A thousand apologies deep

by QuazarRising

Summary

Tony Stark dies in Siberia of a broken heart, both literally and figuratively.

Now, with earth is in ruins from the war with Thanos, and far too late does Steve Rodgers know the truth and the number and depth of his mistakes. He knows he owes Tony Stark a thousand apologies.

So when he gets the chance to fix Everything, He takes it.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
The Death of Tony Stark

The End of the World starts like this. A single blow striking a little too hard, A punch not pulled back enough, and a man lying on the freezing floor, crying of a broken heart. Three things, the cold winter’s chill, a malfunctioning suit of armour and a broken heart, each of them would not be enough to kill a man with a heart made not of iron but of gold and bright blue phoenix fire. But all of them at once could.

So deep in Siberia, on the floor of a winter soldier facility, right next to a famous vibranium shield, Tony Stark dies.

Tony Stark dies in Siberia so no one brings back that patriotic shield back to America. So Captain America, not the person mind, the idea, dies with him. As the man known as Steve Rodgers will never pick it up again. Nor will anybody else as the famous shield ends up lost for the rest of time.

Tony Stark dies in Siberia so no one mentors one Peter Parker. Without Stark’s support with training, tech and subtle financial help, Peter ends up dying trying to stop some muggers in New York City. So Spiderman dies with Tony Stark

Tony Stark dies in Siberia so no one fixes James Rhodes’ legs, no one can help him learn to walk or fly or make the suits accessible to him. So War Machine Dies with Tony Stark.

Tony Stark dies in Siberia so Pepper Potts, still CEO of Stark industries, shuts down funding to the Avengers. After all Tony didn’t bring any new members in like Peter Parker, and the old members don’t really hang around without Tony there. So the Avengers dies with Tony Stark.

Tony Stark dies and no one is watching the stars for visitors. No one is watching to notice Thanos’s invading Army until it arrives.

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The End of The World goes like this. You’re Steve Rogers. You were born in 1918 and your best friend is Bucky Barnes. Now you stand at the front of an army from the hyper-advanced but also sort of secret African country of Wakanda ready to fend off an invading alien army in the year 2017. This is just your life now. But you have Bucky at your side again and you know up that somewhere out there Tony Stark, Ironman, is getting readying his own robot army or whatever to defend your planet and maybe you’ll meet up with Banner and Thor like last time (It’s still weird that this isn’t even your first alien invasion) and things will be fine again. Maybe scrap though by the skin of their teeth but still. Your confident, you have to be. Maybe this time, you can take Tony up on that offer to all live like some weird superpowered family in the Stark tower. The world might be going to shit, and might look and be totally different from everything you have come to know but Bucky is alive, Tony is alive and that’s all that matters. Once Tony calls, you two start mending those bridges. You might have to apologise to him but that’s ok. He will understand. Things are bleak but Hope is still alive.

You finally call the cell you send to Tony Stark’s home, He isn’t the one who answers.

It’s Rhodey who tells you.

He’s the one who says to you “Tony Stark is dead.”

And that’s how the end of the world starts for you.
Steve Rodgers has a lot of regrets. He stands to overlook the battlefield that earth has become. He looks back at what is left of his allies, many had died in the first few days and the rest are weary and in need of medical attention.

To one side Rhodes is in his wheelchair, still twitching in his sleep from trying to control what remains of the Iron Legion, the hivemind of Tony’s suits strung together under FRIDAY’s guidance. Neither the young AI FRIDAY nor Colonel Rhodes is truly up to the task and the mental strain is showing.

Next to him Loki uses Thor as a human (Godly?) mattress. Only the recent revelation that Loki was under mind control when he invaded Earth has made it acceptable for him to be this close to the others. Guess that damn stone explains that Ultron thing. Steve would apologize if he still could.

He never knew about what happened to Rodney during the ‘civil war’, He never knew JARVIS had died during the Ultron incident to create Vision. He never knew that Stark was angling to get everyone out of the Raft using legal methods. He never knew that Stark was holding back a damn “Superhuman Registration Act” by making the Sokovia Accords. How his company was having trouble funding the Avengers all by its own. There is so much Steve should have known and so many mistakes he made, so many apologies he should have made to a man who is now dead, possibly by his own hand.

Steve looks back out the window, He knows he’s sulking but his shoulders are heavy with grief and regret and between sobbing uncontrollably and brooding he thinks he’s picked the better option.

“Blame yourself not for these events, Steven” Comes a voice from his side. “No one could not have foreseen them”

Steve startles and looks over. Dr Strange floats behind him. The man has only gotten more, well, strange over the course of the War. The wizard’s constant use of the time stone has left its mark. His eyes are solid green now and constantly glowing. Wispy tendrils of the stone’s energy wrap around his clothing and make slowly moving shapes in his skin. Even the Doctor’s speech has gotten more and more abstract and convoluted like he is forgetting how to live in linear time. Steve wonders if all the infinity stones can possess someone if given enough time and usage. But it seems the Strange isn’t all knowing in this case.

Steve sighs. It’s not like it matters anymore.

“That’s not true,” Steve says “Tony knew this was going to happen.” He glances at Strange, who
looks at him a confused look. “You never meet Tony Stark. But ever since the battle of New York, He was talking about preparing for another invasion, He tried to get us to band together like a team, made us a base and gear and everything. Tried to make some sort of UN sanctioned global team or whatever, I thought he was grandiose and paranoid, like his dad. But he was right this whole time. I mean look at this.” Steve gestured out the window to the wreckage of spaceship and aliens strung across the earth “I should have listened. I wish I could go back and tell him I’m sorry.”

“Go back and apologize….” Strange muttered.

“Go back!” Strange almost shouted. Steve looked back only to watch as the as the tendrils of energy pulsed, lifting Strange lifted father off the ground.

“That’s It! Steven wake and round up the Others, I was looking to the future, but it’s the past that’s important! We’ve been looking at this all wrong. There still might be a way to fix everything!”

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The plan was this, the time stone could not send a person back in time, at least alone. However, Vision had managed to survive this long and still possessed the mind stone. So while they could not send a person back, they could send a person’s mind back or more accurately a person's memories. Which was pretty much the same thing.

It would however not only require removing the mind stone from Vision, which might kill him but using the stones for that powerful a spell would alert to Thanos to their location. And since Thanos already had the space stone, meant they had minutes if that to conduct the spell before Thanos and his army were tearing down the walls.

In light of this, Vision agreed to forgo being careful on removing the mind stone. On the condition that when Steve went back he would save not only save Tony but also Pietro, Wanda’s twin. Ironically someone whom Vision had never met. In addition to trying to prevent Ultron from existing but trying to make sure Vision did, paradoxically.

Steve agreed, If he was going to get one chance to do everything over, he was going to make everything right this time around. He was going to save Everyone.

Ironically it didn’t take long to prepare, a couple days looking up the events of the soon to be undone past, Steve made sure to memorize the plans of every major villain from the time he woke up to today. From when and where they were to what weapons and weaknesses they had.
It was another lesson in humility but it was important. No one was sure how far back Steve would end up.

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“If you could change the past where would you start?” Dr strange asked starting up the spell.

“I don’t know maybe keep bucky off that goddamn bridge”

Dr Strange gave him a look, more of an admittedly earned glare. “I know you were listening to my lectures about the dangers of time travel and messing too much with the tim-” “I know, I know. I guess I’m….I’m nervous”

Strange gave him a different look this one had sympathy.

“What about Stark? You said you had a thousand apologies to give him”

“Where would I start with that? I’m sorry for not telling you about your dad? I’m sorry for blaming you for Ultron? I’m sorry for making you feel that you had to take down the mandarin yourself? I’m sorry for kill-” Steve took a breath to steady himself. Even now he couldn’t bring himself to say it.

“What about the first apology? The first time you’d say you're sorry to Stark”

“That’s actually easy. That would be for insulting him on the helicarier after the battle of New York. I know we were under the spell of the tainted mind stone but that doesn’t matter. If I had to pick a time it would be soon after Battle, maybe a day or two. Actually, I had a chance this one time….”

And then Steve Rogers woke up.

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Steve Rogers wakes up. He takes stock of his surroundings. The walls are drab industrial grey and he can hear a deep hum. The bed is thin for the 21st century standards and slightly dented. The room is spartan and honestly depressing but Steve finds himself grinning like a madman. He knows he
should be sceptical. After all, Thanos still possessed the reality stone but….

But his good old red, white and blue Uniform is hanging in the closet and his shield is at the end of the bed.

‘It’s in need of a good polish’ Steve thinks and promptly bursts out into joyful yet hysterical laughter.

Chapter End Notes

I know I have an inconsistent style when it comes to writing this but after this chapter, I can get into the proper plot

End Notes

Ok so Steve in the MCU is really out of character for me, I know he is experiencing depression from being in a new time, but he is always so grim and serious, and he seems like he should be a more optimistic and kind person or better able to roll with the punches, maybe they are using the Ultimates universe as inspiration but honestly a lot of the actions Steve takes (especially post Winter Soldier) don't feel like something Captain America would do. But I know canon is canon and I can't throw it out (that's a different fic) so here is me forcing Steve to realise that he did a bunch of stupid and kinda wrong things and making him do things correctly this time.

TLDR I'm not pulling my punches against Steve but he will get a happy ending

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