Reflections

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### Reflections

by [redshineJasper (MrsPummeluff)](http://archiveofourown.org)

**Summary**

Songfiction to Reflections from We Are The In Crowd.

Bucky awakes from a 70 years long slumber, only knowing he was a person once. Then he tries to find his past till he can come back to Steve, the person he always loved the most and the person who had married him despite thinking he had died in the Alps.

**Notes**

Here is the link to the Song [Reflections by We are the in crowd](http://archiveofourown.org)

See the end of the work for more [notes](http://archiveofourown.org)
Another time, another face
Whoever opened the door
Never had the time to waste

The Target looked at him, eyes tired and so sad, pleading. One eye swollen, lip cracked.

“Then finish it.” He said and the Asset stopped, couldn’t bring himself to let his fist crash into the Target’s face. “Cause I’m with you till the end of the line.”

Something flashed in front of the Assets eyes. The same face though less bloody. A smaller, slimmer body than this. A brownstone building. The target’s face on this small body looked so sad and broken like it did right at this moment. He heard the words spoken by someone else though. By himself. He knew his own voice, it was in his head often enough and he had heard it in briefing-recordings often enough.

Underneath the floor cracked and the man fell as the Asset, the Soldier, got ripped back into the present. The fingers of his metallic arm wrapping around some metal of the Carrier and he saw the blue figure fall. Getting smaller.

He was looking after the train, his hand still trying to reach the blue figure but somehow he knew it was hopeless. Don’t come after me he thought. He was falling, screaming, a name coming back without any clear connection why it was so important, again pulling him back to the wreck.

“Steve!” he called out of reflex, diving after the Captain into the water. Around him, bits and pieces of the wreck falling into the water but his eyes were trained onto the Captain. The man in the blue outfit, the Captain behind the mask that was like the key to a door where someone had forgotten to change the locks. He grasped for the Captain, the key. His hand reached blue spandex when he dived into the ice cold water.

He pulled him up and into his arms and then fell back onto the cliff while the snow storm raged around them. It was freezing and he had lost his coat in the woods behind them. The Captain was just grinning, saying something about the Soldier being a mother hen and the Soldier just cursed at the lack of self-preservation of the, his, Captain. His Captain.

Oxygen came into his lungs when he pulled up and dragged him and his Captains body to the shore of the nearby sandbar. He looked down at the blonde, saw water splutter out of his mouth and how he again started to breathe. Irregular.

The man with his Captains face laid on a bed, dirty sheets beneath him but again in this small body, his breath irregular and even though the Solider was worried, the blond smiled and his eyes shone happily. ‘Was his Captain smaller once?’, the Soldier asked himself. He would be fine in a few, the blonde assured and the Soldier shrugged, falling onto a bed himself, but still listening until the wheeze in the smaller man’s breaths eased up.

To paint pictures over windows
That don't satisfy your taste
It's so convenient to lose the truth
When it's laughing in your face

He dove back into the water, seeing the red and blue of the round shield somewhere underneath him.
He needed to get to it, needed to get it back.

His Captain ducking behind it, when bullets wanted to hit him. His Captain throwing the shield, taking out 3 – 4 – 5 Soldiers in green that were pointing their weapons at him. His Captain hurling the shield towards a tank and taking it out. The Soldier standing in front of his Captain, shield raised and firing his gun at a robot who charged his blast and the Soldier felt the wind rushing and his hand gripping for a handle on the destroyed wall of the train he and his Captain were on.

Hands wrapping around one of the handles of the shield he turned around, swimming back towards the surface. He just barely avoided a long piece of metal that was about to hit him when he swam back to where he had left his Captain. Blue eyes opened when the Sargent’s boots walked over the gravel. The Sargent kneeled down next to his Captain and a hand came up to his face.

“Bucky?” he heard, then his Captain started to cough. More water spluttered over his chest and the Sargent helped his Captain sitting up.

“Easy.” He heard himself say and the blond nodded.

“What happened?”

“I can’t kill my Captain. It goes against my initial orders.” The Sargent stated and took the shield from his back. Laid it down on the earth next to his Captain. His Captain held onto the Sargent’s leg.

“Don’t go. Stay.”

“I have to find out who gave me these orders.” The Sargent stated and his Captain looked up at him.

“Please. I just found you.” The Sargent thought his Captain sounded sad, hurt. Pleased. He shook his head.

“You haven’t. I don’t know who I am. I don’t know anything. Just that my initial orders were to keep you safe and no one ever said these orders are revoked. I know they made me forget.” His Captain looked pained when the Sargent stated it. “You haven’t found me. I think I first have to find myself before you can. There is no reason for you to look for me and thinking you found me when I don’t know where I am. Who I am.”

The Sargent turns around to leave. A voice holds him back.

“Do you know who I am?” It sounded hopeful. He thought about the name he had called his Captain earlier. Steve. Was that who this man was?

“My Captain.” He replied instead, then he disappeared into the water towards shore but away from the police and SHIELD forces that arrived at the old SHIELD headquarters. His Captain wouldn’t tell them where his Sargent was. The position of his Sargent and Sniper had always been only his to know.

On the other side of the water, the Sargent turned around one last time, looking towards his Captain, who still sat up, weak, but gave his Sargent one last salute. The Sargent repeated the gesture and disappeared into the shadows.
Destiny is overrated
So I think I'll write my own
I don't believe it's complicated
So I think I'll stay at home
I followed the leader
Now I just follow myself
Destiny is overrated
So I think I'll write my own

The Sargent blended into the crowd with an outfit he had gotten from a line next to a destroyed building. A part of one of the Helicarrier had hit it. The pants fit snug around his waist and the white shirt was a bit big on him and he hid his arm and his face with a dark blue jacket.

The protocols in the Sargent’s head told him to return to base. The base seemed an old bank in DC. He had spent the night in an alley, not yet ready to face HYDRA, should they still occupy the building. It was surrounded by Police and SHIELD and a man flew in, stepping out of a red-golden metallic suit.

“I want the chair for myself.” The man said to a red-blonde woman next to him. “I want to see if I can find out what they did to that poor bastard and every file I can get on Rogers boyfriend is more than welcome Pep.” The woman held a file under his nose and the man stopped dead.

“Husband? When did he…?”

“Steve filed the paperwork not long after he woke up. It was the only way to get all of Barnes’ old stuff that was still with SHIELD and the military back.” The woman, Pep? explained and the man took the file from her.

“So he officially, legally married his long-dead best friend?”

“Both were never declared dead. Missing in Action, Tony. Barnes’s sister gave her blessing and confirmed it would be in her brother’s best interest before she died a few months later. She also changed her will and gave everything she had to Steve.”

“Wow. Okay. Then I really want all files there are. If Capsicle is right, the Amnesiac Assassin will be back and the more Intel on his action we have the better we are prepared for him.” With that, the man, Tony, made his way into the bank and the woman, Pep, put the file into the orange sports car next to her and followed him inside. The Sargent made his way over to the vehicle. It was open and he snuck the file underneath his shirt and disappeared around the corner. He would need more Intel on the man, but they seemed to be friends with his Captain, Steve, and that probably made them more trustworthy.

Or they wanted him as their own weapon, but the man, Tony, didn’t seem the type.

The Sargent made his way towards one of the old safe houses he remembered but hadn’t been used in years apparently. The last time he had been there had been in the 80’s on a mission. It was still there he noticed and slipped in, carefully scouting the perimeters and when he confirmed that no one was here and had been here in years, as suspected, he sat down on the table and took the file into his hands.

It was a collection of documents and files, and a little device with a holographic display that lit up when the papers exposed it to the Sargent’s eyes. He got up and took a few steps away from the table.
“Good afternoon, Sargent Barnes.” A male voice with a British accent greeted. “Can you confirm that you are Sargent James Buchanan Barnes, former 107th Infantry Regiment, Howling Commandos Second in command under Captain America?”

The Sargent found himself on a table, hands, and arms bound to the cold metal. He heard himself repeat the same words over and over. James Buchanan Barnes, Sargent, 32557038. A face appeared above him. Said his name urgently. Bucky, his Captain called him and delirious, thinking he was hallucinating he had said his Captains name. Steve.

“I was. I think. Who are you?”

“My name is JARVIS. Miss Potts hoped you would retrieve this file sooner or later. The GPS tracker embedded in your prosthetic has been disabled after the retrieval of this folder. Sir, Mr. Stark, also disabled the GPS on this Starkphone and is for yours to use. You have full access to the internet and to all files on the SHIELD Servers. You are also granted access to all files concerning you. Captain Rogers fully trusts you and was concerned about your wellbeing and asked Miss Potts and Sir to help him keeping you safe. I will not contact you anymore except for when you call me.”

Barnes was sure it could be a ruse and maybe he was trained to be better than that but at the same time, he was tired of being pushed around, being told what to do and what not to do. And this could be as much a ruse as it could be real. It was either taking the risk and trusting this device or leaving it behind and being without help.

“Can you tell me how my Captain—how Steve is?” Barnes asked the device and he stepped forward. Closer to the table. There was a handwritten short note underneath the device and the Sargent knew the careful handwriting. JARVIS got quiet when he picked it up.

My hand hurts like a bitch, but I wanted to let you know that you can trust Stark. Or more than SHIELD right now. If you need anything ask me or JARVIS. And please come back. I hope you will recognize my handwriting just like you knew I was your Captain and I hope you remember you were my friend.

Please come back soon. I just got you back.

“Captain Rogers is still recovering from the wounds he received during the fight”, Barnes flinched. The wounds he inflicted, “but he will be fully recovered by the end of the week. If you wish to leave him any messages—“

“No. I just wanted to know. Needed to know.” Barnes says quickly. “I—I will just inform you when I need help, I guess.”

“There is a button on the Starkphone which is titled JARVIS. If you activate it, I will be informed that you require my immediate assistance. Saved in this phone are the private phone numbers of Sam Wilson, Captain Rogers and Sir, if you wish to contact them. Access to the files and the internet are also through a button on the home screen of your phone. I will leave you now, Sargent Barnes.”

Then there was silence. Barnes took the phone in his hand and turned it once, twice. There were little symbols on the screen, labeled JARVIS, SHIELD-Files, Stark-Files and Internet.

Barnes smiled lightly at the paper he still held in his hand. Then his glance wandered towards the other files that were spread out on the table and he began to sort through them. On some were little notes, references, to certain files in either Starks or SHIELDS Database. Barnes quickly got the hang of the Starkphone and was able to turn it into a slightly bigger screen, hovering in front of him like a computer. None of the files gave him much more than shadows in his mind of the missions he did
under HYDRA and Red rooms lead. Now he was free, standing on his own feet.

A few days later, he made his way to another base across the country, hoping to find more Intel.

The last time he had visited that base had been in December 1991.

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>I know I've been here before
>But I can't find the time or place
>If we stay in the past
>There'll be no future left to waste

Kiev, Moscow. Austria. Back to the states. Japan, Ukraine, Turkey, Germany. Germany again, Moscow. More Russia, Siberia, more Europe. No more US.

It took Barnes 5 months and 24 days to visit all the places the files stated his kills. But his head had nothing. The only contact he had had at this time had been to JARVIS, occasionally getting updates on how Steve was. Leaving Steve messages that he was still alive, still free. Sending Stark the Video where the Winter Soldier killed Maria and Howard Stark when he found it in Siberia. I'm sorry. I can’t even remember I did it. Stark had never replied and JARVIS had never mentioned it.

He was in Moscow when she found him. Her red hair was covered by a white hat. The black, elegant coat looked out of place in the shabby hotel he had stayed for the past two days. He knew her. Had read the files about her. She had been part of the Black Widow project. Red Room taking orphaned girls and made them killers. He himself had never met any of them or heard of them. And even if he had, he wouldn’t remember.

She came through the door and didn’t even blink when he pointed his gun at her.

“How is your search going, Winter Soldier? Or is Barnes good? James?” He cringed at the first name. She nodded. “Barnes it is.”

“Maybe better for now. Not quite me yet” He mumbles, barely audible, before raising his voice to speak to her. “What do you want?” her name was Natasha Romanov and she had been there when he had fought Steve for the first time. He didn’t have a clue what he had done to her.

“Seeing when you come back. Steve gets grumpy and I can’t watch him mope anymore.” She grinned and sat down when he placed the gun back down in front of him, turning back to the files she had been reviewing.

“Stark said you killed his parents.” He froze. “And you said you can’t even remember it.”

“It is like—” he looked up at her, trying for the very first time in months to explain how he feels. “like the Winter Soldier doesn’t even have memories. Like, y’know, a camera that doesn’t record, just has a live stream. When I go to places where I should see me shooting ambassador or snapping someone’s neck. When I should see myself with a car wreck and the bodies of Howard and Maria. When I should see me, standing in front of you after killing the man by shooting him through you or fighting you on that bridge—there is nothing. I read these files like you or anyone else would read them. They are just files. They have no memories or anything behind them.

“But when I sit in that forest where we raided a HYDRA Base back in ’43 or when I stand at the
cliff where the Commandos and I were waiting for the train, it all is like a movie in front of my eyes. I see it again, I live it again. I can hear Steve telling me to hold on and reaching for my hand. I can see and feel Gabe clapping my shoulder after I saved Steve from getting shot. I feel the cold water running down my back when we stopped at a small river and washed off the day's old dirt. I can feel me waking up from nightmares and Steve holding me close when I am hyperventilating how I did when he couldn’t breathe from his asthma.”

Barnes took a deep breath and the woman, Natasha, smiled at him.

“Do you think you are suppressing the memories? Of the Winter Soldier, I mean?”

Barnes shook his head.

“No. I don’t think so. I wanted to know what I did. Because I knew I did it. But then again it is like It wasn’t me, just my body doing it. Like my brain was on standby after I fell from the train until Steve brought me back when I nearly killed him in DC. I’m thinking about going back, y’know. To New York. To Steve. There is no need for me to dwell on a past I can’t even remember and probably never will. Make a future, because that is what I have. I have my past with Steve and I want my future with him too.”

“He got you both married I heard.”

Barnes chuckled.

“I saw the file.”

“Were you both ever…?”

Barnes shook his head.

“No. We never were. I mean… I knew there was something wrong with me because I loved him with all of my heart. But I never thought he could see me as more than a friend and a brother. Back then I thought if nothing else works I make him marry one of my sisters.” Natasha chuckled. “What? I was young and naïve, okay. Nevertheless. Seeing all these things again, I can’t believe how dumb I was. That I never saw that he always, since we were ten, looked at me the way he looked at Peggy Carter or my mom used to look at my dad or his mom at the photo of his father, though less sad.”

“Now he looks at your photo like someone kicked a puppy in front of him and you are said puppy.”

Barnes huffed, amused.

“Sounds like him.”

“So. Future with Steve? You coming back to New York with me?”

“Not sure. I feel kind of guilty towards Stark. About his parents and stuff, y’know.”

There was a knock on his window and a voice trickled through.

“If you promise me you really don’t remember, I try to forget you ever did it, Terminator.”

Natasha grins wide. “I wasn’t able to shake him off. He would have followed me anyways.”

Barnes gulped and offered a small smile.

“Think Steve will be happy to see me?”
“I hope it gets that lovesick look off his face.” He heard Stark mumble and nodded to Natasha, who helped him pack his files and clothes.

At the jet another man was waiting, his skin dark and he was wearing some kind of backpack out of metal. He grinned.

“You guys found him. Tony said you don’t remember anything before Steve fell into the Pontmac?”

Barnes shook his head, frowning.

“Did I hurt you? If I hurt you, I am genuinely sorry.” Barnes’s voice was hesistant, unsure. It was all so new and even though he knew it wasn’t really his own fault, he felt genuinely sorry for hurting people. He felt sorry for killing them. Sorry for people like Tony, the people the Winter Soldiers Victims left behind.

“Water under the Bridge. You saved his life, well. After shooting him, but it’s not like he’s ever taken getting shot all that seriously. I will keep an eye on you, though.” The man had a warm, inviting smile though dull if compared to Steve’s.

“Stupidity makes him Bulletproof. James Barnes I think.” He shrugged and held out a hand for the man to shake but he shook his head.

“Yeah. None of that. Steve told me so much about you, it feels like I’ve known you my whole life. Sam Wilson.” And he engulfed Barnes in a big hug. Barnes stiffened, but then wrapped his arms carefully around the other man, Sam, and a small smile formed on his lip.

“Thanks. Still. Sorry for whatever I did.”

Sam clapped his back one last time before letting go and shrugged.

“I got a new and better pair of wings after you crashed the old. I should thank you.”

“Yeah, yeah. Love and peace. Could we please leave for home now? JARVIS, start the jet.”

“Yes, Sir. And welcome on board Sargent Barnes.”

The Jet ascended into the sky and Barnes settled on one of the seats in the jet. Natasha and Tony were in the front, chatting and arguing about… something. Sam settled down next to him.

“Can we talk about Steve for a while?”

Barnes looked at him confused and frowned.

“Sure. Always. Why? I though JARVIS said he was fine.”

“Physically, he is. But—he isn’t really doing well. As his councilor I shouldn’t tell you this but as his
friend…

“He is depressed, understandably. He suffers from nightmares and he gets lost in his head so often. I am actually really worried about him. I hope things will get better a bit when he’s got you back. But I think he will never be who he was, you know. I don’t know how to help him anymore. You know him better. Do you have any Idea what I could do to make him open up to me? To let me help him?”

Barnes swallowed and his throat felt dry. His hand, his right hand, started shaking lightly and he held it down with his left. Looking down into his lap and back up at Sam he asked: “He really that bad?”

“I don’t know how bad it really is. He doesn’t really talk to people and shuts down every so often.” A shrug and Barnes deflated. “He is on a path of self-destruct and sometimes it feels like he just throws his problems and his care out of the window and hopes for them to just… go away.”

“So what you’re saying is, Steve still didn’t grow some self-perseveration and it gets worse?”

“Yeah. And I think a big part of that came from losing you. I mean he steered a plane into the ocean and could have gotten out easily. But he didn’t. According to the Commandos and Agent Carter, it was only a few days, two weeks tops after you fell from that train.”

“Stupid Punk,” Barnes muttered and Sam hummed in agreement.

“What I actually want to say… knowing you are out there and will come back eventually, eventually being now, made him get more careful but at the same time, I think he will get more reckless when you have his back again. He will maybe fall back into old habits. And I don’t know much and what I know only from his point of view but you always dragged him out of fights he picked like everywhere.”

“That happens to be true actually. So you mean I just… whack him over the head and tell him to be careful?”

Sam shrugged, laughing amused. Tony turned around.

“If you hurt Capsicle, I will never forgive you. Except for when you do it when I am around and he gets The Speech. Then I may be inclined to overlook it.”

A hand flew out towards Stark and whack him over the head and he gaped.

“Romanoff!”

“Behave or I call Pepper.”

“What do you say her I did wrong?”

“Harassing Rogers husband?”

Tony opened his arms wide, dramatically, theatrically. Flung his head back towards his seat.

“But dear, I only want him to respect and honor his husband. I want to lead him from the path that is spousal abuse and will…”

“Sir, Captain Rogers is calling in.”

Everyone on the plane straightened and Tony’s face became serious.

“Put him through, J.”
The line went static for a while and then Steve’s voice filled the jet.

“You need to be more precise Rogers. We’re already going as fast as we can but are still… JARVIS?”

“One and a half hour from your position Captain Rogers.” JARVIS imparted and Stark nodded.

“We can suit up and be there in about an hour. Give us the intel Cap. Debrief now.”

“Robots in New York. Huge mess. Only this time they are not Stark Industries but Von Doom Tech. We have Hulk and Thor with us. Hawkeye isn’t answering, presumably still in deep cover.”

“Or retired and messing with his tractor,” Natasha mumbled, audible only to Barnes modified senses.

“We can only do so much. They can fly. You all suited up?”


Destiny is overrated
So I think I’ll write my own
I don’t believe it's complicated
So I think I’ll stay at home
I followed the leader
Now I just follow myself
Destiny is overrated
So I think I’ll write my own

Natasha gave Barnes a look, undeniably asking if he would help. Barnes nodded without hesitation. Steve was his Captain. His friend. He would keep his friend safe, no matter the cost.

“Have our weapons and suits with us. JARVIS will provide us with a live feed on the jet. No worries grandpa. We got your back.” She answered easily, a bit mockingly and upon hearing the silent laugh of his friend on the other end of the line, he knew they were friends. Like the both of them had been, maybe could become again.

A few minutes later, Steve tuned back in. Quieter this time. Hesistant, like he wasn’t sure if he really wanted to know the answer to what he was about to ask.

“Guys. I know you’ve been out looking for B—“ Barnes tensed.

“Steve. You gotta focus on…” Sam interrupted his friend.

“Sam, please.” Now Steve sounded desperate. Barnes could see these sad, pleading eyes in front of him. He’s seen them often enough. Most recently in his dreams when the memories from seventy years ago came back.

“Steve. The Winter Soldier wasn’t there.” Natasha said and they could practically hear Steve deflate in New York.

“Well. Okay… just… get back, okay?” And the line went dead. Natasha smirked at Barnes.
“You didn’t lie to him. You really think about me this way?” Barnes sounded impressed and maybe a bit unsure. But he was glad his friend had found someone he trusted so easily in this new Century. Barnes had been an expert on the specimen that was Steven Grant Rogers and knew how hard it was to earn his trust. And some things never seem to change.

“But she did—“

“Barnes is not the Winter Soldier anymore, Tony. He needs a new codename though.”

“Summer Soldier?” Tony received unimpressed stares from all three of them.

“Iron Fist?”

“I think there is a legend about that somewhere in Asia. So no.” Natasha shot Sam’s suggestion down.

“Captain Communism!” Tony exclaimed and received a punch against his arm from Natasha.

“Sargent America?”

“Let’s leave that as the WIP Codename, okay.” Barnes decided and Sam punched his fist in the air, happy to be the one to think of the idea. They suited up on the plane, Barnes stepped into his old Winter Soldier outfit.

“I will so fix you a new one. Something similar to what the Widow wears but a bit more… American.” Tony said, stretching the last word and Barnes just nodded mutely. Then he turned to Natasha.

“You should ask Steve if he knows where the bots are controlled. I could take care of that.”

Natasha nodded and asked JARVIS to connect with Steve again.

“We are five minutes out. Steve, did you find out where the bots are controlled from?”

“Yeah. An old disguised HYDRA Base, Bucky already cleaned out mostly. Doom made his base in there. I’m already on my way there. Iron Man, Falcon, get to Hulk and Thor and help them. Widow, I’ll create a distraction and you can slip through.”

Barnes knew which base his friend meant. Barnes knew that the base had a secret staircase. He knew the ways by heart after spending a few days there and daily checking for other Agents down there. He walked over to Natasha, telling her about it. He would do it. She just needed to get Steve away from there.

“Cap, I think that’s stupid and you know it,” Sam said instead and Steve huffed.

“Do you have a better plan?”

“I do, Cap.”

“Yeah, we do Capsicle. We really do, right?” Tony looked at them confused and Barnes nodded.

“Yeah, we do. And it starts with Cap not trying to get himself killed.” Natasha supplied and Tony shrugged. Barnes nodded and Sam looked at Barnes pointedly.

“Told you.” He mouthed and Barnes nodded.
“If you’d be so kind to confide me to your plan then.” Steve sneered and they heard a distinct sound of metal crashing against more metal and metal splitting and the sound made Barnes cringe.

“Nothing you could help with Rogers. We are fine. Iron Man, Falcon. Out of the jet, get there. I’ll put it down on this roof.”

The two men nodded and left the jet through the side door. Barnes still stood with Natasha, who passed him a commlink while arguing with Steve over the jet’s communication system because he was still dead set on getting himself killed.

“God fucking damn it, Steve.” Barnes practically growled, “If you run in there to get yourself killed I’m not coming to get you out again. Not if I have a fucking way to get into this control room without getting seen and the rest will be muscle memory. And if you say one more word or get one step closer to that building I’m gonna go back to Russia and I won’t make finding me easy.” Then he left the jet, only hearing Steve’s faint “Buck?” on the inside of the metal container.

“I need you to keep the Bots where they are now. Try to keep them on the ground in case they immediately drop when Sarge here disables the control unit.” She says into her com and she hears an affirmative from Sam and Tony. Steve stays silent.

“Nat… you told me…” Steve sounded hurt and betrayed.

“I said the Winter Soldier wasn’t there. As far as I saw, there was only Barnes there.”

“Can we explain and make up later. I’d rather these bots not destroy my city before I can move in.” Barnes interrupted their chatter.

“Rather when you already live there?” Nat sounds amused.

“Rather not at all. But when they continue to try I want the way to my bed to be the shortest possible.”

“And what about the way to your husband?” Tony teases when Bucky eases the secret door open.

“Stark, that—“ Steve starts.

“Since he will follow me like glued to my heel, I can drag him right there with me.” Barnes interrupted his friend then entered the passageway. “And now I need absolute silence and you all need to focus on your task at hand.”

“You’re good at giving orders, Sarge.” She grinned and he stuck out his tongue at her. Yeah, he already liked her.

“No. I’ve just followed people for far too long as it seems. I think I should take the wheel once in a while.” With that the two of them made their way through the narrow ways, up three flights of the building.

“If he hurts you, I’ll kill him.” She remarks, standing in front of the hidden door.

“Yeah, yeah. As I told Sam, stupidity makes him bulletproof.” Barnes murmurs absently, not really listening to her or himself.

Poking at the old num-pad, entering the numbers he had found on their hard drives a few months ago fairly certain they were still working since no one could have changed them these past few months, a wall slid open and Barnes and the Widow drew their weapons, taking out a few human and robotic
helpers. Barnes put a grenade under the control unit for the doombots and the both of them made their way back into the secret stairwell.

“All down. It’s raining robots. A dream coming true. Natasha, you have to put the big guy to sleep.” Tony informed and when they both left the stairwell onto the roof, she rushed off, Barnes making his way back to the jet, taking off and flying it to the rest of the team.

.Reflections on a two way mirror
Of everyone and everything
That's coming and coming out of our lives
I can see myself in the static
I can see myself in you
.Reflections on a two way mirror
Time's running out, time's running out

“Let me start the jet. JARVIS can fly it back to the tower. I mean, no one really flew it here before so I presume JARVIS can do it on his own.” His own voice was quiet, strong and he rather felt than saw Steve nod behind him.

The hand wrapped around his wrist after he had gotten rid of the visible guns and knives on his belt. He knew it was Steve, so he didn’t feel the need to protect himself. He had heard the steps behind him coming closer, knew how the air around his best friend felt and knew how his body always reacted, being close to the blond. Barnes turned around and looked into the tired eyes and laid a hand against his cheek.

“I just don’t want you to leave again.”

“Now why would I do that? You think I would have come with Natasha if I wouldn’t stay? I am a tease but not a sadist.” A tired, sad smile pulled at Steve’s lips and Barnes returned it when the Jet ascended into the air.

“I just found you, Buck.” His voice sounded broken and tears glistened in the corners of his eyes.

“You didn’t find me, punk.” The corners of Steve’s lip turned down. “I found you.” Barnes dragged his friend back into a hug and the other man went without protest. Steve clung to him like a lifeline that would drag him back into the world. They were so different, experiences and beings but similar all the same.

Seventy years from home, both of them trying to find a place in life, in a new world. Both being soldiers, stranded back in life and trying to get back to normal. Seventy years from where they should be and basically frozen, out of history for all this time.

It was like they had been pulled apart, just to be tossed back in together because the universe wouldn’t see them alone. Steve was his salvation, the part and missing piece to become Bucky Barnes again (even though he wasn’t quite ready to think of himself as that yet, but soon, maybe soon), and feeling Steve cling to him, like he is the first real thing, since he woke up, maybe James was his. Maybe Steve needed saving as much as James did.

“I remember falling.” Steve’s breath on his shoulder hitched, “Trying to grab your hand but only because I know I needed to try for you. But I knew if you would have caught me we both would
have fallen. The railing you held onto wouldn’t have been able to withstand the weight of two people. The next thing I open my eyes and you say my name. But I can’t answer. And then there is pain and everything goes dark. Until we are up on that Carrier and you tell me to finish it. I didn’t know who I was. But I knew you. I was asleep for 70 years and you woke me up.”

Steve pulled away. Glancing down into James’ eyes.

“You meant, what you said before?”

“What do you mean?”

“That I will be glued to your heel and you’ll take me home with you?”

There was a glimmer in Steve’s eyes. It reminded James of the day Steve’s mother died. They had stood in front of the old apartment. The thing is, you don’t have to. I’m with you till the end of the line pal. The glimmer of hope to Steve. That he wasn’t alone anymore. The hope that he would never be again.

“I mean. It’ll be fun.” James chuckled. “Clean my boots after a mission, maybe take out the trash?”

The jet landed and the exit opened.

“We arrived at Stark Tower. Sir advises you to get cleaned up and meet for debriefing in two hours.”

They stepped out of the carrier, James carrying his few belongings.

“We could put the couch cushions on the floor.” Steve offered, shooting James a weary smile when they rode the elevator down.

“Like when we were kids?” James grinned. Steve’s face light up, taking a step closer, let their shoulders touch even though the elevator offered enough space even for four of them. But James wouldn’t have it any other way. Arriving on Steve’s floor, he shooed James into the shower.

“I can give you something to wear from me if you want.”

“Sure. We can put my stuff in the wash?” Steve nodded, vanishing into the bedroom. James dropped his duffle, which contained his few clothes, in the hallway.

“I’ll put it in the bathroom if you don’t lock up.”

James turned on the shower, leaving the door cracked open. Stripping out of his armor, he left the leather on the floor in front of the door, along with the rest of the knives and grenades he still had hidden in the various pockets.

“You think Stark wants that crap?” He asks Steve through the door.

“The armor? I think it suits you.”

“Yeah. But I think I want something more… Howling Commandos like when I need to get back to fighting with you. And we were talking about Codenames. Sam offered Sargent America.”

He heard Steve snort and climbed into the shower. The warm water drenched his long hair quickly. Making quick work of soaping up, he heard Steve dropping towels and a change of clothes on the closed toilet seat and scrape up the leather armor.

“Hungry?”
“Sure. What’re you in the mood for?”

He heard the door close a bit and Steve’s voice from the hallway, walking away.

“Let’s see what Tony has. Or we could order. Ever tried Chinese?”

James stepped out of the Shower, wrapping a towel around his hairs and dried his body before slipping into the sweatpants and shirt Steve had brought him. They were a bit big on him and Steve hadn’t brought him any underwear but it’s not like they were strangers to each other. Stepping out of the room he walked towards the kitchen, where Steve scanned a takeout menu.

“Steve.” James stared his friend dead in the eye. “I may have lost the last 70 years of my life but I just spent months traveling the world. Yes, I tried Chinese.”

Steve smiled sideways and his eyes were warm, like the sun, brighten up his day, and that was what he wanted. That was what he had missed all these months, trying to find himself, so far away from home.

“Good. Because there is this new place I wanted to try out.” He waved the menu at James. “Just take a look at what you want and I call in when I’m clean and stuff. I presume you know how to handle Netflix?” he teased and handed James the menu and then turned on his TV.

“I just ask JARVIS to turn on what I want to watch. Just like I did the past few months.”

Steve grinned. “Works for me. Put something on if you want. Be right back.”

Then he disappeared into his bedroom to grab clothes and then went into the bathroom. James heard the armor hitting the floor and then he plopped down on the couch and scanned the menu.

“JARVIS. Could you turn on some music? You put together the playlist with the songs I liked.”

“Certainly, Sargent Barnes.”

The music started up while James scanned the menu in this hands. The couch in Steve’s tower-apartment was comfortable, probably the best money could buy since the Tower belonged to Tony Stark. Steve came out of the bathroom, sweatpants hanging low on his hips and brushing a towel through his hair a few more times.

“So. Decided what you want to try?”

“Get me 65 and 4 and we’ll see if it’s as good as it’s in Germany. That’s where I ate a lot of Chinese. Btw we totally should go there on a vacation. You totally need to try the Bavarian kitchen. Or Austrian if you want.” Steve nodded.

“Sure. If we get some vacation time.”

“If.” James snorts. “We get one of the jets and off we go. I apparently spent 70 years controlled by communists and Nazis. And two years before that following you around Europe, saving your ass and knocking sense into you, not even counting our life back in Brooklyn. I think I am entitled to bend or break the rules and go AWOL once or twice, don’t you think, Captain.”

James winks, Steve blushes. Like it always had been.

“But there may be a thing I need to talk to you about.” James became serious when Steve had hung up on the Chinese restaurant and told the reception of Stark Tower that he had ordered Chinese.
Steve raised an eyebrow, clearly unsure what James was talking about.

“Did you at least get me a ring?” Steve scrunched up his nose in confusion.

“What?”

“Steve. We are married. I want a ring.” James looked his friend dead in the eye. Steve bit his lip, surely not expecting that to come up.

“Well…” he started, fiddling with the tags around his neck.

“Well?” James smirked and leaned closer to Steve who sat down on the other end of the couch. James let his hand, the left hand, the cool metal, wander over Steve’s arm and settle on Steve’s collarbone. Steve still didn’t wear a shirt and he looked at James like a wonder coming true. Like James was a part of a fairytale that had manifested in front of him.

And maybe that was exactly what it was.

Their’s had been a story that had started with them finding each other in hard times, living through the great depression and the death of Steve’s mother Sarah. They were separated by war and death, just to always find their way back to each other again. Their story had started with a little once upon a time and maybe this, now, was their happily ever after.

“You always were high maintenance,” Steve whispered and came closer. James knew the look on Steve’s face. James never saw that look directed at him from Steve. Not in person. Not until now.

“Where would be the fun if I would make it easy. You never liked easy, Rogers.”

“Please tell me this is real.” There was desperation in Steve’s eyes, a desperation that had been there every time he had looked at Bucky when he had come home from a date with a dame back then. It had been there when he had pleaded for the Asset to recognize him. It had been there when they had looked at each other in the jet on their way to the tower. It had always been there. Like a plea. A plea that Bucky, the Asset, James would hold onto him. Would never let him go. “Please tell me this is not… not…” Steve’s eyes became glassy.

“It’s always been real. Since we were fifteen. We just never realized it, Steve.” James smiled at him, a reassuring smile he always had preserved for Steve. He had shot Steve that smile when he had promised him he would make it through the night during a fever, when he hadn’t been able to breathe when they had been running from the nuns at school, when Steve had stood in front of his old apartment after his mom’s burial and Bucky had tried to convince him to move in. It was there now when James was assuring him that Steve had always been everything he had needed. “It had been real enough to wake me up from 70 years of slumber.”

Tears started to roll down Steve’s cheeks and James pulled him in tight, let Steve bury his face in James’ neck.

“I never bought rings. Didn’t pick you for a ring-guy.” The blonde sobbed and James smiled faintly.

“Good that I bought some in London when I was there, right?”

Steve pulled away from him, looking at him with big, red-rimmed eyes.

“You didn’t have to.”

James pressed his lips against the corner of Steve’s mouth.
“I wanted” he whispered quietly and held Steve’s hands between their bodies, “because I want us to do it properly this time. They are in my duffle bag right now, but Steve. Will you marry me?”

Steve’s grip on his hands tightened.

“Yes. Every day since 1933.” The blonde whispers back and Bucky takes both of Steve’s hands in his left to raise his right hand to Steve’s cheek.

“And now stop crying punk. I want to see you smile.” And so Steve does. And the sun is coming up and Bucky knew that, now, he was where he belonged.

He saw his feelings reflected in Steve’s eyes. That’s more than he had hoped 70 years ago.

Destiny is overrated
So I think I'll write my own
I don't believe it's complicated
So I think I'll stay at home
I followed the leader
Now I just follow myself
Destiny is overrated
So I think I'll write my own
So I think I'll write my own

End Notes

Great great thanks to my new amazing beta, who does an amazing Job, okay. HERE is her tumblr
And here you can find me on tumblr and talk to me :D

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