Painted Crimson

by anxious_soul

Summary

In which an ex-employee of Stark Industries takes his revenge on a surprised Tony.

Cue sad and loving Avengers.

Notes

So I have like a bunch of prompts from you guys (which I am working on I swear) but this idea has been haunting me for like months now and I really wanted to get it written, so I hope you enjoy and I promise I'm doing my best to get your requests written and uploaded.

As I've been saying a lot lately, uploads will be slow. I reckon until the end of May/start of June as I have (dreaded) exams throughout May and will be revising until then. Sorry about this!

See the end of the work for more notes.
He was walking down the street in a form-fitting black suit that most definitely did not have glitter on the blazer… don’t tell Pepper. He’d just been in an incredibly boring meeting and decided to walk to his favourite coffee shop where they did the second best coffee he’d ever tasted (ego or not, Tony’s own coffee was the best, even the Avengers agree), it was only a ten minute walk away and in the meantime, Tony was answering calls, texts and emails with the help of JARVIS and the earpiece in (believe it or not) his ear.

On his way back, he continued to answer messages only this time he had a drink in his hand. Weaving in and out of the crowds of businessmen and women along with children and tourists, Tony was walking down the street that the Tower was on.

“Sir, there has been a situation at the Avengers Tower reception.”

“Not now JARVIS, I’m a bit busy.” Tony muttered to his AI before switching back to the caller he’d been speaking with, “Mr Borsome, thank you for your time, I’ll schedule a meeting and have a message sent across to you with the details.” He ended the call and switched back to JARVIS, who had his own little button on Tony’s earpiece, “J can you email Pepper with details about Borsome’s project along with checking when I’m free for a meeting and double checking with Pepper?”

“Of course, sir. You’ve got a free period next Wednesday.”
“Thanking you kindly, J.”

“Sir, there’s the matter of the reception debacle-” But Tony had stopped listening as a loud bang went off and screams echoed around him.

He looked up and found himself staring at a man with a gun. He looked drunk and homeless. A searing pain brought Tony away from the man, he placed his hand on his side and brought it away with a sticky feeling. Looking down he saw his hand was painted crimson. Everything caught up to him at once and he fell to the ground. Staring up at the sky as a tear slipped down his cheek and blood puddled around him. Something red blocked his sight of the sky and then darkness overtook him and pulled him under.

—LINE BREAK—

“There is a situation on the ground floor at the reception,” JARVIS announced pausing the TV show that the Avengers (barring Tony) had been watching. Steve immediately straightened and looked seconds away from grabbing his shield.

“What’s happened, JARVIS?’’

“An old employee that was fired three months ago for harassment is now demanding to speak to Mr Stark and has a gun. Security is trying to disable the situation but are worried he’ll shoot.”

“We’re on our way, J.” Clint stated grabbing his own gun - a bow and arrow was a bit too much for a mere fool, the others too grabbed their weapons save for Bruce, who said he’d go down but stay far away as the Hulk wasn’t necessary but if someone got hurt, he could help.

The minute they exited the elevator, the man saw them and quickly fled the building, narrowly avoiding the hands of the security guard. Natasha and Clint rushed after him to get the man arrested, whilst the other three stayed in the reception checking on the civilians inside.

—LINE BREAK—

Clint tackled the man to the ground seconds after there was a deafening bang. The screams made the archer wince as he gestured for the quickly approaching police to toss him some handcuffs. He explained as much as he knew to them before leaving the man with the police and turning around to see where Natasha had gone to. He froze.

“Tony!” He shouted in horror.

Natasha knew that Clint would handle the man, so she turned to the screaming crowd and told them
to move so she could help the poor civilian who had been in the way of the bullet. The man was laying on the ground, his shirt no longer white as blood pooled around him. She watched as the crimson liquid moved closer to her as it slipped down the cracks in the pavement and the lines. She stepped closer a feeling of horror overcoming her body. There was only one man she knew that would wear such a sparkly suit. She fell beside him desperately putting pressure on his wound, his coffee eyes were glassy as his gaze focused on her for a mere second before his eyes fluttered to a close. Her hands were stained with blood as she put pressure on his stomach, his cheek was covered in blood as she slapped him in an attempt to wake him.

“Somebody call an ambulance. *Now!*” She didn’t scream at the gawking New Yorkers but her throat tightened and her voice came out in a growl.

——LINE BREAK——

“Should we go out?” Bruce asked rubbing at his glasses,

“Clint’s got him.” Steve pointed to where the archer was handing the madman to a pair of police, one of which was speaking into his radio. Thor took off running as he heard the name Clint screamed. The other two took after the god.

Thor stood clutching Mjölnir as he stared at Natasha’s blood covered hands. In the distance, he could hear the wailing sounds of an ambulance siren. He had seen many warriors die. He had seen enough blood in his thousand years of life that it rarely if ever bothered him. He had seen enough of his brothers and sisters in arms become brutally and fatally injured. So why did he feel sick seeing his friend and brother surrounded by blood?

Bruce was the next to come out, he took a slight step back at the scene before he visible shifted into what the Avengers liked to call his ‘doctor-mode-despite-him-saying-he’s-not-that-kind-of-doctor’.

“Give me space!” He shouted and was glad that crowd did, though the hints of green on his face probably had something to do with their obedience, “Keep pressure on that.” He told Natasha before trying to wake Tony, “Has someone called an ambulance- never mind.” He muttered as he heard it in the near distance.

Steve stood there motionless for all of five seconds before he was barking at the stupid civilians to back up and pulled out his phone to inform Pepper of the situation.

Seconds after the ambulance drove away with Tony and Bruce inside, Happy all but threw the car into the now free spot and the remaining Avengers shoved their way inside before ordering the man to follow behind the ambulance that was clearing a path for them -well not literally for them- not that the driver needed to be told as Clint had barely gotten the door closed before he’d taken off.
White walls, sterilised air and the annoyingly familiar sounds of a beeping monitor. Cinnamon eyes fluttered open and closed a handful of times before they came to a stop open and the room came into focus. He cast his gaze around the room. Steve and Thor were asleep in the chairs at the bottom of the bed, Clint and Bruce were both awake at the side of his bed in chairs but they were lost in thought, and Natasha was asleep curled in a ball on the end of his bed. She looked so fragile.

“Who died?” He croaked and let Clint help him into a comfortable position as everyone snapped awake at the sound of him.

“You did. Twice.” Came the familiar voice of Bruce, who was looking at him with tense eyes.

“Oh.” Was all he could mutter,

“Once in the ambulance and once on the table.” He continued and it was clear that the man’s rambles were due to stress.

“Do you remember what happened?” Thor asked, his voice surprisingly gentle. Tony took the opportunity to look at them all as he tried to recall the events.

Steve sat straight in his chair, hands clenching the bed frame so much that there were tiny cracks; Thor was in a similar state and looked far too old and serious for someone who was in his twenties/thirties in Midgardian years. Clint too. The most immature and the clown of the Avengers looked like he’d been crying and as though a decade had been dropped on him. Then there was Natasha, who was sitting cross-legged at the end of his bed. She was slumped over, hands hidden beneath the sleeves of her large hoodie -that Tony realised was actually his- and her eyes were red contrasting against her pale complexion.

“I…I had been coming back to the tower. There was a meeting and I had wanted a coffee afterwards before coming home. JARVIS…he was…trying to tell me something but I…I was on a call doing some work.” He was speaking slowly, he felt drowsy and his tongue didn’t want to work, “I…J was about to say something when I saw a man with a gun. He…I…I was on the ground…it hurt…” He whispered, “Who was he?”

“An ex-employee. Fired for inappropriate behaviour. Harassment.” Steve murmured looking disgusted,

“I remember him.” He responded with a few minutes later, “He…there were multiple complaints but no one wanted to take it further and then…I was in an elevator with him and…well, he pushed me against the wall, groping me as he tried to kiss me. I…he was fired instantly. When that happened I learned about the others.”

“Bastard.”

“Agreed.” Everyone else including Tony stated after Clint’s comment.
Tony released a long yawn causing Bruce to snap to attention.

“You should get some sleep, you lost an awful lot of blood.” For once, Tony didn’t argue and shuffled down into his bed with a little help.

“Nat, you okay?” He asked through another yawn and the redhead nodded, her hand patted his leg as she stood and gently left. The injured man cast sleepy eyes to his science-bro, who gave him a sad smile.

“We think she’s in shock.” Tony looked at him in confusion, “You’ve never been so badly injured since we’ve known you, Tony, and this guy? He wasn’t a villain. He wasn’t some ‘wannabe-overlord’, just a mad and vile man. It was a shock to all of us and Nat…she was the one who saw you first. Tony, she was covered in your blood.” Before the man could say more, Tony’s eyes had fluttered closed and his breathing had evened. Smiling gently, Bruce pulled the cover up to his shoulders before quietly leaving the room.

——LINE BREAK——

“He’s asleep.” Bruce murmured as he met the others in the corridor outside Tony’s room, “Now it’s time for you guys to go home. No, Clint, this was what we compromised -once Tony woke and spoke, you guys would go.”

“But-“

“No. You need to go home. You all need to sleep and eat and shower. It’s been five days. Nat’s still got blood in her hair and on her clothes. Clint looks like he’s about to drop. Steve, you and Thor both look like you’ve lost some weight which is surprisingly possible as neither of you have eaten and you both need food more so than regular humans. Please, just go home and get some food and rest. No one is allowed back until you’ve had at least six hours preferably more and some decent food and a nice long shower -or bath. JARVIS will tell me if you don’t.”

“What about you?” Clint snarked,

“I’ve already been home and I’ve been getting a good six hours whilst eating regular meals each night since he was out of danger, thank you very much.”

Begrudgingly, the others did as demanded and went home.

——LINE BREAK——

Tony was behind a curtain putting a pair of jeans and a t-shirt on slowly, Bruce was helping so Tony didn’t rip his stitches. It had been a few days and Hulk’s counterpart had finally relented allowing Tony to be released from the hospital -the genius had been going stir crazy.
“You might want to wear these.” Clint murmured handing the man a pair of sunglasses, “There’s a shit ton of paps outside.”

“Great,” Tony muttered dryly but gratefully took the glasses and placed them on. Steve held the door open and the group walked out surrounding Tony in a protective manner whilst Clint placed his arm around the man to help him out.

Flashing lights and loud voices echoed all around them. Mr Stark this and Mr Stark that. Tony ignored them all and walked straight ahead to where Happy was holding their ‘getaway’ car door open, he hissed slightly as he bent down to get in and caught Bruce’s frown.

“Come on let’s get you settled on the couch. You can’t be up and about for another few days.”

“But, workshop!” Tony whined at Bruce as Clint helped him out of the car.

“No, Tony. It’s either relaxing and healing in the Tower away from the workshop or back to the hospital.” Tony pouted and grumbled but relented and let the team direct him to the communal living area.

“Movie time!” Thor exclaimed as they all settled down.

Natasha sat next to Tony clutching his hand under the blanket as whatever stupid film Clint had chosen because it was his turn (and because he chose shit movies 90% of the time).

“You okay?” Tony whispered to her as he ran his thumb over the back of her hand,

“I should be asking you that.”

“Thank you for saving me. I’d have died had you not.” He murmured pressing a kiss to her forehead as she placed her head on his shoulder,

“Glad you’re alright, Tony.” He smiled and looked around at his friends -no, his family.

“So am I, Nat. So am I.”

End Notes

Sorry if Natasha's too out of character, I just wanted to write her that way in this.

My tumblr feel free to say hi or something!

Anyway,
Thank you for reading,
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