As Tony and Pepper's wedding gets closer, Peter struggles to find the right time to come out to Tony. It'd be a lot easier if the man would stop teasing him about girls.

Notes

Part 2 to my 'beginning' series!

Title is taken from the song, over the rainbow.

Thanks to All_Terrain_Nerd for beta'ing!

I have quite a bit written to this and am almost finished so have decided to start posting chapters. The goal is to post weekly but I do work a full-time job so sometimes life may get in the way, but I have enough written that I'm feeling fairly confident I can meet that.

Forewarning that this fic will contain references to past sexual abuse in later chapters, I will warn for it in the beginning notes of that chapter though!
“Tony, I’m gay.”

Wringing his hands as he waits, Peter squeezes his eyes shut and bites his lip. He tries to consider all of the possible ways Tony could respond. He knew what he hoped for, but that didn’t mean he’d get it.

“That was very good, Peter.” Karen’s pleasant voice came through and Peter opens his eyes and looks back at his reflection in the mirror.

“Yes?” he asks hopefully.

“Yes, your voice didn’t shake as much this time. Perhaps you should refer to him as ‘Dad’. It’s my understanding that for an LGBTTQQIAAP youth coming out is a very pivotal and emotional moment; it may be wise to emphasize the relationship you and Tony share.”

“You think so?”

“I do.”

“I don’t know, I’ve only called him that a few times by accident and it always feels awkward when I say it,” Peter replies, sighing as he sits on his bed and rubs at his eyes through the mask.

“Has Mr. Stark ever given you reason to believe he’s uncomfortable when you say it?” Karen asks.

“No, I don’t think he minds it,” Peter concedes, thinking about the small smile that would grace Tony’s face whenever it slips out and wonders if it actually makes Tony happy to hear. Peter flops back onto his bed with a groan. “It’s not like it matters anyway, Karen, I’m probably never going to actually be able to tell him. I should just forget about it.”

“I wouldn’t say that. These things take time, and when the time’s right, you’ll know.” Karen’s voice is so reassuring, he doesn’t know what he’d do without her.

“Thanks, Karen.”

“You’re welcome, Peter.”

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Peter waits outside his apartment for Tony’s car. It was a warm day for only being early May, and the sun was so bright Peter wishes he’d remembered his sunglasses. Today was the day he would tell Tony. First, they were going for suit fittings with Happy, Rhodey, and Dr. Banner and then they were going to do dinner with just him and Tony. At dinner, that was where he’d do it.

He’d spent all night practicing with Karen but he was still so nervous in addition to being tired. He just hoped it went well. Finally, the car arrives and Peter shoves his concerns to the side as he hurries into the passenger seat.

"Hey, kid," Tony greets, grinning. "Ready for the final fitting?"

"Hey, Tony, definitely ready. Thank you again for putting me in the wedding party, you really didn't have to," Peter says, still having a difficult time wrapping his head around the fact that he was going to be up next to Tony – his father – when he married Pepper.
"I want you up there, Peter, can't imagine not having you up there," Tony says, voice sincere and Peter grins.

He wants to be up there too.

Rhodey, Happy, and Dr. Banner are already there when they arrive. They greet both he and Tony warmly. The first time Peter had met Dr. Banner, he'd nearly had a panic attack from how excited he was. Dr. Banner's research is something he'd followed closely ever since he'd been old enough to understand it. The man was a genius. Peter still had trouble breathing whenever he remembered that Banner had actually complimented him on his webbing formula. Bruce Banner had complimented him.

They walk into the shop and they're the only ones there. Being Tony Stark means business is closed to other patrons during the time that he's there. It also means glasses of expensive scotch are handed out to their group. Except Peter, Peter gets sparkling water in a fancy looking glass. Go figure.

"Few more years before you get the good stuff, Pete," Rhodey says with a clap to Peter's shoulder. They're just outside the fitting room while the tailor works on Tony. "So how's school been?"

"It's been good, the usual, you know, nothing new," Peter says.

He likes Rhodey. He and Dr. Banner are two of the few people who actually know about Tony being his father, the only others being Pepper, Happy, May, MJ, and Ned. Aside from that, everyone believes him to be Tony's personal intern. Rhodey was the only one he'd known pre-revelation who didn't treat him any differently, Happy had gotten... weirdly protective.

Peter was drawn from his thoughts as Tony exited the dressing room to stand up on the podium while the tailor attended to him. Rhodey lets out a loud wolf whistle as Tony stands there.

"Looking good, Stank. Pepper won't know what hit her," Rhodey says, grinning.

Tony rolls his eyes at the nickname before grinning.

"Let's hope it stays that way. If she ever realizes, she may decide I'm more trouble than it's worth," Tony says with a self-deprecating chuckle.

"I think she already realized how much trouble you are several years back. If she's still with you, she's already decided it's worth it," Dr. Banner pipes in.

"Well, in a few weeks, it'll be too late and she'll be stuck with me," Tony added, a genuine smile on his face.

They continue talking as Tony's suit is fitted. He's wearing a dark grey custom Armani suit with a purple—eggplant, apparently—tie and vest, as opposed to the light grey suits the groomsmen would be wearing. Once the tailor is finished with the final adjustments, it's time for the groomsmen to put on their suits for their own fitting. The suits are custom made and, aside from his Spider-Man costume, Peter doesn't think he's ever worn anything so expensive in his life.

He has to admit that it looks good though, that it feels good. He's not even sure what fabric it is, but it feels like heaven. He steps out and then is directed to the podium where the tailor sets to work. It's a little strange, standing there while someone he doesn't know makes adjustments, barely acknowledging Peter as he works.

Tony is standing with Rhodey discussing final, last minute arrangements for the wedding. His attention turns to Tony when the tailor is finished and his face lights up.
"Well, don't you look handsome," Tony says, a teasing quality to his voice as he saunters over to Peter. "The skinny tie was a good choice; a wider one would've been too bulky on your frame." Tony acknowledges to himself, tugging on Peter's tie.

"Thanks, I've never worn anything like this before, feels so weird," Peter says shyly, hardly able to look at any of the mirrors.

"Well, you pull it off. No surprise really, you are half me, after all," Tony informs, grasping Peter's shoulder. "Hey, Rhodey, get a picture, will you? Promised May I'd send a picture of Peter all gussied up," Tony tells Rhodey, handing off his phone. Peter isn’t sure if he should be concerned over Tony and May’s newfound friendship.

Tony pulls Peter into his side and Peter smiles as Rhodey snaps several pictures. He thinks this might be their first picture together and Peter swears he's never been such a sap before but his chest feels warm as Tony takes his phone back and goes through them with Peter. Once he's picked his favourite he sends it off to May and it's less than five minutes before there’s a response.

[May]

Oh my gosh, he looks so handsome! Can't wait to see the finished product at the wedding!!

There are several heart-eye and kissy-faced emojis tagged on at the end. Peter blushes, but then stops.

"Hey, why are there three fire emojis next to May's name?" Peter asks, and then groans because not this again.

Tony laughs, and looks down at his phone.

"I honestly forgot I programmed it in that way, honest to God, Pete. Look, I'll take it out right now." Tony chuckles the entire time as Peter glares at him, remembering every time Tony’s ever commented on May's appearance.

Not cool.

Tony shakes his head at Peter's look, patting him on the back as he pockets his phone.

"Look, kid, it may not seem like it now but there will be a day where you too will notice the, uh, the female form, and she may even be someone's beloved aunt," Tony says, as though he is imparting valuable wisdom. "Or maybe you're already there. I think I noticed your voice cracking last week, so chin up; it'll happen for you."

Tony walks away after pinching Peter's cheek with a wink. Peter rolls his eyes and tries not to let his discomfort show. He reminds himself that today is the day, which means after today he won’t have to listen to Tony teasing him about girls. Maybe he’ll start teasing him about boys instead, which, still embarrassing, but better.

Or maybe he’ll stop talking to you altogether.

No, Tony wouldn’t do that, would he?

Peter shakes his head, trying to ignore the voice that's been plaguing him since he decided he was going to come out.

Dinner.
At dinner, he’ll come out to Tony, no excuses.
Chapter 2

As it turns out, dinner is not the time he tells Tony.

What was supposed to be just he and Tony eating dinner at a casual diner turns into all of the groomsmen at some fancy restaurant you normally need to make reservations for a year in advance... unless you're Tony Stark. It's a little too fancy for Peter's lower middle class taste buds. The menu is in French and he can't pronounce half of it, let alone know what he's ordering, so he decides to order the same thing as Tony.

The restaurant is beautiful, fancy in a way that makes him feel under-dressed. Actually, they're all under-dressed, but as soon as the maître d' saw it was Tony asking for a table, any initial disdain on their face disappeared and they were immediately seated. The room they're placed in is dark with soft yellow light, candles on each table on top of a white cloth. It’s a private area where they’re the only ones. Peter just hopes the food tastes as good as the place looks.

Peter sighs. He'll just have to wait for another day because there is no way he's announcing his sexuality to the entire wedding party. He hasn't even told May. Which leads him to wonder why he hasn't told May yet, and why he plans to tell Tony before her. He's almost certain May wouldn't have an issue with him being gay, so why hasn't he come clean. In fact, she's been very vocal about her support for gay marriage and her frustration with the current administration's refusal to support it. She even talked about attending a pride parade with Ben 'back in her day."

Maybe he should talk to her first.

He's almost decided when he remembers the post he saw in the online chat group he'd joined. It was a support group for gay teens and Peter's palms had been sweating at the mere thought of joining before he'd worked up the courage to do so, making sure to erase his internet history each time he logs on. One of the other members, Michael, had come out to their parents, parents that had always seemed okay with gay people and absolutely loved shows like Will and Grace, or even Glee.

Apparently what was okay for other people's children wasn't okay for their own. Now, Michael was seventeen and couch-surfing at various friends' places, no longer welcome in his own home.

At least if Tony rejected him he wouldn't be left homeless. He might even have enough time to do damage control with May if Tony wasn't okay with it.

Okay, definitely Tony first.

"Kid, if you weren't frowning so much I'd think you were dreaming about MJ over there. What's up?" Tony's voice comes from across the table.

Peter's head jerks up and oh God, they're all staring at him.

"Ohh and who's MJ?" Rhodey asks, nudging him with his elbow.

"Future girlfriend," Tony tells him, waggling his eyebrows.

"She's not—"

"Who you were thinking about just now, I know. You looked like someone kicked your puppy, and you don't even have a puppy, so spill." Tony's giving him a calculating look, seems concerned. But apparently not concerned enough to ask him in private.
Peter is scrambling for words, unsure of what to say because he definitely can't tell the truth. Before he can think of anything, to his surprise Happy jumps in.

"It's that boy isn't it?"

Peter pales, boy? What boy? There's no boy!

"The one that's always harassing you, he still bothering you?"

*Flash.*

Peter feels a moment of relief, which immediately dissolves when he sees Tony's face.

"Someone is harassing you at school? Who?" Tony's voice is low as he asks and Peter's eyes go wide.

He is approximately ninety percent sure that if he tells Tony who Flash is, Flash will wake up tomorrow to find all his accounts hacked and destroyed in some way shape or form. He takes a moment to enjoy that thought, because really, if anyone deserves it, it's Flash. Peter sighs as he lets that thought fade. If only he were a lesser person.

"It's no one, Tony, just some guy who likes to joke around, it's fine, really," Peter tries to reassure.

Tony furrows his brow, and Peter can tell he doesn't buy it. Instead of continuing with Peter, he addresses Happy.

"Happy, tell me more. Who is this kid?"

"I don't really know, Tony, Pete wouldn't say, but he looks like bad news. I've seen him the odd time when I've picked Peter up, pushing him around, calling him names, that sort of thing."

"Names?" Tony asks, body tense as he stares Happy down.

"Okay, okay, can we please not discuss this right now?" Peter cuts in quickly. The last thing he wants everyone at the table to hear is Flash's nickname for him. "Yes, he calls me names and sometimes pushes me around, but it's not a big deal, okay? I can handle it, I've been handling it, it's not like he can really hurt me anyway," Peter finishes, hoping Tony will just drop it.

No such luck.

"Happy?"

Thankfully, Bruce cuts in, and Peter really owes him one for it.

"Tony, maybe this is something you can talk to Peter about in private?" Bruce asks, eyebrows raised and eyes wide like he can somehow get through to Tony telepathically.

It must work because Tony visibly deflates, looking to Happy, and then to Peter, and points his finger.

"Don't think I'm gonna forget about this. We will be talking about this later," Tony says, final, before muttering about the things he'll do when he finds out who it is.

And okay, he's definitely not looking forward to their conversation, but Tony's reaction to Peter
being bullied might just be giving him the warm and fuzzies. Tony *cares.*

"Thanks, Bruce," Peter says softly, turning to the other man.

"Don't mention it," Bruce says. "He worries about you. Don't be afraid to talk to him if someone or something is bothering you, okay?"

Peter nods in agreement and the tension is thankfully broken by the arrival of their food. Peter's plate is set in front of him, if he remembers correctly, Tony called it 'Coq Au Vin.' It looks good, if a bit small of a portion. He wasn't sure how much it cost since there were no prices on the menu, but for the amount he imagines a place like this charges he would have thought there'd be more.

He takes a bite, and it's delicious, but in all honestly Peter would have been just as happy with a burger. He decides against telling Tony that though, who finally seems to have relaxed since their conversation about Peter being bullied. Peter is really hoping Tony forgets about it but then Tony catches his eye then and Peter immediately knows he's not getting out of that conversation.

He decides to worry about it later and instead focuses on the dinner, but most of all on the company. All things considered, Peter was lucky to get to keep some of the coolest company.

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It was Saturday, which meant Peter was *supposed* to be able to sleep in, and he would be, except that someone was knocking on his bedroom door.

“Peter?” Aunt May’s voice came through the door. Peter groans as he sits up, throwing the covers off him in the process.

“Yeah, May?” Peter called out, rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

“Tony just called to say he’s on his way, so you should get up and start getting ready,” May explains.

“What? He’s on his way? Here? Now?” Peter jumps out of bed, quickly grabbing and pulling on a pair of sweats followed by a loose tee. “Why’s he on his way here? I thought he was in Washington!” Peter throws open his bedroom door and heads directly into the bathroom to brush his teeth.

“Well, apparently whatever meeting was being held was cancelled, and Pepper thought it would be a nice day to invite us over for dinner.” May’s voice is closer now and when Peter looks up she’s standing in the doorway, an amused smile on her face. “But it was Tony’s idea to take you for driving lessons during the day.”

Peter sucks in a breath of surprise, only to be thrown into a coughing fit as he spits out the remaining toothpaste in his mouth. Setting his toothbrush down, Peter grabs for his water-filled cup and quickly rinses his mouth before looking back to May.

“Really?” he asks in disbelief. “He’s going to teach me how to drive?”

“Apparently,” May answered with a smile. “Worth getting up early on a Saturday morning for?”

“So worth it!” Peter exclaimed, nodding enthusiastically.

May laughs in response and informs him Tony was due to arrive any minute. With that knowledge, Peter takes the quickest shower he can, opting against lingering the way he usually likes to. Once
finished, he makes quick work of getting dressed, choosing one of his nicer pairs of dark wash jeans and a green button up, since apparently they would be having dinner at the tower with Pepper later.

By the time he’s finished, Tony is already there and Peter can hear him and May in the living room. As he opens the door, the room is filled with both May and Tony’s uncontrolled laughter. He’s wondering what’s so funny when he walks into the living room and he freezes. May and Tony are sitting on the couch bent over a photo album and Peter’s face heats up because he knows that photo album, just like he knows exactly what picture they’re looking at.

“Oh you should have seen him, even back then he wanted to be a superhero!” Aunt May wheezes as their laughter begins to die down.

It’s then that Tony notices his presence and immediately starts to crack up again.

“Oh kid, this gives ‘underoos’ a whole new meaning,” Tony jokes, gesturing at the picture.

“No, no, no, Aunt May why would you show him that?” Peter whines, covering his face with his hand.

“How could I not? It’s practically in my job description to show off your adorable pictures.” May chuckles, pulling him down onto the couch by his arm.

“Really, Peter, I think I like this costume better. The Iron Man undies really bring it all together,” Tony says, still laughing as he turns the photo towards him.

“I hate you both,” Peter mutters with no real venom.

Glaring at Tony, Peter grabs for the album and forces it closed, ignoring Tony’s laughter. He’d been six when that picture was taken, Tony had just revealed himself as Iron Man a few months before, and the stores had exploded with Iron Man merchandise, including Iron Man underwear. One night, when he and Ben were about to play superheroes, Peter had put together his own hero costume, a costume that consisted of his bed sheet tied around his neck like a cape, a plastic Iron Man gauntlet on one hand, his Iron Man underwear, and nothing else. He remembers Ben and May’s laughter as he proudly posed for the picture.

Yeah, not his finest moment.

“I hope you know that picture is getting shown at your future wedding, Hell, I might even showcase it at my wedding. Think Pepper would approve?” This he directs to May, who starts laughing again.

“You guys are the absolute worst,” Peter tells them, shoving the photo album back into its place on the bookshelf.

“If that were true, I wouldn’t be taking you for your first driving lesson right now, unless you’d prefer not to, since I’m the worst now,” Tony says, sending a wink to May.

“Nonono, I take it back, I’m ready!” Peter blurts, quickly grabbing his house keys as May and Tony stand from the couch.

“I’ll walk you two down,” May says, squeezing Peter’s shoulder with a smile.

As they head down, Tony continues poking fun at Peter for the picture and Peter pretends to be annoyed. In truth, the knowledge that Tony is even a little bit interested in knowing about his childhood sends warmth spreading throughout his chest because it means Tony wants to know him. As embarrassed as he is, that makes it worth it.
They’re just walking out of the building and Peter gasps, eyes going wide, because sitting right in front of the building is Tony’s bright orange R8.

*This is so cool!*

“Tony! I get to drive that? Oh my God, this is amazing!” Peter shouts, jumping on the balls of his feet in excitement.

“Not this one. New York roads being what they are, I figured we’d take the jet to the compound where you’ll be driving one just like this one here so…” Tony’s voice trails off, and Peter looks over to see what the problem is and immediately winces.

If the look on aunt May’s face is anything to go by, he’s not going to get to drive the R8.

“Absolutely not,” she announces.

“Please, please, Aunt May, I’ll be careful, I promise!” Peter tries, but his pleas don’t seem to phase her.

“May, it’s perfectly fine, I’ll be there the whol-“ Tony doesn’t finish, because Aunt May is giving him the look.

Peter knows that look. He’s been on the receiving end of that look before, and it’s *not* a good look. Stronger men than Tony have fallen to that look. *Ben* had always fallen to that look.

However, Tony’s survival instincts are clearly defective because he tries once more.

“It’s the safest car I own. Peter will be fine!” Tony exclaims.

“He’s not driving that or any car like it,” May orders, her tone leaving no room for argument.

“Okay, fine, what kind of car would you be comfortable with him driving. I have several,” Tony tries. Peter shakes his head. He’s pretty sure Tony doesn’t have any cars May would classify as normal.

“I don’t know, Tony, just not that!” she exclaims, pointing at the R8. “Don’t you have like uh, a Ford Focus or something, or maybe an Elantra? Something small and *safe* for him to learn in?”

Peter almost laughs at the way Tony’s eyes pop open, as if *Tony Stark* would ever own anything so pedestrian. Finally, Tony responds, but he’s not talking to May, instead he presses something on his watch and speaks into it.

“FRIDAY, find me the nearest Ford dealership and send the directions to my GPS.”

“Directions have been sent, boss, anything else?” Friday answers.

“No, FRIDAY, thanks.” Tony turns to Aunt May then, “does that work for you?”

“Yes, thank you, Tony. Were you anyone else I’d insist that you didn’t have to go through the trouble, but it’s for Peter’s safety, and I imagine something like this is pocket change for you,” May answers, smiling victoriously. Peter doesn’t think there’s a lot of people who could talk Tony Stark into submission. He’s somehow not surprised that May is one of those people.

Tony waves her off. “Don’t mention it. You ready to go, Pete? We won’t be able to get any driving in, but we can pick a car out.” Peter nods, and Tony turns back to May. “Happy will be by to pick you up at four. Does that work?”
May nods, and then pulls Peter in for a hug, placing a kiss to his temple as Peter tries to avoid it, even though he secretly likes it. He’s a teenager, okay? He’s supposed to avoid it. It’s practically a written rule.

And then they’re off, the streets of New York passing them by with Peter, unfortunately, in the passenger seat.

“FRIDAY, cancel earlier GPS instructions,” Tony says.

“Consider it done,” FRIDAY confirms as the GPS display goes blank.

Peter turns to him, waiting for an explanation, but Tony doesn’t say anything. He looks out the windows then and realizes they’re heading towards the tower.

“Tony?” Peter asks, feeling confused.

A beat. Then, “hm?” is Tony’s only acknowledgement.

“Are we not getting a car today?” Peter asks, feeling a little disappointed, he’d been so excited.

“No, we’re sticking to my original, better plan, and going straight to the compound. I planned for you to have a day of driving, and that’s what we’re gonna do.” Tony says this like it’s the obvious answer, like he’s not suggesting Peter knowingly deceive his aunt.

“B-but, Tony, she’ll find out! She always finds out, and then I’ll get grounded for like a month, maybe even two!”

“She won’t find out, I’ll have Happy go and pick out a Ford. We’ll even take some pictures of you in it to show off, she’ll never know,” Tony explains, resting a hand on his shoulder and squeezing. Peter’s face must give away his thoughts on the matter because Tony continues, “C’mon, kid, where’s your sense of adventure? At your age, I was—wait, no, let’s not go there. The point is, it’s okay to have a little fun. What your aunt doesn’t know won’t hurt her.”

They’re at a stop light, and Tony’s looking at him, waiting for a response. Peter thinks about Aunt May. She’d be so angry if she found out. Then Peter’s mind flashes to the Audi. It would be so cool to be able to drive it, and really, Tony had it all planned out, Aunt May never needed to know. Finally, Peter nods his answer and Tony grins as they start moving again.

They make it to the tower shortly after and ascend to the rooftop where Tony’s private jet is waiting. Peter didn’t think he would ever get used to this. He’d only been in the jet the once when they went to Germany, and it was still so surreal to think that he could just do this. He gets to walk onto an airplane with his idol—who also happens to be his father—and just go places. It wasn’t anything like how he’d imagined his life would be, but he was so happy for it.

The trip to the compound is spent mostly in silence, with the occasional comment by Tony. He seems just as excited to be taking Peter for driving lessons as Peter is to go driving for the first time. He and Tony have spent a lot of time together since Peter found out the truth, and even before that they spent copious amounts of time in the lab for Peter’s internship (which Peter now suspects Tony gave him as an excuse to spend time together without revealing that he was Peter’s father). However, this felt different somehow, this felt like a classic father-son bonding experience.

The realization makes emotion swell in his chest which Peter has to quickly stamp down. After Ben died, he hadn’t thought he’d get to experience anything like this. But then Tony had come along and flipped his life upside down. It still hurt that Ben was gone, but the wound wasn’t as fresh as it once was. And while no one could replace the relationship he’d had with Ben, maybe forming an entirely
new one with Tony wouldn’t be so bad.

It’s not long before they’re almost at the compound and Peter is nearly bouncing out of his seat in excitement. But when he looks over to Tony, the man’s face is suddenly serious. The way he’s looking at Peter has Peter stilling, feeling suddenly unsure.

“So, now that we’re alone, wanna tell me what Happy was talking about before with that boy?”

Peter closes his eyes in frustration. He really, really doesn’t want to discuss the extent of his bullying with Tony.

“Not really,” Peter answers truthfully.

“Peter—“

“No, Tony, please, it’s not something I want to talk about. I can handle it, okay? I promise,” Peter says, desperate for Tony to let it go. “Besides, if you tried to do anything it would probably just make it worse, okay?”

Sighing heavily, Tony looks at him carefully.

“Oh my God,” Peter breathes. “This is so cool.”

“Yeah?” Tony asks, laughing as Peter bounces over to the car, barely containing his energy.

“Yes, it is, it really is, Tony, thank you so, so much, I can’t believe you’re going to let me drive this!”

“Relax, kid, it’s nothing, not even the latest model,” Tony says, as if that somehow changes things. “So, are you gonna get in or are we just gonna stand here admiring it, ‘cuz I’ve got newer ones you can salivate over if you’d prefer.”
Peter throws Tony a glare, ignoring the laugh he gets in return as he finally opens the door and slides inside. Peter takes in everything as Tony settles into the passenger seat. It's so sleek and like nothing Peter's ever imagined himself driving before that he finds himself in awe. He knows this car in particular probably costs more than everything he and May own combined—including his Spidey suit—and that knowledge causes a bundle of nerves to form in his stomach as images of Flash's wrecked car come to the forefront of his mind.

"Tony, maybe this isn't a good idea. What if I crash it? This is a really nice car and definitely really expensive," Peter asks, nerves curling in his belly.

"Don't think about that. I'm here to guide you—and honestly, you should know this by now—but money isn't an issue, Pete. I've wrecked more of my cars then I can count so stop worrying," Tony says, shrugging. "Wreck this one, I'll buy a new one." Tony laughs, like it would be nothing to throw another probably at least one hundred thousand dollars at another car.

Peter keeps forgetting that to Tony, it probably isn't.

"Okay," Peter nods, trying to remind himself of how awesome it will be to learn on this car.

*Think positive,* he tells himself, *you've got this!*

Tony points out which pedals are which and Peter has to keep from rolling his eyes because obviously he already knows that. Tony then shows him how to switch gears and instructs him to put it in reverse. Once in reverse the rear camera turns on and Peter can see the image on the screen.

*So cool.*

Peter uses the camera to guide himself out of the parking space with Tony's instruction. He's a little jerky at first, he'll admit, but he manages. From there he switches into drive and slowly they're leaving the garage. Peter's so excited he has to be mindful of his strength so that he's not gripping the steering wheel too tight. He taps lightly on the gas as Tony orders him to go right and then they're finally on the road that circles the compound.

Tony's staring at him, one eyebrow raised, and Peter isn't sure why but it's kind of freaking him out. He looks amused and Peter feels self-conscious.

"What?" Peter asks finally, and that must do it, because Tony barks out a laugh.

"Kid, you're killing me here," Tony starts. "You're barely going twenty. Give it a little gas, it won't hurt. No need to be scared. She doesn't bite, bring'er to forty at least."

Peter blushes. He was just trying to be safe, is that so bad? Shaking his head, Peter presses down on the gas, and immediately regrets it because he pushes too hard and flies back into his seat as the car jerks forward.

"Oh God!" Peter shouts, meaning to hit the brakes but accidentally pressing further on the gas instead. "Shitshitshit!"

He finally manages to slam down on the brakes but the momentum they've picked up means they're skidding and the car swerves out of control before it stops. Peter's eyes are squeezed shut—*wait, when did he close his eyes?*—and his breaths are rapid, heart pounding out of his chest.

*Ohgodohgodohgod*

Tony was going to kill him.
It takes a moment, but once Peter manages to get his breathing under control he opens his eyes and chances a look at Tony, half expecting Tony to order him out of the car right then and there.

That's not what happens.

Instead, Tony is snickering quietly in amusement while staring at Peter, as if they didn't almost spin out into a horrifying accident.

"Tony! We almost… I almost—" Peter waves his hand frantically, hoping Tony understands where he is going with this. Tony just laughs some more.

"Relax, Pete." Tony says, between bursts of honest to God giggling. "It was fine, you couldn't have crashed even if you wanted to," Tony tells him, eyes gleaming.

Peter's confusion must show because Tony shakes his head, chuckling.

"Pete… Peter, do you honestly think I'd put my sixteen year old son in the driver's seat of a six hundred-and-ten horsepower car without taking at least some precautions?" Tony asks, eyebrows raising as if the answer should be obvious, and yeah, now that Peter thinks about it, this is the same man that thought to install a parachute into his Spider-Man suit, not to mention all of the other safety protocols. "At least give me some credit," Tony concludes.

He then goes on to explain the modifications he'd made to the car and how FRIDAY could take control at his command, and okay, that was pretty cool.

With that knowledge, Peter feels he can finally relax and truly enjoy the experience. He's learning to drive in arguably one of the coolest cars any sixteen year old has had the opportunity to learn in and he's doing it with his father.

And whoa, because that's not something he thought he'd ever get to do.

After that, the conversation between him and Tony is easygoing and relaxed in a way that's become customary between them. They've grown comfortable with each other and even when they're not talking, the silence isn't a bad one. It's not until they're nearing the garage that their conversation ends on a sour note, though Peter refuses to let it show.

"So, how'd you like it?" Tony asks as they pull up to the garage.

"I loved it! It was so awesome, thank you so much for letting me drive it, and sorry about earlier and losing control," Peter says, feeling sheepish over his earlier panic.

"Forget about it," Tony waves off, smiling at him as they exit the car. "So, think we'll be able to talk your aunt into letting you get one of these? Gonna need something to impress the girls before you go off to college," Tony says with a wink, patting him on the back as they walk towards the exit.

Peter feels his stomach drop as his face heats, because right, girls.

It's the one issue he has with Tony, though Tony doesn't know it. He's always teasing Peter, and it's not the fact that he teases Peter—he teases everyone—it's what he teases Peter about. He's already struggling with just the idea of telling Tony he's gay that every time Tony brings up girls it's like a reminder that he's never going to live up to the playboy image Tony has, that he's going to be a disappointment.

Tony mistakes his quiet for embarrassment and laughs. "Don't worry, you'll get there. Hey, maybe you should invite a date to the wedding," Tony says, snapping his fingers like it's a great idea. "What
about that girl you hang out with? Miranda… no… Melissa? Mar—"

"Michelle," Peter corrects, feeling sick.

"Yes, that's the one! She's cute, you should invite her." Tony smiles, bumping his shoulder into Peter's.

"I don't think so, Tony," Peter answers, shaking his head, avoiding Tony's gaze.

"Oh, I see how you're playing it, gonna go stag, leave yourself available so you're not tied down if someone catches your eye. Just a regular chip off the old block, huh?" Tony squeezes his shoulder, laughing, and Peter manages a tight smile. "Alright, I'll stop teasing you, just think about it. You're more than welcome to bring a plus one."

"Yeah, I'll um… I'll think about it," Peter agrees, if only so they can move past this topic.

Peter sighs as they board the jet to head back to the tower. It's clear that Tony has a specific image of what his son should be like and it's not an image Peter fits. He wonders what will happen when Tony realizes this, if Tony will still want to spend time with him, or if he'll go back to being distant like he was after the fight with Cap.

He really hopes not. He's already lost two fathers, Peter really doesn't want to lose another.
May eyes Peter as they return home from dinner at the tower. Peter had been off throughout the evening, oddly subdued, and she had her suspicions why. A few times during dinner, Tony had encouraged Peter to bring a date to the wedding.

A female date.

May frowns, thinking about the PFLAG pamphlet sitting in her nightstand drawer. She'd suspected for some time now, and while she couldn't be sure until Peter confirmed it, the way Peter withdrew each time Tony mentioned girls convinced May she was right.

As much as she wanted to, she couldn't be angry with Tony. Had she not seen firsthand how he acted around others she might have been, but by now she knew that teasing was his way of showing affection, and he only did so with those he cared for most. It was the people he didn't value that were kept at arm's length and only ever saw the cool, collected, sarcastic side of him.

She just wished he were a little more intuitive about things. Perhaps then he'd have picked up on what she had.

While she had no way of knowing his stance when it came to LGBT equality, she knew he held science above religion, and while that didn't necessarily equal tolerance, she'd seen enough of him to believe it wouldn't be an issue. Unfortunately, the longer he went without knowing, the longer he'd continue to make Peter uncomfortable with his assumptions.

For a genius, he could be incredibly obtuse sometimes.

*

Peter pulls his mask off after he drops from the ceiling and lands on his bedroom floor. It had been a short patrol since Ned and MJ were coming over. It had been fairly quiet too, crime-wise, so Peter didn't feel too guilty about spending so little time on the streets. He'd make up for it the next night.

Peter hops in the shower, making quick work of washing himself. He only had about twenty minutes before Ned and MJ were supposed to arrive. Once finished, he quickly dries off and throws some sweats on before starting the popcorn. It's movie night and they're going to be marathoning bad horror movies. Aunt May had picked up an extra shift at the hospital and wouldn't be back until late which meant they'd have the apartment to themselves.

It was gonna be awesome.

The popcorn is just finishing when he gets a text from Ned letting him know that they've arrived so that Peter can let them in. Peter rushes down to get them, unable to let them up from the apartment since their buzzer busted two months ago and their landlord still hadn't fixed it. Letting them in, Peter greets them happily before they take the elevator up to the apartment.

Once inside, Peter grabs the bowl of popcorn and they make their way to his bedroom, MJ carrying the stack of DVDs.

"What should we start with? I've got The Blob, Killer Klowns from Outer Space, Zombeavers, and, just for you, Peter, Eight Legged Freaks," MJ finishes with a wink.

Peter laughs, because yeah, she would.
Peter still isn't sure how she'd figured out he was Spider-Man. One day, when he and Ned immediately halted their Spidey related discussion upon MJ’s arrival to their table, she’d rolled her eyes and revealed that she knew, like it was nothing.

"Look, Parker, you and Leeds can stop trying to hide what you're talking about, I already know you're Spider-Man. Hey, mind if I have your fruit cup? You never eat them anyway," she’d said, ignoring their shocked looks as she reached over and snatched the peach fruit cup from Ned’s tray.

To this day, she still refuses to tell Peter how she knew.

They decide to start with The Blob, and it's about as terrible as Peter would have expected for a horror movie from 1958, but it's just the right side of terrible so that it's actually funny.

"Hey, maybe if they’d had a Spider-Man in this town the Blob wouldn't have been able to grow so fast!" Ned says enthusiastically and Peter laughs.

"Uh-uh I think the Blob would be a formidable foe," MJ adds, "What could Peter do against it? Shoot webs? It would just absorb them."

Peter chuckles, cutting in before Ned can defend his honour.

"Well thankfully, I haven't had to deal with any slime creatures from space, fingers crossed I won't have to." Peter grabs for more popcorn as they settle back in to watch as the main character, Steve, tries to warn people at a theater.

A little while later, the townspeople are trapped in a diner when Peter's phone goes off. He quickly glances down at the I.D. to see it's Tony calling. Ned moves to pause the movie as Peter answers.

"Hello?" he answers, watching as Ned hurries out of the room, gesturing to the bathroom.

"Peter! What are you up to? I just got back to the city; what do you think about another driving lesson? Thought you could use the practice at night," Tony responds, and Peter smiles. It had been a month since the first driving lesson and they'd been going at least once a week. Peter doesn't know how Tony finds the time but he's just grateful he does.

"I can't tonight, I'm with some friends right now, we're having a movie marathon," Peter answers, hoping Tony isn't too disappointed.

"Friends? Which friends? Not having a party are you?" Tony asks, but his voice takes on a teasing quality that tells Peter the thought that Peter would throw a party sounds ridiculous to him.

"No, just Ned and… and MJ," Peter says, preparing himself, because-

"Ooh, MJ, huh? Guess I should be glad there's a third wheel there. I'm too young for grandchildren."

Because that.

Tony's laughing at his own joke and Peter can practically see him winking through the phone.

"It's not like that," Peter groans, flopping back onto the bed next to MJ who's giving him a curious look.

"Sure it's not, Pete. Alright, you go have fun. Don't do anything I wouldn't do - or anything I would do. You know the drill." Tony orders, still chuckling as the line disconnects.

Peter sighs as he locks his phone. The teasing is getting very old; he just wishes he could muster up
the courage to tell Tony. Every time Tony starts joking about girls, he just wants to shout in Tony's face that he's never going to like girls in the way Tony wants him to.

"Huh, interesting," MJ says and Peter startles. He'd forgotten she was there. It was easy to do sometimes.

"What's interesting?" Peter asks.

"You. He doesn't know, does he?"

"What?" Peter asks, confused.

"The volume on your phone is ridiculously high. You should lower it," she says matter-of-factly.

"You heard all that?" Peter gasps, feeling mortified. But then his brain catches up with what she said. "Wait, what do you mean I haven't told him, told him what?"

She can't know.

The look on her face says otherwise, in fact, the look on her face tells him how truly dumb she thinks he is for thinking otherwise.

"That you’re a friend of Dorothy," she finally says, as if it's obvious. And now Peter is even more confused because -

Who is Dorothy?

"Who is Dorothy?"

MJ’s disdain is palpable as she rolls her eyes, giving Peter an exasperated look.

"Really, Peter, really? Would it kill you to learn some of the history of your own people?" she says, annoyed.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean the gays, Peter," she answers, and Peter's eyes go wide because there it is. "Don't worry, they’re my people too," she says nonchalantly, like she didn't just come out to him and oh my God, MJ's a lesbian?

"Friend of Dorothy means a gay man, started sometime during World War Two when being gay was still illegal. It's a reference to the Wizard of Oz. Hilariously, the navy was so concerned about homosexual activities that they went undercover in the navy and actually believed there was a woman named Dorothy who could give them a list of all the gays," MJ laughs, shaking her head while muttering about how gullible straight people are.

And, okay, that's actually pretty interesting.

"So, you're..." Peter trails off, feeling suddenly unsure.

"A lesbian, yes."

"Wait, Peter didn't know?" Ned's voice come suddenly and Peter jumps.

"How did Ned know?"
"We talk, duh," Ned answers, shaking his head like it should be obvious. "I just assumed you knew too, with the way MJ's always eyeing that new girl, Gw-" Ned's cut off as a pillow hits him in the face.

"Shut it, Leeds!"

*Is that a blush? It's definitely a blush.*

Peter smiles as Ned starts up the movie again because apparently MJ was out and he hadn't even known. And Ned was taking it incredibly well. Maybe he could tell Ned. It could be like practice before he told Tony or May. He didn't seem to have any issues with MJ, so there would be no reason for him to be upset with Peter. Before he could talk himself out of it, Peter decides to just do it.

"Ned," he said over the cacophony of people screaming on the TV.

"Yeah, Pete?" Ned replied between mouthfuls of popcorn.

"I'm… I'm gay too," Peter forced out, voice quieter then he'd intended. He has to force himself to breathe as he waits for Ned's response, his anxiety taking the wheel in his brain. *What if it was different because he's a dude? What if Ned's angry because of all the sleepovers they'd had? All the times they'd been in various stages of undress together, what if -*

"Yeah, I know."

Peter stares.

*He knows?*

"How?" Peter blurts, because *seriously*, how did both Ned *and* MJ know?

Ned's giving him the kind of look that would make MJ proud, as if him knowing should be obvious.

"Obviously I know. When we were kids, you'd kiss your Captain America poster goodnight whenever I'd sleep over. And when we were at my place? You brought a folded up picture of him with you that you got from some magazine. You were obsessed, dude."

Peter can't even begin to process what Ned just said because MJ's roar of laughter is so loud Peter's actually concerned for a second.

"You kissed a poster goodnight?" MJ cries, and there are actual tears in her eyes she's laughing so hard. "Oh my God, Peter. How is there anyone left who *doesn't* know you're gay?"

Peter's face feels like it's on fire because, okay, fair, he hadn't exactly been subtle as a child.

MJ's laughter continues for way longer than Peter thinks is necessary and she keeps pulling up pictures of Steve Rogers on her phone and asking if he still kisses them goodnight. Which, *no*. Not only did he stop doing that a long time ago but Cap is a criminal now. Peter's practically duty-bound to dislike him.

"It was the abs, wasn’t it?" MJ asks, showing him a lucky shot someone got of Steve after a run, shirt riding up, abs exposed, shiny with sweat, as he wipes the his brow with the front of it. His shorts are riding just a tad low in the picture and Peter’s eyes are first drawn to the V lines of his hips that disappear, along with a trail of soft looking hair from starting his bellybutton, into the waistband of his shorts.
Heat pools in his belly and his eyes widen, because yeah, it was definitely the abs... among other things. The look on Peter’s face must be a sight because it only sends MJ into another peel of laughter. Peter flushes, digging his fingers into his thighs as he tries to think about Aunt May or anything but Steve Rogers because okay, he may still have tiny crush on the Captain. It definitely didn’t help that he’d seen him up close in action.

“You’ve got heart, kid.”

Peter shakes his head as if he can doing so will make the thoughts go away.

AuntMayAuntMayAuntMayAuntMay

He looks to the TV screen as the townspeople attempt to electrocute the Blob and, okay, that works too.

Crisis averted.

Breathing a sigh of relief, Peter looks to Ned, and then to MJ, who’s finally gotten bored of teasing Peter and is instead watching the movie along with Ned. As the embarrassment fades Peter feels relief flood him as he realizes he just came out. He came out and the world didn’t crumble around him. There were two people that knew now and they were still there.

Maybe everything would be alright.
May wakes with a yawn and rolls onto her back, stretching out lazily before relaxing. It had been a hectic shift and she could feel the soreness in her bones, the kind of soreness that came after spending hours on your feet. Sighing, May turns her head towards her nightstand where the digital clock reads 9:30am. Beside the clock rests a picture of her and Ben, and May holds her breath as she’s overtaken by bittersweet memories of Ben rubbing her feet or her sore back after difficult shifts. What she wouldn’t give to have him back, even if it was only for a day.

Wiping her suddenly wet eyes, May moves to sit up, stretching her arms above her head and throwing a housecoat over her pajamas as she steps out of her bedroom. She’d gotten home just after midnight and Peter had still been in his room with Ned, who had decided to spend the night. MJ had left sometime before, her father coming to pick her up. May smiles as she starts a pot of coffee. It wasn’t too long ago that Ned was Peter’s only friend, it was nice to see him welcome someone else in his life and to be welcomed in return, especially by a spitfire like MJ. He needed someone like that in his life. May appreciated MJ’s no nonsense attitude. She thinks Ben would’ve liked her too.

Once she manages to down one mug of coffee, May gets up and beelines for the shower. She hadn’t had the energy the night before, but she was in desperate need of one after her night. Temperature set, May hops in and where she had initially planned to be quick and efficient, she changes her mind and decides to indulge and take her time, enjoying it. It’s not often she gets to.

It’s a quarter after ten when she steps out, wrapping her hair in one towel and drying herself with another. Securing the towel above her breasts, May pulls on her housecoat over top and heads to her bedroom. She can hear the boys stirring in Peter’s room and figures they’ll be up soon. She’s just finished getting dressed when she hears the boys in the kitchen rifling through the fridge, Ned exclaiming excitedly about something. She can just make out what he’s saying as she opens the door to leave her bedroom.

“-an’t believe Iron Man is teaching you to drive in his Audi! You are so cool right now, Peter! Does he let you go fast?”

May pauses, because that doesn’t make sense. She distinctly remembers telling Tony no, and she has picture of Peter in a Ford, not a fancy sports car. May holds still, just in the doorway of her bedroom, out of sight, and listens.

“Sh, Ned, May doesn’t know. She’d kill me if she found out,” Peter says, voice hushed and pauses for a moment. She can’t see him, but she imagines he’s trying to determine if she’s nearby. She holds still, and he continues, voice low. “First, stop calling him Iron Man, dude. You can call him Tony, and second… yeah, yeah, he does let me go fast, and it’s so cool, Ned, you have no idea.”

May’s heard enough so she decides to make her presence known, stepping out into the kitchen. Peter and Ned immediately go quiet and Peter shoots her a panicked look. She feels so disappointed in him and it must show in her face because Peter immediately looks down, face red.
“Ned, honey, as wonderful as it always is to have your company, I think it might be time for you to go home. Peter and I have some things to discuss,” May tells him, watching as Ned quickly scrambles out of his seat. Ned hurries to Peter’s bedroom to retrieve his bag, shooting Peter worried glances as he does.

“May, I —”

May holds her hand up and shakes her head to stop whatever Peter is about to say while Ned is gathering his things. There have been very few times where May has been genuinely angry with Peter, and this is one of those times. While they wait, May works to gather herself, already planning out what she needs to say. It won’t do to allow her emotions to run her.

Once Ned has left, May looks to Peter, who looks as though he’s already been chastised. He really is a good kid, she reminds herself, but even good kids make mistakes. Lord knows she did at his age. With that in mind, she begins.

“I know, that at your age, when you’re presented with something that’s new, and fun, and cool, that it can be difficult to resist. Trust me, Peter, I do. But I expected better of you.” May pauses to take a breath, having to hold her hand up to stop Peter from jumping in once more. She continues, “I expected better of Tony as well, but at the very least, I knew I could trust you to respect my wishes. So while I am incredibly disappointed in you right now, most of all I’m just sad, Peter, sad to know that I was wrong.”

Peter looks crushed, and it truly is difficult to stay angry in the face of it. He always did wear his heart on his sleeve.

“May, I swear I—I’m sorry, I just, I… I should have listened to you,” he finishes, voice small.

May smiles sadly and nods her agreement.

“I forgive you, Peter, but you are grounded, for starters.” She almost laughs as she realizes she’s never uttered that phrase, - you’re grounded - she’s never needed to. “Your Starkpad, the laptop Tony bought you, your phone, they’re mine now for the next week. No Spider-Man, either,” May says, cutting Peter off before he can object to that last one, “Or would you prefer to make it two, because I think one week is more than fair, but if you disagree, we can always add to it.”

Peter wisely goes quiet.

“Good, now, go get them - Spider-Man suit included, please. If you need a computer for homework over the next week, you can use your library card. You can have your phone for emergencies whenever you’re out, but aside from school or the library, I expect you here and when you’re here I keep your phone, understood?”

Peter nods and May moves around the kitchen table to give him a hug. She may have raised Peter over the last eleven years, but of the two of them, Ben was more often the one to discipline him when it was required, which was incredibly rare. It’s not something she’s used to and it definitely doesn’t come natural to her.

Peter melts in her arms, apologizing once more, and May smiles. Forgiving Peter is easy. He’s not the one she’s truly angry with.

Tony, however, is another story.
Tony’s making adjustments to his latest suit, working out how the nanites will disperse when his phone pings with a text.

[May]

We need to talk.

Uh oh.

Tony wracks his brain, trying to figure out what he did and comes up blank. Tony texts back.

[Tony]

Sure, when?

[May]

Now.

He receives her latest reply just as FRIDAY chimes in.

“Boss, May Parker has arrived at the compound and is requesting entrance.”

“Let her in, Fri,” Tony tells her, quickly packing his equipment away before exiting the workshop.

Tony makes his way to the kitchen and advises FRIDAY to direct May there; he’s starving. He’s still trying to figure out what May could possibly want so urgently and his mind clouds with worry for the kid. He quickly shakes it away. If he was injured or in serious trouble May would be by his side, not personally tracking Tony down.

May enters the kitchen and Tony has dealt with enough disappointed women in his life to know that look. Except those women’s disappointment came from Tony’s lack of interest in anything beyond more than one night. He’s lost as to where May’s comes from.

“We have to talk.”

And yeah, okay, said that already.

“So you’ve said…” he trails off, tilting her head and waiting for her to continue.

“I know about the car.”

Oh, well that’s not so bad, Tony thinks, shoulders relaxing in relief. Here he’d been thinking something terrible had occurred.

“Oh, yeah, I know you wanted him driving something safe,” Tony starts, throwing air-quotes up around the word safe, “and I assure you, the Audi is one hundred percent safe, I even managed to
install FRIDAY into it to take over in the event of anything dangerous. I’m sorry I didn’t tell you, but I thought the kid could use a little fun, you know?"

Tony’s always been good at this, placating people and making them see things his way, May should be no different.

Except she is.

May’s eyes going wide is his first indication that he’s misstepped. Her hand clenching the edge of the table tightly is his second clue. The third?

“No, I don’t know!”

Her raised voice. She was always so calm Tony didn’t think her voice could reach that particular decibel. As it is, she takes a moment to gather herself before continuing, volume back to her usual calming tone.

“Tony, you can’t just override my decision like it doesn’t matter. I am still Peter’s guardian and you’re–“

“His father,” Tony finishes before she can, because it’s true, he is Peter’s father.

She smiles sadly at him.

“Yes, his father, who stepped into his life for the first time after fifteen years.”

Tony feels that’s a little below the belt, but May continues before he can get a word in.

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“Yes, you are his father,” she reiterates, “but I am his parent. I have raised him since he was five years old and I don’t normally pat myself on the back, Tony, but I like to think I’ve done a pretty great job.”

He doesn’t say anything, because she’s right, Peter is a much better person then he ever was at his age.

And oh, okay.

“I would never begrudge him a relationship with you. In fact, I’m thrilled he has you in his life, I really am. But you can’t just swoop in with your money and your fancy gadgets and teach him that the rules no longer apply to him.” May’s eyes are a little wet, and, Christ, that isn’t at all what he’d intended. “It’s not about the car, Tony, it’s the principle. You knew how I felt about that and you not only taught him to ignore me but went out with him of your way with him and bought a whole new car in order to deliberately deceive me.”

The guilt hits Tony hard. It wasn’t about stepping on May’s toes. He hadn’t seen it that way at the time, but regardless of intention, that was the result.

“I’m sorry,” Tony says, because what else can he say? “I just, everything that’s happened, with him finding out, I just…” He trails off, because he honestly isn’t sure where he’s going with this. It had just seemed like a good idea at the time, the way most of his bad decisions do.

Thankfully, May is somehow better at reading him than even he is.

Ha, kinda like Pep.

“You were trying to impress him the only way you know how. I get it, he’s a great kid and you just
want him to want to spend time with you. But you don’t need to buy him extravagant things or let
him drive expensive cars. He already looks up to you. You are literally his hero,” May says, and then
chuckles to herself before looking up at him. “Has he ever told you about your first meeting?”

Tony furrows his brow, flashing back to sitting in the small apartment with May as Peter walked
through the door. Tony was there, why would Peter retell it? May laughs again.

“The look on your face tells me he hasn’t. He was eight, and Ben had managed to get his hands on
tickets to the Stark Expo that year. Peter was so excited.”

Tony is doing mental calculations for which year that would have been in his head and his eyes
widen as May continues because —

“It was the year those robots attacked the Expo. Earlier that night, before the attack, Ben had gotten
Peter his own Iron Man mask and a plastic gauntlet. When the attack happened, chaos broke out and
I was holding Peter’s hand but people were running everywhere and his little hand slipped out of
mine and we got separated,” May pauses, seemingly lost in the memory, and Tony’s picturing it,
little Peter lost looking for May. He still isn’t sure how this leads to them meeting; he thinks he would
have remembered that.

“Oh, once everything calmed down and that man was arrested, we finally found Peter, and the little
bugger wasn’t even scared. He couldn’t stop babbling about how he helped Iron Man take down a
drone.” She laughs, teeth showing as she smiles. “Later, once he’d managed to calm down, we were
able to get the full story out of him. One of the drones had singled him out - we think because of that
mask we got him - he said he was about to blast it with his gauntlet when you showed up.”

Tony’s mind is instantly flooded with that night, because he suddenly remembers. Remembers the
drone zeroing on a little boy, and that little boy raising his arm as if his plastic gauntlet could take it
down. Remembers stopping whatever fight he was in the midst of to step in before the kid got hurt,
or killed. Remembers his exact words before flying off.

*Nice work, kid.*

He’d had no idea, no clue, that it was his son he’d saved. Peter had been in that drone’s line of fire
and if Tony had been even a second late… his heart beats a little faster at the thought and he has to
remind himself that he *did* make it in time, and Peter is safe.

“My point is, you don’t need to impress him with flashy things to be his hero; you already are. He
just wants your time, Tony.”

Tony feels at a loss for words, which is something he doesn’t think he’s experienced before. He feels
shaken to his core and he doesn’t know how to respond.

“I’m sorry,” he says finally, “for, you know, ignoring your wishes and teaching Pete it was okay to
do so, too. Won’t happen again.” Tony is surprised to realize that he really means it, he doesn’t
apologize as a general rule but he means this one.

“Thank you, Tony,” May says, sincerity coming off her in waves. “In all honesty, you’re probably
going to make more mistakes. I forget sometimes that while I’ve been doing this for eleven years, this
is all new for you. And that’s okay. As long as you learn from those mistakes and respect my role in
Peter’s life as his primary caregiver then we should be okay.”

Tony nods, feeling the gravity of her words. She *is* Peter’s caregiver, and he’s so incredibly lucky
that she lets him within fifty feet of Peter given some of the crap he’s pulled — Germany instantly
May looks relieved when he agrees, her shoulders relaxing as she lets out a breath.

“Okay, good, so now that that’s over with, you should know Peter is grounded for the next week,” May says and Tony is about to object but then remembers the discussion they just had and stops, reminding himself that this is May’s call. She explains the terms of his grounding and while she doesn’t expect he’ll try to go behind her back to him, she wants to know he’ll back her if he does.

“Of course,” Tony answers without pause. He doesn’t suspect it’ll be an issue, but just in case it is, he agrees not to contradict her.

With that out of the way, the tension in the room dissipates and they spend some time talking, mostly about the wedding, with May gushing about how handsome Peter is in his suit and Tony has to agree, the kid looks good. It’s not long before May has to leave and surprises Tony with a quick hug before Happy is taking her back home.

Tony goes back to the workshop, pulling out the nanite tech along with the blueprints for the newest model of his suit.

He felt lighter, somehow. The conversation between him and May had been necessary in a way he hadn’t realized, and he was glad they could be on the same page moving forward.

Jotting notes in the margins, Tony thinks on his relationship with Peter and makes a mental note to cancel several orders he’d made the week before as well as the summer trip to England he’d planned for them when he’d had the realization that he had missed sixteen birthdays. Instead he thought of things he could do with Peter, making mental notes for the activities he thought Peter would enjoy.

It might take some practice - and May was right, he probably would fuck up every now and again - but for once he feels like he may actually have a handle on this.

At the very least, he can be a better father to Peter than Howard ever was to him.
It was Tuesday, and Peter was three days into his grounding.

*It sucked.*

May had added TV to the list of things he wasn't allowed to do which meant he was fundamentally lacking in sources of entertainment. The good news was that he'd had a lot of time to work on improving the formula for his web-fluid. The bad news was that because of his current house arrest, he wasn't able to go to Tony's lab to test any of it out.

Peter sighed as he walked the distance from his elevator to his apartment. School hadn't been rough today, but at least he got to have his phone. Now that he was back home, he'd have to hand it over to May before she left for her afternoon shift. He supposed while she was away he could get away with watching TV, but he just felt so guilty. May had been so disappointed in him which had never happened before. Peter just wanted to show her he could be better.

Fishing out his keys, Peter unlocked the door to their apartment and pushed through, yawning as he went. Tossing his bag to the side, Peter stretched as he walked to the kitchen island. Flash had been particularly frustrating today during the decathlon meeting. He just wouldn't stop poking fun at Peter, convinced he had made up the Stark Internship. And it wasn't as if Peter could tell him *how* he knew Tony, or the nature of their relationship, and he absolutely refused to use any pictures of him and Tony to prove he was telling the truth.

People would probably wonder why Tony Stark was taking selfies with some lowly intern.

So Peter took Flash's crap like he always did, Ned practically vibrating beside him, ready to burst with the truth. Thankfully, Ned knew better now.

Peter looked forlornly at his phone as he watched it power down. He could hear May just getting out of the shower as he set it down on the counter for her. He'd have to find something to keep him occupied tonight. It blew not being able to so much as access the internet. He couldn't even listen to his favourite podcasts to pass the time.

Peter makes a plan for the night as he rifles through the pantry, looking for something to eat. He plans to read ahead in his schoolwork and get a start on any assignments that don't require the internet. Aside from that, he isn't too sure what else he could do tonight. At the very least he's still allowed to listen to the radio and read any books he wants. So there's that.

He's just opened a granola bar when May comes out of her bedroom dressed in her sweats, carrying a backpack containing her scrubs and sneakers. She greets Peter with a smile and pockets his phone on her way to the fridge to retrieve her lunch bag.

"So how was school?" she asks, stuffing her lunch bag into her backpack.
"Not bad, the usual I guess."

"That boy still bothering you?" May inquires, her eyes narrowing.

"No, May, it's fine," Peter lies, worried she won't drop it.

Thankfully, she has to leave for work, so whether she wanted to drop it or not, she can't stay to discuss it. So instead she shakes her head and bids Peter a good night and informs him dinner is in the fridge before she has to rush out.

Peter sighs in relief, glad to have dodged that particular bullet.

The rest of the night goes by about as slow as Peter expected. Nothing to do meant he was well ahead of his class at least. Peter was just working through his trigonometry problems when the house phone started ringing. Peter picks it up, assuming it's May checking in on him.

It's not.

"Peter!" It's Ned, and he sounds out of breath.

"Ned? Everything okay?"

"Yes — no, what are you doing right now? Go turn on your TV!"

"Ned, I can't wat — "

"Just go! Trust me, you need to see the news!"

Peter feels dread pool in the pit of his stomach, wondering if there's some sort of disaster going on that he can help with. May would understand, he thinks, if people were in trouble and Peter had to go help. He hopes so.

Peter quickly goes to the living room and switches on the TV, flipping to one of the local news stations.

Peter goes pale.

Right there on the screen, is a picture of him, Tony, and the rest of the groomsmen exiting the tailor's. Up until this point, details about Tony's wedding had been kept very tight-lipped; leaks had been virtually non-existent. Speculation in the public had been constant and both Tony and Pepper had to field questions regarding their upcoming wedding on a near daily basis.

It wasn't that a photo got out, it was what they were focusing on in the photo. The focus being him. Well, him and Tony.

In the picture, Tony had his arm casually around Peter's shoulders, face ducking down to talk into his ear while Peter was mid laugh.

Peter remembers that moment. Rhodey had been regaling them with stories as War Machine and Tony had leaned in to whisper that Rhodey always got annoyed when the Avengers didn't find his stories as interesting as the general public did.

So please, laugh at the jokes, feign interest if you have to. His poor heart won't be able to take it if even Spider-Man finds his tales dull.

That's all it had been, but now that these news anchors had seen it the picture they were speculating
wildly over Peter's presence amongst the groomsmen.

"Who even is this kid?" one of the panel of anchors asks, a man with dark hair in his forties by the looks of it. "And what is he doing at a suit fitting for Tony's wedding party? I gotta say, I'm beyond curious here."

The others on the panel all voice their agreement before someone cuts in.

"We've just received word that the boy is Peter Parker. Having gotten in contact with some of his schoolmates, our journalists have discovered that starting sometime last year, he began claiming he had received an internship with Stark Industries," a woman, this time informs them.

"Okay... so he's an intern. That still doesn't explain what he's doing among Stark's wedding party," the same man from before points out.

A blonde woman who hasn't spoken yet pipes in, laughing as she does, "Maybe he's Tony's secret love child."

"Peter? You there? Peter?"

Peter's attention snaps down to the phone that's still in his hand, resting in his lap. He'd forgotten Ned was still on the phone. Peter raises the phone to his ear as the people on the screen continue to argue over Peter's relationship to Tony Stark.

"Yeah, I'm here," Peter says, feeling a little numb.

"This is crazy! Right? You're on TV, but not as, like, Spider-Man, but as you!"

Peter doesn't share his enthusiasm.

"It's not really a good thing, Ned. I kind of like my privacy."

"Yeah, but now you don't have to hide it, Peter! Flash is gonna look so stupid for all the crap he said about you lying about knowing Mr. Stark."

Okay, true. It would be nice to see the look on Flash's face tomorrow. That part might be okay.

Peter turns off the TV, not wanting to hear any more of the anchors' speculations about his relationship with Tony. Instead, he talks with Ned for a little while longer before hanging up and getting back to his homework. Tomorrow was bound to be an interesting day.
Chapter 6

The next day goes about as well as Peter thought it would. At first, people just stare at him and then about halfway through the day, they start asking questions. Everyone wants to know what Tony Stark is really like. Peter does his best to avoid those questions. Earlier that morning, Stark Industries released a statement confirming Peter as being an intern without addressing Peter's presence among Tony's groomsmen.

Predictably, the press went on a spiral of conspiracy theories.

The one good thing in all of this was Flash's sudden refusal to interact with him, instead resorting to dark glares.

Peter was more than okay with that.

Once people realized he wasn't going to answer any of their questions about Tony, they slowly came to a stop which Peter was happy for. He wasn't a good liar – it was a miracle he'd managed to keep Spider-Man a secret, and even that secret was known to more people then Peter had planned for – and the last thing he wanted was to accidentally reveal that Tony was his father.

The only other surprise that day was Happy waiting for him outside. Happy normally only picked him up when they were going to the tower or the compound, but since he was grounded, Peter could only go home. Happy explains that with the media's current interest in him, Tony decided it was best to err on the side of caution by having Happy drive him to and from school.

Which meant avoiding the bus.

Score.

The next couple days go pretty much the same - the various news outlets continuing to speculate on the upcoming wedding and why Peter is a part of it.

It isn't until Thursday that shit hit the proverbial fan.

It starts out like any other day; Happy drives him to school and Peter beelines to his locker. People are staring at him, but that's been a pretty consistent thing since the story broke so Peter doesn't think anything of it. Peter sees Ned walking down the hall and goes to wave him over when suddenly Flash is calling out to him. Which is odd, since Flash has spent the week ignoring him.

"Hey, Parker, you’d think you’d have nicer clothes by now since you scored a rich sugar daddy.”

Peter whips around because what? Flash continues before he can say anything.

"Or maybe you didn't satisfy him enough this week." Flash laughs as he continues down the hall.

Peter still doesn't fully understand what the hell just happened but some of the students around him were chuckling to themselves and looking straight at him. What did Flash mean by that? What did he mean his sugar daddy?

He snaps his locker closed and turns to find Ned beside him, eyes wide as he grabs Peter's arm and pushes him into an empty classroom.

"I was going to warn you, I swear."
"Warn me? I still don't understand what just happened. Is Flash on crack or something?"

"No, man, it's the latest rumor," Ned tells him while pulling out his phone.

Ned brings up a website and holds his phone out to Peter. Taking it, Peter scrolls through the article, eyes popping open at the claims being made.

The author of the article claims that sources have suggested that Peter and Tony were in a sexual relationship and that Pepper was Tony's beard, fully aware of Tony's relationship to Peter.

"What the hell?" he asks, horrified at the words on the screen.

"I don't know, man. It just like blew up this morning as I got here. Last I heard, Fox News was even picking up on it and demanding an investigation since you're underage. It's insane."

"I don't even know what to - this is gross, Ned; he's my dad!" Peter shouts, slumping into the nearest chair.

Ned sits down next to him, agreeing as Peter pulls out his own phone and sees several new text messages. Hushing Ned for a moment, Peter clicks into his messages.

The first is from May.

[May]

Peter, I just saw the news, I can't believe they'd even suggest such a thing. Plz let me know you're okay. I'm going to give Tony a call and figure out what we should be doing.

Peter shoots off a quick message, letting her know he's fine before moving on to the next four messages, all from Tony.

[Tony]

Kid, I'm sorry you gotta deal with this crap. Sit tight while we work something out.

Just heard from your aunt, she sure has a set of pipes on her when she wants to. Kinda feel sorry for any of the reporters involved in the story.

Actually, scratch that last text. I say sic her on them. My money's on May.

In all seriousness though, you doing okay? Is anyone giving you trouble? I can have Happy come get you if you need.

Peter sighs. A part of him does want to leave, but they have a history test in third period which means he'd have to take it during lunch when he comes back to school. Also, he has a suspicion that a fancy car picking Peter up from school – with Tony's own personal driver driving it no less – will not help their situation in the least.
Peter groans at the thought and immediately sends Tony a message telling him he's fine and not to send Happy, that he'll deal with it. He just hopes Tony finds some way to quash these rumors. He's really not looking forward to the rest of today, let alone the remainder of the week if this story continues.

Peter looks to Ned as he shoves his phone back in his pocket.

"Let's just go," Peter says, moving to stand. Ned's hand comes out and rests on his arm as he too stands.

"You gonna be okay, Pete?" Ned questions, concerned.

"Probably not," Peter says with a humorless laugh, shaking his head, picturing all the crap Flash is going to pull today.

"It sucks, dude. I don't even know what to say, hadn't even thought they might think something like this. But I got your back, and MJ, too. She knows the truth. You're not alone, okay?" Ned assures him, holding out his hand.

Peter smiles, genuine and immediately moves to do the shake they'd come up with as children.

"Thanks, man."

With that, Peter steps out into the hall, feeling like he's about to face a firing squad.

From that point onward, Peter's day is a write off. It's not just Flash now, everyone seems to want to get a cheap shot in at Peter's expense, though Flash is definitely the worst. It doesn't seem to matter how much he tries to tell him it's not true. Each denial only seems to fuel him more. Oddly enough, MJ seems to be the only one capable of shutting him down. Sometimes she doesn't even need to say anything, she just *looks* at him.

Most of it Peter can ignore, like the stuff about him apparently having an affair with Tony. He knows the truth and it's so far from it that it's laughable. It's the other stuff though, the stuff Flash nails on the head without even realizing. The jokes about him being a closet gay all this time, or the mutters of 'faggot' from the other students when he walks down the hall.

Those are the ones that hurt the most.

But right now they’re at lunch and Flash just won’t stop. Peter’s so angry he’s ready to throw him across the lunch room, suddenly not caring that it would reveal his powers if it meant Flash would stop calling him that word.

That's when MJ walks over and sets her tray down across from Peter. She stays standing and waits, staring at Flash, face blank.

Immediately Flash goes quiet, backing away when MJ raises her eyebrows. Peter watches as Flash moves away, and once he's gone, he turns back to MJ, incredulous.

"Seriously, what do you have on him?"

MJ just shrugs. “He’s been afraid of me since freshman year. I’m not really sure why.”

"She's like the Flash whisperer," Ned says, having witnessed the whole thing from beside Peter.

Peter shakes his head and digs into his lunch, glad for a moment's reprieve.
After lunch, they have math and when they get there, Principal Morita is standing at the door speaking with the teacher. Not thinking anything of it, Peter goes to enter but is stopped by the principal's hand on his arm.

"Oh, Mr. Parker, just the person I was looking for."

"You were?" Peter asks, unsure why the principal would be looking for him.

"Yes, Peter, why don't you come with me to my office? Mr. Sams will make sure Mr. Leeds has a copy of any handouts as well as the required homework to give you," Principal Morita tells him while guiding Peter down the hall.

"Sir, did I do something?" Peter asks. He can't think of anything he did that would warrant a trip to the principal's office.

"No, Peter, absolutely not, you've done nothing wrong. We just need to have a chat, okay?"

"Um... okay."

When they get to the office he's surprised to see his guidance counsellor and a woman he doesn't know. She's dressed professionally and is giving Peter a sympathetic look.

Peter has a bad feeling about this.

"Peter, why don't you take a seat. This is Detective Patterson, and she has some questions for you. I'm going to step outside, but your guidance counsellor, Mr. Dupont will be here with you for support."

"Wait, detective? I don't understand. Should I call Aunt May?" Peter asks, feeling panicked. Why does a detective want to speak to him? His immediate worry is that they somehow know about Spider-Man.

"We've already tried your aunt and the call went straight to voicemail. The receptionist is still working on contacting her, but until then, Detective Patterson will be speaking with you."

Before he can say anything, the detective cuts in.

"You haven't done anything wrong, Peter. I don't want you to think that. It's just that there have been some claims made and we need to look into them."

Peter feels like he's going to be sick, realizing that this has nothing to do with Spider-Man. His mind is briefly clouded with memories of a different time, with different detectives inside of a small room in a police station.

Peter shakes his head, consciously grounding himself in the present. This is not then, this is now, he tells himself as the principal leaves. Peter sits in the chair meant for him, waiting for the detective to start.

"I'm sure that you're aware of the news by now and the information that has come to light regarding your relationship with Tony Stark."

Peter rolls his eyes and jumps in before she can say more.

"None of it's true!" Peter shouts, and then takes a moment to calm himself, lowering his voice as he continues. "It's just a misunderstanding, Ton – Mr. Stark," Peter quickly corrects himself at the
detective’s raised eyebrow. "Mr. Stark isn't like that, we're not… that, whatever that is. I'm just an intern."

Peter looks at the detective, hoping she'll just take his word for it and leave.

She doesn't.

"Peter, you know you can talk to us, right? If something is happening, you don't need to protect him. I know Stark is a powerful man, but he is not above the law," she replies firmly.

"I know that! And I'm telling you it's not like that, whoever made this up is ly – "

Peter is cut off when Principal Morita re-enters the room.

"Tony Stark just did a press conference, Detective. I think you should see it,” he says abruptly before turning to Peter. "Peter, I am so sorry to have put you through this, son. We managed to get ahold of your aunt, and she's on her way to pick you up early. You're excused for the rest of the day."

The principal pulls out his phone and hands it to the detective, her eyes growing wide as she reads whatever is on the screen. Peter quickly takes out his own phone, ignoring the new message from Tony and does a quick search. The first link is from CNN. He clicks it.

**Breaking News: Tony Stark Reveals Existence of Biological Son**

*In a press conference only minutes ago, Tony Stark revealed that the boy in the photo that has since gone viral, who was previously thought to be an intern, is in fact his son. Stark had strong words for the individuals who spread rumors about a possible sexual relationship between the two. Standing behind a podium, flanked by his fiancée, Pepper Potts, Stark made his statement.*

“I promised Pepper I wouldn’t veer from the very carefully written statement she worked on. Of course, I made that same promise once before, and I think we all know how that turned out.” Stark pauses as the room fills with quiet laughter. After a moment, he continues.

“Given the rumors that have quickly spread regarding my relationship with Mr. Parker, I feel I have no choice but to come out here and reveal the truth. Peter Parker is my biological son. It sickens me that there are people that would look at that photo and see anything predatory there when I look and see nothing but paternal affection. It was my wish that Peter would be free to grow outside of the spotlight, but thanks to some truly sick individuals my hand has been forced. So congratulations.”

After reading his statement, Stark made a swift exit, refusing any questions.

*Be sure to check back for more updates as the story progresses.*

Peter looks up from his phone to find the others in the room staring at him. The detective looks shocked, and quickly asks if it is true. All Peter could do is nod in response.

Everyone knows.