Lookin' Pretty and Playin' Dirty

by mjstark

Summary

The story of Tony Stark, Slytherin archetype, magical prodigy, prank war master, and self-proclaimed 'king bitch' versus Steve Rogers; Gryffindor archetype, Quidditch captain, friend to many, and self-proclaimed passionate enemy of Tony Stark.

Or: The Hogwarts Au we've all been waiting for. My enemy boys and their beautiful, sexual tension filled rivalry.
Tony Stark was running

Sort of.

Does it count as running if you’re wearing roller skates?

Not the point. Anyway, Tony was traveling at great speed along a train platform, yelling at a train. It had been set to leave maybe 5 minutes ago, but Tony had sent a god blessed text to Clint Barton, who had set off 9 smoke bombs in the hopes of delaying the train long enough for Tony to get there.

It had worked, luckily, and now Tony was on platform 9 and three quarters, skating across the platform to greet Clint. Everyone on the train was pressed up against the windows, trying to see what the big deal was and why their train was delayed.

The big deal was Tony, obviously. He was still skating, holding nothing but a small backpack and wearing nothing but dark green fabric booty shorts and a sweater. He looked like he’d just rolled out of bed, sunglasses on his eyes, hair all fluffed up and messy. A lot of the older students on the train would roll their eyes in amusement because this was a 7th year, prefect Slytherin, one of the coolest boys in the year, probably the best wizard in the school, appearing late in what looks like pajamas.

“You’re late, you wanker,” Clint yells, seconds before Tony crashes full force into him, knocking them both over in a shower of greetings. By greetings, we mean ‘random shouts of ayyyyyy’, because they’re British and that’s how we do things. Tony was going to write a book, he decided in that moment, called How to make an entrance: A guide by a magical prodigy.

Hurriedly, because the train is making noises like it’s about to go, they scramble to their feet, laughing about something that the students on the train can’t hear. As Tony boards it, ripping off his skates, he greets everyone who says hi, high fiving as many people as he can while he makes his way down to a compartment with his friends in. The train is cramped and loud, busy with the sounds of reunited friendships, and Tony flops into a chair, leaning into Thor’s side.

“Lookin’ good, Stark,” Natasha comments dryly, painting her nails. Tony grins at her and pushes his sunglasses up onto his face.

“Would’ve made it but...” He sits up again, swinging his backpack onto his lap and opening it. Inside, of course, it’s infinitely larger than it’s supposed to be. Because magic is a thing and why the hell would you carry around a big ass trunk when you could fucking have a backpack.

Carefully, he pulls out a cardboard cup-holder of Starbucks coffees. His friends instantly erupt into cheers, slapping his back and taking their individual cups.

“I love you,” T’Challa murmurs, not at Tony but at the coffee.

“Mine’s cold,” Thor frowns and Tony goes to grab his wand to heat it up before his eyes widen.

“Oh shit.” He turns, along with everyone else, and his eyes zero in on the wand lying on the platform. The train begins to move. Fuck.
Knowing that his friends were dickheads and wouldn’t accio it, Tony scrambles to his feet and darts along the corridor, leaping over and around people and trunks alike until he reaches the door and swings it open. Barely saving himself from totally face planting the concrete, he runs as quickly as he can towards his wand. By now, the train was moving much faster.

Running alongside it, the doors have fucking locked, so he sprints forward, desperately trying to keep up with the train as it leaves the station and his friends thankfully open a window. Everybody leaks out, a mix of waving to their parents and staring at Tony as he tried, barefoot, to get back on the train. With his wand between his teeth, he grabs onto Thor and Clint’s outstretched arms and lets himself be hauled in, legs sticking out for several minutes before he manages to wriggle his way all the way inside in a flurry of curses.

Clint and Thor had just barged into the nearest compartment to help him, and now Tony was sprawled on the floor, out of breath, in Steve Rogers’ compartment. Of course, it had to be him.

“Rogers,” He nods, going for formal as he stood up and flashed a grin at the blond boy. Steve levels him with an unimpressed look. He’s already in his fucking robes.

“Stark.” Steve nods back, cross-legged on the seats, “making a scene in front of the whole school already?”

“I like to start the year with a bang.” He winks, “… if you’re up for it?”

Teasing Steve about his sexual identity was one of Tony’s favorite pastimes. Other favorite pastimes included: Teasing Steve for other things, pranking Steve, jinxing Steve, turning Steve weird colors, and otherwise making fun of Steve. The best part was that he gave as good as he got, and Steve was a good enough wizard to be the only thing challenging enough for Tony in the whole goddamn school. Steve worked hard, super hard, and studied better and longer than anyone Tony knew, meaning he was very good. Tony was conceited though and knew he was the best. Mostly because he was, like, a tried and tested magical genius. Suck on that, Rogers.

Their rivalry had begun on sight, way back in first year. Dislike flowed between them like a river and it seemed to be the most natural thing in the world. Steve hated Tony. Tony… well, Tony hated Steve too, but he also loved him. Or he loved embarrassing him, anyway. Especially about gay shit.

“Ooooh, prefect badge, very nice,” Tony smirks, as Clint and Thor make their way out of the compartment. Tony ignores the rest of Steve’s friends, just as they ignore him.

“Yeah. I see you haven’t got one?” Steve raises an eyebrow, and Tony could sense the other boy’s pride. Academic competence had been another battle. Steve was smart, and good at magic, and he’d worked for it. Tony hadn’t. Tony appeared to be the laziest, least hardworking, most wayward student to ever walk the halls of Hogwarts and Steve hated that he could still be better than him. The fact that he thought Tony wouldn’t be a prefect was a logical conclusion to reach.

“Mm,” Tony swings around and bends over, pushing his booty shorts-clad ass into Steve’s face, where he’s pinned his green prefect badge. He wiggles once, enjoying the feeling of putting his bum in Steve’s face, and then stands up again.

“Stop.”

“What’s the matter, prefect boy? Am I in trouble? Gonna put me in detention, sir?” Steve grits his teeth and Tony feels his grin widen. He could prank Steve later, but he had coffee to get to in his own compartment.
“How the hell did you get prefect?” Sam Wilson, Steve’s Hufflepuff friend, asks, more genuine interest than snarky comment, “Do you even know what rules are?”

“Don’t pretend that Steve Rogers has ever followed a damn rule in his life,” Tony countered, pointing a finger at a frowning Steve.

“Get out, Stark.”

“Missed you too, Stevie.”

“Leave.”

“You got it, boss.” Tony makes his way out, rubbing his bare feet on the carpet to get the tarmac grains out of his skin, and winks at Bucky Barnes, who glared back at him.

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“You’re an embarrassment to the Slytherin name,” Natasha tells him, not for the first time, as he comes back in. Natasha’s the only other slytherin, and she seemed embarrassed that since leaving Rogers’ compartment and getting back to his own, Tony had picked up 5 cats.

“So I’ve been told,” Is his response, tugging down his shorts a little so they don’t ride up into his bum crack, “and yet here I am. Student representative of the snake house.”

“We all know Ravenclaws are the real snakes, though,”

“Hey, I want no slander on my secondary house,” Tony argues, smiling slightly at the groan. Tony was a Slytherin, obviously, but it wasn’t that simple. On that very first day, upon arrival, Tony had gone up to the sorting hat when his name had been called and the whole school had to just sit there for 20 fucking minutes while it decided where to put him.

‘Hatstalls’ were people that took longer than 5 minutes. It was rare for that to happen, only occurring roughly once every 50 years, but Tony’s took 20 long minutes and most of the students had considered just giving up and saving him till last.

In fairness, nobody struggled to sit through it more than Tony did, who fiddled and twitched and hummed whilst having to sit still. The sorting hat, to this day, claims it wasn’t its fault that it took so long because Tony had distracted him. The deliberation had taken long because not only did Tony belong in Ravenclaw, but the hat seriously considered putting him in Gryffindor as well.

In the end, the hat went with Slytherin, after discovering that someone had told Tony on the way in that the longest anyone ever stayed under the hat was 8 minutes, and he had decided that he wanted to break that record. Ambition, huh? Spite. Same thing.

Steve had been different. Steve had gotten up there, sat down, (this was back when he was as skinny as a baby bird, all bones and determined eyes,) and the hat barely touched his pretty blond head before yelling Gryffindor.

It was a strange idea. Tony had the Stark name. A powerful name that people expected to instantly be put in Slytherin, but it wasn’t so simple either. Howard Stark had been a poor, muggle-born, extremely ambitious and very talented wizard, who had been put into Slytherin House despite the stereotypes and absolutely thrived. Now, despite marrying and having a child with a muggle woman, Howard Stark gave off all the pretenses of being a pureblood wizard. It had always been his dream
to be pureblood, to be on that supposed higher level. He’d always had a bit of a chip on his shoulder about being muggle-born, he saw it as a disadvantage, but he’s overcome it, gotten rich, and now he was one of the best wizards there is. (Tony thought he was a bit of a twat, to be honest, but who was he to challenge it).

Steve wasn’t rich. Not at all, really, but he was as pureblood as it gets. A long line of wizards and witches in his family, never making textbooks but making a family tree broad and wide, even if it thinned out in more recent years. As far as Tony knew, Steve and his immediate family were the only ones left of the Rogers line.

“Let me-” Natasha leans forward, reaching out a hand to do Tony’s hair for him.

“Oh, no. You can’t. I have a big ass mark on my forehead.” Tony bats her away absently, blinking when everyone turns to look at him, “Oh, I’m not Harry Potter, I just skated into the wrong wall the first time around.”

“Why are you wearing pajamas?” T’Challa asks, and Clint looks like he’s only just noticed.

“More importantly, why are you wearing my pajamas?”

“Those are my pajamas!” Natasha interjects, glaring at Clint.

“No, those are my pajamas,” Thor says, and Tony realizes that his pajamas are actually Clint’s pajamas are actually Natasha’s pajamas are actually Thor’s pajamas. At least T’Challa had his own pajamas.

“Well, I’m commando. So, uh, sorry not sorry,” Tony confesses, and he’s met by a storm of things being thrown at him in disgust, “and I’m wearing them because they smell like you, Clint, and I missed you so much I couldn’t help myself.”

That actually wasn’t true, he’d just woken up about 5 minutes before the train left and only had a few minutes to pack, put on the first thing he could find, and then apparate to Starbucks. At least he had his skates.

The blissful thing about being 17 this year was the fact that he could finally (finally) begin to use magic outside of school. Tony never understood why wizards and witches just did every day tasks without magic. Like, when they needed something they’d stand up and go get it instead of accio-ing that shit. Who does that? Why walk anywhere, ever, when you can apparate? Why do anything at all when there’s magic to do it?

And it’s the same with muggle stuff. Wizards are so set in their ways, they never do simple things that make their life easier. Tony had taken one look at his equipment list, way back in first year, and said fuck that. Who the fuck used inkwells and quills? And scrolls? Really?

Tony had gone straight past those pretentious Diagon alley shops and into a WHSmiths, picking up 4 pads of paper and 60 biro pens. The teachers had been shocked, sure, and some had tried to put him in detention for it, but most of them just sighed and went along with it. Slytherins have always been resourceful.

To pass the time, Tony points at Clint and zaps him in the neck with a splat of yellow, making him yelp. The reaction is instant, and Tony deflects the green slime sent flying his way.

As you can imagine, it escalates from there.
By the time they’re an hour away from school, Tony’s stained green on the whole left half of his body and face, Clint has grass for hair, Thor’s eyes are four times as big, and T’Challa releases poisonous gas whenever he burps. Natasha, at least, got away with only having the color of her eyes change to red. It suited her well, but no one was going tell her that.

It takes 20 minutes of Natasha smacking them into line before she manages to fix them all. She mutters something about herding cats. Very annoying cats who did not want to be herded at all. When she’s finally done, she’s even managed to get Thor and T’Challa into their robes.

“Aw, my gryffindor boys,” Tony coos, pinching both of their cheeks. Nobody mentions that he has to reach up to his full height to manage it. Clint’s half in his robes, tugging on his trousers. The tie he’s wearing isn’t his own, given that it’s a Ravenclaw one and he’s a Hufflepuff, but nobody’s about to call him out on it.

“Look, I know I finished off the whole Steve vs Tony battle last year,” Tony begins, catching everyone’s attention, “but it’s been a whole train journey and he hasn’t done shit. I need to get us back in the game.”

“He might be trying to be a little more mature this year,” T’Challa points out, ever the boring voice of reason. T’Challa is the prime example of someone who spouts wise shit and then does something stupid anyway. Fucking hypocrite.

“Ooh, is he?” Delighted, Tony jumps up on to the seat, “Is he really? I would love that. Let’s see how long it’ll take us to break him. Taking bets now, I’m in for a week.”

“A month,” Thor says, ever faithful in the tenacity of a Gryffindor.

“After the feast,”

“Before the train gets there,”

“I’m going for a week as well,” T’Challa adds, grinning, “if that is, indeed, what he is doing. I’m sure he’s still eager to prank you back for last year. It was spectacular. Maybe he was just busy.”

“Too busy for me!” Tony mock gasps, already rooting around in his backpack for something to get Steve with. “I’ll have to win back his attention…”

“Maybe you could go for something basic.”

“No, go big or go home, you know the Slytherin way,” Natasha interjected, and immediately the discussion got loud and passionate, debating over what would be the best way to go about this.

“GUYS. We have half an hour. Now, are we going to stand here arguing or are we going to be real men and go prank Steve Rogers?”

“I have some Peruvian instant dar-”

“Give it to me,” Tony cuts across Clint by practically leaping at him, ripping the powder from his hands.
“What’re you gonna do with it?”

“No clue. The idea will come to me on the way, I’m sure.” Before anyone else can say anything, he vaults out of the room again.

Watching Steve and his friends through the window was a little creepy, Tony was man enough to admit that much, but he did it anyway. There was lots of them, practically the whole Gryffindor Quidditch team, as well as Bucky, Sam, and that girl Sharon. Steve himself was leaning against the window, sketchbook in hand.

Tony had stolen that sketchbook, once. Back in 3rd year, right after Steve had smashed a whole bowl of jelly onto his head. Clint still hadn’t forgiven him for not looking in it. In truth, Tony had really, really wanted to look in it, but it was basically an art nerd’s version of a diary, and back then Tony had been naive and a bit nicer than he was now, and had given it back.

Third year, things were still a little playful. They didn’t like each other, sure, but nothing ever went beyond very harmless pranks and a few snarks.

Then they’d gone home for the summer, and Steve had come back angry. Like, really angry. He was still small and skinny, barely 90 pounds, probably, and there were rumours that his dad had died. In any case, Steve came back a different person. Not the nice, kind, sweet boy that was annoying and a little up himself, but a harder, tougher, even more up himself boy. He was still kind, of course, and even very nice, but never to Tony.

He’d come back fourth year with a lot of anger and nothing to do with it other than take it out on Tony. Which was fine, because Tony could handle it. The difference was, Tony went easy on him because he was skinny and tiny, which of course made Steve even angrier, all the way until fifth year. That was when Steve struck his growth spurt, and Tony felt better about bullying him. That was when shit had gotten real.

At any rate, he’d never been able to get ahold of that sketchbook again, and he sincerely regretted not using it against him.

Tony cracks open the door, just a smidge, and breathes a sigh of relief when none of them notice. Too busy being rowdy and weird. Subtly, he brings up his hand and throws the powder into the room.

It goes pitch black instantly, and he can hear them scrambling around to figure out what’s going on. Gryffindors, with their ‘shoot first, think later’ mentality, instantly begin to start firing spells. Tony leans back, turns to face the people surrounding him, and puts his finger to his lips with a grin. Then, with no caution to making himself known, he goes into their compartment, over to where he knows Steve is. The sounds of them all trying to say ‘lumos’ is all that he can hear, and Steve is dead still, trying to figure out what he can.

Tony brings his wand up to his lips and whispers ‘sonoros’ into it, then holds it out towards Steve’s heavy breathing. Quietly, he leans in close, as close as he dares, right up to what he presumes to be Steve’s ear, and then goes ‘Boo’.
The best part of this trick is, Steve is huge. Steve is massive. Almost as big as Thor, all broad shoulders, huge muscles, deep voice and strong jaw. So the fact that he screamed, high pitched and shrill, like a 4 year old girl right into the magic equivalent of a loudspeaker was probably a good way to kick off the year.

The entire train probably heard Steve scream like a banshee, and then probably heard Tony’s cackling laughter follow it. It rattled the carriage, and it was the best thing Tony had ever heard. Steve’s instant recovery response was to yell “Stark,” and Tony took that as his cue to fucking run.

With the powder fading rapidly, Tony could begin to see the light from the others’ wands, and he bolted from the compartment, laughing loudly all the way back to his own one.

T’Challa’s the first to high five him when he gets back, and most people down the train were laughing too.

“I had no idea he could even make a sound like that,”

“You’re in so much trouble with him now, Tones.”

Your move, Rogers.

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Tony usually, although he liked to remain fairly unpredictable, pranked Rogers with muggle stuff. The guy was so pureblood that he had zero clue what muggle things were, and it just made it far too easy. Tony had acclimatized most of the Slytherins to muggle things, having forced them to accept the basics. (Things had kick-started when Tony had implemented a large coffee machine in the common room, as well as other things. Like battery operated lamps, because who the hell still uses candles?).

The arrival of Tony Stark to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry had been something of a revolution. He took every tradition as a challenge. If it couldn’t be changed or replaced by something muggle, then it could be improved. And if something muggle couldn’t be changed or replaced by magic, then it would be improved by magic. He had this innate inability to just leave things as they were. Things had to be bigger, better, more. It was just who he was. He, as well as his friends and professors, had learned to accept that shit long ago.

Of course, the school had no electricity, so everything muggle that he brought with him came with a lifetime supply of batteries. He had small battery speakers, made better with a sonorous spell, and every year he would bring in a new version of what muggles called a ‘phone’. There was no signal at the school, which Tony eternally bitched about, but he still brought it just to mess with and entertain himself, accompanied by a solar-powered portable charger.

Ravenclaws loved the improvements, mostly, and so did Hufflepuffs. It was the other two houses that took longer to warm up to Tony’s minor improvements to the wizarding world.

Not everything had caught on, of course. All of them still used scrolls and quills and other bullshit
like that, but Tony hadn’t made his big step yet. Things were still in baby steps.

“Bollocks,” He mutters, tripping out of the train. Trying to put on jeans whilst walking was never anyone’s strong suit. Tugging them up over his hips, a few girls giggle at him and he winks, uncaring. “Staying for the show?” He asks, buttoning up his shirt, ignoring the stares at his bare chest.

Tony, like always, totally ignores the Thestrals. He hates them. He hates the Thestrals. So he pretends he can’t see them, and he ignores Steve when they make eye contact, Steve’s own hand reaching out to touch one of them.

Before 4th year, Steve hadn’t been able to see them, Tony knew, and then on that first day back he’d stared for ages. Tony, despite seeing them himself, had asked him what he was staring at, and Steve had said nothing.

He almost walks past the carriage, but Thor grabs him under the arms and hauls him up as if he weighs nothing. Tony had missed Hogwarts. More than anything. Tony had missed his home.

“First years, come with me. The rest of you, through to the great hall,” Professor Hill’s commanding voice rung out, the way it always did, and Clint leaped on Tony’s back to make him carry the boy the rest of the way up. This was quite helpful, as Clint took the opportunity to sort out his hair for him. He ditches Clint on the Hufflepuff table (literally, on it. Like the snack that he is), and then joins Natasha on their way over to the Slytherin table.

There, he greets Gamora and Loki, and waves at Bruce and Strange over at Ravenclaw. The roof of the hall is dark and full of stars, and Tony grins, because he’s fucking missed this school so much.

There are a few minutes of greetings, and Tony practically shouting down the table to greet others, messily tying his tie. He leans right into the center of the table, trying to get a better vantage point to see, and Natasha rolls her eyes when he’s practically crawled on top of the table to yell happily at Okoye.

“Stark, sit down!” The head of Slytherin called from where she was walking down the aisle.

“Professor Helaaaaaa!” Tony leapt up, arms spread wide as he approached the woman. She kept her face carefully dead, but nothing slipped past Tony and he knew that she secretly liked him. “Shouldn’t you be up on the staff table with all the other Gods?”

He moves as if to hug her, and everyone holds their breath, but he stops at the last second and bows deeply, exaggeratedly, and Professor Hela’s lips quirked.

“Stand up,”

“Right, Slytherins don’t bow to anyone.” Tony smiles, standing up again and a few people laugh at Hela’s most used phrase.

“Nor do they kneel for anyone,” She replies, deliberately haughtily, and Tony flashes a suggestive look at everyone else.

“Ah, that one I really can’t promise.”
More people laugh, including the few Ravenclaws who could hear, and then Hela smacks his head and tells him to sit down.

“I selected you as prefect to see if you could prove that you can behave yourself!” She tells him, and Tony grins.

“No, you didn’t! You chose me because all the other teachers told you not to!”

“Damn right. Now shut up and sit down.”

Finally, when Professor Hill lead the first years through the front doors, Tony slipped back into his seat and stopped yelling so much. Natasha even put a fucking binding spell on him to stop him from moving around.

The first years shuffle down the middle, looking appropriately and dutifully terrified, and Tony has no choice but to sit still through the whole thing, only glaring at Natasha. When all of that crap is done, Professor Dumblefury takes a stand and calls everyone’s attention.

He has his long white beard wrapped around his shoulders like a particularly excessive scarf, and he has a new eyepatch, Tony notes unhelpfully. Professor Dumblefury catches his eye and raises an eyebrow in warning, to which Tony just grins, and then Dumbefury turns and gives some boring speech about magic and working together or whatever. Then the food is up, and Natasha releases him from the bind.

“Thank god, my balls are so itchy,” He sighs upon release, and Natasha pretends to be disgusted.

Tony spends the feast alternating between eating, talking to his friends, and looking at Steve. What? He has a perfect view, okay. It was pure coincidence. Not his fault Steve was so eye catching.

When dessert came up, Tony wasn’t too hungry but he grabbed an ice lolly anyway. Now, having caught Steve looking at him, he brings it up to his lips slowly. He looks challengingly at Steve, daring him to look away, and then wraps his lips around the red ice. Steve tries his best to look unimpressed, but he also couldn’t back down from a challenge, so he keeps watching as Tony sucks and licks obviously at the lolly. Tony notices him swallow thickly and shift, and wraps his tongue around it, sliding it obviously up the side and swirls his tongue around the tip. Steve rolls his eyes, but doesn’t look away, so Tony keeps up the erotic display across the great hall for almost two minutes.

Until Steve lifts up his wand and Tony feels heat on his face. The lolly is melted. That twot.

Instantly, Tony responds, bringing up his own wand and sending the stick of one of the Gryffindor lollies right up his nose. Steve glares and flicks some of the whipped cream near Tony onto his face. This time, when Tony retaliates, he steps it up a little and smooches a bowl of strawberry mousse all over Steve’s head. Now other people on the Gryffindor table are beginning to notice, and every Slytherin already knew anyway, having learned long ago to be on the look out when Tony had his wand in his hand. Or just when Tony was in the room, generally.

Now, Steve was wiping the mousse away and Tony was preparing to fend off another attack. He evaded the cupcake flying at him but didn’t manage to dodge a pie. Tony rolled his eyes, and put about 40 profiteroles down Steve’s shirt with a lazy flick of the wand.
The battle continued, shooting spells across the hall at each other, as it gradually got worse and worse and they looked more and more stupid. It wasn’t until pumpkin juice came soaring at him and Tony ducked, that it went all over Natasha.

The Slytherin table, and everybody who had caught on to the battle, gasped into shocked silence, tensing while they waited for Natasha to slit someone’s throat. Tony figured it would be best to defend her before she tried to kill him, and wordlessly shoved a bowl of ice cream into Steve’s face.

Steve stood up, dripping with creamy shit, drawing the attention of nearly the whole hall, and pushed a cake into Tony’s shoulder so hard he almost fell back. This, however, caused Tony’s defensive instincts to kick in and he straight up knocked Steve off his feet, without food, and people were beginning to stand up and watch the battle. Tony hadn’t meant to respond so harshly, but instincts are instincts. It had escalated, sadly, and now they were both covered in food and things were soaring across the great hall, whilst innocents took cover under the table.

After Tony sent a tripping spell at Steve and he stumbled, the Gryffindor boy sent a stinging hex at Tony’s chest and he took it with a hiss of pain, deflecting the one that came immediately after. By now, all attention was on them. The way Tony liked it, if he was honest.

Suddenly, Tony and Steve found themselves being jerked backwards, forced across the floor and dragged down the aisle all the way to the back of the hall. Steve and Tony were both excellent wizards, see, and that’s why everyone turned instantly to the Professors’ table. No student could over power them both.

The two of them came to an abrupt stop in the corner of the hall, and it took about 2 seconds for them to figure out what was going on. Tony fired a disarming spell, and it rebounded off an invisible wall, hitting him instead and sending his wand skittering. Steve did it as well, sending his own spell and immediately crumpling to the floor.

Professor Dumblefury sat at the other end of the hall, a bored look on his face, as the whole school watched Tony try it a few more times, realise he wasn’t getting out of it, and then sit cross-legged on the floor, pressing his face against the invisible bubble to amuse the first years.

Steve, however, did not give up. He fired spell after spell, gaining momentum and frustration as he tried again and again and again. Tony laughed at him.

However, he couldn’t hear anything. The bubble cut off all sound, so he was unaware of Dumblefury telling everyone to return to their meals and ignore those two idiots. Everyone except the first years shrugged it off, used to their antics.

For the rest of the feast, Steve doesn’t give up. He fires spell after spell at the invisible bubble, whilst Tony lies down. It looked like he was lazily drawing penises in the air, but in his mind he was replaying the movements of Dumblefury’s wand. He’d only seen it out of the corner of his eye, but he reckoned he could manage to replicate it. After a while, Tony sits up and tries to remember anything he’s read or seen where a spell like this was used, eventually coming up with something way back in third year.

He holds out his wand, swishes it, and revels when he reaches out and touches a much smaller, but seemingly equally impenetrable, invisible bubble. It wasn’t a very powerful spell, Tony remembers from the book, so it wouldn’t hold them for long at all, and definitely wouldn’t hold if Tony really wanted to get out.
Finally, once everyone’s left and all of Tony’s friends have passed by teasingly, Professor Dumblefury, Hill, and Hela all approach them. DumbleFury releases them from their bubbles, and Steve stands up sheepishly. Fresh air fills their lungs and noise fills their ears, and it’s refreshing.

Steve, if he knew he had done something wrong, would often manage to Teacher’s Pet his way out of trouble. However, if he thought the wrong thing he’d done was actually right, he was exceptionally unrepentant about it. It was the one thing Tony actually liked about him. (Other than his blush, of course. And his thighs, because damn).

“Must you two always make a scene?” DumbleFury sighs, hands on his hips. Hill glares at both of them, and Tony winks at Hela’s concealed smirk.

“Sir, with—”

“All due respect, blah, blah. He started it!” Tony smiles, using a deliberately childish line. Not because he actually was that immature, but because he knew it would reel Steve in hook, line, and sinker.

“You started it!” Steve cries indignantly, then heats up when he realises he fell for it and now looks just as childish. DumbleFury sighs.

“Your prefect badge, please.” Hill says, and Hela says it afterwards to Tony.

Steve’s jaw drops, right as Tony lets out a ‘YES!’*, handing his over immediately, without wiping off the food.

“This is not a cause for celebration, Stark.” Dumblefury frowns, and Steve looks confused.

“Yeah, it is. Fastest time to ever be kicked off prefect duties, right?” He looks at Hill for confirmation, and she nods. Tony grins. “That’s a win,”

“You did this deliberately?” Steve asks, the usual amount of pissed off.

“Well, yeah. I wanted the record, but I didn’t want you to beat me so I had to get you involved as well.”

“I hate you,” Steve deadpans, totally serious, and Tony grins.

“I want better behaviour this year. You’re seventh years, now. There’s some responsibility in that. Now, behave yourselves or next time I’ll put you in the same bubble.”

“That wouldn’t be so bad, would it Steve? Might need to make it a little more private…” Tony sends a cheeky smirk at Steve who only glares. They’re told to fuck off, in nicer terms, and then they both do. However as soon as they leave the great hall, Tony knows Steve’s about to tear him a new one, so the second they’re out the door he practices his new bubble spell, laughing loudly when Steve walks straight into it. The man has too much grace to fall flat on his arse, but he does stumble.

He glares, saying something that looked like ‘let me out, stark’, but Tony cackles and tells him that he can’t hear him, which is true. Then he leaves Steve there, because that bitch melted his ice lolly.
Besides, it's the first night back. Tony has a party to get to and some alcohol to get shit faced on.
The Slytherin common room, Tony had decided a long time ago, was ridiculously ill placed. Why the dungeons? They were classy folks, not dungeon dwellers. Why was old Sally Slytherin such a fucking edge lord.

In 5th year, Tony had staged a revolution and moved all of the stuff up to one of the towers. With some adjustments, and the help of most of the Slytherins, they managed to make it very sleek and nice, better rooms with a better view, and ultimately the best common room. Sadly, it hadn’t lasted long and Dumblefury had Tony move everything single handedly back down.

Since then, Tony had sneaked out of the grounds (it was easy enough, there were a million secret passages), and apparated to the nearest IKEA. He had made several trips, with Natasha and other Slytherins who’s sense of interior decor he trusted, until the common room was exceptional. It was the perks of being rich.

Which is why, having said the password and walked in, Tony was pleased to be home.

They’d petitioned for all of third year to get the entire left wall replaced with glass, so now they had an incredible view into the nice part of the lake, covering the entire expanse of one side and most of the roof. (Yeah, okay, the aquarium thing was kind of super villain-y having so many sea creatures and merpeople and whatever else constantly swimming around, and the greenish glow it cast around the room added to it even more, but the Slytherins had long ago embraced the super villain vibes).

Tony had also replaced the ugly, grotty furniture with the IKEA stuff, and now there were glass and steel tables around the room, chic black leather couches and dark green, modern style comfort chairs. He’d removed the ugly wooden paneling, leaving behind the grey stone walls and some vines crawling across it. A small corner had also been renovated to include the large muggle coffee machine, and he had ordered a million chrome silver and black mugs to keep up aesthetics. The students of Slytherin now lived off of coffee at all times of the day.

So yeah, it was a little extra, but Tony was extra and so were Slytherins, so sue him. They had a colour scheme to keep up.

The stainless steel and glass water feature in one corner might have been too much, but it was aesthetic and creepy, and a good place to drown homework, so what was anybody going to do about it?

The only downside of getting such a cool common room was that Ravenclaws had always been turning up at random hours of the night asking for coffee, up until Tony gave in and got them their own machine.

He flops down onto a couch next to Natasha and Gamora, ignoring the complaints about him getting them covered in food. He’d wiped most of it off, anyway.

Absently, half listening to the conversation and half spinning a black and silver globe with his wand, Tony lays there and revels in being home. There’s that cool scent of rain, pine, mint, and metal. The smell he’s missed so damn much. Above him, in between the vines that wind and twist like snakes,
someone’s grown roses. Black roses, of course, because Slytherins are dramatic as shit.

Another fun dramatic feature of Slytherins: There were several coca cola cans dotted around, from the fridge Tony had installed, but all were either Diet Coke or Coke Zero, because regular Coke didn’t fit the aesthetic. All the non colour coordinated drinks were kept in the black fridge Tony had installed.

Tony found himself smiling, looking around the room. Since Tony had done his big renovation, giving the room a sleek, modern look, other people had begun to contribute. As long as it was fairly contemporary, futuristic, and black, silver, green, or stainless steel, then it could stay. A large mirror encases one of the other walls, because Slytherins are vain, and Tony is stereotyping a whole bunch but who’s gonna call him out for it?

Another wall is half covered by a black chalkboard, framed beautifully by the vines, and the Slytherins of Hogwarts collectively used it to make bets. Like a bookies, only open. The chalkboard was covered in predictions, followed by people’s names and how much they bet. It’s, of course, filled in only in white or green chalk. Occasionally, Natasha’s called in to enforce the rules, but usually everybody pays up. (It’s a magic chalkboard. It remembers anything).

So far, the wall has only a few predictions. Stark gets kicked off Prefect duties on the first day, Stark pisses off Rogers, and Loki challenges Natasha to an arm wrestle and loses (again). Despite Tony not having made any official announcements, they’d all already been checked off as completed.

If anyone had been doubtful about the extents to which Slytherins would go to meet the stereotype that they’d taken in their stride, Tony would direct them to the bathrooms, where everyone’s shower gel, shampoo, and conditioner, were all in green, black, or white bottles. Or to that time someone had found a ginger cat in the common room and turned black.

Everyone expected the Slytherins to be all stuffy about their antiques and their traditions, but actually they were very careful about legacy, as well as family pride, so it was important that they left a good message and a good impression, even if that included interior decor.

“Party tonight?” Tony asks the room at large. Tradition has it, or at least tradition since Tony arrived at school, that everytime a term began there would be a welcome back party.

Generally, Slytherin threw the best parties, but they were rivaled by Gryffindors, who were also excellent. Ravenclaw always made the nicest cocktails and often held nicer parties, and Hufflepuff often did fun costume themes and they always had the best weed, but the ragers were always a competition between Gryffindor and Slytherin. Nobody knew where the Slytherin house were getting their cocaine. Nobody wanted to ask.

“Yeah,” Gamora replies, shifting her legs over the arm of a very angular, design-over-comfort, chair, “Hufflepuff are doing it. Not in the common room, obviously. First years will need sleep.”

“Who’s taken charge?” Natasha runs her fingers through Tony’s hair, frowning at every bit of food she comes across.

“Quill, should be. Or Barton.”

“Clint didn’t mention it. Probably forgotten.”

Natasha puts her feet up on the coffee table, “we’ll bring some drinks, just in case.”
“Do they need it?”

“Not sure. Hufflepuffs are forgetful as shit. Plus, I don’t wanna be drinking cute 5% drinks on my first night back.”

“Course we’re not sure,” Tony scowls, “Can’t fucking text and ask if there’s drinks, though, can we? Noooo, wizards are above that. Fucking idiots have no service—”

Practically the whole common room erupts into complaints, nobody wanting to go through another Stark Rant. Tony frowns deeper, but lets it go, settling himself by casting small, intricate fireworks out of his wand. Someone over by the chalkboard pauses, then throws down the chalk in huff, half way through writing “Tony goes off on one about the WiFi”.

“The first years are in their dorms already. You have time to shower before we go.” Natasha pushes him pointedly away, zeroing in with sharp eyes on his stained clothes. He needed muggle clothes anyway, everyone else was already out of their robes.

Tony went up to his dorm, finding his backpack already there. Fuck everyone else and their trunks.

With a jolt, he remembers Jarvis and Dummy, and rushes over to take out their tank. It’s a large tank, and Tony’s lucky that his dorm is lacking one roommate because the tank takes the use of magic to wrestle it onto the spare bed. He crouches to look at the snakes. Jarvis, pure and bright white, is pressed around the edge, dead still, and Dummy, pitch black, is wriggling over a branch. What good boys.

Tony plays with them for a bit, checking they’re okay and talking absently, and then Loki turns up and he’s reminded of the time.

Who cares if he’s a bit late? Tony thinks to himself, grabbing some of the muggle alcohol he’d smuggled and legging it down the stairs, tugging on a black tee. Natasha’s waiting at the stairs, and they meet up with Thor and T’Challa along the way, each holding their own drinks.

“S’good to be back, huh?” Tony grins, falling in to step with them.

The room that they use for those multi-house, welcome back, fourth year and up, parties is large but tucked away, discovered by Thor and Clint, and utilised by Tony and Natasha. It’s perfect for occasional use because there are no portraits to go tell-tale in them and it’s about equal distance from each house.

There is one portrait, but it’s of James Potter and Sirius Black from like 100 hundred years ago, and they love the parties, so won’t rat.

Tony stops before he goes in, letting his friends go ahead because inside he can hear Tik Tok by Kesha playing. He waits, for several seconds, whilst the song progresses and people inside begin to sing along.

He waits, tactfully, and then dramatically slams open the double doors right she goes “the party don’t start till I walk in,” and everybody drunkenly cheers. Tony grins, having added that to Tony Stark’s Magical Prodigy’s guide to Dramatic Entrances.

Tradition has it that there’s no magic or drugs on the first night back. It started because, back when
Tony was just starting the tradition, no one was so good at controlling magic, especially when drinking, so someone had all out banned it. They still did it at other parties, of course, but somehow this tradition had stuck.

Hufflepuff was hosting, so the room was warm and there was a table full of snacks and candles, as well as the usual drinks. The party was already swinging, all houses alike mixing and reuniting in much less formal circumstances. Tony smiles when Clint bounds up to them, half-way buzzed already, and assures them that he’s just soundproofed the room and shits ready to go.

Tony spends about an hour just drinking happily, greeting practically everyone in the hall, and having a great time. Being here felt like being back home, and Tony would rather be anywhere than at Stark Manor.

Hufflepuff’s are in charge of the music, so it’s good, fun music and not like, rager music, so the night’s fairly relaxed and Tony mostly just has a good time, messing around with his friends, drinking a bunch of shit, and playing whatever game the Hufflepuff’s have come up with. Right now, Tony’s lying across the outstretched arms of the statue in the corner, putting a cone party hat on its head and draping someone’s feather boa around its neck. People are throwing things like confetti at him.

Steve’s the other side of the room, with his own friends, also having a good time. Tony wasn’t gonna make a scene this time, too busy having a good, relaxing time of his own, so he settles for a cocky salute at him and lets it be.

Steve grins back, though, and that’s a little unnerving. He was probably planning something. Tony’s too drunk to care.

It’s sort of a low key party. If Tony ends up hanging from a chandelier then that’s nobody’s business.

The next morning, Tony thankfully wakes up in his own bed. That was a miracle in itself, so he was slightly less pissed off to see 3 other people in his bed with him. Slightly.

“Are you kidding me?” He grumbled, wincing at the light and the pounding in his head. There was a severe case of sandpaper mouth and he felt disgusting all over.

Yep, definitely felt like the first day back.

Tony shifts slightly, making Natasha groan and reach out to smack him. Girls weren’t technically allowed up here, but then neither were Gryffindors or Hufflepuffs, and they’d found a way around that, too. Thor’s at the foot of the bed, and T’Challa’s practically on top of him, so Tony can’t move much.

“Nngh,” Tony pokes pointless at the bodies around him, resigning himself to just having to stay there. His tongue feels heavy and his muscles ache, and that familiar urge to vomit up all of last night’s regrets became overpowering.

Eventually, Natasha relents, shifting just enough that Tony can wriggle out. There’s no one else in the dorm, which makes Tony think that he’s overslept.
Fuck, his phone should’ve woken him up.

“Guys, it’s, like, late.” He nudges T’Challa, who just grumbles in response.

“No. Your muggle box will wake us up,” He waves them away, and Tony scans the room for his phone, but he can’t find it. He’s too hungover to properly care.

Instead, he takes his chance to shower, and comes back feeling better, with a towel around his hips. As he moves over to the dresser, eyes scanning still for his phone, his foot catches on something.

“Ow.”

“Wh- Clint?”

A pile of bedpost curtains shuffles until Clint’s head pokes out, hair in multiple directions, “Mum?”

“... No. It’s Tony. Wake up,”

Obediently, Clint sits up blearily, blinking slowly around the room. It takes him a second or two to get his bearings, but he manages to stand up. He walks, wobbling slightly, towards where his trousers lie a few feet away, but he stumbles over something and clatters loudly back to the floor in a torrent of swear words and crashing.

Natasha sits bolt upright, glaring at nothing, and T’Challa sits up too, almost falling out of the bed. Well, Tony thinks, that’s one way to get them up. The two of them stare at each other for a few seconds, oblivious to everything else.

“Please say we didn’t have sex,” T’Challa mumbles, and Natasha says ‘oh God’.

“You didn’t,” Tony tells him, and they both sigh in relief, seeming to notice him for the first time. “I hope.”

They look like they’re on the verge of going back to sleep, so Tony threatens to pee on them and they finally get up.

Slowly, because everyone was appropriately hungover, the four of them get up and dressed, leaving Thor hanging off the bed. His head almost touched the ground.

“We still have time for breakfast,” Clint says, and Tony shoves him out the way in his search for where the hell he left his phone.

“Accio phone,” He tries, but nothing happens, “Shit.”

“Relax, you probably left it in the hall last night,” Clint tells him, unbothered, shifting Thor’s lifeless form upwards. T’Challa takes the blond’s other arm, and together they drag him so that he’s fully on the bed.

“What’re we gonna do about him?”

“Let’s just see how much stuff we can balance on his face before he wakes up.”

“No, we could build a house on a sleeping Thor. Let’s just… let’s just take him with us.” Clint grabs Thor’s foot, not waiting for a reply, and T’Challa takes another, dragging him out the door whilst Tony picks up a restless Dummy.

True to their word, they haul his massive body down to the great hall. Together, they slump into the
seats at the Slytherin table.

Other students were dotted around, looking just as hungover. On the Slytherin table just up from them, Gamora is asleep against her sister and Loki’s staring listlessly at his cereal while he continuously stirs it. On the Ravenclaw table, people huddle over their coffees and lean on their hands, eyelids drooping. It feels like a true first day back.

Thor’s snoring and drooling, and Tony starts spreading porridge on his face whilst trying to ignore all the noise in the hall that makes his head pound.

“He’s a real looker, huh?” He smirks at Jane Foster over on the Ravenclaw table, and she looks away, embarrassed. Natasha drops a fork and Tony winces, reminding himself to locate Bruce later and get started on that Hangover Cure potion he’d been thinking about creating. Dummy wraps around his neck and bends up behind his ear.

Beside him, T’Challa and Clint are busy arguing over whether it would be better to have a wand shoved up your ass or up your hypothetical vagina.

“Obviously my vagina, because I don’t have one.”

“No, T’Challa you do. In this hypothetical universe, you have a hypothetical vagina.”

“Well if it’s my hypothetical universe, my vagina doesn’t have any hypothetical nerve endings, so there’s no hypothetical pain.”

“Ok, first off, it’s my hypothetical universe, so my hypothetical rules. Therefore your hypothetical vagina does have nerve endings. So there is hypothetical pain.”

“Why is it your hypothetical universe?”

“Because it’s my hypothetical question.”

“That’s ridiculous. It’s my hypothetical vagina, I think I should get to choose how many hypothetical nerve endings it should have.”

“That would defeat my hypothetical question, though.”

“Me and my hypothetical vagina thing it’s a stupid hypothetical universe, anyway. We’re making our own hypothetical universe where we’re allowed to have hypothetical nerve endings and no hypothetical people are threatening to shove wands up my hypothetical ass.”

“Your ass isn’t hypothetical because you have one. Only your-“

Natasha and Tony share a long-suffering look, and Tony sighs long and hard, continuing to smother Thor in breakfast foods whilst he sleeps. The pair of them argue so loudly that none of them notice Val approaching until it’s too late.

You’d think Val’s name would be short for Valerie, but it’s not. It’s short for Valkyrie. How fucking badass was that? Tony loved her, but the woman was terrifying, and probably the only Slytherin who could beat him in a drinking competition.

“Stark, Romanoff,” she nods, ignoring the other two and Thor.

“Ooh, captain of the team?” Tony grins, looking at her green badge. She must be the new captain
after the last one quit. Val gleams with pride.

“Yep. Try-outs tonight, you’d both better be there.”

“Are you kidding?” Tony grumbles, and Natasha looks just as pissed off.

“Nope.”

“We’ve been playing together since first year. Do we really need to try out?” Natasha rubs her temples with her fingers, too hung-over to be thinking about sport. The other two are still arguing loudly about hypothetical vaginas.

“Yeah, I need you there. Moral support.”

“Not a good enough reason.”

“I’ll kick you off the team.”

“You need us.”

Valkyrie sighs, but she’s not about to beg. “Fine. If you come, I’ll let you choose the uniforms this year.”

Immediately, Tony and Natasha nod, much more willing. There was technically nothing in the rules about wearing the allocated kit so long as it wasn’t distracting and they were all the same, so the Slytherin team had taken to coming up with their own ideas. Because they’re slippery bitches like that.

“Okay. We’ll be there.”

“Make sure Gamora, Nebula, and Okoye come too,” Val gestures with her head to where Gamora and Nebula are slumped against each other, heads still buried in their arms. The school’s greatest beaters, everyone.

“Val, we literally only need one player and we have a full house. Just get T’Challa’s sister and we’re good to go.”

“I haven’t seen Shuri play,”

“We have,” Natasha interjects, “she’s good.”

“We’re still doing try-outs,” Val said finally, already walking away again, “we need bench players anyway.”

“Fine.”

“By the way, Rogers is the new captain for Gryffindor, he’s trying to keep it a secret though. And Tones, you’re gonna be the one to tell all the first years that they failed.”

“That’s above my pay grade.” Tony yells, but she’s already gone.

“How big is my hypothetical wand?” T’Challa asks, and Natasha rolls her eyes.

“Like, 12 inches.”

“Be more specific.”
“More specific?”

“Yeah, give me it in microinches.”

“Who the fuck measures things in **microinches**?”

“Clint’s girlfriend.” Tony cuts in, and they all dissolve into childish giggles. Even Thor gains enough consciousness to hold his hand up for a high five.

A minute or two later Professor Potts comes down and hands them all a timetable, teasing them all for being ‘definitely not hungover’ because the Head of Ravenclaw is a bitch like that. Tony loved her, anyway. She ruffles his hair on the way past and Tony decides he has nothing else to do, so he sets off on a whole school check for his phone.

Steve’s just leaving the Great Hall as Tony comes down, looking about as hungover as Steve feels, if not more. He’s the only wizard in the school who wears sunglasses anyway, let alone inside. It pisses Steve off a little that he makes it work, but whatever. He’s got a snake around his neck, and it curls up and around his head while he moves alongside his friends. They’re dragging Thor along the ground, and Steve rolls his eyes because that’s meant to be a member of his Quidditch team.

Professor Potts gives him his timetable on the way out, and luckily Tony doesn’t notice him as he makes an escape. First period is free, and he only has herbology second, so Steve makes his way back to his room.

There’s no work to do, and no friends with a free period right now, and Steve paces with boredom. Until he remembers the box.

Last night, at the party, Steve had found this black box. He’d looked around to see who’s it was and had genuinely meant to ask around, but he’d totally forgotten. A small voice in the back of his mind knew it was Tony’s. Now it sat on his dresser. Screaming at him.

Slowly, because his curiosity was always his downfall, Steve sat cross-legged on the bed, the black box in his hands. He wasn’t dumb, he knew it was called a ‘phone’, he’d just never seen one before. Most of his friends were wizard raised, if not fully pure-blood. It was small, a mixture of metal and glass. Curved ages and very thin. It seemed fragile.

He stares at it, randomly touching the cool glass, but nothing happens. Then, he presses the small button at the bottom of the screen and it suddenly glows bright. It makes him jump slightly, and the rectangle of light shows a picture of some sort.

Upon closer inspection, it became obvious it was a photograph. Except, it was still and unmoving.

It was Tony and his friends, taken outside and at night time, clearly by Natasha Romanoff, Tony’s Slytherin friend, because she was in the foreground. There was a rare smile on her face, if small, and Tony and Thor were in the back, Tony on his shoulders and holding his hands up in a peace sign. T’Challa is also there, crouched on the ground at Thor’s feet with his arms crossed over his chest and
tongue out. Barton is... hanging upside down in the top right corner.

It’s a weird photo, with a lot to take in, but Steve can really only stare at Tony. He looks… different, somehow. Different to how he usually looks. Tony Stark smiles all the time, but not like that. Tony is almost always grinning, or smirking, but Steve rarely sees that kind of smile.

He’s smiling so wide and so brightly that his eyes are squeezed shut in happiness, arms in the air. Steve can only stare for a little while, an uncomfortable feeling in his chest. Fuck Tony Stark and his pretty face. You weren’t supposed to find cocky, arrogant assholes cute.

The rectangle of light fades to black again and in a fit of panic, Steve presses the button again, refreshing the photo. It’s the same photo, and Steve tries to tear his eyes away. The screen fades to black and then he presses the button again. This continues for several minutes, just Steve pressing the button whenever it turns black. Then, he decides to investigate more, tapping randomly at the glass, but nothing happens.

Nothing happens until he sneezes right as he touches it, and accidentally slides his finger across the glass. The rectangle of light changes, and it seems too magic to be muggle, but now it shows a lot of small, multi-coloured squares. Behind the squares, there’s another photograph, this time of Tony’s snakes. Steve can’t remember which is which, but he knows one is called Dummy and one is called Jay? Or something.

Steve stares at the little coloured squares. There’s writing underneath. The first one, a small little blue one with a white bird on it, says ‘twitter’ underneath. Barely blinking, Steve touches his forefinger to it and the light rectangle changes again. There’s a little too much to take in, but Steve reads what he can.

There’s a picture of Tony, close up on his face, one of the snakes winding around his face, sunglasses on. There’s also a bigger photo, of something Steve can’t make out. There’s more writing, and lots of lines, and some numbers.

Tony’s name is there, as well as something that reads @tonysnark. It says Tony has 2.3M ‘followers’, 1,254 ‘following’, and 5.7K ‘tweets’.

Steve doesn’t know what any of this means, nor does he know what to do with this ‘twitter’, so he presses the button again and it goes back to the squares. Next to twitter, there’s one that says ‘photos’. The next one after that was something he’d never heard of before, nor the one after that. Steve worked his way through them, confusion growing until he found one called ‘flappy bird’.

The picture looked innocent enough, and Steve pressed it lightly, blinking when it changed with barely any pressure at all.

It was like… a field? But made of blocks. There was also a bird, sort of. Two red boxes said ‘play’ and ‘leaderboard’. Steve didn’t know what leaderboard was, so he pressed play, gasping lightly when the light changed in response to his fingers. It says touch to play, and Steve can’t help but think that he was entering into something dangerous.

The bird immediately begins to plummet, and in a fit of sheer panic, Steve touches it and it bounds upwards slightly. He presses it again, trying to keep it steady.

The bird flew very weirdly, but Steve was too focussed on making sure it was… alright? Was it a real bird? He was concentrating so hard on pressing the bird that he barely noticed the green things.
Steve didn’t know what they were, but he got the feeling the bird shouldn’t want to touch them. Instead, he tried to carefully navigate the bird through the green things. It worked, just about, but it was close.

Unsure of what happened if the bird died, Steve assumed the worst. It would be really dangerous. Beads of sweat began to form on his forehead, muscles tensing. Things were going well, but it seemed incessant. Guiding the bird was proving more and more difficult.

That’s when it happened.

The bird touched the green thing.

Steve hurled the phone onto the bed and dived to the floor, hunched in on himself in preparation for whatever was about to happen, hands over his ears, eyes squeezed shut.

Nothing happened.

Steve waited a couple minutes, just to be sure, then peaked through open one eye, glancing at the block.

It said 'game over'.

What game? What was over? What did this mean?

Steve sat back up, slightly alarmed. Tony was a prick, but he wasn't a... bad person. Was he? Sure, he pushed the boundaries a lot. Sometimes he was a full scale arsehole, but he wouldn't have anything that bad on his block would he?

Maybe it's a trap. Maybe this 'game' is just a test, to see who was Tony and who wasn't. Maybe it was going to explode, or fire a spell at him.

No, not a spell. This was a muggle object. But it might still explode, he saw what those muggles did. He saw how badly they treated each other, with bombs and 'guns' and other disgusting weapons. They were horrible to each other, for no real reason at all.

Steve ignored the hypocrisy in that, given that he and Tony were, like, horrible to each other for literally no reason at all. He just couldn’t help it. Tony was so annoying. And such a fucking smartass. Sticking his stupid dumb face everywhere. Walking around with his stupid, great butt.

Steve wanted to see what happened when Tony had enough, he wanted to know what Tony would do when pushed to the edge. Even he must have a limit. Steve wanted to make Tony taste what it meant to lose.

And Steve didn't feel bad about wishing something so horrible about someone.

Steve didn't feel bad about wanting Tony to fall off that giant ego of his. Steve was a good person, he knew he was, just not with *Tony*. Tony just pushed all of Steve’s buttons, and now something deep inside him wanted Tony to know just how much he hated him. The downside was, of course,
that Tony was a fucking Slytherin. Meaning that everything Steve did, no matter how cruel or horrible, Tony would just take in his stride, save face and all that. Cunning little bitch always got him back, and he always managed to make it seem like he enjoyed it. Steve, usually, went for more open attacks, because Gryffindors weren’t so into the sneaky tricks like that but Tony was a magical fucking prodigy or whatever, so it was difficult. (If Steve sometimes enjoyed the challenge of a good wizard, then nobody had to know).

Steve snapped back into reality, reminding himself of the potentially dangerous black box in front of him. The object was just the same, only now Steve noticed the 'click here to play again'.

It was a game.

Like an actual game, not some sick twisted game, just a game.

Steve almost laughed in relief but instead stared blankly at the phone. He just freaked out over a game.

In what was presumably an attempt at regaining some dignity, trying to regain some dominance over the phone, Steve grabbed it again.

He was going to beat the game, he decided.

–

Steve had cracked the phone.

Apparently, you can't beat 'Flappy Bird'.

It turns out, as well, a simple 'reparo' spell didn't work on it. Steve looked it up in a book and discovered it was something to do with muggle 'electricity' or something. He wasn't really sure, he didn't really care.

He felt kind of bad for cracking Tony's box, but at the same time, Tony had made him scream like a baby girl and lose his prefect duties, so it seemed about even. He left the shattered black box on his dresser and booked it to second period, down at the greenhouses.

–

On the way down, Steve figured it was only karma that he ran into Tony. Or, not really run into him, because Tony was sat with Natasha Romanoff up on the fucking roof, but close enough. Tony’s voice caught his attention, and Steve clung close to the edge of the wall so that he could listen without them seeing him.

“So, I had this idea.”

“That’s not good,” Natasha’s voice deadpanned. There was a strong smell of smoke, and Steve had seen Tony with those muggle cigarettes before, so he wasn’t surprised.

“Harsh.”

“Did you expect anything else?”

“Yes.”
“Your ideas are terrible and dangerous,”

“You like it.”

“Before I make any decision, I ask myself ‘would Tony Stark do that?’.”

“Aww.”

“If the answer is yes, I do not do that thing.”

“Cuttin’ me real deep here, Nat.” Steve figures this isn’t going to be a particularly fruitful conversation, so he begins to move away again.

“Just spit it out.”

“I have this project.”

“Not like that ‘project’ back in first year?”

“No.”

“Good. It took me years of recreational drug use to get over that.”

“I think I’ve trauma-blocked that one. No idea what you’re talking about.” Steve didn’t end up moving, having convinced himself that he was staying for the project idea, and not because he liked the sound of Tony’s voice.

“You were drunk.”

“I was drunk in first year?”

“Yeah.”

“Oh. No, that doesn’t count, I think it was wine.”

“Drunk on wine is still drunk, Tony.” Steve rolls his eyes, wondering if these two would ever get to the point. Their feet are dangling over the edge, Tony’s non-uniform converse and Natasha’s doc martens just hanging there. Tony kicks his feet slightly.

“What ever. I’m not drunk this time, so it’s good right?”

“Me and you both know you don’t need alcohol to make bad decisions.”

“What ever. So: Project.”

“Mm?”

“I fucked up.”

“Look, I love you, but given your track record you’re going to have to be more specific.”

“Yeah, it’s just that I lost my phone, and I need it.” Steve tenses, a small wave of guilt flushing over him.

“Need it for what?”

“The project.”
“Will you tell me what the project is?”

“No.”

“Why?”

“Surprise.”

“I hate you.”

“Whatever. So, for this idea-”

“I’m in,”

“I didn’t tell you-”

“I don’t care. I’m in.” Natasha says it with some finality, and one of them drops a cigarette butt on the floor.

“Cool. The first step is vodka.”

“Why?”

“Because I want to. It’s not relevant to the project.”

“Nice. I’m in.”

Steve frowns, desperately trying to understand the way Slytherins talk.

“Also, we’re going to drink as many cans of redbull as possible before one of us passes out or goes into cardiac arrest”

“Why?”

“Because I can’t do it with any of the others, they have too much body mass. We’re about the same.”

“But why are we doing it? Is it relevant to the project?”

“No.”

“Okay. Sounds like the stupidest idea ever, though.”

“What about that time Clint and I tried to see who could give the whomping willow the longest hug?”

“You’re right, that was the stupidest idea ever.”

“I’m just trying to keep things in perspective.”

“This project, have you put it through the one rule test?”

“Yes, I’ve put it through the one rule test.”

“Well? Is it worth the jail time?”

“Yes, it is worth the jail time.”
“Sweet. I’m in. So long as it’s not a 2014 repeat.”

Steve, for all that he’s tried, doesn’t understand either of the two of them. Especially Tony, but definitely both. He doesn’t even know what red bull is but it can’t be good.

“Nat, 2014 just didn’t exist.”

“I agree.”

Whatever just happened, whatever they’d both just agreed to do, it sounded a little unnerving to Steve. His mother’s words of ‘if all your friends jumped off a bridge, would you jump too?’ echoed around his head, but Steve figured both Tony and Natasha were the friend to do the jumping, and would do it for fun, whether or not everyone else was doing it.

“You’re gonna kill me, Stark, y’know that right?” Natasha’s voice is full of affection, and Steve reels because, well, everyone kind of assumed that she didn’t have any emotions, “5 stars, ruined my life.” They both laugh a little at whatever inside joke that was.

“I like a few near death experiences. Keeps things fresh.”

“You’re suicidal.”

“Thanks, it’s the daddy issues.”

“Huh.”

“What’s your excuse?”

“Uh, over-exposure?”

“To what?”

“You.”

“Bullshit.”

“Fine. Why can’t mine be daddy issues too?”

“Fine. We can both have daddy issues.” Tony says with false reluctance, and they both giggle again. Steve wonders how many of the rest of the school knew the two scariest/most badass Slytherins in the school were this dorky. It’s too late for him to leave now, or they’d know he’d been here the whole time, so he was going to have to be late to Herbology.

“S’good to see you, Tony.” Natasha says, and it’s almost too quiet for Steve to hear. There’s a weird undercurrent to her voice that sounds almost like seriousness. Like concern. But that couldn’t be true, because Slytherins were stone cold bitches who didn’t do feelings.

“Aw, I knew you’d miss me.” He teases back, and their feet jostle like she’s just shoved him.

“Tony,” She says, and something about the way she says it has Tony actually shutting up for once (It was magical), “you don’t… You don’t ever have to go back there again.”

Tony sighs, and Steve frowns. Back where?

“I know. I… I wasn’t there. All summer.”
“You didn’t go back?”

“No.”

“Why didn’t you tell me? Where did you go? You could’ve- There’s always mine, or Clint’s or-”

“I know, and that’s why I didn’t tell you. I stayed, uh,”

“Tell me you didn’t stay with Stane.”

“I had to!” The conversation seemed to have turned serious very quickly, and Steve didn’t know what to do except wait it out. “I had nowhere-”

“Don’t fucking tell me you had nowhere else to go, Stark.”

“I couldn’t go to yours. Or Clint’s or Thor’s or T’Challa’s, alright? He’d find out. At least with Stane he won’t come for me.”

This sounded sinister, and Steve found himself almost concerned about who this mysterious ‘he’ was.

“He can’t do that. You’re of age.”

“We both know he can still do that, Nat. But it’s fine. We should be good for, like, ever. He’s cut me off but Stane’s funding school and I still have an ass-tonne of cash.”

“I don’t like this.”

“I know, but it’s over now. So it’s all good.”

“You should’ve come to me.”

“Okay. Next time I’m having a life crisis I’ll come to you, okay?”

“Good. You’re a piece of shit,” Natasha replies, which Steve assumes is Slytherin for ‘i care about you’.

“I’m averaging out for crises at about twice a month, so you should expect me soon.”

“Will do.”

“Thanks.”

“I’ll kill him for you, y’know? I know it’s, like, illegal. But I will. I will kill him or I’ll-”

“Maim him or curse him into a cycle of relentless suffering, yes, Natasha, I know. I appreciate that.” Steve, although having little close up experiences with them, knows that threatening to kill someone is another Slytherin code for ‘i care about you’.

“Oh, by the way. I did a whole load of experimental drugs and I think I’ve figured out how to sort out T’Challa’s monthly.”

“Really?” Natasha sounds so fully, completely surprised that Steve flinches. What the hell was T’Challa’s monthly?

“Yeah. Not a fix, obviously, but I think it’ll help. I’m good at potions but I’m not that good, and I
can’t get Bruce to help this time because he can’t know what it’s for."

“T’Challa will appreciate that you tried.”

“Yeah. Fucking Gryffindors are so grateful and kind. It’s so annoying.”

“I know right? Like, all those thank yous and compliments. It’s the worst.”

“And they always think they should repay us and shit. I mean, I’m only helping him so he can shut up about it,” Tony whines.

“He already thinks we’ve done too much.”

“Only because he hates breaking the law. He knows he needs us.”

“True. He still thinks we should register now that we’re all 17, though.”

“Mm. I don’t think I will. I’m enjoying it way too much without government intervention.”

“We should probably go.”

“Yeah, I’m like half an hour late to transfiguration.”

“Okay, I think I have a class now, too.” Natasha says, and Steve rolls his eyes because whoever said Slytherins were the type of determined people who actually went to class were dead wrong. Although to be fair he was late to hermology just so he could eavesdrop on a conversation. Their feet disappear, and seconds later they both leap down. Natasha with a lot more grace than Tony, but he pulls it off at the last second.

As they turn and right themselves, Natasha catches sight of him and her eyes go cold when she sees him. They’d sort of been friends once. Not real friends, of course, but maybe getting there. Then something had happened and she’d cut him off completely. Slytherins were like that. Tony notices her eyes freeze over and turns around to look at what she saw.

Upon seeing Steve, his face seems to flicker with something before pulling up into his usual smirk. The snake from before is curling around his left shoulder and upper arm, twining slightly around his torso as well.

“Hear anything you like, Rogers?” He raises an eyebrow, raking his eyes down Steve’s body as if he was checking him out.

“I only just got here,” Steve says automatically, but he receives matching expressions of disbelief.

“You can’t lie to liars, Steve,” Tony gestures at himself and Natasha, who seems wildly unfazed at being called a liar. Steve was pissed off at being called a liar and he actually was lying, so what does that say about the two of them? He curses the Slytherin ability to detect a liar.

“I didn’t hear anything.” Steve rolls his eyes, and Tony puts the cigarette box back in his pocket. He’s always wanted to know what they were like, and why muggles were so obsessed with them.

“Whatever you say, Captain,” Tony teases, and Steve swears at the fact that Tony knew he’d made captain. It was meant to be a secret until he could rub it in his face properly. Whatever, Tony wasn’t captain, so fuck him.

“Bye. I’m actually going to go to class,” Steve glares, and Tony rolls his eyes.
“Suck my balls, Captain.”

Steve ignores him. He usually would take this opportunity to start an argument, they’d gone a while without a proper hex battle, but he still felt a little guilty about the phone thing. It seemed like a big deal. Also, he was busy trying to figure out what the hell was so illegal they needed to register, and what the hell T’Challa’s monthly was.

—

Down at the greenhouses, Coulson’s class is already in full swing. Steve apologises, but Coulson loves him and would probably let him get away with burning the place down, so it’s all fine.

“Hey, Professor.” He greets, and Coulson grins at him, holding a screeching and thrashing plant in his left hand.

“Hello, Steve. How are you?” He says, narrowly avoiding a kick to the face from the plant. He appears to be struggling with it, so Steve takes it from his hands and applies pressure to the base of it, smiling in satisfaction when it calms down and opens up, releasing 5 or 6 small blue rocks. “Thank you. Got a bit distracted.”

Steve nods, helping him extract the rocks, ignoring whatever task the class had inevitably been set. “I’m good. I’ve missed the greenhouses,” He replies honestly, taking in the earthy smells.

“Your patterpod has missed you. I did my best to look after her over the summer, but she definitely missed you.” Coulson tells him, and Steve glows with pride, “She’s doing well. Go check on her, then find Wilson and get him to tell you what the task is.”

Steve nods once, practically running over to his tree. She was a tree of his own design, and he’d worked all the way through sixth year trying to get her just perfect. She had an element of sentience to her, and now she was fussy and a bit of a diva, but tough and strong all the same.

Approaching the tree, she begins to quiver slightly in excitement.

“Hello Peggy,” He says, and she sways at the use of her name. She’s only about three foot tall, an earthy red along the trunk and branches, with healthy, dark green leaves. Tiny fruits are beginning to grow amongst the leaves, bright white and smelling of jasmine. “How are you?”

She rustles happily, and he pours a bit of water out from his wand. “Yeah, I missed you too. Can’t take you home just yet, though. You know how it is.” He begins to pick out some of the older leaves and rotten fruit, cleaning out her pot, “As soon as this year is up, after I’ve used you for my final project, then I can take you home alright? You’ll be a big girl by then.”

None of the other students notice him talking to a plant. “And I’ll plant you outside, you can grow big as ever. You’re gonna be so strong.”

“Rogers,” Sam calls over to him, half buried under some roots that looked like they were about to strangle him.

“Okay, gotta go save my buddy, Pegs. See you in a bit. Love you.”
Steve trundles happily down to potions, knowing that Professor Selvig always sets a nice easy lesson on the first day. It’s a bit of a nasty surprise to find that Tony is not only on time, but early to potions. Luckily the boy seemed so involved in talking to Bruce Banner that he doesn’t notice Steve pass by at all.

Steve shuffles his books onto a desk next to a Sharon, sadly just close enough to be able to hear Tony. For some reason, he seemed to be desperately trying to convince Bruce to help him do something. Going on and on about how Selvig wouldn’t be setting a real task anyway, and this would be a revolutionary thing to do, and how Bruce was the best ever in the world at potions. Steve had to admit, you couldn’t fault a Slytherin for being unpersuasive.

They were always good, and exceptionally manipulative, and Steve found even he wanted Bruce to do whatever it was Tony wanted.

“You want me to help you make something completely uncharted, potentially disastrous, and definitely exceptionally dangerous, just for the fun of it?”

“No!” Tony swings backwards, grinning, “I want me to help you!”

This continues for a few more minutes as more people filter into the class, until Bruce caves and Tony woops with glee. Steve ignores them then, focussing on Selvig while the two of them have their own conversation, and then sets to work on the task.

For a while, Steve almost forgets about Tony, which is rare, because even when the kid’s not in the room he seems to be centre of attention, but he seems so absorbed in whatever it is he’s doing that he manages to forget. Every now and then he glances over, pretending it’s out of caution and not interest. Tony’s got his shirt sleeves rolled up to above his elbows, displaying tanned forearms, and the top buttons of his shirt are undone and his tie askew. It’s such a mad scientist look that Steve’s almost endeared.

Then Tony is the centre of attention again. Because he’s like that.

Steve’s just cutting things up when Bruce’s careful voice says something a little louder than usual.

“Are you sure this is going to work?”


Then there was an ‘oh shit’ and a boom.

Tony, Bruce, and everyone in the vicinity is sent flying by the force of a huge explosion. Steve manages to get away with a strong blast of heat and a slightly singed robe, but everyone else in the disaster zone got struck bad.

Tony, of course, is cackling. “Write that down!” he yells to no one in particular. Steve watches as he stands up, hair all over the place, tugging Bruce with him and runs back over to the cauldron. He’s still laughing, brushing away all the debris of the cupboard he’d been sent flying into.

“Well that was easy,” He says blankly, staring into the cauldron.

“Stark!” Selvig yells, dusting himself off. The professor had the unfortunate luck of being in the blast area, and was a little coated in ash and dust. Tony blinks, seeming to notice the destruction for the first time but he’s miraculously unphased. He holds up a scoop of pure white liquid.

“Professor!” He yells back, and Selvig is obviously one of those professors that’s more scientist than
teacher, because his interest completely over takes his desire to discipline his students.

“What is that?”

“Hangover cure!” Tony says brightly, and he sniffs it once, wincing, “I hope.”

“That wasn’t the task,” Selvig says, walking over. He doesn’t sound in the least bit irritated, “How did you manage- No, Tony don’t eat.”

Too late, Tony’s sipping experimental potion as practically everyone in the class says ‘no!’ He drinks a mouthful, and swallows with an expression that says it doesn’t taste good at all.

“Coconut-y.” He chokes out, and Steve prays that he doesn’t vomit. After a minute of everyone watching, he grins and holds Bruce’s fist in the air. “HANGOVER CURE!” He yells, and the whole class cheers. Steve rolls his eyes.

“Okay, Stark, stay after class and I’ll run some further tests. Everyone is completely forbidden from drinking any of this, alright? It has to be checked by-” Selvig turns to the class, going off one about logistics and health and safety and other boring things whilst Tony, behind him, winks to everyone and begins pouring the contents of the cauldron into a weird bottle. The curiosity in Steve really wants to try it. Gryffindors were never too good at thinking rationally, anyway.

“Professor, it actually works.”

“We need to prove that Tony-”

“I did!”

“You didn’t, you just drank it. That’s-”

“Anecdotal and pseudoscientific, I know, but…”

After class, Sharon and Steve leave without any confrontation with Tony and he thanks the lord for it, and he’s saved from the possibility of having one soon because Selvig has cornered Tony and Banner about their new potion.

“Yo I heard Stark blew something up in your class today,” Sam says by way of greeting, falling into step besides Steve.

“Yeah, well. Wouldn’t be Stark if he went a day without blowing something up,” Steve sighs in response, still a little pissed off at how dirty his robes were now.

Sam whistles, pretending he didn’t like that Tony blew shit up all the time, and then bustles off again, obviously busy. Bucky takes his place.

“So how long have you had a crush on Stark?” He asks, making Steve splutter. “I mean, I figured you’d tell me when it happened. That’s best friend news, Steve.”

“What’re you talking about?”

“You. Liking Stark.”

“Stark.”
“Well, yeah. I saw that little ice lolly show he did yesterday. If there’s one thing a best friend knows, it’s when you’re aroused.”

“Gross,” Steve frowns, taking the books from Bucky’s one good arm. He usually coped pretty well without his left arm, but a little help never goes amiss. “And I don’t like Stark.”

“Well, obviously. Not for his personality, anyways.”

“Literally what are you talking about?” Steve sighs, not really in the mood for Bucky’s shit today.

“He turned you on. With the faux-job. It was obvious as hell.”

“Wh-”

“Don’t deny it,” Bucky rolls his eyes and jostles his friend slightly.

“Okay, so it was hot. But Tony’s hot, everyone knows that. I don’t like him.”

“Fine. Since when have you been attracted to Stark.”

“Everyone’s attracted to Tony Stark.”

“No, Steve. No.”

“Oh,” Steve shrugs, opening the door to the library, “Like three years?”

“Are you kidding me?”

“Five?”

“Steve.”

“Wait, seven. It’s been seven years.”

“You’ve been attracted to Tony Stark for seven years and you never told me.”

Steve shrugs again, slipping into a chair, “I figured everyone was attracted to him. Its news to me that you’re not.”

“I never said I wasn’t.”

“It’s not the point.”

“What is the point?”

“That he’s hot,”

“And?”

“It’s fine.”

“Why’s it fine?”

“Because he’s an asshole.”

“Yeah?”
“And I hate him.”

“Why’s that good?”

“Because it extinguishes any attractiveness he holds.”

“What’re you-”

“The point,” Steve slams a book down, staring at Bucky across the table, “is that I hate him and we will put each other through hell for the rest of eternity. The fact that he’s hot is irrelevant. I bet he thinks I’m hot.”

“You’re weird.”

“Yeah.”

“I can only see this ending in hate sex.”

“If it was gonna end in hate sex, it would’ve happened already.”

“True. Pretty sure me and you are the only ones in the whole year that he hasn’t slept with.”

“He gave you a blow job, Bucky.”

“Aside from that.”

“Whatever.” Steve smiles, and they begin to actually get some work done.

(By work done, we mean they played wizard noughts and crosses and then thumb wrestled for an hour.)

—

Chapter End Notes

BEFORE Y’ALL COME FOR ME ABT HOUSE THINGS

OKOYE: ready to kill her man to protect her heritage and her country

SHURI: ambitious as fuck and a sneaky bitch
VAL: out to kill hela for some sweet ass revenge
NEBU: evil bitch i mean cmon
GAMORA: snarky sneaky bitch yo

ANY other qquestions pls cum forwards. hope u all enjoy!! tell me wot u think !!
Chapter 3

Tony slips down the corridor towards the kitchens, casting a quick look over his shoulder to make sure no one saw him. Quickening his pace, he walks with purpose all the way until the painting of the fruit bowl, and then tickles the pear.

Immediately, the wall slides back and the smell of food and the sound of happy chatter hits him. He steps forward and it takes 0.3 seconds for them all to notice him. A loud, messy chorus of ‘Tony Stark!’ overwhelms him, and suddenly hundreds of house elves are piling in for a hug.

Tony, as a rule, didn’t really do hugs. Hadn’t done hugs since he was 4, and his father told him that hugs were for babies and weaklings. So he doesn’t do anything except greet them and let them clamber all over, ruffling his hair and clinging to random body parts.

“Hey, guys. How’s it going?” He pats a few of them on the head, sitting down on a work bench and waving away their offerings of food. It had taken years for them to drop the ‘Master Stark’ thing, years of him begging them not to call him that because it made him feel like his father. Tony was still too informal for them, so it was Tony Stark all the way.

They fill him in on all the elf drama since he’d been gone, and there was a lot, and then he asks them if any had seen his phone on their cleaning travels. They hadn’t, and Tony curses nothingness because where was it.

An hour later, he’s leaving the kitchens a little brighter, but still pissed off about his phone.

“Goodbye Tony Stark!” They yell after him as he leaves.

“Bye guys! George, keep growing your hair, it looks great. Daisy, sweetheart, I’m loving your new tea towel toga. Working it. See you guys soon!”

—

When walking back up the stairs, a thought strikes Tony that he can’t quite shake from his head. There’s no harm in checking, right?

Thor’s already told him the Gryffindor password, because he’s hopeless like that, but Tony could’ve guessed anyway. There’s only 5 or 6 people in their common room, too busy being comfy and having a good time to notice him. Too busy being brave or opening doors for people or whatever it is Gryffindors do in their spare time.

The common room is cosy and warm, it smells like wood smoke and dust. It also smells like cinnamon and leather. Tony pretends that he thinks it’s gross, and that it doesn’t remind him of Rogers.

Nothing stops him from walking all the way up the winding stairs to what Tony knows from previous pranks to be Steve’s dorm, so he’s almost suspicious when he approaches Steve’s bed and he’s still alive. Dumb, trusting Gryffindors.

Tony doesn’t find his phone in Steve’s trunk, but that’s not about to stop him from messing around anyway. He’s just formulating ideas when footsteps start coming up the stairs and he dives under the bed in panic.
“Still, I think you should give it back.” Comes a muffled voice that Tony recognises as Barnes.

“I know, I actually feel kinda bad about breaking it.” Another voice says, and the door opens. Steve. Tony watches their feet enter, thanking Merlin that he was blessed with a steady heartbeat and breath. He keeps his face pressed up to the red and gold rug.

Tacky, he thinks with some disdain.

“Kind of a dick move. And you can’t fix it?”

“I barely even know what a phone is! How am I supposed to fix it?” Steve’s voice is indignant, and Tony freezes dead still. Steve did have his phone? And he broke it?

“Look, just take it to him. He’s a genius or whatever, he can probably fix it.”

“Right, he’ll fix it right after slitting my throat and hanging me upside down from the astronomy tower,” Steve scoffs, and Tony’s so pissed off that he’s actually considering. The blood in his veins goes cold at the confirmation that, yes, Steve took and broke his phone. Not very Gryffindor, Rogers.

Bucky, at least, seems a little forthright about it all. “He’s gonna find out one way or another.”

“I know,” Steve sighs in defeat, sitting down on the bed above Steve with a squeak. Tony glares at it. “His revenge is gonna be so bad.”

“Yep.”

“Support, Bucky. Support.”

“Uh, I’m sure it won’t be that bad?” Bucky tries, but all three of them knew that it was gonna be some glorious revenge. “You’re surprisingly not-guilty about this.”

“I know. I should feel properly bad, but I don’t.” Steve says, and Tony didn’t care because even if Steve was sobbing with regret, he’d still take his sweet vengeance. “I just wanna see him get mad, Buck.”

“What?”

“I wanna see him angry. Like, super angry. He’s never fucking angry. Or if he is, it’s like…Slytherin anger. Where it’s all cold and calculated and drawn out. Why is it so hard to make him lose it.”

“Because all Slytherins are composed, detached marble statues who don’t break a sweat when carving out your lungs?” Bucky says unhelpfully, and Steve stands up again.

“Whatever. I don’t feel bad.” He says with some finality and Tony remains still while the two shuffle around, talking about their next class. When they finally leave again, having collected whatever books they needed, Tony rolls out from under the bed and dusts himself off.

Sure enough, there on the dresser, right where he hadn’t checked, was Tony’s phone. Trying to keep emotions in check, he wonders over and picks it up, sighing in relief when he realises it’s literally just the screen. He could fix that shit easy.

Now, Tony had a few options.
1. Let it go, be the bigger person, and move on.
2. Go downstairs and blast Steve into oblivion for touching his shit.
3. Plan long, sweet, precious revenge
4. Go and publicly embarrass Steve and get it over with.

A was obviously out of the runnings because Tony was a Slytherin and a nasty one at that. B was an option, but Steve wanted that. Steve wanted Tony to get mad.

Which meant… C was the best bet, but he’d need to give Steve a little show first. Make it seem like he didn’t care at all.

_ The door to Steve’s History of Magic class slams open conveniently as Professor Ross was out of the room. To Steve’s irritation, it was Tony.

He’s walking with confidence, left arm raised, holding a smashed phone in his hand. Oh shit, Steve thinks. To his even greater annoyance, Tony isn’t angry. Not even that cold, evil anger that Slytherins get. He’s even smiling. Cocky son of a bitch.

“Rogers!” He greets brightly, and Steve gives up the pretence of having not noticed him. The rest of the class is focused on them, gearing up for one of the famous Tony vs Steve battle. On instinct, Steve picked up his wand, but it was too late. His arms and legs bound together by invisible forces and Steve cursed Tony for getting him so quickly, but also thanked him for a move that no one would notice.

“Tony,” Steve responds as happily as he can. Tony is unfazed, of course.

“So, Stevie, I took a little detour by your room,” He smiles, walking around behind him and leaning against his back. Steve can’t turn to look at him. “And found this. It’s mine, right? This is my phone? That you took?”

Steve rolls his eyes, trying to figure out a way to get some control over the situation. The bodybind is an overused spell and Bucky used to use it often enough that Steve thinks he might be able to get out of it. Tony hadn’t put a particularly strong one on.

“So anyway, I was just in your room, and here we have my phone. Buried amongst the dildos, of course.” He smiles and every muggleborn in the room laughs. Steve frowns when Tony places his chin on his shoulder, unable to shake him off. Tony smells good and feels good and wow, that’s an inappropriately timed thought. Someone mutters something about sexual tension

“Get off me, Stark,” Steve grits through his teeth, still working on getting out. Tony obediently leans away, but only slightly.

“Don’t worry, I’m not gonna hurt you,” Tony purrs, voice taking a much darker and more sinister tone, and Steve would shiver if he could fucking move. “But I will. If you take my fucking stuff again,”

His voice is cold and his breath is hot against Steve’s neck. He begins to walk towards the door
again, apologising to the class for not putting on a show today.

As soon as he reaches the door, he adjusts his grip on his wand and it’s just enough of a warning for Steve.

“Sike,” Tony says, flicking up his wand casually and firing a spell at Steve with breathtaking efficiency. Luckily, Steve broke the bind just in time and deflected, but it was a close one. The most annoying part was Tony smiling as if he expected it. Steve fires a spell back, missing by an inch, and Tony twitches his wand again.

It misses, uncharacteristically, by about a meter, and Steve frowns until a book that had just been sat on the desk bit his ass. Steve responds by pointing at Tony, who ducks, but the shelf behind collapses on top of him with a satisfying crunch. So he’d escalated it a little, big deal. Tony shoves it off quickly, sending two dummy spells and then hitting Steve with one of those fucking jinxes that makes you dance uncontrollably.

Despite this minor set back, Steve sends a load of books flying at Tony. He can’t dodge all of them, so that’s a bonus. The downside is Tony not only hits Steve with a spell that makes yellow goo erupt from his nose but then also another that makes him drop his wand, just after Steve can fire a simple knockback jinx.

By now, the whole class had cleared to the sides, cheering as the battle proceeds. Tony’s laughing, the way he always does when they fight like this, and pushes all of the tables towards Steve, forcing him against the wall. The room is in havoc, objects flying across the room, things upturned, and Steve was still dancing. After Steve blasts away as many of the tables that he can, he sends all the quills in the room at Tony, but in return, he gets set on fucking fire.

Then Professor Ross walks back in. Her eyes are immediately drawn to Steve, dancing, on fire, goo squirting out of his nose, and Tony takes the opportunity to escape the room, casting one last gleeful look at Steve. Fuck.

Tony dusts himself off, thinking that, yeah, that was kind of fun. Not nearly enough though. Now, he would begin the proper revenge.

He finds a book about how to brew veritaserum.

“I have detention every Monday for the next month,” Steve grumbles, and his dreary expression does not corroborate well with his body, which is still dancing. The talk with the professors has been awkward, given that he kept shaking his bum and twirling.

“That, considering the damage you did, is not a bad outcome,” Sharon points out, deliberately not looking at him because if she did, she’d laugh. Apparently the dancing would wear off in an hour or so.

Steve paced/danced angrily. He had planned on going to see the house elves, but now he’d have to wait until the dancing finally stopped
“Wanna go get high in the shrieking shack tonight?” Clint asks everyone, cleaning his nails with his wand, “I got a new magic bong.”

“Sure,” T’Challa shrugs, then a thought strikes him, “You guys, we need to do the Welcome Games,”

“Oh shit, yeah. Friday night? When is your next… y’know, cycle.” Thor gestures at T’Challa’s entire body, and he rolls his eyes.

“Why do you still call it a cycle. It’s not a cycle. I’m not due for a transformation until two weeks, so Friday’s good. Besides, we can’t put off a whole-school tradition just for me.”

“We can and we would,” Natasha shrugs and Tony nods, because it's not like anyone's gonna say no to them, is it?

The Welcome Games were another tradition, accidentally started by Tony and Steve. In order to give the first years some non-teacher-regulated fun, they sneak out into the grounds after lights out and play whole school games. It started when Steve challenged Tony to a one-on-one, no rules allowed quidditch game, that the whole school had come to watch. Steve was a better Quidditch player, but Tony was better at using magic whilst flying. Since then it’s developed, mostly by Tony’s loving, nurturing care into something a lot bigger than that. (It was still a thinly disguised attempt at a Tony vs Steve battle, but y’know.)

“Sounds good. Someone tell Ravenclaw.” Thor smiles and bounds off. Tony and Natasha say goodbye as well, heading down to the Quidditch pitch for try-outs.

“You’re late,” Valkyrie comments, staring them down as they approach. She’s leaning back against the wall of the changing rooms, Okoye stood next to her. Nebula and Gamora sit just to the right, also staring them down. Natasha goes to stand near them, and Tony raises an eyebrow.

“You guys are the most terrifying group of people I’ve ever seen in my life,” He tells them truthfully, eyeing at the formidable group of women. They all smile at the compliment.

“Okay, the people who wanna try out will be here any minute,” Val stands up straight, clapping her hands together. “We’re looking for a chaser, so Tony and Okoye I want you out there with them to see how well they work with you. You’ll be switching between working with and trying to stop them from trying to score against me. Gamora and Nebula, I mostly want you watching, but knock a bludger at ‘em if you think they need it. Nat, as seeker, I just want you observing. Let me know who you think has the best chemistry and all that.”

They all nod, variations of ‘yes boss’ and ‘aye aye Captain’ echoing.

On their own, none of the team were good at or likely to obey any orders, under any circumstances, but the team was important to them and, despite their pretenses, Val was a good leader with good advice. If they felt there was a problem then there was no passive aggression about calling her out.

“Don’t get changed, your muggle clothing should be fine. Let’s go. Hands in. Stark, would you do the honors?” She says, and they all gather around. Tony shoves his hand in the middle and everyone piles theirs on top. He clears his throat.
“Eat my leek.” He says with deliberate force, and the team echoes it loudly, raising their hands with fingers in a V shape. To normal people, the V shape is for peace, but for Slytherins it’s for Victory.

‘Eat my leek’ is a strange rallying call, but the tradition is that each time they do it, they say a different, random, weird Shakespeare quote. Mostly, they do it to confuse the other houses. Only the sainted Ravenclaws seem to have caught on and they aren’t spilling to the other two houses.

Try-outs are long and so boring, but by the end, it’s clear that Shuri Udaku, although not the biggest, was definitely the smartest contender and worked the best with the team.

Tony grins when they dismount, patting his blessed broom. He’d missed flying. He’d missed the team and quidditch.

The best thing, for Tony, about Quidditch was that he was good at it. Not great, not spectacular, not record-breaking, he was just good. It was so refreshing to do something without the pressures of being a magical prodigy or a super genius or whatever. Flying made him feel alive, and the team worked so well together.

“Okay, Udaku, welcome to the team. Obviously, there’s work to be done, you’ll need time to adjust, but I think you’re going to do good here.” Shuri grins and nods, knocking her fists together.

“Thank you.”

“We all need to practice, but especially you Tony. You did tragically,” Val looks at him with a small smile on her lips. She’s right, though. Tony hadn’t been able to practice all summer and his head was still in that potion for T’Challa.

“Pfft. I did everything smoothly.”

“You crashed into the stands,” Nebula gestures to the caved-in section of the seating area, about 100m away from them.

“Smoothly,” Tony adds with a grin. There was a bruise forming on his cheek already.

“You’re an idiot,” One of them says, ruffling his hair.

“Sexist,” Tony mutters, watching as every single one of his all-female team rolls their eyes. Claiming sexism was just something Tony did to wind them up. It didn’t work so well anymore, sadly.

“So,” Val puts her voice back into ‘boss’ mode, “aside from Tony working out what his stopping distance is, it’s just practice.”

“And, if you’re going down, take as many of the other team as you can,” Gamora nods wisely, looking at Shuri. Val sighs.

“If you’re gonna die, die a legend.” Natasha contributes.

“It’s only cheating if you get caught,” Nebula says.

“Fear is a powerful tool, use it excessively,” Okoye adds.

“Being nice never gets you anywhere,” Tony joins in. Val facepalms at their advice, but Shuri is drinking it in.
“But most importantly,” Valkyrie looks her in the eyes, “Never listen to anything Tony says. Ever.” At the final words, they all nod solemnly. Even Tony.

“Thanks for letting me on the team. You won’t regret it.”

“You’ll regret making me regret it, if you do.” Val threatens, a glimmer of humour in her eye. She claps her hands. “Okay, Natasha and Tony are sorting the team uniforms. Nat, I’m relying on you not to let Tony fuck this up, alright? Dumblefury will have a fit if we all have the words JUICY pasted across our asses again. Practice on Thursday first games up in 5 weeks.”

Natasha nods and they all put their hands in the middle again. Shuri mimics and Okoye clears her throat.

“What, you egg?” She growls.

“What, YOU EGG?” They all yell, then split. As they leave, the team wolf whistle and catcall the Gryffindor boys entering for their own try-outs.

—

“Attention, class mates!” Thor’s loud voice booms across the Gryffindor Common room, effectively calling everyone’s focus to him. “Friday night will be the Welcome Games! Are you excited?” More cheering, “Yeah! You know the rules. Be discreet, no telling to the professors, and wear house colours.”

T’Challa steps up next to him on the sofa. “We want to win this year, yes?”

The common room clamour their assent.

“Good. Be ready! Play fair! Most importantly, enjoy yourselves. We are not aware of the games as of yet, but we will inform you at the earliest opportunity!”

The gryffindors roar, happy shouts of excitement filling the room. Steve shifts, a little bit from anticipation and a little bit because the dancing hadn’t quite worn off yet.

“FOR GRYFFINDOR!” Thor yells with his fist in the air, and its met by a unanimous shout of “GRYFFINDOR!” back.

—

Tony stands on a table in the Slytherin common room, Natasha next to him. He clears his throat.

“Hey!” He yells, directing the attention to himself, “Welcome Games, Friday night. Wear black, green, or silver or white. Be there, be ready, and remember, snitches get stitches, you little bitches.”

The common room cheers at the announcement, whistles sounding around the room.

“So! The Gryffindors probably think they’re gonna win. Because they’re dumb like that.” More
cheering. “But remember. Winning isn’t *everything*.”

Pause.

“It’s the *only* thing. We’re gonna crush those fuckers into the dirt or die trying!” The cheering is reinstated, house pride riding high.

—

“Oh, guys?” Clint lounges on the sofa in the Hufflepuff common room, raising his voice slightly to be heard over the quiet chatter. A few people look over. “Welcome Games on Friday night. Wear house colours.”

“Cool.” A few people say. Others just nod.

—

Stephen Strange walks through the door to the Ravenclaw common room. He raps on the wall for everyone’s attention.

“Stark says Welcome Games on Friday.”

“Oh no,” Someone says.

—

Tony sat cross-legged on his bed, fixing his phone screen. The muggle way. Jarvis and Dummy crawl all over him, winding around his arms and shoulders. With a small screwdriver in his mouth, Tony hums to fill the silence. He would listen to music, but, well, his phone was fucking broken.

In of the corner of his eye, a spider crawls into view. It’s pretty big, about an inch and a half, with a big, bulbous body and spindly legs. On it’s underside, there’s a small, red, hour-glass shape. The spider crawls up Tony’s bedpost. It’s dangerous, definitely not native to England.

“Hey, Nat,” He says. The spider, upon being seen, transforms, growing to the size of a 17-year-old redhead.

“Hey, Tony.”

“Not that I don’t love visits from the most venomous spiders to be found in North America,” Tony says, looking up briefly from the phone, “but you could just walk.”

“Yeah, but I haven’t transformed all summer and I’ve missed being small and deadly.”
“You’re already small and deadly.”

“Whatever.”

Tony’s about to go back to fixing his phone when something else catches his eye.

“For fuck’s sake.” The hawk in the doorway cocked its head indignantly. “Why does no one notice a massive fucking hawk wandering around the school?”

The hawk shifts, growing rapidly into Clint.

“It’s not the weirdest thing to be wandering around, let’s be real.”

“Besides, I think most of the school has caught on that we’re animagi,” Natasha shrugs, picking up Tony’s phone. “What happened?”

“Rogers.”

“He broke your phone?”

“Stole and broke it.”

“We need revenge.”

“Already on it.”

“How can I help?”

“Help me brew veritaserum.”

“You two are terrifying,” Clint comments, taking the phone from Tony’s hands and putting it on the dresser. “Nat says you have something for T’Challa?”

“Yeah, it won’t stop the transformations each month, but hopefully he’ll be able to transform whenever he wants outside of that time whilst still remaining in his own mind. Also, if he keeps it up for a long time, he’ll be able to be a little more conscious during the monthly’s.”

Natasha and Clint stare at him, mouths slightly open.

“That’s incredible.”

“How the hell-“

“He’ll be so grateful”

“You could make billions from that.”

“I know,” Tony shrugs, going over the maths for the potion again, “but I can’t sell it. Will raise questions about T’Challa.”

Natasha levels him with a look that Tony steadfastly ignores.

Tony, as a Slytherin, doesn’t really trust anybody. Loyalty is a much more convoluted and complicated thing to a Slytherin than to any other house. Loyalty is something binding and forever, and it is definitely not given to just anyone. Until third year, Tony would have claimed loyalty to no
one but himself and would have truthfully claimed to trust absolutely nobody. Natasha was his friend, as were the others, but he didn’t trust them. Over a long period of time, he grew some loyalty to her, as she did him. He still didn’t trust her, but that was okay. By third year, she trusted him with her life, after an incident they don’t speak of, and by fourth year he trusted her too. Thor, T’Challa, and Clint were loyal and trusting immediately, but it took a little longer for Nat and Tony.

The idea of Tony keeping secret a huge breakthrough like this until T’Challa was safe was a sign of something big, and Natasha knew it.

“We’ll try it out tonight,” Natasha says instead of calling him out, then when Tony opens his mouth to say no she continues “you need to come, Tony. It’s been a while. You’re getting fat.”

In response, Tony lifts up his t-shirt to display a pretty solid set of abs. “I think I’m good.”

Tony’s animagus was the fastest land animal on Earth, and transforming and performing whilst in Cheetah form had gotten him fitter than reasonably possible for someone who’s only other exercise was sitting on a broomstick.

Clint tackles him back into the bed, thankfully the snakes were now wriggling up the bedposts, and Natasha wrenches the shirt up, pinching at Tony’s skin.

“Look at all this chub,” she tuts, squeezing the bit of flesh on his sides while Tony desperately tries to get them both of him.

^funky flashback scene^

“So, okay, do we all do it at the same time or take turns,” Clint asked, shifting his feet slightly. Nervousness was not a good look on him. The five of them stood in a circle in the shrieking shack. Months of preparation, of hard work, of considerable patience and a little bit of pain, had led to this. To this exact moment. 5 fourteen-year-olds about to attempt something that many accomplished wizards could never even dream of.

“One at a time,” T’Challa responded, looking very concerned considering he wasn’t actually going to be doing anything except watching. “It’s safer. Thor, want to go first?”

Being a Gryffindor, Thor set his jaw resolutely and stepped forward, wincing and straining when the first ever transformation began. Everyone held their breath.

He grew, which is terrifying because he’s already big. He grew and his hair grew and his hands and feet grew. The fact that he turned into a big, blond bear seemed to surprise no one, though the shock of the actual transformation itself was enough to shut everyone up.

As quickly as he had done it, he was back again, shrinking and smiling and shaking his entire body free of it. Someone whispers ‘holy shit’.

“That was easier than I thought it would be,” Thor had said cockily, convincing Clint to step forward so he could go next.

Clint shrunk, all the way down to their knees, and his arms expanded into wings and his hair grew out to feathers. The new hawk flapped a little, checking itself out, then grew back to an average sized fourteen-year-old kid.
“That doesn’t hurt at all,” Clint said, a smug grin on his face at the success of the transformation.

Natasha went next, and she shrunk so small that the group began to panic, wondering if she was okay, but then Clint had spotted a small, dangerous little Black Widow spider on the floor.

When Natasha grew back to regular size, she was even smiling a little. Tony went last.

Thing was, something must have gone a little wrong, somewhere along the way, because Tony’s hurt.

It hurt like nothing he’d ever felt. Searing, tearing, burning, blinding pain like he’d never felt before and never felt since. Tony had collapsed to his knees, teeth clamped together in pain, fingers digging into the wooden flooring beneath them. Thor had reached him first, but Tony batted him away because something was happening. The others yelled at him to stop but he was going to do it.

He let out a low, guttural scream of absolute agony and it turned into a roar of an animal. His spine twisted, bones grinding together and flesh tearing. His skin sizzled, eyes burned and throat closed.

Then everything was fine.

He was a cheetah.

Tony stretched, taking the time to embrace his new, alternate body, then turned back quickly, painlessly, and swore.

“What the fuck was that?”

“Something must have gone wrong,” T’Challa told him, “you’re... you look like a king cheetah, but you’re the wrong colour...” He dives for the book, flicking through it. “It says here if you get the baby steps bit of the process wrong then the first transformation can be worse than a cruciatus curse, and it turns your animagus permanently albino.”

“Albino?”

“And heterochromatic.”

“I’m an albino heterochromatic King Cheetah.”

“Yeah.”

“Ha. That’s way cooler than all of yours.”

“You just endured a pain worse than the cruciatus curse and you’re still a cocky ass.”

“Hey, s’gonna take more than some agonizing pain to kill this ego”
them be a little rowdy for a while before calling for attention. Bucky waved at him from the stands.

“Alright Howlies, settle down.” Steve calls. The team, maybe about two years ago, had once been teasingly called the Howling Commandos by Tony Stark, and since then they’d sort of gone with it and adopted it as a team name.

They, of course, did not settle down, but they did direct more of their energy towards him. Bucky was talking to them too, shouting from the seats. Bucky loved quidditch, and was really good at it, but with only one arm he couldn’t play for the team. (Steve had considered it). It meant Thor took his place, if somewhat reluctantly. Thor was great at quidditch, but he didn’t really have a passion for it so he was more of a filler. Steve would have chosen Sif in place of him, but he was just ever so slightly better than her.

“First game’s in a few weeks. It’s Slytherin vs Ravenclaw first and then its us against hufflepuff after that.

“We’ll smash ‘em!” Dum Dum calls, drawing out roars of agreement from the rest. Steve smiles, beginning to walk with them to the changing rooms. His team were some of the best, and he was certain that most of them could go professional. He himself was hoping to get scouted this year, and although humbleness is a great Gryffindor quality, so is honesty, and Steve was a damn good beater.

The Slytherin beaters, sisters, were probably the most skilled in the school but were dragged down by the fact that half way through games they’d just start beating the shit out of each other.

As they leave, the Slytherin team are coming on for their practice. Tony’s not there yet, obviously late, but the rest of the girls are and they’re wearing a new uniform. Every year they change it, but it’s not technically against the rules. This time, they’re wearing simple green t shirts with little embroidered silver snakes and black muggle sports leggings. Steve wonders if Tony will wear the leggings too, because his ass in tights would be a damn blessing. Also a massive distraction during games.

“S’all girls.” Gabe Jones comments, staring at the Slytherin team.

“Stark’s on the team as well,“

“S’all girls,” he reiterates.

“Be careful how you speak.” Thor warns, ever loyal, “A comparison to any of those girls is a formidable likeness. If Tony is comparable to any of them, that is a complement in the highest.”

“Alright, sorry buddy.”

“Don’t worry. I’m sure Tony would take much joy in the likeness.”

As if on cue, Stark comes crashing out of the changing rooms. He’s on fire.

“VAL! CHECK IT OUT!” He yells, gesturing happily at his flaming t shirt.

“What the fuck is wrong with you?” Nebula says back, carrying out the case of balls for the game. Tony catches up to them, snagging Okoye by the arm. He’s got a bruise on his cheekbone and Steve wonders if it had anything to do with the caved in and smashed up part of the seating area.

“Watch!” He says, pointing his wand at Okoye and setting her on fire as well.

“What the fuck is wrong with you?” Gamora repeats. Okoye shoots Tony a deadpan stare.
“Why am I on fire?”

“I fire-proofed our kit,” Tony gleams with pride, putting out both him and Okoye to display totally pristine uniform. Only the Odaku girl looks excited about it.

“Stark, get your broom and lets go,” Valkyrie rolls her eyes, totally unfazed, and Tony’s broom sweeps gracefully to his side. They all put their hands in the middle.

“Take you me for a sponge, my lord?” Natasha Romanoff says, and the rest of the team shout it back, mounting up and lifting off.

Steve realises the rest of the Howlies are gone and it’s just him staring at Tony. He hurries into the changing room.

—

“So, I was thinking.” Shuri says, after they’re done with their first practice as a new team.

“Ooh, that’s a bad idea.” Tony nods wisely, clasping his hands together.

“That we have to shout to communicate with each other, right?” She ignores his comment, but seems to be speaking solely to him and not the team.

“Yeah. It’s mostly bullshit, though.” Val flares at Tony, still a bit pissed about him stopping a drill because a bird was throwing up a little way away.

“There has to be a better way,” Shuri presses on, locking eyes with Tony, who brightens instantly.

“Like for example-“

“Muggle communication units!” He finishes for her, “Shuri, you genius.”

“Right? So I don’t know much about muggle technology because I never interact-“

“Oh, you’ll love it. It’s so much better than magic. It makes sense.”

“Really? I hate magic.”

“Me too! It makes no logistical sense. How can-“

“Energy be so transferable and yet so difficult to use wandless magic?”

“YES. Matter and energy are just morphed and created completely against all common laws of physics and all these wizards and witches just hand wave it away like ‘oh that’s just magic’”

“Yeah, it should be ripping the fabric of time and space!”

“Shuri, you beautiful daughter of a bitch, you’re gonna love muggle technology. We could probably set up radio communication-“

“And use it for the team! That’s what I was thinking.”

Without either of the two realising, the rest of the team had fucked off to the changing rooms. The pair of them realise at the same time, grinning cheekily at each other before heading in.
“You're fourth year, right? Do you get free periods? Whatever, come with me now. You seem clever as shit I reckon we can get this done before tomorrow’s practise.”

Sure enough, they do. Shuri picks up the technicalities of muggle technology ridiculously quickly and Tony loves it. They work in the slytherin common room, steadily creating some slightly static-y but otherwise fully functioning comms units. Val and the team pretend to be unimpressed but Tony’s not stupid and knows they think it’s great. Even Nebula smiles slightly.

The beauty of Slytherins is that they don't, usually, break the rules. They're just smart about how they manipulate them. Cunning, huh?

—

“Shit shit shit shit shit shit shit shit shit shit shit shit shit.

“We did not think this through,” Val cuts through Tony’s endless chatter. He talks through the whole practice and nobody even realised until they put a direct line from his dirty mouth to their ears.

“Tony, shut up,” Gamora grits, swinging hard and sending a bludger directly for his head.

Tony twists, narrowly avoiding a concussion, “Mean swing, Elphaba.”

“Focus up, Stark. Shuri, you’re leaving your six unguarded.”

“Ooh, the Gryffindors are here.”

“Stark.”

“Ow, Nebula? Hit someone else for a damn change.”

“Sorry, your head’s just so massive it’s an easy target.”

“Stark, focus.”

“Sorry. Steve Rogers’ ass in shorts is right there.”

“Tony.”

“He’s glaring at me.”

“Because he hates you. Focus.”

“I know right? Super hates me. It’s a damn shame, because I think I’d let that guy just about wreck me-”

“Stark, if you don’t shut up and focus, you’re off the team.”

“Alright, fine. Jeez,” Tony swerves, ducking a bludger and twisting around to throw the quaffle through the hoop at the last second, escaping Val’s hands. “But only because it turns me on when you get all bossy,” he winks.

Tony leaps up onto his broom, landing precariously on his feet, balancing as it flew away.
“Stop showing off just because Rogers is here.”

“Rogers? Why can’t I show off to 6 beautiful ladies?”

“Stark, we all know the only one here who’s into women is Valkyrie.”

“Hey,” Natasha’s frowning voice kicks in on the comms, “I claim a steak.”

Tony lifts a leg high so he’s now balanced on one foot, broom still travelling at a graceful speed.

“I think I’ve earned some right. I’ve fucked pretty much all the Gryffindor girls.” He frowns, still balanced.

“Except Sif.”

“Can you imagine?” Tony laughs, “she’d literally cut my balls off.”

“And hang them up on a wall.”

“Framed and labelled”

“Make then into a centerpiece on her dining table.”

“Showcase cabinet”

“Premiered on opening night.”

“Art museum exhibition,”

“Centre stage play.”

“Tony Stark’s balls.” Gamora says, arms splayed out as if envisioning the words lit up in lights.

“Guys, chatter.” Val grits.

Tony falls off the broom, straight into Okoye’s arms. Princess style.

“Okay, I’m guessing we’re done for today.”

“We are?”

“If Rogers is out here in shorts then Stark’s gone for good. May as well quit while we’re ahead. Good work today guys”

“See you tonight for Welcome Games.”

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Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Clint and Tony are skipping class, stood in the corridor.

They are both wearing roller skates.

“Okay, just attach your end to that wall, I’ll do mine to this wall.”

“Are you sure a sticking charm’s gonna work?” Clint looks up, sticking his end of a long piece of elastic to one wall. Tony’s on the other side, nodding and sticking his end of the elastic to his wall. Clint slips slightly on his skates.

“Okay, let’s go.” Tony ducks under the band pulled tight and rests his lower back against it. Slowly, he pulls the goggles down from his head over his eyes. Clint puts an arm around Tony’s middle and begins to pull him backwards. The elastic makes an ominous creaking sound as Tony is pulled back. It quivers with the strain.

“Ready?” Clint asks, voice forced with the effort of keeping Tony back. Tony nods, and Clint begins to count down, ready to release a roller skated Tony into the empty corridor.

Until, right as Clint says ‘zero’, the corridor gets less empty.

“Oh shit,” Tony says, and Clint lets go.

Immediately, the elastic snaps forward and sends Tony flying. The skates speed forward, and Tony yells by way of warning as he goes hurtling forwards. It’s too late, though. It’s too late.

Tony almost falls, but the time is gone and everything’s a blur and Tony crashes full force into an unsuspecting Bucky Barnes.

“What the fuck, dude?” Bucky hits the ground with a massive thump, Tony on top of him.

“Oh shit, sorry Stumpy.” Tony desperately scrambles off him, sliding a little on his skates and ignoring the pain in all of his body. Bucky accepts his hand up, raising an eyebrow at Tony’s… everything.

“Stumpy? Really?” He responds, and he should be angry but he just sounds amused. Tony liked Bucky Barnes. He didn’t know why, but the guy was fun and good-hearted, with a sense of humour. Tony would never admit it, but Bucky was the embodiment of all the good parts of Gryffindor, and never took things too seriously. Plus, they used to have a healthy competition going over who could get the most girls. And then boys.

“Stumpy.” Tony nods solemnly, balancing himself with a hand on the wall.

“That’s abuse against the disabled.” Bucky waves his stump and Tony rolls his eyes, pretending to be fed up.

“I don’t get you wizard folks.” He sighs, patting the stump, “You got no arm and you’re all just like, oh, I’ll just leave it.”

Bucky frowned. “What else am I supposed to do with it? I have no choice over whether or not I have
“Muggles get fake arms,” Tony said like Bucky is stupid and this was obvious. Bucky’s mouth dropped. Huh. Not obvious, then. “You… Haven’t even heard of that?”

“No-” Bucky looked like his throat was closing up and Tony withdrew. He really did not want to be involved in an emotional enlightening. Oh, fuck. He was gonna have to tell him.

“Prosthetics? Fake limbs? They don’t… You really didn’t… I thought you just didn’t want one-”

“Fake arms? That, like, work? Like real arms?” Bucky looked like he was screaming internally and Tony began to back away. Where the fuck was Clint?

“Yeah, I mean, yeah, mostly. If it’s good. They’re not perfect, but they function well enough.”

“You- How did- This just-”

“Yeah, crazy, right? My muggle friend Rhodey had a spinal injury and uses metal frames to walk.” Tony says for no reason whatsoever. What the fuck? Did he just fucking open up? To a Gryffindor?

“They just… like… They have fake arms,” Bucky’s voice had dropped to a whisper, and he stared at his arm stump with something akin to awe.

“Yeah, something like that.” Tony spun on his skates, saying something like a goodbye before he slid away, not in the mood to have a heart to heart about Bucky’s problems and the solutions that he was never offered because wizards are stupid fucks. Besides, Clint was about to launch himself.

Steve walks with his friends, rubbing his hands together in the cold. It’s late, maybe 1:30 in the morning and the Gryffindor house move as a single, rowdy body down to the Quidditch pitch. Steve has red stripes painted across his face and a red henley, and he’s carrying his trusted broom like many others. The students are buzzing, anticipating the legendary Welcome Games, and he couldn’t help but join in. He was, technically, a co-founder with Tony.

Bucky walks next to him, complaining about Sam. He’s also got paint on his face, but it’s smeared all over. Sharon’s gold paint is in much neater, more tidy stripes and the Howlies are also painted up and ready. It’s early enough for the trailing first years to be awake and excited, but late enough for the teachers to be able to pretend they know nothing of what’s going on. The Gryffindors jump around, hollering and slapping each other, hyping themselves up and Steve happily joins in, letting the atmosphere swallow him.

Down at the pitch, the Ravenclaws are already there, casting light spells to cover the pitch in a low, white light. Hufflepuff was also there, sitting in the stands with the other Ravenclaws and the Slytherins were just filtering in. Everyone was dressed in house colours, psyched up and excited, each with their own war paint.

After about half an hour of general chatter, gentle house teasing and a little bit of playful trash talk, there’s a familiar obnoxious cough voice broadcast throughout the pitch. Tony’s there, stood precariously on top of his broom (Steve would’ve thought after his fall earlier that day that he would’ve learned, but apparently not). He’s painted in house colours, two thick green stripes across his olive skin cheeks, and he’s wearing a tee shirt that one of the Howlies has told him has the ‘gucci’ snake on it. Steve doesn’t know what Gucci is, but the snake is cool and Tony’s very ripped
black jeans display enough tan skin to distract him from the world of muggles.

In a show of pure drama and excess, flames erupt from Tony’s wand, effectively gathering a few ‘ooohs’ from the younger years and some casual laughter from the rest.

“Listen up, pissheds,” He grins, receiving some cheers and shouts in return, “it’s the welcome games. So welcome. To the games.”

Tony and Steve, since they’d both accidentally started the legendary Welcome Games, had inadvertently started taking turns ‘hosting’. Second year they’d both done it, but third year Steve hadn’t even thought about it until Tony had made it into a big deal, and it had actually been really fun. Then the fourth year Steve had done it, fifth was Tony, last year was Steve and now the torch fell to Tony to carry again. It was always more relaxed with Tony, and he often came up with quirkier games. Tony always made sure to make a lot of the games non-magic, so that the first year muggle borns didn’t struggle too much, and he was better at riling up the school. Steve hated public speaking and often just read words he’d pre-written on his hand, but Tony lived to perform and couldn’t have been anywhere more at home than in the spotlight.

“A brief history lesson,” He begins, a hand on his chest, all faux dramatic, and someone casts a spotlight on him. There’s a communal but light hearted groan that Tony ignores. “Back in the day, the first year day, the Welcome Games were born. Born by me and my co-founder. Speaking of, get up here, Rocky Horror.”

Steve has no idea who Rocky is or why all the muggle borns are laughing, but he knows that Tony means him just from the tone and the mocking smile. Obediently, Steve mounts his broom and moves to sit next to Tony’s standing form.

“Me and Ken Doll here began the games, way back in the day.” Tony puts a hand on Steve’s shoulder and he automatically bats it away, irritated at the nicknames he doesn’t understand. “But this isn’t about me.” Tony says and there’s good natured laughter at the insinuation that Tony Stark isn’t a self-centred, obnoxious bitch, “No really, it’s not about me. It’s not about Rogers, it’s not about you guys. It’s not about us. It’s about legacy.”

More laughter and someone mutters a sarcastic ‘slytherins’, but Tony carries on.

“This is Rogers and mine’s last year here.” People go awww, “I know, I know, very sad. But that means it’s time to pass on the mantle. It’s time to continue this legacy beyond our years.”

Steve has no idea where this was going, but doesn’t butt in.

“So, as my heir, I would like to invite Shuri Odaku to come up here,” A fourth year slytherin, the new one on the Slytherin Quidditch team, looks surprised but comes up anyway, straddling a sleek broom. She’s also got paint on her face, white dots trailing the line above her eyebrow and beneath her eye, as well as three lines of the dots on her forehead and a stripe down the middle of her bottom lip. It’s the same paint used on Valkyrie, behind her, whose paint is simple white lines on her forehead, breaking over her eyes. “Fred from Scooby Doo, choose your legacy,” Tony turns to him, expectantly.

“Uh,” Steve stalls, fighting to keep up with the situation. He scans the Gryffindor crowd. “Parker, get up here.”

Peter Parker might have been a mistake to choose. The kid idolised Tony, but it didn’t matter. He flew up, awkwardly, to be with them and then stuttered for a while. Peter has his red paint covering his whole face, with black lines like a spider web over the top. Tony pats Peter’s shoulders, mutters
to both of the fourth years if they’re up for it. Then, when they both nod, Tony takes both Peter and
Shuri’s hand, holding them up in the air.

“From this night onwards, the new leaders of the Welcome Games are Shuri and Peter!” He yells,
and the school cheers. The two fourth years grin, then shake hands, and then Tony shoos them away,
preparing for the actual games.

“The first game, a classic, a legend, an icon.” Tony pauses, “Is forty-forty in. We’re gonna have one
team defending the tree. If they touch a person, then that person is officially out. The team defending
the tree can win if nobody touches it, otherwise the house with the most people touching the tree
wins. You know the rules. I want no spells, no cloaking devices, and no throwing of the first years.
The defending team can not form blockades. I’m casting spells right now so that if you’re touched,
your hair will glow purple. Cheaters will suffer the consequences.” Tony waves his wand idly and
everyone glances around to see the large, white tree that had magically formed in the middle of the
pitch. He brings out a dice and throws it, watching it levitate in the air in front of him. The whole
school is buzzing with excitement.

The dice floats over to a Ravenclaw, evidently the one with the honour of rolling it, and they grab it
and throw it onto the floor. Everyone crowds in to see which team will be defending.

“GRYFFINDOR!” Someone yells, and immediately the red and gold house charge over to the tree.
They gather around Steve, awaiting their orders. The games were about to begin.

“Right,” He says, getting everyone’s attention. The rest of the houses are already taking off. They
had all of the Hogwarts grounds to escape to, to allow them to bide time and eventually try and touch
the tree. “The game will begin in two minutes, I assume. I want all the fourth years and below out
scouting. Leave the pitch, go find everybody out there. Fifth years, you’re in the stands, and sixth
years, I need you as our final defences. No blocking, obviously, but get any that manage to break
through the seventh years who will be around the edges of the pitch. Any questions?” He looks at all
of them, obediently listening to his words, and they all shake their heads, grinning. Steve puts his fist
in the air.

“GRYFFINDOR!” He yells.

“GRYFFINDOR!!” They yell back. The pitch is now empty of the other houses. Let the games
begin.

Nobody had touched the tree. Gryffindor were really good at this. Tony crouched behind a bush,
peeking through. People were battling to get to the tree but, overall, there was very little hope.
Several feet to his right, Okoye was readying to commence the final stretch. The two of them were
the last hopes, the last chance. If neither of them made it, Gryffindor would win the first game.

All of the Gryffindors were engaged. This was it. This was their only shot. (Bucky was horrifyingly
good at this game). Okoye hadn’t seen him, but seemed to realise this was the moment she needed.
She readied herself and then pegged it, steaming towards the tree.

That’s when Tony saw Steve. He had locked eyes on Okoye, and had moved to block her. She
hadn’t seen him. He was going to get her. Okoye was going to be tagged.

It left a gap wide open for Tony to win, but Okoye wouldn’t make it.
Tony took off running, going as fast as he could and tried to remind his brain that it wasn’t worth outing himself as an unregistered animagus just to win a house battle. Tony didn’t go towards the tree, though.

‘Never let it be said that Slytherins aren’t selfless,’ he thought to himself as he tackled Steve to the ground.

Okoye made it to the tree and the entire Slytherin house screamed in victory. Tony himself shouted in triumph, ignoring the look of confusion and irritation on Steve’s face, only inches from his own on the cold ground. The houses were in uproar, screaming in either victory or just general excitement. Slytherins swarmed forward, hoisting Okoye up into their arms and carrying her above their heads, chanting their glory. Steve just stared at Tony. What the hell was that look for?

“Did you have to tackle me? A simple shove would have done it.” Steve said, voice pissed off but his face still showed this weird kind of curiosity. Like he thought it was weird Tony had tackled him for Okoye.

“Any excuse to get you under me, Rogers,” Tony winks, heaving himself up and the look of curiosity is gone, replaced with that familiar exasperation and annoyance. Steve aids him by shoving Tony off him.

Unfazed, the smaller boy leaps to his feet, his broom sweeping into his hand. He casts a look at the school, still in uproar, and smiles. He watches it happen for a little while, then stands back on his broom, because sitting on it was way too normal.

Putting his fingers to his mouth, Tony wolf whistles and everyone turns to face him, the noise dying down but not that much.

“Okay, so. Not to brag, but the best house won.” He smirks, rising above their heads and everybody jeers, throwing various things at his head that he bats away. Tony holds a hand up for silence. “But, it is the first of many games. We ready for the next one?”

Everybody, Steve included, cheers and Tony grins even wider. His eyes are bright, a happy deep brown and sparkling in the wand light. In the wind, his hair looks soft and floaty, making Steve kind of want to touch it. Wow, he needs to focus.

“Okay, next up is what started it all. The origin of the legend. The seed of the great tree.” Tony spreads his arms and somebody tells him to get on with it. He smiles, and cuts to the chase. “We’re playing no-rule quidditch. Pick your members, get on the pitch. Ravens on first with my black and yellows. Winner stays on from there.”

The cheering is instant. This was the legendary part of the night. It was fair to get it over with so early. Steve felt his heart rate quick in anticipation.

Whilst the Slytherins and Gryffindors moved to the seats, the other two houses gathered together to pick their teams and Tony stood in the centre of the pitch waving his wand, taking all of the glowing orbs at the side and expanding them, moving each light to the top corners of the pitch like muggle flood lights Steve had seen at those ‘baseball’ games. It was pretty impressive. Steve didn’t know that spell.

“Done starin’?” Bucky smirks, nudging his shoulder into Steve’s in the stands. Bucky had been quiet most of the day, mumbling something about ‘arms’ or whatever a ‘protestic’ was. It was nice to see
him happy. Everyone was happy, despite the recent loss. The Quidditch was what everyone waited for, anyway.

When it was settled who would play and the rest of the students were settled around the seats, Tony stood (levitated) in the middle of the pitch, between the two captains. They shake hands, someone below opens the case of stolen Quidditch balls, and then he wolf whistles again and they lift off.

The Quidditch was always fun. Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff were slightly less competitive, though still very good, and it was fun to just watch them play and have a good time. Ravenclaw won, just about, and Gryffindor went on in place of Hufflepuff. Naturally, Steve and his team crushed them, but only because they had the desire and passion for victory that really only Slytherin could match in these specific circumstances.

Once that was done, the long awaited game would happen. The famous red versus green. Out the corner of his eye, Steve could see Valkyrie cracking her knuckles and swigging from a large bottle of something or other. Gamora and her sister were leaned back, feet up, and the rest bar Tony were sat in equally menacing positions.

Tony wasn’t the best on his team, but he was good. He flew like he was born to fly. Like he could never stay on the ground for longer than a second. Before, he didn’t really have the focus to play for the team. He could fly like a professional but when it came to actually playing, he had never really had the interest, from what Steve could tell. Then, when he was around 14, Tony became ridiculously fit. Like, aggressively fit and healthy and Steve couldn’t understand how. Steve spent fucking hours a week using special work outs to maintain his muscle but Tony just seemed so effortlessly toned. The kid didn’t even work out.

And his reflexes were faster, too. It was like magic. One day he’d just started playing and he was incredible. All fluid movements and lightening quick reactions. He could move like a damn cat. Anyone would think he actually was a cat.

It didn’t make any sense, but Steve had moved past it. Even if he was bitter that Tony was so lean and muscled when he never seemed to work out.

Whatever.

Steve was over it.

He glanced subconsciously at Tony. The chaser was stood to the left, stretching his back and yeah, he really did look like a cat. He shudders happily, pushing his sweater sleeves up to his elbows and ruffling his own hair.

“Ready?” A Hufflepuff girl, Darcy, said loudly. She stood between Steve and Valkyrie, the new invigilator now that Tony was on the pitch and they both nod.

She yells go, and the game begins.

The game, of course, is chaos.

The ability to use magic pushed the already dangerous game into even more treacherous territory.
Slytherins were totally fearless, just like Gryffindors, but had the added benefit of absolutely zero inhibitions about inadvertently hurting someone. They were brutal, which was to be expected, but they also were so in tune with each other. No matter where on the pitch they were, they seemed able to communicate without shouting across the field.

Steve was severely injured and magically deformed by the end. The Slytherin team had taken a battering too, given Okoye’s barely concealed limp and the fact that Nebula was totally blue. Tony had blood all over the left of his face and was grinning like a mad man. It was a dead fucking tie, which neither team were happy with, but rules were rules and Slytherin had scored more but Jaques had caught the snitch, making them even. Steve looked over his team, searching for any worry-worthy injuries, finding only about 5, and then turned back to shake Valkyrie’s hand. Half of the field on the pitch was blown to hell. The magical battle had been epic, even if Steve now felt like he was about to die.

Behind him, his team breathed heavy and laughed slightly, still on the high of the battle. Tony stepped forward and cleared his throat.

“Uh, I actually had a follow up game plan in the event that there was a tie,” Steve thinks ‘oh no’ because he’s tired as shit and literally can not handle another magical battle.

“What is it?” Gabe asks from behind Steve, voice gruff with exhaustion.

“No magic, just good ol’ game,” Tony says, wiping some blood off his face. Steve thinks he might have been the one to give him that.

“What’s the catch?”

“You’ll be tied by the wrist to a member of the opposing team,” He grins wryly and a few people groan.

Thing was, stupid idea as it may be, there needed to be a winner. Tony casts binding spells as the teams pair up, too busy tying them together to realise that Steve was the only one left. Oh no, Steve thinks again.

–

It was, in hindsight, a bad idea. Tony swears to himself when he feels himself being yanked in Steve’s direction yet again. The Gryffindor team had size on their side and it was absolutely not working in their favour. Team full of fucking girls was a great idea, right until you’re all tied to a giant bear’s excuse of a human being. Tony wasn’t even a girl and Steve could just tug him around like a ragdoll.

Without the upper hand of magic, the Slytherin team were struggling. Holding their own, of course, but struggling. The Gryffindors were in the lead and it looked like they were about to take the victory. Tony swore when, once again, he lurched backwards with Steve’s strength.

The only upside he had over Steve was that he was slightly faster, and his broom was better.

At this point, Steve was charging forwards, about to smack a bludger at presumably Shuri, who was on her way to the goal posts with Thor in tow.
Tony sighs, because apparently, this was going to happen again if he was going to stop Steve.

He shifted, moving to sit on his feet as they moved, then lunged forward and tackled Steve off his broom.

They fell a great distance, both of them swearing the whole way down, and unfortunately, it was Tony underneath. He hit the floor with a sickening crunch.

“Fuck,” He chokes out, utterly winded, and Steve immediately gets off of him with an angry scowl.

“Why the fuck did you do that? You could’ve really hurt yourself.” He frowns, actually yelling at Tony as the crowd cheered for Shuri. Tony didn’t say anything for a moment, trying to focus on breathing instead. His vision clouded black, brain fuzzy as all he could think was ‘oh fuck’ over and over again. Man, that was painful.

“Worth it,” He whispers with a grin, watching his team continue to play above him. They each glanced at him once to check he was alive before carrying on the game.

“Worth it? For a game? That was a ridiculous height, Stark! You might’ve actually died!” Steve stood up, inadvertently tugging Tony up with him and Tony winced at the slightest motion.

“I wouldn’t have died,” He says, voice a little stronger now he’d caught his breath. “I ran the calculations.”

Tony collapses with the effort of trying to hold his head up, ignoring the way Steve stumbled to his knees to accommodate the motion. He groans, feeling his ribs. That’s gonna hurt tomorrow.

“Calculations?” Steve yells incredulously, totally ignoring the game.

“Yep. Probably a cracked rib at best. Neck break, at worst. If we were really unlucky.”

“At worst?”

“Well, yeah, but that was without the variable I hadn’t considered of a 220 pound twat landing on top of me.”

“I’m 190 pounds,” Steve scowls, before remembering the actual problem. “Tony, that was so fucking stupid. Are you alright?”

“I’m fine, don’t worry about me so much,” Tony rolls his eyes, still unable to stand up without a little blinding pain. He shifts slightly and accidentally lets out a growl that a regular human should not be able to make. Steve’s eyebrows shoot up but, luckily, Bruce appears at that exact moment. God bless Bruce Banner.

“What’s happened?” Bruce asks with the tone of a man who has done this one too many times before.

“Cracked rib, for sure. And I think my spine is now re-shaped for eternity,” Tony mutters, and the crowd cheers when a Gryffindor scores above them. Bruce kneels, applying pressure to various parts of Tony’s chest.

“Any head injuries? Can you move your legs and arms and stuff.”

“Yeah, Bruce, I’m fine. Just give me that good stuff that makes me not able to feel it until tomorrow.” Tony says hurriedly, desperate to get back to the game. Something tells him that Steve
kind of wants to get back to it as well, given the way he keeps twitching.

“No, let me heal you-”

“That’ll take ages, Bruce! I got games to play.”

“Tony-”

“Please! It’s my last ever year, Banner. I’m never gonna get to do this again-”

“Fine!” Bruce sighs, cutting off what was probably about to be a very well executed begging speech. He draws out a bottle of green liquid and Tony grabs for it. "This isn't a fix-it, though. There is going to be some serious damage, tomorrow. You'll be making it worse by pretending it doesn't exist."

“I love you, Banner,” He grins, practically inhaling the liquid and ignoring everything Bruce just said. Immediately, a huge amount of tension leaked out of his entire body. Steve flinched, not even having realised how much stress Tony’s body had been under. Tony makes an obnoxious refreshed noise and hoists himself up, patting a cross looking Bruce.

“Time to play, Captain. Ready to go?”

“Are you sure you should-”

“It’s fine, let’s go.”

“Are you-”

“Yes, let's go!”

“Fine!” Steve yells, picking up his broom that had fallen a few feet away. Tony did the same. They rejoin the game and the school cheers. Natasha shoots them both a look, but doesn’t comment.

—

Gryffindor wins. It’s a narrow win, but a win nonetheless. Val shakes his hand, a little too tight, and the Slytherin team all pat them hard on the shoulders in a slightly painful version of congratulations. It’s worth it, Steve grins, high fiving any Gryffindor that came his way to celebrate. A little way away, Tony is celebrating with his friends, looking way too vibrant for someone who had cracked ribs. What had Bruce given him?

After the Quidditch championships, most of the younger years headed up to bed. Tony waved them off, waiting for the school to settle down again before rising up on his broom. Now, with less people, he doesn’t bother with amplifying his own voice.

“Ok, next up is the simplest game of all time,” He smiles warmly, gesturing to the wide expanse of quidditch pitch. The tree was gone now, and Steve presumed that Tony must have transported it rather than grown it, because Herbology was never his forte. “It’s a race. A good old, no magic, straight line, on foot running race. Line up at the end.”

Everyone obeys, not without grumbling their suspicions. Never trust a slytherin, for one, and never,
ever trust Tony Stark. Nevertheless, they assemble themselves in a row, staring ahead across the
grass at where a small flag symbolised the finish line. Tony joins them in their line, gearing up for
what looked like a regular running race.

“What’s the catch?” Someone yells, and everyone turns to look at Tony.

“No catch,” he smiles, putting one foot up to the line. No one believes him. “Okay, fine. The catch is
that we’re all going to be blindfolded and its going to be funny as fuck.”

Immediately, everyone erupts into either noisy amusement or noisy disagreement. Steve shudders.
This is a terrible idea.

And yet, Steve was a Gryffindor, and a headstrong one at that. There was no way he was backing
away from this challenge.

A few people, Hufflepuffs and Ravenclaws exclusively, seemed to decide it would be more fun to
watch a bunch of people charging blindly forwards than to join in and stepped back into the stands.
Steve wanted to watch as well, but his priorities would always be trying to win, so he steps up to the
line, accepting it openly when Tony waves his wand and a warm blindfold covers his eyes.

“Oh, I can’t see either, as I’m part of the games, but just know I got one of the scariest people from
each house to sit in the stands and make sure no ones cheating.”

“Who?” Someone asks, and Steve can’t tell who because he can’t see.

“Sif, from Gryffindor. Natasha, from Slytherin. Jessie J from Raven- OW! Sorry! Jessica Jones from
Ravenclaw, and Darcy from Hufflepuff.” Tony tells them, and Steve is assured that, yeah, he didn’t
want to get caught by any of those people. Not that he would cheat anyway.

“ALRIGHT. Ready, get set. Fucking GO !” Sif yells from somewhere to the left and the mad, blind
charge begins.

Steve can’t see, but from what he’s hearing, it’s chaos. Surrounded by the cries of fallen men and
women, Steve ploughed through the brutal screams of those who collided with others. Blindly and
inadvisably, he sprints forward, waving goodbye to his self preservation instincts and running in
what he can only hope is forwards. Distantly, the crunching sounds of the wooden barriers fills his
ears, accompanied by raucous swearing and manic laughter. The entire fucking school had gone mad
and Steve was just running.

Until he wasn’t.

He collided head on with another body, collapsing to the ground in a torrent of curse words and pain.
Steve, realising that the game for him was up, wrenches his blindfold off and starts to apologise.

Until he sees who it is.

“We really have to stop meeting like this.” Tony says from underneath him, eyes sparkling and hair
messy from where he’d tugged off his own blindfold and Steve couldn’t help but agree because it
was third damn time this had happened tonight. Out of the corner of his eye, Steve can see students
of all houses screaming as they run blindly in all directions. No one was even near the finish line and
people littered the grass in varying degrees of pain and amusement.

“This was a terrible idea.” Steve huffs, trying not to laugh when a Ravenclaw trips over Bucky a few
metres away.
“Yeah. If you wanted to get on top you could’ve just asked, Steve.” Tony rolls his eyes, tapping at Steve’s chest in a pathetic attempt at reminding him to actually get off and not just lie there. Steve stays on top of him.

“Uh, first of all, all of these times have been completely your fault.” He glares, trying to find it in him not to be surprised at how small Tony was.

“This was your fault! I was going in a vaguely straight line!”

“What. The game was your idea.”

“Uh, come on. This is a fun game.” Tony gestures at the carnage surrounding them.

“This is a formal request from the entire school to Steve Rogers and Tony Stark,” Darcy’s voice projects, magically, through the whole stadium. “Just make out and get it over with.”

The students who had given up laugh, whilst the remaining stragglers continue to try and claim victory. Clint Barton is running full speed, having managed to somehow avoid any collision, only to slam smack into the barrier and collapse to the ground. Steve shifts upwards off of Tony to watch, and Tony sits up with a small groan of pain that Steve ignores.

Eventually, a Ravenclaw girl wins by walking it, using her foot to detect obstruction and avoiding being tackled by pure luck. Tony pats her once on the shoulder in congratulations.

More students head up to bed after that, having acquired enough injuries for one night, and Tony continues to run some more low key games that shouldn’t get violent but somehow manage to.

“We’ve all heard of sardines, right?” He yells, and Steve’s heart sinks. “Well, we’re playing sardines. All, like, two hundred of us.”

That one doesn’t go so well. Gryffindor does win, but Steve ends up squished next to Tony, along with a couple hundred other people, in the changing rooms. They bicker the whole time, chest to chest, until someone eventually yells at them to either kiss or shut up.

After that, there’s what muggles call a ‘sack race’, which Hufflepuff wins, then ‘British Bulldogs’. Steve had never heard of it before but it turns out he and his team of (massive) Gryffindors were very, very good at it.

After that Tony creates a pole out thin air and plays some weird, boppy music and explains to the remaining students what a ‘limbo’ is.

Slytherin win that one, by a mile, and Steve’s horrified by how flexible Tony is. Like a fucking cat. The whole snake quidditch team were incomprehensibly bendy. (In the end Tony knocked the pole because his ass was slightly too bubbly).

Slytherin win the next one as well, a game that Tony called ‘human jenga’. It was like regular jenga, which Steve had played before, except that instead of bricks you used people. It had not gone well for the gryffindors.

It was 4 in the morning by the time capture the flag had begun. It was basically only sixth and seventh years left, as well as Peter Parker and Shuri, and everyone was tiring. Everyone except Tony
and Steve.

Somehow, Steve ended up on top of Tony again.

“Fuck.” Tony growls upon hitting the ground, wincing. “That one was definitely your fault.”

“Yeah, not sorry.” Steve responds brightly, yanking the flag out Tony’s hands before he could back to his own base. Steve had meant to be guarding the flag but Okoye had come at him with a literal spear and he hadn’t noticed Tony sneaking to get it. Luckily, he had it back now, and with no time to lose, he pegs it back to the Gryffindor base. Eventually, Gryffindor wins.

“Okay, now this is the game you will all hate the most.”

They could, of course, back out, but there was a tie between houses again and there really needed to be a winner. Natasha tells everyone to separate into their houses, which they do, and then Tony waves his wand in front of each group of people a long rope appears.

“We’re playing a big ass game of jump rope.” Tony yells happily and everyone begins to groan because what the fuck. “Yeah, I know, but stop whining. Each house has a long rope, you all line up and start jumping. If you trip, you’re out. The house who can keep at least one person in the longest wins.”

This game, of all of them, goes the worst for Gryffindor. The only ones left still willing to play were the team, and Sif, T’Challa, and Bucky. A group of very large, very uncoordinated men did not go down well. Only Sif managed to stay in for a little, but not for very long before she, too, joined the pile of fallen soldiers.

Slytherin, of course, do amazingly. Natasha and Nebula stayed in for ages. Steve just couldn’t believe he was foiled by a fucking rope.

Finally, the final game, is a game of muggle dodgeball. The game that would decide the winner.

Steve has never played something so intense in all his life. Ever. The game goes on for almost an hour and, by the end, he’s sweated through his sweater and sworn never to play this game again. He learns quickly that Clint Barton is a ridiculously good shot, but so is Bucky.

There was no going back now. Steve would give his first born fucking child before losing this game.

A bright pink ball goes sailing past his ear, missing him by an inch, and behind him, Thor catches it and launches it back at one of the opposing teams. Around him, people are screaming and the children are crying and sirens, somewhere, are wailing and whatever God that they had angered was alive and thriving in the air. Fully charged and full of adrenaline, Steve grabs a ball and propels it towards Tony’s head, only for him to duck without even turning to face it. Fucking cat like instincts.

It takes several more minutes, but Steve finally manages to land a ball to Tony’s ribs. The reaction is instant, and totally unexpected, because Tony collapses to the ground, eyes squeezed shut for all of about 10 seconds, before he seems to shake himself free of it and looks up. They lock eyes and Tony grins in acceptance, slipping off to the side with the other people who’d been voted out. Steve’s so confused by the little show that he doesn’t have time to duck when Gamora hits him in the face with a green ball.

It’s only when he’s sitting down next to Dum Dum that he remembers Tony’s fucking cracked ribs. Bruce had said that the thing he drank wouldn’t fix it, just put off the pain. He was playing with
severe injuries and probably making things much, much worse for himself.

In conclusion, Tony Stark was an idiot and Steve was a hypocrite, because he’d probably do the same.

Another half an hour and it’s only Shuri, Thor, Loki, and T’Challa left. It’s just the two sets of siblings left, loudly trash-talking each other and pacing around, each holding a ball. Each house was loudly cheering for their respective player, and every now and again one of them would feign a throw or dummy jump. The tension was so, so high.

Everyone by this point was sleep deprived and exhausted, vamped up on adrenaline alone. T’Challa and Loki remained cool and collected, walking slowly and dramatically, whilst Thor and Shuri were so pumped full of energy they could barely contain themselves. It was driving everyone who watched insane.

Finally, with the air electric with the weight of what was at stake, T’Challa and Thor co-ordinated and fired a ball at them at the same time, the double attack causing confusion and although Loki dodged the first one, the second one caught his arm and the Gryffindor team roared in victory.

However, the distraction was enough. As Loki moved to leave the pitch, Shuri ran forward, diving to her knees when T’Challa threw another at her head, and careened forwards, one ball in each hand. As she skidded along, hair flying behind her, she let out a vicious war cry and launched both balls at the other team.

In slow motion, they sailed through the air, past the faces of the audience, who were frozen in shock and anticipation. Their eyes trailed the projectiles, mouths hanging open in the realisation of what was going to happen. Thor and T’Challa began to move in vain attempts at dodging what fate had deemed inevitable.

The balls collided with each of them respectively, and the atmosphere of shocked silence shattered. The Slytherin house charged forward in raw, unadulterated joy, screaming their triumph. Tony reached Shuri first, yelling gibberish and hugging her into oblivion, holding her fist in the air, before the rest of the team reached them and threw her into the air, carrying her all the way back up to the castle.

It was final.

Slytherin won.

Usually, a victory of this magnitude would result in a huge party, getting really drunk, and celebrating incessantly for the next few days.

So that’s exactly what they did.
On Sunday, Clint carries a struggling Tony all the way down to the hospital wing because "you can't just pretend you don't have fucking cracked ribs, Tony, what the fuck?"

Chapter End Notes

what do u think? sort of a plot-less chapter bc i want u guys to get a feel for what kind of vibe my hogwarts has lol.

anyways i got a tumblr (infinity-stoner) and i think u guys hsould check it out bc i post all the aesthetic moodboards i make on there. I've just made one for slytherin tony, which i just put up, n there's others on there and also i only have liek 3 folllowers so help a girl out

anyways let me know what u think of this fic
Tony would’ve healed quicker if Clint had just let him shift and sleep it off, but he was not having it, so now he was stuck in the fucking hospital wing, bored out of his mind.

He couldn’t even work on his project, because the wing was nearly full and he really didn’t want to risk anyone finding out.

Instead, Tony did something that would shame the Slytherin house for centuries.

He decided to do something nice for someone, for no reason.

Yeah, crazy, right? Call him stupid, but Tony had about 5 days of sheer boredom and nothing to do except build. Might as well make it a useful creation, right? The house elves bring him all the junk he asks for from his room, and at night he sneaks out best he can to go buy some high tech shit and sneak into his own home up in London.

It takes 5 days and one visit to Shuri. He’s very happy with the result.

Steve spent the weekend and most of the week doing whatever he wanted. Tony being in the hospital wing meant total freedom from the constant paranoia of was-there-going-to-be-a-near-fatal-prank today.

Sunday morning, he spent the whole day with Peggy, working on her growth and strength. She was getting big, and her personality was really beginning to show. She was very no-nonsense and Steve loved her.

Monday evening he finally got a chance to visit the house elves, who loaded him up with enough snacks to feed the entire quidditch team for a week, and Tuesday he actually managed to get some homework done.

On Friday, he gets a huge shock when there’s a knock on the door to his dorm room and he opens it to see a grinning, still slightly battered looking Tony Stark.

“Tony, I don’t want-” He starts to say, but the cocky son of a bitch just pushes straight past him.

“Not to worry, Captain. I’m not here for you.”

“You’re not?” Steve can’t help but let slip, surprised at the genuine smile on Tony’s face. “What’re
“Barnes!” Tony cuts across, speeding up and leaping at Bucky. Steve goes to defend his friend but Tony just lands cross legged at the foot of Bucky’s bed, opposite him.

“Can I help you?” Bucky doesn’t put down his book but he does look up at Tony, half wary, half interested. Steve has never been able to understand Bucky’s willingness to see the fun side of Tony.

“No, but I can help you.” Tony grins, holding something in his hands that Steve can’t see. It’s large and wrapped in his robes. “Do you trust me?”

“No.” Bucky replies instantly, a hint of a smile on his face.

“Close your eyes.”

“No.”

“C’mon, Barnes. Close your eyes and give me your stump.” Tony demands, laughter in his voice and Bucky just rolls his eyes.

“I’m not gonna give you my stump.”

“Not give it to me, idiot. Just extend it.”

“What?”

“Take off your shirt.”

“No.”

“Take off your shirt!”

“No!”

“Bucky, take your damn shirt off—”

“Okay, that’s enough.” Steve cut them off, standing in between them before Tony started to actually take Bucky’s shirt off himself. “What do you want, Stark? Get on with it or get out.”

“Don’t be so rude. I’m doing you a huge favour.”

“Oh, really?” Bucky raises an eyebrow, leaning in and putting his book down. Steve may as well have not been there.

“Really.”

“What is it, then?”

“Take off your shirt.”

“If I take off my shirt, you have to as well.”

“What? Why?”

“Even it out.”

“That makes no sense.”
“It’s my deal.”

“Fine.” As a shock to both of the Gryffindors, Tony actually relents. He unbuttons his shirt and dumps it on the floor whilst Steve is grateful to whatever Gods out there that his back was turned and couldn’t see Steve stare at the way his back muscles shifted with the motion. Holy shit, he was gonna kill Bucky for managing to get a shirtless Tony Stark on his bed. “Your turn.”

Bucky seemed shocked into obedience, so began to also take off his shirt. What the hell was going on? It was like the intro to a very strange porno.

“What now?” Bucky asks, having shed him of his clothes and exposing his top half. Tony whistles appreciatively at his torso, which was a bit rich given his own tanned abs. The whistle triggers something ugly and bitter in Steve.

“Get on with it,” He snaps, making Tony laugh.

“You’re gonna love me,” Tony moves on to his knees and shuffles around to sit next to Bucky’s stump. From the robe bundle, he shakes it and out falls something large and metal.

“What the hell is that?” Steve and Bucky ask at the same time but Tony just ignores them. He grabs the metal object with both hands and brings it towards Bucky. In true Gryffindor fashion, Bucky doesn’t cower away or tell him to stop, just watches in curiosity as a renowned trickster comes at his one physical vulnerability with an unknown contraption.

Steve watches in mixed trepidation and anticipation as the metal seems to envelop the stump of Bucky’s left arm, crawling all the way up it and around his shoulder. It seems to stop once it’s covering all of his shoulder and Tony moves away, giving Steve a clear view of what has Bucky’s mouth dropping open.

It’s an arm.

A metal arm.

“I… It’s…” Bucky tries to speak but his voice is tight and strangled.

“Yeah!” Tony leaps backwards, putting on his shirt (much to Steve’s buried disappointment). “It’s an arm. I’m sorry it goes all the way up to your shoulder, I couldn’t get it to respond to your movements if it just went from where your arm stops because you don’t have any nerves there.”

“This… It’s…” Bucky stares, unblinking, at the shiny metal where nothing used to be. He flexes, watching the silver fingers move and dance like real ones. It was frighteningly realistic and efficient. “How did… You could… How-”

“Well, it was hard, not gonna lie. Luckily, I’m a genius. It’s mostly muggle tech for movements, that way it’ll be harder for wizards to interfere with its functions. Though not impossible. If you want, I could work on it a little longer to make it a bit more magic proof. No one wants a sabotaged arm. Anyway, it does use magic for detecting nerves and all that so it knows what movements to execute. Obviously, I couldn’t test it on myself because I have two arms and I wasn’t even 100% sure it would work but here we are.”

“You-”

“Let me know if it doesn’t work or even if it does work, actually. How about in like a week you come update me on it and I’ll figure out how to fix it up even better.”
“You’re letting me keep it?” Bucky finally manages to force out a full sentence, tearing his eyes away from the false arm to meet Tony’s own.

“Of course I am. The fuck am I gonna do with a metal arm, Barnes? Jesus, Gryffindors are dumb.”

“Tony—” Steve tries to cut across because Tony’s ruining the damn moment by being an asshole, but Tony’s already moving towards the door. "How can we trust this?"

"Don't worry, Cap. It's 'armless!" He grins at the cheesy joke.

“Is this- This is a joke, right? A very elaborate practical joke?” Bucky looks like he’s having a seizure, so Steve’s attention is more on him than it is on Tony.

“No, I don’t quite care about you enough to put this much time and effort and money into a joke. Enjoy your new limb!” Tony ducks out the door quicker than anyone should logically be able to move, leaving Steve with a million questions and a dumbstruck Bucky.

That kind of magic was miles ahead of current times. That kind of selflessness was way out of a Slytherin’s comfort zone. Steve didn’t trust it.

Steve didn’t trust it at all but he didn’t have the heart to look at Bucky and tell him not to use it, especially with the tears forming in his best friend’s eyes.

Chapter End Notes

YO INFINITY WAR FUCKED MY ASS SO HARD. I NEEDED TO POST THIS WARMTH BC OTHERWIE I WILL CRUMBLE AND DIE.
FUCCCCCCCCFCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCC
Hey guys, am struggling a lot w this fic atm as i am not a huge fan of it. IM focussing mostly on my new one 'someone new' but i dont want this baby to die just bc its a lil ugly. Bare with me and I love u all ur comments r love and life

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