Don't Shoot The Messenger

by scarletmanuka

Summary

On his way to see his partners, Peter is ambushed by Steve Rogers who wants him to pass on a message to Bucky.

Notes

This will be multi chaptered, not sure how many as yet :)}
Chapter 1

Peter rushed from the school grounds, eager to get to the Tower. He’d had to stay behind for an extra Decathlon training session as they had a tournament in two week’s time and as much as he usually loved those, he was missing his partners. Vision was away on a mission and Rhodey wasn’t in town so they’d have the Tower to themselves and all three were looking forward to having a night to themselves where they didn’t have to hide or watch every move they made.

He was rounding the corner of an alleyway, planning on getting changed into his suit so he could swing his way there and arrive much sooner, when he heard someone call out to him.

“Hey, kid, got a minute?”

Peter skidded to a stop and peered into the dark recess of a warehouse opening and made out a tall, broad man wearing a baseball cap pulled low over his face. The stranger looked up and blue eyes met Peter’s and he swallowed hard. It was none other than Captain America. “Mister Rogers,” he greeted him warily.

“Peter,” the man replied, giving him a nod. He tilted his head in invitation. “Mind if we have a quick chat?”

“I, uh, I’m in a bit of a hurry,” he tried to deflect, gesturing over his shoulder.

“I’ll be quick, I promise.”

With one last glance towards his destination, Peter sighed and gave a curt nod. “Okay, yeah, sure.” Rogers crooked a finger, beckoning him over to the alcove and the teen felt like rolling his eyes.

“Hey, kid, got a minute?”

“I, uh, I’m in a bit of a hurry,” he tried to deflect, gesturing over his shoulder.

“I’ll be quick, I promise.”

Of course, he had sort of forgotten that Rogers was the original super soldier and so his hearing was just as good or even better than Bucky’s. He gave Peter a wry shrug and said, “I’m kinda a fugitive at the minute - can’t really be seen in the open.”

“Yeah, alright, I guess,” Peter conceded. “So, what do you want?”

Roger raised an eyebrow. “Did your mother never teach you manners?”

His condescending tone grated on Peter’s nerves and made him snappy. “My mom is dead, so’s my dad, but we’re not here to talk about me. I really am in a hurry so spit it out.”

The man looked shocked and the teen guessed he was used to people fawning all over him and rushing to fulfill his every whim. The truth was, the first time they’d met, Peter had been one of those people - even as he’d stolen his shield, he was babbling about what a huge fan he was. But things had changed. He’d learned not only the truth about what this so-called hero had done to Tony, but had seen first hand how arrogant and self absorbed he could be when it came to Bucky. His hero worship for Captain America had not only lost its shine but had tarnished so much that no polish remained at all.

“I need you to pass on a message to Bucky from me,” he said once he’d recovered from his shock.
“What, no please? Did your mother not teach you manners either?”

Roger’s eyes narrowed. “You’ve got a smart mouth on you, kid. Anyone ever tell you it’s gonna get you in trouble one day?”

Peter glared in derision. “All the time but it’s not gonna stop me.”

“I can see why Tony likes you.”

“And I can see why he can’t stand the sight of you,” Peter snapped right back. “Look, if you want me to play messenger for you, hurry up and get to the point ‘cos my patience is wearing thin and I got places to be.”

The Captain looked torn between giving Peter a piece of his mind and imparting the message but he must have concluded that the teen had dug his heels in and wasn’t backing down. “Fine, be that way. Look, I can’t get through to Bucky, I don’t know why, maybe his phone isn’t working.”

Peter did roll his eyes now. “Uh, his phone is fine. You can’t get through because he blocked your number.”

“He what?”

“Seriously? You’re surprised? After the stunt you pulled on New Year’s?”

Rogers frowned. “Sure, we had a disagreement, but I didn’t think he’d go that far.”

Peter huffed. “If I recall correctly, he told you that he was quite happy with his life without you in it - he didn’t exactly leave room for misunderstandings.” The super soldier looked almost on the verge of tears and for an extremely brief second, the teen almost felt sorry for the man. Then he remembered the sound of Tony’s cries, the way the genius would clutch at his chest as he shivered involuntarily as he relived those moments from Siberia and it disappeared without a trace. “Now that you’re up to date with all the facts, you still want me to pass on a message?” he asked.

Straightening his shoulders, Rogers pulled his determination around him like a cloak. A year ago, Peter would have found that sort of resilience impressive, now it just irked him. “Yes, yes I do. Please,” he added after a moment’s thought. “Just tell him that I know that I screwed up, that I hurt him. I want to make it up to him, to get to know the new Bucky, and hopefully he’ll give this new me a chance too. Just a chance, that’s all I ask.”

He looked like he was going to say more but when he didn’t, Peter nodded. “I’ll let him know.”

Then without giving the Rogue Avenger a chance to say anything else, he shot a web to the top of the building and swung up to the roof, leaving him behind.

Peter found a small nook next to a ventilation unit where he could change into his suit, and by the time he was swinging off the building, heading for the Tower, Rogers was gone. Anxiety was bubbling up in the pit of his stomach, making him feel queasy, and if it wasn’t for him being so used to the ‘stomach rising up into your throat’ feeling from swinging between buildings, he’d probably have been sick. Why did this have to happen now? For the most part, they’d been so happy (the odd panic attack, flashback, or depressive slump aside, but in some way they were all a little broken so that was to be expected) and this development was sure to throw a spanner in the works. They were all superheroes, who fought evil on a regular basis, surely they didn’t need any more drama in their lives. And how was poor Bucky going to react? Peter hated the thought that his lover would be upset because of a message he had passed on. For a brief second, he considered turning about and tracking down Rogers so he could punch him for putting him in that situation in the first place but then the
Tower was only one web away and he decided not to.

Climbing the Tower was always tricky - no matter how much experience Peter had, he still wasn’t overly fond of heights and the building was tall. He hadn’t counted on how much more difficult having his backpack on his back would make it - by the time he was fifteen stories up, the wind seemed like it was trying to grab a hold of it and was almost yanking him off the wall. After a second close call, he had Karen and Friday unlock one of the windows and he crawled into one of the empty research labs, breathing hard. He changed back into his school clothes in case he ran into an SI employee on the way up to the penthouse and by the time he was riding the elevator up, he had to admit to himself that with all the mucking about, it would have been quicker to have just walked there. The afternoon had just gotten worse and worse and he was feeling a tad sorry for himself by the time he arrived.

That melted away in a flash when he walked into the penthouse to find Tony and Bucky in the middle of a tickle war on the couch. Tony was perched on Bucky’s thighs and the soldier was squirming under him as those strong fingers dug into his ribs, getting his own back by grabbing a hold of Tony’s weakest spot - his knees. Both men were laughing their heads off as they tried to get the upper hand but neither were seriously trying to avoid the other. They looked so happy that Peter’s mood immediately brightened and he spent a minute or two just watching them, soaking it all in.

Bucky looked up and saw him there and it shouldn’t have been possible but his smile got even wider. “Petey!” he cried.

Tony twisted about, looking excited and he made grabby hands at the teen. “Baby, you’re here!”

Grinning, Peter dropped his backpack and hurried over to the couch, allowing himself to be pulled down into their embrace. “Hey, guys,” he said, exchanging kisses with his lovers.

Tony frowned as he rubbed his back. “You’re all tense - what happened?”

Peter sighed and dropped his head onto Tony’s shoulder. “Can I tell you about it later? I don’t want it to ruin the night and I just wanna have some fun with you two first.”

“Doll, that sounds kinda serious,” Bucky said soothingly, rubbing at his back.

“Wanna bet?” Peter sighed. “Steve Rogers was waiting for me after school today.”

“What?” Tony barked, immediately going on alert. “Did he hurt you? Are you okay?”

“I’m fine, Tony,” the teen assured him, shaking his head, “he just wanted to talk.”

“Talk?” Bucky asked, his voice flat. “What about?”
“He wanted me to pass a message on to you.” Peter ran his hand through his hair. “Thought your phone was broken since he’d not been able to get through to you.”

“Did you tell him I’d blocked his number?”

Peter grinned evilly. “Oh yeah.”

Tony laughed. “I bet you enjoyed that a little too much.”

The teen shrugged. “Maybe. He mighta also have said that my mouth was gonna get me into trouble one of these days and that he could see why you liked me so much.”

The genius leered at him. “But he doesn’t know just how much I like you.”

“So what was the message?” Bucky asked, clearly troubled. His handsome face was drawn down into a frown and he’d slumped in on himself.

“He said that he knows that he fucked up and he wants a chance to get to know you again,” Peter summarised, keeping his own comments to himself. This would be Bucky’s decision and no matter what he chose, the teen was determined to support him, even if he didn't agree.

“Huh,” was all the response he got right away to that.

Both Peter and Tony watched their partner, worried about how he would react, but for the longest time he just sat there, thinking. Finally the super soldier announced, “I need a drink,” and he got to his feet and headed for the liquor cabinet.

Peter was on his feet and after him in a flash, halting him before he even got there. “Hey, how about we distract you some other way?” he asked, shooting a pointed glance over his shoulder at Tony.

At first, it looked liked Bucky was going to tell him to go jump and then proceed in his attempt to get plastered, but then his brain seemed to catch up with his emotions and he realised what Peter was trying to imply. Normally they didn't have a problem - Peter wasn’t old enough to drink as yet, and it was an uphill battle against the serum for Bucky to get drunk so he rarely bothered and so it was little effort to support Tony in his efforts to stay sober. Bucky seemed determined that drinking tonight would make him feel better and Tony was clearly trying his best not to let it bother him but he looked like he might flee at any moment. The soldier swore and hurried back to the couch, gathering the genius into his arms. “Shit, I’m so sorry, sweetheart. I wasn’t thinking and that’s unforgivable.”

Tony, as usual, tried to brush off the apology. “Hey, there’s no rule saying you can’t have a drink, don’t let me stop you.”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” Bucky told him. “What sort of boyfriend would I be if I didn’t do everything I could to support you?”

Tony shook his head. “It works the other way ‘round, too. I have to be supportive of what you need. You don’t have a problem with booze so if a drink is what you feel like you need to help process this, then there’s nothing wrong with that. I just have to deal with it.”

“Or ,” Peter broke in loudly, hoping to stop the debate before it even got started, “we could just go and have lots and lots of sex.” The two men shut up instantly and turned as one to look at Peter. He pulled his shirt off over his head and threw it at them, then started to head to the bedroom. “Last one there has to watch me blow the other one.”

There was a mad scramble to follow.
Chapter End Notes

Don't forget that if you'd like to leave a prompt you can either do so in the comments or email me at scarletmanuka1@gmail.com (one of these days I should probably set up a tumblr account or something...)
I don't guarantee to fulfill all prompts but the more ideas I get, the longer this series will continue. Thanks for being awesome :D

Edit to add: I finally set up a Tumblr account. I don't really know how it works yet (I'm used to FB and Reddit) but come say hello :)
Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Bucky had to hand it to Peter - the teen was as much a genius as Tony was. There was something that had upset the super soldier but he honestly couldn't say what it was right now, nor did he even care. All he cared about was the lithe form above him, rocking backwards and forwards on his cock. He had a firm grip on the teen’s hips, the shiny metal of his left hand a stark contrast to the flawless, milky skin. Peter was biting down hard on his lower lip and Bucky reached up with his flesh hand and used his thumb to tug the abused flesh from between his teeth. In a flash, Peter had sucked his thumb into his mouth, his tongue swirling around the pad and Bucky moaned at the feeling. There was a twin moan from beside him and his twisted his head to look at Tony.

The second genius was lying beside him, satiated and spent from the rather epic blowjob Peter had given him earlier, content to watch the teen ride the soldier. “He has such a pretty mouth,” he said reverently as he watched and Bucky couldn't help but agree. “Fuck, you two are both so pretty together,” Tony added, leaning in to kiss Bucky. “Perfect, just for me.”

“And you’re perfect for us, sweetheart,” Bucky told him.

It was almost too much, the dual looks of love directed his way, and Bucky wondered briefly what he’d done in a past life to deserve this (because he’d definitely not done anything in this one to warrant it). Peter was so pure and kind and passionate, and Tony was selfless and generous and good, and together they cradled Bucky’s heart in safe hands, and he trusted them completely to not break it. It took his breath away, quite literally, and his chest ached with the knowledge.

Tony had reached over to take Peter’s cock into one of his calloused hands and the teen arched his back to thrust into it, rocking his pelvis firmly downwards as he did so. All thoughts left Bucky’s mind as pleasure overwhelmed him and he slipped his thumb from the teen’s mouth, dropping down to rub the wet pad over a sensitive nipple. Yes, as far as distractions went, there was none better.

Peter began to rotate his hips as he moved, the angle changing constantly and Bucky gasped, feeling entirely consumed by the teen’s tight, hot grip on his cock. Tony licked and sucked his way along Bucky’s shoulder and collarbone, moving up to his throat and then to his ear, sucking the lobe into his mouth. His breath was warm and sweet against his ear when he began to speak, but although there was no doubt that the words were for him, they weren’t directed at the soldier. “Does that feel good, Petey, having Bucky buried so deep inside of you while I work that pretty cock of yours?”

“Fuck, yes, Tony, please, please give me more, Bucky,” Peter cried out, his hips jerking erratically as he tried to push himself down on Bucky’s length and thrust up into Tony’s hand at the same time.

“Apparently I’ve been rubbing off on you,” he continued, his voice low and throaty and utterly filthy, “so maybe we should turn the tables? Maybe rub you off on me instead? How ‘bout it, baby? Wanna come all over me, mark me as yours? Make sure you spill over our Bucky as well, lay your claim on him good and proper. We might not be able to shout it from the rooftops but that doesn’t mean we don’t belong to you.”

Peter was dragging in deep breaths as Tony spoke, his whole body thrumming, and Bucky was immediately on the precipice of orgasm. Of all of them, it was generally himself who had a penchant for dirty talk, but damn did he appreciate it when one of the others took up the mantel. Tony’s mouth was so sexy that it should be illegal and the words that spilled from his lips lit fires in Bucky’s loins,
and he went back to gripping Peter’s hips so he could thrust up hard into him.

Peter came first, spilling his hot seed over both of his lovers, marking both of them in the most primal of ways. His spasmng muscles tightened around Bucky’s cock, sending him over as well and his cries as he came were swallowed down by Tony capturing his mouth in a hot kiss.

The three of them collapsed against one another, sticky, messy, and exhausted, but all happy and satisfied. It wasn’t until much later, when they were debating the pros and cons of ordering food before or after having a shower that Bucky finally allowed his brain to kick back into gear and he was left with a sinking feeling in his stomach as he contemplated his dilemma. Just what the hell was he going to do about Steven Grant Rogers?

oOoOo

The sounds of Tony and Peter’s laughter or making the odd comment about the movie they were watching drifted through the Penthouse, sounding like music to Bucky. He was sitting alone (by choice - his lovers had tried to get him to join them in their snuggle huddle on the couch), cradling a now cold cup of hot chocolate in his hands, trying to get his thoughts sorted. It was more difficult than he’d expected.

Months ago when the Rogue Avengers had breached the Tower in a misguided attempt to ‘rescue’ Bucky, it had been crystal clear. James Buchanan ‘Bucky’ Barnes, former sniper for the 107th Infantry Regiment, tortured prisoner of war and ex-assassin, the Winter Soldier, newest Avenger, and proud partner to Anthony Edward Stark and Peter Benjamin Parker, knew exactly which side to chose. He rejected Steve Rogers and sent him packing, happy with his new life. And Bucky was happy, happier than he’d ever been, in fact. But every now and then he couldn’t help but feel that there was something missing, some small part of him that anchored him to his past, reminded him of just how far he had travelled.

Maybe if his old home had survived the recent development of his neighbourhood, or if one of his old school friends was still alive, he would have something tangible to hold onto, but as it was, there was nothing. Nothing except for his childhood friend. Had Bucky been too harsh in dismissing Steve? The blonde may not have experienced as much trauma as Bucky had, but that didn’t mean that he had it any easier adjusting. Hell, the ex-assassin at least had been awake on and off throughout the years, experiencing new technology and seeing the world change, so when he was finally free, it wasn’t as much as a shock to the system. Steve had simply woken up one day to find himself in the future - a future that was vastly different to the time they’d come from.

The problem with Steve was that he was so determined to do what he thought was right, to fight for what he thought was right, to never back down, to hold steadfast against anyone who opposed him, to uphold his beliefs. Even if those beliefs, those thoughts, were actually wrong. Sure, he’d fought a lifelong battle against bullies, he detested those who tried to squash the ‘little guy’, but the crux of the matter was he did so only if the little guy believed in the same things as Steve.

Back in the day, the old women of the neighboured adored Steve. He was polite, and chivalrous, and was a good, Christian boy who went to church, helped them cross the street and put away their groceries, and even when he was in trouble, it was because he was fighting the good fight. If he hadn’t been as small as he had been, he would have been seen as one of the most eligible bachelors around and would have been fighting off the girls (as it was, Bucky knew of several gals who would have happily dated him, except they didn’t match up to Steve’s standards). The morals of the day had evolved and changed so much in the here and now, mostly for the better, Bucky thought, but Steve clung to the prevailing notions of the 40’s and in doing so alienated the friend he was so desperate to connect with. But if truth be told, he’d already been doing that without knowing it before they’d
even gone off to war.

It was a Friday night and Bucky had taken Steve out for his 21st birthday to celebrate. The previous few birthdays had been sombre events, with no blood relatives left to celebrate with, but Bucky was determined that his best friend was going to enjoy the transition into official adulthood. There were a couple of bars where the clientele were more easy going and accepting and so Bucky was sure that Steve wouldn’t manage to find a fight whilst they were out. Normally Steve would shoot off his mouth, or would insert himself into a situation he believed needed his intervention, and it was all downhill from there. He may have three welterweight boxing championships to his name, but Bucky would much rather avoid a fight altogether than end one. He’d hoped that with the more relaxed atmosphere of the bars, avoidance would be possible.

After half a dozen drinks, Steve seemed drunk enough to relax and slumped against the bar, chatting animatedly with the patrons to either side of them. Bucky caught sight of a familiar, handsome face across the room and nodded to the man when he waved in greeting. Steve followed his line of sight, breaking off mid-sentence from his talk about rumours that Howard Stark of Stark Industries was building a flying car to ask, “Who’s your friend?”

Images flashed through Bucky’s mind - a hot mouth against his, the cold of the brick wall at his back, the smell of the alley in his nose, his hands dipping under a shirt to feel hot flesh beneath, the fear of being caught, and he felt the tips of his ears go red. “Oh, just a fella I’ve seen about a few times when I’ve been out to bars. More of an acquaintance than a friend.”

Steve considered this, like he was sizing the guy up and deeming if he met the high standards he had for people who wanted to be friends with his best bud. Bucky rolled his eyes, unsure of how Stevie thought he was the protective one in their friendship. It was sweet that he thought Bucky only ever deserved the best but there was little he could do to drive off any riffraff that he thought would be bothersome. James Barnes had long been able to take care of himself and he didn’t need anyone making decisions for him, but he knew the younger man only had his best interests at heart so he didn’t bother getting into an argument about it.

Steve’s attention was soon back on the conversation he had been involved in with the other patrons and Bucky sighed in relief at knowing that he wasn’t digging any deeper into how he knew Mr Tall, Dark, and Handsome. Steve, the law abiding good boy that he was, was quick to denounce homosexuals (was quick to denounce anything that broke the law really) and so Bucky knew that it would not be received well if he explained that he’d come closer to sleeping with the man in question than he’d ever come with another male. Steve wouldn’t care that his best friend had wanted it, he wouldn’t deem it relevant that Bucky preferred men, he’d just focus on the fact that it had been a man kissing Bucky pushed against a wall and make him out to be some sort of assault victim. Steve would be at the local police station crying foul before Bucky even had the chance to finish explaining, and so he never did. It wasn’t worth the risk.

It was hard, so hard, to find someone to be with in that way since anyone could be an undercover cop, if anyone saw them or even suspected them, they could be reported and arrested. It was hard enough finding someone that you shared an attraction with in the first place so when you added to that the need for secrecy, the cloak and dagger aspects of sneaking around, listening to whispers, speaking in code words, not sharing any personal information (not even a name) for fear of it being traced back to you - it almost left a fella not even wanting to try. Bucky couldn’t deny his attraction to men but with the dangers posed by actually being with one, well, it was easier to just close his eyes and pretend that the dame he’d picked up was more compact, not as soft, was more masculine. Sometimes that worked, most times it didn’t, but Bucky could pretend with the best of them and so he
earned a reputation as something of a ladies man. It was safer that way.

Several drinks later, Bucky was persuaded by the gal next to him into teaming up with her husband against her brother and brother-in-law in a game of pool. He wasn’t half bad at it and he and his partner (Mario) put on a good show, pipping the others right at the end to take victory. As the losers were buying a round of drinks, Bucky looked around and found he couldn’t find Steve anywhere. He was immediately worried and after giving his apologies to the group he’d been with, left to go outside to try and track down his friend.

The night was cold and snow was falling softly from the sky as he looked around the quiet streets. The snow outside the bar was well trodden, just slush now, but there in the entry to the next alley down was several footprints in the crisp flakes, two larger sets and one that was much smaller. If it wasn’t so late at night they could possibly be mistaken for a child’s but Bucky had a gut feeling that they were those of his best friend and so he headed down into the alley.

Sure enough, he could hear the sounds of a fist hitting skin and he darted into the darkness to find Steve falling onto the ground, Mr Tall, Dark, and Handsome above him. “Stay down, you little shit,” the man was snarling, “and keep your nose out of things that don’t concern you!”

Steve got to his feet and wiped the blood off his face, spots falling down to colour the snow at his feet. “No way,” he declared. “It’s unnatural and you gotta be stopped.”

“Says who?” the man demanded.

“It’s written in the good book,” Steve said stubbornly, “and if it’s good enough for God, then it’s the rules that we have to follow.”

“Fuck your rules and fuck your god,” the man spat. “I’ll be with whoever I want to be with and if you don’t agree with that, well so be it.”

“You’re breaking the law,” Steve insisted.

“And I’ll break your nose if you don’t shove off and mind your own business.”

Stepping forward, Bucky held up his hands placatingly. “Hey now, no need for anyone to break anything, Stevie, just walk away, man.”

“Buck!” the smaller man said, grinning happily at him, the effect turned gruesome due to the blood colouring his teeth. “Help me pin him down, will ya so we can call the cops.”

Bucky shook his head. “Not gonna happen, Steve. I didn’t come out tonight looking for trouble so let’s just get going, yeah.”

Steve furrowed his brows. “But I caught him with a man back here, Bucky - that’s against the law and he needs to be punished.”

Tall, Dark, and Handsome was watching Bucky warily, but there was an unspoken code amongst their hidden community that no one would out anyone so he was remaining silent, waiting to see what his past companion would do. “Last I checked, Stevie, you ain’t no copper so just leave it be. It’s late and I’m tired and I just wanna go home. Come on now, we can share a cab since your place is one the way to mine.”

“But, Buck -”

“Steve, leave it,” he growled.
The smaller man huffed but finally acquiesced, muttering to himself as he stormed past to exit the alley. The men remaining held their breaths as he went until they were left alone. “Sorry ‘bout that,” Bucky said softly.

The man shrugged. “It happens. Thanks for pulling him back.”

Bucky peered into the alleyway behind them. “Is your friend still around?”

He barked out a laugh. “God, no, he scarpered the second that little twerp sprung us. Ah well, looks like it’s just me and Mr Palmer tonight.”

“Sorry,” Bucky said once more with a sad smile.

“Ain’t your fault, doll,” the man said and stepped close to him. “Maybe next time you’re out this way we could get a drink? I had fun the last couple’a times.”

Bucky smiled more broadly now. “Yeah, yeah I’d like that a lot.” His breath caught as the man leaned forward and brushed his lips against his and then he was gone, hurrying off into the darkness, leaving Bucky alone. He turned and traipsed out, looking for where Steve had run off to sulk, not looking forward to the lecture he would surely receive for not condoning a citizen’s arrest.

“Babe? You okay?”

Bucky came out of his daze to find Tony standing in front of him, a tub of ice cream in one hand and several spoons in the other. “Yeah, sorry, just lost in thought,” he assured him.

“Oh, okay, well, if you want some company, we’re having a party with some Cherry Rocky Road and you’re more than welcome to come join us.” Tony held out the tub enticingly.

Smiling, the super soldier nodded and got to his feet. “Yeah, ice cream sounds good right about now.”

“Awesome, this party has the best guest list,” the genius said with a dopey grin.

Bucky laughed and wrapped his arms around Tony’s waist, causing the man to shuffle awkwardly as they walked, attached, into the living room. Peter was on the couch and he looked so happy to see Bucky there that all thoughts of his dilemma and his memories from the past faded from Bucky’s mind. He had to give it some more thought but for now, he was going to sit his arse down, snuggle with his partners, and eat enough ice cream to make a man sick. He could worry about everything else tomorrow.

Chapter End Notes

So, I finally got a Tumblr account so I might remember to post shit there every now and then or something. I dunno, if you’re on Tumblr and want to say hello, come say hi :)
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

So uh, I had a plan, but the muse had other ideas and this didn't quite end up how I expected. Heads up for Steve fans, this isn't overly nice to him...

Sorry

“This is an intervention,” Tony announced dramatically, dropping down to sit on Bucky's lap.

The super soldier made an oof noise as the air was forced from his lungs by the unexpected weight but his arms immediately circled Tony’s waist in a subconscious desire to make sure his lover didn’t slip off and land on his arse. “It’s a what now?” he asked, pretending not to have heard.

“An intervention,” Peter clarified, sitting on the floor at Bucky’s feet, pressing himself against his legs.

“And why do you two think I need one?” he asked pointlessly, knowing exactly what they were referring to but playing dumb simply because he couldn’t get enough of the fact that these two remarkable men cared so damn much about him.

Tony made a face and shuffled about until he was sitting sideways so his back wasn’t to Peter. “Because you’ve been moping about all morning and it’s clear to both of us what decision you want to make but you’re letting your brain talk you out of it.”

Bucky frowned in earnest at this, pretty sure that he hadn’t come to any decision as yet so he was at a loss as to how the two thought he was in that particular predicament. “I don’t understand,” he confessed.

“Buck, you want to reconcile with your friend,” Peter told him, a hand stroking up and down his shin almost absently. “No matter what he’s said or done, Rogers is your oldest friend and we both know that you don’t want to give that up without a fight.”

“It ain’t me doing the fighting, doll, that’s the problem.” He sighed and hugged Tony just a little tighter, needing the comfort. “I had to put up with Steve’s views silently back in the day and since we were reunited, I’ve still been putting up with them, no matter how much it hurts. When does it get to the point where enough is enough?”

“We get that it’s painful for you, babe,” Tony sympathised, “but, playing Devil’s advocate here for just a second - does he know that you think his views are outdated and hurtful?”

Bucky furrowed his brows. “I hadn’t come out to him so I never explicitly told him how I felt,” he admitted, “but I never agreed with him and always changed the subject when he got onto one of his rants.”

“Yeah, see, I don’t think that’s clear enough,” the genius said. “Look, as much as I don’t like the guy, Rogers isn’t a bad guy. The problem here is that he’s clinging to what he thinks is right.”

“But it’s wrong!” the ex-assassin protested.
“I know, babe, but you should understand better than anyone what it was like back then, hell, you were on the wrong side of the coin even if no one knew it. You know how ingrained it was in people back then and how adamant they were that it was immoral and wrong. Rogers has only been out of the ice for a handful of years and he’s had a lot of stuff to adjust to, and unlike you, he doesn’t have firsthand experience of what it’s like to be gay. Between fighting off aliens, fighting Hydra, fighting me and the others, and just fighting in general since that seems to be his default setting, he probably hasn’t even given much thought to how things have changed for non-straight people. The fact that you never said anything overt probably just reinforced his belief.”

“You’re saying that this is my fault?” Bucky demanded defensively.

Tony huffed. “Of course not. What I’m trying to say - badly, clearly - is that yes he’s wrong but until someone takes the time to educate him, he won’t magically change his opinion. At the end of the day, he’s still a good guy and you obviously mean the world to him, so if anyone can make him see that those ideologies of his are actually hurting the person he cares about most in this world, then it’s you.”

The super soldier narrowed his eyes suspiciously. “Why are you so adamant that I should give him a chance? You hate the guy.”

Tony suddenly looked so sad that Bucky immediately regretted asking. “I don’t hate him, not really,” he said softly, his eyes haunted. “He hurt me, and lied to me, disappointed me, and broke my trust, but I considered him family. I don’t think I can ever truly say that I hate him. Will I ever forgive him? Probably not, but that doesn’t mean that I despise him to that extent.”

“Sweetheart, I’m sorry,” Bucky muttered, squeezing him tightly. “I know I’m being a dick right now. I’m just so confused and torn and I know that’s no excuse but it’s the only one I got.”

“It’s okay, love,” Tony assured him, pressing a kiss to his forehead.

“What do you think about all’a this?” the soldier asked Peter.

The teen gave him a warm smile, wrapping his arm around his calf. “We just want you to be happy, Buck. Agreeing to talk to Rogers doesn't mean that everything will work out, but if you don’t try, I reckon you’ll just spend the rest of your life second guessing yourself and regretting not taking the chance.”

“So you both think that I should meet with him?”

“Yeah, we do,” Tony agreed.

Bucky chewed on his bottom lip as he thought. “Could I arrange to meet him here? I want to be on my own turf with you guys around just in case it goes south. I mean, I don’t think it’d come to blows and even if it did, I could hold my own, I guess I kinda just want you there for moral support.” He felt himself blush slightly at the admission.

“Hey, asking for help and admitting that you need emotional support isn’t a weakness, babe,” Tony told him. “Of course you can meet him here and we’ll be right here with you if that’s what you want, or even in the next room over if you want privacy but us close at hand. Whatever makes you most comfortable.”

Peter held up his hand like he was in class. “Yeah, doll?” Bucky asked, one eyebrow arched in amusement.

“I just wanna say that if he does anything to hurt you, I will be kicking his butt and neither of you
Tony laughed. “Baby, if he hurts our boy, I’ll hold him down while you beat him up.”

Bucky was overwhelmed by just how loved he felt by the two and before he’d even realised what he was doing, he’d reached down, grasped the back of Peter’s shirt and hauled him up onto the couch next to them. In one fluid movement he was leaning forward and kissing the boy soundly. Once he’d thoroughly devoured Peter’s mouth he turned to Tony and showed him the same courtesy. “Fuck, do you two have any idea of just how damn much I love you?” he asked, breathlessly once he pulled away.

“Just a bit,” Tony said, looking dazed at the intensity of the kiss he’d just received.

“How ‘bout you send Rogers a message telling him when to meet and then you show us just how much,” Peter suggested slyly, his hand dipping under Bucky’s shirt to stroke along the hard muscles of his abdomen.

“Yeah, I like the sound of that,” he agreed, pulling out his phone. It only took a moment to find Steve’s number in his address book and change the setting to unblock it. Then he fired off a text, telling the man that if he wanted to talk, he could drop by that afternoon. Then, not even waiting for a reply to confirm if his old friend would come or not, he was stripping Tony out of his shirt and watching as Peter shimmied out of his jeans. He knew that there was no way he was going to fret and worry the afternoon away until Steve arrived, he’d be too busy with his lovers to even notice the time passing. Completely forgetting about Steve Rogers for the time being, he concentrated solely on the men in front of him.

The elevator opened, revealing the blonde super soldier, blue eyes seeking out Bucky’s own storm cloud grey ones. “Bucky, you’re here,” Steve said in relief.

The tone immediately irked Bucky and he wanted to ask if Steve thought he’d been lured here as part of some nefarious plan. He choked back the impulse and nodded his head in greeting. “Steve. Come on in.”

He walked further into the Penthouse and his eyes flickered over to Tony and Peter, standing just behind Bucky but very much in his space. “Peter,” he greeted the teen. “Thanks for passing on my message. Tony, good to see you again.”

Stony silence was his only reply. The two superheroes had agreed to support Bucky but that didn’t mean they were going to just let Captain America stroll back in like he owned the place, especially since the last time he’d been in the Tower, it had been by force.

The lack of response seemed to make him uneasy but he recovered quickly, turning his attention back to Bucky. “So, is there some place we can go so we can speak in private?” he asked.

Bucky started to cross his arms over his chest, realised it might come across as too aggressive and let them drop to hang at his sides. “Anything you say to me can be said in front of them,” he declared, unable to keep the hint of a challenge from his eyes.

Steve frowned at this. “Tony I get, I mean, if you two are together, but does the kid have to be here? I’d rather not have an audience for this.”

“He’s my best friend, he stays.” He’d thought long and hard about how to explain Peter’s presence without pushing his luck. If he played his cards right, Steve would leave today reconsidering his
stance on homosexuality. Hitting him with the concept of polyamory on top of that seemed too much of a stretch. Bucky however, wanted to make it clear just how important Peter was to him, and just how far Steve had fallen from his graces. It was a fine line between rubbing it in and making it clear that Bucky didn’t need Steve, that if he was to remain as part of his life then it was entirely by choice.

The flash of hurt across Steve’s face told Bucky that his point had been made and he turned to gesture into the sitting room, not missing the smug smirk on Peter’s face as he did so. He gave the teen a look that said ‘Really?’ and Peter just put on his doe eyed, innocent expression that made him look like an angel. He couldn’t help but smile at his lover’s antics as he led everyone towards the couches. Peter was beyond playing nice now and he was not afraid to let his inner snark out to play.

“So, how have you been?” Steve asked awkwardly as he sat in one of the armchairs, only to find the three other men had all taken the couch. It made it feel very much like a panel interview but really, that’s exactly what it was.

“I’ve been real good,” Bucky told him, honestly. “Never been happier.”

“And, uh, things are good with you and Tony?”

Bucky laced his fingers with Tony’s and gave his partner a sappy smile. “Oh yeah.”

“So, well, I uh, guess I want to apologise for my reaction last time I was here,” Steve began, bashfully, one hand coming up to rub at the back of his head. He’d always had a problem with apologising since it wasn’t often that he thought he’d been in the wrong. “Sam explained a few things to me afterwards but yeah, it doesn't excuse my actions. I guess I was just a bit surprised is all, since I never knew.”

Bucky was left a little speechless by the apology since he’d really not expected it. He managed to nod, a less gracious acceptance than was polite but an acceptance nonetheless. “Thanks, Steve, I appreciate that.”

“So, you’ve always been gay then? Even back in the day?”

“Yeah, yeah I have.”

“You never said anything.” It wasn’t quite an accusation but the tone was slightly petulant.

Bucky huffed. “You were always pretty vocal about your feelings on the matter, Stevie. Kinda made it hard to come out when I knew you didn’t approve.”

The blonde frowned again. “Maybe if you’d given me a chance, explained how it was for you, I coulda changed my mind.”

“It’s easy enough to say that now, to suggest I could have trusted you, but considering you were happy to report any guy to the cops that you even suspected of being gay...well, you gotta see how that looked from my point of view.”

“I would never have reported you, Buck! Surely you know that!”

“Oh, so you’d make an exception for me whilst condemning everyone else?”

“It wasn’t like that!”

“Then enlighten me, Steve, because it damn well seems that way from where I’m sitting.”
Tony placed his hand against Bucky’s chest. “Hey, calm down, babe. Remember - you can’t change the past, so there’s no point dwelling on it.”

“Why don’t you stay out of this,” Steve snapped, glaring at Tony.

“Don’t you talk to him like that,” Bucky growled.

“I’m just trying to help,” Tony said, trying to placate the blonde. “I know Bucky wants to fix things between the two of you but getting caught up in how you’ve hurt each other in the past isn’t productive.”

“Why don’t you quit trying to talk about stuff you don’t understand,” Steve said condescendingly to the genius.

“Oh, I know firsthand what it feels like to be betrayed by you, Rogers,” Tony said flatly.

“You just can’t let that go, can you?” Steve stood up from the armchair and shot Tony a filthy look. “I did what I did for Bucky and you seem to have forgiven him just fine but me? Oh no, every chance you get you throw that back in my face, crying foul, making everything about you. Well I’m over hearing about it, Tony so for once in your life, just shut your damn mouth.”

“Hey, what the fuck did I just say about speaking to him like that?” Bucky snarled.

“I’m just telling it like it is, Buck,” Steve protested. “I can’t help it if Tony is too delicate to not take offense.”

“You know what? Fuck you, Rogers,” Tony snapped, jumping to his feet so the super soldier wasn’t looming over him. “I was all for Bucky making things right with you but dammit, you don’t deserve his friendship.”

“Oh, like you have any idea of what people deserve,” Steve sneered. “The great Tony Stark, genius, billionaire, playboy, who can buy off anyone he wants and throw money at a problem to make it disappear. You have no clue of what something is worth, Tony.”

“Bucky isn’t a thing,” Tony growled. “He’s a human fucking being who is capable of making his own choices and deciding for himself who he spends time with.”

“What, like you? You really think you mean anything to him, Tony? Back in the day, Bucky had a new gal every night and was never serious about any of them. You’re just a placeholder, a new toy that will quickly lose its shine. He’ll soon realise that this is just a phase and he’ll toss you aside like yesterday’s news.”

“You son of a -” Tony took a step forward which was all the incentive Steve seemed to need. The super soldier’s fist connected with Tony’s face, throwing him backwards onto the couch before Bucky could even react. He cried out, rushing to Tony’s side to check he was okay when a low, terrifying snarl echoed throughout the room. A glance over his shoulder gave Bucky a glimpse of Peter’s face - dark with unsuppressed rage, before the teen was lunging towards Steve.

Then all hell broke loose.
So, for those who didn't see it coming, this chapter has some violence in it, maybe a little more brutal than canon-typical. Well, I'd say it's Russo Bro's level, not Whedon Level violence, if that helps those of you who get squicked out.

For the very briefest of moments, just a fraction of a second, less time that it took a hummingbird to flap its wings once, Bucky was torn.

Tony or Peter?

That tiny slither of time seemed to stretch before him like an eternity as he contemplated which choice to make, who needed his help more - the furious spiderling who was throwing himself directly at the enhanced super soldier, or Tony, his very fragile, very human, very breakable lover?

Before the thought was even finished, Bucky was completing the leap he’d taken to get to Tony’s side and he was crouching down next to the man; in the end it was no choice at all. Peter could take care of himself but Tony was already down. The genius was crumpled in a heap on the couch and the ex-assassin could tell instantly that he was unconscious. He leaned close until his cheek was directly next to the lax mouth and held his breath as he waited to feel the puff of air against his skin to indicate that Tony was still breathing. He felt it, shallow but regular and the tension in his shoulders relaxed just a little. He then cradled Tony close to him, knowing that he would have to wait until Peter was finished with Steve before they could seek medical attention.

Steve had managed to dodge Peter’s initial charge and was backing away, his hands held up placatingly, trying to talk the teen down. Peter was having none of it, stalking forwards very deliberately, his eyes flinty, his fists clenched. “Come on, kid, there’s no need for this, we can work it out,” Steve was saying, but his tone was still light. Too light. He clearly had no idea of the gravitas of the situation. Even after he’d dropped a gangway on the teen at the airport fight in Germany, which Spider-Man had caught and then held up, he still didn’t seem to realise just how strong the kid was. If Bucky wasn’t so damn worried about Tony, he’d probably be overcome with glee to see his old friend about to get schooled.

If Steve thought Peter would stop advancing once the blonde was backed into a literal corner, he was sorely mistaken. It was only when Peter was several steps away that Steve even bothered to take a defensive position, but still his arms were raised in a half hearted fashion. Peter now had six months of regular training with Bucky under his belt and he wasn’t going to fail to take advantage of every slip up his opponent made.

Leaping with unnatural force from a standing position, Peter kicked off the wall to give him more height and swung his arm as he descended, catching Captain America in the jaw with a resounding thwack. Steve thumped back against the wall, his head smacking against it as he had nowhere to go. Peter was quick to follow through by grabbing the soldier’s shoulders whilst he brought his knee up forcibly into his gut. Steve grunted but managed to remain upright and he shoved the teen in the chest, breaking his hold on him. It was only then that he began to take the fight seriously.
The two began to trade blows, and it was a much more equal fight than Bucky had anticipated. Peter had the superior strength but despite his training, Steve’s experience far outweighed the teen’s. Now that the blonde was no longer underestimating Peter, he was quick to change tactics, moving to defensive maneuvers since he knew he couldn’t win with brute force and so Peter would need to really get the upper hand to be able to end it.

It took a while before Bucky noticed an anomaly and his eyes widened in shock. It was subtle to begin with but he discovered that Peter wasn’t fighting alone. Friday was joining in, and she was getting serious. Spotlights behind Peter would swivel and shine directly into Steve’s eyes, a door closed behind him as he tried to use it as an escape, the gas fire he fell against sparked to life. They were small things, nothing more than distractions, but they all helped to give the teen an edge. Friday had seen someone hurt her creator and she was not happy. Bucky was immediately grateful that he’d never pissed the AI off before.

Steve darted behind the couch in what could only be considered a dick move, using Bucky and Tony as a barrier, which caused Peter to pause for a moment. The soldier used the time to catch his breath and he said, panting hard, “Come on, kid, can’t we talk about this?”

“Talk?” Peter spat. “Talk? Tony is unconscious and you want to talk? Fuck you, arsehole, we’re done talking.” And he bounded over the couch in a single leap.

Bucky had seen the teen make moves like that a hundred times but it never got old and it still never failed to impress him. Tony had calculated the forces involved once and the numbers had been staggering - at a casual glance someone would think that there must be stunt wires or a hidden spring involved, but no, Peter had the ability of a jumping spider. He collided with Steve, taking them both down onto the ground, and he pinned the blonde down by his wrists, now able to fully demonstrate the extent of his strength.

Steve cried out and Peter squeezed his grip and even from where he was several feet away, Bucky could hear the bones grind together. “How dare you?” Peter growled menacingly. “How dare you come into our home and act this way. You were invited here as part of a peace offering and instead, you raised a hand against Tony. He’s hurt because of you. I seem to recall telling you on New Year’s that the next person to hurt one of us was going to get a crushed skull.” A quick jump changed the angle of his hips and he was now pinning Steve’s arms with his legs, and with cold eyes, Peter very deliberately moved his hands up until they were cradling the sides of the super soldier’s face. “Unlike you, I’m a man of my word.” And then he began to squeeze.

Bucky watched in horror as Steve screamed, the pressure on his skull building, building, his skin blooming with bruises from where the teen’s hands were connected. Blue eyes gradually turned red as blood vessels popped, and he struggled weakly against the teen. Peter was relentless, an icy coldness to him that Bucky had never seen in him before but recognised from within himself. It was a throwback to the Winter Soldier, a state of mind whereby he could detach himself from his rational mind and allow his rage, his primal instincts to take over. He couldn’t be bargained with, couldn’t be reasoned with, couldn’t be stopped.

But Bucky had to try.

At this exact moment, he didn’t really care if Steve lived or died but once it was over, once Tony was safe, he knew that he would have regrets piled to the moon and back if he allowed Peter to kill the super soldier. Some of that would be due to his own nostalgia for a time past, but mostly it would be because Peter would regret it. The teen was pure and good and no matter how crazed he was right now, once he had regained his senses, he would be devastated if he actually killed someone.

Laying Tony gently down on the couch, Bucky climbed over the backrest to drop down next to
Peter, keeping himself in sight at all times. He didn’t reach out to touch either of them, knowing that it would more likely result in himself getting hurt which would only cause Peter more distress later.

“Petey, doll, you gotta let him go. He’s learned his lesson, sugar, there’s no need to take this any further.” He tried to keep his voice calm and even but he knew it was shaking slightly.

“He hurt Tony,” the teen grated.

“I know, I know, and I’m pissed as hell too, but we can’t get Tony help until you let him go. Come on now, sweetheart, he’s had enough. Just let him go.”

Peter glanced down at Steve, and Bucky’s eyes followed. The blonde’s face was bright red, except for the points directly around Peter’s fingers that were a stark white. Blood was trickling from his nose and one ear, and he’d stopped screaming but not from choice. His mouth was still locked open in a silent scream but his body was diverting resources elsewhere to try and combat the assault. His eyes were almost all red now, and they were bulging unnaturally from his face. With one last snarl, Peter suddenly let go and leaped off of him.

Steve dragged in a ragged breath and rolled onto his side, arms coming up to clutch at his head. Bucky turned his attention immediately to Peter, finally reaching out to him. “You okay, doll?” he asked gently. Peter suddenly looked like he wanted to cry and Bucky was struck but just how young he was. He pulled him to him in a crushing hug, and kissed his forehead. “It’s over now, sugar, it’ll be okay. Let’s take care of our boy, yeah?”

Peter nodded against him and sniffling, pulled away to move around the couch, where he scooped Tony into his arms.

“Friday,” Bucky called.

“I alerted medical personnel the minute boss was hit, Bucky. They arrived at the Tower forty seconds ago and are in the elevator currently.”

He sighed in relief. “You are an angel.”

“I care about him too,” she said simply.

“You did good, helping Petey out,” he said with admiration.

“I try to play my part.”

Bucky sighed and cast a glance to his ex-best friend. “Any chance you can arrange another medical team for Rogers?” He didn’t think he’d ever be able to call the man Steve again. Steve was dead to him now.

It shouldn’t have been possible but the AI sounded petulant as she said, “If I really must.”

“Thanks, Fri.” The elevator doors opened and two paramedics rushed out. Bucky went to greet them and led them over to Tony. One of them glanced at Steve, worry on his face as he saw the state of him, so Bucky explained, “He’s enhanced, Tony isn’t. He’s not the priority.”

The medic nodded at once, and began to help his partner examine Tony who was still cradled in Peter’s arms. He knew that hovering would do no good, but there was no way that Bucky was going to leave Tony’s side until he was back on his feet. One look at Peter’s face told the same story and the ex-assassin lay a hand on the teen’s shoulder, giving it a squeeze in comfort. Tony was hurt but he had two men who loved him more than life itself and they were damn well going to make sure that he was looked after. Starting right now.
Chapter End Notes

There'll be a quick, fluffy follow up chapter to end this so stay posted for more :)
“Oh my God, will you stop fussing?” Tony demanded with a glare. The hospital bed he was occupying was tilted up slightly but with the way he was attached to numerous monitors, an IV, and was dressed in one of those horrible hospital gowns, the glare had little *oomf* behind it so Bucky disregarded it.

“I’m just getting you some more water,” he said airily as he filled the jug from the sink in the private room.

“You know that they’re not letting me get up to pee, right?” the genius said, pouting. “I have a damn catheter up my dick.” He shuddered. “If you’re trying to get a peek at my butt in this gown, then your nefarious plan won’t work.”

The jug slipped from Bucky’s hands and fell to the ground, the plastic bouncing on the linoleum floor, spilling water everywhere. Peter was on his feet in an instant helping to clean up, and Bucky tried to avoid Tony’s questioning eyes.

Tony was stubborn and when his glorious eyes didn't get him the answers he sought, he came right out and asked. “What’s got you so spooked?”

The super soldier pulled more paper towel from the dispenser and crouched down next to Peter to mop up the mess, sighing heavily. “It’s nothing, really. Just a thought I’d had when Ste - when Rogers - had arrived.”

Tony’s eyes softened. “Ah, you mean when he realised that we hadn’t lured him into a trap?”

Bucky grunted. Captain America sure wasn’t subtle. “Yeah, that’d be the one.”

Tony’s lips quirked as he obviously thought of what had gone through Bucky’s mind but he let the matter drop. It didn’t take long before the floor was dried off and Peter took the used towels from Bucky to put in the bin, dropping a kiss to his temple as he went. The teen seemed his usual self, but once Tony was out of the hospital and he couldn’t distract himself with the genius’ recovery, Bucky was pretty sure that he was going to crash, and crash hard. Peter had always been wary about his strength, had gone to extreme measures to ensure that no one was hurt by him - even the bad guys - and then he’d single handedly whooped Captain America’s arse, coming extremely close to killing him. Even without knowing him as well as his lovers did, it would be obvious to anyone that the kid was going to freak out in a bad way. Bucky just hoped that when he did, that he and Tony would be able to talk him down and reassure him.

Bucky began to fold the jacket that Peter had slung over the chair, noticing a mark on the shoulder and trying to brush it off, when Tony huffed. “For fuck’s sake, fuzzball, would you quit with the mother henning for two seconds and come over here and sit with me?”

Sheepishly, he put the jacket down and crossed to one of the two chairs next to the bed, sinking into the one not occupied by the teen. “Sorry,” he said softly.

Tony reached out and took his hand, and Peter twined his fingers with Bucky’s metal ones, connecting them all. “Stop feeling guilty,” he said sternly, jerking on the hand until Bucky looked up to meet his eyes. “This *isn’t* your fault.”
With a shake of his head and a small smile, the ex-assassin disagreed. “But it is, sweetheart. If I’d not been such a coward and met with him somewhere else, hadn’t insisted on you both being with me...well, this would never have happened.”

“No, this would never have happened if Rogers wasn’t such a dick,” Tony countered.

“Tony’s right,” Peter agreed quietly.

“You got hurt because of me, sugar,” Bucky told Tony, hanging his head. “God, he coulda killed you.”

“Hey, I’m fine.” The genius raised a hand and waved, a trail of cords and leads trailing behind. “See, I’m alive and well, no killing me today.”

Bucky shot him a sour look. “You are not fine, Tony. You have a concussion - another one - so they’re worried about Post Concussion Syndrome.” He ran a hand over his head, the regrowh soft beneath his fingers. Heh, fuzzball indeed. “Tony, I don’t think you understand just how scared we both were. You’re only human, and so...breakable. God, we coulda lost you today.”

Normally when anyone even dared to suggest that Iron Man was vulnerable, Tony’s hackles would be up in an instant. He seemed to be clamping down on that instinct right now, the distress of his partners crying out to him loud and clear. “Hey, I have Bucky Barnes and Spider-Man in my court - no one’s gonna do me in while I have you both fighting for me.”

He was trying for light hearted, but the very real possibility of him being killed was too raw in Bucky’s mind. The super soldier choked out a sob and covered his mouth, trying in vain to keep his emotions in check, but it was a fast losing battle. Hot tears spilled over his cheeks and another sob escaped his throat. “I’m sorry,” he said in a cracked voice.

There was a soft whine from next to him and Bucky looked over to see tears also streaming down Peter’s face. Tony’s eyes widened in panic and he tugged on the hand holding Bucky’s, urging both of the upset men to him. Shuffling their chairs forward, Bucky and Tony leaned against the bed as well as Tony’s leg and hip, crying as silently as they could. A hand caressed Bucky’s cheek and then moved on to card through Peter’s locks. “I’m sorry I scared you both,” Tony said to them. “I swear, I’m never leaving either of you, you’re stuck with me for good and not even Captain Spangles can tear us apart.” He was trying his best but Bucky knew that once he’d had time for it to process, Tony wouldn’t be dealing so well with yet another attack from his old teammate.

“But he almost did,” Peter croaked. “Tony, you went down so hard. I was sure he’d killed you.”

“Oh, baby, I’m so, so sorry, but I’m okay now, I promise, I’m okay.”

“I thought I’d lost you, oh God, I can’t ever lose you, Tony.”

Bucky wrapped an arm around the teen’s waist as Tony tried to nuzzle into him as much as was possible whilst attached to so much equipment. Fuck, they were all going to be such a mess after this.

“I love you too much for you to be rid of me so easily, Petey,” Tony told him, pressing a kiss to his hair. “Fuck, you have no idea how much I love both of you. Some days I think it’s gonna consume me whole.”

“I think I have some idea,” Bucky said with a small smile, “since I’m pretty sure I love you guys just as much.”

“Hey, I’m not gonna get out-loved by you two,” Peter said, aiming for a little of his usual cheekiness,
but falling short of the mark as he sniffled and wiped tears from his cheek. “Maybe I love you two even more.”

“Yeah, that’s not possible, baby,” Tony declared.

“Wanna bet?” the teen challenged.

“Can’t we all just agree that we love each other all equally?” Bucky suggested, knowing the two geniuses would soon be coming up with a science experiment to quantify love.

“Could the three of you get any more fucking sappy?” a voice asked from behind, causing them all to jump.

Bucky was instantly on his feet and in a defensive stance in front of Tony and Peter. He’d been taken by surprise, so caught up in his emotions that he’d failed to hear anyone approach. The guilty look that flashed over Peter’s face told him that he’d not heard either.

Colonel Rhodes stood in the doorway, one eyebrow arched in amusement as he watched them. “You can stand down, soldier,” he said to Bucky as he closed the door behind him and then moved into the room. Peter was immediately on his feet and offering his chair to him. “Thanks, kid,” he said, sinking onto the seat with a quiet mechanical whir from his leg braces.

Tony was watching his best friend warily and he suddenly looked so tired. “Hey, Rhodey Bear,” he greeted him.

“Tones, I see you got into yet another fight with Rogers. I thought we agreed that you weren’t going to do that anymore.”

The genius shrugged. “He was being a dick.”

“That’s nothing new.”

“He started it.”

“Also nothing new.”

“From what I heard, Peter finished it,” Tony said, a little proudly.

Rhodey nodded. “Friday sent me the footage.” He looked over to Peter who was standing back a ways, arms wrapped around him, looking like a cornered animal. “Good job, kid.”

“Oh, uh, um, thanks.”

The Colonel turned back to his friend. “From what we can figure, Rogers had fled the country again. Shouldn’t take us long to track him down - you wanna press charges?”

Tony rolled his eyes. “God, no, Rhodey.”

“Okay, well I just needed to check. We’ll keep tabs on him then, keep him on the radar, but won’t engage.”

“Thanks.”

“So, the doc thinks you can be released tonight so long as you promise to rest up at home. You gonna be able to manage that?”
“What do you think?”

“I think that as soon as you’re in the door, you’re gonna try to head to your workshop.” Tony stuck his tongue out at him. “Come on, man - rude. Can you please just promise that just this once you’ll follow doctor’s orders?”

As the two friends bickered over Tony’s recovery, Bucky and Peter shared a look. Why hadn’t Rhodes exploded at them as yet? Why hadn’t he even mentioned what he’d walked in on? What the fuck was going on?

“I’ll go above your head and straight to Friday to monitor you if you don’t swear to behave,” Rhodes was threatening.

“My baby girl would never betray me like that,” Tony insisted.

“Yeah, well, that’s where you’re wrong,” the Colonel said, somewhat smugly. “We have ourselves an agreement when it comes to your safety, Tones. She doesn’t want you hurting yourself anymore than I do.”

“Traitors,” Tony replied, petulantly.

“Yeah, well, unlike the good old days, it’s not just me and an AI looking out for you.” The man gave Bucky a level look and then turned it on Peter. “Do I?”

Bucky cleared his throat. “We’ll take good care of him,” he promised.

“What the hell, anyway, platypus?” Tony said, peering suspiciously at his friend. “Why aren’t you lecturing us right now? Did you know?”

Rhodes snorted. “Of course I knew. God, did you three think that you were being subtle?” It was his turn to roll his eyes. “It was almost comical, watching you all sneak around, trying to hide the fact that you were giving each other moon eyes whenever you were in the same room.”

“But, I don’t understand,” Peter said in a shaky voice, and tapped at his chest. “You, um, don’t have an issue with um, you know - my age?”

The Colonel pointed at Tony. “After all the shit that I’ve seen this guy pull over the years, this isn’t even the worst of it. Am I happy he’s sleeping with a teenager? Not particularly, even if you are seventeen, we all know what the law says. But the fact that he’s sleeping with an enhanced, responsible, decent guy who can hold his own and isn’t going to be easily led? Well, that’s a different matter. Look, I have no idea how you three came to be, but it’s clear that you all care deeply for one another. Fucking sappy, remember?” He smirked. “So long as no one is getting hurt, especially my best friend, it’s really not any of my business. Having said that, it would have been nice as your Team Lead to have been given the heads up,” he told Tony sternly. “Something like this can compromise you in the field and I really needed to be in the know.”

Tony winced. “Okay, you have a point. Sorry.”

Rhodes gave his head a shake and then offered a rueful smile. “It’s okay, Tones, I get it, but I can’t say that I’m not a little disappointed that you didn’t think that you could trust me with this.”

The genius shrugged. “You were always my moral compass, Rhodey. I figured this would be too much for you.”

“Trust me, if I ever even suspect that one of you - any of you, not just the kid - isn’t on board with
this, then you will hear me loud and clear. But look at you, Tones.” He waved a hand absently at the bed-bound man. “Recent events aside, I’ve never seen you so happy, not even with Pepper. Your little triad is good for you, man. I’m not going to stand in the way of that.”

“Thanks, Rhodey Bear,” Tony said, reaching out and giving the man’s forearm a squeeze.

“Right, I’d best get going.” He stood up, his braces whirring once more and he offered a hand to Bucky, who clasped it firmly. “Take good care of him, Barnes. I’m counting on you.”

“You have my word, Colonel.”

Rhodes turned and slapped Peter on the back, then with a final nod, he left the room.

The three of them let out a collective breath and Peter came back over to collapse into the chair. “Fuck, fuck, fuck,” he said, dropping his head down between his knees.

“Hey, calm down, baby, it’s okay,” Tony assured him.

“Colonel Rhodes knows,” Peter said, like the others hadn’t been in the room the entire time. “He knows. Fuck, fuck, fuck fuck.”

Bucky cupped the back of Peter’s neck and pulled him in for a kiss, cutting off his rambling. When he pulled back, the teen was blushing but still looked wild eyed. “It’s okay, doll,” he promised him. “We’re okay.”

Tony reached out to take Peter’s hand in his. “We’re more than okay,” he said.

They fell once more into an embrace, but this time Bucky made sure to keep an eye on the door. Not everyone would be as accepting as Rhodes, and Bucky would do anything needed to protect the men he loved - and he’d seen enough violence in the past twenty four hours.

Chapter End Notes

Hey, I'm on Tumblr now so why not come say hello or leave a prompt?

Also, don't forget that you can leave prompts in the comments here. Thanks so much for your continued support, you guys are amazing xxx

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