**A Storm is Brewing**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>General Audiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archive Warning:</td>
<td>Choose Not To Use Archive Warnings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category:</td>
<td>Gen, Multi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fandom:</td>
<td>Percy Jackson and the Olympians - Rick Riordan, Percy Jackson and the Olympians &amp; Related Fandoms - All Media Types, Spider-Man - All Media Types, Marvel Cinematic Universe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship:</td>
<td>Annabeth Chase/Percy Jackson, Nico di Angelo &amp; Thalia Grace &amp; Percy Jackson, Ned Leeds &amp; Peter Parker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character:</td>
<td>Percy Jackson, Peter Parker, Annabeth Chase, Thalia Grace, Nico di Angelo, Hestia (Percy Jackson), May Parker (Spider-Man), Tony Stark, Ned Leeds, Michelle Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Tags:</td>
<td>Major character death - Freeform, sorta - Freeform, In the first chapter, Alternate Universe, Spider-Man: Homecoming Compliant, like it follows the movie really closely, Cross-Posted on Wattpad, Tags Are Hard, no beta we die like men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series:</td>
<td>Part 1 of Hurricane 'Verse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A Storm is Brewing**

by voidfangirl

**Summary**

After the Giant War, Percy Jackson decided to leave the Greek World. His cousins, Nico and Thalia, decided to follow him. They managed to lead normal lives without drawing attention to themselves.

Until Percy decided to become a superhero.

**Notes**

I'm really excited to share this fic with you all! Updates will be every week on Saturdays. I hope you enjoy the story!

IMPORTANT NOTES:
- The PJO/HOO timeline has completely been thrown out the window. Don't think too hard about it.
- Percy is sixteen in this story but it still takes place post-HOO when he should be seventeen (as I said, the timeline makes no sense)
-The Trials of Apollo don't exist in this universe

See the end of the work for more notes.
Downhill. That was where the battle was going. Gaea had been put to sleep once again, however, it was at the cost of Leo’s life. Despite her defeat, there was still a horde of monsters, each more determined to avenge their mistress than the last.

Arachne’s children had joined the fight as well. There was a swarm of spiders across the battlefield, ranging from minuscule to the size of a dog. The smaller ones crawled across Percy’s body, biting wherever there was visible skin. He wanted nothing more than to shake them off; the feather-light legs caused chills to run down his spine. Nonetheless, he couldn’t afford the distraction. He was focused on the fight in front of him.

In his subconscious, he registered his friends falling in battle. Their unconscious bodies were quickly transported to the safe zone that the children of Apollo had managed to secure.

Eventually, he made his way to Annabeth, the only other member of the Seven still standing. They stood back to back, fighting the shrinking army of monsters. He had just impaled an empousa when Annabeth whirled around and stabbed a dracanae that was about to attack him.

“Just like the Titan War all over again,” she called as she turned and continued fighting.

Percy’s sword clashed with the shaft of another empousa’s spear. He grunted as the force caused him to stumble, allowing the monster to slash his shoulder. He hissed in pain before responding, “You and I remember the Titan War very differently.”

As much as he wanted to stay by Annabeth’s side, the two were separated as the chaos of the battle continued. Time started to blur as Percy moved through the motions of each fight. Dodge, parry, thrust, repeat. His body was on autopilot as he moved through the legion of monsters. He found himself fighting beside Thalia and Nico. The trio moved like a hurricane, their unique powers complimenting each other, and decimating the monsters in their path.

The sun was setting as they faced the last monster on the battlefield, a drakon. Thalia called down a bolt of lightning while Percy summoned a wave, the familiar tug in his gut causing the drakon to be doused in water that puddled at its feet. Nico covered them in shadows, confusing the monster. The combination of water and lightning caused the drakon to be electrocuted and it spasmed as arcs of electricity traveled through its muscles.

The creature stumbled to its feet and trampled the ground as it tried to reorient itself. The cousins took advantage of the drakon’s confusion and charged at it. Thalia was standing to the side of the monster’s face, avoiding its poisonous breath as she clanged her spear to her shield. The loud noise disoriented the monster further, which proved to be fatal as Percy scaled up the side of its body, the bumps and ridges providing footholds for him to use. He drove the point of his sword into the soft part of the drakon’s skull. The monster roared in pain and reared up, almost knocking Percy off. Nico, who had been standing on the other side of its head, took the opportunity to slide underneath of the drakon. His sword carved into the unprotected underbelly of the beast like a knife through warm butter.

The drakon dissolved into yellow powder, leaving its hard outer shell behind. Percy slid down the side of the shell as Nico crawled out from underneath it. Thalia was waiting for them as they finally
caught their breath.

“We did it,” Nico breathed before he collapsed to the ground. He was pale and his face was gaunt, skin stretching tightly across his face.

Thalia and Percy rushed to his side and picked him up, supporting his weight between the two of them. They were both worried about their cousin, who looked too close to death, even for a child of Hades. “What happened to him?” Thalia asked as they made their way to the infirmary.

“He’s been using his powers too much. He shadow-traveled half-way across the world and then immediately started fighting a battle with over a thousand monsters.” Percy informed her. His entire body was aching and he wanted nothing more than to find Annabeth before taking a nap for the next ten years.

There was a comfortable silence as Percy and Thalia focused on getting to the infirmary. Once they were inside they were immediately approached by Will Solace. The son of Apollo’s eyes went wide in worry once he saw Nico’s limp frame. He looked like he was about to drop everything to attend to Nico before he refocused.

“Austin,” he called. His brother walked out of a nearby room. He had a grim look on his face, though almost everyone in the infirmary shared the expression. He quickly made his way to Nico and took him from Percy and Thalia. He walked away without a word, making his way into another room.

Percy and Thalia watched their cousin and exchanged a worried look. They were about to follow after him but Will stopped them. His tone was somber when he said, “You’re going to need to follow me.”

“What happened?” Percy asked, already fearing the worst. He wondered which of his friends he’d have to mourn next.

“It’s bad,” Will started, struggling to find the words. “She was fighting the chimera and it managed to injure her with its claws before biting her. The poison has already wrecked her system. We... we tried everything we could to save her. My father even tried to help but it’s too late. I’m sorry.”

Thalia grabbed onto Will’s arm, shaking him roughly. She had unshed tears in her eyes. She already knew who he was talking about but she needed confirmation. “Who? Who are you talking about?”

Percy had frozen. His blood was roaring in his ears and he could feel his heartbeat pounding in his chest. Will gestured helplessly to the room that Austin had come out of. Percy rushed to the room but stopped at the doorway, unable to move.

Thalia shoved past him and stopped in the middle of the room. There, on the bed, was Annabeth. Her torso was bandaged and there was a red splotch of blood that stood in stark contrast against the white gauze. There was too much red. It was spreading across the bandages like a tidal wave. Percy felt sick at the analogy and had to stop himself from throwing up.

Thalia let out a choked sob, garnering Annabeth’s attention. She weakly turned her head to the side and gave a small, sad smile. Thalia staggered to her bedside and kneeled down. She clutched Annabeth’s hand like it was a lifeline. Annabeth weakly squeezed her hand. “Hey, Thals.”

Thalia gave her little sister a watery smile. “Hey, Annie. You’re going to be fine, okay? Because it’s not your time to go yet.” She let out a sob. “You’re not allowed to go yet. I won’t let you.”

“We both know that we have no control over that,” Annabeth said gently. A tear rolled down her
cheek but she didn’t have the strength to wipe it off. “I’m going to miss you the most after this. You’ll always be my family.”

Thalia had to stifle another sob as she realized she wouldn’t see Annabeth for at least another few centuries. She gave a shaky laugh that was more for Annabeth’s sake than anything else. “When you see Luke down there, be sure to punch him for me.”

Annabeth started to laugh but it turned into a coughing fit. It sounded painful and wet and it took a few minutes to subside. “What, no hugs?”

“Maybe one, but only after you’ve punched him,” Thalia conceded. The moment passed and Thalia had to blink back tears. “I love you, Annabeth.”

“I love you too, Thalia,” Annabeth said. It was a goodbye between two sisters in their small, found family.

Thalia stood up and walked to the back of the room. She took a seat in a chair by the door. Kayla, another child of Apollo, came in to bandage her wounds but Thalia waved her off. All that mattered was being there for Annabeth.

Percy slowly approached Annabeth, hoping that it was all just a horrible nightmare and he would wake up to Annabeth knocking on his cabin door, alive and uninjured.

It wasn’t a nightmare though, it was the even worse reality. He kneeled down by her bedside and caressed a hand against her cheek. He had silent tears streaming down his face as he stared at his girlfriend. “Hey, Wise Girl.”

“Hey, Seaweed Brain.” Annabeth had to pause as another bout of coughing took over her body. She hunched over in pain once she was finally done.

“I’m sorry,” Percy started to apologize. “I should have been there-”

“Hey,” Annabeth cut him off, “You were exactly where you needed to be.” Her tone was reassuring and left no room for argument.

“I can’t do this. What am I supposed to do without you?” Percy asked desperately.

“We both knew that this would happen eventually, Percy. We’re demigods, the chances of us actually living past twenty were almost non-existent,” Annabeth tried to placate him.

“But… we could’ve done it. We could have moved to New Rome and gone to college there and gotten married and…” Percy trailed off. He slammed his fist into the frame of the bed in fury. He clenched his eyes shut and leaned his head against Annabeth’s lap. He whispered brokenly, “We should have… it isn’t fair.”

She gently ran her hands through his hair. “I know, Seaweed Brain, I know it’s not. But have our lives ever been fair?”

Percy shook his head helplessly. He leaned up and pressed their foreheads together. “I love you,” he whispered into the space that the two of them existed in alone together.

“I love you, too,” Annabeth whispered back, her voice breaking. She leaned in and pressed her lips to his. The kiss was like drinking from the Phlegethon all over again. Annabeth’s lips were chapped and Percy doubted his were much better. The moment seared itself into his memory. The smell of antiseptic from the infirmary, the feel of Annabeth’s hair under his hand, the taste of her lips as they
pressed against his. It was the culmination of five years of friendship, loyalty, and love compressed into one kiss. When they parted, they were both breathing raggedly.

“What do you need?” Percy whispered against the crook of her neck.

“Stay with me?” Annabeth asked breathlessly.

“Always,” Percy promised. He climbed into the small bed and wrapped his arms around his girlfriend. He could feel the unsteady rise and fall of her chest as she struggled to breath. They sat there as the sun set, the light fading across the horizon. Annabeth’s breaths became more spaced out until they stopped completely and she went still in Percy’s arms. He gripped her tighter and sobbed into her shoulder. He was vaguely aware of Thalia stumbling out of the room as a few children of Apollo rushed in.

They tried to coax him away from her body, her corpse, but he refused to let go. He felt rather than saw his father as he walked into the room. There was an increase in the smell of salt water in the air and it almost made him sick. He choked back the bile that rose in his throat. Annabeth was counting on him, he couldn’t fail.

His father walked up to the bed and pried him off of Annabeth. He started kicking and flailing in an attempt to escape his grasp. He could feel the Earth tremor in response to his emotions and some part of his subconscious registered the fact that he should probably stop before he accidentally hurt anyone. It was a small part of him, however, and he continued to scream and thrash as his father tried to pull him out of the room.

Using his last burst of adrenaline, he wrenched himself out of his father’s arms and ran back into the room before collapsing to his knees in exhaustion. The effects of the battle had caught up with him and he could feel himself losing consciousness. “I can’t leave her. Not again,” he tried to explain but his voice was hoarse from screaming. “I can’t…” He didn’t get to finish his sentence before he fell unconscious, black invading his vision until it was all he knew.

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry but it had to be done. Don't worry though, it gets better.
Percy woke up to darkness and a dull pounding in his skull. It took him an embarrassingly long time to realize that the darkness was caused by the fact he hadn’t opened his eyes. His eyes fluttered open and were met with a bright light. He immediately shut them again as the pounding in his head got worse. He hesitantly opened them slowly so he could get used to the light.

When his eyes adjusted he found himself on an infirmary cot. He wondered how he had gotten there. He had probably fallen off the lava wall again. He tried to sit up but fell onto his back as a sharp stab of pain went through his entire body. Looking down at himself, Percy found his chest was covered in bandages. There was a dark red stain on some parts of the gauze. He was confused; he had never been this injured from a simple fall before.

He glanced at the table next to the cot and found a few squares of ambrosia and a small amount of nectar. He gingerly picked up a piece of ambrosia and started chewing. The taste of his mom’s chocolate chip cookies filled his mouth and he let out a sigh of contentment as the pain immediately started fading.

Since his head was clearer, he tried to think about the last thing could recall. He inhaled sharply as he remembered the final battle against Gaea and the giants. Leo had sacrificed his life to stop Gaea and Percy felt a wave of sadness wash over him. He would miss hearing his friend’s jokes and watching him enthusiastically explaining his newest invention.

After Leo had died, and Gaea had been defeated there was still an army of monsters left. He remembered fighting next to his cousins to defeat the drakon and smiled. The three of them worked well together. They had rushed Nico to the infirmary after he collapsed and then… Percy gasped as he recalled Annabeth’s pale form, her torso covered in red gauze as she slowly died. He put a tentative hand to his lips where she had kissed him for the last time.

A sob started building in his throat and he had to choke it down. She was gone. It would be years until he saw her again. Unless… he glanced at Riptide sitting on top of a stack of clothes for him to change into.

He shook his head violently to get rid of those thoughts. He wouldn’t go down that path. There were still people who needed him.

Percy slowly started to remove the bandages from his chest. It was a slow process and he had to stop more than once to avoid reopening his wounds. Once he had removed the last strip of gauze he moved to the stack of clothes and changed into them as quickly as possible. He tried to not glance down at the scars that littered his body. He would have to deal with it eventually but at that moment he was filled with the need to get out of there as soon as possible.

He managed to sneak out of the infirmary without anyone noticing. They were too busy attending to the other patients who had more serious injuries. The sun was low in the sky, letting Percy know that it had been at least twenty four hours since he had lost consciousness. He made his way through the camp, avoiding any campers that he came across.

He sat on the soft sand of the beach, his feet getting covered by the surf every few seconds as the tide moved. The sun was setting by the time Nico and Thalia found him. He slowly got up and turned to face them.
Thalia had a look of unbridled fury on her face. “Where have you been? Will told us you disappeared an hour ago. The entire camp has been looking for you!”

Percy didn’t respond. He moved forward and pulled his cousins into a group hug. Thalia was tense but her shoulders relaxed after a moment and hugged him back. He started to cry again, the tears running silently down his face.

After a few minutes of the three of them standing there, Percy broke the embrace. He looked closer at his cousins. They both looked horrible, Thalia had unkempt hair and Nico’s skin was two shades paler than it normally was. Thalia was also missing the silver circlet that marked her as the lieutenant of Artemis.

“What happened to your tiara?” Percy asked, trying to avoid talking about Anna—her.

Thalia’s eyes darkened. “I quit the Hunters.”

She didn’t offer any explanation and Percy didn’t ask for one. His mind flashed back to Thalia saying goodbye in the infirmary.

Percy nodded at her before turning to Nico. “Nico, I’m sorry about Annabeth. I know that you…” He trailed off, unsure how to finish. He had been aware of his cousin’s crush on Annabeth for a while but he didn’t know how to deal with it so he had never said anything. He imagined the pain that Nico must have been going through if his own grief was any indication.

Nico’s cheeks darkened and a scowl formed on his face. He crossed his arms over his chest. “I-I didn’t like Annabeth,” he stuttered. He took a deep breath. “I was jealous of her because she got to be with you.” After Percy just continued to stare blankly at him, he huffed before admitting, “I had a crush on you, okay?”

Percy felt heat rush to his cheeks at the admission. He had been completely wrong. He tried to stammer out a response but he was speechless. Thankfully, his cousin took pity on him.

“Don’t worry,” Nico reassured, “I realized that you aren’t my type.”

Percy continued to stammer, unable to form a coherent response. Thalia, who was silent until that point, started laughing at the two of them.

“Are you done?” Percy asked sarcastically after she laughed for two minutes straight.

Thalia straightened from where she was hunched over and smirked at them. The moment passed and the mood became somber again once.

“Listen,” Thalia started, “we’re burning the shrouds for all of the campers who died tonight during the campfire. We knew you would regret missing it.”

Percy furrowed his brows. “Tonight? How long have I been out?”

“Chiron wanted to ask if you would say a few words for Annabeth,” Thalia said gently.

Percy’s throat closed up. He didn’t know if he would be able to get through a speech without sobbing and he needed to be strong for the other campers. He figured that he didn’t have a choice. The camp needed to see that he was okay, that he was still living, even if it felt more like he was just surviving at this point. He reluctantly agreed. “Yeah, I’ll say something.”
The trio walked to the campfire in tense silence. When they arrived, there was a row of shrouds lined up. Percy immediately spotted Annabeth’s. It was the same grey as her eyes, with an owl embroidered on it. It also had her dagger underneath the owl, made a deep bronze thread.

Percy ignored the eyes that followed him and sat down. He was numb throughout the entire ceremony. They had lost too many people, exactly fifteen, and Percy could feel their deaths like a physical weight on his soul.

Too soon, it was his turn to talk. He walked to Chiron and grabbed the torch from him before moving to Annabeth’s shroud. He didn’t register what he was saying, all he could feel was the tears dripping down his cheeks. Once he was done, he lowered the torch to the grey silk and watched as it started to burn. The smell of smoke and the sight of the fabric withering from the heat burned itself into his memory.

He sat down, completely numb, and watched as the rest of the shrouds were burnt. As soon as people started to leave Percy jumped up and sprinted to his cabin. He slammed the door shut behind him and collapsed before he could make it to his bed. He started sobbing, the flames from Annabeth’s shroud flickering across his eyelids. It seemed final. She wasn’t going to appear, Yankees cap in hand, and call him a Seaweed Brain before giving him a peck on the cheek. She was really… gone.

A hand landed on his shoulder, causing him to jolt. He looked up to find his cousins there, each of them also crying, albeit silently.

“I-I can’t do this,” he tried to explain.

They sat down on the ground next to him; Thalia put a hand on his knee. “Do what?” she asked.

“Any of this,” Percy exclaimed, throwing his hands into the air and gesturing around him. “I can’t be here, knowing that she isn’t. I can’t walk around camp every day, thinking she’s going to show up behind me and then realize she not going to. That she’s never going to. I’ve done everything for them and in the end, the only thing I have to show for it is a shit ton scars and a graveyard of dead friends.”

Thalia and Nico shared a worried look over Percy’s shoulder. Their cousin was sounding a lot like Luke when he was explaining why he betrayed the gods. Nico quickly tried to placate him. “Then we’ll leave,” he said simply.

“What?”

“We’ll leave,” Nico repeated. “We’ll go somewhere where no one knows us. No more wars, no more death. Just us, being normal teenagers.”

Thalia stood up, prompting Nico to do the same. She held out a hand for her cousin to take. “Are you with us?”

Percy looked up at his cousins and gave them a weak smile. He reached out and clasped Thalia’s hand, pulling himself to his feet. He nodded. “Let’s do it.”

After a moment Thalia said, “You’re going to have to let go of my hand so we can leave, Kelp Head.”

Percy furrowed his eyebrows and looked down at his hand. It was still holding Thalia’s hand. He tried to let go but his hand wouldn’t unstick from hers. “I can’t.”
“What do you mean you can’t?”

“I mean,” Percy drawled, “that I can’t let go.”

“Sure you can, Perce,” Nico said unhelpfully. “It’s called moving your fingers.”

“No, I mean I physically cannot move my fingers.”

Thalia started tugging at their intertwined hands. After a few moments of useless pulling, she started to grab random objects to try and pry their hands apart.

“Stop,” Percy cried, “you’re just going to break something and I doubt freaking out about it is going to help.”

“I swear to every god out there if I’m stuck like this for more than an hour I will kill you,” Thalia threatened.

“It’s not my fault,” Percy defended. Unfortunately, he also tried to put his hands up which caused Thalia to lurch towards him. Once he put his hands down, she glared at him.

“Hey,” Nico cut in, “I’m going to go get Will. Can you two not kill each other in the five minutes I leave you alone?”

Thalia continued to glare at Percy before turning and reluctantly agreeing. As soon as Nico was out the door, Percy opened his mouth but Thalia cut him off.

“Not a word or I will break my promise and your nose.”

Chapter End Notes

I'm seeing Far From Home on Tuesday and I'm not ready at all.
“I’ve never seen anything like it,” Will commented after he finished examining Thalia and Percy’s hands. “It’s like your hands are stuck together but there’s no visible adhesive that I can see.”

They had been stuck together for almost forty-five minutes and Thalia had become impatient. “Can you fix it? Because I’m willing to chop a hand off.”

“You’d be willing it to live without your hand?” Percy asked rhetorically, eyebrows raised.

“It wouldn’t be my hand that I’m chopping off,” Thalia muttered darkly, glaring at their intertwined hands.

Percy audibly gulped and turned to Will. “You can fix it, right?”

“I wouldn’t know where to start,” Will admitted. “My dad would know. You could probably head to Olympus and ask him. After everything, I doubt he would refuse to help.”

“Yeah, because we can just walk into Olympus and demand that Apollo help us,” Nico said sarcastically. Will raised an eyebrow at him and he started to blush. “Sorry,” he muttered, ducking his head down.

“I would at least try,” Will suggested. “Unless you want to be stuck like that?”

“We’re going,” Thalia and Percy said in unison.

***

The trio walked into the Empire State building. The sun had set over an hour ago so there was no one in the lobby beside a janitor in the corner and the receptionist sitting behind the desk with his feet propped up, reading a newspaper.

They approached the desk drawing the man’s attention. He took his feet off the desk and raised an eyebrow at them. They made for an odd group. Nico was walking in front of Thalia and Percy who awkwardly had their arms crossed due to their interlocked hands. Thalia was glaring at Percy every few seconds while he made funny faces at her.

“Six hundredth floor, please,” Nico asked, holding out his hand expectantly.

The man raised his other eyebrow before picking up his newspaper. He didn’t look at them when he said, “Ain’t no such thing kid, get lost.”

Thalia shouldered past Nico, pulling Percy with along with her. “Do you know who I am?” she asked, annoyed. She didn’t give the man time to respond as she leaned in closer, glaring at him. “My name is Thalia, Daughter of Zeus and ex-lieutenant of Artemis. These two are my cousins Percy Jackson, Son of Poseidon and Nico di Angelo, Son of Hades. So you better give me the keys or I will kick your-”

“I think he gets it, Thals,” Percy cut in, taking pity on the trembling guard.

The man fumbled for the keys as he pulled them out of his pocket. He thrust his hand out and Thalia
snatched the keys from them with her free hand before walking towards the elevator, head held high.

They rode the elevator up to Olympus in comfortable silence, disregarding the horrible songs playing. After five minutes the elevator dinged and the trio stepped out, admiring the grandeur of the place for a moment. Thalia started leading the way towards the area of personal temples and altars in a private section of the gardens. As they walked, nymphs, satyrs, and various minor gods watched them pass, whispered conversations following them.

Apollo’s temple looked like every object and surface had been touched by Midas. The walls were solid gold and glowed softly. There was an ornate, three-tiered fountain in front of the temple, with a lyre statue at the top. There were four braziers placed in the corners of the temple with a larger brazier in the direct center of the temple. Thalia marched into the middle of the temple and shut her eyes.

Nico and Percy watched her for a minute, unsure of what she was doing. They didn’t have to wait for long; Thalia opened her eyes and a satisfied smirk settled across her face. A moment later there was a bright flash from outside and the three teens instinctively looked away. Once the light faded, they looked outside to see Apollo’s sun chariot, transformed into a convertible, in front of the temple.

Apollo had an annoyed expression on his face that grew as the teens approached him. “What was so important that you had to call…” He trailed off as he saw the awkward position Thalia and Percy were in.

“We need your help,” Thalia muttered begrudgingly.

Apollo raised an eyebrow at them. He turned to Percy. “If you glued yourself to her as a prank then that’s your own fault. You don’t need my help to fix that.” He muttered in a lower voice, “Even if it was a funny prank.”

“It wasn’t a prank. I just grabbed her hand and then I couldn’t let go,” Percy explained.

Apollo sighed and walked over to the trio. He put one hand on Nico’s shoulder and the other on Percy’s. “Close your eyes,” he warned before he started to glow. When the light faded, the three teens were standing in a spacious room that resembled a study. There was a workbench that was surrounded by cabinets filled with different ingredients. The wall was lined with bookshelves and in the corner was a small area that was set up like an infirmary.

“My private medical room,” Apollo explained as he led them to the corner of the room. Nico stood back and leaned against the closest wall as Percy and Thalia continued to follow Apollo.

The god turned around, waiting for them to stop before taking their interlocked hands and examining them. Percy and Thalia stood there awkwardly as Apollo poked their hands. At one point, Apollo took out a magnifying lens and used it to examine their hands. The god had an expression of growing confusion on his face.

“I… don’t know what this is,” Apollo said haltingly. “It almost looks like…” he trailed off and shook his head.

“Like what?”

Apollo waved off the question. He walked away for a moment before coming back with three needles. “I need to take a sample of blood from each of you.”

Percy looked like he was about to protest before Thalia elbowed him in the gut. He hesitantly held out his arm and allowed Apollo to extract a sample of his blood. Thalia followed suit and Apollo
turned to look at Nico expectantly. Nico scowled but held out his arm, grumbling under his breath as Apollo drew a small amount of blood. Once he was done, Apollo took the samples to his workbench. Surprisingly, the god pulled out a microscope from underneath the table. He took ten minutes to set up slides with a sample of each teen’s blood. He then examined each one under the microscope individually. His eyes lit up after five minutes of looking at the blood samples.

Nico noticed his expression and stood up from where he had taken a seat on the floor. “Did you find anything?”

“Yes,” Apollo told him distractedly, “and also no. I’m going to need someone else’s opinion on this. You just go, over there.” He gestured vaguely to the other side of the room where the books were set up. The dismissal was clear and Percy had to pull Thalia along before she tried to protest.

Thalia huffed and sat down in a chair near the bookshelves which caused Percy to lose his balance and he fell to the floor. There was a bright light near Apollo signaling that another god had arrived but when Percy looked over the workspace had been blocked from sight by walls that had appeared from nowhere.

“What do you think it is?” Percy asked.

“You guys are probably going to be stuck together forever,” Nico teased.

Thalia glared at him. “It’s probably nothing.”

There was an uneasy silence as Thalia continued to silently fume at their situation. Percy thought about trying to make small talk but decided against it. For all of his teasing, he didn’t want to be trapped with Thalia forever. He loved his cousin but he knew that they both needed their space.

There was a flash in the corner of his eye and Percy turned to see the walls had been taken down. Standing next to Apollo was… Annabeth. His heart gave a lurch before he realized that the woman standing there was Athena, not Annabeth. He walked over to the workbench and pointedly did not look at Athena besides greeting her.

“Percy, did you get bitten during the battle?” Apollo asked randomly.

Percy furrowed his brows and thought of the spiders. He nodded. “Yeah, Arachne’s children had joined the battle. The smaller ones were crawling all over me.”

Athena nodded gravely like that explained everything. “It seems that one of those spider bites mutated your DNA.”

“They what?” Percy exclaimed. He prayed to every god out there that he wasn’t some sort of weird spider hybrid now.

“One of the spiders must have had a venom that altered your genetic makeup,” Athena repeated calmly.

Percy took a deep breath, trying not to freak out. He glanced at his cousins and saw that they were both looking at the goddess in shock. Thalia recovered first and sent him a reassuring look.

“That doesn’t explain why our hands are stuck together,” Thalia said.

Athena gestured to their hands and the two walked closer so she could examine them. Apollo handed her the same magnifying lens he used and she took it, putting it about an inch from their hands. After a moment she handed the lens back with a smug smile on her face. “It seems like Percy has
developed the same miniature hairs that are present on all spiders called setules that allow them to adhere to flat surfaces.”

“What? Does that mean I’m going to stick to everything for the rest of my life?” Percy started to panic.

“No,” Athena stated firmly, reassuring Percy. “It will take practice but I think as long as you are relaxed, you will have minimal problems.”

“Relaxed?”

“Yes, relaxed. You need to calm down. Take a deep breath and think of something that makes you feel calm. Your hand should release itself,” Athena explained.

Percy closed his eyes and tried to think of something that made him feel relaxed. His mind immediately went to a sunset picnic on the beach with Annabeth but that just caused him to tense up. He took a deep breath and thought about making cookies with his mom, the two of them covered in flour. A small smile spread across his face and he could feel his shoulders relax. He took his hand off Thalia’s and she snatched hers back, extremely relieved.

“How do I stop this from happening again?” Percy asked, opening his eyes.

“Practice,” Apollo spoke up, “there’s no exact technique for this, obviously, so you’ll have to figure it out as you go. However, there could be additional side effects that we’ll need to figure out so you aren’t caught off guard again.” Percy paled at the thought of having more abilities. Apollo saw his expression and was quick to try and comfort him. “We can start testing your abilities tomorrow. I know that my dad was planning on calling you all here anyway. Just come here again afterward and we can figure it out.”

Percy nodded and thanked the two gods. He left with his cousins shortly after. By the time they got back to camp, it was past midnight. They had to be quiet in order to not alert the harpies of their presence so no words were exchanged between the three teens as they headed to their respective cabins.

Percy made it to Cabin Three and he collapsed into bed, but his mind refused to let him sleep. He kept picturing Annabeth on the cot in the infirmary, bleeding to death in his arms. Eventually, his eyes shut and he passed out from exhaustion from the day’s events.

Chapter End Notes

Oh my god, Far From Home was amazing and I’m literally screaming from the ending. But I won’t spoil it for everyone who hasn’t watched it yet. Let me know what you think of this chapter.
Percy found himself in the Olympus throne room the next day with his cousins. Thalia had informed him on the way there that the other members of the Seven had already been summoned to Olympus while he was unconscious. He was happy for his friends but he didn’t know if he would be able to face them again. He felt fractured inside, and if he suffered one more hit he might shatter.

Percy stood in a line in front of the Olympian Council next to his cousins. The three of them bowed to the gods, going down on one knee and staying there. “You summoned us.”

Zeus nodded and gestured for them to rise. “Your efforts have helped save Olympus once again. We would like to offer you each a wish, as long as it is within our power, as compensation.”

Percy felt slightly skeptical. They had not honored his wish after the Titan War and he doubted Zeus would do so now. “Will you swear on the River Styx?”

Zeus mouth twisted into a grimace. He looked like he wanted to argue but Poseidon glared at him, and he grudgingly agreed. “We swear on the River Styx to fulfill your wishes as long as it is within our power.”

Percy narrowed his eyes. He tried to keep his tone polite and respectful. “Could you swear on the River Styx to honor our wishes within the week, Lord Zeus?”

Zeus glared at him. “You dare-”

Percy cut him off. “Yes, I dare. You haven’t honored your promise from the last war and I want to make sure this time.”

Zeus looked murderous and opened his mouth to protest but was cut off once again, this time by Hera. “The boy is right, my lord. We swear upon the River Styx to fulfill your wish within the next week.”

Percy sent her a grateful smile. He still hated her, but he didn’t need to make another enemy. “Thank you.”

“Very well,” Zeus grumbled. “What is it that you wish for?”

Percy glanced at his cousins who each nodded at him. He decided to try and push his luck. “First, I would like you to honor your wish from the last war.”

“You question our oath?”

“Of course not, Lord Zeus. However, I would like to see it for myself,” Percy responded, flashing him a wolfish grin.

Zeus glowered at him. He nodded at Hephaestus who flashed out of the throne room. A moment later he flashed back in with two thrones. One was dark obsidian that had a dark aura around it. The base was decorated with small, glittering gemstones or varying rarity. There also seemed to be human bones along the base of the throne, however, they were made of strangely white and polished stone, not unlike marble. The back of the throne was ornate and had more gemstones along the top.
The other throne radiated warmth and had a comforting aura. The colors resembled a fire, the base was brown before it moved onto red, orange, and yellow.

The thrones were situated on opposite sides of the room at the end of the other thrones. There was a bright light from each of the thrones. A moment later, both Hestia and Hades appeared next to their thrones. Hades had a look of shock on his face and Hestia was sending Percy a warm smile. Zeus gestured to them and the gods took a seat in their respective thrones. Once he had sat down, Hades smiled gratefully.

“There,” Zeus said, “we have honored your wish.”

He was about to move on but Percy interrupted again. “You haven’t honored everything. The peaceful Titans still need to be released.”

Zeus scowled at him and snapped his fingers. There was a bright flash and Leto appeared in between Artemis and Apollo’s throne. The twin archers hurried off of their thrones and helped support their mother, who was swaying from being suddenly teleported.

“Are you done now?” Zeus asked, annoyed.

“Where’s Calypso?” Percy asked.

“She’s already on her way back,” Zeus’s tone was firm and his eyes promised pain if Percy tried to ask questions. “Now, what is your wish?”

Percy pursed his lips and kept quiet. Thalia stepped forward, directing the Council’s attention onto her. “We have already discussed it, my lords, and have decided on what we want.”

“What is?”

“We want to leave,” Nico said.

“Leave?” Hades repeated.

“We want to lead normal lives in the mortal world without worrying about monsters or wars,” Nico explained.

“My son, is that true?” Poseidon asked, looking at Percy. Percy nodded and refused to meet his father’s eyes.

“That is a large task you set before us. Three children of the Big Three living together in the mortal world will attract attention,” Hephaestus pointed out.

“We could create something to dampen your scent, but that will only decrease your chances of being attacked, not eliminate them,” Athena said.

“That’s fine,” Thalia agreed, “we can deal with whatever monsters that manage to track us down.”

“Percy will also need a new identity,” Aphrodite said gleefully. “Even the Mist has its limits. If you truly want to live normal lives then Percy Jackson needs to disappear. You’ve already made it onto the news too many times.”

Percy, Thalia, and Nico glanced at each other. They hadn’t thought of that when they decided to leave.

“I’m willing to do that,” Percy said. If he did this, he could have a completely new start. He had
already failed as Percy Jackson, maybe he could be better as whoever he became.

Aphrodite squealed at the prospect of getting to give him a makeover. “I’ll get started right away!”

“Come back tonight and we will have everything ready,” Zeus said.

The three of them bowed to their respective parent before bowing to the entire Council. They left the throne room and started making their way to Apollo’s temple so they could see what other abilities Percy had. They had just exited the room when Percy saw his father standing off to the side.

“Yes, sure.” Thalia asked.

Percy nodded before he turned and made his way over to his father. The man was standing there, nervously wringing his hands together. He had a worried look on his face. Once Percy was in front of him, he pulled his son into a hug.

Percy wrapped his arms around his father and breathed in his scent. His face twisted into a sour expression as the scent brought back the memory of the infirmary, directly after Annabeth had died. The sea used to bring back fond memories but now it just reminded him of everything bad in his life. His father let go of him and he quickly put a neutral look on his face.

“Are you sure this is what you want?” Poseidon asked.

“I’m sure, Dad. I can’t walk around camp every day knowing that I’m never going to see her again,” Percy said, his tone final.

Poseidon nodded sadly in acceptance and put a hand on Percy’s shoulder. “I’m proud of you, Percy. Know that I will always love you and you will always be my son.”

Percy smiled sadly. “I know, Dad. I love you too but this is something that I have to do.” He hugged his father one last time. Poseidon offered him a small smile once they pulled apart before he turned into a fine mist and disappeared, leaving behind the smell of salt water.

Percy quickly made his way to Apollo’s temple. It seemed final like he was walking away from being the son of Poseidon and leaving it in the past.

Chapter End Notes

Another update for y’all. I was almost late but I got it up in time. Let me know what you think.
His cousins were waiting for him outside Apollo’s temple. Thalia opened her mouth to say something but they were interrupted by Apollo arriving in a bright flash of light. Once he saw that they were already there, he grinned.

“I took the liberty of setting up a little obstacle course after you left yesterday,” he told them. When they didn’t react, he continued, “It has a variety of obstacle all designed to test your speed, endurance, and strength. If you wouldn’t mind holding on…” he trailed off, holding out his arms from them to take. Once the trio had each put a hand on him, they disappeared in a flash of light.

Once the light died down, Percy opened his eyes to see that they had arrived in an open field that was framed with trees. Around the field was an obstacle course that looked like something out of a reality TV show.

Thalia let out a sharp whistle when she saw the obstacle course. “Impressive.”

“I try,” Apollo said smugly. He started pointing to the different parts of the course. “First, you’re going to start by running through the tires that are set up. That will lead to the climbing wall where you’ll have to get down using a series of bars that decline in height. The climbing wall has spikes on it so you’ll need to be careful. After that, you’ll have to army crawl without touching the rope which will shock you if you touch them. When you get up there will be a stretch of moving posts that you’ll have to make it through without getting hit. Some of the posts have spikes on them so again, you’ll need to be careful or you’ll slice your arm open. Next, you’ll have to climb up the rope wall where you will have to make it across the chasm by swinging across ropes. When you get down there will be a series of platforms that you have to jump to without falling in the mud underneath them. You’ll jump onto a set of monkey bars and then have to swing to the final platform over a distance of ten feet.”

Percy turned pale as he saw all of the different components to the obstacle course. He knew he was fit but the course looked like it would give the best Olympic athletes a hard time.

Nico snorted. “Don’t worry Perce, it looks like a piece of cake.”

Percy glared at his cousin before moving to the start of the race. Apollo stopped him before he could get there. “I need to put these electrodes on you so I can monitor your vitals while you run the course.” He then proceeded to put the small patches underneath Percy’s shirt on his chest and added two on the side of his temples. He moved to a side table that lit up with various vitals.

Percy started by the flag that indicated where the course started. He kneeled down in a starting position and took a deep breath, trying to focus. A shrill whistle pierced the air and Percy clamped a hand over his ears at the sound. Once his ears stopped ringing he turned to face the god. “What was that for? Did you really need a whistle as loud as a siren?”

Surprisingly, Thalia stepped forward to defend the god. “It was a normal whistle Percy. It was a little loud but it didn’t hurt.”

Percy looked at Nico who nodded in confirmation of Thalia’s words. Apollo had a large smile on his face. “Seems like you have enhanced hearing. Let’s try again but this time I’ll just tell you when to
Percy nodded and moved back to the starting line. He kneeled down again and this time when Apollo shouted for him to start he ran towards the tires. He quickly made his way through them, managing to not trip as he stepped through the hole of each tire. He ran up to the climbing wall and paused for a moment. There weren’t any handholds on the climbing wall. Percy glanced down at his hands and placed them firmly against the smooth wood of the wall. He tried pushing off of the ground with his foot and was only a little surprised when he stuck to the wall. It took a minute, but he figured out how to climb up the wall without falling off. Once he made it to the top he found that he was able to perfectly balance on the narrow ledge. He could feel his adrenaline pumping as he stared down at his cousins.

His eyesight suddenly shifted, allowing him to notice details that he normally wouldn’t be able to see from far distances. He saw Thalia’s worried expression as she stared up at him as well as the small mosquito that was flying near Nico’s head. Everything seemed brighter as well; the sun seemed to cast a glare on everything around him.

He shut his eyes as the light became too much and took a deep breath to try and calm down. He could feel the adrenaline fading and opened his eyes, happy to see that the world had gone back to normal. He glanced at the bar that was slightly above him and took a running leap before grabbing onto it and swinging through the air on to the next one. He continued to move to each bar before he was close enough to the ground that he could jump down without breaking a bone. He surprised himself when he managed to pull off a perfect backflip as he leaped off of the last bar.

Once he had safely landed, Percy laid down on the ground and started to army crawl underneath the rope that was inches from his head. There was a ringing in his head and he ducked his head down in instinct in order to avoid a length of rope. He managed to get through the section of the course without issue, the ringing in his head picking up every time he got close to the rope.

Percy stared at the next part of the course. There was a series of wooden posts with spikes sticking out of them slowly rotating. The posts were close enough together that it would be difficult to get through without one of the spikes hitting him. Percy took a deep breath and felt his muscles relax. He took a running start at the maze, turning sideways at the last moments so he could fit in the space in between the posts.

Percy moved through the maze swiftly, contorting his body to avoid the spikes at the last second. The ringing in his ears had returned, allowing him to know when he was getting close to being hit. He had made it to the end of the maze when the ringing in his ears grew and a loud buzzing formed in the base of his skull. Percy hissed in pain as his arm was slashed open by a spike on the last post in the maze. The force of the spike striking him caused Percy to roll onto the ground. He gripped his arm tightly as blood started to flow out of the wound. Thalia and Nico ran up to him with Apollo in tow.

“Give him some ambrosia,” Nico yelled at Apollo, who was standing there with a thoughtful look on his face.

“No, I want to see how your healing has been affected. We can wrap it for now, but let’s hold off on the ambrosia. Unless you think that you won’t be able to finish the course,” Apollo said, pulling out some gauze and wrapping it around Percy’s forearm. The blood quickly seeped through the bandages and Percy lurched as he was reminded of the bandages that were wrapped around Annabeth as she slowly bled to death.

He shook his head violently to clear the thoughts before he stood up. Percy realized how his cousins might perceive him shaking his head and said, “I’ve got this.”
Percy approached the rope wall and put his foot through the bottom rung. He slowly moved up the wall, the ropes swinging as he shifted his weight. Once he made it to the top he stared down at the chasm that ran along the bottom of the individual ropes. Percy jumped at the rope closest to him and started as the roped jolted his body from the unexpected weight. Percy wrapped his hand around the rope; his arm stung and the muscles strained as he supported his weight using the rope. He recovered after a few seconds and started swinging, adjusting his center of gravity to make the rope move back and forth. Once he had built enough momentum he let go of the rope and jumped onto the next one, this time a bit lower than he had been before.

He jumped across nine more ropes until he reached the last one before the platform that was located approximately ten feet away as Apollo had said. He was five feet below the platform and in order to successfully make it, he needed to be above the platform. His muscles were aching from the exertion of the course. Nevertheless, he reached a hand up and wrapped a hand around the rope and pulled himself up. Percy slowly, but surely, climbed the rope until he was above the platform. There had only been five feet between each of the ropes and the distance between the rope and the platform was twice that. Percy slowly started swinging the rope back and forth. He couldn’t risk not having enough momentum, the fall was at least twenty feet. He was swinging hard enough that his feet were at least three feet above the platform.

Percy let go of the rope and flew through the air towards the platform. He pressed his legs together and pointed his toes in an effort to become more aerodynamic. As he grew closer to the platform he brought his limbs close to his chest, flipping through the air. The ringing in his ear increased and he rolled across the platform to absorb the impact from landing. Percy stood up and took a moment to catch his breath before descending the ladder that was on the side of the platform and extended to ground level.

His cousins and Apollo ran over. Nico exclaimed, “That was awesome! Where’d you learn to move like that?”

“I don’t know,” Percy admitted. “It came naturally to me.”

Apollo hummed at his statement and wrote something down on a clipboard that he had with him. “Come on, like go back to my worktable and you can have something to eat while I explain what I’ve found.”

Percy nodded and walked back to the start of the course. His muscles were aching and he felt like he could take a thousand-year nap. He collapsed into a chair that was waiting by Apollo’s worktable. Thalia handed him a Gatorade that she had gotten from somewhere and he took it gratefully. He opened the cap and started to chug the flavored water. Once he had finished the bottle he felt ten times better.

“Can I see your arm?” Apollo asked and Percy nodded, holding out his arm so the god could remove the gauze. He had gotten another Gatorade and was happily sipping it when he choked and spat it out as he saw his arm. What was once a nasty gash had been reduced to a small cut that wasn’t bleeding.

“Oh my gods,” Thalia breathed as she saw his arm. “How is that possible?”

“As I was monitoring your vitals, I noticed that you’re glucose- or sugar levels- were decreasing exponentially as you moved through the course. You have a strangely fast metabolism which means that it processes and breaks things down much faster than a normal mortal or demigod. The only effect that this will have on you is that you’ll need to eat something every hour,” Apollo explained.

“That doesn’t explain why my arm is almost completely healed,” Percy said, staring in fascination
down at his arm. The cut was closing in front of his eyes and he watched as his skin stitched itself together.

“Everything about your body is faster, including your healing,” Apollo simplified. “This makes me think that everything about you is enhanced so I want you to try a few more things.”

Percy groaned at the thought of more tests. Nonetheless, he nodded at Apollo who smiled gleefully at the thought of being able to spend the next few hours helping (read: torturing) his cousin.

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“It’s been three hours,” Thalia groaned. She was sprawled in a chair underneath part of the obstacle because it provided some of the only shade in the field. “How much longer do we have to be here?”

“You are free to leave,” Percy gritted out through his teeth from underneath the large rock, that weighed at least one ton, that Apollo was having him carry. “At least you don’t have to do anything.”

Percy grunted as the strain became too much and threw the rock down next to him. A small cloud of dust rose up and he coughed before slumped onto the ground next to his cousins. A silhouette appeared in front of him and Percy lifted his head, squinting at it. When his eyes refocused, Apollo’s grinning face appeared in his vision. Percy groaned and slammed his head back down, wincing when it only caused him more pain.

“Aww, chin up little cousin. You’re done,” Apollo informed him.

“Really?”

“What’d you find?” Nico asked.

“Honestly, that spider bite was more of a blessing than a curse,” Apollo said. “If Arachne was trying to hurt us, she has a really funny way of showing it.”

“What is it?” Thalia asked impatiently. Percy sat up and was staring at Apollo nervously. The god didn’t seem worried so Percy tried to relax.

“I’m getting to that,” Apollo defended, holding his hands up. “Obviously, you have advanced strength, speed, and healing. I’ve also observed that you seem you have advanced agility if your predisposition to naturally performing stunts that would take a normal mortal years to perfect is any indication. Your senses are also enhanced, as you’ve experienced with eyesight and hearing.” Apollo paused for a moment as he looked incredulously at Percy. “The thing that I find amazing is that you seem to have developed a sixth sense that tells you whenever you are in any sort of danger.”

“If I have superhuman strength then how do I stop myself from breaking whatever I touch?” Percy asked.

“You’re going to have to hold yourself back. I’m sure with practice that it’ll become second nature,” Apollo said regretfully.

Percy sighed. He figured that would be the answer. He was going to have to spend the rest of his life holding himself back around the people he loved in fear of hurting them. “That’s what I thought.” He looked towards the horizon where the sun was setting. He looked at Apollo who was still standing in the clearing. “How is the sun setting if you’re here?”

“I got a friend to fill in,” Apollo said dismissively. His head cocked to the side as if he was listening
to something. “We need to go back. The Council has everything ready and is waiting.”

Percy nodded and turned his gaze to his cousins. “You guys ready?”

Nico shrugged. “Probably not. But we’re with you Percy.”

“Let’s do this.”

Chapter End Notes

Kind of OOC Apollo but the story calls for it. If you couldn't tell by now, Trials of Apollo WILL NEVER be a part of this story. I'm completely ignoring it. Let me know what you think of this chapter.
Chapter 6

Standing in front of the Olympian Council with his cousins, Percy felt slightly uncomfortable. The gods were staring at them intently for what seemed like an eternity but were only thirty seconds in reality. Poseidon was the first to speak and addressed each of them individually, "My son, Percy. My niece, Thalia. My nephew, Nico. Olympus will lose three heroic champions and warriors today. However, we respect your decision. My only request is that you always remember us, just as we will remember you three as saviors of Olympus."

Percy gazed at his father for a moment before he glanced at the gods and his cousins. He met the eyes of everyone present as he spoke, "We might be leaving but we’re not going to forget. If Olympus was in danger of being destroyed again, we would come back if it was in danger to fight for you."

The gods of the Olympian Council seemed genuinely touched. There were still a few who acted indifferent like Ares and Dionysus but that was expected.

Athena spoke up from her throne. "Hephaestus and I have created a scent dampener for you all that will minimize the chance of monster attacks. Each one is unique to your specific scents and instead of putting it in a charm that can be removed, we have created a sigil that can be branded onto you. If you would step forward."

Athena shrunk down to human size and approached the three teens. There was a small brazier in the middle of the floor. Thalia stepped up first and knelt down to receive her tattoo. Athena held the end of the branding iron over the hot coals until it turned red. She chanted something in Ancient Greek that was too fast for Percy to understand. The flames grew and turned an electric blue before going back to orange. She turned toward Thalia and gestured for her to lift her shirt. Thalia did so reluctantly, glaring at the male gods until they turned away.

Athena pressed the brand into the skin right above Thalia’s hip bone. Her flesh sizzled as the blazing hot brand made contact and Thalia hissed in pain but otherwise stayed silent. When she pulled the iron off, the skin was raised but it was the clear symbol of a lightning bolt inside of a circle. There was Greek lettering filling the inside of the circle but it was too small for Percy to understand. Athena handed Thalia a square of ambrosia that she took gratefully before retreating back to her next to Percy.

Nico walked forward next and pulled down the collar of his shirt. Athena repeated the process with a different branding iron. Nico started to sweat and gritted his teeth as the brand burned onto his skin. When it came off, the brand was in the form of a skull inside of a circle, much like Thalia’s. Nico took a square of ambrosia and stood next to Thalia.

Finally, Percy knelt down next to the brazier. Athena held his branding rod, the tip molten red, above his chest. Percy could feel the heat coming off of it and refused the instinct to turn away. Athena looked him in the eyes as she pressed the brand into his chest and started to quietly chant. Percy’s eyes grew wide when he felt a rush of power go through him. He never thought he would see the day when Athena blessed a child of Poseidon.

Once Athena removed the brand he looked down and was surprised by the spider that was imprinted onto his chest. He had expected a trident but found that he didn’t mind the symbol. Athena winked at
him and handed him a square of ambrosia. She also slipped a small box into his hands and he looked at her, bewildered. She sent him a look that told him to not say anything and he nodded minutely before walking back to his cousins while slipping the box into his pocket.

Aphrodite spoke next and she almost looked like she had tears in her eyes as she said, "I've spent the last few hours working with Hecate on your new look. You'll be able to take off your disguise if you concentrate but you should be able to keep it up subconsciously. Are you ready?"

Percy nodded and Aphrodite started chanting. Much like Athena, she was going so fast that Percy was only able to catch a few words. After a minute, a warm feeling bloomed in his chest and continued to spread to the rest of his body. Percy could feel the light radiating off of him. The warm feeling began to shrink as the light faded.

When the light was completely gone, Percy saw Aphrodite gazing at him. The entire Olympian Council was staring at him, but Aphrodite was scrutinizing him as if she was looking for flaws in his new body. Squirming uncomfortably, Percy spoke for the first time, "How do I look?" He did a double-take at the sound of his voice. It was higher and had adopted a slight accent. It reminded him of the people from Queens in New York.

Not blinking, Aphrodite snapped her fingers and a full-length mirror appeared in front of him. Percy’s jaw dropped as he took in his new appearance. His messy black hair and sea-green eyes were gone. He now had brown hair and eyes. He seemed slimmer but he was also at least six inches shorter. He was also paler, his tan reduced significantly.

"You still look like a Kelp Head," Thalia commented from behind him. Percy threw a half-hearted glare towards her.

Zeus interrupted them before they could start bickering. “Hestia has volunteered to act as your guardian in the mortal world. You'll be living in an apartment in Queens.”

“You will be attending Midtown High School. However, due to the age difference, you will all be in different grades. Nico, Thalia, you will be attending as freshmen. Percy, you will be a sophomore,” Poseidon chimed in. “We know that you aren’t in the correct grades but it’s for the best. Your education has been interrupted so many times that we found it best if you repeated some of your schooling.”

“As you felt during the branding, I’ve blessed you with attributes that you didn’t have before. You’ll find yourself picking up on things, such as new languages or complex equations easily,” Athena informed him.

Percy opened his mouth to thank her but Zeus cut him off. “Enjoy your new life, Percy Jackson, Thalia, and Nico di Angelo. Or perhaps I should say, Thalia, Nico di Angelo, and... Peter Parker.”

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Percy was lying in the top bunk in his new room. He was exhausted but he needed to see what Athena had given him. He pulled out the small box and opened it. There was a small note card inside. It said, “Perseus, I have a feeling that these will come in handy.” It was addressed from Athena. On the back, there was a recipe of some sort and Percy vaguely recognized some of the ingredients as chemicals. Percy set the notecard aside and pulled out a small vial from inside the box. There were nine more inside the box and the vials were filled with a strange white substance. Percy pulled out the other item inside the box. It was a strange-looking metallic cuff that had a button that extended to the palm of his hand. There was a button on the side and Percy pressed it. A compartment popped open. It was the perfect size for the vial. Percy slid the cartridge into the
compartment and clicked it into place. He put the cuff on and aimed it at the ceiling. Percy pressed the button on his palm and jumped when something white shot out of the cuff and attached itself to the ceiling. Percy leaned forward to examine it. It reminded him of the webs in Arachne’s chamber.

Percy shuddered at the memory of Annabeth being caught by one of the webs and it dragging her down to Tartarus. He shook his head in an effort to get rid of the memory. He ripped the webs off of the ceiling and stuffed it under his pillow so Nico wouldn’t see it. He would deal with the webs in the morning. He was too exhausted to think straight. His eyes fluttered shut and Percy tried to keep his mind blank and free from any memories that would trigger a flashback.

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Percy found himself in the middle of a busy street. Looking around he recognized the Empire State Building in the distance and realized he was in New York. Checking his surroundings, he jogged towards Central Park which was on his immediate left.

As he entered the park there was a bright light to his right that caused him to shut his eyes. When the light faded and Percy opened his eyes, he saw someone that he didn’t think he would see for at least another few years. He blinked once, before the figure that appeared rushed towards him. Percy threw his arms around his girlfriend, clinging to her as if she could disappear at any moment, which she probably could.

They reluctantly pulled away from each other. Annabeth took a deep breath, "Hey, Percy."

"I've missed you so much," Percy said, letting out a breath he didn't know he'd been holding.

"I have too, but you don't need to worry. We'll see each other again someday," Annabeth reassured him. Before he could say anything, however, she continued, "I need you to promise me something first." Percy looked at her questioningly. "I need you to promise that you'll move on. That you'll live your life and not let my death hold you back. You can start again, Percy."

Percy looked at her, shocked. "I don't know if I can promise you that, Wise Girl. So much has happened. Your... death, not to mention these freaky powers I'm gaining," Percy said, hoping that she was joking though he knew deep down that she wasn’t.

She looked at him sadly, "I know it's a lot to ask but with these powers you have, I think you'll be able to start again. The mortal world is already full of people with weird abilities that science has granted them. The mortals are getting into more danger every day and it's going to be our job to protect them. You were bitten by a spider, something that we’ve only seen act evilly. I know you're secretly scared of your powers but that's okay. You can turn it into a symbol of good. You're smarter than people give you credit for Percy, you just need to try. You're always going to protect people, it's who you are. New York needs you, Percy. With great power, comes great responsibility. I believe in you, Seaweed Brain. I love you."

Percy stared at Annabeth. What she was asking was near impossible. But he would try, for his Wise Girl, he would try. He only nodded his head, not trusting his voice at the moment. He pulled her in for a kiss and noted that they both had tears rolling down their faces as they embraced for what would probably be the last time. They continued to kiss until Annabeth became a bright light and faded away. Percy was left standing in the park, alone and crying.

Chapter End Notes
And bam! The big reveal. He's going to be Peter Parker. This is hella weird but whatever.
This explains the intelligence difference, for lack of a better phrase, between Percy and Peter. Peter is literally a genius while Percy, while smart, is nowhere near that. So he was blessed by Athena and now he has the potential to be a genius if that makes sense. Let me know what you think :)}
Percy was walking towards his apartment with his two cousins trailing behind him, deep in conversation. It had been three months since he had changed his appearance and name. He was currently living in an apartment with Nico, Thalia, and Hestia, who he called 'Aunt May'. He would have kept referring to her by her godly title but he didn't want to slip up in case someone came over. Nico and Thalia called her that as well. Their records showed that they were Hestia's foster children.

It was about a month ago when Percy had decided to take her advice and become a hero. He had made a suit and used the spider-web Athena gave him to get around. He mostly helped with small things around the city and never stuck around long enough for them to get a decent photo of his suit. He was eighty-seven percent sure that his cousins knew it was him in the suit but had decided not to say anything. He was one hundred percent certain Hestia knew but she didn't know that he knew she knew.

Lost in thought, Percy idly heard Thalia comment on the expensive car outside his apartment complex. As he unlocked the door to the apartment, he shoved the DVD player he had been carrying into Nico's arms, forcing him to hold it.

"Hey!" Nico cried, indignantly.

Percy walked through the door backward, his tongue stuck out mockingly. The three made their way through the small space, calling out greetings to Aunt May as they went.

"Hey, did you see the crazy car parked outside..." Thalia started to ask before trailing off, speechless at the man sitting by Aunt May. Her cousins weren't any better. Both of their jaws were dropped, staring at the multi-billionaire.

"Mr. Parker, Ms. Grace, Mr. Di Angelo," Tony Stark greeted.

Surprisingly, Percy was the first to speak, his voice cracking slightly as he stuttered out a response, "What are you doing... Uh, hey. I'm Pe-Peter."

"Tony," came the reply, as if Peter didn't already know who he was.

"What are you doing here?" Nico asked, accusingly. Percy was wary as well. He knew from firsthand experience that powerful men coming to visit wasn't always a good thing.

"Nico, be nice," Aunt May warned. She too was wary of the mortal who had almost destroyed the world but at least she was better at hiding it.

"I gotta go with Nico on this one, Aunt May. Why would a billionaire be visiting us?" The way Thalia said it was a challenge, daring the older man to answer. She gave him a wolf glare and he shifted his eyes away almost immediately.

"I thought it was about time that Mr. Parker and I met," Stark answered, his gaze focusing on Peter,
who hadn't said a word since introducing himself.

The three teens (technically two teens and a senior citizen) tensed. Whenever someone wanted to meet Percy, it was normally never for a good reason. They almost always had an ulterior motive.

"And what do you want with Peter?" Thalia asked cautiously. She really didn't want to manipulate the Mist so soon after their fresh start.

"Apparently, Peter applied for a grant through the Stark Internship program," Aunt May said with narrowed eyes. Percy knew he didn't have her fooled and would most likely be getting a lecture later.

"You did? But you're just a Kelp Head," Nico snarked.

Percy ignored the comment.

"The September Foundation. Remember when you applied?" Stark reminded him. They both knew he had no idea what the older man was talking about. Peter nodded his head mutely. "Great, well, I approved so here we are."

"Why didn't you tell us?" Nico asked. He sounded slightly hurt.

"Yeah, you keeping secrets from us now Parker?" Thalia jibed but Percy knew his cousin well enough to recognize the pain in her eyes. He didn't blame her, they had made a vow to stick together and it seemed like he broke it by not telling them.

"I- I just didn't want you guys to get your hopes up in case I didn't get it," he defended. "What exactly did I apply for anyway?"

He had directed the question at Stark but he chose the wording to deliberately tip his cousins off that he had no idea what was going on.

"That's what I'm trying to hash out."

"Okay, ha-hash it out. Yeah," Peter tried to sound confident.

"I'm sorry, it's just that I can't believe she is someone's aunt," Stark turned the conversation away from the grant.

"Yes, well," Hestia said, sounding cold for the goddess of the hearth, "we come in all shapes and sizes."

Stark looked slightly put out by the change in mood. Before he could respond, Nico cut in, "Does the grant involve, like, money?"

"It's pretty well funded. Look who you're talking to kid," Tony answered Nico's question. He gestured to Peter. "Can I get five minutes with him?"

They looked reluctant to leave Percy with Stark but nodded his head minutely and they relaxed. Peter led him to the room that he shared with Nico. Peter was hyper-aware of everything going on around him. He was especially aware of when Stark bolted the door shut but he wasn't particularly worried what with his family in the next room. Stark walked over to his trash can and spit out the walnut loaf Aunt May had offered him. Percy mentally raised his eyebrows. He wondered how Stark would react if he knew that he had just spit out food from a goddess.

Peter watched as Stark looked around his room before his gaze settled on his collection of old
computers. Percy still didn't trust that he no longer had a demigod scent so he took his chances with the older tech instead of the new stuff.

"Whoa, what do we have here? Retro tech, huh? Thrift store? Salvation Army?" Stark asked.

"Uh, the trash," Peter admitted sheepishly.

"You're a dumpster diver," Tony stated.

"Yeah I was... listen I definitely did not apply for your grant."

"Ah, me first," Stark clapped his hands together and pulled out a high tech smartphone. Peter tensed as he played a clip of him as Spiderman, "Just a quick question of the rhetorical variety. That's you, right?"

Peter tried to play it cool. "Uh, no. What do you, what do you mean?"


Peter turned his back on Stark, despite his demigod instincts screaming at him not to. "That's all on Youtube, though, right? I mean, that's where you found that? Because you know that's all fake. It's all done on the computer."

Peter really should have listened to his demigod side because in his distraction he hadn't notice Stark poke at the ceiling where his suit was hidden until it was falling. He lunged for it and managed to throw the suit in his closet but he knew it was too late.

"So... you're the Spider...ling. Crime-fighting spider... Spider-Boy?" The way Stark said it shows that it was not a question.

"Spider-Man."

He scoffed, "Not in that onesie you're not."

Peter crossed his arms. He watched as Stark picked his suit. "It's not a onesie. I don't believe this. I was actually having a really good day today, you know, Mr. Stark. Didn't miss my train, this perfectly good DVD player was just sitting there and... algebra test. Nailed it!"

"Who else knows? Anybody?"

Peter hesitated for a second before deciding to tell the truth, "I don't think so."

"What does that mean?" Stark asked.

"I think my aunt and cousins know. At least my aunt. None of them have said anything about it. They're gonna know after you leave."

Stark raised an eyebrow, "You're going to tell them?"

"More like their going to force it out of me. There is no way they fell for any of the lies about the grant," Peter snorted.

Stark hummed noncommittally. "You know what I think is really cool? This webbing. That tensile strength is off the charts. Who manufactured that?"
"I did."

"Climbing the walls, how're you doing that? Cohesive gloves?" Stark asked. He didn't give Peter any time to respond before he started to inspect the suit further. He exclaimed, "Can you even see in these?"

Peter huffed and grabbed the suit, "Yes. Yes, I can! I can. I can-I can see in those. Okay? It's just that... when whatever happened, happened... it's like my senses have been dialed to 11. There's way too much input, so... they just kinda help me focus."

Peter sat down in on the bottom bunk where his bed was located as Tony addressed him. "You're in dire need of an upgrade. Systemic, top to bottom. One hundred point restoration. That's why I'm here. Why are you doing this? I gotta know. What's your MO? What gets you out of that twin bed in the morning?"

Peter looked down at his hands. His ADHD started to kick in and he began fiddling with the suit, "Because... because I've been me my whole life, and I've had these powers for three months. I read books, I build computers... And-and yeah. I would love to play football. But I couldn't then so I shouldn't now."

"Right, because you're different."

"Exactly. But I can't tell anybody that, so I'm not. When you can do the things that I can, but you don't... and then the bad things happen... they happen because of you," Peter explained. There was also what she had said but Stark knew nothing about that.

"So you wanna lookout for the little guy. Do your part? Make the world a better place, all that, right?" Stark summed up.

"Yeah. Yeah just looking out... for the little guy. That's-That's what it is," Peter responded.

Stark walked closer to Peter. "I'm going to sit here so you move the leg." Peter shifted his leg to make room for him. Stark hesitantly put his hand on Peter's shoulder, "You got a passport?"

Peter looked at him bewilderedly, "Uh, no. I don't even have a driver's license."

"You ever been to Germany?" When Peter shook his head, Stark continued, "Oh, you'll love it."

"I can't go to Germany!" Peter protested.

"Why?"

Percy deflected the question. He was suspicious again. "Why do you want me to go to Germany? Because I'm not even going to think about going until you explain."

Stark sighed and it seemed like he had aged ten years. "The Avengers need to be controlled. I'm sure you saw that mess with Rumlow and the subsequent Sokovia Accords in Vienna. James Barnes blew up the building and killed a lot of people." He continued at Percy's silent nod, "The Sokovia Accords are about controlling the Avengers. I agree with them, Cap doesn't. When Barnes was captured, Steve helped him escape even after he had harmed the psychiatrist that was given. I've been given forty-eight hours to bring him in or else things will turn a lot uglier. Cap is my friend and I want to help him before this becomes even messier."

Percy thought about it for a few minutes, going over his options. He sighed, "I-I'm sorry Mr. Stark. I need a little bit to think about this. What you're asking me to do... fight against Captain America. Just
give me an hour to think about it. I need to talk to my family and figure things out."

Stark looked surprised for a moment before he smiled tightly. Percy felt bad for him, he really did but he did not want to enter another fight without all of the information first. Stark looked down at his watch.

"I can give you thirty minutes. If you do decide to help, have a small bag packed."

Tony exited his room. His family was sitting on the couch, waiting for them to come out.

"I hope you decide to come, Peter. Ms. Parker, you've got one special kid," Tony inclined his head. He left through the front door without another word.
The moment the door swung closed, Peter whirled around and stared at his cousins, panic-stricken.

"You've got thirty seconds to explain, Jackson," Thalia growled lowly.

Percy's eyes widened as he realized that he probably wouldn't have to worry about his decision because Thalia would kill him first.

Chapter End Notes

To address the whole 'Peter' vs 'Percy' thing, basically what I'm going to do is use Peter whenever he is interacting with MCU characters and acting as the MCU Spiderman. Like when he is talking to Tony or at school. In that setting, he is expected to be Peter so that's what he is going to be called. When he's acting like Percy and the movie's course is altered he will be called Percy. Like when his demigod instincts kick in or he is with his cousins. Of course, that doesn't mean that Peter and Percy are two completely separate personalities. They are the same person but with the name change and changes in the movie, it's easier to show where the differences are. The same goes for Hestia. When she is acting more like the goddess she will be called Hestia and when she is acting more like the MCU character she will be called Aunt May.

I hope that made sense. Let me know what you think :)
"Time's running out Jackson," Thalia growled. She had just threatened Percy to explain but he was still staring at her like a Kelp Head. Her threatening seemed to work and shook Percy out of his stupor.

"Please don't kill me!" Percy begged.

"I won't if you actually listen to me and explain what on Olympus just happened!"

Percy chuckled sheepishly, "Um, remember when I got bit by that spider during the final battle with Gaea and was knocked unconscious for a while?"

Nico raised an eyebrow. "I think you're forgetting the part where you got spider powers and can now stick to walls." His eyes widened and he groaned as he came to a realization. “Please, tell me you aren’t the new vigilante that’s running around.”

Percy grimaced which seemed to be the only confirmation that Nico needed.

Thalia blinked once but showed no other reaction. She asked, "What does that have to do with Tony Stark coming to visit us?"

"He discovered your identity," Hestia stated softly. Percy nodded his head in response.

"You idiot," Thalia hissed.

"Yeah, whatever, I know, I'm a Seaweed Brain," Percy dismissed. "We have bigger problems though."

"And what," Nico asked sarcastically, "could be more important than a billionaire finding out your secret?"

"How about a billionaire wanting my help in a fight against Captain America?" Percy snapped.

Thalia's eyes widened. "Why would he want your help fighting against Captain America?"

"You aren't going to do it, are you? If you do, I am never talking to you again. I remember him from before the Hotel. He was everyone's hero," Nico told Percy.

"I don't know. It was something about the Sokovia Accords," Percy answered Thalia, choosing to ignore Nico's fanboying about the man he could potentially be fighting.

"I have heard about these Sokovia Accords," Hestia started, "and from what I know, I do not think you should do this."

Thalia nodded her head, "I agree. I was reading up on them the other day-"

"I didn't know you could read," Nico snorted in amusement.

Thalia glared at him before continuing, "The basis of the Accords is to reign in the Avengers."

Percy nodded his head thoughtfully, "That matches up to what Stark said."
"Well, the part he didn't tell you, is that the Accords also forces enhanced people to register with the government."

Percy paled, "That's not good. Stark is going to be disappointed when he comes back."

***

The knock on the door startled Percy even though he knew it was coming. He lunged towards the door and opened it, trying not to flail too much. Unsurprisingly, it was Tony Stark standing behind the door, with a briefcase in hand. The strained smile on Stark's face dropped and his eyes dimmed once he saw that Percy didn't have anything with him.

"You aren't coming," Stark stated unnecessarily.

Peter shook his head, "I'm sorry Mr. Stark. I looked up the Sokovia Accords and while I agree with some of it... the rest goes against what I believe in."

Stark just sighed dejectedly, "I had a feeling you were going to say no. You're a good kid, Peter. Don't change."

"I don't plan on it, Mr. Stark," Peter said confidently.

Stark looked like he was going to walk away for a moment before he turned back to Peter. He held out the briefcase. Peter took it gingerly, wondering what was inside.

Stark inclined his head, "A gift. I think you could be great, kid. You just need some help. We'll be in touch."

Peter smiled sincerely, "Thank you, Mr. Stark."

Tony just gave him a tight smile that looked more like grimace before walking down the hall, leaving Peter standing in the doorway.

Percy closed the door to the apartment and took the briefcase back to his room to open. He set it on his bed and slowly reached for the clasps. He had a feeling that whatever was inside would change his life.

It was like a scene from a movie when Percy finally opened the case. The first thing he saw was the spider symbol and the brighter colors. He grinned to himself as he lifted his new suit out. He couldn't wait to try it on for the first time.

Chapter End Notes

So Peter doesn't fight the avengers in a Walmart parking lot which means none of them know/have met Spider-Man. I wonder how this could impact the future. :) I'm thinking of making daily updates to this book. Let me know if you think I should.
It was midnight, the city streets were as bright as ever, the lights of New York casting an ethereal
glow over everything. Percy was swinging around his neighborhood, trying on the new suit Tony
Stark had given him. Even though he was supposed to be on the lookout for crime, he barely noticed
his surroundings. He was content to take in the noises of the city as he flew by.

A voice in his ear scared him out of his reverie. Percy landed roughly on the roof of a building near
his apartment before he registered who the voice belonged to and what they said.

"Enjoying yourself?" Stark asked, through what Percy assumed to be comms linked into his suit. It
was either that or he was going crazy, which was just as likely.

"Mr. Stark! Hey!"

"Hey, Underoos. How are you doing?"

"Oh, I-I'm doing great Mr. Stark. Thank you so much for the new suit by the way. I love it," Percy
exclaimed.

"Yeah, about the suit..." Stark started.

"You're not going to take it away, are you?" Peter asked, panicked. Despite only having the suit for a
couple of weeks, he was very attached to it.

"No, kid. I'm not going to take the suit. But with that suit, comes a lot of responsibility. I have a
friend, Happy, he's going to be your point man on all of this," Stark told him seriously.

Peter nodded his head before realizing the older man couldn't see him. Probably. There was always a
possibility that Stark was watching him, especially considering all of the technology he had at his
fingertips.

"Yeah, I understand."

"When you're in that suit," Stark started, "don't do anything I would do. And don't do anything I
wouldn't do. There's a little gray area in there. That's where you operate."

Percy furrowed his eyebrows. Stark's advice was absolute nonsense, but Percy tried to follow along
anyway. Peter's eyes widened as he realized a possible implication of having the suit. "Does that
mean I'm an Avenger?"

"No," Stark deadpanned. Instead, he suggested, "However, if you're up for it, you can be on standby
in case we ever need you."

"Yeah! That, that would be awesome," Percy exclaimed. If was able to work with the Avengers then
he could help more people, which would make her proud.

"Yeah, someone will call you. I've got to go now, so we'll be in touch," Stark said hurriedly. Percy
could tell the comms had been disconnected but he didn't really care.

"They're going to call me," Peter muttered to himself as a large grin spread across his face. He started
his short journey home, thinking of his cousins' reactions when he told them what had happened.

***

It was two weeks later and Peter hadn't heard anything from Stark or the man named Happy. He had tried to initiate contact repeatedly, but none of his texts were answered. He was on the train with his cousins, who were talking quietly to each other while glancing his way every few seconds. Percy didn't doubt that they were talking about him but he was too distracted to take out his earbuds and actually listen to their conversation.

The trio made their way into the school building. Nico and Thalia had run ahead and were waiting for him by the door. Peter just made it out of the way of a silver car trying to run him over, driven by none other than Flash Thompson himself. Flash called out a crude insult as he sped by, laughing at his own immature joke. Percy just rolled his eyes and made his way to his cousins.

"I wish you would let me summon a couple of skeletons to deal with him," Nico said, the announcements about homecoming drowned out by his grumbling.

"Or at least let me drop him off with the Hunters," Thalia complained. "It would be so nice to see him turned into a jackalope."

Percy chuckled at their antics, "He's just a mortal bully. Nothing I haven't dealt with before. Now you should head to class. Aunt May will kill you if you're late, again."

"Yeah, yeah, we're going," Nico waved him off and he walked away with Thalia, who was flipping him off with her back turned.

Peter made his way through the hallways to his locker. He was in the middle of putting his supplies away when a voice started speaking in his ear.

"Join me, and we can build my new LEGO Death Star," Ned whispered in a gravelly voice, trying to imitate the Sith Lord.

"So lame," a cheerleader to their right commented.

Peter didn't really care, he was more excited than anything. He exclaimed, "No way, that's awesome. How many pieces?"

"Three thousand eight hundred and three. You want to build it tonight?"

Peter groaned, "No man, I can't tonight. I've got the Stark-"


"Yeah, but maybe it'll lead to a real job with them," Peter explained.

The two continued to talk about the internship as they walked to class. Peter slowed to a stop and Ned's words filtered through his brain in a haze. His gaze had settled on Liz, the only girl who had attracted his attention since her. However, the majority of the reason he liked Liz was that she painfully reminded him of An- her. Liz was smart (she was the captain of the decathlon team), kind, and just different enough from her that he didn't feel physically sick when he gazed at her.

Peter shook himself out of his reverie. He had to get to class, he couldn't waste time daydreaming about girls.
I completely forgot that yesterday was Saturday so enjoy a double update! Let me know what you think :)

Chapter End Notes
"-till with us?"

Percy's head shot up at the sound of the teacher's voice. He was plagued by nightmares the previous night and the lack of sleep was catching up with him. His eyes focused in on the blackboard that showed a linear acceleration model. It was at times like these that he was grateful for Athena's blessing and Anna- her extra tutoring.

"Uh, yeah. Mass cancels out, so it's just gravity times sine."

"Right. See, Flash, being the fastest isn't always the best if you are wrong," the woman said condescendingly. Percy didn't even notice Flash threatening him, his eyes were focused on the teacher. Now that he thought about it, he couldn't remember her teaching there very long. The way she purposely antagonized Flash so he would blame Peter was suspicious as well. He would have to bring it up to his cousins after school. Percy couldn't risk alerting her now and causing a scene that would get him expelled.

Thoughts on his teacher faded to the back of his mind as the day went on. In chemistry, he worked on the third version of his web fluid, mixing chemicals in the drawer of his desk when no one was looking.

He finally saw Ned again at lunch. The two sat at their normal table and Percy decided to share his weird feelings about his teacher with his friend.

"I'm just saying, she made Flash angry with me on purpose by humiliating him!" Peter exclaimed.

"I don't know man, Ms. Warren has always been super nice. I mean, she stays after every Wednesday for extra help. Anyone who voluntarily deals with high schoolers more than they have to has to be a saint," Ned countered. Percy cursed in his mind. Ned was probably affected by the Mist and therefore would have no reason to be wary of her. It was a good thing today was Wednesday, so he could confront her after school.

"Yeah man, you're probably right," Peter dropped the subject, "but I still think she's a little strange."

Ned chuckled, "What did Flash look like when everyone started laughing?"

"Oh, he was so mad. His face looked like a tomato. I think he wanted to legitimately murder me," Peter snorted, thinking back to that morning.

"Look, it's Liz," Ned said suddenly, gesturing to the senior as she hung up a sign for homecoming.

Peter's attention snapped to Liz. He sighed dreamily, "She looks amazing. Is that a new top?"

"No, we've seen that before, just never with that skirt," Ned responded instantly. Percy looked at him like he was an alien. He had meant for the question to be rhetorical, he didn't think Ned would actually have an answer.

Ned caught his slightly horrified gaze. "I have a really good memory! It's not creepy," He tried to defend himself.

"Peter's right for once. It is creepy, you guys are losers. Also, Ms. Warren is odd. She just showed up
one day and started teaching, with no explanation as to where the last guy went," Michelle butted in from a few seats down.

Percy threw his hands up, "See, I told you!"

Ned ignored him and focused in on the first part of her statement, "Why do you sit with us then?"

"Because I have no friends," Michelle deadpanned like it was obvious.

***

"Peter, it's nationals, are you sure that you can't get one weekend off?" Mr. Harrington asked him again at Decathlon practice.

"I can't go to Washington. If Mr. Stark needs me, I have to make sure I'm here," Peter tried to get his point across. If anything happened and people were hurt because he wasn't there, he would never forgive himself.

"You've never even been in the same room as Tony Stark," Flash interrupted from where he was sitting.

"Wait, what's happening?" Cindy asked from the stage where they were practicing.

"Peter's not going to Washington," Bluebird called from the floor.

The room filled with noise as the Decathlon team started to protest his upcoming absence.

"He already quit marching band and robotics," Michelle pointed out. When everyone stared at her, she just shrugged, "I'm not obsessed with him. Just very observant."

"Flash, you're in for Peter," Liz announced. Even though he was upset Flash of all people got his spot, he found solace in the fact that Liz didn't seem happy about it either.

"I don't know. Let me check my calendar first," Flash snarked. "I got a hot date with Black Widow coming up."

"That is false," Abraham stated as he rang the bell.

"What did I tell you about using the bell for comedic purposes?" Mr. Harrington reprimanded.

***

The rest of the day dragged on. When the bell finally rang, he shouted goodbye to Ned and was one of the first people out of the classroom. He jogged down the hallway, slowing down as he reached his cousins. He slid between them and wrapped his arms around their shoulders.

"We have a potential monster," he whispered, trying to act natural.

Thalia turned her head towards him and smiled, following his lead on acting calm. Her tone was lighthearted but her words were completely serious, "Who, what, and where?"

Percy retracted his arms and started to walk normally. "A teacher, Ms. Warren. She's staying after today for tutoring. I figure we stick around until all of the students are gone and then confront her so we don't make a scene."

"That's actually a smart plan, Kelp Head," Nico joked. Percy shoved his head forward playfully in
Thalia rolled her eyes at their antics. "Come on, we can hang out in the auditorium until we have a chance. It's close enough to her classroom."

***

"Hey, idiots!"

Percy shot up, his arms flailing slightly. Nico wasn't much better, he was sprawled on the floor. They had been waiting for the past hour and he had dozed off.

"Gods, Thalia! Do you have to be so loud?" he complained.

"Maybe if you two hadn't fallen asleep, we wouldn't be in this position. Now come on, we can't let her get away," Thalia said sarcastically. That statement successfully got Nico and Percy to scramble for the exit as Thalia laughed. Right before they left, Percy ran back to his backpack and searched through it for a moment before grinning and running after his cousins.

The trio cautiously approached the classroom. Thalia stopped from where she was leading them. Percy handed her the item he had retrieved from his backpack. They nodded to each other before going their separate ways. With both of his cousins out of sight, Percy took a deep breath before he schooled his features. He made his way to the classroom door, coming to a halt at the threshold. He made sure he had one hand in his pocket in case he needed to use Riptide.

"Uh, Ms. Warren?"

The potential monster looked up from her desk where she was packing up. She smiled at him, sickly sweet. If he wasn't looking for it, Percy wouldn't have noticed the way her eyes narrowed at him and a strange glint entered her eyes.

"Can I help you?" she asked.

"Uh, yeah," he responded, trying to make himself look small, "I had a question about today's lesson."

"You seemed to understand it well enough during class," she narrowed her eyes. "And I'm sorry but you're too late. Tutoring ended ten minutes ago. You can try to catch me tomorrow during my planning period. Next time, if you have a question, try to be more punctual, Mr. Jackson."

Percy narrowed his eyes at her, "Parker."

"Hmm?"

"My name, it's Peter Parker," Percy said, emphasizing his last name. He had no doubt that this was a monster now.

"Oh, of course. My mistake, Mr. Parker," the monster tried to brush it off, but Percy could tell it was nervous.

Percy narrowed his eyes and walked into the room, changing his stance to almost predatory. He sneered, "Are you sure it was a mistake?"

The monster's appearance flickered for a moment, changing into a dracanae before settling back into the disguise of Ms. Warren. Percy grinned wolfishly. The fight would be easier than he originally
thought. The dracanae hissed and was about to lunge at him when he pulled out Riptide and held it out threateningly, easily falling back into the proper stance.

"You sure you want to do that?" he snarled. Nico emerged from the shadows to the right of the dracanae, holding his Stygian Iron sword menacingly.

The dracanae backed up, obviously threatened at the sight of two powerful demigods. It had barely gotten two feet when it froze and looked down at the spear impaling its stomach. It exploded in a burst of yellow dust that thoroughly coated the floor and the spear as it clattered to the ground. The spot behind where the dracanae was standing shimmered for a moment before Thalia came back into view, holding Annabeth’s Yankees cap. She smirked at them before bending down to retrieve her spear, grimacing at the yellow powder.

"That was anticlimactic. I was hoping for more of a fight," Thalia sighed disappointedly.

"Yeah, it didn't even say anything. There was no normal 'I'm going to kill and then eat you, demigod scum'," Nico pointed out.

"I think we scared it. I am happy that we don't have to explain why anything is damaged. It's a nice change from getting expelled after a big fight," Percy chuckled.

"I hate to admit it, but you guys did look pretty threatening. And nice job with the taunts Perce. Of course, it helped that it didn't have its spear within reach," Thalia conceded, though she had a teasing lilt to her voice. The trio made their way out of the classroom, having stowed their weapons away safely.

"Hey," Percy protested, "I bet if it had its spear it still would have backed away. I'm just that scary."

"Sure, whatever you say Kelp Head," Nico muttered under his breath. Percy punched him playfully on the arm. They exited the school building and quickly made their way across the street.

"Shut up, Death Breath. Anyway, I'm heading to Delmar's then going on patrol. Can you guys tell Hestia I'll be home late?" Percy informed them.

"Yeah sure. We'll also fill her in on our encounter at school," Nico assured him.

"Yeah, but you gotta tell us all about today's adventures as the Spider-Boy," Thalia teased.

"It's Spider-Man!" Percy whined.

"Not in that onesie," Thalia scoffed.

Percy pouted and walked off, heading left to the deli while his cousins continued home. He could still hear Thalia laughing behind him and allowed a small smile to form on his lips.

Chapter End Notes

Part two of the double update. I really like this chapter and it has to be one of my favorite's to date. I used the names from the cast list so that's where the names came from in the decathlon scene. Let me know what you think :)
Peter walked into Delmar's and greeted the man behind the counter. He enjoyed his visits to the small deli. With his salt and pepper hair that very vaguely reminded Percy of Paul, in addition to his friendly personality and adorable cat, Mr. Delmar was the type of guy that you could talk to without feeling judged. His deli was a staple in Queens and everybody loved him.

Peter came to the bodega so often, that the guys in the back started making his sandwich when they saw him come in. Peter often thought that if he wasn't Spiderman he would try to get an after-school job there. He did, however, have to voice his desire for two additional sandwiches.

"How's your aunt?" Mr. Delmar questioned, striking up a conversation as Peter stood there waiting. He made a comment to the men in the back of the store that most likely had something to do with her appearance.

Peter looked down uncomfortably. For some reason, most of the men he knew (Stark) thought Hestia was attractive. He couldn't just say that she was actually a Greek goddess who took a vow of eternal maidenhood and preferred the form of a twelve-year-old. Everyone would think he was crazier than he actually is. He decided to deflect instead of answering the question.

"How's your daughter?" Peter asked with a smirk and a joking glint in his eyes.

Mr. Delmar put on a serious face but his mouth was upturned just a tick. "Twenty dollars."

Peter gestured incredulously to the large menu hanging on the wall. "It's fifteen."

Mr. Delmar raised an eyebrow at him. "For that comment, twenty dollars."

Peter laughed a little as he fished fifteen dollars from out of his pocket and handed it to the man.

"So, how's school?"

"Oh, you know, it's boring. Got better things to do," Peter responded.

"Stay in school kid," Mr. Delmar reprimanded jokingly. "Otherwise you're going to end up like me."

Peter looked around as he grabbed the bag of sandwiches from the shop owner and put them in his backpack. "That'd be great. Best sandwiches in Queens."

Peter ran out of the store and across the street before heading down an empty alleyway. Once he was a few feet in he started stripping down and throwing all of his clothes into his backpack. He pulled out his Spiderman suit and quickly put it on as he walked. As he reached a dead end he tapped on the spider emblem which caused the suit to stick to him instead of being baggy. Peter grinned to himself from under the mask as he felt it mold to his form. It was another cool feature that he loved about being Spiderman. Holstering his backpack, Peter jumped onto the top of the building before starting to web across Queens.

Peter loved this part of the day where he could fly across New York in relative peace. It gave him time to think and clear his head. He only had to stop a few times to catch a bicycle thief and a car thief. The latter was slightly embarrassing because it turned out the guy was just trying to get into his
own car. There was a lot of yelling from the people in the surrounding buildings so he left as quickly as possible. Having arrived at his destination, Peter landed in the alley next to the building where he quickly changed back into his civvies.

This next part was more difficult. Peter closed his eyes and took a breath to steady himself. Slowly, he called up the memories from his previous life. His head filled with flashes of memories from throughout his life. He saw himself, Annabeth, and Grover in the smelly truck with the circus animals on his first quest. He saw Tyson, running towards him for a bone-crushing hug. He saw his memories of seeing both Thalia and Nico for the first time. With that came the images of Bianca and Zoe and their subsequent deaths that left such a large impact on his life. He saw the Labyrinth, Calypso, and Daedalus dying. He saw the Battle of New York and all the deaths that accompanied it. He felt the pain of the River Styx as its curse caused his skin to become impenetrable. He saw Luke sacrificing himself and proving that he was a hero. He saw himself denying godhood and kissing Annabeth in the lake.

At this point the memories were flying across his vision, lasting only a few seconds each. He saw the Wolf House and Lupa. He saw Camp Jupiter and New Rome and the legion. He saw Frank and Hazel and their journey to Alaska. He saw his trek through Tartarus and Bob and Damasen sacrificing themselves to close the Doors of Death. He saw the final battle with Gaea as Leo saved the camp. He saw Annabeth dying and the emptiness in his soul that followed. He saw his mother when he finally came home and her sadness as he left once again to start over with his cousins. He saw his baby sister Estelle from his monthly visits. He saw everything that made him Percy Jackson and channeled that until there was a warm feeling in his chest that slowly spread until his whole body was tingling. It took two minutes until the feeling subsided and another three minutes until he had calmed down enough after seeing his life flash before his eyes.

When he opened his eyes they were no longer a rich brown color but a blazing sea green that almost seemed to glow with power. He was five inches taller with broader shoulders and a swimmer's figure. His hair, which was once a chocolate brown color and neatly styled, was now black and windswept. Percy rolled his shoulders as he reoriented himself. Changing between his two personas was a taxing ordeal but a worthwhile one. It was especially helpful whenever he was visiting his allies and friends, which admittedly was not often.

Percy jogged up the stairs to the ornately decorated double doors and knocked. It took a moment before one of the doors swung open and he walked inside.

"Mr. Jackson," a voice said gruffly from his right, "you're late."

Percy turned to face the speaker. He grinned and reached into his backpack for one of the sandwiches as he replied, "Aw, come on Wong. Cut me some slack, I had to take care of some things on the way here. I got your sandwich for you so you shouldn't be complaining."

As he started walking up the stairs of the sanctum he called out, "And I told you to call me Percy."

Percy could hear Wong grumbling behind him but he didn't look back. With a small grin on his face, he made his way to where he knew Strange was waiting for him. Entering the room, Percy put down his backpack and took a seat.

"Ah, Percy. Come on, we have a lot of work to do." Strange floated up dramatically. Percy sighed and got up to follow the Sorcerer Supreme into a separate room. In it was a large table covered in star charts as well as maps of Earth with a few areas circled and highlighted.

Percy stopped at one end of the table while Strange walked down to the other. Percy opened his mouth to speak but Strange cut him off.
"We'll get to that, but first," he trailed off before holding his hand out expectantly.

Percy subtly rolled his eyes at the man's dramatic flair. The only people worse than Stephen Strange when it came to theatrics was Tony Stark and Zeus himself. Percy often wished that none of them would ever have the misfortune of meeting. Their egos would explode trying to outdo the other. His uncle would most likely smite the two mortals for their attitude after Stark or Strange inevitably insulted one of the Olympians. Percy heard thunder rumble in the distance and smirked to himself. Regardless of Strange's behavior, Percy tossed him his sandwich and watched as the man unwrapped it and started eating.

"So," Percy began, "two months ago, another Great Prophecy was-"

"What are you doing?" Strange cut him off, looking up from his sandwich for the first time.

"Giving a brief recap of everything we've worked on the past two months."

"Why? We've both been here for the past two months. It's not like anyone else is here with us."
Strange looked at him condescendingly.

Percy gave him an unimpressed stare. "My friend Wade would disagree with you but that's not important. My ADHD makes it hard for me to focus sometimes. This will help keep me on track and provide a refresher for both of us."

"You do know that I have an eidetic memory, right?"

"Then you can just eat your sandwich and I'll talk to myself," Percy snarked.

Strange rolled his eyes but focused his attention on his sandwich once again. Percy shook his head to gather his thoughts and started voicing his thoughts again, "As I was saying before, two months ago another Great Prophecy was issued by Rachel. It spoke of a mad Titan who was bent on destroying half the population of the entire universe. It also mentioned a hero with ties to all four pantheons as the champion who would unite them against this enemy. After much discussion, the gods have decided that this was me. The only other candidate was... Annabeth."

Percy took a moment to calm his emotions before continuing, "We know that we have at least two years before this, apocalypse, for lack of a better word, occurs. Um, the prophecy also mentions infinity stones and the return of a long-forgotten ally."

"Why don't you just say the entire prophecy at this point?"

Percy gave Strange a small glare that he held for a few seconds before averting his eyes. Percy smirked to himself. He mentally thanked Lupa for teaching him the wolf-glare. It often came in handy when knocking down Strange's ego. He did, however, comply with Strange's demand.

"A demigod with ties to all the gods,
Shall be their champion and face the odds,
The four pantheons united under one foe,
Together their strength will only grow,
In two years time, the Mad Titan will rise,
With his search for the stones comes half the universe's demise,
An ally long forgotten shall live again,
And with them heralds the Dark Lord's end."

“Mmh, very ominous," Strange remarked sarcastically after Percy had finished.
Percy had to physically stop himself from rolling his eyes. He was starting to compare to Thalia rolling her eyes at himself and Nico. He was actually sort of impressed with how much Strange could get on his nerves.

"If that's all the requests you have," Percy trailed off, staring at Strange. In response, the man gestured obnoxiously with his hand for Percy to continue.

"After the gods heard the prophecy and decided that I was, once again, the subject of it, they informed me of the Infinity Stones. Great stones of power that represent fundamental forces of the universe, all of that. They have no idea who the 'Mad Titan' could be, but they doubt it's a Titan in the traditional sense.

"They knew where one infinity stone was: yours, obviously. They sent me so we could work together and find the other stones. So far we know that the mind stone is located in the being called Vision. We've managed to come up with a way to track his location continuously, so we don't need to worry about him. The next one is in the Tesseract, which, as far as we know, is still on Asgard with Thor. The Norse have promised to keep it safe until we need it. The power, reality, and soul stones are still missing... and we have no idea where they are," Percy summarized.

"Thank you, for that depressing endnote. Can we get to work now?" Strange snarked.

"I was just about to ask you the same thing. Have you found anything in your books? Sorry, I meant has Wong found anything in the books?" Percy shot back. He sighed internally. As much as liked bantering with Strange he knew it was going to be a long day.

***

Peter was sitting on the fire escape of a building in Queens. The meeting with Strange had lasted longer than he had expected and the sun was already setting. He looked out on his city as it was bathed in golden light and smiled. Seeing his home safe and protected made everything worth it. The pain and death, it was all worth it if it meant seeing other people safe. It made the gaping hole in his chest seem a little less cold. He might have helped re-imprison Atlas under the sky when he was fourteen, but the weight of the world had never left his shoulders. He liked to think Annabeth was proud of him and his accomplishments, fondly calling him a seaweed brain every time he messed up.

Percy allowed himself one more moment of sadness before pulling out his phone and calling Happy. He gave the man a walkthrough of the evening like he had every day since getting the man's number. He ended the call as soon as possible. He needed to try and make it home in time for dinner if not Hestia would kill him.

Peter got up and reloaded his web-shooters so he could start the trip back to his apartment. As he was about to swing away, a shout from the street below caught his attention. He saw a group of thugs enter the bank and smirked to himself. He had been itching for a fight. Percy shook the thought from his head. He was starting to sound like Thalia. He knew that he should try and avoid conflict or confrontation. It would be best if he could just slip in, web the people responsible, and then slip out after calling the police.

Peter walked into the bank and closed the door softly behind him. The robbers were too busy to even notice him walk in. Peter couldn't help but goad them a little bit. He was also acutely aware of the ATM lying in pieces on the floor. Whoever these guys were, they had some serious tech. He would have to look into it after he took care of them.

"What's up, you guys? Did you forget your PIN numbers or something?" The group turned to look at him. Peter gasped sharply, "Woah, you guys are the Avengers! What are you doing here?"
The two closest to him raised their weapons. Peter quickly fired a web onto the barrel of the gun before it could fire. He swung the weapon and knocked the two down. He fired another web at the ceiling and kicked the third man in the chest.

"Thor! Hulk! So good to finally meet you guys. I thought you'd be more handsome in person," Peter quipped. He was hanging upside down. The one in the Iron mask ran up and started trying to punch him. Peter easily dodged all of them even while he was talking. "Iron Man, what are you doing robbing a bank? You're a billionaire!"

Percy felt the hairs on the back of his neck rise. He quickly flipped out of the way of a beam of blue light. He watched as the light accidentally caught one of the robbers and held him immobile. He quickly webbed the one in the Captain America mask who was holding the weapon. He heard another gun powering up behind him and quickly jumped onto the ceiling. He flung a web at the gun. The man was pinned to the floor, but not before he pulled the trigger and a concentrated beam of purple light fired and went out the windows before hitting the bodega across the street.

Percy watched in horror before snapping out of it and webbing the other two thugs. He would have to come back for the weapons but he had to check on Mr. Delmar first. He ran towards the burning building before ducking inside. The air was thick inside and he had trouble breathing even through the air filter in his mask. He found Mr. Delmar inside, thankfully alive and conscious. He grabbed the cat and guided the older man outside. He could hear sirens wailing in the distance. Percy panicked and quickly handed Mr. Delmar his cat back. He made his way back to the bank. He quickly grabbed the two guns and stored them in the Duat. They were too bulky to carry and he couldn't just leave them there.

Percy looked back on the destroyed storefront sorrowfully. It was another thing that he couldn't save. The police sirens were getting louder and Percy couldn't afford to stay any longer. He webbed onto the roof of the bank and started running. His heart was pounding with fear and adrenaline and Percy wondered if the feeling would ever leave him.

Chapter End Notes

This also has to be another one of my favorite chapters to date. What did you think of the Prophecy? Any guesses on who the forgotten ally is? Let me know what you think :)
Peter stopped running across the rooftops and leaned down as he caught his breath. He pulled out his phone and quickly called Happy. He was surprised when the man actually answered the phone. It normally went to voicemail whenever Peter called. The man did sound distracted so it was probably an accident. "I just stopped these guys from robbing an ATM-"

Happy cut him off. "Hey, take a deep breath. I don't have time to worry about ATM robberies or the notes you leave. Moving day is coming up and there are still a million things to do."

Percy cursed. He had heard about Stark selling Avengers Tower on the news, but he had never realized what it might mean for Happy. It was probably futile to try and inform Happy about the weapons he had taken. The man would most likely dismiss whatever he said without even listening to it. Percy didn't blame Happy for treating him like a child. His demeanor was child-like and he didn't seem to take anything seriously but that was just his coping mechanism. After surviving two wars, jokes seemed like the best way to lighten the mood when everything was bleak.

Peter tried to warn him anyway. "No, Happy you don't understand."

Percy figured that the urgency in his voice was what caused Happy to pause.

"Okay, I'm listening. You've got one minute," Happy conceded.

"These guys, they had some serious tech. I saw them rip the face off of the ATM like it was made of paper. They had two guns. One seemed to grab things and the other was just a laser beam. It almost reminded me of the Chitauri weapons."

Happy sighed deeply. "Alright, I'll tell Tony about it. Don't do anything. We'll take care of it."

"But-"

Peter heard the phone call disconnect as Happy abruptly hung up on him. He scoffed to himself. He was definitely going to do something about it. He wasn't going to just let an innocent person get hurt by these weapons because he didn't look into them.

Peter started running again and was home in a matter of minutes. He quickly climbed in through the window of his room. He needed to tell Hestia and his cousins about what happened as soon as possible.

He was climbing on the ceiling towards the door when a crash sounded from below him. He looked down and saw Ned sitting on his bed looking at him in awe. The remnants of a LEGO Death Star were on the floor around Ned's feet. Peter cursed in his head. Hestia was going to kill him for letting Ned find out.

"What was that?" Hestia called out worriedly. She showed up in the doorway a moment later, looking frazzled.

Percy watched her process the scene before smiling sheepishly. Hestia just shook her head in exasperation but also amusement. Percy relaxed when he didn't detect any anger coming from her. He had no doubt that he would still be punished, but maybe she would go easy on him.

Hestia walked over to Ned and gently placed a hand on his shoulder. "Come on, Ned. I'm sure you have lots of questions."
She turned her attention to Percy. "Change and meet us out there. Your cousins are picking up Thai so we'll wait until they get home to explain everything."

Percy watched her lead Ned out of the room before he dropped to the floor. He started to mindlessly change his clothes as he mulled over the possibilities of the conversation that was about to happen. He had really screwed up. He never wanted Ned to be pulled into this life. If he got hurt or killed, Percy would never forgive himself. It would be nice to have a friend to talk about this stuff with though. He knew that he could always count on Thalia and Nico but he didn't want to burden them with all of his problems.

However, Percy swore to himself that he would never get Ned involved with the demigod aspect of his life if he could help it. It was too dangerous and it would involve revealing a part of his life that he was trying to move past. It's why he preferred staying as Peter Parker. Making the enchantments drop was tiring and reminded him of the dark part of his life.

Percy shook his head to clear his thoughts and walked out to the living room. Ned was sitting on the couch, still looking dumbfounded. Hestia was in the kitchen, most likely preparing tea or something to calm Ned down.

Percy took a seat across from Ned which caused him to flinch and snap out of his stupor. Percy saw Ned take a deep breath and prepared himself for the torrent of questions that Ned undoubtedly had.


Peter sighed, "Yeah, I am."

"You were on the ceiling." Ned looked on the verge of a breakdown. "How many people know?"

Peter took a second to think about it. "About five, I think. Six, if you include you. Aunt May knows, so do Nico and Thalia. This guy named Happy Hogan. Tony Stark, because he made the suit-"

Ned cut him off, "Dude, Tony Stark made your suit! Does this mean you're an Avenger?"

Peter grimaced, "No, and I don't really want to be."

"Dude, why not?" Ned exclaimed.

Peter was about to respond when he was cut off by his cousins entering the room. They each had a bag of Thai from the local restaurant. They took the food into the kitchen then came back, this time with Hestia following behind. She had a cup of steaming tea in her hand which she gingerly handed to Ned.

Thalia decided to answer Ned's question for Peter. "The Avengers are broken. Stark literally sold Avengers Tower. He may have that fancy facility upstate but the Avengers ended when they all fought in that Walmart parking lot."

Ned nodded in understanding before changing it to a lighter subject, "How does the suit work? Is it magnets? What are the webs made of?"

"In order? A lot of tech, no, and you don't want to know," Peter replied.

"Cool, one last question. Can I try on the suit?"
Chapter 13

Percy slowly closed the door to the apartment as Ned walked down the hall. After the initial shock had worn off Ned had asked a million questions about Spider-Man. Eventually, Percy had to force him to leave, promising to answer more questions at school the next day.

He turned around to face his family, meeting their expectant stares and grimacing at the thought of the upcoming questions about to be hurled his way.

"Why were you late?" Thalia demanded.

Percy chuckled nervously, "About that..."

Hestia raised her eyebrow at him, unimpressed.

Percy cleared his throat before explaining, "So, I was swinging home after meeting with Strange, which was useless because we didn't find anything new, when, I saw these guys robbing an ATM. I went to stop them and then they pulled out this advanced tech that literally tore the ATM out of the wall. So, yeah, that's my excuse."

He had been fidgeting throughout his explanation but it got worse as Hestia set her intense gaze on him.

Hestia let out a deep sigh, "As long as you're safe. It's been a long night, you three head to bed and we can talk more tomorrow."

Thalia and Nico looked on the verge of protesting before a stern look from Hestia sent them on their way. Percy followed behind them, wanting nothing more than to sleep for hours. Knowing his luck, he probably wouldn't get any sleep due to nightmares.

***

Peter arrived early at school the next morning. He had a feeling that Ned would have more questions and wanted to get them out of the way. He quickly said goodbye to his cousins and made his way to his locker where Ned was already waiting.

"Morning, Ned," Peter greeted.

Ned didn't bother to respond properly, he started to immediately ask questions, "You got bit by a spider? Can it bite me? Well, it probably would've hurt, right? Whatever. Even if it did hurt, I'd let it bite me. Maybe. How much did it hurt?"

Peter just smiled and shook his head, "The spider's dead, Ned."

That, unfortunately, didn't deter Ned from asking more questions. "Were you at Delmar's last night? I saw it on the news. It was totally trashed."

"Yeah, I was there."

Ned quickly changed the subject, "Can you lay eggs?"
"What? No!"

***

Ned managed to hold off until Chemistry before asking another question. "Can you spit venom?"
"No."
"Can you summon an army of spiders?"
"No, Ned. Now pay attention, this is going to be on the quiz."

***

"How far can you shoot your webs?"

Peter groaned and banged his head on the table, which attracted the attention of his classmates and teacher. At that point, he didn't really care what they thought, he just wanted the day to end.

***

The worst of it was in gym class. Coach Wilson was playing a fitness video of Captain America that made Percy want to jump in the Lethe.
Ned was still asking him questions. Peter ignored him, letting the sound drift to the back of his mind. He snapped out of it when Ned pushed him, before looking at him expectantly.

"What?"

Ned rolled his eyes, "I asked if I could be your guy in the chair? Do you know how there's a guy with a headset telling the other guy where to go? If you're in a burning building, I could tell you where to go. There'd be screens around me, and I could swivel around. I could be your guy in the chair."

Percy contemplated it for a second before his mind produced the vision of his friends dying because of him. He refused to let Ned become another one of those people. He replied without hesitation, "I don't need a guy in the chair."

Ned pouted for a minute but didn't bring the subject up again. The two were distracted by Liz and her group of friends having a conversation about Spider-Man.


Percy cursed in his head. He tried to deny it but instead ended up agreeing to bring Spider-Man to a party that Liz was throwing.

He wanted to be mad at Ned but understood that his friend was just trying to help. He would just have to figure out a way for both Spider-Man and Peter Parker to be at the party at the same time.

***

Ned and Peter pulled up to Liz's house later that night. They could already hear the music that was blaring from inside. They quickly said goodbye to Aunt May and walked up to the front door.

Percy had tried to get his cousins to come along but Thalia had told him it was lame and Nico melted into the shadows before he even got a chance to finish asking. He would be alone in case he needed a quick escape.
After a brief, but strange interaction with Michelle, they found Liz amongst a group of seniors. She quickly broke away from the conversation to greet them.

"Hey, guys. I'm glad you could make it."

"Hi, Liz."

"There's pizza and drinks so just feel free to help yourselves," she told them. A crash from their left drew her attention. "Sorry, I got to go. My parents will kill me if anything is broken."

She disappeared into the crowd of people, taking Peter's hope to actually have a conversation with her. Ned tried to pressure him into changing into his suit but he refused. If he ever went on a date with Liz, it would be as Peter Parker, not Spider-Man. He would not use his suit to try and get a date with someone.

***

Peter cursed himself as he took off his clothes, revealing the bright red and blue suit underneath. He had been successfully ignoring Ned's attempts to have him put on the suit when Flash approached.

The other boy was quick to start insulting Peter, calling him rude names and making fun of him. Peter got irritated and that led him here, doing the exact thing he had promised to not do.

He was about to swing down when there was a large explosion of light to his right. He stared at it for a moment, wide-eyed, before pulling on his mask. He looked at the house remorsefully before turning bad swinging the opposite direction.

Chapter End Notes

September 1st, 1989
Dear Diary,
I believe I'm a good person. You know, I think that there's good in everyone but here we are!

Anyone? Okay, I'll leave now.
Peter quietly approached the bridge where the explosion had come from. A group of men were standing around the back of a van and Peter had to hold back a gasp when he saw the tech that one of the men was showing off. It looked exactly like what the ATM robbers had.

He clung to the wall and listened as the men explained the different weapons they had in the back of the van. He jumped as his phone started ringing. He tried to quickly silence it after seeing that it was Ned calling. However, the damage was done and the two dealers had turned on the third man, thinking he had set them up. Peter didn’t have to think twice as he jumped between them. The man may have been a criminal, but he didn't deserve to die.

"Hey!" He exclaimed as he dropped down. "If you're going to shoot someone, shoot me!"

One of the men smirked before turning the weapon on him and firing. Peter felt the brunt force of the weapon hit him and then he was being thrown back into the wall. He was grateful for the mask at that moment because it prevented him from getting a mouthful of dirt after he fell to the ground. He looked up and both cars were pulling away. He quickly shot a web at the van, letting the other man go.

The dull ache in his chest persisted as he was dragged along the ground. There was a ringing in the back of his head before he instinctively dodged an incoming shot from one of the weapons. Peter managed to knock it out of the man's hands causing it to fly away from the van. He just managed to see where it landed before he was being dragged down the street again.

This time the van swerved in an attempt to knock him off. Peter hit three trash cans and a mailbox before he fell. He managed to duck into a roll at the very last second that absorbed most of the impact. He watched the van speed away before swinging after it. Peter crashed through about five more houses, startling twice as many people before he caught up to the van. He was just about to jump onto the roof when he was lifted into the air. Peter looked up and saw a humanoid figure with wings and glowing green eyes carrying him.

For a second, he thought that Alecto had decided to come after him again before dismissing the thought. Uncle Hades liked him now, he wouldn't send the Furies after him. He tried to take another look at the thing carrying him. It was obvious now that the thing was human. The green eyes were part of a mask and the wings... the wings caused a sharp pang to shoot through his chest as he remembered Daedalus. The pang increased but this time it was because the air was stinging his skin harshly as the masked man took him higher into the sky.

Percy cursed himself as he started thrashing in the man's grip. He had let himself get caught up in his memories and lost a few vital seconds. Now, he was high enough that if he fell he would have a few broken bones. He glanced down and grinned. Maybe he wouldn't end up injured after all.

The man had flown him at least five hundred feet into the air before he stopped. Percy froze as he stared into the bright green eyes on the mask for a few seconds before he was released. He hit the water with a large splash. Immediately, he felt reenergized, the water working to heal the cuts and bruises he had gained. He quickly got free of the parachute and started swimming towards where he thought the shore was. He had barely made it twenty feet when something else shot into the lake and picked him up. He started thrashing again before he saw the familiar iron suit and
stopped. He cursed in his head. He was not looking forward to the conversation he was about to have.

Stark dropped him off at the shoreline and Peter stumbled as he regained his footing. Stark hovered slightly above him, the suit managing to give off an air of disapproval.

"How'd you find me?"

"I put everything in that suit. Including this heater," Stark answered vaguely.

There was a hiss of steam as the suit started to heat up at Stark’s words. Percy pulled uncomfortably at the neck of his suit. He was already dry because of his powers and the heater provided extra uncomfortable warmth. Plus, he didn't like the thought of Stark being able to control the features on his suit.

"What were you thinking?" Stark asked.

Peter furrowed his eyebrows in confusion. "The guy with wings is the source of the weapons. I gotta take him down. What did you expect me to do?"

Stark scoffed, "Take him down now, huh? Peter, there are people who handle this sort of thing."

Peter looked at the billionaire incredulously, "Like who? The Avengers? Oh wait, they don't exist anymore. You didn't have to come out here, you know. I had that."

Stark floated down a bit. The visor of the suit opened to reveal that no one was piloting it. "Can we stop with the sass? I'm not here. You should be glad this place has Wi-Fi or you would be toast right now. Look, forget the flying vulture guy. Please."

Percy felt his blood start to boil as Stark spoke. The man couldn't even deign to be there in person and then he was treating Percy like he was a child. Which, admittedly Stark thought he was, but it was still annoying.

"Why?" Peter asked heatedly.

"Why? Because I said so! Stay close to the ground. Build up your game helping little people, like that lady that bought you the churro. Can't you just be a friendly... ...neighborhood Spider-Man?" Stark tried to explain.

The anger in Percy continued to grow. "I'm ready for more than that now."

"No, you're not."

"Yes, I am! Mr. Stark when we first met you asked me why I put on the suit and I told you it was because I could do things other people couldn't so it was my job to make sure they stayed safe. Someone once told me that with great power comes great responsibility. There's a man out there now who can do things that most people can't and he's using his abilities to hurt people. I have to be the one to stop him because no one else is willing or is able to," Percy explained to the older man.

He heard a soft sigh come out of the suit. "Trust me, kid. You have your whole life ahead of you. Focus on school. Call Happy if you come across any more of these weapons."

Before Peter could respond the suit flew away, leaving him standing there. He let out a scream of frustration before turning and swinging away. He didn't care what Tony Stark said, he was going to find the Vulture and make sure he faced justice.
Chapter 15

Peter was swinging across the street towards Liz's house when something glowing and purple flashed in the corner of his vision. He backtracked a bit before he came across a piece of the weapon that one of the men from the van was using. He picked it up and briefly examined it before putting it into the Duat with the other two weapons he had previously found. He was about to take off again when his phone started ringing. He took it out and Ned's face flashed on the screen.

"Hey, what's up," Peter answered, "I'm on my way back."

"Yeah, maybe not the best idea. Listen," Ned's garbled voice came through the phone. There was a pause, most likely Ned putting it on speakerphone before Peter could hear the faint chanting of Flash shouting and the crowd responding shortly after. Peter gave an audible sigh at the other boy's antics.

"I'm going to head home now. I'll see you tomorrow."

Peter sighed again, "Yeah, see you tomorrow, Ned."

***

Percy swung into his room to see Nico already lying down on the bottom bunk of the bed. His eyes were closed and he had his headphones on. Percy smirked to himself as he was presented with the perfect opportunity for a prank. He quietly crawled toward Nico, getting ready to yell at the top of his lungs. It would be the perfect way to cheer himself up. Nico would probably spend the next week getting back at him but it would be worth it. Oh, Percy could just imagine the look on his cousin's face as he-

"What are you doing?"

Percy screamed and fell down from the ceiling. Nico also jumped up screaming and ended up hitting his head on the top bunk. Laughter sounded from the doorway of the room where Thalia stood. There were tears coming out of her eyes as she took in the two boys sprawled on the floor of the room.

Percy stood up and dusted himself off. He shot her a glare before taking a few deep breaths to try and calm his racing heart. Thalia was still chuckling as she told him that dinner was ready and walked out. Percy rolled his eyes and then followed her out of the room with Nico right behind him, muttering under his breath.

Hestia was already sitting down at the table when Percy entered the main room. He smiled at her warmly and sat down at the spot to her right. Thalia and Nico sat down and the three of them began eating the pasta that she had whipped up while Hestia just had a glass of nectar and ambrosia.

After a couple of minutes of silent eating, Hestia turned towards Percy. "How was the party?"

Percy tried to play it cool. "It was good. I was there for five minutes before I saw these weird lights and went to check it out. It ended being a weapons deal for the same thing that destroyed Delmar's. I took it down and then got attacked by this Vulture guy who had metal wings and glowing green eyes. Stark unnecessarily fished me out of a lake and then yelled at me. And... I think that's it."

"Well, as long as everyone is safe," Hestia replied calmly.

"Really?" Percy asked hopefully.
"Really?" Nico and Thalia echoed in disbelief a second later.

"Action-wise? Yes, that's it. I wish you had called your cousins for assistance but I understand that it was a tense situation that happened quickly. However, we still need to discuss the weapons that you encountered. Where is it now?" Hestia explained.

"I stored it in the Duat. Here, give me a sec," Percy said. He stuck his hand out and grabbed one of the weapons from the ATM robbery. He handed it to Hestia who examined it for a moment before handing it to Nico.

"What do you think the glowing purple stone is?" Thalia asked.

"I am unsure," Hestia replied hesitantly. "It feels familiar but I cannot know for certain. I shall visit a few of my siblings. Perhaps they have come across something like it before. Just focus on your studies for now Perseus. I will let you know what my search yields."

Hestia took the weapon back from Thalia and started to glow. Percy shielded his eyes as the glow intensified. When the room was dark again he opened them to find Hestia had left, the cup of nectar left behind.

Percy stared at her empty chair for a moment before turning to his cousins and grinning. "I bet you ten drachmas that I can finish this entire bowl of pasta in one minute."

Thalia gave him a wolfish grin in return. "Make it twenty and you're on."

***

Percy went to school the next day with a still-full stomach and forty drachmas richer. Nico had joined in on the bet directly after Thalia agreed. Percy still felt slightly sick from eating so much food so fast but it was completely worth it.

He met up with Ned in shop class later that day. He had the stone in his backpack and was planning on working on it during class. He had a feeling that it was technological rather than magical.

"Whoever's making these weapons is combining alien tech with ours," Peter told Ned, who was looking over his shoulder while he worked.

Ned looked at him in awe, "That is literally the coolest sentence anyone has ever said. I just want to thank you for letting me be part of your journey into this amazing-"

Peter gave the machine a calculated hit with a hammer, cutting Ned off. He managed to get the stone out of the casing without attracting the attention of his teacher or classmates. He turned to face the other teen. "I gotta figure out what this is and who makes it."

"We can go to the lab after class and run tests," Ned suggested helpfully. Peter grinned at him and held out his hand. The two fist-bumped before going back to their actual assignment for the class.

***

Peter and Ned had been making their way towards the lab after school when Peter caught sight of two familiar men walking down the hallway. He quickly pulled his friend behind a wall and out of sight. He quickly explained that the two men had been the ones to attack him and left to follow them before Ned could protest or say anything.

Peter stealthily made his way behind the two men as they walked into the shop classroom. They
seemed to be following the energy signature from the stone. He froze when he saw one of the men turning towards him. He quickly got underneath a table and stuck to the bottom of it. As they walked upstairs Peter stuck his hand out and fired a small tracker at one of them. He grinned to himself before making his way back to Ned.

***

"Hey, Aunt May! I'm home and Ned's here too," Percy called as he walked into the apartment. Hestia emerged from her room. She had a strained look on her face that put Percy on edge.

"Hello, boys. Ned, are you staying for dinner?" Hestia greeted.

"Actually," Percy started, drawing out the first syllable, "Ned's staying the night. We have a new lead on the arms dealer, you know the guy with the wings that I was telling you about. I shot a tracker at one of them today and now we just have to watch to see where they're going."

"We? And when did you have the chance to track them?" Hestia questioned.

Percy chuckled nervously. "At school?"

"Was that a question?"

"No, it was definitely at school," Percy answered quickly.

"And how did they track you to the school?"

Percy grimaced. "I... may have brought the stone with me to school."

Hestia's face was blank and Percy grimaced. He really hated making the goddess upset.

"Ned, I'm going to need to a minute with Peter. Can you go wait in his room?" Hestia asked, though her tone left no room for argument.

"Sure thing, Mrs. P," Ned chuckled nervously. He quickly scurried towards Peter and Nico's room, only pausing to turn and mouth good luck to the other teen.

Once Ned was safely out of earshot Hestia turned to Percy. "I'm glad you turned to Ned for support."

Percy was startled by the change in her demeanor. He had thought she was about to lecture him again.

Hestia gave him a soft smile and gestured to the spot next to her on the couch where she was sitting. "You're cousins and I will always be here for you but you need more than that. Ned is a loyal friend, he will stand by your side through the coming hardships."

"But, Ned is mortal. I don't want him to get hurt," Percy tried to weakly protest. It had been a concern of his. He didn't want to see another one of his friends hurt because of him.

"You are strong, Perseus. Ned will be fine but you cannot push him away. Even heroes need a 'guy in the chair,'" Hestia reassured him. Her face turned serious. "However, if I find out that you've taken an unknown and potentially dangerous object to school I'm giving your cousins your dessert for two weeks.

Percy gasped in feigned outrage before chuckling softly and leaning in to hug her. He whispered a soft thank you into her shoulder before getting up. He gave Hestia an impish grin, "Tell Nico that I'm
kicking him out of the room tonight."

***

Peter stayed up all night with Ned watching the tracker move across the map. Nico had come in about an hour after they had first gotten to the apartment. He had quickly climbed the bunk and fell asleep. Percy just chuckled at his cousin's antics before taking a spot on the floor. By the time sunlight was softly streaming through the windows of his room the tracker had stopped in Maryland.

"What do you think is there?" Ned asked.

Peter shrugged, "I don't know. Maybe an evil lair? A gang with alien guns, run by a guy with wings? There's got to be an evil lair."

"Cool," Ned looked starstruck for a moment. "How are you going to get there? It's like, three hundred miles away."

Both teens simultaneously turned to the Academic Decathlon poster on the wall, showing the location as Washington DC. Peter grinned as a plan formed in his mind.

"That's not too far from Washington."

"I hope you plan on telling May where you're going," Nico grumbled, his voice muffled from where it was pressing into his pillow.

Percy scoffed, "Of course I was going to tell her."

Nico raised his head from the pillow enough to give Percy a deadpan stare.

"Okay," Percy raised his hands in surrender, "I'll tell her during breakfast."

Ned turned on his phone to check the time and paled a bit. "Crap, I've got to go. My parents wanted me to be home thirty minutes ago. I'll see at school on Monday."

Peter yelled goodbye to his friend as the other boy made a hasty exit. He walked out to the kitchen a couple of minutes later, Nico following behind like a zombie. Hestia and Thalia were already sitting there. Thalia looked like death warmed over and was nursing a cup of coffee.

Fifteen minutes later, after Percy had consumed a healthy amount of cornflakes and coffee so he was a functioning human, he told Hestia about his plan to go on the Decathlon trip so he could check out the address where the men had stopped.

Hestia nodded in agreement to his plan, "As long as you make sure you have a drachma and water in case you need to contact one of us then you should be fine. Oh, and you have to make sure that you actually compete in the Decathlon."

Percy's jaw dropped. "But what if I'm fighting the guy with wings? Isn't that more important than-"

Hestia fixed him with a stern look as she cut him off, "You made a commitment, Perseus. I expect that you'll try your hardest to uphold it, but if you must, then you may skip it."

"Great, thanks, Hestia! I've got to go pack," Percy said quickly before rushing back into his room. Hestia and his cousins watched him leave.

"He does know that that's my room too, right?"
Chapter 16

Peter made it to DC without any problems. Mr. Harrington had let him on the bus eagerly, much to Flash's chagrin. Happy had called him briefly as they were exiting the state to see where he was going but was assuaged by the lie that Peter had made. It wasn't really a lie but his focus was on finding the Vulture-guy, not winning the Decathlon. He was also still upset about the tracker in his suit. Peter had privately freaked out about earlier. He had thought of all the times that he had taken the suit to the New York Sanctum. He didn't like the thought of Stark becoming suspicious with his weekly and sometimes hours-long visits to a seemingly random building in New York. It was these thoughts that prompted him to have Ned disable the tracker in his suit as soon as they entered the hotel room.

Once the tracker was turned off and stowed safely on the lampshade, Ned informed him of the Training Wheels Protocol on the suit. Percy felt his blood boil. He was not a child and refused to be treated like one. He immediately had Ned disable the program, even if it took some convincing. He needed all of the advantages he could get to take down the man with wings. He watched with satisfaction as the suit lit up for a moment. He quickly got dressed, making sure he had his phone and the things needed for an Iris Message in the backpack he was taking with him.

He said goodbye to his friend before quietly making his way down the hallway. He had barely made it five feet before he saw Liz rushing towards him in a swimsuit. His cheeks took on an interesting new hue that matched the color of his suit as the girl got closer.

"Hey, Liz," he greeted.

"Hey, Peter. Perfect timing. We're going to go swimming. I read in a Ted Talk that a rebellious group activity the day before a competition is good for morale. Well, I heard it in a TED Talk. And I read a coaching book," the girl stuttered out. She seemed unnecessarily nervous talking to him when she was normally confident.

His reply wasn't much better. He could feel the blush on his cheeks move towards his ears as he made up an excuse for his late-night excursion. "I was-- I was gonna go study in the business center."

She gave him a look that he couldn't decipher. "You don't need to. You're, like, the smartest guy I've ever met. Besides, we raided the minibar and these candy bars were, like, eleven dollars. So, get your trunks on and come on."

He watched longingly as she continued down the hallway, clutching the candy bar she had thrown at him to his chest. He shook his head to shake himself out of his reverie. He had a job to do, and that came before his own desires.

He was standing on the roof when he finally put the mask on his head. He jumped when a female voice started talking directly in his ear.

"Hello, Peter. Congratulations on completing the Training Wheels Protocol and unlocking all of the features of your suit."

Peter decided to just roll with it before asking the suit lady to plot a course to where tracker currently was. He quickly hopped on top of a truck that was headed in the direction he needed to go before settling in. Rather than just sit there the whole time Peter decided to go through some of the suit's new capabilities.
His eyes widened comically when he saw that he saw over five hundred web-shooter combinations available. He also made the executive decision to stay away from Instant Kill Mode.

"Hey, suit-lady, can you decide which webs would be the best choice depending on the situation I'm in?" He asked. He felt silly talking to air but there was nothing he could do about it.

"Certainly, Peter," the suit responded kindly. Percy was unsettled by the amount of emotion the seemed to be able to display.

"Can you change the type of web-shooters as the situation changes?"

"Of course. Are there any programs that you prefer?" she asked.

"Not really," Percy replied. "Just, don't activate Instant Kill Mode without my explicit permission."

"Okay. You might want to jump here, though," the suit quickly said.

Peter scrambled up and jumped off of the side of the truck. He quickly scanned his surroundings. He was a bit disappointed that the evil lair was located in a gas station but it made sense. No one would suspect a random gas station as the location of a criminal's hideout. He climbed up the sign of the gas station. His visor zoomed in on the truck that was across the parking lot from him.

"Activating Enhanced Reconnaissance Mode," the suit said abruptly.

Peter quietly thanked the suit, which was weird when he thought about it for more than a few seconds. He focused on what the men in the truck were saying. His eyes widened and he grinned when he realized that he had caught them in the middle of a heist. He stealthily made his way closer to the truck by webbing to the roof of the gas station.

Peter watched as three trucks pulled past the gas station. He gasped as the man with wings circled above the last truck, like a real vulture, before shooting something at it. Peter realized that he needed to act quickly if not the man would get away again.

He shot a web towards the truck and landed towards the front of the vehicle. He approached the weird translucent thing that allowed him to see into the truck. He put one hand in and quickly took it out. It seemed like some sort of matter phase-shifter.

Peter abruptly backed away as the Vulture jumped out of the hole in the truck, carrying a bag of stolen items. He shot a web at the bag and brought it towards him. The man whipped around to face Peter a moment later. His wings, which were hovering in the air, attached to his back and Peter had to dodge an incoming attack from the razor-sharp wings.

He shot a web at the man and watched in horror as it went uselessly past him. "Well, so much for that," he thought. He would have to go through the webs later rather than rely on the suit. The Vulture took the moment to knock Peter into the truck with the bag of stolen goods.

Peter slammed down painfully onto the bottom of the truck. He jumped up to get out of the truck but his head collided with something hard. A sharp flash of pain reverberated through his skull and then everything went black.
Chapter 17

Peter blinked dazedly as he adjusted to his surroundings. His head was pounding and the details of whatever led him to this predicament were hazy. In the back of his mind, he registered the fact that he was wearing his suit. He also heard the AI in his suit informing him of a concussion but it sounded like it was coming from underwater. Or, more accurately, like he was the one underwater and the AI was talking to him from the surface. After a few minutes, the throbbing in his skull subsided to a dull ache and Peter fully opened his eyes to analyze where he was.

The site of boxes and crates sparked the memory of his fight with the Vulture. Peter scrambled up, different scenarios of what could possibly be waiting for him on the other side of those doors playing through his mind. On one hand, the man with wings could have hijacked the truck and brought Peter to his hideout. On the other hand, the man seemed to want to avoid confrontation, based on the way he went for the last truck and didn't blow it up.

Peter resigned himself to the possibility that he might have to fight his way out. He decided to go for a surprise attack. If there were people outside waiting for him, he had the advantage because they didn't know he was awake. He walked to the back of the container and then turned around and ran full speed at the metal doors. At the last second, he shot a web at the roof of the container and used his feet to kick the doors off their hinges.

He landed in a fighting position before realizing that there was no one around him. He seemed to be in a warehouse that was empty of any people. The only thing he could see was multiple storage containers, like the ones you saw on cargo boats.

Deciding to pretend that he didn't just try to attack empty air- Thalia would have a field day if she found out- Peter moved onto the most pressing issue. "Where am I?"

"You're in the most secure facility on the eastern seaboard," the suit told him. "The Damage Control deep storage vault."

Peter felt pure panic wash over him. When his cousins asked later, he would refuse to admit that he had spent the next ten minutes trying to get the door open with his hands.

"The door will most likely remain closed until morning," she informed him helpfully.

Later, he would also refuse to tell his cousins what happened within the twenty-seven minutes before he finally cracked. It wasn't that bad, in fact, Peter would even say that some good had come out of it. He went through the refresher course on his suit's new abilities (the wings looked the coolest) and he even gave the AI a name.

"Hey, suit lady. I kind of feel bad calling you "suit lady," you know?" he had told the AI, somewhat guiltily. His mother had raised him with better manners, after all. "I think I should probably give you a name, like Liz." He had blanched at the thought a moment later. "No, no, no. gods, that's weird."

Percy had briefly entertained the idea of calling her Pythia. Naming her after the original Oracle of Delphi, who helped guide demigods on their quests seemed oddly fitting. He had dismissed the idea after another moment of thought. He had left his life as a demigod in the past. Or, he was trying to. He was already being forced into another prophecy so there was no need to remind himself of it even more. Something mortal, with no relation to the gods, would be the best option. He had thought for a minute before the perfect name came to mind. "What do you think of the name Karen?"
"You can call me Karen if you would like," she had approved.

Peter, unfortunately, spent the next twelve minutes lamenting to Karen about his crush on Liz. The only silver lining was that in his pathetic ranting about Liz he got a great idea. He had just commented that it was nice to have someone to talk to when a switch in his brain flipped. He really was a Kelp Head, not that he would ever admit it out loud.

He clambered up from his spot on one of the crates and made his way back into the original crate where he had stashed his backpack. He gave a mental apology to Karen before he took his mask off and stuffed it into his bag after hastily zipping his backpack open. After seeing the Training Wheels Protocol he had the sinking suspicion that the suit recorded everything he did. He quickly refocused and pulled out the things he needed to make an Iris Message.

He quickly set everything up, using one of the boxes as support, before reluctantly uncapping the water bottle. He hadn't actively used his powers over water since that day in the throne room where he had received his new identity. He had no doubt that he could do it, he just didn't want to. However, as the saying went, 'desperate times called for desperate measures'.

Percy felt a familiar tug in his gut as the water turned into a fine mist and a rainbow formed. He placed the drachma on the tip of his thumb and flipped it into the mist. "Oh, Fleecy, do me a solid, show me Nico di Angelo, Queens, New York," he thought. The mist shimmered for a moment before refocusing on his sleeping cousin.

"Nico," he whispered harshly. The younger boy continued to sleep soundly. Percy said his name again, this time at a normal tone of voice. He still continued to sleep.

Percy refused to let himself get annoyed. It was his fault that he was in this predicament. He also felt guilty. Nico barely got enough sleep and now he was forcing the boy to get up and find him. Despite his guilt, he needed Nico to wake up. He tried calling his name one more time, this time yelling.

Nico jolted up and pulled his sword out of nowhere. The sight would have been imposing if the boy didn't have bed head and was wearing a Mythomagic t-shirt. Percy couldn't help the snort of laughter that escaped him. Nico turned towards the sound and his posture relaxed. An annoyed scowl formed on his face.

"What do you want?" Nico demanded. His eyes squinted in confusion. "Where are you?"

Percy chuckled nervously. "About that…"

Nico gave a long sigh. "Do you know where you are?"

Percy nodded vigorously. "Yeah, the Damage Control storage vault."

"Only you," Nico said exasperatedly. "Since I've never been there before it's going to take a while. Plus, I have to tell Hestia and Thalia about your idiocy. Hopefully, I'll be there in an hour. Try not to die."

The Iris Message cut out as Nico slashed his hand through the mist. Percy grimaced. He owed his cousin at least two batches of chocolate chip cookies. Since he had an hour to kill he decided to go through the bag that the Vulture had tried to steal. He put the mask back on and was relieved when Karen didn't comment on being stuffed inside the backpack. Percy pulled out a few strange objects, like an Ultron head, out of the bag before he pulled out another glowing purple stone.

"That's an explosive Chitauri energy core," Karen informed him helpfully.
Peter's eyes widened and he exclaimed, "You mean we've been carrying around a bomb this entire time!"

"It would require radiation to activate it," she told him, like that made it better.

Peter really had to get out of there. He had left the energy core with Ned and he couldn't let the thing explode and hurt his friend. He just hoped that Nico would get there soon.

***

It ended up taking three hours for Nico to shadow-travel into the storage vault. Percy had spent all of his drachmas showing his cousin what the inside of the container looked like so he had an idea of where to go. The faintest of the sun's rays could be seen on the horizon, but it was still dark outside. After his cousin had grabbed him and shadow-traveled directly outside of the storage vault, Percy had to catch Nico as the younger boy stumbled, all of his energy drained.

"I don't think I have enough in me to take you back to Washington," Nico said apologetically.

Percy was quick to reassure him. "Hey, it's okay. Thanks for getting me out of there. I don't have any ambrosia but I do have a Snickers." He pulled out the candy bar that Liz had thrown him earlier and handed it to his cousin.

Nico opened the wrapper and quickly started eating it. He managed to choke out between bites, "You should go. I'll be fine. Thalia is going to get here later, something about cashing in a favor with Apollo. Try to meet up with us after Decathlon, okay?"

Percy looked at his cousin worriedly, "As long as you try to not overexert yourself."

Nico tried to give him a grin but it ended up looking more like a grimace. Percy winced at the state he was in. He knew that his cousin hated swinging but Percy doubted that Nico could walk, let alone shadow-travel to Washington, even after resting. He also didn't want his cousin to be found outside the storage vault. He quickly picked up the much-lighter (he would need to talk to Hestia about that later) boy and threw him over his shoulder in a fireman's carry.

He swung toward the nearest bunch of trees and set his cousin down in the shade. He sent a prayer to Hestia in his mind to find Nico before repositioning him to be more comfortable against the rough bark of the tree. Percy cast a look backward before taking off, hoping that he would get to DC in time to help Ned.
Peter managed to get back to the hotel five minutes before the Decathlon started. He ran through the crowd of people as quickly as possible. He made it to the auditorium where it was being hosted right as Flash was about to walk on stage. Ned stood off to the side, talking with Mr. Harrington in a hushed whisper. When he caught sight of Peter jogging up, a huge smile lit up his face.

"Peter! You made it! I'm glad you're feeling better," Mr. Harrington said, patting him on the back.

Peter tried to roll with whatever excuse Ned came up with. "Yeah, I am definitely feeling better."

"Good, because you are back in. Flash, you are sitting this round out," the teacher directed. Flash huffed before storming off. Peter quickly made his way on stage where he took a seat next to Michelle.

"Ned," Peter tried to whisper, "where's the-"

"Peter, the round is starting," Liz warned under her breath.

"But-"

Liz glared at him until he could no longer meet her eyes and looked down. Peter resigned himself to getting the Chitauri core after the match had ended. He focused on the official explaining the rules at the podium and tried to take his mind off of the bomb that might explode. The only positive thing was that his Spider-Sense wasn't going off. He hoped that that meant they were in the clear.

The tournament went by in a flash. Peter didn't answer many questions, he was too focused on the Chitauri stone. They still managed to win the championship with Michelle answering the last question in the sudden death round.

As the rest of their team was celebrating, Peter grabbed Ned and pulled him backstage. "Where's the stone?"

"The stone? It's right here," Ned patted down his pockets before looking around confusedly. He spotted his backpack leaning on the floor and grabbed it. He looked quickly rifled through the pockets before a panicked expression took over his face. He started to hyperventilate. "It was here, I swear."

Peter grabbed Ned by the shoulders, trying to calm him down. "Are you sure? Ned, I need you to think."

Ned took a deep breath and closed his eyes. After a moment he opened them again and said uncertainly, "I may have left it in the room."

Peter let out a small sigh of relief. At least it was away from the large crowd of people. "Okay, while you guys go to Washington Monument I'll head back to the hotel and track it down."

"Did you figure out what it is?"

"Yeah, and that's why I need to get it back," Peter told him, unintentionally vague. Ned just gave
him an expectant look. Peter stared back at him, not understanding why his friend was staring at him."

Ned sighed exasperatedly and clarified, "What is it?"

"Oh, it's a bomb."

"It's what?!"

***

After calming Ned down, Peter quietly snuck off and made his way back to the hotel. He ran up to the hotel room and started looking around the room. He checked under the beds, in between the sheets, and even in the bathroom but he could not find the Chitauri core. He was about ten seconds away from panicking when his phone beeped and distracted him. It was a text from Thalia reading, "CHcK TRH NEWS!!"

A moment later another text came in. "SOMETHING IS HAPPENING AT WASHINGTON MONUMENT."

And then another. "YOU IDIOT! WHAT DID YOU DO??"

Peter didn't even bother to check the news. He stripped down and put his suit on. He sent Thalia a text saying that he was on his way then ran out of the hotel as quickly as possible. He could see the Washington Monument from the parking lot and mentally thanked Mr. Harrington for choosing a hotel only two or three miles away.

Swinging across D.C, it seemed to take forever for him to finally arrive outside the monument. He somehow ended up standing next to Michelle. She was staring up at the tower, an uncharacteristic show of emotions easily displaying the worry that she must have been feeling. He didn't stop to chat for long. He could hear the incessant ring of his Spider-Sense as well as Karen's voice in his ear, informing him of the situation. The noise from the nearby tourists was only drowned out by the blood roaring in his ears and he could feel a sensory overload starting to overtake him.

Peter shook his head and pushed the feelings down. He wasn't important right now. What was important was his friends who were trapped at the top of the tower. He ran towards the side of the massive obelisk and started scaling it.

"Estimating ten minutes before catastrophic failure. All safety systems are failing," Karen told him as he scurried up the side of the monument. "Unexpected movement has accelerated the deterioration in the elevator. You now have one hundred and twenty-five seconds until failure."

"How do I get inside?" Peter yelled frantically.

"Activating reconnaissance drone. Proceed to the southwest window."

Peter followed the small drone around the side of the monument. He could hear the tourists’ shouts increase in volume as he moved. He stopped for a moment after he reached the top of the obelisk. He risked a glance down. The sight made him dizzy and caused the blood to rush to his head. He suddenly understood his cousin’s fear of heights, especially because he no longer had his parachute to save him if he fell. He scooted over to the window and started kicking it with his foot. His hands were still firmly attached to the concrete like it was a lifeline.

"Why is it not breaking?"
"It's four-inch ballistic glass. You'll need more momentum," Karen said.

Peter let out a curse. They were over five hundred feet in the air. Why would they need ballistic glass? Nevertheless, he shot a web a few feet above his head and let it support him as he started jumping the pane of glass. He could feel the impact of each hit increase until he finally cracked the glass. His victory was short-lived as he heard the blades of a helicopter behind him. He glanced back and found military agents pointing a gun at him.

Knowing it was pointless to reason with them, Peter kept his mouth shut as he scrambled to the tip of the monument. He had a plan that would probably work. Maybe. It was more like twelve percent of a plan but it was better than nothing. The hairs on the back of his neck stood up and there was a faint ringing in his head right before he backflipped off of the monument and over the helicopter.

He opened the wings on the suit and then shot a web at the feet of the helicopter. He crashed into the glass and slid into the room. The elevator doors were open and he shot a web at the ceiling as it fell. It held for two seconds before the ringing in his skull increased and his legs gave way as the door broke. He fell down the elevator shaft and landed hard on the floor.

He quickly got up and shot a web at the ceiling of the elevator shaft and used what remained of the elevator to brace himself. Somewhere in his subconscious, he registered the pain that the fall had caused. He would definitely be in agony later, but for the moment the adrenaline was helping to numb it.

The muscles in his arm protested as he slowly used the web to pull the elevator up to the first floor he could find. He could feel the metal starting to warp underneath his feet as his teacher and Ned were pulled out of the elevator. The ringing in his head increased until it was the only thing he could hear. He didn't even register the metal falling from beneath his feet. He instinctively shot a web that connected with Liz's wrist and saved her. He pulled her up until she was safely perched on the ledge.

"Thank you," Liz breathed out. "You saved my- our lives."

A wry grin stretched over his face. He pitched his voice lower when he answered, "Yeah, well I've never been a fan of the whole 'Elevator of Death' thing." He knew that she didn't understand from the cock of her head and the way her eyebrow rose. He was glad for the mask all of a sudden. It meant that she didn't see the dark look in his eye. He wasn't the biggest fan of gallows' humor, but you would think otherwise from how much he used it.

He's saved from answering her unspoken question when the web supporting him snapped and he let himself fall. About halfway down he jumped on the side of the shaft and crawled out. He snuck out of the monument where he made his way back to the hotel where Peter Parker was supposed to be so he could wait for his team to get back.

Chapter End Notes

So I was going to leave you all in suspense but I'm thinking that I'll just upload the rest of the chapters this week (one a day) so I can start posting the sequel. Though the sequel will have much slower updates because I'm writing as I update, as opposed to having everything written beforehand. Let me know what you think :)
Peter crawled along the ceiling of the parking garage until he was right above his target. The man, who Karen had identified as Aaron Davis, was putting groceries into his car. Peter shot a web at his hand, effectively trapping him. He watched as the man looked around before trying to unstick his hand. It reminded him of the cliche horror movie where the main character looked everywhere but up and then got jump scared. He silently dropped down behind the man and a smirk overtook his face.

He pitched his voice slightly lower when he said, "Remember me?"

Davis jumped slightly and tried to turn around before his arm stopped him. Peter flipped onto the roof of the car and hoped he looked intimidating. "I need some information and you're going to give it to me."

Davis' face turned from alarmed to confused. "What happened to your voice?"

"What? Nothing happened to my voice. Now, I need to know. Who is selling these weapons?" Percy tried to get the 'interrogation', if you could call it that, back on track.

Davis slammed the trunk of his car shut, causing Peter to startle. The older man shot Peter an unimpressed look. It was obvious that his current tactic was failing miserably so Peter tried a different strategy. His voice took on a pleading tone. "Look, man, these guys are selling weapons that are crazy dangerous. They can't just be out on the streets. Look, if one of them can just cut Delmar's bodega in half-"

"They destroyed Delmar's?"

"Yeah, these weapons, they're dangerous. Come on, man, please." Peter stared at Davis for a moment before turning and walking away. He didn't plan on leaving without answers but he figured that if he seemed more approachable then Davis might be more forthcoming.

"The other night," Davis started. Peter smiled slightly and walked back towards the man. Davis continued, "you told that dude, 'if you're going to shoot someone, shoot me.' That's pretty impressive. I don't want those weapons out on the streets. I've got a nephew who lives here. And judging from your voice, you're only a couple years older than him.

"I can't tell who or where the guy with wings is. But I can tell you where he's going to be. Try the Staten Island ferry at eleven."

Peter pumped his fist in the air in excitement. He started to walk away, already muttering to himself about possible plans to catch the guy.

"Hey!" Davis shouted behind him. Peter turned to look at him. The criminal gestured to his hand, that was still stuck to his car. Peter contemplated just leaving the man there before his conscience won out.

"Yeah, okay, I'm coming."
Peter managed to catch the ferry right as it was pulling out of the dock. He clung to the side of the boat and peeked through the window. The ferry was full of passengers and Peter activated the reconnaissance mode in his suit to find the man that he was after. Karen picked up on the conversation of two men across the boat. They looked ordinary but they were having a conversation even though they were facing away from each other.

"It looks like something out of one of those old spy movies," Peter thought.

"Peter," Karen said, breaking through his thoughts, "there's an incoming call from May Parker. Should I reroute to your heads-up display?"

Peter bit his lip in thought. On one hand, Hestia rarely called and he would feel bad if he didn't answer. On the other, he really needed to follow this guy if he wanted to get him. "Audio only, Karen. Droney, stay here and watch the other guy."

A small icon popped up on his display, letting him know that Hestia was now patched into his comms. There was also a small box showing the live video feed that the Spider-Drone was recording. He crawled along the outside of the boat, following the man who had gotten up.

"Hey, what's up, Aunt May?" he greeted.

"Peter, good, where are you right now?" Hestia's voice filtered through the comms.

"Uh, on the Staten Island Ferry. I've got a lead on a location for the guy with the metal wings," he said distractedly. The man that he was following was almost to the front of the ship where the deal was taking place. "I've actually got to go now, I'm about to catch these guys."

"Very well, I'll talk to you afterward. Remember, Peter, you're on a ferry and there are innocent people there. Make sure that you're careful," she both advised and warned him.

"I'm always careful."

He hung up before she could respond, but he could imagine the long-suffering sigh that she most likely let out. He had made it to the front of the ship and was now perched above the group of criminals.

"Who's the guy on the left?"

"Mac Gargan, Extensive criminal record, including homicide. Would you like me to activate Instant Kill?" Karen immediately suggested.

Peter shook his head. His AI seemed a little homicidal. He thought it was kind of funny. Not that he would ever tell her that and enable her to continue. Though she would probably just continue to suggest it until he could completely get rid of the option. "No, Karen, stop it with the Instant Kill already."

"I've got the weapons, buyers, and sellers all in one place. This is almost too good to be true."

"Incoming call from Tony Stark," Karen informed him before the display in his suit showed a miniature version of Mr. Stark alongside the other different cameras that he had.

"And I jinxed it. Of course."

"Hey, Underoos, nice work in D.C." the older billionaire sounded awkward and stilted when he said it. Peter was barely paying attention, he was trying to watch the deal about to go down in front of him. "My dad never really gave me a lot of support... And I'm just trying to break the cycle of
shame."

That caused Peter to pause. Stark really was trying to be a good mentor, and compliment him for the work he had done. But he couldn't deal with him right now. It was too much. There were five different cameras displayed and Mr. Stark was talking and the guy was going to get away again and the ferry horn was blaring and it was just too much. He hung up in the middle of Stark's sentence. He was probably going to pay for that later but he could probably come up with an excuse.

Without the extra distraction, he managed to set his attention back on the weapons deal. His eyes focused on the set of keys in one of the mens' hands. He snatched them and flipped down from the roof.

"The illegal-weapons-deal-ferry was at 10:30. You missed it."

Peter shot a web at two of the goons and yanked them behind him. He used the momentum of the pull to propel himself through the air and kick another guy in the chest and off of the boat. There was a tingle at the base of his neck and an overwhelming need to duck. He did and just managed to dodge the punch from the man with the electric gauntlets. He quickly webbed his hands to the ground, making it impossible to get free.

Two of the guys that he had thrown earlier got up and started to charge at him again. He webbed the nearest vehicle, which happened to be a motorcycle and threw it at them. He winced as they crashed to the ground. The drone rushed up to him, melting back into the spider emblem on his chest. There was a ringing in the base of his skull that caused him to turn around.

Standing towards the back of the cargo hold was an older man. He had wrinkles and his hair was close shaved. He was staring at Peter intensely and Peter just knew that this was the Vulture. They held each others' gaze for over ten seconds until a bunch of people came bursting out the two doors on either side of Peter.

"FBI, don't move!"

Peter looked around wildly and tried not to panic. He knew that they likely won't listen to him. He had to get to the Vulture before he could put on the suit. But, he currently had over twenty guns trained on him and no amount of super healing would fix him if he got shot with that many bullets.

There was a ripping noise from the cargo hold that sounds like nails on a chalkboard. Peter fought the instinct to cover his ears. He was too late and now he had to get these people to safety. He watched as one of the cars get ripped apart as the Vulture flew out. He had one of the Chitauri-weapons. Peter recognized it from the ATM robbery. It's the same type of weapon that's responsible for the destruction of Delmar's.

The Vulture shot past them so he's in the open air. He fired a shot at the agents who scatter as the blast scorched the area where they had just been huddled. Those who are standing, are firing off their own shots, which the Vulture seems to easily dodge. It's mostly federal agents, Peter noted. He could see a couple not wearing tactical gear, but still shooting guns at the maniac with wings.

Peter blamed his ADHD for distracting him because he didn't see the shot that the Vulture had aimed at him. He felt it though. The pain hit his side as he was thrown into the water. It revitalized him and he jumped back out and into the deck of the ship. He shot a web at the barrel of the gun. He quickly electrified it, causing the Vulture to drop the weapon. It started to bounce around wildly and fire randomly. Peter shot a web grenade at it, covering it until he could deal with it.

He turned to face the Vulture again. The man was flying higher than before, hovering menacingly
"You're messing with things you don't understand," the man threatened before flying into the clouds.

From behind Peter, the weapon cut through his webs in multiple arcs. Within seconds, they sliced through the length of the ferry before Peter could destroy the machine. Jets of water started to split up the boat.

"Karen, give me an X-ray of the boat and target all the strongest points," he instructed. He shot across the widening gap in the boat, shooting as many of the support beams as possible. He managed to get across the boat in thirty seconds and turned to survey his work. The boat had stopped moving, which was a good sign.

"Good job, Peter. You are ninety-eight percent successful." Karen informed him.

Peter's eyes went wide as he spotted the support beam still highlighted in red. It was all the way across the ship and there was no way that he would make it in time. He watched as the web strands that were holding the boat in place began to snap. Water flooded the cargo hold, pushing the cars forward. People clung to posts as the stream rushed past them. On the upper level, passengers slid down the floor of the leaning ferry. The gap widened as the web strands continued to snap.

Peter leaped into the air and quickly shot two webs on either side of him. He desperately tried to manually hold the boat together. His muscles were screaming under the strain of the weight of the ferry as he hung in the middle of the gap. He could feel the moment when the tension started to decrease in his arms and for a second he thought that he had actually done it.

It was moving too fast though, and he gently touched down in the seating area of the ship.

"Hi, Spider-Man," he could hear Stark's voice filter through his comms. Peter winced at the icy tone the man was giving him. He gave chase as the Iron Man suit flew through the different levels of the ferry, repairing the damage that Peter had caused.

"Mr. Stark. Could I do anything? What do you want me to do?" He called after the other man. He wanted to fix his mistake.

Stark turned to look at him and Peter could feel the disappointment in his gaze.

"I think you've done enough." He didn't say anything more before he flew off, leaving Peter standing there, surrounded by smoke and the mess that he had made.

Chapter End Notes

I'm not going to lie to you, this chapter is very movie-centric and it has to be my least favorite. The next chapter, however, is much more AU. Uploads will continue to be every day so I can start posting the next book. Let me know what you think.
Chapter 20

Peter sat on the edge of a building. He was facing towards the harbor and could see the ferry in the distance, helicopters still flying around it. It would probably take another couple hours for the boat to be evacuated. He felt empty inside, the hollow pit in his stomach growing as he watched other people clean up the mess that he had made. It wasn't long until he heard the tell-tale pulse of the Iron Man suit from behind him. He didn't even bother to turn around when Stark started to reprimand him.

"I tell you to stay away from this. Instead, you hacked a multimillion-dollar suit so you could sneak around behind my back doing the one thing I told you not to do." Stark's tone was disappointed, which was somehow worse than him being mad at Peter.

"Is everyone okay?"

"No thanks to you."

Stark's words stung and Peter could feel himself getting angry. He turned and stalked up to the suit. "No thanks to me? Those weapons were out there, and I tried to tell you about it. But you didn't listen. None of this would've happened if you had just listened to me."

Peter scoffed as a thought hit him. He looked up and down at the shell of a suit. "You don't care, you're not even here right now."

He startled as the suit hissed and started to open. Tony Stark stepped down and walked towards him. With each step that he took, Peter took another step back.

The billionaire's tone turned impatient. "I did listen, kid. Who do you think called the FBI, huh? Do you know that I was the only one who believed in you? Everyone else said I was crazy to recruit a fifteen-year-old kid. What if somebody had died tonight? Different story, right? Because that's on you. And if you died, I feel like that's on me. I don't need that on my conscience."

Peter huffed. His throat felt thick like he was about to cry. Or vomit. Or both. "I just wanted to be like you," he found himself saying. He never realized how true those words were until that moment. Somewhere in the back of his mind, he had been trying to emulate the older hero. He had already failed at being a hero once. He hadn't wanted to mess up again. Not that it helped. It seemed like no matter what he did, he would always be a screw-up.

"And I wanted you to be better."There was a pause. "Okay, it's not working out. I'm gonna need the suit back."

Peter's head snapped to look at Stark. "For how long?"

"Forever," Stark said grimly.

Peter shook his head frantically. He couldn't take away the suit. "No, please. You don't understand. Please. This is all I have. I'm nothing without this suit."

"If you're nothing without this suit," Stark stated harshly, "then you shouldn't have it. Okay? God, I sound like my dad."
A sense of defeat rolled over Peter. He had tried so hard to be a hero again. To live up to his promise. Now, he was nothing. He sighed defeatedly and his shoulders slumped. "I don't have any other clothes."

"We can sort something out."

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Percy trudged through the halls of the apartment complex. He was wearing an embarrassingly oversized 'I Love NY' shirt that was normally only seen on tourists. He reached up and picked up the key from above the door frame. He didn't want any attention right now. He unlocked the door and dragged himself inside, trying to slip past his cousins and Hestia unnoticed. He should have known that slipping past a former Lieutenant of Artemis and a goddess would have been impossible.

Hestia called him into the living room which he entered reluctantly. His eyes were drawn to the television that had the news story about the ferry plastered all over it and winced. His cousins took one look at him before demanding what had happened after Stark had shown up.

"He took my suit," he said simply, not really in the mood for talking.

"What?" Thalia growled.

Nico looked just as murderous. "Say the word, Perce and I'll break in there to get it back while Thalia beats him up."

Percy managed to give a small, weak smile at his cousins' thoughtfulness. He could always count on them to have his back. He turned his gaze to Hestia who was staring at him intently. She didn't take her eyes off of him as she addressed Thalia and Nico. "Can you please give me a moment with Perseus?"

"Hest-"

"I just need five minutes," she said softly. Her tone left no room for argument.

Nico and Thalia walked out of the room, throwing him worried glances as they left. He sat down by Hestia, waiting to hear a lecture on his recklessness. It never came, instead, she just put her arms around him and pulled him close. He leaned into her embrace, basking in the warm feelings of home and the hearth.

After a few minutes, she pulled away, taking the warmth with her. Once again, Percy was left feeling cold and empty.

Hestia fixed him with a stern expression. "What were you thinking?"

Percy was startled with the change in tone. He sat there gaping at her as she just looked at him expectantly. She must have gotten tired of his floundering because she started to scold him again.

"I told you to be careful. I warned you about the mortals on the boat. But did you listen? No! There were a million things you could have done differently in that situation. I know that you have the tactical skills to have found an outcome that didn't result in you having to be saved by an arrogant mortal! You didn't have to rely on a suit. You were given the powers over your father's domain as a gift from the Fates themselves, Perseus. Why didn't you use them?"

Something inside Percy snapped and all of the emotions and anger that he had kept pent up since the end of the Giant War, since Annabeth died, came flooding out.
"I don't know what you want me to tell you! Those 'powers' that you insist are a gift, are useless! Percy Jackson is useless! Where were those powers on the battlefield as countless demigods died? Huh?" he screamed. The next sentence came out as a broken whisper, "Where were they when Annabeth died? They couldn't save what mattered most, so what use are they?"

Hestia sat there watching him as he broke down. Her face remained carefully blank. Percy's face, on the other hand, was a torrent of emotions. There were tear tracks running down his face and he looked like he was going through extreme pain.

He looked up at Hestia desperately, as if begging her for the answer to a problem he couldn't quite define. "Peter Parker was supposed to be better. He was supposed to be able to save everyone the way that Percy Jackson never could. The way that I never could. But Peter is just as much of a disappointment. I am nothing without that suit. If I can't even save a boatful of people without help, how am I supposed to protect the city?"

Hestia looked at him with gentle eyes and spoke softly, "You're not."

Percy looked at her in shock. "What?"

"You're not supposed to protect the city. Not by yourself and certainly not everyone in it, Perseus." She told him. He flinched at the mention of his name. "Not even the gods could protect everyone and expecting yourself to accomplish that task is a heavy burden that no one should have to bear."

Hestia got up and moved to look out the window. "Do you know why it hurts every time you drop the enchantments that hide your identity as Percy Jackson?"

Percy was startled by the suddenness of the question. He had never really thought of it before. He just recognized that it hurt and he preferred not to do it. He hadn't even known that Hestia was aware that it hurt. "I don't know. I've never thought about it before."

"You say that Percy Jackson is useless," Hestia began, leaving her question unanswered. "Would you call saving hundreds of demigod and mortal lives useless? I would call it heroic. There are always casualties in war. Nothing you do will change that, Percy. The reason why it hurts is that you refuse to accept Percy Jackson as part of yourself. To you, he is a failure and you would rather forget he exists altogether. But to forget about him is to forget about all of the demigods who sacrificed their lives. Are they not worth honoring?"

"Of course they're worth honoring. They're the real heroes," Percy trailed off.

"You've given up hope, Percy." Hestia turned around, causing Percy to gasp. In her hands was Pandora's Box. He hadn't seen it since the end of the Titan War. Hestia sat down next to him, the Box giving out a pulsing warmth.

"I'm not asking you to take it back," she reassured him. "I'm just asking you to remember that Percy Jackson has just as many good memories as there are bad."

Percy sat there, gaping at her. He opened his mouth once and then closed it. And then repeated the process a couple more times until Hestia took pity on him. She walked over and gave him another hug which he leaned into.

"You don't have to say anything right now. Just go think about it," she paused. "And maybe take a shower while you're at it. You smell like garbage."
Even goddesses have a breaking point. Hestia just reached hers after watching Percy be a complete dumbass for months. I'm really happy with how this scene turned out. Let me know what you think :)
Chapter 21

Peter had spent the last two weeks going through life like a normal teenager. He went to class, hung out with Ned, and ignored his problems until they went away. He hadn't spoken to Hestia in the two weeks after their conversation. He had thought about it for hours and realized she was right. Acting like it didn't happen didn't change the fact that it had happened. By running away from the Greek world he was dismissing the sacrifices made in the Second Titan and Giant Wars. Despite his conclusion, things were still awkward with Hestia. He didn't know what to say to her. He didn't know if he even had to say anything.

These thoughts were swirling through his head as he made his way back to class. The hallway was empty except for a student walking towards him. As they got closer, Peter realized it was Liz and he could feel the heat rush to his face. He hadn't spoken to her since the trip to DC, where they had exchanged a few awkward sentences.

"Hey," he called out. "I thought you had calculus during fifth period?"

Liz gave him a soft smile as they met in the middle of the hall by the trophy case. "Yeah, I was just doing some homecoming stuff."

He awkwardly nodded his head. "Cool, cool. Um... look, I want to apologize for almost missing the Decathlon."

"Peter, it's fine, you were sick. Last week, Decathlon was the most important thing, but then I almost died," Liz reassured him.

"Yeah, I know." His heart started to pound. He could hear a few different voices in his head, all of them contradicting each other. But the voice that stood out the most was Annabeth's, asking him to move on, to not be stuck loving a ghost who couldn't return. "It's just, I feel like I almost let you down because... I like you."

Liz smiled and tucked a stray piece of hair behind her ear. "I know. You're terrible at keeping secrets."

Peter huffed out a laugh. "You'd be surprised."

A moment of awkward silence passed before Peter realized that she wasn't rejecting him. He decided to take a risk and ask her out. "I-I know that you probably already have a date to homecoming-"

"Actually, I was so busy planning it that I never really got around to that part," she cut him off.

"Actually, I was so busy planning it that I never really got around to that part," she cut him off.

"Would you want to go with me?" he asked hopefully.

"Yeah, I'd love to," Liz beamed at him. Her cheeks were red and he admired the way that the light filtered through the window to frame her face. He stared at her for a few seconds past socially acceptable before a blush bloomed across his cheeks.

"I'll text you," he said, trying to move past the awkwardness.

"Cool."

"I'm actually going that way," he told her, the heat in his cheeks increasing. He walked past her, flashing her another smile. Once she was behind him a giant grin broke across his face. It quickly
turned into a look of panic when he realized that he had no idea what he was going to wear.

He managed to get through the rest of the day with minimal panicking. As soon as the bell rang, he ran out of the room towards the front of the school. He was halfway to the bus stop before he remembered that he was supposed to wait for his cousins outside. He groaned and pulled out his phone to send them a text on their group chat as he continued to the bus stop.

He quickly typed out, "Forgot about you guys so I'm at the bus stop and not dead."

Nico, whose name was Death Breath in his phone, was the first to respond, "Wow, rude."

Thalia, also known as Pinecone Face, texted back almost immediately after Nico. "How could you leave me here with this idiot?"

Percy chuckled at their antics but didn't respond. It felt like five years had passed before his cousins eventually made it to the bus stop right as the bus was pulling up. The trio got on the bus and it quickly pulled away. He had to brace himself as it swerved dangerously into oncoming traffic. Beside him, Nico was also looking sick.

"Remind me why we take the bus?" Nico asked miserably.

"There's nothing crazier than a New York bus driver," Thalia agreed.

Despite the crazy driving, nothing could stop his good mood. His smile was still stretched across his face like it was painted there.

"What's got you in a good mood?" Thalia asked.

"I asked Liz to homecoming," he told them in a sing-song voice.


"Never do that voice again," Thalia deadpanned.

"Which voice?" he teased. He increased his voice an octave. "This one?"

"I swear to the gods, do it again and I'll stab you in front of all these people," Thalia threatened.

"Fine," Percy conceded, dragging out the 'i'. He smirked and raised his voice even higher. "How about this voice?"

Thalia immediately elbowed him in the stomach, knocking all the air out of his lungs. He hunched over and started coughing violently; the other passengers on the bus took a step away from him.

"You want to try that again?" Thalia hissed.

Nico was just standing there, watching them with barely concealed amusement on his face. He made no move to help Percy. After a minute Percy straightened out again and admitted defeat. He knew to not push his luck.

The bus stopped and the trio got out before starting to walk in the direction of the apartment. They still had to walk another two blocks before they could get home. There was something else that he had wanted to talk to them about.

"So, I was thinking," he started hesitantly, "after homecoming, maybe next time you guys go to Camp Half-Blood I could join you."
He continued walking with his eyes focused in front of him, not turning to look at his cousins' expressions. That turned out to be a mistake because it took him a full minute to notice that they had both stopped in the middle of the street.

He stood there for a moment before sighing and running back to where they were still standing. He grabbed them both by the arm and dragged them forward. Nico let out a shriek of surprise and Thalia yelped as they finally started moving again. When he thought they could walk on their own, Percy let go of their arms and went back to walking next to them.

"What made you change your mind? Every time we've brought it up before now you've gotten upset," Nico finally asked. He had a fair point. 'Gotten upset' was putting it lightly. The last time his cousins' had asked he had glared at them and left the room. He then proceeded to ignore them for at least the following twenty-four hours. After a month they had just stopped asking altogether.

"Hestia yelled at me," he admitted sheepishly, not going into further detail.

"Thank the gods. I was wondering how long it would take for you to get your head out of your-"

"Thalia!" Nico exclaimed.

"Alright, fine," Thalia grumbled, "some would think you were an old man with how old fashioned you are."

"I was born in 1924," Nico deadpanned.

The three of them burst out laughing, the people around them rolling their eyes. Percy relaxed as his cousins started talking about some guy in one of their classes. Harry, or something, he thought. He wasn't really paying attention. He was just happy that they didn't ask too many questions. Within two minutes they had made it to their apartment building and Percy couldn't contain his excitement. He ran past his cousins and into the building. The landlord yelled something at him but it fell on deaf ears in his attempt to get upstairs. He tried waiting for the elevator for approximately five seconds before he just decided to take the stairs.

He was panting by the time he reached the apartment door on the third floor. He dug around his pockets for his keys before haphazardly shoving them into the door and swinging it open. He slid into the kitchen where Hestia was standing with a raised eyebrow, already waiting for him.

"I need your help," he told her frantically.

She smiled at him and walked into his bedroom. They spent the next hour getting ready for homecoming. She helped him pick out a suit and make a Windsor knot with his tie. After he managed to tame his hair he was officially ready for the dance; Hestia had already picked out a corsage for him. At some point, Nico joined them and they had to spend another hour finding him something to wear.

By the time they had finished, Thalia was sitting in the living room, completely ready. She was wearing a blue velvet, knee length dress with a black leather jacket. She had a silver clip in her hair that resembled her circlet from her time as a Lieutenant of Artemis.

"You guys take forever to get ready," she snarked.

"Thalia, be nice to your cousins," Hestia reprimanded. Thalia ducked her head in embarrassment.

Percy furrowed his brows. "Who are you guys going with?"
"I'm not going with anybody. I'll probably just hang out with MJ or Harry if he's not too busy with his date," Thalia told him.

"Who's he going with again?" Nico asked. His cheeks were red though, so the question was most likely an attempt to draw attention away from himself than an actual interest in the answer.

"I can't remember, starts with a 'G' I think," Thalia dismissed.

"You didn't answer the question," Percy pointed out.

"It doesn't matter, you'll see once we get there," Nico grumbled. "Anyway, Thalia and I have to go pick them up so we're leaving now, bye."

Nico grabbed Thalia's arm and shadow-traveled away before Percy could interrogate him more. Percy chuckled, he had a good idea who his cousin was bringing anyways.

"We should go before you're late," Hestia told him. "Remember to close your eyes."

She put a hand on his shoulder and the two disappeared in a flash of bright, white light. When Percy opened his eyes again they were standing outside of Liz's house.

"So, what's the plan?"

"Open the door for her," he started. He waited for Hestia to give a hum of approval before continuing, "Tell her she looks nice, but not too much because that's creepy. And when I dance with her, put my hands on her hips."

Hestia gave him a small smile. "I'm proud of you Peter."

He hesitated a moment before answering. "Percy," he corrected. "I'm Percy Jackson just as much as I'm Peter Parker."

Hestia wrapped her arms around him tightly, careful to not wrinkle his suit. Her voice was quiet and tickled his ear as she repeated, "I'm proud of you, Percy."

She let go of him and straightened his tie. "Now go have fun."

Peter grinned at her before walking up to the front door, pink corsage in hand. He rang the doorbell and waited as someone came to answer it. There was a faint ringing at the base of his skull. He furrowed his eyebrows and dismissed it as nerves. A broad smile spread across his face as he thought about dancing with Liz.

The door swung open and the smile faded from Peter's face and the feeling of horror grew. The hair on the back of his neck stood up, a clear indication of danger. He was frozen in place, unsure of what to do.

"You must be Peter," the Vulture said. He was grinning which Peter thought was wrong after all the destruction that he caused. He hoped that it was a mistake. That he just managed to find the guy he's been chasing because the Fates couldn't be that cruel. His hopes were dashed when the man continued, "I'm Liz's dad."
Peter silently followed the Vulture- Liz's dad- through the house to the kitchen. He was trying very hard not to freak out. He couldn't make the man suspicious. He just had to get through tonight and then he could take down Toomes.

"Won't that be a fun conversation? 'Hey Liz, I'm sorry but I'm the one who took down your father and now he's in jail. By the way, do you want to go on a date on Saturday?'" he thought bitterly. No matter how this turned out, someone would be getting hurt.

Liz's mother, Doris, greeted him briefly before walking away to get Liz. Peter was left in the kitchen with Toomes, both of them standing there awkwardly. His spider-sense had dulled, only a faint pressure in the back of his skull, warning him to keep his guard up.

"You alright there, Pete? Want something to drink? Maybe some bourbon, or scotch?" Toomes asked. It occurred to Peter that the man was testing him. Not because he was Spiderman, but because he was a guy taking his daughter out to a dance. Toomes had even taken out a couple of knives to clean as an intimidation tactic.

"No, sir. I'm not old enough to drink," he said truthfully, trying to act unnerved.

"That's the right answer." Toomes smiled at him before he focused on something behind Peter and his eyes went wide.

Liz walked into the room. She was wearing a pink, knee-length dress overlaid with floral lace in a slightly darker shade. Despite the danger present, Peter's jaw dropped as he admired her.

"She looks beautiful, doesn't she Pete?" Toomes's voice cut through his slight haze.

He turned towards Liz and gave her a soft smile that she returned. He wasn't going to ignore her and he doubted that Toomes would try anything. He just had to stay alert.

"Yeah, you look really pretty," he said sincerely. "Oh, I got you a corsage." He hastily pulled it out of its box and slid it onto her wrist.

"Thank you, I love it." She beamed and Peter could feel the heat rush to his cheeks.

"How about we take a couple of photos and then you all can get going?" Doris suggested.

Peter stepped closer to Liz as her mom pulled out a small camera and started taking photos. His smile was set as he looked into the camera, trying his hardest to not look at Toomes who he could feel staring at him.

They were in the car not long after. Peter had tried to stop Toomes from driving them but the man had just said he was going out of town. That caused warning bells to go off in Peter's head.

"Happy is moving all the stuff out of the Tower tonight," he thought. "It must be his last chance to get any more alien tech."

A feeling of dread welled up in his stomach as he realized that he would probably have to leave Liz at the dance to go and fight her dad. The Fates really did hate him.

"So, Pete," Toomes said suddenly, causing Peter to snap to attention. It was a good thing because it
reminded him that he had to stay focused. "What do you think you're going to do when you graduate?"

"Oh, um, I don't know. Maybe something with marine biology," he stuttered. He wasn't prepared to be put on the spot like that.

"Really?" Liz asked, surprised. "But you have that internship with Tony Stark. Aren't you more interested in engineering?"

Peter didn't get the chance to respond before Toomes cut in. "Tony Stark? What do you do?"

He scrambled to come up with a believable lie. "Yeah, engineering is interesting but I've always found ocean fascinating. I'll probably do something involving both. And I actually stop interning with Stark Industries at the end of the school year."


"Spider-Man? What's he like?" Toomes asked and the faint ringing in the back of his head increased slightly.

Peter was quickly starting to panic. "He's nice. I worked on his suit a couple of times but that's it."

"I've seen you around before, right? Your voice sounds familiar," Toomes inquired, getting more suspicious.

"He does Academic Decathlon with me. And he was at my party," Liz told him helpfully. Her tone turned playful, "But he was only there for, like, two seconds."

Peter scoffed indignantly while silently begging her to stop talking. He could feel Toomes becoming more apprehensive of him the more they talked. He quickly made up an excuse. "Yeah, I wanted to stay longer but my cousin, Nico, got really sick. My aunt freaked out and took him to the hospital so I had to leave."

"Was he okay?" Toomes asked, feigning concern.

"Oh yeah, he was fine. Just a bad case of the flu." He hoped that was a reasonable explanation that warranted a visit to the hospital.

"That's good," Liz said empathetically. "I've only talked to him once but he seems sweet. Are he and your other cousin coming tonight?"

"Uh, yeah. Nico's boyfriend is probably going to drive them," Peter told her. She looked surprised for a moment before going back to smiling. She looked like she was about to say something else but before she could they realized that they had made it to the school. Peter breathed a sigh of relief. It was short-lived when Toomes asked to talk to him alone. Liz went ahead and got out of the car and walked into the building.

The ringing in his head increased, making Peter aware of the gun that Toomes had pulled out. He had hoped that the man hadn't figured out his secret but it seemed that the Fates couldn't give him a break.

"Does she know?" Toomes asked menacingly.

"Play dumb!" his instincts were basically screaming at him.

"Who's she?" he asked.
"Not that dumb!" he chastised himself.

"She doesn't, that's good. I admire that. I've got a few secrets of my own that I don't want my family to know about." Toomes cracked a grin and shrugged. "Peter, nothing is more important than family. You saved my daughter's life. I could never forget something like that. So I'm gonna give you one chance. You walk through those doors, you forget any of this happened. Don't ever interfere with my business again. Because if you do, I'll kill you and everybody you love. That's what I'll do to protect my family. Do you understand?"

Peter nodded, silent. He didn't meet the other man's eyes, afraid that Toomes would see the anger burning in them. He continued to stare at his feet before an idea came to him. He quietly dropped his phone onto the padded floor of the car as Toomes continued to speak.

Toomes smirked at him. "I just saved your life, kid. Now, go in there and make sure my daughter has a good time."

Peter nodded again and silently got out of the car. He already knew that he couldn't let Toomes get anymore alien tech. He stopped walking once he got to the doors of the gym and stared inside. His friends were already inside, standing in a circle and talking. His cousins were there too. Nico was standing next to Will, their hands intertwined while Thalia was talking with MJ.

He didn't want to ruin their night, but he also needed their help. He would deal with them later though. He opened the door and made his way across the floor to Liz. She was dancing with her friends when she saw him approach and pulled away to talk to him.

"What'd he say to you?" she joked. Her smile faltered once she saw the serious look on his face.

"I'm sorry. You don't deserve this," he said solemnly. "I've gotta go."

He ran across the dance floor, leaving Liz standing there alone, a look of hurt marring her features.
Peter raced through the halls of the school until he nearly slammed into the row of lockers where he hid all of his extra supplies. He quickly lifted the lockers up with one hand while his other grabbed his spare suit and web-shooters.

"Hey!" Thalia called from down the hallway. She had probably followed him out of the gym after he ran out. She jogged up to him, taking in his disheveled look and the suit. "What are you doing with that?"

"Liz's dad is the Vulture," he informed her grimly and she took a sharp breath in disbelief. He scoffed. "Yeah, I couldn't believe it either. But that's not all. He's going to rob Stark Industries. Tonight."

"We have to stop him," Thalia said, determined.

Percy shook his head. "We can't do anything. This isn't like the normal stuff we face. This guy is a mortal. We can't charge in there, swords swinging. You wouldn't be able to use your powers either. I have to be the one to stop him."

Thalia huffed in annoyance. "I hate when you're logical. Fine, I won't come with you. What can I do?"

"Talk to Liz?" he asked sheepishly. Thalia raised an eyebrow in response. He sighed. "Don't give me that look. I really like her and I feel bad about ditching her, especially because the guy I'm going after is her dad."

"Fine," Thalia acquiesced. "What do you want me to say to her?"

"I don't know, but I'm sure you'll come up with something," he said. Thalia opened her mouth to say something but Percy cut her off, "And no, you can't use the Mist on her."

Percy nodded, mostly to appease her. He would call her, but only if there was no other option. He was about to leave but turned around at the last second. "I need to borrow your phone."

Thalia furrowed her eyebrows in confusion and pulled it out of her jacket pocket. She warned, "You better not break it."

"No promises," he said quickly. Percy turned and ran towards the back of the school. He managed to get changed as he was running, months of quickly getting changed in alleyways finally proving useful. He had just made it to the parking lot when his spider-sense went off, a large buzz in the back of his mind screaming at him to duck.

He managed to do so, narrowly dodging an attack from behind him. He slid roughly against the pavement and scrambled to get up, only to get knocked in the stomach by the man he had dubbed Shocker in his mind. He flew back, slamming into a school bus. The impact of the hit caused his web-shooters to go flying, leaving him weaponless.

"He gave you a choice, you chose wrong," the Shocker said menacingly. The man hesitated, taking in Peter's suit. "What's up with the crappy suit?"
Peter doesn't respond, taking the time to get back up and reorient himself. The shock itself didn't hurt that much, it was weaker than Thalia's by a considerable amount, but his back was stinging from the pain of hitting the bus. He was starting to regret his decision to tell Thalia to stay behind.

"Guess we're doing this the old fashioned way," he thought. He rolled his shoulders, squaring up in a defensive position.

He stayed on the balls of his feet, expertly dodging the incoming punch from the Shocker and ducking behind him. His goal was to get to his web-shooters before going on the offensive. The gauntlet slammed into another bus, the metal warping underneath it and the glass shattering into tiny shards before falling to the ground.

"I wasn't sure about this thing before..." the man trailed off.

Percy took whatever time he could to assess his opponent's weaknesses. The man was reliant on his weapon, and it took a few seconds to charge between every use. Percy grinned wolfishly. He could use that.

He waited until after the Shocker had attempted to punch him again, this time causing a bus to go flying across the parking lot, to make his move. In the few seconds that he was charging his weapon, Percy flipped over his head, causing the other man to spin rapidly. The slight whiplash was all Percy needed to land a good hit on him, sending him reeling. Unfortunately, he quickly recovered, wiping at the blood under his nose. He shot Percy a glare before getting ready to attack again. He lifted his gauntlet in the air, and it started to glow brighter as it charged. Percy was about to try and punch the man again when a web attached itself to the top of the gauntlet. He looked over and saw Ned standing there, holding the web shooter awkwardly. He quickly grabbed the string and pulled the device out of his friend's hand. He ripped the gauntlet off of the Shocker's hand and webbed him to the side of the bus.

The man started struggling and yelling which Peter fixed by shooting another web against his mouth, effectively preventing him from speaking.

He ran back to Ned. He briefly considered telling him to go back to the dance before he remembered the phone in he had planted in the car. He wouldn't be able to track it and go after Toomes. He swiftly explained the situation, "Liz's dad is the guy with wings. I need you to go and get on a computer to track my phone. We have to catch him before he makes it out of town."

"What? Are you going to be okay?" Ned asked worriedly.

"I'll be fine. Now, go!" Peter reassured him. Ned nodded and hurried back inside the school.

Peter grabbed the gauntlet off of the pavement and started running for the other side of the parking lot. He let out a shrill whistle, hoping that his friend would hear him. He stopped underneath a lamppost. He took a moment to concentrate and stuffed the gauntlet into the Duat until he could deal with it later.

There was a flapping of wings above him and he turned his head towards the sky. A familiar silhouette briefly covered the moon before descending.

"Hey Boss, long time no see," Blackjack greeted him. "What's with the stupid onesie?"

Peter grimaced. "It's a long story. And I'm sorry for not staying in contact. I was dealing with... everything. We can talk later though. I'll promise you two dozen doughnuts if you can give me a ride."
Blackjack huffed indignantly but nonetheless let Percy climb onto him back. He took off roughly, jostling Percy around. He eventually leveled out, wings beating steadily. Percy pulled out Thalia's phone and dialed Ned's number. His friend picked up after the second ring.

"Go for Ned."

"Hey, I need you to track my phone for me, I left it in Toomes' car," Peter informed Ned, getting straight to the point.

"Genius move. Okay, he just passed the GameStop on Jackson Avenue," Ned said after a minute of typing. Percy cursed in his head. Blackjack had been heading the wrong way. He quickly adjusted their flight path.

"Wait, Jackson Avenue isn't on the way out of the city," Percy voiced his thoughts out loud.

There was a moment of silence before Ned spoke again," It seems like he's heading to the old industrial park in Brooklyn."

Percy was about to respond when the line suddenly clicked and the connection went dead. He waited for a few minutes before Ned finally texted him.

"Got caught by Mr. Harrington"

Percy cursed again before he tapped out a quick reply, "It's okay, I'll be fine. Let my cousins know where I am if I don't text in two hours."

Ned sent a thumbs up emoji back within a few seconds. Percy safely stowed the phone away and focused on safely flying. The silence only lasted a minute before Blackjack started a conversation.

"So, boss," he started, "Who are you going to stop this time?"

"This mortal, he has a pair of wings like Daedalus and is selling weapons to dangerous criminals," Percy told the pegasus.

"What else?" Blackjack asked.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean," Blackjack clarified, "that there's always a catch with you, boss. This can't just be some random criminal."

Percy huffed before grumbling, "He's my date's dad."

Blackjack snorted in amusement at Percy's predicament. "Only you, boss."

Percy didn't have time to retort as Blackjack descended, quickly landing in front of an old decrepit building. Percy said goodbye to his friend and climbed up the side of the building. Once he got to the roof, he opened one of the many skylights and slowly lowered himself down. The room he landed in was surrounded by computers, each of them holding blueprints and schematics most likely related to the heist.

To his right was a pair of large metal wings. Just looking at them caused a faint ringing in his ears. His instincts were screaming, "danger!" He shot two small bursts of webs into the blades of the machine. Hopefully, that would prevent Toomes from using them.

He walked past the wings, venturing further into the building. Toomes was in the back of the
warehouse, watching as Peter walks towards him. He stopped about twenty feet away from Toomes. They were having a silent standoff. Peter moved first, webbing the other man's hand to the table he was leaning against.

"Hey Pete, didn't hear you come in," Toomes said. He chuckled when Percy stayed silent. "You know, I gotta tell you, I really admire your grit. I see why Liz likes you. When you first came to the house, I wasn't sure. I thought, "Really?" But I get it now."

Peter could hold it in any longer. "How could you do this to her?"

"To her? I'm doing this for her. You're young, Pete. You don't understand how the world works," Toomes said condescendingly.

Peter gritted his teeth. He had been in two wars, he knew exactly how the world worked. "I know that selling weapons to criminals is wrong."

"How do you think your buddy Stark paid for that tower? Or any of his little toys?" Toomes asked. "Those people, Pete, the rich and the powerful, they do whatever they want. Guys like us, like you and me, they don't care about us. We build their roads and we fight all their wars and everything, but they don't care about us. We have to pick up after 'em. We have to eat their table scraps. That's how it is. I know you know what I'm talking about, Peter."

"I do know what you're talking about," Peter admitted, thinking of Luke and how he felt used by the gods. "But, people like you, you just add to the problem. It's a never-ending cycle. Someone gets jealous of the guys at the top, so they start taking shortcuts and doing whatever it takes to 'survive'. In the end, you're no better than the guys in those skyscrapers."

Toomes growled but didn't say anything. Peter had a split-second warning, in the form of an intense ringing in his ears, before he instinctively jumped up, narrowly escaping getting killed by the wings.

The wings flew in circles around him, each time just missing hitting him after it swooped down. After a minute, there was a lull in the attacks. Toomes was staring at him, something almost like remorse shining in his eyes.

"Sorry, Pete," he apologized.

"What for?" Peter asked, a growing well of dread in his stomach. The base of his neck thrummed with the familiar warning of his Spider-Sense. "You haven't even hit me yet."

Toomes shrugged. "True, wasn't really trying to though."

Peter watched in horror, frozen to the spot as the wings destroyed the last of the support pillars surrounding him. The ceiling started to crumble before large chunks of rock rained down on his head. He tried running through the falling debris, but a piece of the ceiling fell and hit him directly. He barely had time to register the pain before he closed his eyes and let unconsciousness take over.
Percy woke up to a weight crushing his chest and for a second he wondered if he was somehow holding the sky again. His mind caught up and he remembered the confrontation with Toomes, how the man had used his wings to take down the support beams of the building to crush him. The pain made it hard to think and the dust and debris in the air made it even harder to see. He ripped off his mask, hoping he would be able to better without it.

He slowly moved his arms, trying to brace himself against the ground. He struggled for a minute, pained groans escaping every few seconds. He barely managed to shift the concrete a few inches before he collapsed from the exertion.

He looked around his surroundings. His mask had fallen into a puddle of water. He stared at his reflection and the water shifted, covering half of the mask. The image distorted and for a few moments, it looked like he was wearing the mask on half of his face.

"If you're nothing without this suit, then you shouldn't have it," The memory of Stark's voice flitted through his head.

"Even without the suit, I'm still Spider-Man," Percy realized, "And even without that, I'm still Percy Jackson."

He probably should have come to this conclusion sooner but as Thalia frequently called him, he was a Kelp Head (not that he would ever admit it). He had been so deep in his self-loathing that any mention of Percy Jackson or the Greek world made him recoil. However, it was like he told Hestia, he was Percy Jackson just as much as he was Peter Parker.

He reached out and stuck his hand in the puddle, the small amount of water revitalizing him a little bit. He was still tired, but the pain had dulled and he didn't feel like he was about to pass out. However, he could feel his glamour flicker and then fade. Percy guessed that he didn't have enough energy to subconsciously maintain it like he normally did. He pressed his palms down flat against the ground, using it as leverage. He took a deep breath and slowly started pushing up. He could feel the concrete shifting above him.

He let out a hiss of pain as the rubble shifted on his back. After a minute of trying to move the concrete, he managed to finally free himself. He got up, surveying the giant crater he was in. He scanned the skies and spotted Toomes perched on a billboard in the distance. The man launched into the air, flying towards the Tower.

Percy let out a shrill whistle and started climbing out of the crater. Once he made it to solid ground, he took off running. He heard a neigh from above him and glanced up to see Blackjack descending towards him. The pegasus had barely touched down before Percy was mounting onto his back.

"Follow the guy with wings," he shouted. Blackjack gave a neigh of acknowledgment and took off, going at his top speed. He managed to catch up to Toomes in less than a minute, lagging behind so they wouldn't be seen. They continued to follow Toomes and the city below them disappeared from sight as they flew above the clouds. The cold air bit against Percy's skin and the suit did little to insulate any heat.
Toomes finally stopped, his wings attaching to what looked like midair until it looked like the man had disappeared altogether. Percy squinted and he managed to make out the outline of something.

"Of course," he complained, "it's an invisible jet."

Blackjack neighed in disbelief. "Mortals come up with some crazy things."

"Come on, let's see if there's a side door I can break through," Percy said. He steered Blackjack towards the side of the plane. He groaned in frustration after he checked both sides and there wasn't a door like in normal planes.

Blackjack flew back to the bottom of the plane where the wings were still situated. He shot a web at the undercarriage and started using his feet to kick at the wings. After thirty seconds he still hadn't made any progress. He took a deep breath and gave another kick. The wings slid back a few inches and Percy almost let go of the plane to celebrate. Before he could try moving the wings any further they detached from the bottom of the plane.

Blackjack sank into the clouds below the plane, unwilling to be seen by a mortal. Toomes dove towards Percy causing the teen to move further along the side of the plane. The giant metal wings ripped apart the panels of the plane where Percy's head used to be. The force of the wings caused him to fall off of the plane. He quickly shot two webs, one at Toomes and the other at the side of the jet. Toomes had flown twenty feet, taking Percy with him, before the webs snapped.

Percy hurtled at the engine and quickly fired a blast of webs. He managed to stop the propellers and Toomes was dragged behind him, his wings getting caught in the engine. The main propellor fell away from the plane and Percy shot another web and crawled onto the wing of the plane.

Toomes flew back and lunged towards him. They ended up on top of the plane and Toomes continued to attack, stabbing the sharp edges of his wings into the carriage of the jet, causing deep gashes and a fire to start in the main engine.

Toomes stabbed his wing deep into the plane. When he ripped it out, the resulting force hit Percy across the chest, causing him to go flying. He managed to fire a web at the burning engine, barely holding on. Percy expected Toomes to try and attack him again but the man had diverted his attention to something inside the destabilizing plane. He took the time to climb back up. They had broken through the cloud cover and Percy realized with growing horror that the plane was headed straight for the city.

He glanced at the hole where Toomes had disappeared into the plane before heading to the left side of the plane. He shot a web at the right wing, using it as leverage to manually steer the plane from the outside.

"Please turn," Percy thought desperately.

He pulled with all of his strength and slowly the plane started to turn, almost flying sideways, and narrowly missed multiple buildings. Percy almost cheered when he saw that he had managed to steer the plane to crash on the beach. His victory was short-lived as he quickly realized that he was going to crash land. Percy didn't have any time to try and right the plane before he had hit the ground and fell unconscious for the second time that night.

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Percy woke up surrounded by smoke and flames. His ears were ringing and he could barely move. He staggered to his feet and glanced around. He was about to take his mask off so he could breathe
better when a dark blurry mass rose in front of him.

Toomes lunged at him, hitting him roughly in the chest. Percy flipped over from the force of the attack, violently hitting the sand. He scrambled to his feet at the same time that Toomes did. The metal wings were smoking and had sparks flying off of them every few seconds.

Toomes dove towards him. Percy futilely shot a web at the man before he was pinned to the ground. Large metal talons dug into his chest, cutting gashes in his chest through the suit. He let out a scream of pain that Toomes ignored in favor of punching him multiple times. Percy finally blocked one of the punches but that only led to Toomes flying up into the air.

The talons were still stuck in his chest, leaving Percy feeling light-headed as he was roughly jerked through the air, blood sluggishly spilling out of the wounds. They had made it ten feet in the air before Toomes dropped him. He landed on the sand with a hard thump. Toomes swooped down again, the talons digging into his back this time, and picked Percy up, slamming him down on the ground repeatedly. The man tossed Percy in the air, knocking him around like a ragdoll. He was vaguely aware that his mask had ripped and partially revealed his face.

Toomes finally threw him to the ground. He slowly turned over and his eyes widened when he saw Toomes standing over him menacingly. One of the wings plunged towards his head and Percy flinched, waiting for it to make contact with his body. Instead, it picked him up by his hoodie and he was left hanging limply in the air.

Toomes gave a cruel grin. "Aw, come on now Pete, there's no need for masks between us."

Percy started struggling as Toomes brought him closer but the man still managed to rip the remains of the mostly destroyed mask off of his face. Toomes' eyes widened when he saw the unfamiliar face of Percy Jackson underneath the mask. It was too late to turn back so Percy gave him a feral grin. "Not who you were expecting?"

"Where's Peter?" Toomes growled.

"At Homecoming, I presume," Percy drawled and because he didn't know when to stop antagonizing someone he added, "Thanks for tipping him off, by the way. Made my job so much easier."

Toomes snarled before his eyes focused on something behind Percy. He started smiling murderously. "You know I'm glad it wasn't Parker. Now I don't have to feel bad about making sure you stay out of my way while I get what I want."

Percy didn't have time to ask what he meant. All of the wind was knocked out of him and he hunched in on himself as the wings of the suit plunged into his stomach. He screamed in pain as they were mercilessly ripped out of him. Toomes dropped him to the floor callously, stepping over his body to get to the crate behind him that was full of Chitauri energy cores.

Percy started choking as his mouth and throat filled with blood. He clutched at his stomach, which was quickly causing him to bleed out onto the sand. He strained his head upwards, watching through blurry eyes as Toomes started packing more of the cores into the crate. His wings were sparking uncontrollably and Percy wanted to cry out a warning but he had lost the ability to make any noise other than retching gasps.

Out of the corner of his eye, the water glistened under the moonlight. The reflection of the fires around him was also visible on the surface of the water. Percy started to crawl towards it. He had to drag himself using one arm, the other was clutching his stomach and his legs were useless...
underneath him. Each movement sent another stab of pain through his abdomen and another gush of blood out of the wound in his stomach but he continued to push himself towards the water. Percy knew that it was a long shot, he would probably be dead before he made it.

Percy looked up from the sand and saw that he was only a few feet from the water. He sent out a prayer to any deity that was listening. He just needed one last push of strength to make it. He dragged himself further, unfortunately going over a piece of shrapnel from the plane crash. He let out a cry of pain and shut his eyes, collapsing in the sand.

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Percy opened his eyes with a gasp. He was at least ten feet away from the shore, which confused him as he had previously been several feet away from reaching it. The water flowed over the wounds, lending him strength and temporarily mending them.

"Go, my child," a voice whispered in his ears and Percy gasped. The voice gave off an aura of ancient power, like a fiery inferno but also calming waters gently lapping against the shore. The voice spoke again, this time more urgent, "You must go, Perseus Jackson. Your foe is getting away. Do not worry, we will meet again."

Percy scrambled up. Somehow, he had only been unconscious for a few seconds. Toomes was still on the beach, this time above the crate, his talons gripping the side as he started trying to fly away. His wings were badly damaged and he couldn't seem to stabilize himself, dropping in altitude every few seconds before flying back up.

Percy ran through the shallow surf and back onto the sand. He tried firing a web but nothing came out of the web-shooters. He was about to try and control the water before he realized that would probably make it worse when combined with the electricity. He could only watch in a slight panic as the suit exploded, taking Toomes down with it.

Not hesitating, Percy ran through the fire, searching for Toomes. He found the villain under a flaming hot hunk of metal that used to be the wingsuit. He grabbed the bottom of the suit, grunting as his hands made contact with the searing hot metal. He quickly lifted it off of Toomes. He roughly picked the man up and threw him over his shoulder. He made his way back through the flames, the heat causing beads of sweat to roll down his forehead.

Percy dropped Toomes onto the sand near a crate that wasn't burning once they were a safe distance away from the fire. Toomes was still unconscious so Percy decided it was relatively safe to try and put out some of the flames. He closed his eyes and focused on the once familiar tug in his gut. It had been months since he had really used the power on a large scale, but he found it as easy as breathing. The waves from the beach grew bigger until Percy was holding back a fifteen-foot wall of water. He directed the water to the explosion site where the wings were still being consumed in flames. He dropped the water with a splash and it hit the burning metal, hissing as the fire and water made contact.

Percy was about to summon another wave when he heard Toomes coughing behind him. He turned around, towering over him. "It's over."

He fiddled with his web-shooters for a moment, keeping Toomes in his line of sight. Once he got them working again he shot a few blasts at Toomes, trapping him to a crate. He thought about just leaving the man there but he couldn't help messing with Happy a bit. He managed to find a piece of paper and a marker at Coney Island after a quick search through the different booths. He made his way back to Toomes, the man still trapped by the webs. He refused to say anything, opting to just glare a Percy.
"Found flying vulture guy. Spider-Man. P.S. Sorry about your plane," he wrote. He left the note webbed to the crate next to Toomes's head. Percy could hear the sirens getting closer. He managed to get off of the beach right as the first agents walked down in hazmat suits. Rather than stick around, he started making his way back home. Percy already knew that Thalia was probably going to rip him to shreds but at the moment all he wanted was a shower and to sleep for the next ten years.

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Peter walked down the hall of Midtown High. Ned walked alongside him, chattering excitedly about the fight with the Shocker, whatever his real name was. It was peaceful but also completely chaotic at the same time. He spotted Liz at the end of the hall with her mom. He inhaled sharply at the sight of her. She looked depressed with red eyes and a hunched figure.

"I caused that," he thought, "I'm the reason she's miserable."

He still had to go talk to her. He ran up to her, calling her name as he went down the hall. She turned at the sound of his voice and stopped walking. Once he got close enough he could see that she was wiping the tears off of her face. A stab of guilt shot through his chest.

"Liz, I'm so sorry," Peter apologized.

Liz gave him a small, sad smile. "It's okay, Peter. Your cousin explained everything."

Peter furrowed his eyebrows. He had forgotten to ask Thalia what she had said to Liz. He shook his head. "That doesn't matter, I shouldn't have left you like that. I... I can't imagine what you're going through with your dad. If there's anything I can do to help..." He trailed off.

"I guess we're moving to Oregon. Mom says it's nice there, so that's cool. Anyways, Dad doesn't want us here during the trial, so..." Liz told him.

"Liz, I'm-" he started but cut himself off.

"Bye, Peter," Liz gave another small smile, fighting back tears. She leaned forward and kissed his cheek before moving past him. Peter turned around, watching as she walked away and out of his life.

***

Peter had made it through the rest of the day in a haze after his encounter with Liz. He was in the library after school with the rest of the Decathlon team. Mr. Harrington had the trophy they won from Nationals.

"I'm gonna have to put this back in the trophy case soon, but just for motivation right now at this practice. I'm a little ahead of the game, but we will need a new team captain next year. So, I'm appointing Michelle." He announced once everyone had sat down.

The entire team turned towards Michelle and started clapping. For the first time since Percy had met her, she seemed uncomfortable. "Thank you, but my friends call me MJ."

Ned grinned like a little kid on Christmas. "I thought you didn't have any friends."

She gave an awkward smile and a warm feeling bloomed in Peter's chest. "I didn't."

Peter's phone buzzed. There was a text from an unknown number telling him to go to the bathroom. He eyed it with suspicion before deciding to follow its advice. "I've got to go."
MJ focused her attention on him. "Where are you going?" When Peter didn't answer she narrowed her eyes and leaned across the table, gazing at him intently. "What are you hiding, Peter?"

Peter opened his mouth with a lie about a family emergency when Michelle started grinning. "I'm just kidding, I don't care."

He chuckled nervously and hurriedly got up to leave. Even as he walked out of the room he could feel MJ's eyes on his back. He made his way to the bathroom. When he walked inside, it was empty until Happy exited one of the stalls.

Percy quirked his head quizzically. "Kind of a weird place for a middle-aged man to be hanging out, don't you think?"

Happy rolled his eyes, almost fondly, and just ignored the statement. "Listen, kid, I really owe you one. I don't know what I would do without this job. I mean, before I met Tony-"

A toilet flushing cut him off. There was an awkward silence as Nico came out of one of the stalls and washed his hands. Once he was done, he turned around and leaned casually against the sink with his arms crossed. He smirked. "No, please go on. Don't let me disturb you."

"The boss wants to see you." Happy got to the point.

Peter made a confused face. He pointed to the stalls and whispered, "Is he here too?"

Nico rolled his eyes and moved to smack Peter upside the head. "You really think Tony Stark would be caught dead in a public bathroom?"

Percy shrugged before turning to Happy for confirmation. Happy sighed tiredly and muttered something about dumb genius kids. In a louder voice, he said, "No, he's upstate. Come on."

The man walked out of the bathroom, clearly expecting Peter to follow. He turned hopefully towards his cousin.

"I'll tell Hestia where you went," Nico assured him. "Now, you better go before he leaves you here."

"This is why you're my favorite cousin." Peter gave him a cheeky grin before dashing out of the bathroom.

"I'll be sure to tell Thalia that," Nico yelled after him.

Peter managed to catch up to Happy quickly. He got into the back of the car and started to chatter excitedly to Happy in the front seat. He thought that he saw a small smile on the man's face. He took it as a sign that he was finally growing on the man.

After an hour they finally made it to the compound. It was a pristine white building with slanted rooftops and large glass walls. Peter stared in awe at the place.

"It's pretty impressive. They just finished remodeling," Happy said proudly.

The two walked inside and ended up inside a long, immaculate hallway. Peter stopped and stared out the window as a black futuristic jet lifted off the ground and took off.

"Ah, there you are. How was the ride up?" Tony's voice echoed from behind him. "I just finished saying bye to our Wakadan guests, so you got here just in time."

Tony walked up and put his arm around Peter. Percy tensed at the unexpected contact, inhaling
sharply as his body spasmed in pain. Despite his advanced healing and ambrosia, the wound on his stomach still hurt as it finished stitching itself back together. Thankfully, Stark didn't seem to notice. He just continued walking down the hallway, Happy trailing a few feet behind them.

"Sorry I took your suit. I mean, you had it coming." Stark began. "Actually, it turns out it was the perfect sort of tough-love moment that you needed, right? To urge you on, right? Don't you think?"

Peter frowned a bit. He got a small flashback to the crater, where the building was slowly crushing him. It sounded like Stark wasn't sorry at all about taking his suit and him almost dying. He chuckled nervously to hide his irritation. "Um, I don't think my cousins or aunt would agree with you. If you ever come over again, which I doubt you will," he started, muttering the last part, "I can't promise they won't try anything. May might try to be civil though."

Stark raised an eyebrow at his candor. "I will... take that into consideration." He quickly moved on. "You screwed the pooch hard. But then you did the right thing. I was wrong about you. I think, with a little more mentoring, you could be a real asset to the team."

"The team?"

They had made it to a circular room. There was a door in the back corner that Tony gestured to, "Yeah, there's about fifty reporters behind that door. Real ones by the way, not bloggers." He tapped a few buttons on his watch. The wall in front of them slid open and a spotlight turned on, illuminating a sleek metal suit. It resembled his other suit but it had gold accents on it. While Peter admired the suit, Tony started to talk again. "When you're ready... why don't you try that on? I'll introduce the world to the newest official member of the Avengers: Spider-Man."

Peter chuckled in disbelief and amazement. He was going to be an Avenger!

"So, after the press conference, Happy will show you to your room, your new quarters," Tony said. He turned towards Happy. "Where's he between? He's next to Vision?"

Peter's smile faded a bit. As amazing as being an Avenger would be, it didn't seem like him. He wasn't an Avenger, he was just the friendly neighborhood Spider-Man. Plus, he would have to leave his family and his friends.

"You'll fit right in."

His decision made, he turned towards Tony. "Thank you, Mr. Stark. But, I'm good." Before Tony could say anything, Peter continued, "I'd rather just stay on the ground for a little while. Friendly neighborhood Spider-Man. Somebody's got to look out for the little guy, right?"

Tony took off his sunglasses and stared at Peter with something akin to surprise in his eye. "Are you sure about this?"

"Yeah, I'm sure."

"Okay, I get it. Got a working-class hero vibe going on. I can respect that. Happy will take you home."

Peter smiled at him and shook his hand. "Thank you, Mr. Stark."

He was about to walk away when Tony pulled him back and smiled softly at him. If Peter thought about it too hard, he would say that it almost seemed... paternal. "Listen, Peter, just because you won't be an official Avenger doesn't mean that you can't have a room here. We can talk about it later, but, um, I want you to know that you'll always be welcome here." He cleared his throat, and his face
straightened out but his eyes retained a fond look. "Anyways, I will see you around. Happy will take you home now, I just need a quick word with him first."

Peter nodded and walked back the way he came. He only glanced back once to see Tony and Happy talking to the CEO of Stark Industries, Pepper Potts. He grinned to himself. Thalia was going to be jealous that he got to see the Pepper Potts up close. He stood by the car door, admiring the building and the grounds surrounding it. Happy walked up a few minutes later. They sat in a comfortable silence during the ride back.

Once they made it to his apartment complex, Peter quickly got out. The window rolled down behind him and Happy smiled at him. "I'll see you around, kid."

Peter waved goodbye and the man drove away. He made his way upstairs, opening the door. The apartment seemed empty so he didn't bother calling out a greeting. He froze in the doorway of his room, eyeing the brown paper bag sitting innocently on his bed.

There was a note written on it, reading, "This belongs to you- TS."

Peter beamed and stripped down, pulling on the suit as soon as he got it out of the bag. It was a familiar comfort and he slipped the mask off for a moment. His elation died as his spider-sense suddenly picked up and the hairs on the back of his neck stood up.

"What the-" his mother's voice yelled from his doorway. He was so dead.

Chapter End Notes

Well, here we are. The last chapter. Y'all don't know how tempted I was to leave it at the beach scene and make everyone think he died. And as for the voice he hears... well I guess you're going to have to read the sequel to find out. If anyone was wondering, the lie Thalia told Liz was actually sort of the truth. She told her that Annabeth died and Liz was the first person he had asked out since then so it was probably overwhelming. Let me know what you think :)}
Percy stood at the crest of Half-Blood Hill. He was pacing underneath Thalia's Pine. He had already greeted Peleus who was curled around the trunk of the tree, watching him lazily. Going to Camp Half-Blood was a mistake, he never should have gone back. He turned around to start marching back down the hill when there was a sharp tug on the back of his shirt.

Instincts took over and Percy whirled around. He grabbed his 'attacker' by the wrist and twisted their arm back, pressing it against their back. Nico chuckled even as Percy tightened his grip.

"Nice to know that you aren't rusty, Barnacle Boy."

Percy huffed and let his cousin go. "What are you doing here?"

"What aren't you doing down there?" Nico retorted, waving towards the camp.

Percy opened his mouth and closed it again. "I'm scared," he admitted. "I just left them. Everyone was hurting after the war and I put myself above their needs, and... I just left. Like I was more important than them."

Nico scoffed and looked at him like he was crazy. His expression softened once he saw the genuine anxiety in Percy's eyes. "Listen, Perce. I'm not going to deny that you weren't stupid by pushing everyone away. But, everyone grieves differently. You've been fighting since you were twelve and you had just lost your one constant in all of that. You're allowed to be selfish sometimes."

"But-"

"You're not the only one who ran away," Nico reminded him. "When Bianca died, it felt like my world had fallen apart. I became impulsive and withdrawn. You were the one who brought me back. It's my turn to return the favor."

Percy smiled at his cousin. His eyes were watery and he could feel his throat choking up. He threw his arms around the smaller boy, bringing him into a tight hug. After ten seconds, Nico started fighting back and shrugged out of the hug.

"When did you get so smart? I thought your head was full of bones," Percy teased. Nico stared at him for a moment with a blank face before he cracked and started laughing.

"What?" Percy asked, not understanding what was so funny. Nico just shook his head and walked down the hill, still quietly chuckling.

Percy hesitated before following his cousin down towards the dining pavilion. The sun was setting, meaning that dinner was about to finish. A pit of dread welled up in his stomach. No matter what Nico said, Percy was going to feel nervous about it until he finally faced them. Everyone seemed to be there, even the Hunters, who Thalia was sitting with despite no longer being Lieutenant.

Nico stopped for a moment and smiled encouragingly at him. He then walked confidently into the dining pavilion and made his way over to the Apollo table. He sat down by Will and turned to stare at Percy, who had still managed to go unnoticed, standing at the edge of the pavilion.

Will followed his boyfriend's gaze and went silent at the sight of the son of Poseidon. The rest of the table looked over as well, wanting to see what had their normally level-headed head counselor so shocked. The entire table went quiet, causing a lull in the noise.
Each table looked over to see what caused the normally loud children of Apollo to become mute. Percy almost chuckled when he glanced at the Athena table to see them speechless for once. Within a minute it was completely silent. Everyone was looking at him in surprise, almost like he was a ghost. He could see a few younger campers try to whisper to their older siblings, most likely questions about him. They were all shushed in response.

Chiron stood up and cantered towards him. He placed a comforting hand on Percy's shoulder. "It's good to have you back." He turned towards the rest of the demigods and raised Percy's left arm, proudly declaring, "Percy Jackson, Savior of Olympus!"

Before Percy could protest, claim that he wasn't the real hero, he was swarmed by his old friends. It was a flurry of shouting, hugs, and cheers. The dining pavilion was a scene of complete chaos and Percy loved every second of it. Amidst the mayhem, Percy managed to find Nico again, who looked completely at ease.

"Now," Nico said with a playful lilt, "you've just got to do this one more time with the Romans."

Percy paled and turned a shade of green darker than his eyes. He might have survived his mother when she found out about Spider-Man, but he was definitely going to die at the fury of Hazel Levesque and Reyna Ramírez-Arellano.

And... that's it. This book is special to me because it is the first fic I've ever written. I hope you've enjoyed the story. It's been a crazy journey and still seems surreal. Every time I update I always get such positive feedback. It inspires me to write and always makes my day better. The scene between Percy and Nico has to be one of my favorites. It feels like everything has come full circle. I want to thank my sister. She was my sounding board for this fic and the sequel. She gave me a lot of great ideas on how I want to proceed and everything I should include as I write the sequel.

End Credit #1

"Hestia? Lady Artemis said you wanted to see us?" Thalia called out softly as she approached the hearth with Nico.

"Thalia, Nico, I've wanted to speak with you. Come and sit," the goddess greeted warmly, gesturing beside her.

Thalia and Nico sat down on either side of her. Hestia was tending to the hearth, the fire warm and comforting.

"What is it?" Nico asked. He had a feeling that it must have been serious. The goddess had waited until they were alone and at Camp Half-Blood.

"Nothing bad," she reassured them. "I've been speaking with your fathers."

"That's never a good thing," Thalia said warily.

Hestia laughed softly. "Yes, it generally isn't. However, this time is an exception. After your cousin almost died at the hands of mortal Adrian Toomes, we have decided that it's time for him to receive help."

"I don't think he's going to like that," Nico said, thinking about Percy's self-sacrificing habits. "He won't want anyone to be in danger because of him."

"That is why we've chosen someone that he knows can fight. Someone he trusts and has the abilities
to blend into the world of mortal heroes without raising too much suspicion. Well, I say someone, but I mean two people."

Thalia gasped in realization. "You mean us?"

Hestia smiled encouragingly and gestured to two brown packages near the foot of the hearth. Thalia hadn't noticed them before, but they seemed obvious now. The two cousins each reached for the one closest to them.

Nico opened his first. He gasped as a feeling of darkness and cold washed over him. It should have felt foreboding but somehow it seemed comforting. He took out the cloak from inside. It was predominantly black, the bottom of it ripped into shreds. It had a gold clasp with the Greek symbol for omega engraved on it. The hood seemed big enough to cover most of his face but there was also a basic domino mask. The mask had a red sheer fabric over the eyes. Nico held it up to his face and was amazed to find that it did nothing to impair his vision.

"The cloak will amplify your powers, allowing you to shadow travel with ease and without risk of injury. That should ease Mr. Solace's worry." Hestia informed him, teasing him.

Nico blushed at the mention of Will. "Thank you."

Thalia opened hers after watching her cousin. A slight buzz traveled up her arms. Inside was a full-body suit, thankfully it wasn't spandex, that was also primarily black. It had stripes of electric blue along the arms, legs, and torso. There was a large gold lightning bolt across the chest. There was also a mask in the same electric blue as the suit. She had a circlet as well, reminiscent of the old one that marked her as the Lieutenant of Artemis. This one was gold and it almost looked like two lightning bolts meeting together at a small blue gem in the shape of a sideways crescent.

"The suit will help your channel electricity into powerful blasts that you can control. You will both need to practice but I do not doubt that it will come easily to you." A grin lit up Thalia's face and she carefully folded to suit and put it back in the bag. She then turned and hugged Hestia tightly. The goddess was startled for a moment before she hugged back. After she let go, Thalia turned to Nico and smiled evilly. "We aren't going to tell Percy about this. I want to see how long it'll take him to notice. I bet that it'll take five months for him to ask."

Nico narrowed his eyes but took her hand as the bet was made. "I'll take you up on that. I think it's only going to take him three months. If I win, you have to let the Aphrodite cabin give you a makeover and keep it for a week."

Nico glared at him but shook his hand. "And when I win, you have to wear bright yellow for a week without any black. That includes your hair."

The sequel for this book is titled "Calm Before the Storm". It will focus on the two-year gap between Homecoming and Infinity War. That's right y'all. You're getting a completely AU storyline that's not going to be heavily based off the movies. I'm really excited to share it with you. It will branch off of the MCU more and will definitely be canon-divergent. I already have everything planned out which will make writing chapter a billion times easier. Once I publish it, it will update every other week because I'm going to writing as I update rather than having
A bell dinged from somewhere in the depths of the small diner located off the Montauk Highway. The patrons of the diner were all normal people going about their day. None of them paid attention to the teenage boy who had just walked in besides giving him a cursory glance. The boy had windswept raven hair and sea-green eyes. He scanned the diner, his gaze settling on a boy and a girl sitting in a booth towards the back of the diner.

The boy had a dark complexion with dark brown hair that was cut close to his head. He had warm brown eyes and a friendly smile. He was wearing a simple pair of jeans and a blue hoodie. The girl seemed like the boy's complete opposite. She had fair skin and deep blue eyes that had a mischievous glint in them. Her hair was light and the tips were dyed a bright blue to match her eyes. She was wearing a pair of ripped jeans and combat boots with a pair of earbuds hanging around her neck. She also had an ankh on a golden chain that seemed out of place with the rest of her outfit. No one would guess that the two were siblings.

Percy made his way over to Carter and Sadie Kane with an easy smile on his face. He hadn't seen his friends since the fight on Governor's Island where they had fought and defeated Setne right after the Titan War. There was a dull ache when he realized the last time he saw Carter and Sadie, Annabeth had been alive.

"Sadie, Carter," he greeted as he approached the table.

"Percy," Carter responded with a grin. He slid out of the booth and gave Percy fist bump. Sadie got out as well and punched him in the shoulder.

"It's good to see you again," she said with a smile.

Carter's grin faded a bit. "I heard about Annabeth, I'm sorry-

Sadie cut him off with an elbow to the gut. "I doubt he wants to be reminded of it, you twit."

Carter smile apologetically. He nervous rubbed the back of his neck. "You're right. Sorry. Thanks for meeting with us. I'm sure you're busy."

Percy gave a strained smile and accepted the apology quickly before moving on. "It's cool, man." He took a seat and the two siblings followed his lead. He glanced around the diner. "This place sure does bring back a lot of memories though."

Carter let out a soft laugh. "That's for sure. That little baby crocodile was more trouble than he was worth."

"As much as we'd love to reminisce," Sadie interjected, "that is unfortunately not why we called you here."

The hairs on the back of Percy's neck stood up. His spider-sense was telling him that whatever they needed him to do would probably result in him getting injured or in some sort of trouble. He warily asked, "Why did you call me here then?"

There was a sudden increase in his spider-sense and he whipped around. A woman was approaching them. She had caramel skin with a lithe frame. Her hair was straight and black, cut just below her
shoulders. Her eyes were a bright, lamp-like, yellow. She was wearing a skin-tight, leopard-print, full-body leotard. She had an aura of power that marked her as a goddess. Judging from the fact that she had come with the Kane siblings, she was not the type of goddess that Percy was used to dealing with.

"I asked them to bring you here, Perseus Jackson," Bast said in lieu of a greeting. "I need a favor."

End Notes

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