‘Stand down, final warning,’ Tony said, standing motionless for an instant to give Steve Rogers a chance to surrender.

Tony has suffered at the hands of his supposed friends during the media-called Civil War, it is now time for him to heal, to rebuild himself and the world around him. Not that this is going to be an easy task with his duties as Iron Man, Rogers constantly breathing down his neck, the threat of an extraterrestrial invasion plaguing his mind and his overall talent to get into trouble.

Start at the end of CA:CW, will follow Homecoming events right until Endgame.

Title inspired by Lovely, Billie Eilish.
‘Stand down, final warning,’ Tony said, standing motionless for an instant to give Ste… Rogers a chance to surrender.

Despite his best intentions, he couldn’t help himself but feel a spark of hope in seeing Rogers breathing heavily. Surely the fight had lasted long enough for Steve to realise that Tony didn’t want to fight him. All he wanted was to make the man who killed his mother, who took his mom away from him, pay. Yet, underneath all the pain and suffering, he couldn’t deny that he felt satisfaction in observing Rogers struggling to get to his feet. Steve was supposed to be his teammate, his co-leader, his friend. Supposed to be. But all of these were nothing more than an illusion, weren’t they? Rogers never respected nor trust him. He did not respect him to lay down on the wire, on their first meeting despite not even knowing him. He did not trust him to handle the truth about his parents, now. No. Tony was never his friend. He was just a convenient tool. Rogers needed a sugar daddy and Tony just happened to have the resources and to be stupid enough to fall into this trap, this illusion of comradeship. He bitterly watched Rogers rise, rejoicing in his grunts of pain and the blood on his face. If asked later, if he even had a later, he would affirm with honesty that, despite any hope that he may have felt, he wasn’t surprised when Rogers raised his fists in a defensive position like some out of date boxer.

‘I could do this all day.’

Tony raised his hand, his repulsor hissing, ready to strike.

He barely felt the jolt of pain caused by this gesture. His head was swimming and the edges of his vision were strangely invaded by black spots. If he didn’t know any better, he would say that he had reached the end of the rope. Physical and emotional exhaustion had finally caught up with him and if not for the pure adrenaline that kept him going, he would have collapsed ages ago. His ears were ringing with his mother’s pleas and calls for her husband. His blood was pounding in rhythm with the sound of his father’s head bashed against his car’s wheel. His lungs were desperately seeking for air just as his mother’s lungs when she was being strangled. Strangled by James Buchanan Barnes… with Steve’s knowledge. No. With Rogers’ knowledge. Rogers had lost the right to be on first-name basis with him when he decided to betray him by not revealing what he knew, when he decided to betray his father, his friend, by helping his murderer. Tony took a shaky breath, his hand risen trembling imperceptibly. He closed his eyes for a fraction of a second. Just an instant, to catch his breath, to regain his senses, to control this overwhelming feeling that threatened to drown him.

A fraction of a second too much. He detected the iron grip of the Winter Soldier enclose on his boot and he felt his skin crawl, flashes of the exact same super strength spilling his family’s blood dancing in front of him. Tony reacted instinctively. He tried to pull away from Barnes’ grasp and failing to do so, he reached to kick him in the face, forcing the Soldier to back off. Yet, this momentary distraction was enough for Rogers to evade the wall where Tony had cornered him and the super soldier seized the opportunity to lift Tony up, preventing him effectively to touch Barnes. Tony attempted to break free from Rogers’ hold by activating his repulsors. However, Rogers anticipated his move and used the propulsion from his technology as well as his own strength to smash him violently to the ground.

Tony’s head hit the ground hard enough to make him see stars for a few seconds, unable to hold back a grunt of pain. When his vision cleared, Rogers was already pinning him to the cold soil of the base, punching him with unrestrained force. Yet, the faceplate held against the super soldier’s
assault. Noticing the lack of success of his antic method, Rogers grabbed his shield and resumed brutishly hitting him with the unbreakable vibranium weapon. Not even Tony Stark’s technology could resist these blows which, soon enough, started to indent the faceplate. Tony could feel the shards of metal dig into his skin, blood pouring freely from the cuts as he could not contain his increasing terror. A few punches later, the headpiece came free and for a fraction of a second, mocha orbs met ice eyes before Tony raised his hands to protect his face in self-defense, convinced to his very core that Steve Rogers was about to deliver the killing blow. He could already picture the shield cracking his head open, blood mingling with brain covering his father’s creation, and Rogers’s eyes. Ruthless, cold, satisfied eyes. Instead, Steve smashed his shield into the arc reactor with his superhuman strength.

The precious piece of technology shattered and completely disabled the suit. Underneath it, Tony felt his ribs crack and he saw white for an instant, blinded by the sheer agony that spread across his body. When his vision clarified, he saw Rogers, looking utterly defeated, all but collapsing near his handiwork. Rogers took an instant to regain his bearings and catch his breath before reaching to pull his shield away from Tony’s chest, forcing the genius to squeeze his eyes shut in an attempt to control the pain pulsing through his nerves. Not once did Rogers meet his eyes. Not once did Rogers ask Tony if he was alright. He walked straight past him, grabbing Barnes’ arm to help him stand up and took a few steps with the apparent aim to leave Tony behind. Against his best judgment, Tony sat up with difficulty, unable to control his grunts of pain. He would be damned if he left Rogers leaving him in the dust like some vulgar trash that could be thrown away at any moment.

“That shield doesn’t belong to you. You don’t deserve it.” He hissed between clenched teeth, “My father made that shield!”

His words made the super soldier pause and, even with his back turned to him, Tony could see the internal conflict within him. Yet, a few instants later, Rogers tossed the shield in the snow as if it was nothing, as if it represented nothing.

Tony coughed painfully, spitting a drop of blood on the ground, his muscles collapsing underneath his weight and his body meeting the cold Siberian soil. Rogers never showed a hint of hesitation. Steve Rogers left, leaving Tony to perish in his self-made coffin. What could Tony do, except close his eyes?
Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Disorientation welcomed Tony when he first woke up. He kept his eyes closed, trying to make sense of the situation. Judging by the cold metal biting his skin, he was in the suit. Yet, the glacial wind that was clawing his face suggested that he didn’t have the faceplate on and was that snow falling on his nose? Behind his closed eyes, he couldn’t perceive any particular lightning. Perhaps, night time? His body was strangely numb. Was he hit during a mission with the Avengers? No. That didn’t seem to be it. He couldn’t hear any voices or noises but for the wind which meant that the team wasn’t there and he was certain that Steve, at least, would not miss an opportunity to lecture… Steve. The Accords. Barnes. Leipzig. Siberia. His parents. Rogers.

Tony screwed his eyes shut. Now that his initial shock and anger had rescinded, all he could feel was sadness and hurt. He couldn’t believe that Rogers had hidden the true story behind his parents’ death from him. Was he really worth so little to the supersoldier? And the Accords mess. Did Rogers really disagree with them or was that also another technique to look for Barnes? Tony smiled bitterly. Everything was about Barnes. Nothing was more important than Barnes, precious childhood friend Bucky. Not the will of 117 countries. Not Howard. And certainly not Tony.

Yet, now was neither the time nor the place to reminisce on past events. Tony needed to focus on the here and now and evaluate his situation, objectively. Yes, Rogers has discarded him like a useless piece of garbage but Tony was certainly not going to give him the pleasure to die here and prove to him that he was nothing. Before the Avengers, before Rogers, before he tried to prove himself a team player, Tony could take care of himself just fine. He didn’t need anyone to watch his back. He could handle this, all he needed was to grasp the situation.

The suit was down. He had no chance of repairing it with the arc reactor completely destroyed and his limited resources. This meant that his communication channel was inoperational as well. However, he was in a Hydra base which used to cryogenically freeze Winter Soldiers. This requires materials, electricity and computers. Tony should be able to hack into the base technology to send a distress signal. Even so, he was in Siberia, literally the other side of the world. It would take a rescue team ten hours to reach him. Did he have ten hours to spare?

Speaking of injuries, he was expecting to be in quite a bit of pain following Rogers’ poor attempt at engineering. Yet, his body was numb as if asleep. Tony forced his eyes open and turned his head to face the ceiling of the base. His gesture seemed to invite a jolt of pain to pierce through his brain and he squeezed his eyes shut, breathing in sharply. This appeared to be the wrong course of action as it sent a crippling pain to his chest as he bite into the inside of his cheek hard enough to draw blood. Not so asleep after all. His body seemed to be letting him know that it didn’t appreciate his little joust with two angry super soldiers at all.

Tony rested his head against the hard ground. He was so tired. When was the last time he had gotten a full night of sleep? He couldn’t even remember, probably before this mess started. His eyes were heavy and all he wanted was to rest them for a while. Yet, he knew he couldn’t. Surrendering to his fatigue would mean signing his own death certificate, he needed to move. He braced himself and tried to sit. The pain was excruciating, every inch of his body on fire, a weight on his chest, preventing him to breathe. His vision was swarmed by dark spots and he swallowed down his saliva, struck by a wave of nausea. He forced himself to take a few calming breaths despite the hurt. He needed to push the pain away, to think.
What did he need to think about, again? Ten hours. Did he have ten hours? Other than a probable concussion, his chest injury was the most worrying. Judging from the pain in his chest, he suspected several broken ribs, possibly even internal bleeding. Ten hours was too much to ask Pepper to send someone. What other options did he have? Rhodey was out of commission, Natasha was a backstabbing traitor, Peter was just a kid. Vision. Vision was still in Germany, dealing with the damages at the airport, Tony was supposed to check on him after meeting with Ross. From Germany, Tony quickly calculated it would take Vision four hours to come. The quinjet also had medical supplies. Not enough to spare Tony the inconvenience to go to a proper hospital but enough to help him survive the trip to New-York. Yes, contacting Vision seemed to be a viable alternative.

Great. He had a plan but to execute it, he needed to get up and this was just not possible with a hundred kilograms of dead weight. He was forced to discard the suit. The faceplate was already off but Tony had to manually release each and every piece of the suit, starting with the gauntlets. Arriving at the chestpiece, he hesitated. If he did have interior bleeding and broken ribs, the chestpiece was applying pressure and containing the wounds which may be the best course of action. On the other hand, he wasn’t sure that he could, in his state, add extra weight to carry. His own body was already going to be a problem. After a few seconds, he decided against taking off the piece. It wouldn’t do him any good to move more easily if he was to exsanguinate.

Now free to move, Tony carefully tried to rise, supporting his weight on the wall near him. If he thought breathing was an issue, he was not ready for the sheer, nauseating agony that moving was. He doubled over, vomiting violently on the snow near him. Shaking like a leaf, he wiped his mouth clean, swaying on his feet. His vision was nearly blinded by dark spots and he could swear that the room was not turning before. He took a few instants to regain his senses. He did hurt but he was Tony Stark. Tony Stark survived an open heart surgery in a cave without analgesia. Tony Stark survived torture and waterboarding at the hands of terrorists. Tony Stark survived being poisoned by his own piece of technology. Tony Stark would not be killed by an old-fashioned frisbee.

Speaking of said frisbee, his eye caught a glimmer on the ground. He was very tempted to just let it rot in the base and never lay his eyes on it again but he knew he couldn’t. If not in his father’s memory, if not in the possible scenario that Rogers was needed again, then to have the pleasure to melt it and forge it into a crown for Dum-E. He reached down to get it with a grunt of pain but his fingers numbly let go of it and it resonated on the ground with a loud clang.

‘Shit,’ Tony mumbled, his voice hoarse.

His hands were shaking as he reached for it again, eyes screwed tight. He managed to lift it off the floor and using it as a crutch, he started to move forward in a painfully slow pace. Slow progress but better than no progress.

The walk proved to be exhaustion and agony. Tony had lost count of the number of times he had to grip the wall or a nearby object to avoid collapsing or because he couldn’t see well enough to keep moving. After a few minutes, he reached a console board with, thankfully, a chair. Tony all but fell in it, face contracted in pain, breathing heavily, sweat trickling down his forehead. He broke into a cough, holding tightly his chest before straightening and starting the computer.

‘Come on, honey, show me what you’ve got,’ he muttered as he started to break into Hydra’s firewalls.

Hydra’s security was surprisingly weak considering that it only took Tony a few minutes to hack them. It was truly shocking that they managed to infiltrate SHIELD for as long and as deeply as
they did. He quickly activated a distress beacon coded to his name which would alert FRIDAY immediately and would dispatch the nearest rescue team, namely Vision himself. All he had to do was wait.

He brushed away the blood that was tickling down his forehead into his eye. He truly despised head wounds. They tended to cause a mess but were usually superficial. He had refrain himself from sighing with frustration and settled into his chair, trying to find a more comfortable position to close his eyes for a few seconds.

When he opened them again, he could tell that more time has passed. He coughed once again and winced. Breathing was getting more and more difficult which was never a good sign. His breaths were shallow and coming quickly. He blinked a few times, half of his vision invaded by black spots. He closed his eyes again.

When he opened them again, he could tell that more time has passed. His ears were ringing and his legs felt numb. He slowly stood up with the intention of reviving feelings into them by walking for a bit but as soon as he stood up, they collapsed underneath his weight and he gripped the desk to ease himself slowly to the ground. He rested his head against the furniture and closed his eyes.

When he opened them again, he could tell that more time has passed. He tried to lift his head but found himself unable to, as if it weighed more than the suit. His laboured breathing had turned into wheezes. He brought his hand curled into a fist to his mouth and coughed violently. His fit was met with dampness and he blinked a few times to see drops of blood on the soil beneath him.

‘That’s not good,’ he said before closing his eyes again.

When he opened them again, he saw a red and blue figure approaching him swiftly, calling out his name. Tony coughed lengthily and spat blood on the ground as the body came near him. Tony could not help himself but smile widely when Vision dropped to the ground near him.

“Hey Vis… Took you long enough,” he wheezed.

He closed his eyes again.

Chapter End Notes

Here’s the first chapter!

I know this chapter was kinda slow but next chapter will be better.

Although I posted the chapter two days after the prelude, I can’t promise to keep a similar pace throughout the story. I’ll try not to do worse than a weekly update though.

As usual, English is not my first language and this work is not betaed if anyone wants to give it a try.

Comments, opinions, questions are always welcomed!

Thank you for reading!

Athena Skywriter
Here it is!

I hope you have enjoyed this taster! I would just like to inform you that English is not my first language and that this work is not beta read. If one of you would like to review this story, I would be very grateful!

Do not hesitate to ask any questions or share any feedback in the comments. I would love to hear your opinion on my work!

Thank you for reading!

Athena Skywriter

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!