The Art Of Being Lonely

by Thunderfire69

Summary

Tony cuts himself off from the world.

He kind of misses a few things.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.

Once again, he was in quiet solitude, locked away from the world, walls up around his heart and thoughts and feelings.

It was a lonely existence, but he refused to let anyone in.

It was better this way.
No one could hurt him, no one could break his heart or ruin his life.

All that matter was the research, the planning, attempt after attempt, flaw after flaw, day after day keeping himself physically and mentally locked away from the rest of the world.

He only slept when he was on the verge of collapse, only ate when he couldn’t handle the hunger anymore.

More often than not he found himself breaking down, silent tears trailing down his cheeks, but he lacked the energy to cry properly.

He’d sit there for a while, usually a few hours, just silently crying, before he’d pick himself up off the floor and return to his work.

He spoke to no-one but FRIDAY, and cut himself off from the events of the world.

Any news from the outside world was ignored, invitations knocked back, and the only times he ever left the house was to buy more food.

Echoes of words rang in his head, the final words of the sorcerer, whose name he couldn’t forget, and the words of the kid, of his kid, who had died right in front of him.

He angrily wiped at his eyes with a hand as more tears threatened to spill over and down his cheeks again.

He looked back down at the paper on his desk, and let out a noise of frustration as he spotted the flaw, scrunching the paper up in his hand and throwing it angrily to the ground, where it landed beside countless others.

Groaning, he ran his hands through his hair, blinking back more tears and leaning backwards on his chair, staring at the ceiling.

Emotions welled up inside him, threatening to overwhelm him and come rushing out, like a river bursting its banks.
It’d be less painful to just rip out his heart.

A small, almost timid knock on his lab door startled him, but he ignored it, figuring they’d go away.

“He’s in there,” came a familiar voice; Pepper, his ex-fiancé and still faithful employee despite the shit he’d put her through, especially as of late.

Footsteps, recognisable as Pepper’s by the way they sounded, grew fainter as she obviously left, and the knocking at the door became more insistent.

Sighing, Tony pushing himself to his feet, hesitating for a second before grabbing the handle and opening the door.

Something- or rather, someone- barreled into him, arms wrapping tightly around him, and he staggered backwards.

A muffled “Mr Stark!” met his ears, and he immediately looked down to see…

“P-Peter?” he said softly, voice cracking on the kid’s name.

He hesitantly touched Peter’s shoulder with a hand- it was solid. Real.

Not a dream. Not a nightmare.

He was here.

Real.

He broke down into tears, then, hugging the kid tightly in return, silently vowing to never let anything happen to him again.
After a while, Tony finally managed to calm himself down again, and he released Peter from the hug.

“Stark.” The same voice Tony remembered from all that time ago, the same calculating tone that seemed to soften towards the end of each word.

The voice belonging to the sorcerer who had saved his life.

Acting on instinct, Tony threw himself at Stephen, pulling the sorcerer into a tight hug.

“Thank you, thank you, thank you,” he repeated, over and over again, feeling Stephen slowly relax into his grip and begin to return the hug.

When they broke apart, after a lot of “thank you”s from Tony, Stephen grinned.

“Well, I couldn’t just let the most handsome man in the world die, now could I?”

Tony felt his cheeks heat up, but before he could think of any kind of reply, the sound of Peter clearing his throat from behind them made him turn, embarrassed, before he began to laugh.

“Get over here,” he said, putting an arm around Peter and tugging him in for a group hug.

End Notes

Yeah Tony cut himself off from the world, so he didn’t know the other Avengers defeated Thanos.

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