his flesh and blood are toxic. Not necessarily ALL OF HIM. Just don't eat him.
As for his spit, sweat and other bodily fluids? It's fine. He can have normal sexual relations when he comes of age.
So pplease don't askkk anymoore. XD Ha. Though I guess it's a justifiable concern.
BANNER. CLEAR IT UP WITH PETER SO HE DOESN'T WORRY IN THE FUTURE.

WHEW. Well. That was chapter and a half; and finally some discussions are going to happen, and we're going to learn a lot more of Deadpool's side of things... Dun dun dun.

And as always, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE COMMENTS. I was so floored by the number of them, and I did my best to reply to each and every one of them. I mean it. Thank you. Thank you so much. Now that the holidays are over, hopefully I can get back into a more coherent writing groove.

You guys keep me going. ❤
Never doubt the meaning of even the simplest of comment. ❤

Also! If you want to see more Spider-Man art, or have some updates on the fic itself, I have a tumblr at BlueSocksandFluff, and this tag here I've put some art that I've done as of late. (There's also some DADpool stuff going on, so take that as an apology for the suffering that I've put Peter through.)
Also feel free to say hi!

My Artsy Fartsy Link

❤❤❤ THANK YOU AGAIN ❤❤❤
Well. This was happening.

Now.

Not that Peter thought it would happen now, but it was happening now, it seemed.

Perhaps Peter had been running on the high from escaping death. Perhaps it was the fact that it was an inevitable truth that needed to be addressed, or perhaps it was the fact that Peter seriously wondered what his Aunt’s take on all of this was.

So he had blurted - plainly and simply - the moment his Aunt had sat back down beside him, “I need to tell you something.”

There had still been other people in the room. Banner, for one, who was adjusting monitors and going through routine checks. Tony had been loitering just outside the room, chatting idly with Steve who had just finished his own conversation with Peter.

The moment Peter had blurted that statement, the room went quiet.

In a flash, Tony and Steve were gone from the doorway, and Banner looked around before politely - and quickly - excusing himself and shut the door.

That left just Peter and May.

“Yes Peter?” she asked simply. She was still that almost disturbing kind of calm understanding she had been since he had woken up.

It’s what prompted this in the first place maybe. She was just so.... Understanding.

However, despite his sudden confidence he had in his previous sudden statement vanished as fast as it had come. For Peter had realized that with that statement, the crashing reality that this conversation was happening and it was happening now.

Peter opened his mouth, closed it again, and when he opened it once more, all that came was a rough hoarse squeak.

Dammit.

May simply took up the cup of water from his bedside and held it up to help Peter to drink, not saying a single thing.
Peter took the drink as a welcome distraction as half of himself demanded to know what the hell he was doing, that this needed to stop now. The other half pleading for him to continue, because this insane lie had to stop.

“Thanks,” he muttered after taking a few good long dregs.

His aunt gently took away the cup, placing it gingerly on the side table before folding her hands in her lap.

“So,” she started, her voice ever-so-kind, but also ever-so-careful. “What do you want to tell me?”

“Um -” again the words died on Peter’s lips, but instead of them coming out hoarsely, they just ended. He closed his mouth and furrowed his brow.

May reached and pat his shoulder. “You should rest, Peter,” she insisted, her hand moving from his shoulder so her thumb could swipe across his cheek. “You’ve only just woken up, after all.”

Peter saw that for it was; an opening. It was an opening to take her offer and run, and she wouldn’t judge him if he didn’t broach the subject again. She was offering him the door to let the subject go; and yet - and yet, her eyes were so sad.

What she must have gone through these past few days.

What did she know?

What did she not know?

It wasn’t fair to her. His want for her not to know had long since passed any point of meaning, and...

Peter moved his hand, wrapping his cold fingers around hers, and tugged her hand away from his face. It wasn’t an unkind gesture, he just wanted to hold her hand.

“Peter?”

“I have to tell you something,” Peter said quietly, with less of the gusto as before, but he meant it far, far more this time.

Did she look relieved?

“What is it?” she asked quietly, hopefully.

He looked at her, and her expression already said, ‘I know what you are going to tell me,’ but he just had to say it.

“I’ve been lying to you,” Peter looked down, looking at her hand in his own pale one. “A lot, actually. I mean, not normal teenage stuff about curfew, homework or video-game stuff. Big stuff.”

“I thought we already talked about me noticing you skipping out at night -”

“Yeah but I still am lying to you, May. Big time. I don’t know how much you know - but I know you do know something,” Peter met her eyes as he said this. “It’s sort of obvious. You should be freaking out more. We’re in the Avengers Tower - you should be freaking out.”

May was silent for a moment, took a breath, replying with her words chosen very carefully, “What do you think I know?”
Peter wanted to duck away his eyes, to look away in shame. She was looking at him with such a look of assurance and acceptance that all he wanted to do was sink into the bed in shame for ever thinking it was a good idea to lie to her at all.

Instead, he kept his gaze caught with hers. “That I’m Spider-Man.”

Silence.

Then, Peter’s hand was let go of and Aunt May cupped his face in both her hands - as she seemed to do so often as of late - and firmly kissed his forehead.

“Thank you,” she breathed, her voice catching.

Startled when she pulled back, Peter replied, “Thank you? For - for what?”

“For telling me, Peter.”

“I - but -” Peter swallowed. “I lied to you. I - I told you that Spider-Man was a friend. When you told me that you knew about some of my weird powers I had a chance and I still didn’t say anything. I lied to you.”

“I cannot even begin to imagine how hard it was for to tell me,” May swiftly said, her hands back to being folded into her lap, but Peter still felt the warmth of them against his face. “I was willing to wait.”

“I - I -” Peter lowered his gaze. He still felt shame despite how kind she was being. Was she holding back for his sake? “How long did you -?”

“Did I know? Longer than I probably think I’d care to admit to myself,” May sighed. “However, I only had it confirmed just a few days ago.”

“- Oh.” So when he got injured then.

May’s kept her tone light as she continued to speak, plainly masking whatever it was she was really feeling, “Though that confirmation nearly never happened. It had been a matter of debate...”

Peter looked up. “Debate?”

May nodded. “Let me explain. See, they had called me immediately that night.”

“They?”

“Tony Stark,” May said. “He said that you had gotten into an accident and he was ‘en route’ with a doctor to get to you.”

So probably the moment Steve had called them for help.

“An accident?” Peter prompted.

“As I said - telling me what really happened was a matter of debate, apparently.” She added bitterly, “He didn’t tell me anything more than that you had ‘been in an accident,’ and ‘not to worry’ before he hung up.”

That sounded like something that Stark would do, given how the Avengers had been aware and Peter himself had emphatically told the man not to tell his Aunt he was Spider-Man.
“I was contacted again,” May continued, “I was completely beside myself with worry I’ll have you know - I thought that they had done something to you again, if this had to do with your ‘friendship with Spider-Man’ again,” May continued.

Peter flinched. “What did he say this time?”

“That I was getting premium escort to the tower. That ‘everything would be explained there,’” May huffed, tapping a finger against her crossed arms. “Only when I arrived did I learn that there had been an argument between him and two other members of the Avengers over all of this.”

“An argument.”

“Yes. Well. Tony Stark felt it necessary to hide what really happened from me. He said something along the lines that it was in ‘Peter’s best interest,’” she made air quotes as she spoke, “Apparently Mr. Rogers and Dr. Banner both thought otherwise. They thought it was imperative that I knew.”

Peter glanced up at the doorway, wondering idly if either of the two men were listening. It wasn’t likely... But still.

He suddenly remembered something Banner had started to say earlier, when Peter had been wary about Banner divulging too much of his biology in front of his Aunt; ‘Is it because your Aunt is here? Peter, she already -’

“Oh,” Peter realized. “I should have noticed before.”

“It’s fine.” May shook her head. “I didn’t exactly want them to tell you that I knew.”

This confused Peter the most.

“Why? After what I put you through -”

“First of all, you didn’t put me through anything Peter Benjamin Parker,” May sharply replied. “Second, I wanted you to tell me.”

Peter furrowed his brow. “I don’t... I don’t understand. Why aren’t you more... angry about this? Why aren’t you - you- I dunno? More upset? Yelling? Feeling betrayed?”

“Peter, do you think you’ve betrayed me?” May almost sounded shocked - saddened even.

“I ... Yeah.” He shrugged. “I guess.”

“Peter. You haven’t betrayed me, and as much as my parental-minded brain wants to get mad at you for not telling me, what right do I have to speak? I don’t know how or why or what caused you to become what you are now, and I can’t possibly put myself in your shoes to even fathom what you must have been going through.”

“I should have told you earlier.”

“Yes,” May agreed, “You should have.”

Peter took a shaky breath.

May continued her assurances, “I’m not about to punish you for it. You’re too good at punishing yourself. But. I do want to know everything. I mean everything. I don’t want to be out of the picture anymore, Peter. I want to know every detail.”
That was more than reasonable to him. She deserved to know everything.

“I can do that,” Peter eventually said. “Everything. I’ll tell you anything you want to know.”

“Good,” May seemed satisfied.

With that said, another silence fell between them.

Of all the ways that reveal happened over the years in his mind’s eye, Peter never imagined it to happen like this.

It looked like it wasn’t going to be an on-the-spot interrogation fest, but something drawn out over time.

It... made him feel both more anxious but a hell of a lot better.

“Peter,” May broke the silence.

“Yeah?”

“You know I love you right?”

Peter shifted, “Well. Yeah. You say it a lot.”

“I mean it.”

“I... I know.”

“Even if you are somehow part-spider.”

Peter choked on a surprised laugh. “What?”

“And secretly learned how to sew without asking me, your loving, caring and doting Aunt,” she said dramatically hand against her chest.

“May!”

“So I mean it when I say I want to know everything, mister. All the details. Like where are you hiding that sewing machine, when did you learn to sew, and also spandex, Peter?”

“Why is that the first thing you interrogate me on?” Peter incredulously cried back at her. “Sewing? Spandex?”

“I have a right to know,” she huffed. Then smiled.

He smiled back at her gratefully.

God he loved her.

May stood, tugging at Peter’s sheets and started to pull away the pillows that supported him. “Okay, I think it’s time for sleep though. As much as I want to drill you on everything.”

“Wait -” Peter tried to keep himself propped with his elbows, but May effortlessly pushed him down, tucking him firmly. “- You’re not going to keep asking me questions?”

“As much as I want to - no. We have a lifetime for that, Peter.”
Peter had nothing to say to that, and May just smoothed his hair back fondly.

“Sleep Peter. You're going to need the rest.”

“Do you have any two-by-fours? In the dark grey?”

The clinking of plastic, shuffling of sheets, and low voices filled Peter’s room.

It had been three days since he had woken up, and only one day since Bruce had given him the okay to be moved to a different room and allowed to sit up and walk for longer periods of time.

It was a much nicer room, a little closer to the one that he had at home, and his Aunt’s room was just next door, so he didn’t have to worry about being too far from her.

At that very moment though, Peter was sitting upright, legs crossed, cheek resting in one hand as he picked through plastic pieces.

There was an IV was hooked into his wrist - taped gently in place - but Peter hardly noticed, or cared. He knew what it was there for, and he hardly was going to argue with Dr. Banner of all people.

“No...” was the slow reply, along with the shuffling of their pieces. “No... I don’t see it. I have black ones?”

Peter shook his head, thumbing through the instruction booklet. “I gotta have the dark grey,” he picked up the book, turning the instructions this way and that. “Where could it have -” He spotted it. “- Aha!”

Peter held up the piece in triumph - it had been hidden under the manual and the folds of the sheets of his be - grinning ear-to-ear.

Steve chuckled. “Found it then?”

Peter clicked the piece triumphantly in place. “Found it.”

“Good. I finished my part,” Steve had it in his hands as he spoke, holding it delicately.

“Dude. Awesome. You did that really fast,” Peter gingerly took the piece, and turned it over. “This is great! When we’re done, it’s going to be so awesome.”

Never did Peter ever think that the first time that he would be teaming up with Captain America of all people, would it be over LEGO of all things.

Sure, he had imagined them fighting crime together - as all young children sometimes dreamed of being a superhero like Captain America.

Those dreams just increased one-hundred fold when he got his powers and became Spider-Man. He had pipe-dreams of swinging through buildings on some mission with the Captain, saving people and thwarting crime.

Never did he think he’d be sitting with Steve Rogers, both in casual clothes, working on a model of a
spaceship together.

Peter picked up the model part he had finished and happily clicked it together with Steve’s. “Well. Two down, a lot more to go - are you sure you want to keep helping me? I didn’t expect for Mr. Stark to pick up such a big kit when I asked for something to keep me busy, so...”

“Wouldn’t a big kit keep you busy though?”

“Yes. Er, what I meant was -” Peter laughed, “- You don’t have to keep helping if you don’t want to.”

Steve was already turning the manual toward himself and flipping to the next few pages. He started to rifle through the pieces as he spoke, “I enjoy this,” he stated simply.

Peter held back a flush - it was like he was some seven-year-old - and just blew out air, ruffling his own bangs. “Right. Let’s keep going,” he agreed, reaching for the instruction manual.

A knock on the door didn’t move Peter’s attention from the instructions - even Steve didn’t even look up - he just called out a ‘come in,’ as he stuck two pieces together.

“You know,” a drawling voice started immediately upon the person’s entry, “Steve here technically isn’t allowed to play with LEGOS. He sort of exceeds the age-limit on the box. Or just about.”

Peter looked up at Steve who rolled his eyes and looked over his shoulder at Tony Stark. “What is it?”

“I hate to interrupt your lovely bonding-session,” Tony gesturing between them. “It’s beautiful, really. Brings a tear to my eye. But Natasha and Clint are back.”

Peter straightened, as did Steve.

“And?”

“And? Looks like our ‘guest’ was indeed telling us the complete truth when he said he was going to cooperate with us. They found exactly what he said they’d find.”

Steve furrowed his brows.

“Look, I know you don’t trust him worth an inch -”

“Of course I don’t -”

“- But now that we have those documents that he was given, I think it’s about time we had a better full-on chat.”

Steve frowned.

Was this a conversation that Peter should be overhearing? He was so used to them skirting around subjects when around him.

Peter knew that Deadpool was in the building - he was shocked he was alive even - and Peter knew that wherever Natasha and Clint had gone to was involved with his whole situation.

Never before had they spoken about it all so frankly in front of him.

Before, when he asked anything, they gave him vague answers that he’d, ‘know soon enough,’ or
‘we’ll tell you when we know more.’ But that was all.

So Peter tried again, “What’s going on?”

Steve was frowning at Tony. “I don’t like this game you’re playing.”

Tony shrugged unapologetic ally. “It’s just the way I play.”

“You know I don’t trust him.”

“And you know what he requested when he said he’d do a tell-all.”

“I know what he requested! The documents should be good enough for him!” Steve stood, suddenly and surprisingly angry. “He has no right to be demanding anything from us let alone -”

“Well why don’t we just let -”

“This isn’t fair, Tony,” Steve hissed. “You know exactly how I feel about this situation, you already know my position on it. Hell, you know Clint’s position on it, and Banner’s, and Natasha’s and his Aunt’s.”

“Don’t speak for his Aunt, she already -” Tony started to say.

Peter looked between them. “Is this about me?”

Steve ran a hand down his face, and Tony looked triumphant but grim. “Every word, kiddo.”

“What’s going on?”

“Well -”

“Tony,” Steve interrupted.

“What? You were the one that said we shouldn’t keep him in the dark about everything? So why don’t we just let him decide -”

“Because this is a bad idea,” Steve turned to look at Peter. “You know that I would not intend to hide information from you, correct? I want you to know as much as we do, but what we are talking about here is a matter of safety and not about -”

“He should choose that.”

“Why can’t you just video-feed him in?”

“Our ‘guest’ said it’s a no-go.”

“Our prisoner has no rights here.”

“I think we should listen to him?”

“Are you insane?”

“Not as much as he is, but maybe?”

“What are you guys talking about? What does Deadpool want that I have to have an opinion about?” Peter asked.
Steve sighed, looking defeated. “You.”

Peter stiffened.

Tony held up a hand. “Not quite so literally,” he quickly explained - Peter relaxed, “What he wants is for you to be there when we finally have our full ‘conversation’ with him. He refuses to say a thing to us until you are in the room as well.”

Peter didn’t know how to feel about that. “Why does he -?”

“Because he’s a deranged lunatic,” Steve stated flatly. “A deranged lunatic,” he turned to Tony, pointing a finger at his chest, “That tried to kill him remember?”

“Clear as day,” was Tony’s sharp reply, as he moved the finger. “He also cooperated the moment he was able to talk and breathe again. He told us exactly where to find where to find his current hideout, told us exactly where to get the information he was given, and never once lied about a single piece of information.”

“I don’t trust him.”

“Obviously. I am not asking you to trust him, I am asking Peter -” Tony glanced at Peter when he said this, “- to trust me enough to keep him safe so we can get what we need out of Deadpool.”

“I don’t like this,” Steve ran a hand through his hair, the other resting on his hip.

“Believe me, I don’t either,” Tony said in a less confrontational tone. “I will have the man behind glass that not even our very own Hulk could smash through. He will be able to hear and see Peter, but nothing else.”

Steve looked unconvinced, but his shoulders relaxed a little. He appeared to be silently debating with himself before he focused on Peter, “What do you want to do?”

What did Peter want to do? There was a lot for him to consider.

Peter decided to ask a question. “So Deadpool will tell you guys everything if I’m there in the room?”

“That’s right - but -”

“What will he say if I don’t show up?” Peter asked Tony.

“We’re not sure. Likely nothing at all. He was pretty serious about it,” Tony replied.

“Why?”

“Why does he want you to be there?”

“Yeah.”

“Hell if I know. I can tell you this one thing, he keeps saying sorry.”

“Excuse me?”

Steve clicked his tongue. “I wouldn’t believe a single thing that came out of his mouth. He’s not sorry.”
“I think he is,” Tony stated. “I can’t even begin to fathom what is going on in his head, but I think - just maybe - he feels genuine remorse for what he did.”

Peter frowned, turning over the LEGO in his hands so he could think. “What do you think I should do?”

“What I think and what I want you to do, kid, are different things. I think you should attend. I want you to make your own choice here.”

“Steve?”

Steve held up his hand. “I’ll be no help. If it were up to me, he wouldn’t even be in the building. I emphatically don’t think you should go.”

Peter thought. “So if I go, he’l tell you guys everything he knows? I mean, he’ll answer any of your questions?”

“So he says.”

“This is why I don’t like the way you approached this Tony,” Steve started to say, “You plainly made it seem like if Peter doesn’t go then somehow it’s being a detriment to us -”

“What about mine?” Peter said.

Steve turned to look at him, as if the thought never came to him. Tony raised his eyebrows.

“Yours?”

“Yeah. Would he answer any of my questions?”

Tony and Steve exchanged looks.

“I- I don’t see why he wouldn’t? I never thought of you asking questions, I had only figured he wanted you present. Proof that you’re alive,” Tony tapped his chin. “Something like that.”

As they talked, Steve was looking at Peter, one arm crossed over his chest with his other hand balled up near his mouth. After a moment, he took a breath, closed his eyes, and looked like he was silently reprimanding himself.

“I’ve changed my mind,” he suddenly stated, turning back to Tony.

“Really,” Tony sound disbelieving.

Steve nodded. “Really. Giving him a chance to ask questions of Deadpool might be good. If he is going to be as cooperative as you say he is.”

Tony held up his hands, “I believe him, okay?”

Steve didn’t respond, instead focusing back onto Peter and sitting back down on the edge of the bed. “I promise that all of us will be there, and if you are uncomfortable at any point, you can leave. No matter what that man says or does, you are in complete control.”

“Really?”

“Really. You deserve that much.”
At first, the idea of going face-to-face with the man that had hunted him down through the city like some horror-movie was beyond frightening to Peter.

That was, if flickering memories of a genuinely scared, terrified and confused Deadpool hadn’t come back to him.

He had clear mental images of that fearful face as the reality had crashed down on the mercenary.

Deadpool had been terrified.

Truly, wholly, genuinely terrified.

And that was something that Peter couldn’t quite understand or come to grips with. Deadpool had been shaken to his core and had done such an about-face when it came to him that Peter just had to know why.

He had to understand.

“Yeah. I want to go.”

“Good! That’s finally settled.”

When Peter said he wanted to go, he didn’t think it would be that day. Apparently in finding whatever Natasha and Clint had found, the whole situation became urgent enough for everyone to be immediately called together.

It had happened so fast.

Tony had left the room, and within minutes, Peter had his IV moved to a walking pole, and his Aunt had been there to assure him that everything was going to be okay.

She had chosen to not to attend the meeting - stating plainly, with an emotion-filled voice, she wouldn’t be able to handle it - but wanted to know everything afterwards.

Peter promised she would.

Steve’s firm and supportive grip on his shoulder gave Peter the resolve he needed to enter the room.

“Oh my god he’s alive!”

Peter jumped, looking up to see Deadpool. Deadpool who was indeed - as Tony had said - behind several layers of near-invisible glass. Though he was pressed against it like a child in a zoo.

The mercenary was still in his costume, a huge gash torn across the chest - right where the shield had been embedded - and despite that, he still managed to look akin to an excited puppy.

“Holy shit you’re alive! Look at you! Alive! You’re alive!” Deadpool said, nearly bouncing. “Holy crap! These shit-holes didn’t want to tell me if you were alive or not! Do you know how bullshit that is?” Deadpool pulled back from the glass to put his hands on his hips.

Peter blinked. “Uh...”
“I know, I know,” Deadpool continued. “It’s completely fair. I’m the real asshole here. But still. I was worried out of my fucking mind. I thought I had killed you.” He paused, adding, “You’re looking really good, kid.”

Peter opened and closed his mouth a few times, unsure of what to say. “Thank you?”

“Don’t,” Deadpool held up a hand. “Seriously. Don’t”

Peter was guided by Steve toward a chair - who was glaring daggers at Deadpool the entire time - but not before Clint and Natasha entered the room. Natasha held a bag in her hand, and Clint crossed the room in an instant.

“Peter!”

Peter happily took the archer’s warm embrace.

“I’m sorry I wasn’t able to see you,” Barton immediately said, “I had been on a mission when it happened, and had been sent off on another one as soon as that one had finished. If I could have I would have come to see you -”

“It’s fine,” Peter mumbled into his chest. “I get it.”

“Aww! Oh my god - that’s so sweet.”

Clint let go of Peter and shot Deadpool a look that could kill.


Natasha threw down the bag at Deadpool’s feet outside the glass. “We found what you were talking about.”

“All of it?” Deadpool asked.

“All of it. You hide your information very well.”

“Yeah well. Just ’cause I’m good at finding stuff, doesn’t mean I shouldn’t hide my shit well. Those are for these eyes only,” Deadpool gestured to his own face with two fingers.

Peter was sat down, Clint standing at his right, and Steve at his left, both of the men’s arms were crossed.

Peter nervously held onto the pole of his IV bag.

“Where did you get these documents?” Natasha asked.

“Just get right to the point, don’tcha? You just just swoop right in there,” Deadpool made a diving motion with his hand, “No preamble. No ‘how are you’s’ or ‘how’s the weather’, just straight to the point -”

Natasha crossed her own arms, and just looked at him.

“Yeesh. Okay. Fine. You held up your end of the bargain,” Deadpool glanced at Peter, “I’ll hold up mine. I got those from the proxy who hired me. Handed them to me all nice and pretty-like in those manila folders.”

“And where did they get them?”
“Said they got that from their employer,” Deadpool answered easily. “Look, and before you ask, no - I don’t know who that is.”

Steve spoke, “Why wouldn’t you know who it was who hired you to kill?”

“That isn’t so unusual, Mon Capitaine. Most people don’t want a mercenary to know who they are. You know, the whole killing thing. Sort of a double-edged sword. Often gets them killed.”

“Then how do you know that any of what you told was legitimate?”

“I might be bat-shit insane, but that doesn’t mean I’m not thorough. I take my job very, very seriously,” he said darkly. “I want to know every detail of my mark. I want to know absolutely everything. Whoever it was wanted me to kill Spider-Guy here,” Deadpool nodded to Peter, “Went way out of their way to convince me he was worth my time.”

“And what convinced you?”

“What convinced you?” Deadpool shot right back at them.

Peter noticed their collective flinch.

“Aha. Can’t play that high-and-mighty better-than-thou card can ya? See, I heard that you guys went after him. I heard about all of that. It’s also part of those documents there,” he pointed. “Also, I just hear things from other people. I’m not blind to the goings-on of this city.”

“Your point?” Tony asked.

“My point is this - you also got to ask yourself how you were as easily fooled as I was.” Deadpool explained.

“And?”

“And? I’m nothing like you guys! I’m an asshole. I have the moral code of a degenerate, but I do have some morals. Like; rape equals bad, don’t fucking hurt or abuse a child - oh - and, don’t be an asshole. Everything else? Fair fucking game.”

“So?”

“So.” Deadpool stepped closer to the window. It was shocking how one moment he looked like an absolute childish idiot, the next the most dangerous man in the world. “Why did moral-values-that-of-a-saint get so convinced that wee Parker here is an issue?” He thumbed over at Peter.

Peter looked at the others, who looked uncomfortable.

“See? Look. I was fucked with. I fucked up, I get that, I admit that. But you also gotta realize that you were duped too. Duped bad. The funny thing is? I’m harder to dupe than you guys it seems, because the work there is more thorough I bet.”

Tony looked at Natasha for confirmation, and she nodded.

“Oh ho - now doesn’t that feel bad? I know shit, okay? I know for a fact that even when you guys had your doubts, you still went with the whole thing. Right? Lemme guess? You took him in anyway? You-”

Steve took a few dangerous steps forward, “This isn’t about us!”
“Oh it is just as much about you as it is about me,” Deadpool replied as easily as if Captain America were but a mere bystander and not the hero that he was.

Steve clenched his jaw.

“I might be an ally for now, but I’m an - pardon the title drop - Unapologetic Ally. I’m not here to sugarcoat a single fucking thing to you guys,” Deadpool pointed between them.

Peter was shocked, wasn’t Deadpool supposed to be the one questioned? The one that was being put in his place? How in the hell did the man take control of the conversation so easily?

Deadpool tilted his head, looking satisfied.

The Mercenary casually strode across his small ‘room’ grabbed his own chair, and plopped himself in it, tucking his hands behind his head and crossing his boots.

“... shouldn’t have given him a chair,” Peter heard Tony mutter.

“So. Now that we got it clear that all of us fucked up - ‘cept you baby-boy -” Deadpool started, “- maybe we can get this conversation started.”

The others exchanged looks, Steve didn’t look happy, but nodded to Tony, turning back to Deadpool, relenting.


Chapter End Notes

Oh man oh man.

Thanks so much for waiting for this chapter to come out! Man I had a weird past week, but when I sat down to actually write this chapter, it came out so fast! Man. I love writing this. I love all of you guys.

If you ever doubt the meaning of a kudos, a subscription, a comment? Don't. Everything is amazing. All of it. I love reading people's point of views, and I love just seeing other people enjoy something I enjoy too!

More to come soon, and much talking with the Deadeat Pools.

So much for the Avengers feeling like the had the control over the situation, huh?

❤ THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH❤
Chapter Summary

Some revelations - more questions.

This is Deadpool, after all.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“No matter how many times you ask me; no, I don’t know who it was who hired me,” Deadpool said with boredom from where he was still reclined in his chair, “It doesn’t matter how you word the question, or how many times you ask, the answer is still, and always will be, ‘I don’t know’.”

Deadpool’s ‘interrogation’ wasn’t going very well.

For all that he had given them an opening to ask any question they wanted, Captain America had circled back to one of the ones that had already been asked.

Not that Peter blamed him; Steve had no trust in Deadpool whatsoever and plainly didn’t believe a word that came out of his mouth, let alone his statement of not knowing who his true employer was.

Which was fair, Peter wasn’t sure if he trusted Deadpool either.

The mercenary was... confusing to be near. For all that his memories of the man were filled with horror and fear of death, the picture before him was an erratic and insane mess of a person, flickering between serious statements and nonsensical one-liners.

It was hard to peg the man down, and that made Peter just feel nervous and uncertain of any future interaction he was to have with the man.

Like his questions.

So Peter watched as Steve paced in front of the glass, arms crossed and firing off his questions for Deadpool to answer.

Peter was more comfortable with this arrangement.

“Surely you must have some idea of who it was that would want to hire you,” Steve said once more.

“Nope,” Deadpool curtly replied. “Shockingly, I still don’t have an answer to that question. No matter how many times you ask it.” He uncrossed his legs, gesturing in exasperation. “Do I need to remind you that it wasn’t a priority to know at the time? That I had sufficient evidence that the target was a viable one? That if I wanna get paid, I have to value my customer’s privacy?”

Captain America stopped his pacing, instead he faced the mercenary with his arms folded behind his back. “You cannot make me believe for one second that you just blindly take on hits for people without even a ghost of an idea of who ordered them.”
“Hello? Is patriotism clogging your ears? Did you hear me?” Deadpool cupped his hands over his mouth in a mock-shout, “I said; I had sufficient evidence that the target was viable. I didn’t need to know who ordered the hit.”

“How could you possibly be a viable mercenary if you don’t try to find out who hired you?” Steve snapped back, standing close to the glass.

Peter could feel the ire radiate off of Steve in waves. It made the hairs on the back of his neck prickle, and his spider-sense to send out weak warnings.

He swallowed, carefully watching the interaction.

The others watched too, silently and not interrupting.

Steve’s last statement caused Deadpool to bark a laugh, doubling over in his chair as he smacked his knee. “Oh my god, that’s priceless; you’re trying to place legal and ethical business practices on killing people.” He wiped away a mock tear.

“This isn’t funny, Wilson.”

Deadpool looked up, the humour was gone from his expression as quickly as a light turning off.

“Isn’t it though?” he said darkly as he stood.

The tension in the room grew thicker.

Deadpool approached the glass, stopping only when there were only mere inches between himself and Captain America. And from Peter’s point of view, that glass no longer looked thick enough.

“It isn’t,” Steve coolly replied.

“Oh, I think it is,” Deadpool replied in equal measure, “You seem to forget what world I come from. So why don’t you stop asking me pointless questions and actually ask me something useful? Because as far as I’m aware, we’re just repeating the same bullshit over and over.”

Steve took a breath, but Deadpool continued, narrowing his eyes, “And I don’t do repeats.”

The air went absolute frigid, and it was Tony Stark that cut through the ice before anything else could be said. “Okay - that’s enough.”

“This isn’t getting us anywhere,” Natasha agreed, also stepping forward to stop the conversation from degenerating any further.

Oh, thank god.

Peter slumped back in his chair slightly, unaware that he had been sitting bolt upright as the tension had hardened into solid ice.

“That’s what I was saying,” Deadpool gestured wildly, dropping the cool bravado for dramatics.

“This line of questioning is useless! Do you really think I’d hide knowing who the person was if I knew? I want to flay them just as much as you guys do! Of course I’d tell you guys!”

Peter watched as Steve shook his head in disbelief, just stepping away from the glass in disgust.

“I seriously would!” Deadpool called to Captain America’s back. “Honestly, if I wasn’t trapped in this glorified glass cell, I’d have found the fucker, strung him up, and mailed them straight onto your
front doorstep for you to have fun with. All neat and tidy with a bow.”

“Would you?” Natasha’s asked.

“Ab-so-fucking-lutely! In fact, I could get out right now and -”

“You are not going to ‘get out’,” Steve snapped, whirling.

Deadpool plainly rolled his eyes under his mask. “Duh. Not unless one of you guys intentionally made it easy enough for me to do so.” He knocked on the glass to remind them of its existence, his attention flickering to Tony for a second or so before staring straight back at Steve. “See? So, why don’t you just ask me something useful - dumbass - and we can move this train a bit faster.”

Captain America’s closed his eyes. Peter could easily hear the muttered mantra of counting and the leather of Steve’s gloves squeaking as his fists clenched tightly.

This was going oh so well.

So very well.

Peter wanted to be anywhere but there.

What had he been thinking?

“Hey. No.” Tony chastised Deadpool as if he were a dog, “Stop it. Bad. No.” He also addressed Steve, “You too. Calm down.”

Steve sighed in frustration, but nodded slightly.

“You hear that, Cap?” Deadpool called childishy, “Calm down.”

Tony rounded on him again, “Stop antagonizing him. Seriously.”

Deadpool shrugged, plopping down in his chair again his arms behind his head.

“I mean it,” Tony continued, “you may think this is your ballgame, but it isn’t. You’re playing in my court, and if you don’t behave, you are not going to like the consequences,” Tony warned.

“... Uh huh. Sure.”

“I mean it,” Tony said. “Remember our nice little deal? I might just renege on some of our agreement if you don’t behave.”

Peter wondered if that meant that Tony would take him out of the room. Though he wasn’t sure how that was much of a punishment, seeing as Deadpool now knew he was alive.

Though, Peter was only assuming the reason why he was there in the first place - he honestly had no clue why Deadpool wanted him there.

Deadpool straightened. “You wouldn’t.”

“I would. So don’t try me. Also,” Tony pointed to Dr. Banner over his shoulder with his thumb, “Good ol’Bruce here has offered to keep you company as well. If you continue to misbehave.”

Bruce waved grimly.
Peter winced. He was once locked in the room with the Hulk - it was not something he particularly wished on anyone or wanted to witness.

“I dunno if that’s much of a punishment,” Deadpool stated casually. “You know, I’d let Hulk smash me anytime.”

Then he winked.

Bruce grimaced.

Peter gaped.

“By the way,” Deadpool stage-whispered from behind his hand to Bruce, “My safe-word? It’s the entirety of 'O Canada' -”

Steve growled loudly, scrubbed a gloved hand over his face, his other hand on his hip, and turned away from Deadpool.

“- sung in the key of C,” Deadpool continued, winking again.

“That’s it.” Steve snapped again, whirling on the spot, his eyes ablaze. “If he says one more thing -”

He was quelled by Clint’s hand on his shoulder. “Don’t listen to him.”

“Hey,” Tony warned the merc, “I mean it. Stop it.”

“Make me,” Deadpool petulantly replied, crossing his arms and legs.

“I knew this was a bad idea,” Steve growled under his breath to Clint. “I knew this was a bad idea...”

“... Don’t let him get to you - he’s doing this on purpose...”

“... I know but...”

As Clint spoke to Steve quietly, trying to calm him down, Tony faced Deadpool on the other side of the glass, tapping it slightly.

“I meant what it when I said I’d pull back on some of our agreement,” Tony threatened.

“You sure you’re gonna wanna make that choice there Stark?” Deadpool asked.

There was a certain note of concern in Deadpool’s voice - worry - as if he was fairly certain that Tony was going to do exactly what he feared. Whatever that was.

“Yes,” Tony grimly replied. Deadpool frowned, and Tony addressed Steve, “Ready to try again? Give this a chance?”

Steve glowered at Tony, displeasure painting his every feature, “You know I don’t trust him, Tony. You can’t expect me to believe anything he says.”

Tony put up his hands. “I get it. I understand. I promise I’ll keep him in line. If you would just...”

“Tony I can’t just-”

“Enough!” Natasha shouted, drawing everyone’s attention and bringing silence crashing down over the room, everyone stunned into stillness.
Even Peter had frozen, even though he was not a part of any of this.

Natasha looked at Steve, then at Tony and then at Deadpool, before she cleared her throat. “Are you done?”

Tony made a non-committal sound, shoving his hands in his pockets, and Steve merely frowned, but did not look as if he was going to say anything else.

“Good,” she said. “That’s better.”

Even Deadpool looked quelled. He was sitting upright in his chair, hands folded in his lap something akin to a scolded child.

Natasha didn’t focus her attention on him, however, instead, she turned directly toward Peter, “Peter.”

Peter jumped. “Um? Yes?” he replied nervously.

She didn’t reply right away. Instead, Natasha simply knelt down next to Peter so that they were at eye-level, her arm resting on the back of his chair.

“Don’t you have questions?” she asked simply.

Well, yes. Of course he did. He just wasn’t as confident in them as he had been before. Being in the same room as the man had changed his opinion on their necessity somewhat, that and how terribly the ‘conversation’ between him and Captain America had gone.

“Er -” Peter couldn’t help but notice Deadpool’s interested expression from over Natasha’s shoulder and Peter forced himself to look at Natasha instead. “I don’t think anything I have to ask will help.”

“Why is that?” she asked.

“Because I’m the most in the dark here? You all have a better idea of what is happening, not me.”

What could he ask that would help anyway? They had the most information. He was wholly in the dark, and the more he thought of the things he wanted to ask Deadpool, the less and less likely it could even remotely be a help to anyone.

Besides, they were stupid questions really, things that bothered or confused him, nothing important.

Natasha shook her head, putting a comforting hand on his arm. “More reason to ask questions, isn’t it? You want to understand something - then ask.”

Peter was still doubtful.

“You can ask me any question you want, kiddo,” Deadpool loudly added from over Natasha’s shoulder. “Anything! Doesn’t matter what it is!”

Peter frowned, Natasha leaned closer so that only Peter could hear. “You will be safe.”

“I know that,” he quietly replied.

“I mean it. Nothing will happen to you,” she assured. “Not again. I promise.” She nodded then in the vague direction of the mercenary, continuing, “I also believe he will not do anything to intentionally hurt you.”
Peter glanced at the mercenary that was cheerfully waving at him. He couldn’t help but flatly reply with an eyebrow raised, “You sure about that?”

“I’m sure.”

Peter nodded closing his eyes and taking a breath. There was really no avoiding it, was there? He did have questions, he wanted to speak with the man, and also him using that as a reason for him to come would have been pointless if he didn’t ask even one thing.

“Ohay,” Peter finally said, opening his eyes and blowing out a stream of air. “I’m ready.”

Natasha squeezed his shoulder she stood up.

She turned on her heel, hands resting firmly on her hips as she addressed Deadpool. “You will answer his questions.”

He saluted in return. “Any and all ma’am.”

“You will not antagonize him,” she continued.

“I’d never.”

She narrowed her eyes. “Good.”

Then, before Peter could even protest, she grabbed a hold of the chair - and the IV stand - and pushed Peter toward the glass wall, shortening the distance between him and Deadpool considerably.

“I could’ve stood up,” Peter muttered to himself nervously.

Deadpool grabbed the edge of his own chair, and scooted it closer to the class, to bridge the gap as much as he could between himself and Peter.

It was odd seeing the man so - yet not so - close to him now.

The distance between them made it feel like they were alone in a room and not like Peter had the Avengers hovering several feet back listening carefully.

“Heya, kid,” Deadpool greeted. His tone altogether soft and cautious.

How this man flickered between one mood to another was a sight to behold. He looked nothing like that dark figure that had been glaring down Captain America like he was a nobody just moments before.

He looked uncertain, sheepish almost, playing with his gloved fingers uncertainly.

“Um. Hey,” Peter replied.

Steve frowned from over Peter’s shoulder, but Natasha put a placating hand on his arm and guided him further back into the room to give Peter and Deadpool space.

“So you got questions for me?” Deadpool brought Peter’s attention back to him.

“Oh. Um...”

“How about basics first. Hi, my name is Wade Wilson, I’m Canadian, I like long walks on the beach and eating pancakes in the morning,” the mercenary prattled off like he was in some addiction
meeting. “I also love Mexican food, and my favourite colour is red but that’s not why I wear it.”

Peter didn’t want to know why he wore red - he had a pretty good idea why he wore it and Peter personally preferred a lack of confirmation for his own sake.

Peter took a breath as Deadpool patiently waited for him to speak.

It had been easier watching from afar than sitting so close to the man. For all that he was a complete one-eighty from who he was when he was literally chasing him down to kill him, it was still entirely unsettling.

This man was a cold-blooded killer, and had killed hundreds if not thousands of people, and he was sitting in front of Peter cheerfully talking almost as if that chase never happened.

Peter gripped the IV stand.

“Hey kid,” Deadpool’s suddenly soft voice surprised Peter out of his thoughts. “I ain’t gonna hurt cha.”

Peter swallowed.

“It’s fine! You don’t have to believe me. I wouldn’t believe me.” Deadpool paused. “No wait - ouch on my part - that’s not a good way to word it. What I mean to say is - I just want you to hear me say that, okay? I’m not going to hurt you.”

Peter nodded slightly.

“Cool. Besides, there’s like a foot of glass between us, and I’m not about to even try anything remotely as stupid as breaking into there right this instant, so like, yeah.” Deadpool leaned in really close, and harshly whispered, “Good Ol’ American Flag Pj’s over there will defend you so fast that I’ll be a red mist before I could even take a single step in the room.”

To his surprise, Peter snorted.


“Okay,” he took a breath. Peter, instead of letting himself hesitate any further, just asked, “How did you find me, on that night?”

“Oh? Easy. I’ve been watching you for a couple of days.”

This lazily given information startled Peter. “A few days?”

“Oh? Easy. I’ve been watching you for a couple of days.”

This lazily given information startled Peter. “A few days?”

“Yep,” Deadpool casually replied. “I was getting an idea of how you work, what you do, etcetera.”

“I had no idea you were even near me,” Peter remarked.

“I sure hope not! Would sort of be shit at my job if you noticed me. Also, binoculars are an awesome invention, by the way - also, YouTube. They’re many ways to get a picture of a person without being close to them.”

“How did you find me that night?”

“Oh? Well. It’s not that hard to follow a red-and-blue spandex-wearing Spider-hero, you know that, right? You’re wearing like, cherry red and bright-ass blue, not exactly spooky-mysterious,” Deadpool started. “I thought you were on to me at first, though.”
“On to you?”

“Yeah. Your routes are never consistent! You never do the same shit twice and you went so out of your way that night that I was sure you were on to me,” Deadpool explained.

“What really?” Peter never considered how erratic his patrols were.

It was true that he hated to do the same route twice, it gave criminals less of a chance to figure out where he was so they could try to do something from under his nose.

Never did he think it’d frustrate the hell out of his would-be killer

“Yeah! Nearly fucked up all my plans! You have any idea how hard it is to set up shit like that?”

“Set up?”

“Yeah. I had to ditch one of my plans and move it all over elsewhere in the city because you couldn’t keep your skinny behind where it I thought it was gonna go.” Deadpool explained. “Annoying as hell, by the way. It was a scramble for me to get it all ready without you noticing.”

“Noticing? Set up? What are you-”

It clicked.

Right before Deadpool had pressed that gun to the back of the head, the two men he had been apprehending had been oddly compliant.

One had even turned to him and complimented him.

Oh shit.

“- Oh.” Peter nearly stood up in surprise.

“Yeah,” Deadpool stated with simple pride.

Peter’s heart thudded hard in his ears. How in the hell had he not noticed it was staged?

It was so obvious looking back on it now. The drivers never left the alley - never once ducking into traffic where they could have gotten away much easier.

The trunk had been so obviously broken - leaving such a perfect trail of cash on the street.

It had been horrifically cartoonish, and terribly easy, the entire apprehension.

Never once had he noticed how odd it had all been. How it had been too easy -

Damn.

That blatant compliment had been said to make him stand still.

And come to think of it?

Peter had no idea where those two men had gone after the fact. They were just gone.

Peter looked at Deadpool, unable to keep the horror out of his voice. “You staged the whole thing to
get to me.”

“Um... Yep.” Deadpool repeated far, far less of the pride that he had just moments ago. “I did. Look-”

“- Was that part of the request?” Peter asked quickly.

“What?”

“Staging the crime? Was that part of what was asked of you? Did they plan that?” Peter had to know. He had to know if he had to look out for something like that in the future.

“What? Oh! No. No that was all me. I sort of tailor every job to the person, you know,” Deadpool explained, “Sometimes I just going into a place and **bang**, but other times it’s a little more orchestrated,” he wiggled his fingers. “But sometimes people request stuff.”

Peter felt relief in knowing that.

Only some relief - there was still the matter that someone had been hired to **kill him**.

“Request what?” he asked.

“Um - well, like sometimes they want a person to be killed a certain way - I don’t give guarantees - or sometimes they want the killing to be staged to implicate someone else,” Deadpool started, Peter cringing at the idea of any of those things happening to others or himself. “With you, in this case, they just wanted Spider-Man dead, and for the body to be dropped off.”

Peter stared. “What?”

His body...?

Steve stepped forward. “You never said that before.”

“What?” Deadpool said. “I never said that they wanted the body to be dropped off?”

“No. You didn’t,” Steve confirmed.

“You sure?”

“Positive.”

“Huh,” Deadpool clicked his tongue. “Well you didn’t ask.”

Peter held up his hand before the two of them could degenerate again into a dangerous standoff. His voice pitched, “Can we get back to the whole; my body being dropped off thing? Where? Where did they want it to be dropped off?”

“Yes, I’d also like to know,” Steve agreed, eyes narrowed.

“Nowhere glamorous,” Deadpool shrugged. “They wanted me to hide the body securely and then call them to pick it up. They didn’t have a specific place.”

“Why?” Peter asked.

“Why what?”
“Why did they want my body?”

“Well, there’s many reasons for that. Mostly it’s so nobody can find the body - sometimes they just want a person to disappear.”

“That’s odd, isn’t it?” Steve asked. “For them to want that.”

“I guess it’s a bit odd,” Deadpool considered, leaning back, the front legs of his chair lifted off the ground. “You’d think they’d want to show off they got him, right? That they were the people behind getting rid of Spider-Man, right?”

Steve hummed in consideration.

Peter only felt ice and fear in his stomach, and he was only vaguely aware that Steve had put his hand on his shoulder.

“So why-?” Peter asked, mouth dry.

“Hell if I know - it’s not like they were trying to -” Deadpool slowly trailed off, his eyes widening. “- Holy shit.”

“What?” Steve asked. “What is it?”

Deadpool held up a hand standing sharply. “Holy shit.”


“Well, that much is obvious they tried to have you kill him.”

“Hold on. Thought not finished. They wanted him dead, they wanted his body... They didn’t want him just dead. They could’ve strung him up by the rafters and put a big sign up to warn others that they took out a hero -”

Peter blanched at the mental picture.

“- But no. They didn’t want to do that. They wanted his body. Why else would they want me to -” Deadpool clapped his hands together whirling on his heels to face Steve. “Cap. Tell me. What would you have done if Spider-Man really was who you guys thought he was?”

Steve’s hand squeezed Peter’s shoulder. “We weren’t going to kill him if that’s -”

“Just humour me. What were you going to do?” Deadpool said. “Play with me here. Hypothetically speaking, what if Spider-Man was who it said he was, what if he was exactly what the files lead you to believe, what would you have done?”

“He would have been incarcerated,” Steve started, going along with whatever Deadpool wanted. “He was listed as a dangerous mutant, so it is extremely likely he would’ve been locked away. Though he was listed as being a non-American citizen, so there was a high chance that he would have been given to the authorities of his country of origin for the crimes that he had done listed there once we got into... contact...”

“He gets it!” Deadpool raised his arms in excitement.
Peter heard Natasha whisper to Clint, “Deportation... He would have been off our radar.”

“This is troubling,” Steve stated.

“Well, yeah, but finally we’re getting somewhere!” the mercenary cheerfully announced.

“Do you have any idea of why someone would want to make Spider-Man ‘disappear,’ as it were? Body and all?”

“That - That...” Deadpool trailed, then shrugged. “I have no idea honestly.”

There was a collective sigh.

“Well that was incredibly disappointing,” Tony stated from across the room. “What a grand use of our time.”

“Rude. I think it was a great use of our time.”

“Unfortunately, I have to agree with Deadpool,” and just stating that sounded as if it hurt the Captain.

“Aw! You agree with little ol’ me? Am I sensing a friendship coming on?” Deadpool blinked.

A swift glare shut the mercenary up.

“I agree with him,” Steve repeated to Tony, “This is just too convenient. Think of the documents, the underground rumours of Spider-Man, everything that paints him as a problem but not too big of a problem, if you understand me. Just enough to make someone deal with him before anything worse happens,” Steve frowned in thought. “Just enough to sweep in and try to intercede and take him out of the picture.”

“But why?”

“I don’t know. We’ll find out.”

Peter hoped so.

Steve turned, firm determination set into his stance and his jaw. “Tony - I want you to scour every bit of information we have, every bit of information we have obtained from Deadpool, and everything else in between. I want to know every crime that ‘Spider-Man’ has supposedly committed, and I want to know every country he is supposedly tied to. I want you to chase those routes as far as they will lead.”

Tony nodded.

“Clint. Natasha.”

“Yes?”

“I want you to come back here once we are through and talk to Deadpool about every aspect of his meeting with this proxy, about every bit of information, about every step of his movements from the time he was hired to now. For now, I want you to join Tony and tell him everything you found during your re-tracing of Deadpool's steps.”

“Can do.”
“Wilson?”

“Yes, my knight in American armour?” Deadpool fluttered.

“When they return, tell them exactly how you were to hide ‘the body’ and how you were to get in contact with them so they knew where to pick it up. I also want any theories on safeguards they would have taken on the off chance that you got curious afterwards and followed them.”

“Wow, he knows me so well,” Deadpool said as an aside to Peter, “I’m really nosy.”

“Are those all the orders?” Tony teased.

“Yes. For now.”

“Then this meeting is over?” Deadpool asked.

“For now - unless anyone has further questions. I think we need to look through what information we’ve gotten from you,” Steve gestured to the bag that Natasha had brought earlier, “And this new revelation.”

“Aw, too bad. We were just starting to have a breakthrough moment,” Deadpool whined.

Steve completely ignored Deadpool’s last comment

As Steve turned away to speak to the others more in-depth - some sort of plan formulating between them as they got a better picture of how to approach the problem - Deadpool moved very close to the glass.

“Hey. Ppst. Peter.”

Peter, having been training his hearing to listen to the other’s conversation jumped a mile when he heard Deadpool knocking on the glass.

“Baby-boy. Ppst.”

“U-uh. Yeah?”

“Any other questions before this party ends?” Deadpool asked, leaning backward and pressing his hand into his back as if to scratch it. “Make it quick.”

Peter furrowed his brows. “I’m sure they’ll let me ask more questions.”

Deadpool shook his head “Just make it quick. Any other questions? We won’t have a chance like this for a while.”

Again, Peter was confused, but instead of voicing his confusion, he just did as Deadpool requested. The man was a scattered mercenary after all - there was no knowing what was going on in his head, or how long he’d be compliant with questions even.

“There is one thing that I want to know.”

“Yeah?”

“When you found out how old I was - when I took off my mask,” Peter started, and Deadpool’s expression fell slightly, “You went from wanting to gut me to being absolutely terrified. Why?”
“Shit, kid - I pretty much killed you! Of course I was terrified.”

“Why? Why though?”

“I said it before, I don’t kill kids.”

Peter frowned. “Why didn’t you notice before? When I spoke?”

Deadpool flinched, he muttered ‘shut up’ to himself before answering, tapping his temple as if silencing something, “Because I didn’t want to believe you were actually a kid. I was ignoring my fucking instincts based on pure anger.”

“Why were you angry?”

“Because I hated you. Plain and simple.”

Deadpool flinched.

“Not anymore. But I hated the Spider-Man I had been presented with. I hated him because he was someone who manipulated others into thinking he was better than anyone else when he was really worse. He rubbed me the wrong way.”

“What did ‘Spider-Man’ do? And why are the newspapers not full of that information? Why is it so guarded? I don’t get it. Sure, the police don’t like me much, but why?”

Deadpool scrubbed a hand over his face. “I dunno, kid. It’s probably a part of whatever and whenever the ‘whoever’ is orchestrating this planned. I don’t know. There are a lot of things that happen behind-the-scenes that the public doesn’t know about, kid. This world has a dark, dark underbelly.”

“One that Spider-Man was supposedly a part of.”

“Supposedly. I’m going to do more research into that. What and how and who has been giving ol’ Spidey a bad name. Believe-you-me, I want to find the answers more than you’ll ever know.”

“Why?”

“Because they fucked with me. They fucked with my head and they fucked with a kid. They twisted what morals I had left and nearly forced me to go against them for their own personal gain. I admit I fucked up - I am genuinely sorry for what I did - but I also want to flay the bastards that put me in that position.”

Peter considered all of this silently.

“Look,” Deadpool said low under his voice. “Kid. They’ll get to the bottom of this.”

Peter knew that, but it was still scary. It was still scary knowing that this was happening - and still happening - to him, and scary to know there was some lie of what Spider-Man was out there where he couldn’t stop it.

“I never did anything they said I did, you know.”

“I know. Shit, kid, I know. Be glad that for some reason it not being public knowledge is a part of whatever grand scheme. It’ll be swept under the rug. It’s fine. You’ll go back to being the Gosh-Darned Polite City Spider-Boy.”
Peter replied flatly, “Friendly Neighbourhood Spider-Man.”

“Right. That. That thing.”

Peter found himself snorting again. “You know - you’re not nearly as bad as I thought you’d -”

“Scootch back would you?”

Peter tilted his head. “Pardon?”

“Your chair. Scootch back.”

Peter, puzzled, did as was requested, moving the chair a foot or so back.

“A little to the left,” Deadpool waved his hand.

“What? Why?”

“Please? Humor me. I’m crazy.”

“Okay…” Peter did as he was asked, moving the chair until Deadpool gave him the thumbs-up.

“Perfect!”

“What was that -”

“Shh!” Deadpool put one of his gloved fingers up.

“W-”

“Shhh!” he hissed again.

Peter closed his mouth, and mouthed, “What?”

Deadpool’s gloved finger was still positioned over where his lips were and he was looking straight at Peter. “Just shh.”

At first, he wasn’t sure what Deadpool was doing - one of his hands was still at his back wheeling around like he was scratching wildly by his hip - so Peter just turned to look behind himself to see where the others were.

It looked like it was just Steve left in the room.

The others must have gone off to their respective ordered duties - even Bruce was gone.

“Ah ah! Don’t look at him,” Deadpool whispered, his voice hitched slightly. “Shit - ow. Just look straight at me.”

“What are you -”

Then he noticed it. Red droplets of blood hitting the flooring right under were Deadpool was crouched.

“... What...?”

The back of Deadpool’s leather jacket was hitched up, blood seeping and pouring from a fresh wound, spilling onto the floor.
However, that only caused Peter’s line of sight to go straight to Deadpool’s bloodied open hand.

In it was a bloody oblong object.

Peter was too shocked and horrified to make comment.

“Watch this,” Deadpool cheerfully whispered, and out flicked a long blade.

Deadpool *thrust* the knife downward into the seam where the glass met the flooring. Not into the glass itself, but wedged somewhere between it and the floor at an odd angle. Immediately, a long thin cracked line traced up one of the panes glass before spider-webbing.

Then another layer cracked.

And another.

And another.

Each pane lost its integrity and alarms blared. Lights dimmed. Chaos broke loose.

Sparks flew from the handle of the knife.

Seconds. Mere *seconds* after Deadpool had jammed the knife, and he was already up on his feet, chair over his shoulders swinging it deftly at the glass just above the point where he had jammed the blade into the flooring.

Steve was already halfway across the room by this point, but the barrier separating Deadpool from the rest of the room shattered into a waterfall of tempered glass before he could reach Peter.

He wasn’t quick enough.

Peter didn’t even have time to scream in surprise, because the flat of the blade - yanked from where it had been lodged, was pressed against Peter’s throat.

It felt hot.

Peter swallowed, held tightly in the mercenary’s grip, one arm over his chest, the other holding the blade.

Steve skidded to a halt.

“Here’s how this is going to go,” Deadpool breathed. “You’re going to let me go because you distrust me so much that you’ll think I’ll kill Peter for leverage.”

“I don’t think so.”

“Oh, so you do trust me then?” Deadpool tilted the blade, and Peter whined.

“That’s -” Steve hesitated. “That’s not going to happen. You’re going to let him go.”

“Sorry - no can do. Need a shield.” Deadpool ducked as a shield came straight - and accurately - for his head, taking Peter down with him.

Peter’s eyes were slammed shut, wincing as he heard the sound of the shield embedding into a wall.

“Not *that* kind of shield,” Deadpool chastised.
“Let. Him. Go.”

“No thank you!”

Peter yelped as Deadpool dropped the knife, and hooked one arm under one of Peter’s legs, effectively pulling him up into the mercenary’s arms.

If he wasn’t in the middle if healing - he could’ve pushed himself away.

But he couldn’t.

Steve ran at them, arm pulled back, eyes ablaze.

Deadpool ducked swiftly, kicking the blade on the ground with the back of his boot as he lunged forward. The hilt sharply smacked into Captain America’s jaw, giving Deadpool just enough time to dash out of the room.

Peter’s IV had unfortunately been yanked out with the movement.

“Sorry sorry sorry sorry!” Deadpool quickly yelled as he ran down the hallway with Peter in his arms. “I’m not going to hurt you. I’m not going to hurt you. I’m not going to hurt you! I just needed leverage to get out!”

Heavy footsteps were following. “Wilson!”

“Shit shit shit shit! I don’t have any other knives hidden in me. You have any idea how hard it is to hide a knife in your person? It was right in my hip too! A literal pain in the -” Deadpool ducked as the shield went over his head. “Aw fuck!”

Deadpool took them around a sharp corner, nearly tripping over his own two feet. Peter couldn’t help but to half-cling to the man to keep himself from being dropped violently.

“Where are you taking me!?”

“You? I’m not taking you anywhere! Look, I’m seriously sorry. I needed to use you to get out. There’s no way in hell that Cap would ever hurt you I needed to get away -”

What was he-?

Peter tried to focus on where Deadpool was running to, sure that Steve was hot on their heels.

Then he saw it.

A window.

It was wide open despite the alarms; the emergency shuttering seemingly failing to come down.

“Oh no...”

“Oh yes, ” Deadpool triumphantly announced. “Okay Pete! It’s been swell! See you later - I’m seriously sorry - I promise I’ll make it up to you. But now I gotta -”

Peter was let go, dropping to the ground as Deadpool leaped for the window, kicking off of the table settled right in front of it.

“- go!”
Peter cried out, covering his head with his hands as more glass showered over him.

Like that, the mercenary was gone.

Like some sick joke, it was only then that the emergency shutters decided to slam shut.

Peter breathed on the floor, aware of how badly he was shaking, only just barely able to take in what just happened.

He marvelled in the sheer fact that he wasn’t somehow more injured.

In fact - save for the slight bruise from when he was dropped - he wasn’t injured at all.

“Peter!”

Peter looked up to see Steve - who was sporting a very angry looking welt on his chin - run up toward him, going to his knees and to Peter’s side.

“Are you -”

“I’m okay, I’m okay -” Peter assured. “I’m okay.”

“Stay down, son, I’ll call -”

“No no. I’m fine. Really. He didn’t hurt me,” Peter assured, and to prove it he slowly stood up, flecks of glass raining off of him.

“What happened? What did he do?”

“I - I dunno. He just grabbed me and ran,” Peter said, rubbing the spot on his arm where the IV had been yanked out. “He said he was using me as a human shield, basically. Kept apologizing.”

Steve frowned angrily, glaring at the window. “... That was too easy,” He muttered.

“Why didn’t the window shut?” Peter asked, adrenaline still flooding his body and he rubbed his arms to quell the shaking, “When the alarm had gone off that time I tried to escape, it didn’t take nearly so long.”

“Steve! Peter!”

Tony was rounding the corner in a half-run. “What happened?”

Steve’s frown increased. “Tony.”

"Shit - that cut looks nasty, Cap. Kid, you okay?” Tony breathed once he caught up.

Peter nodded.

Steve watched Tony for a moment, before his eyes narrowed.

“What? What is it? He escaped, didn’t he?” Tony asked, walking straight past them to look at the glass pieces littering the floor. “Shit.”

“I don’t know, Tony.” Steve turned, “You tell me.”

Tony’s face contorted quizzically. “What? What are you - I was upstairs.”
Peter looked between the two men, still rubbing his hands up and down his arms to steady himself and his beating heart.

“Tony,” Steve’s voice was sharp, serious. Angry. “We need to talk.”

Chapter End Notes

Tony.

- 

Well I apologize for the delay but I had fallen into a pretty bad creative slump do to real-life stuff and also just a general slump.

BUT - what kept me going was all the amazing comments and interactions with you guys on and off this site. From notes to my Tumblr, to messages - it all means a lot.

I feel the gusto again, and I still love this fic.

HOLD ONTO YOUR SPANDEX - you're in for a bumpy ride.

I love you all!

(HUGE thanks to my best friend for helping me so much AND for editing. You da best)

Note! Sep 06, 2018

Hi! In light of recent events - this fanfiction has never and will never be posted anywhere but on Ao3 (Or link to this directly via Tumblr)! So your fill of Peter getting into a lot of trouble (outside his own control, poor kid) is only accessible here! I'd ask for people to be respectful and not repost and and other people to be equally respectful and calmly report or contact me if there is any re-postings on it.

Thank you!

As for me? Gosh lots have happened. Though; I think I'm starting to do better than I did before, and am going to go through the fic soon to do minor spelling error-fixes, reread all of your awesome comments, want to hug you all, and go through my plot notes.

You are the BEST people!

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