Peter, You're A Star

by Gamma1243

Summary

Infinity War AU. During Ebony Maw's attack on New York, Dr. Strange, Tony Stark, and Peter Parker find themselves backed up against a wall. With no options and no backup, Strange does the only thing he can think of: send them and the time-stone somewhere no one will find them. Of course, things don't go quite as expected... Based off the Supernatural episode "The French Mistake"
Prologue: Spirit in the Sky

“Oh set me up with the spirit in the sky
That's where I'm gonna go when I die
When I die and they lay me to rest
I'm gonna go to the place that's the best
Go to the place that's the best”

POV: Doctor Stephen Strange

Time.

All that exists is time.

I sit, meditating in the sanctum. My eyes block out the light from the normally dim room. The absence of sound creates a soft ambience.

I know I won’t be disturbed here. My manipulation of time makes my meditation take but seconds in linear time.

So I give in completely.

I give myself to Time.

Time rules over being, over space. At a given time there is no universe, no galaxy. The twisting turning push and pull of the outer reaches of space itself happens within the confines of time.

This is where I cast my consciousness.

To the edge, the furthest reaches of existence. To where space and matter end.

Therein lies possibility.

Therein is multiplicity.

Therein is the multiverse.

I breathe in slowly, deeply.

The power pulsing from the Eye of Agamotto choes into my awareness. It’s not a visual power or something I can detect with any senses. Rather the energy of my soul has become intertwined with the luminous stone. I simply know it’s there.

Almost like I am a swimmer and the stone is the ocean.

Deep, bottomless in some places, mysterious, and altogether breathtaking.

I drink in its depths until I drown.

There is infinite knowledge, endless eternities.
Like seeing the Earth from space makes one realize how small a human life is, comprehending the length of eternity nearly causes my mind to implode when contrasting it against the insignificance of a single moment.

Time isn’t truly linear as human life would suggest. Time is the entire construct of all that is, all that was, and all that will ever be. The stone testifies of this eternity.

It is well to be named an Infinity Stone.

I continue to allow the stone complete control of my consciousness. A few more moments and I reign my awareness back to myself. Now we are two, separate bodies surrounded by an endless dark void. I take the form of myself in a plain blue tunic. The stone takes a form it is most comfortable with. It spreads out in thin emerald lines and interlocks with itself. The lines give off light as they cross, grow, and spread until it resembles an almost spider-web like image of multiple overlapping clocks. It’s massive size dwarfs me as I gaze at it.

Beautiful...

It isn’t living...but at the same time it isn’t just an inanimate object. The strands of thin green sway lightly and some shift around the circular shapes. It certainly has a presence in the space we occupy, much like nature, alive, growing, deadly powerful, but not something you can communicate with.

Not unless you have access to the mystic arts.

I furrow my brow as I conjure a thin line of gold between my fingers, similar to the gem’s current form. Twisting back, I build up momentum and then fling the stream towards the green web of time.

The collision is spectacular.

In an instant, the green and gold morph around each other like two dragons fighting in the air. Beautiful reds and oranges erupt in tendrils from the chaotic mesh.

I’m so awestruck it takes me several moments to realize another oddity forming from the explosion.

Thousands of small circles of light fizz and then pop. They grow and expand until they very nearly form a wall, much like a stained glass window, around me. Each circle frames something different. As I shake myself from my aw, I detect familiarity in several of them.

In one circle I see a countryside.

In another I see the ocean.

Yet another reveals a city I once visited on business.

The scenes flash before my eyes. I’m barely able to take one in before it flickers and changes to another. There are hundreds I recognize and even more I don’t.

A pulse of reasoning resonates through my mind.

...go through the doors…

I take a hesitant step towards the nearest opening. By now, several of the circles have grown large
enough that I could walk through. They look almost exactly like the portals sling rings create, except the Time Stone makes its presence manifested in them by green sparks mixing in with the gold.

A few more steps and I’m a breath away from the portal. It connects to about a dozen others in a chain, but I’m more focused on what’s through its doorway. All I see is gray buildings and lines of streets. I close my eyes and step through.

A wall of sounds crashes into me.

Cars.

Horns honking.

The thunder of a hundred people walking across streets.

I reopen my eyes to take in the fresh surroundings. All around me is a jungle-like cluster of buildings stretching on until my vision is blocked by them. The bright sunlight glints off window panes and corners of buildings. Vendors yelling on the streets and the persistent smell of cigarette smoke invade my senses.

...New York, 2018...

The Time Stone once again pushes into my awareness. I take a second look around. The infinite knowledge in the Time Stone is undebatable however, this is NOT the New York I know.

The air is much cleaner than the city I reside in. Brightly colored posters line almost every wall. Although still old and needing repairs, the streets aren’t littered with garbage and filth.

As if the Stone could read my mind, a reassurance echoes my thoughts.

...not your New York...multiverse…

Of course.

This is not my reality.

I hum in appreciation. What I’m currently experiencing is beyond all rational thought and reason.

Drinking in the sight for a third time, I duck back to the portal behind me. There are many more doors to explore and much to learn.

The wall of portals is cavernous and compelling, even after a glimpse of an alternate New York. I scan over the hundreds of openings, debating on which to enter.

...there…

The stone pulls my attention to a particular entryway on the far side from where I am. Greenery and bright light shine through it. I approach it without a second thought, my tunic rustling at the movement.

Stepping through the portal, I am unexpectedly hit with an unbearable amount of heat. This causes my breath to catch for a moment. If not for a dense line of trees and the chain linked fence separating the parking lot I’ve stepped into from them, I would have thought the stone brought me to a different planet.
Loosening my collar, I begin trudging through the parking lot. It takes all of three seconds for sweat to form on my brow and my breathing to become laboured. Rows upon rows of cars bake in the heat of summer. The light reflecting off them pains my eyes.

Once again, although incredibly similar to the world I’m used to, something about this place feels odd...

A magazine on the ground catches my attention. I stoop to pick it up, but I continue walking. A large building, almost like a gym, dominates the far side of the lot. It casts a relieving lengthy shadow against the ground by its entrance. I slow to a stop under a forest green awning.

The magazine I picked up looks relatively new, probably dropped on accident. I flip through the pages. A date in the top corner reads:

JUNE 2017

This only furthers my feelings of this world being off from my own.

...continue...learn...

I obediently respond to the stones command by taking a seat on a nearby bench and delving into the magazine.

15 minutes pass, then another. Before I know it, an hour has gone by. The magazine turned out to be Time Magazine (ironically) and was full of news stories from this world. They each compellingly resembled events that occurred in my world.

The only difference?

No Avengers.

No S.H.I.E.L.D.

No aliens or advanced technology.

No magic.

I have no explanation as to why the stone wants me to know about this place in the multiverse. Part of me wonders if the stone even has power here. After all, if what I’m reading is true, that would lead me to believe that none of the Infinity Stones exist in this realm.

...a safe place...for protection...


...from...the others...

I shut the magazine and set it gently to my side.

Whatever the stone meant by that, I can tell it doesn’t wish to share more. After waiting a few more seconds, I stand and proceed to march back across the humid parking lot. The portal takes up a parking stall on the other end of the lot waiting to return me to the gateway of multiverse.

I almost make it.

I don’t know why I turned around.
Maybe it was because I heard familiar voices and glanced back in curiosity.

Maybe it was the Time Stone pressing me to see.

Regardless, I turn back.

What I see stops me dead in my tracks.

What on Earth???
Chapter 1: Going up the Country

“I'm goin' up the country, baby don't you want to go?
I'm goin' to some place, I've never been before”

POV: Peter Parker

Being a Spider-Man is awesome.

I get cool perks like meeting the Avengers, getting sweet tech, being the hero, and saving the day. Basically it’s like everything I ever dreamed of.

Well, really it’s awesome like...85% of the time...because let’s be real, crap happens.

Take today for example. Did I expect to be hit in the face by some dude flying around?

No. Not at all.

Did I get hit in the face though?

Almost.

“Kid that’s the wizard. Get on it!”

I jerk around in surprise as I narrowly avoid being hit by said wizard. Obeying Mr. Stark’s shout, my eyes track the man in the cape as he whizzes far past me in the bright sunlight.

Huh.

The things you see in New York.

*thwip* *thwip*

“On it!” I fling myself into pursuit, leaving Mr. Stark to fend for himself against a super ugly fanged alien, the two of them currently wreaking havoc in a nice peaceful park.

The flying figure jerks left and right around buildings and down uncharacteristically empty streets, leaving the branches of small trees whipping violently in his wake. He’s leaving me in the dust!

“Hey Karen, would mind tracking that guy’s path for me?” I politely ask my A.I. while flinging myself around a corner.

“Oh course Peter.” The mechanical voice responds.

The screens on my display light up and highlight the outline of the wizard’s form, the tip of a red cape flicking like the tongue of a snake.

Gotcha!
Easy peesy Mr. Stark. I’ll get em! I think as I release one web and shoot another.

I catapult after him like it’s a regular Tuesday, although come to think of it, racing after a wizard down the streets of New York City during an alien invasion has got to be one of the weirdest things I’ve ever done. Definitely going to add it on top of my list of “Weird Stuff I’ve Done With Mr. Stark.” Which meant that fighting a giant and Captain Freaking America in Germany was getting knocked to second. Sorry Cap.

Distracted by my thoughts, I almost miss it when the swatch of red veers abruptly left into a narrow alleyway. I let out a surprised huff and awkwardly twist in the air, trying to throw myself into a new trajectory.

Not a good move.

My forward momentum hurls me straight towards the side of a building.

CRAP!

In a slight panic I reach my hand out.

*thwip*

Shooting one last web at the opposite wall of the alley, I yank hard to pull away from my impending crash. I let out a slight groan as my shoulders protest at the sudden change in force. With a quick flip in the air, I let the motion carry me to the ground and gracefully catch myself with one hand. The dust on the ground clouds around my feet as I stand in the entryway of where the strange man halted his flight.

The man’s cape dumps him on the trash strewn ground. He staggers to a standing position against an old wooden pallet, the high building casting him in shadow.

My eyes must be playing tricks on me because the cape continues to hover in the air above the broken glass and debris after depositing the poor dude. I blink a few times, but the cape is there every time I open my eyes. There’s only one logical conclusion out there to explain that.

“Whoa....you’re a wizard AND you have a magic cape? The words tumble out of my mouth. “That’s insane!”

The man jerks around with surprising speed. His sharp features and impeccable facial hair are barely noticeable compared to the icy blue eyes staring back at me.

“What?” He demands.

“Your cape! It’s magic, right?” I say matter-of-factly and point at it. The cape, in response, moves back a little as if accused.

The man gapes at me for a second before shaking himself a little and ignoring my question all together. “Are we still being attacked?” His eyes flicker between the two cement walls and the far back wall of where we landed. It’s emptier than my chemistry class after the lunch bell rings. “Where did Tony Stark go?” His eyes flick back to me.

“You flew right through the fight so Mr. Stark uh, told me to follow you and stop that fanged dude from stealing your necklace...” I rub the back of my neck somewhat self-consciously and examine the necklace. “I mean, it is nice I guess...but Mr. Stark is...uh...” I trail off trying to think of where Mr. Stark is now.
A thought suddenly strikes me, and I raise my eyebrows.

“Hey wait a minute, you are on our side right?”

“That depends on who exactly you are?” His eyes narrow as his tone turns hard and steely. His cape next to him floats over and lands protectively on his shoulders.

That is SO cool! I think. But now isn’t really the time to nerd out over magic.

Tapping into my Spidey-senses reveals nothing sinister about this guy. So I put my hand on my hip and cheerfully respond with “Just your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man. Who are you?”

“Doctor Strange.”

I tilt my head in confusion. “I’m sorry, is that some kind of superhero name? I mean, I get the strange part, I’m not so sure about the doctor thing though.” I say gesturing to his getup, but I don’t think he appreciates my attempt to joke because his expression flattens. Actually, he looks about 100% done with me. It makes me take a small step back. Okay, maybe he’s a little intimidating.

I’m about to ask about his necklace when the ground begins to shake behinds us.

CLANG BOOM!!

An explosion echoes into the alley coming from the street outside. I move towards the opening only to jump back in surprise.

CLANG!

Something large and metallic hits the ground where I had just been standing. Cursing my Spidey-senses for not warning me, it takes me two seconds too long to realize it’s just Mr. Stark in the Iron Man suit.

Before I can even voice a “oh, hey man, what’s up?”, gold flashes and Mr. Stark’s face appears.

“Good news,” he says in a low tone, implying there’s nothing good about his news. “I lost Squidward and friends somewhere back there so they aren’t here yet. Bad news, the ugly bitch is angrier than if I just hit its mother over the head with a two by four.” He looks pointedly at Strange. “So essentially what I’m saying is you have about 30 seconds to come up with some voodoo escape spell or we’re toast.”

Strange lets out a long sigh. His cape, which appears dormant now, swirls around his legs as he begins pacing.

“It won’t matter where we go. As long as Thanos seeks the time-stone he will follow us anywhere.”

“So you want to go Mano a Mano with him here?” The mechanic’s voice is heavy with incredulousness.

“It’s either now or later.”

“Well I’d prefer a little more back up against him and a literal alien invasion than your magic ass and Spider-Kid over here.” Mr. Stark jabs his finger towards Strange and then directs it to me. “So wrangling up some back up and fighting later sounds pretty good to me Doc.”

Strange’s pacing stops. He faces Mr. Stark. “Then what?” He hisses. “If we waste time getting
back up and Thanos gets more of the stones we won’t stand a chance against him. That will be on you Stark.”

I raise my hand as if we’re in class. “Who’s Thanos?”

They ignore me.

Mr. Stark steps towards Strange, fuming. “No. No, you know what’s on me? None of this shit! Where have you been every time we, the Avengers, defended the world? Were you too busy “defending our reality” to lift a finger against any of the pretty damn real threats we’ve defeated? No, you know what’s on you?! Not warning us about Thanos and his damn rock collection from the start!”

Their bickering bounces off the confined space like bullets. The distant clouds of smoke reflect off the glass high above us.

A familiar tingle of awareness creeps down my spine with a chill. My heart unexpectedly skips a beat and my anxiety spikes.

Something is coming.

As usual, paranoia floods my thoughts. I examine our surroundings, my heart thudding. Everything looks fine, but that doesn’t mean trouble isn’t around the corner.

“Hey, hey, hey, Mr. Stark?” My voice barely breaks through the tension in the narrow space. “Guys?!”

I move towards them when a force shoves into me from behind. I am in the air hurtling down the alley. The walls of brick race past my eyes before my body makes impact with the ground and all that exists is pain.

“Kid!”

Someone is yelling, but all I can hear is buzzing because the sky is now on fire and everything is hot. My senses throb at my skull.

After an agonizing moment, I roll over and heave myself up onto hands and knees. My breath sticks in my throat at the sight beyond my mask.

Mr. Stark and Dr. Strange are backing over to where I’m situated. Their attention is directed at two figures at the entryway of the alley.

Oh great. Big fanged boy is back and he brought another, shorter, alien friend. Do aliens even have friends? The shorter one is probably who Mr. Stark has been referring to as Squidward based off his flat nose and wrinkly grey skin. They’re both hideous, and, I’m guessing, the reason I’m a bruised heap over here.

“Your antics have been admirable, but nothing more than the bother of an insect.” Somehow Squidward looks even uglier when he speaks. “Nothing will prevent Thanos, he is inevitable.”

At that, Squidward raises his hand and flexes his fingers oddly. Several bricks come flying off the nearby walls and crumble to form into the shapes of icicles, or maybe they’re brick-cicles. I don’t know. Regardless, they look deadly. With another flick of his wrist, Squidward somehow seems to control the flow of air through the alleyway because I find myself being sucked off my low stance towards the brick-cicles.
Strange must have used a spell to slow down time because I swear as we hurtle toward the spikes waiting to impale us that I can feel every tremor of my heart against my chest. I think I hear screaming, or maybe I’m just hearing myself.

Just then, a pretty orange light, like a sparkler or firework, erupts to life in front of the spikes. It circles and circles around until the spikes behind it disappear and all I can see is the street behind them.

My body hurtles toward the circle of light, and I wildly wonder if this is what people mean when they talk about a light at the end of the tunnel when you’re about to die.

I close my eyes as the circle engulfs me.

The second I pass through the fiery sparks the pull on my body disappears and I slam into the rocky pavement. The impact knocks my breath away for the second time in less than five minutes, and I lay there gasping for a moment.

The force of the impact must have jostled something inside me because the air feels thick and humid now.

Rolling over with a groan, I wheeze and push off of the rough asphalt, preparing for another attack. I scan over where Squidward had been only…he’s completely gone. I look around the street for him, expecting a surprise attack, but no sign of him. My Spider-senses have reduced from haywire alarms to barely a prickle.

But I sense something behind me….

I whip around. It’s only then that I notice a small crowd of people milling around on the street outside the alley. Have they been here the whole time? Some are watching us intently while others are holding things pointed our direction. I start to bring my arms up defensively when I realize these people aren’t threatening. In fact, the things they have pointed at us aren’t lasers or anything sinister.

They’re large video cameras.

What??

A few of the people notice me looking at them and tilt their heads in confusion.

“Get out of here! You need to find somewhere safe!” I shout to them. My voice echoes loudly off the nearby walls, causing me to wince.

Wait, why is it so quiet..?

The absence of noise is eerie. No screams, no explosions, no aliens…

I glance up to where I remember the alien ship hovering in the sky. What I see makes me choke.

The sky is gone.

All around us the buildings of New York grow until they are swallowed up into the dark expanse of…a raftered ceiling. We’re on the street…in a building.

I have a sudden ridiculous image in my mind of being a Lego figure on the street of a Lego set and half expect enormous hands to rip the roof off of wherever we are and reach down for me.
“What the hell? Mr. Stark-” the words babble from my mouth. I stagger backwards.

“Where are w-“ Upon turning around, I discover another horror. Mr. Stark is crouched over the limp form of Dr. Strange. There’s blood…lots of it.

“FRIDAY give me a reading!”

I can feel the lingering eyes of the crowd behind us as Mr. Stark barks orders at his AI.

“Head trauma to the lower skull, weak pulse, sprained wrist. He appears to have a concussion. I would recommend immediate medical attention to prevent further damage Boss.”

Mr. Stark curses as and my heart plummets at the sound of FRIDAY’s diagnosis. This is NOT good.

Mr. Stark makes no indication of seeing me. He continues to ask FRIDAY questions and glance around. I can tell he finally registers our surroundings because he rises in an instant and shouts to the small crowd behind cameras. “Why are you all just standing there?? We need a doctor!”

The sharp sound of a bell rings out over the scene.

“CUT!”

Turning again, I watch the gathering of people immediately jump into action. The cameras are wheeled away, several people start running towards us, and a few people start gathering up larger chunks of debris lying around.

“Tom, Robert, I love the raw reactions, I really do, but you’re acting like you’ve never seen a camera before. What’s up?” A dark haired man wearing a dark t-shirt and glasses looks up from a chair near the cameras. I think he’s talking to us because he’s looking right at me.

By now my confusion is as high as the unsettling ceiling. One of the women from the crowd reaches me.

“Here’s your water Mr. Holland.” She reaches a water bottle towards me with the longest straw I’ve ever seen.

“I-what? Uh…thank you?” I hesitantly take the water from her. More people crowd around Mr. Stark and Strange.

“Oh my God! He’s really bleeding!”

“Someone get the medic!”

“WE NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION NOW!”

The shouts and cries distract the water lady’s attention from me. In fact, everyone’s attention is now focused on the small huddle around Dr. Strange.

I don’t know how long I’m standing there. Confusion, shock, and exhaustion keep me frozen in place, stupidly staring at the scene with a water bottle in hand.

After a while, someone comes in with a gurney. Mr. Stark and several others help Dr. Strange onto it. They begin to wheel him down the street and away from the alley.

Someone puts a hand on Mr. Stark’s shoulder, stopping him from following the fallen wizard.
They say something to him I only hear because of my enhanced hearing.

“Rob, we need you to stay. We’ll send someone with him to send us updates on his condition.”

He runs a hand through his hair out of stress. His stance is wary and guarded. Abruptly, his posture jolts and he looks around wildly until his eyes rest on me.

“Kid!” He begins marching over, relief evident in his movement. “You’re okay?” It’s less of a question and more of a hopeful statement.

I stare at him for a moment before shaking myself out of my haze. “Yeah, yeah, I’m good.”

He raises an eyebrow at me.

“Mr. Stark...do you know what’s going on? The aliens just vanished and we’re inside some building!” I say in a rush, frantically pointing upwards. Lowering my voice, I add “And now Dr. Strange is hurt and all these people are running around like nothing is going on. Was that sparky thing like a portal or something?”

Mr. Stark raises his hands to me, “Kid, hey, slow down,” then registers the bizarre things I mentioned surrounding us. “What the hell? FRIDAY, where are we?”

“I’m sorry Boss, my location services are currently having difficulty connecting to the Stark Network. Looking for network errors now.”

Mr. Stark scoffs. “You can’t have network errors. You are the Network.”

“It appears that the network doesn’t currently exist. Would you like to connect to ‘PINEWOOD_GUEST3’ WiFi instead?”

“Doesn’t exist? Wha-FRIDAY that’s not possible!”

Shaken, Mr. Stark continues with his tirade of questions directed at FRIDAY while my attention drifts around the room. All the people I’ve seen appear relaxed, if a little hurried. The street stretches on until it becomes a wall of office buildings and stores. Buzzers sound and I realize part of why the room gives off weird vibes is that all the natural looking light is coming from lamps scattered all around the street. Those were definitely not there before, but there’s dozens of them! I start to count them to try and distract from my nervousness. I’m barely at three when my attention is drawn to something behind one of the buildings.

Eyebrows high with even more bewilderment, I take a few steps to the side of the street until I can see the object clearly. What I see makes my blood freeze.

There’s a massive wall behind all the line of buildings I didn’t initially notice. It’s obviously the wall to the massive room we’re in. On the wall is an immense poster. It takes up probably a fourth of the space and features around two dozen people on it. I wish I could say that was the eerie thing about it, but with a start, I identify Mr. Stark placed prominently in the dead center surrounded by the faces of several of the avengers and even Dr. Strange, all with an orange glow behind them. There are other faces I’ve never seen before. My eyes follow the lines of people until my breath catches as I recognize...myself.

Plain as day, I stand, unmasked, in the Spider-Man suit very, very exposed.

I gape at the sign, mouth hanging open.
What is this? How did someone find out my identity?

For a horrible heart-wrenching moment I wonder if Mr. Stark gave my secret away. However, the utter stab of betrayal is pushed away by the fact that there is a lot more off about this poster than just me. Like, who was that giant purple dude behind Mr. Stark? Why were all the Avengers together? Did something happen to the Accords to allow them working together again? And why did we all look so…posed?

My eyes trace up to the giant text blazoned across the top of the banner.

Mr. Stark must have noticed my unusual lack of movement because, after a few moments, he joins me on the side of the street.

“Kid, listen, I don’t know what the hell is going on, but we need to find out where they took Strange and then we can figure our way out of wherever this is. I need you to see if your AI is onli— you’re not listening to me. Why aren’t you listening to me? What could possibly be more import—“ His question cuts off as he glances at what I’m looking at. He does a double take and breathes the words I’m unable to form.

“What the hell is this place?”

It all clicks. The people, the cameras, the lights. The sign says it clear as day.

“MARVEL STUDIOS
AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR” it reads.

We’re on the set of a movie, and the movie is about us.

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AN:

Hey guys! Hope y’all enjoyed this chapter!

I wanted to take just a second to thank those who have inspired this story. I’ve read tons of fan fiction over the years, but lately some authors have inspired me to want to write more. If you haven’t checked out Queen of Crystallopia, PippenStrange, Eva7673, KevyGrayce, or JustmeSpidey you’re really missing out. They deserve huge shout outs due to their Spider-Man fan fictions being some of the best fan-fiction stories ever written!

Of course, much love to those who left reviews or favorited/followed. Y’all are the best!! <3 I would love to know what y’all think about this story as it goes along. Although most of this story is already written, any ideas or thoughts you may have for it are always welcome too!

One more thing. Each chapter title is based off of songs used in marvel movies. Bonus points if you guess which movie they’re from!

Until next time!
~Gamma

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Review replies:

Fangirl485:  
Thank you so much!! I hope you’re excited because I’ve got a fun adventure planned for our favorite avengers! :D
“Yo quiero que me lleven a Buena Vista”
“That’s what FRIDAY said. Concussion.” Mr. Stark says, retracting his hand and using it to stroke his goatee.

Dr. Banner cocks his head at Mr. Stark. “Oh FRIDAY said that did she?”

“Well it sure wasn’t me. What do I look like, Greg House? Listen, I’m glad you’re here. Like actually really glad, but we need to make a plan.” He points a flattened hand at Bruce. “Our local wizard is the only one who can get us back to where we were as far as I know. Did you hear where they took him?”

“No, but my guess is Piedmont Fayette. That’s where they usually go. Hey, since when did you care so much about him?”

“About Strange? I don’t. He’s just our ticket out of all this movie crap.”

Dr. Banner doesn’t answer at first. His eyebrows furrow, and he regards us with skepticism.

“Movie crap..? I don’t follow….” he shakes his head from side to side.

There’s an awkward pause. I can see the gears turning in Mr. Stark’s head. He shifts his position away from Bruce, making a realization.

“Oh hell. You’re not Bruce, are you? You’re an actor.” He rolls his eyes higher than the ceiling and turns to me, not waiting for an answer. “Oh my god. He’s an actor kid. I can’t believe this. What a waste of time.” Grabbing my shoulder, Mr. Stark pushes me away from the guy who looks just like Bruce Banner. “I’m gonna kill that wizard.” He mutters low enough that only I can hear.

“Is this a joke?? Are you trying to prank me? Well real funny Downy! I’ll be sure to tell the guys about this one!” Not Banner yells between laughs after us. I whip my head back to watch him even as Mr. Stark propels me in the opposite direction.

What’s going on?

When we’re a considerable distance from the earshot of Not Banner, Mr. Stark turns me so my attention is directed towards him. His face tightens and his eyes glance around before fixing on mine.

“Okay kid, we’re not in Kansas anymore.”

“I think that movie is before my time Mr. Stark.” I protest.

“Doesn’t matter.” He waves a dismissive hand. “This place we’re walking around in right now? It isn’t real. Strange popped us into some vudu reality.”

“Wait, this isn’t real? Did we die and go to heaven or something?”

“No, at least I don’t think so. I don’t know all the rules of whatever it is that Strange does for a living, but that orange portal we went through? It can travel across space.” He makes a circle with one hand and pokes a finger from his other hand through it. “I went through one in New York right before the space invaders showed up.”

“Where are you going with this..?”

“What I’m saying is that, if it’s possible for Strange to send us through space, maybe it’s possible for him to send us through space enough that it manipulates our reality.”
“So this is real? Are you saying we traveled to another reality? Is that even possible??” My eyes widen in shock.

“Wouldn’t be the first time I’ve done something impossible.” He muses, bringing his arms to a small shrug.

“We need to stay close and find where they took Strange. As much as I hate to admit it, he’ll have more answers—“

“Tom, Robert! There you are!” A powerful voice booms next to me, making me jump. The man with glasses from the set appears on my side. He’s smiling, but it’s a tight smile that reads more like “I’m only talking to you because I have to.”

He wraps his hands around his chest as his powerful voice carries toward us again.

“How are my boys doing today?” He sounds like a concerned grandpa but looks about middle age with his thick dark hair and way more fashionable attire. So maybe like, a young cool grandpa I guess?

“Doing great. Can we help you?” Mr. Stark replies with barely more than a glance at the man.

“Whoa, hey I’m not trying to pick a fight today. Just checking up on ya.”

Mr. Stark gives him his full attention now. “And I said we’re fine. Do you mind? Kind of in the middle of something.” He says gesturing towards me.

The man gives out a laugh. “Yeah okay, when you two are finished up we can finish shooting our movie? Is that how this is going to be?”

“Yes, because I couldn’t care less about your movie right now. There are bigger things at play, okay? Kid let’s get out of here.”

He reaches over and grabs my arm again, presumably to lead me somewhere else, when—

YANK!

Another powerful grip grabs my other arm and pulls me back towards the fake New York street. The awkward momentary battle of two forces causes me to stumble and drop the water bottle I had been holding up to this point.

As the water gushes out on the floor, I can’t help but relate to it. Our situation is spiraling out of control just as fast as it.

A female voice attached to the hand invading my personal bubble says “Not so fast Tom! We’ve got to fix your makeup for the next scene!” The same lady who handed me the water bottle earlier kicks it out of her way as she rips me away from Mr. Stark’s reassuring hold. Even though I didn’t want it, I get a better look at her now. She looks about the same age as Aunt May, with dark blue eyes and short brown hair. Her dark shirt and pants, although plain, offered her a sharp contrast to her pale skin and boasted more sleekness and style than any outfit I’ve ever worn. Like, maybe ever.

In all, she’s terrifying.

The hold she has on my arm is so firm it begins to cut off circulation in my hand.
“I uh-what?” Even as I’m whisked away from him, I look back to Mr. Stark for help. My heart rate increases when I don’t see him behind me. He and the other man have disappeared into the crowds around the set.

Crap!

We’re in unfamiliar territory and we’ve been separated!

The lady leads me around fake brick buildings and we exit the street setting. I note as we round the corner that the backs of the buildings are flat plywood instead of being real structures. It leaves my stomach unsettled.

I try to pull my arm out of the lady’s grip, but I’m distracted when--

SMACK!

Someone slaps me square on the butt!

“Heyyyyyyy Tom! Nice stunts back there!” A young male voice drags after us. The hot sting on my butt cheek is nothing to the rush of embarrassment flooding my facial cheeks.

“Who the hell is Tom?” I whisper more to myself than to anyone listening. No one answers.

People flow through the packed studio walkways like mid-day traffic. Some carry props, others are running and shouting, and some are carrying food trays. The aromas from the food trays and fresh paint mix together, seeping through my mask like I just walked into an all you can eat buffet in art class. A sea of wires and cords stretch on across the floor and walls.

Everything wizzes past my poor overloaded brain like a bath faucet filling a thimble.

This can’t be real...

A few people address the lady dragging me around as Rachel.

I guess that’s her name? I think. I still don’t know where she’s taking me. For all I know this could be just an elaborate scheme and she could be leading me right to my death!

Freaking Rachel!

But she continues on, past a giant bright green wall and crowded corners full of set pieces and props until we finally arrive at a small room off to the side of the set.

“Okay here we are!” She announces, shoving me into the room.

I immediately want to gag. I’ve always liked the smell of hair gel, but the room reeks of the clear gooey stuff amplified by 1000! It’s disgusting. Other than that, the room is a picture of what I’ve been told every teenage girl dreams of: gleaming white counters, spinning leather chairs, and enough mirrors to make anyone vain. There’s makeup supplies and wigs sprawled all over the counters reminding me of when my school put on a play last year and turned the band hall into a temporary dressing room.

“Sit.” Rachel commands, gesturing to a chair. Maybe it’s because she reminds me of Aunt May, or maybe it’s because I’m afraid of what she may do to me if I don’t obey her, but I hop right over to a chair and plant myself down in it. She grabs the chair and spins it around to face the mirror, away from her.
There’s a woosh of air and my mask is pulled off. I let out a panicked, high pitched squeak and try to grab it back. “Hey lady, you can’t go taking stuff that’s not yours!” She jerks her arm away from mine.

“I can actually. Now are you going to quit acting and let me?” She smiles, but I see flames of irritation spark behind her eyes. She sets the mask down out of my reach.

“Y-yes ma’am!” Although nothing is physically keeping me from leaving, I am a prisoner. Confined to this chair. Set to endure some kind of upcoming torture.

My eyes are trained on Rachel as she pulls a black bag off the counter and rummages through it. Her expression is neutral until she finds her target and brings out a small brush, brandishing it in front of my eyes.

“Ah ha! Alright, we’ll be quick because I think Joe wants everyone back soon.” Her eyes move over my face, taking in every millimeter of it. Although I’m fully clothed in my Spider-suit, I’ve never felt so exposed in my life.

“Okay, can you look over here for me hun?” Rachel gestures with her thumb to the side. I comply more by reflex than anything.

Too late I realize how vulnerable it left me.

An onslaught of bristles and powder bombards my sensitive facial skin. There’s suddenly a cloud of powder around me and I’m choking on it. I jerk back, my eyes watering.

“What-wh-hey, what are you doing?!” I splutter.

Rachel stops to look at me. I must appear ridiculous, fighting back coughs and looking like I’m about to cry or be sick.

“Fixing your makeup?” She says sounding like she’s trying to decide if she should slap me or laugh at me.

A nervous laugh escapes my sore throat. It sounds like a broken machine, pathetically clinging onto life. Like I’m an injured puppy about to go to the vet.

I hate it.

“I wasn’t wearing any makeup though!” My voice comes out far higher and raspier than I wish it would.

“Tell me about it. That stupid mask rubs it all off every time. That’s why we’re fixing it.” The half satisfied smile on the makeup artist’s face makes me feel like I just missed something obvious.

She moves to attack me again and my body tenses up.

Here we go again…

I’ve been in plenty of uncomfortable situations before, but this sets an all new record of squirm-in-your-seat-I-can’t-stand-this unpleasant. I squeeze my eyes shut tight in a feeble attempt to protect myself. It feels like hours, but I know it can’t be more than a few minutes that pass. The only thing that breaks the tirade of poking and chalky powder is when Rachel switches to a new brush or when people pass through and she pauses to talk to them.
After Rachel changes her brush for what seems like the 15th time, I’ve had enough. I need to go find Mr. Stark.

So I awkwardly clear my throat and crack my eyes open to meet hers.

“I...uh...need to go make a phone call!” I squeak out. It was the only excuse I could think of. My phone of course is in my backpack, safely webbed to the side of an alley in New York where hopefully no one will find it, but Rachel doesn't need to know that.

“Right now?” Rachel huffs.

“Er-yeah. It’s really important.”

“Well considering you left your phone on your chair, like you always do, you’re going to have to grab it when we’re finished.” Rachel says as she turns to rummage through her bag again.

“Um...I actually need to go get it...right now. It could be life or death.” I manage to tighten my lips into a half smile for her.

She looks at me like I’m crazy...which, judging from how today has been, might not be far from the truth. “You’re being weird today kid, not gonna lie. Five more minutes, I’ll hurry.”

I’m not waiting through five more minutes.

Before my bravado leaves me, I leap up from the chair and grab my mask from the counter, knocking over containers sending plumes of makeup powder in the air. It spills all over Rachel and the counter, but I don’t wait to see it settle. I’m dashing out of the room like a madman, relieved when my nostrils are alleviated of the potent stench. I risk a glance back at Rachel’s shocked gasp...

...and run face first into something solid.

“Ahh!” I fall back more in surprise than pain. The ground smacks hard into my butt.

I rub at where my face made impact and I blink away surprise. Squinting up against the bright studio lights, I make out two bulky silhouettes and a large pole.

“Hey watch it!” one of the silhouettes shouts down at me.

I bring my hand up to block out the light and meet his eyes with an awkward pause.

The door to the makeup room burst open behind us in an instant. Rachel comes storming out, her face twisting in fury.

“What the hell kid?? Get your skinny ass back here!” She snarls.

My ass is definitely NOT going back there.

“Uh. She sounds mad. I gotta go!” I jump to my feet and give a two fingered salute to the crew members. Aiming at a rafter above, I slam down the button on my web shooter.

*FIZZ* *POP*

No webs come out.

Oh shit! Of all the times for a malfunction!
Not wasting a second, I dash away from Rachel’s angry shouting. I hear the other crew member laugh at me as I book it back through the studio.

Since I have literally no idea where Mr. Stark is, I go to the only logical place I can think of.


Wow, none of those names are very catchy...

I can’t tell if Rachel will follow me all the way there, but I don’t really want to chance it.

I dodge around more crew members as I approach the indoor street. No one gives me a second look as I pass.

The street looks exactly like I left it not long ago. It’s surreal how realistic it is. Trash crunches under my feet as I walk down the cement walkways. Cars are parked along curbs lined with plants. I can’t tell if they’re real and or just props. The air even smells a little like the Hudson, full of chemicals and oil. Not many people remain here, only one or two cleaning the ground where we first appeared.

Not wanting too much attention, I duck into the closest doorway I find.

My mask is warm and comfortable as I slide it over my pasty, sweat covered skin. The familiarity of it comforts my racing heart. I didn’t realize how freaked out this place made me until now. I haven’t really had a chance to breathe since I left Ned and the rest of my class on the bus.

“Karen?” I pant at my AI, “Will you call Mr. Stark, or track his location for me?”

Back pressed against the wood of the doorway, I feel the slow flow of air in and out of my chest as each breath passes.

One.

Two.

Three.

No answer from Karen.

“Karen?” I try again.

No lights, no screen monitors, no friendly neighborhood AI voice, no Karen.

“Oh this is just great! Webs aren’t working and neither is Karen.” I hiss to myself, banging the back of my head against the wood in dismay.

“Please don’t freak out Parker, please don’t freak out Parker.” I repeat in mantra to myself.

I’m freaking out.

Ummmm….what would Mr. Stark do?

Oh, The phone!

Hadn’t I just told Rachel I was going to go get my phone? That must mean whatever version of me exists in this place has a phone. I just gotta find it!
I memorized Mr. Stark’s number forever ago, just in case. I form a plan and recite it back to myself.
Step one, go get the phone that belongs to me in this universe.
Step two, call Mr. Stark. He said FRIDAY wasn’t working, but unlike myself, he probably didn’t leave his phone back in an alley in New York so he should still have it on him right??
Step three, meet up and get out of here.

“Good plan.” I say in a pleased whisper.

I exit the doorway and return to the streets of New Fake York.

Rachel said I left a phone by my chair, right? I scan the street and nearby for chairs. Don’t movies always have those fancy directors chairs for the actors right by the set?? I have literally no idea, and for all I know this set could be different!

But to my relief I see a line of wooden studio chairs with gold lettering marking them in front of a fruit stand.

Yes!

My legs skip a little on my way to the them.

Each name is scrawled onto the chair in fancy gold lettering.

Bruce Banner
Wong
Stephen Strange
Tony Stark
Peter Parker

HOLY FREAK I HAVE A CHAIR!

Feeling like a kid sneaking into the kitchen to steal cookies, I inch towards my chair until I’m right beside it. There is indeed a sleek black iPhone innocently sitting on the seat along with about four empty plastic water bottles.

I pick it up and the screen lights up. There’s a picture of jupiter surrounded by empty space. It’s a newer model, one without a home button.

I cross my fingers and lift it to my face.

FACE I.D. REQUIRED.

It’s locked.

My heart deflates.

So much for that plan.

With a huff, I flop into my studio chair.

Tears prick at my eyes as I glance around the set. I don’t know what I’m looking for, a familiar
face? A glimmer of hope? My hands twiddle with the phone in my hand. I’m at a loss for what to do aside from running back through the studio calling out Mr. Stark’s name.

The screen lights up in my hand again at an incoming text. The contacts name is Harrison with an emoji next to the name. I try to swipe the text open in hopes that somehow this will magically grant me access to the phone.

Nope.

I sigh and swipe the screen to the other way out of curiosity.

A variety of widgets pop onto the screen, showing an array of information. One shows the time, another the daily forecast for Atalanta, Georgia--WHAT???

As if I’ve been burned by it, I drop the phone to my lap, staring in disbelief at the screen.

“We’re in GEORGIA?” I whisper in horror. I’ve only ever left the state of New York a handful of times for field trips and small vacations (and that one time in Germany). I’ve never dreamed of visiting Georgia! Heck, I probably couldn’t even point to on a map if you asked me to! How in the holy heck were we supposed to get back to New York?

A loudspeaker interrupts my thoughts.

“Everyone to the sound deck please! Everyone, right now!”

My eyes follow the cleaning crew members as they glance up at the voice. They pack up their supplies and shuffle down the street. I lose sight of them as they round a corner.

Forgetting about the fact we’re in Georgia, I reason that if everyone is gathering at the sound deck, there’s a good chance I’ll find Mr. Stark there.

With some small amount of energy, I spring up from my chair, phone clutched in my hand, and follow the crew members off set.

Hanging a good few yards back from the workers as we approach a larger group of people, I try to blend in to the background. I notice the familiar faces of not Bruce Banner and Rachel across the sea of faces as everyone gathers around a bunch of sound equipment. Rachel’s eyes are scanning over the group like a hawk, probably looking for me I realize. Her eyes abruptly sear over to where I am, and in a panic, I duck behind a large looking dude wearing a black t-shirt with a big red logo on it.

Yikes!

There’s some screens propped up on tables to my left so I side my way over to them in a desperate attempt to hide, despite the fact that I’m literally wearing bright red and blue spandex. I peer around the screens to check if anyone saw me. No one seemed to notice the disturbance.

Keeping my eyes hovering on the scene around me, I see cool grandpa dude who interrupted Mr. Stark and I before pushing through the crowd to the center of the gathering. Remembering how he had been yelling orders and directing everything on set, I reason he’s probably the director.

He calls out to the crowd after clamoring up to the top of a table. “Everyone! We’ve had a great day of shooting, lots of good video. Light crew, you were fantastic! Props department, I loved the fire effects! Those will look amazing on the big screen.
Now, not to discourage any of you, but we had a slight accident today. No one is sure what happened, but Benedict hit his head on something and is on the way to the hospital now. We don’t know what his condition is yet or what will happen. That being said, we will continue to shoot our regularly scheduled pages each day, excluding only the shots that Benedict is in. We will use stand-ins where we can like Aaron, who has kindly informed us that he will shoot as much as he can as Dr. Strange.

This brings us back to a topic we’ve been talking about a lot lately. I don’t mean to beat a dead horse, but safety on set is crucial. Today showed that for sure.” The dark haired man continues talking about safety procedures on set but I zone out. My eyes take in the faces nearby again. Then they see the most relieving sight today; a glowing arc reactor and worried brown eyes. Those eyes meet mine, and Mr. Stark moves over to me, pushing people out of the way in the process.

“Kid!” He stops just shy of me. There’s an awkward hesitancy, because where others may have stepped in for a hug we just look at each other unsure. He ends it by bringing his hand up, and after another hesitant millisecond, places it on my shoulder.

“You good?” He asks at last, giving me a once over.

My head bobs up and down. “Yeah I’m good! Where did you go?!”

“Just got caught up in the crowd with that guy in the glasses. Turns out his name is Anthony too. Anyways, we’ve got to get out of this building.” He jabs his free thumb behind him towards a glowing exit sign. “I can’t think in here. Follow me.”

He turns towards the exit sign right as the director finishes up his speech.

“We good everyone?” The director, or Anthony as Mr. Stark just informed me, says with a thumbs up towards the many faces watching him. Some respond with woops and others just applaud. “Alright then, we’re out to lunch.”

The effect is instantaneous. The crow disperses around us leaving only a few stragglers gathered around some screens. Our exit out the door is completely unnoticed.

I take a deep breath as soon as we’re outside, but my lungs construct against the thick wetness of the air. It’s an oven outside! I almost choke against what feels like 300 degree temperatures. The chalky makeup on my skin becomes slimy. Sweat forms on my back and the suit I love so much is suddenly incredibly uncomfortable.

“Oh my God, did he send us to the jungle?” Mr. Stark pants in the heat.

We’ve exited onto the top of a flight of stairs descending to a small back alley. The building we just exited is cast in a light brown brick color, matching a building right across from it. There’s not a cloud in the blue sky, framed by the twilight setting of the sun.

“Kid, is your AI working?” Mr. Stark inquires.

“No, it’s not!” I gasp against the heat. “I tried to call you and Karen didn’t answer! My webs weren’t firing and I thought it was just a coincidence. Do you think the portal knocked out our tech too?

“I don’t know yet, I’m trying to figure it out.” Mr. Stark says. “FRIDAY started glitching out when I was talking to hot shot Anthony. She’s completely offline now.” He fiddles with a control on his forearm. After a minute he claps his hand down on it in frustration.
A thought comes back to me all at once.

Oh yeah…..

I swallow. “Oh yeah, I forgot to mention. Just found out we’re in...uh...Georgia..?”

Mr. Stark’s eyes lock onto mine.

“Excuse me?”

“See?” I hold the phone up to his face, swiping until it displays the weather again.

He squints his eyes at the dim screen, eyes scanning back and forth for a minute. Then he claps his hands together and blows out a breath of air as he straightens back up.

“Well today just keeps getting better and better.”

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AN:

Howdy all!

Sorry for the longer wait for this chapter. I was all finished up with it when I spotted a HUGE error! Took a few days to fix, but it’s all better now XD It’s the middle of the semester and...well there’s a lot going on...tests, homework, clubs, the usual. I try to write every chance I get tho!

Also, double apology today because due to the way FF is set up each chapter is offset by one because of the prologue...idk if it bothers you but it’s kinda annoying to my OCD O.O

Wow!! Thank you so much to those of you who reviewed!! I LOVE YOU GUYS SO MUCH!!! Also much thanks to those who favorited and followed as well :) You guys are the LITERAL BEST! <3

Next chapter will be from Tony’s point of view so we’ll get a peek at how he’s handling all the crazy :)

~Gamma

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Review replies:

Kedibonye:
TBH I’m so excited for it!! I really hope you all enjoy it as much as I have!! Thanks so much! <3
Whatta Man

Chapter 3: Whatta Man

“Don't take him for a sucker 'cause that's what he's about
Every time I need him, he always got my back
Never disrespectful 'cause his mama taught him that
What a man…”

POV: Tony Stark

This might be the worst thing that’s ever happened to me.

Shifting the thin black box from hand to hand, I contemplate whether it would be easier to chuck the sleek top of the line Samsung out the car window and build a new one from scratch or actually use the inferior technology. Its firm weight in my palm taunts me, reminding me of our desperation. After another moment of consideration, I tuck it in my pocket, vowing to look into it later.

The seats in the shuttle van are stiff against my back. I stretch out, trying to rid myself of mounting exhaustion from the last five or so hours. It doesn’t work, the ache setting in deeper than before.

The driver said the ride to Piedmont Fayette Hospital would only take about 10 minutes. That was 10 minutes further away from the fake people on the fake set of a fake movie about real us in fake Georgia complete with fake people driving a fake van with real me and real Peter in it on our way to a fake hospital to see a real wizard.

I remember when the weirdest thing that happened to me was being kidnapped by terrorists.

“That” I reason to myself, “would be much preferable to this.”

Constant worry prevails in my mind, resurfacing in a tumult of never ending thoughts. What was happening in real life? Thanos was on the verge of invading Earth when Strange had snatched us all away. I might be biased, but that left New York quite vulnerable, not that I don’t trust others to protect the city, I just prefer to do it myself. That way if anything goes wrong it’s my fault and no one else has to carry that blame.

But that thought nagging at my brain wasn’t as bad as the other…

Pepper.

She was somewhere (oh I hope somewhere safe) very likely worried about me…

She has to be safe.

The entire city could burn or half of its population die, but if anything happened to her it would destroy me. In a very real sense, I’m not me without her. She is a piece of my world. I count my blessings everyday she’s alive, breathing beautiful alive and somehow in love with me after all the
stupid shit we’ve been through.

She’s amazing.

“...no more surprises…”

I’ve got to make it back for her. I promised.

I think back on our plan. Right now it wasn’t much. We needed to go find Strange which had worked out in our favor so far.

Peter and I had been talking outside until the heat threatened to boil us alive, pushing us back inside the movie studio. All was calm upon reentry, with most everyone being at lunch, so sneaking through the sets hadn’t been a problem. My suit had lost all functionality at that point, as had Peter’s. It was pointless to keep them on until we could find a way to fix them. So, we snuck around back through the studio looking for a bathroom to change in. It also wasn’t hard to find an unused closet tucked away behind props. We stashed our suits there for protection.

Wandering back through the set, we almost literally stumbled upon a group of crew members talking about someone named Benedict and a head injury.

Everyone was all about these fake names here. Robert or Bob is what they kept calling me. Or sometimes Downey..? I’m not sure. I know the kid’s fake name is Tom, and I figured that Benedict must be Strange after we found this group.

They asked us if we wanted to join them in going to check on him after what happened on set today. It was only a 10 minute drive anyways, they had explained to me, and no one had complained at a chance to get out of the heat, even if it was just for a few minutes. We readily agreed and wound up in the backseat of this uncomfortable van heading to Piedmont Fayette Hospital to see my least favorite and concurrently favorite wizard.

The kid was sprawled on the seat opposite from me, legs propped up on the seat in front of him, engrossed by the phone in his hand. I smirk a little, remembering him shoving the phone in my face right before we’d entered the changing room, demanding I hack into it. He had said the facial ID must not work on it because it hadn’t unlocked for him.

I responded by grabbing the top of his mask and pulling it off. The facial ID unlocked upon seeing his face and Peter hadn’t said much more to me.

The kid is a genius, but we all have our moments.

But, speaking of people I worry about…

The kid always seems to find himself in the thick of things. If aliens hadn’t interrupted our day in New York, Peter likely would have stumbled upon some low level crime and accidentally started a fire somewhere. After all, this is Peter-got-bit-by-a-radioactive-spider-on-a-field-trip-Parker. If he had a normal week I might actually start believing in God.

But here we are, stuck somewhere in the cosmos of reality. I’d rather be with about 1000 other people before I’d want the kid to be here with me, not that I don’t like him or that I don’t think he’d be a great source of help.

It’s more like if anything drastic happened to him on my watch I’d probably fling myself off an appropriately tall building, sans-suit.
For both our sakes I’d rather not do that.

As if the universe detected my thoughts and wanted to test their sincerity, Peter makes a choking sound in his seat, like he just swallowed a piece of gum. I snap around with a sense of urgency to see both his hands and his face pasted against the window as though looking into an aquarium shark tank.

“MJ!” He shouts.

I follow his gaze out the far window to see a billboard advertisement picturing a beautiful slender girl poised in a trapeze hoop. Everything from her bright pink hair to the purple costume lining her form are the very definition of sharp, graceful beauty. The contrast of the dark billboard behind her gives the impression that she’s twirling through the air. She is absolutely stunning, and apparently Peter thinks so too. Funny I never thought he was much into models...or girls at all for that matter.

“Just because she’s the same ethnicity as the King of Pop doesn’t mean she is. She doesn’t even look like him—” I try before being interrupted.

“No! No, MJ she’s...uh...a girl I go to school with. But that’s her! I’m sure of it!” Peter turns back towards me after we pass the sign on the freeway.

“Oh man...I don’t like this universe Mr. Stark...we need to get out of here.”

“Yeah, no argument here.”

The van slows and bumps over an entryway to a large parking lot. Piedmont Fayette Hospital doesn’t exactly scrape the sky like buildings in New York, but it certainly has a large presence on the otherwise tree-filled countryside. Orange brick surrounded by greenery and an extravagant entrance define the structure. Blue glass windows dot its many walls.

We park along a far wall and hustle toward a side door. For the first time since falling through that portal, I’m actually grateful for the crew members. They seem to know exactly where they’re going, as if they’re here a lot.

A nurse greets us at the door.

“Hey y’all, if you don’t mind just following me through here. We just had a bunch of y’all come through so we were expecting ya!” Her voice is thick with a southern accent, another painful reminder of how far from home we are.

She holds the door open while we pass by, a bright smile plastered to her face.

A warm lobby filled with people smiling and enjoying their day definitely didn’t greet us on the other side of the door. Instead, a plain gray hallway full of fluorescent lights and old hospital equipment greets us coldly.

The nurse rushes to the front of our cluster and ushers us through swinging doors at the end of the hallway, effectively routing our path of travel.

“Just so you know, we have a fully trained professional staff to work with patients of your caliber. We take our jobs very seriously and there won’t be any picture requests or paparazzi of any sort.” She recites as though reading off a page while leading us through the halls effortlessly.

“And here we are! I’ll just have y’all wait here until the next nurse comes to getcha, okay? Great!” She smiles at us one by one as we enter a waiting room. I nod my head at her, stride into the
waiting room, and lock eyes with the angelic seamless face of Captain Steven Rodgers.

I almost choke, my heart palpitating in my chest.

How is he here?

It’s been so long since I’ve seen him.

I don’t want to see him.

Not here…

Not now.

Not in front of the kid.

Oh god...oh god...oh...

...wait, this isn’t reality my brain reminds me.

Right. Not Bruce Banner proved that. This must be Not Steve Rodgers.

I take a steadying breath, my nerves tingling with anxiety.

This isn’t the man who betrayed you. You’re fine.

My shoulders twitch into a half shiver-half shrug as I shake myself out of my daze. Peter looks up at my movement but doesn't say anything.

Not Steve looks up at our arrival and smiles wide and welcoming. He jumps to his feet, rushing over to us like a friend meeting another friend.

“Bob, glad you could come. They haven’t brought us any news yet.” Not Steve reaches his hand toward mine. I receive it with a stiff hand of my own, staring in his eyes. Nothing but sympathy, warmth, and care shines back from his blue gaze.

“Well, no news is good news right?” I say twitching my lips into a half-hearted smirk.

“That’s what they say.” Not Steve agrees easily. “Well, we can get you both a seat here. Hopefully the doctor comes out soon.”

Yellow pasty walls try to persuade a calm feeling, but it doesn’t take a therapist to read the unease in the room.

They’ve been here too long. Why hasn’t news come sooner? Just a bump on the head doesn’t warrant hours of emergency procedures. Faces I don’t recognize reflect the thoughts in my head, all around the room it’s quiet, tense.

So we take our seats and join the vigil.

At long last, a different nurse comes into the waiting room.

“Party for Cumberpatch?” She announces with a small sympathetic smile. Her tired eyes, messy hair, and wrinkled green scrubs tell how much she’s been working. Hopefully working hard on making Strange okay.
Not-Steve is first to act.

“Yes that’s us...well, all of us.” He gestures around the waiting room with the dozen or so people from set waiting anxiously.

“Okay, we’ll take three of you at a time.” She makes eye contact with me, as if sensing my anxiety.

“I’ll go, and Bob why don’t you come with...and uh I guess Tom you come too.” Not-Steve decides.

We all stand and follow the nurse through the doorway.

A short walk and she brings us to a room with the door ajar. She pauses before leading us in, her hand on the knob.

“We’re very sorry about how circumstances turned out. We were hoping he would have woken up by now.”

My mouth goes dry, my tongue turning to lead. “Excuse me what?”

She locks her gaze onto mine, her eyes defensive, ready to reason and calm me down. “Sir, the patient was brought to us in profound unconsciousness. By the time we started working on his head injury he was already in a comatose state. We’ve tried stimulants to arouse him, but so far the results have been inconclusive.”

I clear my throat, getting rid of a lump that formed. “Can we see him?” I demand with softness.

“Of course, I’ll be waiting right here.” She turns the knob and ducks her head, looking towards her shoes as we enter.

Sunlight streams into the room, unabashed. It illuminates a gray chair in the corner and warm wood flooring. There’s nothing remarkable about the white walls or the myriad of electric plugs connecting the hospital bed to the wall. No, there’s nothing inherently wrong with the way the room smells like antiseptic or even how I hate that smell because of overexposure to hospitals. The thing that my mind doesn’t want to see, what it wishes were fake like everything else, is Strange looking completely unresponsive and motionless on the bed.

I barely know Strange. I just met him today like...a few hours ago? God, I need to look at a clock. Regardless, he looks terrible. There’s a white bandage covering half of his face, red blooming from behind it. The slow rise and fall of his chest is almost imperceptible if it weren’t for the small sounds of air escaping his parted lips.

I’m horrified. The wizard is the only one I know of who can use the infinity stone and get us back to reality. And, if what the nurse said is true, He’s. In. A. Coma.

I could scream.

Actually, cut that last thought. I will scream. Later, when Peter’s not around. For now I store all my emotions away and run a hand over my face.

An arm makes contact with my shoulder, making me jump. It’s Not-Steve, a sympathetic smile on his face.

“Hey, it’s not your fault Bob. It could have happened to anyone.” He comforts. It doesn’t work. My mind can’t differentiate him from Real-Steve. It’s too much.
“Yeah, I’m going to go sit down. Thanks.” I nudge his hand off me and move to the unoccupied chair by the bed.

I hear Peter’s voice faintly as he strikes up a conversation with Not-Steve, but I zone it out. I’m staring at Strange, I can’t tear my eyes away from the redness growing behind that bandage. Bringing my hands together at my mouth, I try to steady my breathing.

In…

Out…

In…

God, this really is the least ideal situation to be in. I would literally rather face an army with my team behind me than be stuck somewhere with the only way out beyond my understanding. I rarely feel useless. It’s just not in my nature. Right now though...I feel pretty damn useless. I could invent and build and research for years before I would even come close to breaching the same level of complex science as the time stone.

And by then would it even matter?

What would be left of my world if/when we ever made it back?

The door to the room clicks shut. Interrupted from my thoughts, I look up to see that Not-Steve is absent and only Peter and I remain in the room with Strange.

“He seems nice...for you know...not being Captain America.” Peter says. He moves his head slightly to the left, staring at Strange. “Hey, Mr. Stark, look!” he says urgently. I follow the point of his finger to Dr. Strange’s chest where a faint green light now glows through the hospital sheets.

Brow furrowed, I move the edge of the sheets down until the vivid green light is obstructed only by Strange’s thin hospital gown.

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“Holy shit, that’s his magic necklace! Is it opening another portal? Can we go back home through it? Is it going to make a green one? Because we came through an orange one right?” Peter rattles off as fast as he can in his frantic voice.

“Kid, what are you even talking about?”

“Sorry, I was thinking about this game Ned and I played forever ago. See you make these portals all over and some are orange and some are blue and you can go through the orange ones or the blue ones-“

I give Peter a look. He abruptly shuts up.

A knock sounds on the door and the nurse returns, opening the door a crack. I see the faces of three more crew members behind her.

“Y’all mind switching these folks out for a bit?” She asks sweetly.

“Of course.” I say running my hands down my side.

“Oh I see you found his necklace.” She responds, pushing the door open. “We weren’t able to get that off. Is it some kind of weird prop y’all are using?”

“Yeah, something like that.” I smirk back.
She lets the others in as Peter and I move to leave.

“Oh yeah, we were going to ask about that. Did he have flammables in his costume? Something was sparking and letting out a lot of steam. Not exactly sanitary, or safe for that matter, to be in a hospital room,” she adds with a slight tilt of her head. “Due to insurance and safety procedures, we had to dispose of everything. Well, everything except for the necklace, which we couldn’t remove. We do have a contract with Pinewood Studios for when things like this happen so we can pay for any damages or replacements.”

“Great.” I say passing through the doorway. “Thank you.”

The sun had long set by the time we got back to the studios. Long shadows, left at dusk, grew until they swallowed the landscape. Thick darkness was interrupted only briefly by the twinkling of fireflies and then not at all. I didn’t want to find out what other mysteries lay hidden beyond the din of headlights on the small Georgia highway we made our way back through the gates.

Few words were said until the shuttle van pulled up to a line of trailers alongside one especially large studio building.

“Tom, Bob, here y’all are. Anything we can do for you gents tonight?” The driver announces distantly from the front of the van.

“Hmm-uh, no, we’re good! Great, uh thanks for the ride!” I stutter. I nudge Peter in the seat beside me and gesture for the door as I stand from my seat. “Come on kid.”

Peter follows me and we unceremoniously exit the van. A few halfhearted waves and they’re gone.

“Now what?” The kid mumbles, kicking a rock at his feet.

I make a short “tsk” sound before beginning to stride down the street. Each trailer has a light above the door making the road look one BBQ away from being a friendly, approachable neighborhood.

Not sure as to where I am going, I scan our surroundings, for what I don’t know. Peter trudges behind me silently.

We walk for about five minutes, my desperation mounting. There’s too many things going through my head...too much to worry about. That’s when a sign on one of the trailer doors catches my eye.

“Hey!” I stop abruptly. “Look!” The kid’s eyes shoot right up to where I point.

“Tom Holland.” I read out loud.

“That’s fake me!” Peter exclaims.

“Yeah!” I agree.

“This must be fake mine!” He gestures wildly to the rest of the trailer.

“Your logic is blowing my mind. Come on, let’s check it out.” I stuff my hand in my pocket as we approach the door.

I don’t know what I expected the inside of a teenage movie star’s trailer to look like, but it’s not
A putting green runs from the entrance down half of the trailer, taking up most of the walking space within. Sleek wooden countertops complement silver appliances in the kitchen and the furniture further in. A few pictures of a family are hung on the wall along with a very large one of a dog. The interior is spotless...much too clean to belong to a teenage boy. Everything creates a modern wealthy vibe, but a modest type of wealthy. Like a hipster with a rich daddy.

“Mr. Stark…” Peter says from beside me. “I have a golf set.” His eyes are glued to the putting green.

“Tom Holland must be pretty well off.” I scoff, bending down to sniff the wood of the countertop. It looks like real mahogany.

“Oh, and I have all this stuff! Look at that couch!” A flurry of dark hair wizzes past me as Peter literally flings himself on one of the luxury couches.

“Ahh this is nice. Mr. Stark, come try this out!”

I start to head for the couch, but stop short halfway across the small trailer room. What am I supposed to tell the kid? If Strange doesn’t wake up we’re screwed.

It’s quiet for a moment. Peter’s voice sounds again.

“You must be pretty worried about that wizard guy. Do you...uh...think he’s going to be okay?”

I sigh and finish my journey to the couch. The seat indents as I settle my weight into it. It is extremely comfortable.

“I don’t know kid.” I clasp my hands together. “I don’t know.”

“Well it’s going to be alright right? We’ll figure it out. I mean, you’re Tony Stark! You’re literally the smartest person I know. If anyone could find a way out of this place it would be you.”

I glance at the kid to see him gazing at his shoes, his face turning red, hands playing with the hem of his t-shirt.

Something deep inside my heart melts. Who even is this kid, and why does he place 100% of his trust and faith in me?

I reach my hand to his shoulder, his head raising at the touch. Our eyes lock and I reassure him.

“Yeah, kid of course we’re going to figure this out.” I say, emphasizing each word for him. “You’re right, I always figure things out. I’m going to need your help this time though.”

Light enters the kid’s eyes. “Really?” He asks breathlessly.

“Yeah, so go grab that laptop on the counter for me while I go get our suits from the set.”

Peter beams back at me.

“You got it Mr. Stark!” He leaps up to comply.

“We’ve got a lot of work to get done tonight.” I smile after him.
AN:

Wazzupp my dudes???

Hope you liked this chapter! It was a bit of a slower chapter so it took me like 8 years to write I swear *eye roll*

BUT OH NO!! WHAT ARE OUR BOYS GONNA DO??? THEY’RE STUCK IN OUR UNIVERSE!!!! O.O

Yeah, it’s gonna keep getting interesting for them as they find out more and more about our world. In fact the next chapter is one of my favorites so be sure to tune in!

Thank you 3000 to the reviewers and favorite-ers! Y’all are the real bees knees :) <3

~Gamma

Review replies:

Kedibonye:
Yeah……you guessed it! The boys are really screwed! I would say I don’t know how they’re going to make it out of this one...but I do haha XD
Thanks for reviewing! <3

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!