Life as We Know it: A Superfamily AU

by DarkSkiesIlluminatedByFallenAngels

Summary

When Mary and Richard Parker die in an accident and both Tony and Steve are named as guardians for their 1 year old son, Peter, they are going to have to put aside their differences to even come close to raising this baby together (along with some help from Nat and Clint). They must learn to work together as team while juggling home life, work life, and each other's lives.

Notes

This is based on the 2010 movie Life as We Know it. I watched it and thought it would make an awesome superfamily fic and so here we are. You will notice that I've taken some canon from the movies and mostly the comics with my personal spin on them, so some of the plot-points may not coincide 100% with the MCU but if you're a stickler for that I'm really sorry, I had no idea how else I was going to make all that fit otherwise. Anyways...enjoy!!!

See the end of the work for more notes.
The First Date

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Steve Rogers checked himself in the mirror once again for maybe the 8th time in the last hour, smoothing his already set hair over. He wanted everything to go well. This was going to be his first date in decades.

It had been months since he awoke in the 21st century. Everyone at SHIELD had been helpful, he’d admit, but sometimes he couldn’t help but feel out of place.

That is where the friends he’d made came in. There were four of them that stood out the most; Natasha Romanov, Clint Barton, Richard and the-soon-to-be Mary Parker. They all worked for shield and had their demons, but that wasn’t what defined them. Clint was a marksman, a hell of a good one, and he definitely knew it. His best and oldest friend was Natasha. She was equal as deadly and just as badass. Mary and Richard were engaged to be married; they were also high-level shield agents. Mary and Richard worked alongside Clint and Natasha in several missions, which is how their bond had developed even beyond work.

It was all by luck, in Steve's mind, that he was assigned to the four of them for one of his first missions since he was found. They didn’t treat him like the legendary Captain America or anything special as the other agents had. To them, he was just another special agent doing his job. It was wonderful. They went out for drinks afterward and just hung out, talking. Steve can only describe the atmosphere as warm; warmer than he had been in weeks.

This is probably why he had trusted them when they had set him up with someone on a blind date.

Tony Stark was his name. It wasn’t exactly a blind date, he was known as the Iron Man and owner of Stark Industries. His face was plastered everywhere, there was no escaping it. This just made Steve all the more nervous. But he agreed to it none the less.

Steve sat on his couch. He played some music to calm his nerves.

Tony Stark was late; two hours late. Maybe he wasn’t coming at all? Maybe it was for the best, he had never gone out with a man before, not that he was opposed to it, he just didn’t know what to do (two men didn’t exactly go on dates openly in the 1940’s). It probably wasn’t any different from any other date he had been on before…not that all of them went well in the first place.

Finally, there was a knock at the door.

Steve quickly shut off the music and went to answer. Steve took one small calming breath and opened the door.

There he was; Tony Stark. In person. He was shorter than Steve had expected.

He seemed to have just been finishing up a call. Tony put his phone in his back pocket.

“Hey,” he said, stretching out a hand, “Stark”

Steve took and shook his hand, “Steve Rogers.” He said trying to give a more polite response than one he just got.
“Am I, am I late?” Tony Stark asked, finally realizing this apparently.

Steve put on a small fake smile, “oh no,” he closed the apartment door and locked it behind him, “Just 2 hours.” He added in a lower voice. Tony probably had heard him, he could feel it as they walked to the elevator. “Which is okay, Nat told me that that might happen. I just didn’t think she was serious.” He laughed nervously.

Tony Stark pressed the button, lighting it up with a downwards pointing arrow. “Yeah and Richard had told me you were this way.” He said entering the elevator.

Steve had no idea what he meant by “this way” and he wasn’t sure that he liked it, but Steve tried to move past that comment for the sake of the date.

Thankfully, he lived on the third floor; it wasn’t that long on an elevator ride. He followed him out to Tony’s car. It was an expensive black car, even if Steve didn’t know what type, he could tell it was a luxury type car.

The driver opened the door for them and Tony got in first. That did bother Steve a little, a gentleman would have let him in first, but again he wasn’t going to dwell, it didn’t matter. Steve went in and the door was closed.

“Where to boss?” the driver asked.

They both looked at each other with the same expression. Expectation.

Okay now Steve was getting annoyed, “Let me guess,”

“Hey” Tony said defensively, “I thought you were the ‘man with a plan’.”

Steve hated it when people brought that terrible song and almost embarrassing campaign up, but again he tried to keep a level head. “I,” He paused for composure, “I have been alive in this century for 6 months. How am I supposed to know the good and bad things to do around here?”

Tony sighed, and did what Steve could have sworn was an eye-roll. “Do you like sushi?”

“I’ve never tried it. But I wouldn’t mind to.”

Tony nodded, “Take us to the usual place.” He relaxed back into his seat.

They sat quietly. Steve looked out the window at the life passing by him. This isn’t how he’d imagined this date to go. The thought maybe they’d get dinner and he’d get to see 21st century New York through a new set of eyes. Not from the back of these eye’s car. He turned around to face his date once more.

“So,” Steve said, wanting to make up for the awkward silence. “What’s your involvement in Shield?”

Yeah nice, bring up work on a date.

“I do a little bit of everything.” He began listing everything, “I do field work as Iron Man, help out in the tech labs, I’ve done maybe a handful of special ops, hell, I’ve even hosted and planned the Christmas party one year.” He smiled, it was his attempt at humor; Steve smiled back, “And as you know I also kind of run a company.” Tony took a breath, “What about you?”

The date was changing for the better. It was about time.
“Well I do mostly just field work type missions with Nat, Clint, Mary, and Richard; anything that would be best for Captain America really. The higher-ups seem to know we all work together the best.” Steve laughed to himself, “In fact once Clint and Richard had to-”

Steve was interrupted by Tony’s ringing phone.

“It’s okay go on.” Tony said after checking the contact.

Steve felt it rude just to ignore the phone like that, who knew how important the call could have been. “No, please take it.”

Without any hesitation, he fished out his phone and picked up.

“Hello, Stark speaking.” Tony paused for a second and in almost a blink of an eye his entire demeanor changed. “Hey.” His voiced mellowed out. “Yeah, uh actually I’m busy right now…uh-huh, of course, we can, how about we make it um 11” He looked towards Steve, “Maybe 10:30? I’ll call you…okay…okay…see you then.” He hung up his phone and dropped it into the cup holder. “Just a business call; anyways where were we.”

Steve knew that wasn’t a business call. He was going to be meeting this person right after their date. And this was where the date took a turn for the worse.

Steve was fed up with being polite, this guy didn’t deserve it. “Oh, are you sure?”

“Yeah” he responded sarcastically. He seemed to be able to feel the irritated atmosphere of the room. “You know we can reschedule this date.” He had no idea what he was saying. “I mean I was late, we’re probably not going to be able to do anything.”

“Okay” Steve responded, not even thinking about it.

“Okay?” Tony thought he would call his bluff, and not take it seriously.

“I mean you probably want to go take care of all that ‘business’ don’t you. We’re doing all this for our friends anyways. I mean, what were you expecting to get out of this date?”

“I’m going to be honest here-” Tony said.

“Please do”

“I was hoping we'd go out, talk for a little while, maybe get drunk and then I get lucky.”

“Get lucky?”

“Yeah, you know sleep with you. Fondue is the term I heard from my dad once. This way everyone wins right?” Tony was very confident in himself at this moment. He probably shouldn’t have been

Steve felt heat rise up to his face, he wasn’t sure if it was anger or he was just blushing. “Who- what exactly do you take me for?”

“I don’t know. Look it's Friday night, I’m just looking for a good time.”

Those words, “a good time”, that is what most likely really drove Steve off the edge.

“Okay you know what, I can’t do this.” Steve leaned forward to tap the driver's shoulder, “could you please pull over.” The driver did as Steve asked.
“Hey what did I do” Tony asked holding his arms out defensively, “Was it something I said?”

Steve got out of the car, thanking the driver as he got out. “I’m sorry Mr. Stark, but I am not just some easy pass for a fun weekend.” He wasn’t completely sure what that meant but he heard it in a movie once so Steve was going to go for it. Just before he shut the door he remembered, “And by the way” He leaned into the car. “I can’t get drunk”. And with that, he closed the door himself and walked onto the sidewalk, back towards his apartment.

Steve bought himself a takeout dinner and walked around a little to clear his head and went home. Not as eventful as a night as he had expected.

It wasn’t until a few hours after he got home that he got a call.

He looked around the small living room for his phone. He still hasn’t caught on to the whole being able to carry a phone so small with him where ever he went thing.

It was Natasha.

“Hello?” he said

“Steve,” she answered, “Hey, how’s the date going?”

“Well…”

“Well?”

“It kind of didn’t happen?”

There was a pause on the other end, “What? What happened?” Steve could hear voices in the background, “Hold on a second…okay, you’re on speaker now.”

“Hey Steve” came another familiar voice. It was Mary. “What happened?”

“It was terrible.” Steve felt bad for saying it, they really wanted this for him, but he also wasn’t going to tiptoe around it. “He even made plans to meet with someone else after.”

“Oh Steve I’m so sorry,” Mary apologized.

“No, it’s fine, as long as you can promise that I never have to see him again.”

Chapter End Notes

I really hope to continue and to see this to the end. Any reviews or comments to know how I could make this better or please feel free to say.
Broken Promises

Chapter Summary

A year and some after Steve and Tony's date.

Chapter Notes

This is the last pre-story chapter...the real stuff is going to start after this one.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

6 months later...

It was the wedding of Mary and Richard Parker.

It was a simple ceremony in fancy hotel big enough to accommodate the party. So many people were invited. Famous heroes, Shield agents, and family were there. If anyone wanted to pull some type of an assassination attempt, this would be the place to do it. But it was also a pretty bad idea considering the amount of powerful people at this wedding.

The ceremony was followed with a short photo-op and then the reception.

Steve, being one of the groomsmen, was supposed to give some form of a speech for the bride and groom.

Steve stood up and raised his glass, “To Mary and Richard,” He realized that he probably should have prepared a little more as he was looking for the right words, “They have been some of the greatest people and friends.” Steve could see Richards beginning to smile, which would have thought was a good sign; if Mary didn’t have a look of confusion and horror on hers. But they were looking towards him, maybe it was someone behind him. Steve continued, “I have met in the past year. And I am very lucky to call them-”

Steve still has no idea what had happened during his speech.

All he heard was a loud clunk from behind followed by a voice yelling “Shit”. Steve turned around just in time to watch a man fall out of his seat, holding the metal floral centerpiece in one hand and the tablecloth in the other. As he fell to the ground, taking the contents of that table with him (thankfully, they hadn’t served dinner yet). Everyone gasped, a few were even laughing, but some just sat in silence with no idea what had just happened.

Steve kind of went into hero mode and went over to help the person along with a few of the people were sitting at this man’s table. Steve wasn’t even halfway there when he saw the man’s face, making him stop in his steps.

It was Tony Stark. Blood was trickling down his face; judging by the cut, it looked like he had hit it against the center piece. Tony was actually laughing, he barely seemed bothered.
Steve rolled his eyes, why was he not even surprised.

10 months later…

Christmas time always had always been one of Steve’s favorite holidays. Friends and family got together just for the sake of each other; present were just an extra detail to him.

Even when it was just him and Bucky it was enough.

It was technically his second Christmas in this time. He had been “defrosted”, as Clint liked to call it, for less than 2 months. That first one wasn’t as great, he didn't spend it alone he was at the SHEILD holiday party, but he still felt alone.

He was definitely going to make up for that this time around.

Mary and Richard (being the newlyweds with the house big enough to hold everyone) hosted the party this year.

Clint and Natasha were obviously there, a few extra friends were coming and some people from the neighborhood that Steve still hadn’t met yet.

“But why the suburbs man.” Clint said as he placed the last sandwich platter on the dining table. Steve helped by putting the chips and dip next to the platter.

“It helps with our cover.” Richard came in holding two bottles of wine.

“Plus it’s a good place to raise kids,” Mary said following in behind Richard. She was nearly 6 months pregnant.

“Yeah, yeah” Richard agreed, kissing the side of her head.

“Why are you guys all in here?” Natasha said peeking in through the doorway, “Come on the party’s out there.” She grabbed Steve by the arm, mainly because he was the closest to her. “Tony’s about to light the tree with those new light things he made.”

Tony.

Steve had gotten past how much Tony irritated him. From the date, to that stunt he pulled at the wedding (which he later learned from Clint and Natasha that a nearly drunken Tony was trying to fake throw the centerpiece at Steve during his mini-speech, just to make his table laugh, and he lost his balance and took everything on the table with him). Now all he really felt now was annoyed and not wanting to deal with his antics…so really he could still sometimes infuriate him

They all entered the living room where the rest of their guests were. The guests were standing around the tree and Tony, who holding a glass of wine facing the people had his arms out dramatically; “Ladies and gentleman and neither and both, I present to you,” Tony flipped the switch on his right, causing the tree to light up, “Christmas.”

The tree was lit up in all the colors of the rainbow and danced all around the tree. Each of those little lights looked lively and beautiful, all synced together yet not at the same time. It was pretty amazing, Steve had to admit.

Everyone clapped and Tony took a bow, “But wait,” He said dramatically, “there’s more.”

Tony walked past the guests and turned up the music that had been playing quietly in the
background.

The lights intensified and began to change in response to the music. It was a pretty phenomenal sight. The group, once again, applauded him which, Tony yet again gave dramatic bows to left and right.

“Yes, yes,” Tony took one last bow, clasping his hands together, “I know I’m awesome.” Steve rolled his eyes, yup Tony Stark confident as ever. “And the best part is-”

Tony was interrupted by the sound of the music dying away, along with the rest of the power in the house. The only light that was left was from the small candles the Parker's had put in the windows and on the tables. Everyone gasped in surprise.

“Okay, now that,” Tony tried to explain himself, “wasn’t supposed to happen.”

“It’s okay,” Clint spoke up, “I got this.” Using his phone as a flashlight he walked back to the kitchen where he thought the breaker box might be.

Steve stood in the dark. The power going out was a pretty good conversation starter.

“Well the tree was really pretty,” Mary said Richard. She sounded a little disappointed but not too much.

“It’s alright,” Natasha said trying to help. “Clint’s going to fix it.”

“I’m sure he will.” Steve agreed, placing a hand on her shoulder.

Steve could see Tony coming towards them; he felt a bit of irritation build up and took a few steps to the side.

Tony faced Mary and Richard, “Hey, sorry about the power.” He apologized.

“Don’t worry about it man.” Richard said almost instantly.

“Yeah,” Steve cut in, “Even a genius couldn’t have expected that to happen.” He was trying to know sound too sarcastic, he was only being half serious after all.

Tony patted the side of Steve’s arm, “See, he’s got the right idea.” Tony sensed the sarcasm in Steve’s voice, but knew just what buttons push.

Steve inhaled and exhaled for a calming effect, which did help a little. But he also noticed something else, “Do you, do you guys smell that?” it was a burning smell, ”Is there anything in the oven?”

They looked around, rooted in their place, for the source of that smell. Then they found it.

Well technically they didn’t find it. It was another guest.

“Oh my god, fire!” they shouted.

The room was now even more lit up...by the fire from the tree.

“Oh shit.” Tony said, he didn’t sound as alarmed as everyone else was. The light of the fire cast a darkening shadow over Tony's face and he had this look with what he could have called a small smile. Steve wasn't sure if it was fear or interest. He looked almost psychotic.

Thank god someone had invited Bobby Drake. He was able to put out the fire quickly enough before it spread anywhere other than lightly on the drapes.
Tony laughed it off, "Well at least I didn’t do the house too; am I right?"

Steve folded his arms, frustrated. It was an accident but he could have at least cared a little more that he nearly set the house on fire.

He still couldn’t see what his friends saw in him.

3 months later…

"This is so exciting." Natasha said happily. Steve pressed the button to the maternity ward of the hospital. Steve nodded in agreement. He straightened up the flowers in they had brought for their friends. "Oh come on." She shook his shoulder. "It's your first nephew, show a little emotion."

It may not have been his blood-related nephew, but Steve didn't care at all. He was excited, very excited; somehow he managed to contain that excitement.

They reached the floor with a ding from the elevator. Natasha checked her phone quickly, "Clint says he's already there and that we've got to see him or he's going to send us pictures and spoil the surprise."

"Tell him we're on our way right now."

Natasha texted him back and was a good 5 strides ahead, Steve managed to keep up with her until she reached the front desk with the receptionist that would have to buzz them in. "Mary and Richard Parker." Natasha said in a nearly urgent voice, before the man at the front desk even asked who they were here for.

"Room 161, just go left," He said with a smile, "And congratulations."

The room buzzed and opened slowly in a way that strangely reminded Steve of a prison.

They counted the doors quickly (but took a second to slow down, not stop, and see the other newborns, each in their own little clear bassinets and adorable little hats).

157, 159, 161...

Steve held the door for Natasha.

"Hey you guys!" she said in a low voice.

Steve followed her in. The room was dimly lit. They walked past the small curtain. Mary laid in the bed. She looked disheveled and tired, still happy none the less. By her was her husband, he looked as if he hadn't slept in the last 24 hours, but every bit as happy as his wife.

In her arms, she held in a tiny bundle, her son.

Seeing him for the first time filled Steve with this undefinable warmth. A feeling he was sure he felt before, just not this intensely.

"Congrats," Steve said, holding his hand out to shake Richard's hand.

Natasha kissed the side of Mary's head, "He's so cute.". Mary pushed the receiving blanket down a little more for her to get a better look.
"He really is." Steve agreed.

"Would you like to hold Peter?" Mary asked.

Natasha nodded excitedly. She used the hand sanitizer dispenser and rubbed the clear liquid all over her hands. Steve did the same.

Slowly Mary sat up and handed her son over to Nat carefully. "Support his head." She added, sounding worried. She was a brand new mom, who could blame her.

"I got it," Natasha held him in her arms and took a few steps away, rocking him. "Hello Peter. Peter Parker, I like it. Very alliterative."

"My turn." Steve said holding, his arms out.

"Be patient, I just got him."

Steve could see the amused look that Mary and Richard gave each other in the back.

"Where's Clint anyway?" Steve asked just taking notice of his absence.

"He went out to get me a coffee." Richard responded, "he should be back any minute." There came a knock at the door followed by footsteps, "That might be him."

But it wasn't.

It was Tony Stark.

There was no escaping this guy.

He held a well-wrapped gift, most likely for Peter, and a bouquet. "Hello, hello" he said putting down the gifts. He walked to Richard arms open to embrace him in a hug. "Say goodbye to sleep from the next 18 years." Tony joked placed a kiss on Richard's cheek and moved on to Mary. "Even now you look better than ever." He hugged and kissed her. "Now let me see the baby."

"Ah, no disinfect first," Mary said pointing to the hand sanitizer.

"Okay, mom." Tony exaggerated with a wink.

He rubbed the sanitizer all over his hands up till it was practically dry and walked over to Steve who had just gotten ahold of Peter.

He was so small, Steve felt instantly protective of him, he made a mental promise to never let any harm come to him in any way. Steve held him up a little more to get an even closer look. The baby fussed at being moved but settled quickly after Steve rocked him a little. So small, so cute, Steve hardly wanted to let go.

Especially when he saw who was next to hold the baby.

Tony stood facing Steve. "Come on Cap, my turn." He looked ready to pick him up.

Steve not wanting to make a scene or the baby cry he gently lifted him up and into Tony’s arms. "Sit down" he added, “you might drop him.”

Tony glared at him a bit and walked away.
“Hi there,” Tony cooed, “I'm your coolest uncle.” he walked in little circles. He looked up to Mary and Richard. “He's so light.” Tony held him so that Peter’s head was in one hand and his small body was facing towards Tony. Tony lifted him up and down as if weighing him, “Like a bag of flour. Oh my god.”

Mary sat up, “Tony. Tony no.” She was seemingly close to freaking out, “Please. Sit down.”

Tony was only half listening. “Look at this,” Tony looked down at the baby, “You’ve got to tell me your diet, it’s working so well.” He was too distracted to see that he was walking backward into the clear plastic basin which would have been used to wheel the babies into their respective room, and to hear everyone trying to warn him to stop.

By the time he noticed it it was too late.

It fell to the ground with a loud crash, spilling the contents of the little cabinet underneath everywhere, making everyone flinch. Peter scared from the noise instantly started crying, more like screaming, his head off.

Tony began to panic, Steve took the baby from him and handed him off to Richard. He tried to comfort him until Mary held her arms out, asking for their son back.

Natasha helped Tony pick up the mess. And the baby still hadn’t stopped crying.

“What the hell…” Clint stood in the doorway holding his coffee in one hand and Richards in the other. “I was gone for 20 minutes”

Steve didn’t want to point fingers or say anything, but he blamed Tony.

Chapter End Notes

I really hope to continue and to see this to the end. Any reviews or comments to know how I could make this better or please feel free to say.
First Birthday

Chapter Summary

It's Peter's first birthday!!!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Oh, Richard he’s so big,” Mary said cradling her son, kissing his head, as if he were still a few months old. “I can't believe it’s already been a whole year.”

“I know, I know.” Richard kissed his wife, “How does another one sound?”

Mary smiled as if it were a joke, “Okay,” She patted him on the back and began walking away, “But you have to carry it for nine months.” She added over her shoulder.

It was Peter’s first birthday party. Most of the people who they had invited were their closest friends and the suburban families on the block, who really invited themselves more than had been invited by the Parker’s.

Mary walked into her home. The first person she saw was Clint, he was chatting it up with a few neighbors. She knew he enjoyed messing with them, and it was fine as long as no one was hurt. “Clint here,” She put Peter into his arms, “I’ve got to get the cake ready.” Clint held Peter, he was sucking on his fingers and stared up at Clint for a second and a smile grew when he recognized who was holding him. “Thank you, you’re a saint.” And she sped-walked off to the kitchen.

Clint got a better grip on his nephew, “Hey Petey”, he bounced him in his arms making the boy smile close enough to giggling but not quite. Clint excused himself from the group and walked off to find Natasha.

He passed by Steve. Poor guy was stuck on a couch surrounded by middle-aged married suburban moms; all of them talking to him all at once about potential girls they had for him that he could go out with, that he must try whatever random dish they had brought, and how handsome of a man he was. Clint knew Steve was uncomfortable; too bad he was also too polite to do anything but go with it.

He kept on going; maybe she was outside?

“Hey Clint!” He heard someone call from behind. Turning around, he saw it was Tony. Clint stopped to let Tony catch up.

“Yeah” he responded back.

“Clint you gotta help me.” Tony seemed actually afraid, “The kids know who I am. They want Iron Man.”

“Well give them what they want then.”

Clint could see the children Tony was talking about coming up from behind him, not as many as he had expected. Peter got a good grip on Clint’s hair and tugged at it, making screeching noises as he...
did it, “What” Clint was prying away the little fingers from his hair, “am I supposed to do.”

“I don’t know, tell them that Hawkeye’s here too.” Tony knew how close they were getting.

“Uh-uh, no” Clint said, “Unlike you, my identity is still secret…kinda…and I want to keep it that way.” He started to walk away, “sorry man.” he continued his search, “Let’s go find Auntie Nat,” Clint told Peter.

He went outside where he instantly spotted her in one of the deck chairs, sipping from her cup, and talking with the other neighbors. He took the seat beside Natasha. “Look who I got.” Clint said raising Peter’s arms up with both his hands and wiggling them.

Natasha took Peter from him, “Hello birthday boy.” She tickled him.

“Nat, Clint, Mary wants us to come inside for the cake. Richard came over and picked his son up, he peppered little kisses on his cheeks making the baby laugh and try to push him away. Richard bounced him in his arms. “Come on” He told them.

Clint and Natasha followed him in.

Tony, Steve, and Mary were already in the dining room with the cake.

Richard slipped him into the highchair. Mary put a bib around his neck to protect his clothes.

“Ready?” Richard asked his wife.

“Ready.” She responded.

They both went out to call the rest of the guests in.

Nat looked at the direction from where they had left, “They are so in sync it’s amazing.”

“Do you think the kid’s even going to be able to blow out a candle?” Clint said.

Peter was drooling all over the tray of the chair smiling. “It won’t matter.” Steve said wiping the drool off of Peter’s face with the corner of the bib.

“Yeah it’s not like he’s going to remember not blowing it out.” Tony added.

Steve looked at him, they hardly ever agreed on anything. He was pretty sure this was the very first time he could think of off the top of his head. It was a strangely good feeling though.

People began pooling inside all followed by Mary and Richard.

Mary went into the kitchen and came back with the cake and a lit number 1 candle.

Mary held the cake next to Peter. “Okay guys. Happy birthday to you-”

Everyone else joined in. Peter had no idea what was going on but they were singing and he liked it. He smiled up at his mother and everyone else. Richard was taking pictures, wanting to capture every moment.

When they got to the final, “Happy birthday to you” of the song Mary finally placed it in front of Peter.

“Okay Peter blow out the candle” His mom said in a sweet voice.
Peter didn’t know what she meant and just stared.

Tony got down to his level, “Look, go like this.” Tony blew at him. Peter’s eyes fluttered in response but didn’t seem to get it.

Instead Peter began to reach for the open flame causing all the parents to cry out in warning. Tony taking action, whispered “shit” under his breath quickly and blew the candle out before Peter could burn himself.

Once everyone breathed that small sigh of relief they clapped. Peter joined in and clapped too.

Mary took the cake and cut the first slice for Peter. She put it on a plate and handed it to Steve to put in front of him. She went back to cutting cake for the rest of the guests. Richard helped out.

One of the best traditions for a baby’s first birthday is when they get their first slice of cake and they get to actually dig in and make as big of a mess that like. Peter took the liberty of fulfilling that tradition really well.

Blue and purple icing was smeared all over his face, hair, the tray and up his arms. Peter was having a lot of fun playing with it more than eating it; granted that he did end up eating some of it, causing it to smear onto his face.

“Hey, let’s get a picture of the uncles and aunt,” Richard said, meaning Tony, Steve, Clint, and Natasha.

They all put down their plates and gathered around Peter. Tony was on his right, Steve on the left and Clint and Natasha in the back.

“Come on Petey” Steve said pointing to Richard look at the camera.

Natasha tapped on Peter’s shoulder to get his attention. He turned around to see what she wanted. “Look” She pointed in the same direction as Steve.

Peter listened to them for about a second, and then he noticed who was next to him, Tony.

“Ready,” Richard began counting down, “3, 2, 1, and-”

As though he was timing it accordingly, Peter made excited cries and gurgled as he reached out to Tony. He wiped his hand on Tony’s face just when Richard had taken the picture.

“Peter,” His mom scolded him, “Tony I’m so sorry.”

Tony waved her off, it was fine; “Thank-you Peter” Tony smiled at him. He lightly nibbled at the frosted fingers that were already almost in his mouth, “Mmmm” he said in an obviously fake way. Peter laughed and offered Tony another handful of cake, which Tony let Peter feed to him, even though Peter missed some of his mouth and it got onto his clothes, he ate it anyways. Tony stood back up and gave Peter a messy kiss on the top of his head.

Steve watched Tony’s interaction with their nephew from afar. He was really good Peter, almost sweet. Seeing Tony with him sometimes gave him second thoughts.
I really hope to continue and to see this to the end. Any reviews or comments to know how I could make this better or please feel free to say.
All good things...

Chapter Summary

The title kinda says it all...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was Wednesday.

Wednesdays were usually better days for people; middle of the week, not too close to Mondays and not too close to Fridays, they were just right. But that doesn’t mean that they’re just right for everyone.

Steve woke up on one of these Wednesdays and did what he did practically every morning.

He woke up at 8:00am, took a shower, and made a quick breakfast. When all this was done he had finished this routine he was usually left with an extra hour or more to do whatever he wanted. He might go out for a walk or just home and read or watch TV. Which is what he did this time; Steve turned on the news and read a book. He had nearly 70 years worth of books to catch up on after all.

Time always went by so quickly when he was reading, before he even knew it, it was already 10:45. He had to get going now or he going to be late.

Steve double checked that he had everything he was going to need and then left, locking the door.

He took the couple miles long walk to one of the smaller SHIELD divisions in New York, from there he would get a ride to which ever branch they would need him for the day.

Steve got out of the car, thanking the driver as he closed the door. This was one of the largest ones in New York, where most of the trainees went right before they were going to get their first real assignments. The first ones were never very big but it was usually really exciting for young ones.

Steve walked into the lobby to sign in.

There was a new secretary there; a younger man with blue eyes and dark hair. He had somewhat of a baby face, and Steve had to admit, he was pretty easy on the eyes. But that shouldn’t be the first thing that he noticed when first meeting someone.

Steve held out his hand to shake, “Steve Rogers.”

The secretary looked a bit shy but took his hand and shook it. He had a good firm grip, the first sign of character. “Charlie, Charile Rivers.” He said.

Steve handed him his badge, “First day?”

Charlie scanned him in. He let out a small laugh, “Yeah, is it obvious.”

“No, if I didn’t recognize the other secretary I probably wouldn’t have.”
He handed Steve his badge back, “Yeah, she was promoted to HR I think.”

Steve nodded in understanding, “Well, it was nice talking to you.” He said with a genuine smile.

Charlie smiled back, “Have a nice day.”

“You too”

Steve didn't really do much at SHIELD, but he was Captain America, making him an asset to them.

He did some work here and there, but if it wasn’t missions, he mostly he did training, for both him and the newbies.

It was his favorite thing to do and their facilities were perfect for his level of conditioning. None of his friends were there today; Mary, Clint, Nat, and Richard were all out on a mission in some Slavic country. It was a simple one, just capturing some mid to low level villain and bringing him back. Steve wasn’t too worried about them; they were supposed to be coming home tonight after all. He had agreed to stay behind this time to do some extra training with the newer agents as a favor to Phil Coulson. It wasn’t that big of an assignment anyways.

The training was supposed to start right after his lunch break.

Steve ate a light lunch and went out to the eastern field to meet up with the trainees. They were all already there waiting for him, each dressed in the matching black pants or shorts and dark blue shirts, the SHEILD logo embroidered on the right breast side of the shirt.

“Alright men and women” He was now using his loud commanding voice. The voice that said he meant business. This got the attention of everyone; they stopped whatever side conversation they had to give him their full attention. “Good. Now I say we start with a warm up.”

They stretched, did pushups, burpees, sit-ups, and moved on to a quick run.

They followed each of Steve exercises to the T. These guys seemed really excited to be working alongside Steve. He was pretty sure they didn’t even know he was Captain America, but did know that he was high up on the level system they had over at SHIELD, meaning he held a high position.

After the run, they went inside for sparring and hand to hand combat practice.

Steve walked slowly through the student groups, helping them here and there wherever they needed it. His specialized training wasn’t very broad when he first woke up in this century but in the year and a half since then he took up all sorts of fields and bettered himself to the point where he was comfortable enough to say that he could oversee a class of his own.

Here is where he was truly in his element.

He worked with them for hours until about 5pm. Mary and Richard had invited him, Clint, Natasha, and Tony over for their homecoming at their place. They lived about 45 minutes from where he was, it was a bit of a drive but it was worth it. He was excited to see everyone, especially Peter.

Steve said goodbye to his group. He truly enjoyed the time he had spent with them and hoped to do it again. They thanked him and he left to change into a new set of clothes. He still wasn’t very comfortable about showering there.

He picked up his things and met up with the car waiting for him to take him back to the city. He waved to goodbye to the secretary, Charlie, as he left. Charlie waved back. Steve got into the car,
thanking the driver as he got in. Steve really needed to get a license and a car; he hated having to make them do this every time he needed to go up to work and back.

It was about 20 minutes out when he got the call. He picked up.

Steve’s eyes widened, no it couldn’t be.

“Turn around.” He said urgently. It wasn’t a request, it was a command.

Tony Stark’s Wednesday went about as normally as most of his weekdays did.

He woke up at 10:30, and took another half hour to check through his phone; texts, calls, social media, that kind of stuff. He finally got out of bed and stripped off his clothes to get into the shower.

“Jarvis,” Tony said running his hands through hair, making it stick up in all directions, “What’s my schedule for the day?”

Tony turned the shower on waiting for it the water to heat up. “You have a meeting with financiers at 2, another at 5, and dinner at the Parker’s at 7pm.”

Right, Mary, Richard, Nat, and Clint were coming back today, and he also had been invited to their welcome back dinner. “Jarvis, remind me to pick up a gift for Peter when I’m free.”

Tony stepped into the shower just in time to hear Jarvis say, “Very good, sir.”

After his shower, Tony shaved and put on the pants of his suit and an undershirt. He figured he could put on the rest after breakfast.

Running a comb through his hair, He went to the kitchen for his breakfast. Pepper Potts was already down there on her phone sipping from a mug, waiting for him.

She looked up when she noticed him come into view. “I made you breakfast.” She said, “Even if it’s closer to lunch.”

Thank god for Pepper, he would have been screwed on levels if it weren’t for her.

He walked around the counter that gave the person sitting at it the view of the pit living room and went into the kitchen area. He set his dress shirt, tie, and blazer down and took a seat at the counter.

Bacon, veggie omelet, fruit and a hot cup of black coffee; she knew him so well. But it was missing just one thing.

He grabbed a bottle of whatever liquor was the first in the cabinet under him and poured some of it into his mug of coffee.

“Isn’t it too early to be drinking?”

Tony ignored her and took a swig of his cocktail, “It’s night somewhere.”

Pepper knew she couldn’t win, so there was no point in arguing. Tony’s drinking habits just bothered her so much sometimes.

“Whatever,” She pulled out her tablet and opened up their schedule, “So your first meeting is expected to take a little longer than we thought, so to avoid overlapping with the one afterward, we’ve moved it up an hour.”
Tony nodded mouth full of eggs and bacon, “Now what are the chances that you do it and I stay home.”

“Don’t talk with your mouth full. And they want to see Stark himself, not his stand in.”

Tony moved on to the fruit, “Oh come on, you know that you’re much more than just a stand-in. You are an integral part of this operation.”

Pepper put away her table, “Yes I know that; they don’t. Now stop making excuses and finish getting dressed.”

“Okay mom.” He downed the rest of his coffee, cringing at the terrible aftertaste that came with it. He took a small swig from the liquor bottle to help with the taste, which was obviously no better.

“Tony. Enough with the alcohol, we need you sober at the thing.”

Tony rolled his eyes. He could hold his drink. Tony picked up his plate and dropped them into the sink. He got his extra clothing and moved into the living room to watch the news as he finished getting dressed.

Tony buttoned the last button and tossed his tie around shoulders to begin knotting it. “Why can’t we have an alien race or something attack New York now?”

Pepper came down the steps into the living room, “Because,” she said straightening his tie. “They know that you have a very important meeting today.”

“Figures”

Tony usually did this whole pouting and stubborn thing but matured by the time he reached Stark Industries. He walked into the building. He never needed to check in, he owned the damn place; they knew who he was.

“Good morning Mr. Stark.” said the receptionist in the lobby as soon as he passed by her.

“Morning Julie” Tony greeted her back. He was 85% sure that was her name.

Tony followed Pepper into the elevator and from there they went to the medium sized glass meeting room which was soon going to hold the financiers who were going to help backup whatever new project they were to come up with next and inform them of where they were now.

It was important that the host of the meeting be there first to prepare the room and themselves. Pepper set out the small snacks and drinks on the table while Tony leafed through the folder with all the info he needed to know while Pepper quizzed him.

After some time, his phone alarm went off; 12:45pm.

Tony straighten out his suit and tie, “Good luck, Mr. Stark”, Pepper said as he went out to meet with whoever may have already been there waiting for him.

Tony peeked back into the room, holding onto the doorframe as a support, “Good luck, Ms. Potts” he added with a wink before walking to the waiting area of this floor.

By the time he got to the area it was nearly 1pm, so there were, in fact, people there waiting for him. Tony greeted them and shook their hand. He led them to the meeting room, making small talk here and there about their families, sports, and business; the kinds of they liked to talk about. They waited
a little longer in there for the late stragglers, and then really began the meeting.

He had to admit, the meeting went well. It wasn’t boring. Tony just became his charming self, which everyone else ate it all up.

It went just as long as Pepper had guessed, 3:30pm. They probably could have done without the extra hour push up, but it gave Tony an extended lunch period. He got a slice of pizza from a nearby joint that he usually went to and walked to Toys R Us that was about 3 miles from him. He had a little over an hour to kill.

That gave him a half hour to walk back and forth and a half hour at the store. It didn’t seem like much, but he knew exactly what he was there for.

Tony walked in through the sliding doors into the toy store. It was a multilevel toy store in New York City, so it was filled with tourists and screaming children. But Tony was able to navigate past the kids to the very section he was looking for, superheroes.

Tony browsed the Iron Man toys, looking for something that would be just right for a one-year-old. He settled on one of the cute looking soft plushies that looked like a baby itself. It had a large rounded head, little stubby arms, and a tiny body. The best part was that it was Iron Man.

He was going to make this kid an Iron Man fan if it was the last thing he ever did.

Tony checked out and left with the bag in hand.

He made back just in time for another coffee and to prepare for the last meeting.

He was hoping to get through this one as quick as he could. It was mostly just a progress report from the other departments, so it shouldn’t have to take too long.

5 o’clock. This time, it was Pepper who welcomed the department heads into the room. And their meeting began.

Nearly a half hour…maybe 45 minutes in he got a call.

The head of Human Representatives stopped talking; everyone’s attention was now on him.

Now usually Tony left his cell in his office or off but in his pocket. But this wasn’t Tony Stark’s personal phone. It was Iron Man’s. This was the phone that he always had for emergencies and anyone who needed to get in touch with him ASAP.

Tony excused himself and went outside to pick up.

Pepper saw him from the glass. She knew it couldn’t have been good; his eyes widened, his face fell, there was something wrong.

Tony shoved his phone back into his pocket and walked back up into the room. He picked his bag up.

“I’m so sorry to this,” Tony sounded shaken up, “But I have to go. Pepper will be taking over now.”

Tony quickly walked to the door, he was in a rush. But Pepper grabbed him by the arm and stopped him. “Tony what are you doing” her eyes flashes from him to the people then back to him, as if to remind him that he was in a meeting, or that she was expecting an answer.

“I. I have to go, please I just can’t.” Tony shrugged her arm off, “I’ll call you later.”
And with that, he was gone.

Chapter End Notes

I really hope to continue and to see this to the end. Any reviews or comments to know how I could make this better or please feel free to say.
...come to an end

Chapter Summary

They get the news...

Chapter Notes

I'm planning to try to do this in a away so that there are weekly installments, so if anyone would or wouldn't like that please tell me...or if anyone has any other ideas to make it better would also be welcome.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Steve wouldn't say he was in a panic, but freaking out was accurate.

He was on his way to see the Parker's for dinner. These homecoming dinners were always nice for him, they'd order takeout or maybe pizza and just talk or watch whatever movie they had which Steve hadn't seen out of pure shock that he hadn't. It was all about them being together, home and safe.

It was in the car that he had gotten the call. It wasn't even a voice Steve had recognized. They didn't tell him exactly what it was other than it was regarding the mission his friends had just gotten back from and that he had to come back for a debriefing immediately. This person's voice was emotionless, but something about the call made him know that it wasn't anything good.

The driver sped back to the SHIELD branch from where he had just left.

Thoughts of worry began to cloud his mind. They were hurt. They were captured. Maybe they didn't make it back at all. No, not that. Steve quickly tried to push that thought back, attempting to replace them with comforting thoughts.

But that didn't keep the worse thoughts from racking his brain, making him grow more and more afraid to learn what it was that he had to come back for; why couldn't they have just told him on the phone?

Finally, they had passed the barrier and the grounds began to come into view.

Steve's heart began to beat faster and faster, now he was about ready to panic.

They pulled up to the front of the main building.

Steve left the car so fast he nearly forgot his bag which had his badge.

He rummaged to find it before he reached the front desk in order to save time. He found it in the front pocket.

The same secretary from before, Charlie, instantly seemed to have recognized him, "Nice to see you
again." He said it with a smile.

Steve handed him his badge, "Please I'm in a hurry."

The smile disappeared slightly and he signed the badge in, "Is everything alright?" he asked handing the badge back.

Steve shoved it into his pocket. "I sure hope so."

Steve walked past the desk to the hall with the elevators. He just realized that he had no idea where he was supposed to go; maybe the floor with the rooms they usually went to for debriefing.

Floor 12.

Steve press the button to get into the elevator and pressed the one to get to the 12th floor.

Just before the doors closed completely, he saw someone practically running towards the closing. "No wait," He called out. It was Tony Stark. "Hold that elevator"

Steve responded quickly enough in time to press the button that reopened the door.

Tony got inside. They looked at each other for a second probably thinking the same thing. This couldn't be a good.

"Thanks" Tony said straightening up.

Steve stiffened, "No problem"

The elevator took off, Tony looked at Steve, he could feel his eyes on him. Steve asked the question that Tony was most likely going to ask, "So do you know why we're here.

"The guy on the phone said nothing much. What do you think it could be?"

Steve was silent, those same thoughts that clouded him on the ride here refilled his head. He didn't want to think them, he wanted to change the subject, he didn't want to think the worst. "How did," Steve looked for something else to say, "How did you get here at the same time as me?"

"Billionaire man, I flew here in a helicopter." Tony answered in a way that made it Steve feel like it was a stupid question.

The elevator landed on that floor with a ding.

Tony let Steve go out first, "Do you know where we're supposed to be going?"

"No, they didn't tell me." Steve looked left and right from the elevators. It was dimly lit and practically empty. All he saw was a long hallway that could go either left or right for the rooms. He'd been there several times and knew how to navigate it. "Let's walk around, I'm sure we'll find it."

"Good idea, man with a plan." Tony mumbled, he was on edge with worry. And Steve knew this, so he was going to pretend he didn't hear it.

They wandered the halls looking for the room. Steve was even beginning to second guess himself until he saw a light on in one of the rooms. Tony took the liberty of being the one to check if it was the right one. Steve took the fact that Tony walked in as a sign to follow.

Steve felt relief in seeing that Natasha and Clint were there. The room was a big one with a
long table and multiple rolling chairs, basically like most office meeting rooms. They were still suited up as though they went straight from the mission to the room. Phil Coulson was there too, Steve had only seen him on a handful of times.

But it was when Steve had come inside completely to get a view of the whole room that he noticed that Mary and Richard weren’t. He felt a sinking feeling. When he saw the familiar look in both Clint and Natasha’s eyes, he sunk even further.

It was a look he hadn’t really seen since the war all those decades ago. A look of loss, pity, and all topped off with a look of overall tired or weariness. It didn’t take very long for Steve to put two and two together, but he didn’t want it to be true.

Natasha sat up a little more, “You guys better sit down.” she said it slowly picking her words carefully.

Tony and Steve took the two seats next to each other, closest to their friends.

Steve was praying to anything and everything out there that he wasn't about to hear what part of him knew was the truth.

This was when Coulson took over, “You are probably wondering why you were called in here today.” He was only talking to Steve and Tony, Nat and Clint already knew what had happened. He was being careful with his words just as Natasha had, tip toeing around them. “Well there’s no way to avoid it. There was an accident.”

“An accident?” Tony asked for clarification.

Steve’s gaze flashed from Coulson to Clint and Natasha. They looked pained to hear the word, “accident”. Steve’s heart felt as though it was skipping beats in an irregular pattern. He was beginning to shake.

Phil Coulson continued, “I’m sorry to be the one to have to deliver this news. But—”

“They’re dead.” Clint snapped cutting in, “Mary and Richard are dead.”

There they were, the words didn’t want to hear. He knew it when he got the call, he just knew. Everything seemed to go slow motion all of a sudden.

Clint took heavy breaths, he seemed about ready to lash out. It pained him to be the one to tell them. He slumped back in his chair running his hand through his hair, a mannerism Steve knew he did whenever he was troubled. Clint was trying to calm himself, Natasha rubbed his arm comfortingly.

Steve couldn’t believe what he was hearing. It was supposed to be just a simple there and back mission. He hand on hand flat on the table, his elbow propped on the table and hand holding his head up from his forehead. Steve’s eyes were downcast. He stared at the table taking everything in.

He could feel Coulson hovering, waiting to continue. He was probably saddened by this loss, but he barely knew them as they had. Steve’s eyes began to burn, he didn’t want to cry, at least not in front of anyone else. He couldn’t remember the last time he had even cried. He knew he’d be able to hold it together.

Coulson continued explaining exactly what had happened. Steve was only half listening. They had gotten ahold of the supercriminal Gustav Fiers, the guy they were assigned to bring in, and some of his closest advisors. Feirs went on one quinjet and the advisors went on another. This is when the
team of four had split up.

Natasha and Clint went in the one with the Fiers’ men and Mary and Richard with Fiers himself. When they transport criminals on long trips back agents usually would sedate them to make the trip easier for both of sides.

But something had gone wrong. From what they have been able to gather so far was that Fiers wasn’t sedated and broke out sometime during the trip, causing the quinjet to crash over the Pacific Ocean.

Steve perked up when he heard this, “So maybe they survived.” He thought of his own crash.

“No,” Coulson quickly dashing his hopes, “their vital signs cut off, he most likely killed them beforehand.”

Steve felt a warm hand cover his own, he looked and saw it was Tony’s. He was trying to give him some kind of non-verbal comfort. Steve nodded in understanding in let him continue.

“Now we’ll have to deal with one other topic.” Coulson who had been standing at the front delivering the report now took a seat near them. “The funeral. Are we going to have one or not, there weren’t any bodies recovered.”

A bad taste formed in Steve’s mouth, he knew Coulson had good intentions but they had died not even a day ago, this wasn’t the time for such a conversation; not yet at least.

“Are you serious,” Tony spoke up as if he had read Steve’s mind. He removed his hand from Steve’s leaving a light cool feeling from the absence of its warmth. “Our friends died like 5 hours ago and you want us to choose if we want lilacs or daisies on their coffins.” This was another of the few times Steve could count on one hand that they had been on the same page.

“Tony please,” Natasha said speaking up for the first time since they walked in, “he’s just trying to help. Even if you are right.” She looked from Tony to Coulson.

A thought Steve hadn’t even thought of before and even felt guilty not thinking of before hand popped in his head. “What about Peter?”

That shifted the atmosphere in the room.

Steve caught Clint and Natasha give each other a look, they were both thinking the same thing. But Steve didn’t know what that was.

Coulson closed the folder he had open in front of him. “They left a last will and testament which outlines who’ll have custody of their son. That is something that their lawyer should go over with all of you.”

“Well where is he now?” Tony spoke up.

“He’s should be at the house with Sarah.” Natasha answered. Sarah was another agent, but she also did some nannying for Mary and Richard when they went on missions and they would do the same for her and her kids.

“Well what should we do then?” Clint said.

“I’m going over there.” Steve said, he needed cheering up, he didn’t want to leave Peter with anyone else tonight of all nights. It would be worth the hour long drive.
“I second that.” Natasha said getting up slowly with a sigh as though it were strenuous.

Clint stood up, “I’m coming too.”

Tony knew he was going to go with them, “We’re going to have to borrow one of your cars.” he said looking at Coulson.

“Yes of course, we’ll have one brought to the west entrance.” Coulson showed them the door. “We’re currently sending agents to try and recover the jet, we’ll keep you all updated.” They walked out of the room. “And I’m sorry for your loss.”

They thanked him and went together to the elevator, Coulson went in a different direction.

They all had nothing to say to each other as the elevator went down.

Natasha broke that silence, “I can’t believe-”

“Yeah” Steve and Clint agreed knowing what she was going to say.

“And Peter” Clint added, “Poor kid’s only a year old.”

“We’ll make sure he never forgets who his parents were and what they did.” Steve promised to himself and them.

They made a fast stop to have Natasha and Clint change into more comfortable outfits on the way.

They reached the bottom floor and went out find the car awaiting them.

They passed front desk. The same secretary smiled and waved to them; well specifically Steve. Steve somehow managed to give a half smile and slightly wave back to him.

“Who was that?” Natasha asked quietly when they got outside.

“Just the new guy.”

Tony took the keys from the guy who had brought the car, “I’ll drive.” It was a normal sized 2-row SUV. Clint and Nat sat in the back with Steve and Tony in the front.

They took the long drive to the Parker’s home. Before they had all been so excited to get there, but now it was different. It wasn’t in the same, it would never be again.

But the ride was calming in a away. The sun had just set, it was almost officially night. Tony had hooked his phone up to the car to play some old classic rock music softly. Clint had laid his head on Natasha’s lap while she reclined back in her seat, running her hand through his hair soothingly; the way a mother would for their child. The steady moving of the car watching the trees go by was a welcome relaxing.

Eventually, they had to stop for gas. Tony got out, “Did you guys want anything?” Tony asked, it was then did he notice that Clint and Natasha had fallen asleep in the backseat. They’d had a long day, it was understandable why they fell asleep. “How about you?” he got Steve’s attention, “Sweedish fish? Sour watermelons? Anything?”

“I have no idea what any of that is” Steve responded.

Tony stared at him for a second then shook his head, he tapped the roof once, “Of course.” He began to walk away, Steve could hear Tony talking to himself as he went inside to pay, “Of course he
doesn’t know.”

Steve found himself amused by the response he’d gotten. It was strange, they were getting along so well for whatever reason. He wondered how long this was going to last.

Tony came back filled the tank and got back into the car. Tony placed the three different packages he had in his hand in the cup holder and opened one of them, “Here,” he held the bag out to him, “These are sour watermelons.”

Steve took one of the little pieces out. They were pink and green and watermelon slice shaped. They looked okay. He ate it. It was good. It was really good, why hadn’t ever tried these before? They were sweet and sour and just the right amount of chewiness that he didn’t care how bad they were for his teeth. He took a few more from the bag.

Tony handed the bag to him and started the car. “Can’t believe you’ve never had sour watermelons.”

It took them another half hour until they were driving down their street and pulling up to the house. In that time Natasha and Clint woke up from their short lasting nap and Natasha had called Sarah, the person taking care of Peter at the moment, to see if she was at the Parker’s place or her own home.

Thankfully she was at theirs so it saved them the trip of having to drive to hers.

They parked in the driveway and got out, stretching from being stuck in the car for over an hour and walked to the door.

“Do we knock or just go in?” Clint asked.

“Here I have a key,” Steve handed it over to Clint and he unlocked the door. There was a few beep that rang out as the opened it, signaling to whoever was inside that someone had opened it.

The house looked different now. It still looked the same with the staircase leading to the bedrooms upstairs, the first living room that was on the left, the nicer sitting room that they used for guests and the hallway that ended up in the kitchen along with a dining room connected to it. It still looked the same but it didn't feel the same. It never would again.

"Hello?" called a voice from the kitchen.

Sarah walked out, drying her hands on a cloth. "Hi, just finished up dinner. I made enough for everybody and Peter's been fed already so no worries for interruption." she was always such a warm and motherly women even to adults, "How'd it go? Where's Mary and Richard?"

The four of them looked at each other, they weren't sure who should be the one to break the news. Tony was about to be the one to speak up, but he was interrupted by the sound of banging against the hardwood floor from the kitchen. Peter came crawling into the hallway, searching to see who had just came. He had just started getting more mobile on his own, his "crawl" was more like a balance of a half bear-crawl and buttscooting all over the floor but it was still enough to make Mary and Richard invest in baby gates to contain Peter in one room at a time. He had a toy set of keys, which explained the noises.

"Hey Petey." Tony said in a lit up voice. Peter looked up too see that all of his favorite aunt and uncles were there. He ditched the toy and tried to get them as quickly as possible. Steve met him halfway and picked him up. Pete held onto Steve’s shirt collar, he looked from Steve to Natasha to Clint to Tony. His eyes hardened in confusion he was thinking about something.

Sarah seemed to know exactly what he was thinking, “Where’s mama and baba?” She asked him
holding her hands up gesturing the question in a cooing voice. Peter’s eyes lit up and he looked around the room expecting to see his parents, but he didn’t.

“Sarah we have to talk,” Natasha said, she led her into the nicer living room. Tony followed the both of them, probably for moral support.

Steve and Clint looked at each other they weren’t as close with Sarah as Natasha, “Let’s go eat.” Clint said finally.

Steve sat at the kitchen table playing with Peter on his lap, he wasn’t sure if he would understand his parents’ absence. He noticed it earlier, so Steve was going to keep him distracted just in case. Clint served them each a slice of the casserole she had made. They had no clue what kind it was but they were about to find out.

Broccoli, cheese, and chicken with noodles.

When Steve first woke up he wouldn’t eat very much. Maybe it was the new century, maybe it was all the different foods the 21st century had to offer; for the first couple of weeks he would only eat what he had back in the 40’s. That meant mostly campbell’s soups and other comfort foods, they didn’t taste the same though. One of the first thing he noticed was the amounts of foods and that Mary, Nat, Clint and Richard were the first people who actually got him to try new foods to broaden his taste palette.

“She’s such a great cook,” Clint said, he was picking at his food, taking it in small parts. He probably didn’t have much of an appetite, in all honestly Steve didn’t really either.

Peter gurgled reaching over for Steve’s plate. Steve shifted so that Peter was now farther away from it, but he kept reaching.

“Here.” Clint took a small piece of the pasta from Steve’s plate and handed it to Peter, “He probably just wants to eat since we are.”

Steve wasn’t 100% sure that Peter could be having some, Peter had a few teeth already and he’s seen him eat solids before; he’d be fine.

Sarah came in by the time they were both almost done with their food. Her eyes were red and watery, she looked as if she had been crying.

“I’m so sorry.” She said, her voice breaking, Tony put a hand on her shoulder in comfort, “I’ll-I’ll be going now.” She picked up her bag. She was about to cry again. “If any of you ever need anything please don’t hesitate to call.” She came up to Steve and Peter, “He’s so young,” She kissed Peters head. He was chewing on the other piece of pasta and looked up at her, completely oblivious to everything that was happening. They all walked her to the door. She said her final goodbyes and condolences and Natasha closed the door behind her.

“Well then,” Tony said. It was pretty awkward in all honesty. She had cried more than any of them. Each person copes in their way, apparently, their way was by avoiding the subject until it was impossible not to.

“Did you guys try the food?” Clint tried changing the subject, he knew they hadn’t.

“Is it good?” Natasha said giving in. They all walked back into the kitchen to eat. Steve set Peter on the ground to play with some of the toys Sarah had left out from him earlier.

They sat around the table like a family even when they knew parts of it was missing. “I think this day
needs a drink,” Tony said getting up with a small groan. He wasn’t sure where they kept their alcohol but he was also pretty sure that he could find it.

“Get me some thing” Clint called out.

“Same here,” Natasha agreed.

Tony found a bottle of whiskey and one of wine in one of the top cupboards and a few beers in the fridge.

He took both bottles of whiskey and wine and the beers and set them out on the table. Tony found a few cups and set them next to the drinks. “But none for the super-soldier, can’t get drunk, right?”

Steve couldn’t understand why Tony would never use his name, it was always some stupid nickname. He wasn’t wrong, though, but Steve still wanted a drink. Maybe it would remind him of a time when he could actually feel a buzz. “No, I’ll have one.”

Tony took the liberty of pouring for them. “To Mary and Richard,” He said in a soft voice, raising his glass.

The rest of them raised their glasses in agreement and drank.

“The lawyers will be coming over tomorrow afternoon and there’s also the funeral arrangements,” Natasha spoke up after some time.

“Let’s not talk about this, please.” Clint poured himself another glass of whiskey. He took a sip, “It still feels too soon.”

Peter let out a whine, bringing all their attention on him. His face was scrunched up as though he were about to cry. Peter rubbed his face with both hands and scooted over to the person closest to him, Natasha. He reached out to her and started crying to get her to pick him up.

Natasha pulled him onto her lap, “Oh, oh, okay” Natasha said soothingly pulling him onto her lap, “what is it, huh?” That didn’t seem to help very much. Peter kept crying rubbing his eyes until he stopped to stifle a small yawn.

Steve caught on to what was wrong. “I think he’s tired.” He checked the oven clock, 9:29. He had no clue what his nephew’s sleep schedule was but it had to be late for someone his age. “Here, I’ll go get him ready for bed.” Steve got up from his chair and Natasha handed the crying Peter over the table to him without any protest.

“You need any help?” Clint asked.

“No, no I got it.”

Steve walked up the steps to Peter’s nursery. Peter calmed down when he got into his room. But he was still clinging tightly onto Steve.

Steve didn’t actually know what his nightly routine was; Steve had helped Richard put him to bed once when Mary had gone out with Nat when he was a few months old. It wasn’t any different...hopefully.

Steve laid out Peter’s footie pajamas and a clean diaper on the changing table. Then he found the duck towel with the hood that was hanging on the door and from there he took Peter to give him a quick bath.
Steve turned on and adjusted the water to just the right temperature and let it fill up the small plastic tub that was already sitting in the bathtub. As it filled up, Steve took Peter’s clothes off him as easily as he could and got on to his knees to be at just the right level with Peter when he was in the tub.

Peter didn’t like being put down at all. He started crying once again. Steve tried to ignore it and get through this shower as quick as possible. He lathered him in the baby soap with the wash cloth and rinsed him down. Peter kept on crying splashing water everywhere and partially on the front of Steve’s shirt.

“It’s okay,” Steve said, Peter probably wasn’t listening though, “We’re almost done.” He scrubbed in a little of the shampoo. Steve was having a hard time maneuvering with one hand as the other one was being used to hold Peter still to keep the soap from going into his eyes. But he got through it and was able to rinse him off thoroughly one more time. Steve got up and to get the towel which he wrapped Peter in and took him back to the nursery.

There they yet again had to power through the tears as he got lotioned and dressed. The end result was a clean Peter who was more than happy to be back in Steve’s arms. Steve picked up his blanket from the rocking chair and covered him with it. Steve went back downstairs to find them putting the food away and doing the dishes.

Tony placed the wrapped dish into the fridge. “Ah nice and clean,” Tony smiled and held his arms out for Peter to come to him. Peter made a noise of rejection and cuddled his blanket tighter, resting his head against Steve away from Tony. “It’s okay.” He said rubbing Peter’s back.

Steve secretly liked that Peter chose him over Tony.

The last dish was dried and put away by Clint. “You guys wanna go watch a movie.”

They all agreed and went into the living room. Natasha and Tony went into the kitchen to get snacks and Clint went through the DVD’s to find something to watch.

Natasha and Tony came back in holding one bowl of popcorn and one of chips Tony had a brought in a few cans of different sodas and handed Steve a baby bottle. “He likes warm milk before he sleeps.”

Steve fed it to Peter, who took to it quickly and eventually held the bottle to feed himself. Steve tried to lay him down on the couch, but Peter immediately started fussing. It was probably better to just hold him. Peter relaxed again, resting on Steve’s lap holding his own hair with one hand. He looked just about ready to sleep.

“Anything good?” Tony asked sinking into the recliner. He had another drink in his hand; what was this his second, third, fourth?”

“They really love their cult classics.” Clint said sitting cross-legged in front of the entertainment center, “Hey Steve, ever seen Napoleon Dynamite.”

“No, I’ve heard of it.”

There was a moment of quiet, they were computing that this guy had never seen this movie.

“Put it on,” Natasha called out to him in a voice louder than it needed to be.

“Tony?”

Tony was looking into his cup, “Yeah, who’s never seen, Napoleon Dynamite.”
Clint turned on the TV setting it to the right setting and placing the DVD into the player to play.

Steve was only half watching it, eating and drinking with one hand. It was an entertaining enough movie but some of it seemed like nonsense. He just didn’t see the appeal. But the rest of them seemed to enjoy it, and he even found himself amused at some moments, so he wasn’t going to say anything against it.

It was nearly midnight by the time it was over. Steve felt ready to

“Nat,” Steve whispered as the credits began to roll, “Nat” She turned around to see him, “Is he sleeping?”

Natasha sat up a little to get a better look and nodded, “Did you want me to take him upstairs?”

“No, no I got it.” Steve stood up easily and carefully to not wake Peter up. He went upstairs, laid him to his crib, and took the baby monitor piece with him.

Clint returned the bowls to the kitchen and Natasha and Tony were still lounging in the living room.

“Well I don’t know about you guys but I’m just about ready to sleep.” Natasha said.

Steve didn’t feel that he would be sleeping anytime soon. But he still felt very fatigued, it was probably because of what had happened to today.

“What are we doing as a sleeping arrangement anyways?” Clint came back into the room.

“I’m not sleeping in their room.” Tony established; none of them actually wanted to.

“There’s the guestroom upstairs.” Steve suggested, “I don’t mind sleeping on the couch, though.”

“Me either,” Natasha agreed.

Clint didn’t want to sleep alone, not tonight of all nights, “I’ll sleep here too.”

They all looked at Tony, he had been in the recliner since the movie started and he was still there. “I’m not getting up.” Tony set his glass on the floor next to the chair.

“So we’re camping out here I guess.” Natasha got up from the couch, “I’ll go get some blankets and pillows then. I’m sure they have some in that closet upstairs.” She came back within minutes, arms full of blankets and pillows. She dropped them on to the ground. “Clint and I can take the couch. Tony, we all know you’re not moving, and Steve are you okay with the loveseat?” Steve nodded.

Steve picked up a blanket and pillow. Natasha threw a blanket to Tony and Clint picked up a blanket and pillows for both of them. He threw one on to one end of the couch and took the other to his side.

“Anyone care if I turn the light off?” Natasha asked. No one protested so she took it as a no and shut the light off.

No one could actually sleep, they all just laid there together, each off in their own thoughts.

Steve thought about the day he had. That morning seemed to far away, he had no idea that his day would have taken the kind of turn it had.

He thought about Peter and Mary and Richard. It was unfair, there were so many people in this world that deserved what happened to them, but they of all people didn’t.
And what about Peter?

He didn’t have any living family member that he could see Peter having a happy life with. Maybe he could do something about that, there was enough room in his appartment for a baby afterall.

His head was flooded with so many happy memories swimming in his head. They hurt, why did such happy things hurt so much. Steve turned over on the couch, cocooning himself further into the blanket. Steve’s eyes began to sting again, here it was. All those emotions that he had been able to hold back so far where resurfacing.

“We saw it.” Clint said finally, he didn’t seem to be talking to anyone in particular, “The quinjet, we watched it fall. It didn’t look there was anything wrong at first, it just sort of drifted-”

“Clint don’t.” Natasha interrupted.

But that didn’t stop him, “It drifted downwards and we tried to com them and there was no answer, then they got so far down, it all happened so quickly.”

Tony let out a sigh, Steve could hear him shifting around in the chair, “Shit, man.” He whispered.

Steve turned to lie on his back, “This feels wrong.” Steve said looking up to the ceiling. “This was their house and we’re here using it as if we live here.”

“Well,” Tony snapped at him, “That’s because you’re too nice.” Steve frowned at him, he was hoping that Tony knew even though he couldn’t see it because of the dark.

There it was, the turning point; that moment of reconciliation where they were okay and even worked together was gone, now it was probably back to old times. Bickering and toleration of each other and nothing else. It lasted for maybe 10 hours, give or take; Steve was going to miss that small amount of time.

No one said anything else and eventually they all fell into an uncomfortable restless sleep.

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Steve was awoken in the middle of the night to sound of Peter’s crying coming from the monitor. He blinked a few times and squinted at the clock on the cable box as it came into focus, 2:58am. Steve didn’t want to get up he finally found a comfortable position, but he also knew that Natasha and Clint were such heavy sleepers that they could sleep through the apocalypse, especially right after a mission; god knew what Tony would do. But something he didn’t even expect happened.

Steve stretched his arms out a little in preparation to get up. But he heard someone else get up, which obviously had to be Tony.

“No, no, I got it.” He heard Tony’s disembodied voice say. Steve could heard Tony’s come closer and closer until he could make out Tony’s figure. He picked up the baby monitor and repeated, “I got it.” Tony patted Steve (Tony didn’t seem to know exactly where and how close he was to his thigh), his movements were sluggish. He sounded half asleep and tired, but did it none the less.

Steve saw the light from the second floor come on and heard Tony climb up the steps slowly.

Maybe there was hope for him yet.
I really hope to continue and to see this to the end. Any reviews or comments to know how I could make this better or please feel free to say.
Thanks for the heads up

Chapter Summary

Breakfasts and Lawyers and Funeral Arrangements and Parenthood. Oh my!

Chapter Notes

So there's a drawing in this done by my bff and she said I can use it on the condition that I remember to tell you all that drew it in the hour of final editing I did before uploading this chapter so yeah...

Steve was woken up yet again by the sound of Peter’s crying from the baby monitor. He opened his eyes, the orange yellow glow of the morning sun shone through the translucent blinds. He looked at the clock, 7:34, that was a little shy of the time he usually woke up, so it wasn’t that bad.

He sat up on the couch and. Steve rubbed his eyes and slicked his loose disheveled hair back out of his face. Looking around the living room, he saw that Tony was curled into a ball on the recliner; Natasha and Clint were both lying on the same couch so that their head were resting at opposite ends and the feet at the other ends opposite to them. Clint was facing the inside of the couch with one arm slung over to the back of couch and his other hidden somewhere under the blanket. Natasha slept on her side one arm was hang on the edge barely touching the floor and the other cushioned her face, which was probably going to leave a red print later on it.

He got up slowly and careful not to wake anyone up. He went upstairs to get Peter.

Peter was sitting up in his crib, not crying so much as making whines for attention. He stopped as soon as he saw Steve enter the room.

Peter reached out to Steve. He picked him up and cradled him in his arms rocking him up and down. “Hey,” he said with a smile. Peter smiled back and reached up to touch Steve’s face.

Steve smelt something off, he lifted Peter up and smelled to check. He needed to be changed. Thankfully he also knew (somewhat) how to do that, he’d done it a handful of times before. “You need a change, huh.” Steve said in the baby voice his parents used...used to use...over Peter as he was placed on a changing table.

Steve undid the snaps on his pj’s and then the tabs on his diaper. Thank god it was just a wet one. Steve wiped him down, put the powder and a clean diaper on. He took a second to admire his work.

Once clean, Steve redressed Peter and carried him downstairs for breakfast.

Steve knew that breakfast is the most important meal of the day and there was nothing better then a good breakfast right before a long day. He knew that they probably had an appointment with Mary
and Richard’s lawyer. Natasha had emailed them during their movie but it was late so they didn’t get a response. Then there was also the funeral arrangements; Steve dreaded that more than the lawyer.

He went through the fridge and freezer to see what there was that could be put towards making a breakfast. He found sausage, eggs, bacon, fruit. He was going to be able to make a pretty good old fashioned breakfast. He set Peter into his highchair. He had no idea how the stupid tray worked. He just pushing on it and eventually there was a click, it must have locked in, Steve made a note keep an eye out just in case it wasn’t actually. He gave Peter a few toys to keep him entertained. He then washed his hands and got started on breakfast.

Tony felt himself slowly wake up. It took a few seconds to regain his grasp on reality. He rolled over in the recliner which he somehow managed to spend the night in. He checked his phone to see what time it was, 9:42...god it was so early. Tony was hoping he could go back to sleep, but after a couple more minutes passed he realized how unlikely that was. Not feeling like getting up just yet, he checked his phone; a couple voicemails from Pepper, a text from a girl he couldn’t remember but apparently slept with, and also a text from a guy who he had also slept with, but he vaguely remembered him.

After sometime he got bored and set his phone down. Tony looked around the room, Clint and Natasha were both still fast asleep in equally uncomfortably positions. Tony noticed that Steve’s place was abandoned, all that was left was the blanket piled onto the couch; he was probably awake already.

Tony stretched and stood, lowering the foot rest as he got up, to not wake his sleeping friends, but he was sure he couldn’t have even if he tried.

Tony was still kind of cold but he’d adjust. Tony could hear noise from the kitchen, as he got closer he began to smell the smells of breakfast. A really good one at that.

He walked in find Steve cooking over the stove, humming to himself. Peter was in his highchair, he had toys on the tray and what looked like the remnants of scrambled eggs.

Steve looked so domestic, a natural house mate.

“Smells good.” Tony said finally. Steve turned around. He was wearing a frilly pink apron with hideous blue and brown stripes. So freaking domestic

“I.” Steve seemed a little embarrassed, “I didn’t see you there.”

“No worries Margaret Anderson,” Tony poured himself a cup of black coffee and added one spoon of sugar. He leaned against the counter. Steve was giving him a look as if expecting an explanation for his last comment, “Margaret Anderson, you know that show, Father Know Best?”

Steve went back to his cooking, “I’ve never heard of it.” Steve took a plate from the cabinet to his left and scooped the bacon onto it. Placing it on the counter next him, he got started of making the scrambled eggs. “I don’t watch a lot of television.” Steve tapped Tony’s hand away just as he reached for one of the slices of bacon. “Be patient.”

Tony, getting the message, backed off. Tony sat down in a chair next to Peter. Peter picked up one of his stuffed elephant and dropped them on the floor. Tony responded by bending over and giving it back to him. Peter stared at the toy and Tony, then pushed it off again.

Tony got the toy and yet again gave it to him. Peter let let out a happy noise and hit both hands on his highchair knocking the same elephant onto the floor. Tony caught onto what Peter was doing. He
retrieved the toy, “Are you trying to mess with me?” Tony held onto the toy this time, he nuzzled it against Peter, tickling him with it. “Huh?” Peter laughed and tried to take the toy from him. Tony pulled it away before he could grab it; Tony teased it over him in a somewhat of a game of keep away. Peter frowned still reaching for the toy, Tony knew that he was starting to get frustrated with him and gave in, “Fine,” He said, “but drop it again and you won’t be getting it back.”

Peter looked at him with big eyes, chewing on the ear of the stuffed animal; he was drooling all over it. Peter didn’t seem to understand what Tony was saying but still hung onto his every word. Those hazel brown eyes reminded him so much of Mary’s.

Mary and Richard. Why did it have to be them? There were so many that deserved what they got. He couldn’t help but imagine what if he had gone with them. Surely he could have done something to prevent their deaths. There’s no changing the past; well maybe there was, but it wasn’t a good idea.

Tony took a long sip from his mug, he considered getting something stronger from the cabinets other than coffee.

Steve set a plate of large scrambled eggs and another of bacon and sausage on the table. Tony reached for a piece of sausage.

“Oh, ah no,” Steve stopped him.

“What now?” Tony must have sounded like a whining teenager right then.

Steve looked down at him with a slightly raised eyebrow. It strangely reminded Tony of the look his least favorite teachers would give him from time to time. “Can you help set the table.”

Set the table? Tony couldn’t even remember the last time he had a “family breakfast” let alone set a table. Just something about Steve demeanor made him begrudgingly get up and find the plates and silverware to set the table. “Aye, aye captain.” Tony added not-so-under his breath, just to sass him.

Steve picked up a few fruits and got to cutting them after giving Tony a quick “Thank you.” He sounded as though he hadn’t expected Tony to actually comply to his request.

Tony set out four plates, the right silverware and cups. He also put out juice and milk as an extra favor. Steve handed him the fruit and toast to put on the table too.

Once done, Tony sat back down. He picked up a slice of bacon with a fork and ate it before Steve could do anything to stop him. Steve sat down across from him and served himself a plate. Tony fooled around with his phone to compensate for the conversation they were not having. Maybe if he looked busy enough he wouldn’t have to hold one.

But Steve didn’t seem to get the hint. He took a few bites of his eggs and gave some of the softer fruits to Peter to snack on, “I wish Nat and Clint weren’t still sleeping.” Steve took a few slices of bacon and a sausage onto his plate. “It’s almost noon.”

In reality, it wasn’t. It was 10:58; almost 11 not noon. But Tony wasn’t going to say otherwise.

“We’ve got things to do today.” Steve added.

Tony didn’t care, sleeping or awake, it didn't make too much of a difference to him. "If you want to wake them up be my guest." Steve didn't respond. He was willing to bet on being able to guess what Steve was thinking. And like-mindedness was definitely on the bottom of their list of qualities they shared. Wait was there even a list?
They both weren't very big on being woken up, especially the day after a mission. Clint was pretty manageable when he woke up, he was just like a clumsy toddler who refused to talk except in little words and grunts until he was fully awake. Natasha, on the other hand, was just plain scary in the morning. But then Tony had an idea. A brilliant idea. "Hey Petey," Tony said using his excited voice to get his attention. Peter stared at him. "Where's Auntie Nat and Uncle Clint? Peter looked around, he seemed to recognize who Tony was talking about.

"What are you-"

"They wouldn't kill a baby, especially Peter."

"Tony," Steve scolded him.

Tony took the tray off of the highchair with some difficulty. Tony hopped he didn't break anything because of the snapping noise it had made coming off. He undid the buckle in the chair and lifted Peter. “Let’s go get them, huh?” Tony, ignoring Steve’s protests, took Peter to the living room.

He set down Peter at the front of the couch facing them. Peter crawled up to the edge of the couch and got onto his knees. He was at eye level with the sleeping Natasha. “Peter,” Tony said in a low voice, Peter took his attention of Natasha to look at Tony, “Where’s Auntie Nat?” Peter gestured to Natasha. Tony nodded and smiled in encouragement. Peter smiled back and let out a shriek mixed with babbling, hitting both hands onto the couch. He was inches away from hitting Natasha.

Shit. Tony got out of the room quickly and rejoined Steve at the table.

Tony saw what he liked to think was amusement in Steve’s eyes, “I can not believe you just did that.” Steve said.

They could both hear Peter in the other room making noises. They were going to be up soon enough. Tony would admit that he felt a little bad for what he did, but was less willing to admit that he agreed with Steve. They needed to wake up soon so that they could get started on their day; if anything, just to get it over with.

They heard a groan come from the living room. They must be up now. Tony wasn’t sure if that was Clint or Natasha, it made no difference to him anyways.

Tony could hear the sound of shifting and moving of what he assumed was both of them.

“Peter, Pete, shhh.” Clint’s groggy voice echoed from the living room to the kitchen.

Tony’s job was done, he’d be willing to admit that he did feel bad but he less willing to admit he did agree with Steve. They did have things to do today that needed to get done.

He helped himself to a little more of the eggs and a half of an orange. Tony looked up to see Steve staring at him. He was looking at him the way a person would read a book with small print, and it was making him uncomfortable. “What?” Tony spoke up at last.

Steve’s eyes darted away from him, “Oh, No, nothing.”

It was weird, they have been able to spend time together, in the same room, and not bicker or fight. Tony, himself, knew that he was trying his best to avoid any conflicts with Steve, he just wasn’t feeling up to any arguing. Especially so soon after their friends’ deaths. Maybe it was the same for Steve?
“Fuck you, Stark” Natasha came in grumbling, holding Peter in one arm. She was holding him similarly to the way a child would hold a teddy bear or rag doll “You forgot this.” She forced Peter onto his lap and placed herself next to Steve. Her fiery red orange hair stuck up in all directions, defying gravity. She had a scowl stuck to her face along with a large red handprint on her face from the position she had been sleeping in. She served herself a plate with a little bit of everything on it.

Clint came in after her. He was wrapped in blanket like a human burrito. Clint was practically trudging as he took the last empty seat, and just sat there with a blank expression as though he were a computer that was still starting up.

Steve got up, “Coffee?” He offered. Natasha nodded tiredly resting her head in her hand, eating lazily. “Clint?”

Clint shook his head and peaked a hand out of the blanket. He made a grabbing motions with the freed hand, “No, juice.”

Steve rolled his eyes, he set the warm steaming mug in front of Natasha then moved on to pour Clint his cup of juice. He handed it to Clint who raised the glass to him in thanks and drank slowly. Clint looked as if her were about to go back to sleep at the table.

It was pretty funny.

Peter was trying to reach for one his toys that were on the table. Tony slide one of them closer for it to be in reach for Peter.

They said nothing for a while. The ate in silence, the only noise came from Peter and his incoherent babbles as he kept handing Tony random toys so he could play with him.

“So,” Steve looked to Natasha, “Did you hear back from the lawyers yet.”

“I haven’t checked.” Natasha reached down into her shirt from the neck collar and pulled out her phone, from where was most likely her bra. The boys all stared at her in both surprise and maybe a little discomfort. “What? These pants don’t have pockets, it’s the safest place where I wouldn’t lose it.” She wasn’t wrong, Clint and Natasha were still in the spare navy blue shirts and mesh shorts that SHIELD had for them to change into after their mission. They kept staring at her nonetheless. It was like a magic trick or something for them. What was she going to pull out next? “Whatever.” Natasha shrugged them off. She wiped her screen off a little and unlocked her phone to check if she got any emails.

“Uh, yeah. They’re available to see us at one and three today and same times tomorrow. They also left us a number to call to confirm.”

Steve looked at the table, “Does one work for you guys?”, no one said otherwise so he took it as a yes, “I’ll make the call” He offered. Steve got up and set his plate into the sink and turned around for Natasha to dial the number and pass the phone to him.

Steve left the room to speak to the person on the other line in peace.

“There’s also the funeral arrangements,” Natasha added in a quieter voice.

The atmosphere in the room felt heavier all of the sudden. This was the unavoidable topic that none of them wanted to deal with.

Tony felt a tightly twisted feeling grow in his chest. He couldn’t call it anger, maybe frustration? “Why do we need to have one?” Tony felt bitter, “There’re no bodies to bury.”
“Tony. They deserve a proper memorial.”

“No, no that’s not what they deserve. What they deserve is to be here, safe, with their son.” He snapped. God, he felt that itch again; the desire, no the need. He set Peter down on the floor and proceeded to rummage through the cabinets to find something to drink. Thankfully it didn’t take too long.

Tony could feel Clint and Natasha’s eyes burning holes into his back as he downed the small glass of whiskey and poured himself another. Unable to care less, he returned to his place at the table.

Natasha was obviously disappointed but decided to move past that, “We’re doing it and that’s final.”

Steve returned back to them, “They’ve offered to come over here to go over their will. So they’ll be over in a few hours. Steve looked around the kitchen, it wasn’t too messy but they probably were going to have to clean it up anyways.

Natasha, who seemed more awake and in a better mood now, got up and dropped her plate, silverware, and cup into the sink. She turned around leaning against it. She ran her fingers through her matted hair, “Well, I’m going to take a shower.”

“I’ll go after you” Steve called dibs.

“I can go third.” Tony Spoke up, “wait, why don’t you just use the shower in the master room.”

Natasha and Steve looked at each other for a second, “I’m not going into their room.” She said with finality.

“Me neither.”

Tony stood up, “Well that goes ditto for me.”

“Clint?” Nat asked. They all turned their attention to him.

His head was resting on the table as he was slowly feeding himself with the freed hand. He stopped to look up. “I’ll get to it when I get to it.”

Hey, that was the first full sentence the drama queen had said today.

“Alright then” Natasha clasped her hands together, “You two can stay here, me and Clint can take go to a funeral home and make arrangements for-” She glanced over at Tony, “-a proper burial.” She began to walk away to take the first shower, “And we should figure out the extra legal crap. That’s probably SHIELD’s thing.”

And now their day really began.

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Steve got to washing the dishes and had Clint help with the drying and putting away. Steve made periodic time checks; 11:45 on the dot. 1 hour and 15 minutes to get everything ready.

He wanted to make a good first impression.

Steve washed the last fork handing it to Clint. Steve hoped that Tony was actually touching up the living room as he had asked; he had his doubts though, he could hear that Tony had the TV on. Steve quickly put plastic wrap on the leftover fruit and shoved it into the fridge.
All this cleaning was an effective distraction.

Suddenly, he heard Peter crying, drawing all his attention to his nephew.

Tony had taken Peter with him to the living room.

Peter was sitting on the couch facing the TV crying, with Tony next to him, slightly freaking out. He was surprised to find that Tony had actually taken the time to at least fold the blankets and pile them up along with some of the pillows.

“What did you do?” Steve crossed his arms, coming over to pick him up.

Tony turned to look at him, “Nothing, I swear.” Steve didn’t seem to buy it, “I just was flipping through the channels.”

“And?”

“And what, he just flipped shit.” Tony defended himself.

“Language Stark.” Steve rubbed Peter’s back, trying to get him to stop fussing. Tony rolled his eyes at him (Steve hated it when he did that) and began skimming back down through the channels.

“You’re just going to ignore him.” Steve was getting more frustrated.

He obviously wasn’t. But for a second Peter calmed down but quickly started up again. Tony went up a few channels. Silence, Peter stopped crying, his eyes transfixed on the screen.

Did he want to watch a show? It was some colorful cartoon obviously made for people his age.

“There.” Tony sounded triumphant, “He just wanted Wonder Pets.” Steve wasn’t even going to ask why he knew the name of this show, or was it a movie? Steve had no idea. “Right Peter?” Tony came over to him slowly. Peter held out his arms for Tony to take him. They went over to watch the show together from the couch. Peter climbed onto Tony’s lap and rested his head against him. It was probably almost time for a nap.

Steve felt a sense of sheepishness for being so quick to blame, “Tony, I-”

“Steve shower’s yours.” Natasha interrupted him coming downstairs. She was in a bathrobe and had her hair wrapped in a towel.

Clint walked in, “You should go first.” Steve motioned to him, “Since you’re leaving with her.”

Clint folded up the blanket he had taken to the kitchen and added it to the pile. “But I don’t wanna go. I want to stay and see-” Natasha elbowed him and gave Clint a look. A look that reminded Steve of the same one they had given each other at the debrief yesterday. “Okay, okay fine.” He turned and walked upstairs.

“Okay then,” Natasha said, “Well now I need to find something to change into.

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Steve got out of the shower and patted himself dry with the towel. He had a good 45 minutes. Natasha and Clint had probably left by now.

He put on the pants he had been wearing before and buttoned up clean plaid flannel that he found in the laundry. It was strange to be wearing Richard’s clothing, it felt wrong in a way.

He rubbed his hair in the towel to dry it off some. When he opened the door he could hear Peter wailing downstairs and Tony shushing him.
What was it now?

He walked downstairs but wasn’t in any rush.

Steve followed the sound of his cries. Tony was walking around the lower level of the house rocking him soothingly. “I think he’s ready for a nap.” Tony said, taking notice to Steve.

Well Steve had no idea how to get him to take a nap. Usually Peter just fell asleep on his own eventually, but actually getting him to sleep was going to be a lot harder.

“Here.” Tony handed him off to Steve. That just made Peter more upset.

Steve patted his back, taking little steps back and forth, trying to get him to calm down. Tony went off to the kitchen. What was he doing? It didn’t matter, Steve returned his attention onto Peter. He checked if he needed to be changed.

No, clean.

Steve tried to run through his mind what would be of some comfort to Peter. Wait he got it, “Where’s his foo foo.” Steve called to Tony.

“The hell is a foo foo.”

Steve didn’t like the amount of cussing Tony said around Peter but this wasn’t the time. “His bunny Tony” Steve tried to project his voice over the crying, “It’s that toy with the rabbit head on the little blanket.”

“Oh that thing.” Tony answered. “I don’t know, go check the nursery.”

Alright then, “Let go take a trip, ‘kay.” Steve whispered to Peter. He went up into the nursery to find the stupid toy.

Steve tried to set Peter down into the crib to look but he wouldn’t let him. Peter clung on tight. But coming into the nursery did seem to help with the tears.

Yeah it was definitely nap time.

Steve went through the drawers and checked both in the crib and under, it was nowhere to be seen. Steve tried to give Peter other toys. He’d hold them for a second only to cast them away the next.

Accepting his defeat, Steve sat in the rocking chair with Peter on his lap. Steve rocked the chair a little. “Come on Petey.” Steve was getting to a point of desperation, “You’re fine, you’re okay.”

Music began to play; Steve looked around for its source. It was coming from the speaker that was in the nursery, which he hadn’t even noticed before.

But where was the music coming from?

Peter stopped crying and stared at him, hiccuping out a whine after each one. But at least it wasn’t crying.

Tony came in holding a blue sippy cup with handles on each side in one hand, his phone in the other, that explained the music; even if Steve didn’t know how that worked and he had some red thing under his arm.

“Here, warm milk.” he handed the cup to Steve to give to Peter. “Music can always solve the
world’s problems.” Tony knelt down to see Peter at eye level, “and this.” He pulled the red thing out from under his arm, “is for you.”

Peter’s eyes grew wide and let go of the sippy cup, dropping it on Steve’s lap. He reached out for the toy. Peter immediately took it, staring at it with a small grin and made an excited “ah” holding it up for Steve and Tony to see.

Steve now realized it was an Iron Man stuffed toy. “Really?” Steve looked down at him.

Tony stood back up, “Well they were fresh out of Captain America’s, sorry.” He knew Tony was just messing with him.

Peter laid down against Steve tucking the toy under one arm and lazily taking the sip cup back from Steve.

“Okay then,” Tony pulled down the shades and drew the curtains, darkening the room, “I’ll leave you to it, I’m gonna go change.”

Peter really did love the new toy. It was sweet for Tony to have thought of him like that; even it the toy was pretty narcissistic of him.

It only took a good ten minutes of that smooth somewhat rock music and the milk to get Peter to lull himself to sleep. Steve was also finding himself feeling fairly relaxed. Steve waited for good measure, just in case Peter wasn’t fully asleep, before moving Peter into his crib. It was the ringing of the doorbell that really made Steve move him.

Thankfully Peter didn’t fuss at all, until Steve tried to take the new toy away from him. Peter frowned and whined, but didn’t open his eyes. Better to just leave that alone. Steve checked over Peter once more.
He could hear Tony greeting the lawyer downstairs. Steve took the sip cup to be washed and turned on the baby monitor, taking the receiving end with him. Steve slowly and noiselessly closed the door and joined the other men.

The lawyer looked like basically every other stereotypical lawyer. He had a short taunt build and wore a dark navy, maybe black, suit. He had a tan leather briefcase in hand. He had this look on his face as though he was in a bad mood, but Steve would later find out that that was just the way he looked. A constant state of looking pissed off; even if he wasn’t.

“Steve Rogers,” Steve said shaking the man’s hand

The man shook his hand back, “James Allen.”

They all walked to the dining room. The lawyer, Allen, sat down and opened his case on the table. Steve and Tony were across from him.

“Would you like anything?” Steve asked remembering his manners, “Tea, water?”

The lawyer shook his head, “No, no thank you.” He pulled out a black folder. “Now then, let’s get down to business.”

He opened the folder and pulled out a few sheets of paper. “I’m going to begin by saying, I’m sorry your losses and we will try our best to make this transition as smooth as possible. Now we’ll begin with the house.”

He gestured with every word dramatically. He bent over and squinted to read the documents, “Now before we get to the reading of the will we’re going to get just a few other things out of the way. As I’m sure you know, this house is a rental month to month; meaning that it goes back to the landlord within the next 30 days. Now, though we haven’t spoken—”

“Uh, I’m sorry.” Steve interrupted him. Allen’s eyes went up from the paper to look at Steve but he didn’t physically move otherwise. “But the real topic that I um, I mean, I’m sure we--” Tony nodded in agreement, even though Steve wasn’t 100% sure that he knew what he was getting to, “Is in regards to their son, Peter.”

“Yeah, what’s going to happen to the kid?” Tony added on.

The lawyer shuffled through the other papers, “Ah yes, erm.” He picked on of them up and then laid it back down flat on the table. He sat up a little straighter in his chair. “I’m sorry, but did Mary and Richard ever go over the guardianship arrangement they had in case some like this were ever to happen?”

Steve and Tony looked at each other for a moment, “No” They both said in unison.

“Well,” He cleared his throat, “When writing up the will, we talked about who would be taking care of Peter if they were ever to die and they,” He closed both his hands together in discomfort, “They named you...both...of you.”

Steve grew cold all of a sudden. Was he hearing him right?

“Excuse me.” Steve and Tony both leaned in to hear him better, “What?”

“Can you repeat that?” They were now talking on top of each other.

Steve couldn’t believe this, “I think this is a misunderstanding.” Steve looked at Tony and he was
looking back at him. “We,” He pointed at himself then back to Tony, gesturing back and forth, “We.”

Tony finished for him. “No. No, no, no. We’re not a couple.” Good, he was equally freaked out, “They tried to set us up once.”

They must have been speaking so fast and incoherently, “And it was terrible.”

“Terrible. I mean we didn’t even get 5 blocks out.” Steve nodded in agreement.

Allen held both hands up to get their attention, “Hey, hey,” they both quieted down enough to let him talk, “I get that this can be a bit of a surprise to you both,” that was an understatement, “but there are other options. You can say no. This a lifelong commitment. This is a child we’re talking about.”

The room was beginning to feel tight and small. Steve needed some air. “If you’d excuse me.” Steve got up and walked out of the room.

A kid? What the hell.

This could not be happening.

Tony got a mug and filled it with water and put it in the microwave for a minute and a half. He didn’t really know how to make a cup of tea, now that he thought about it.

He shakily poured himself a glass of wine. He’d had enough whiskey in the past 24 hours. Tony downed it and poured himself another. He hated his drinking habits sometimes, and he was positive that his liver did too. But this wasn’t the time to rethink life decisions.

The microwave went off and Tony dunked a few tea bags in the warmed water until it began to have a brown tinge to it. Tony stirred in a large spoon of sugar.

He picked up the mug and his wine and returned to the dining room; Steve came back just seconds after.

“Okay options,” Tony said, handing the mug off to Allen.

“Well, there are a couple.” He took a sip from the mug. He cringed a little and set it aside. “First, there’s family. There’re distant cousins, second aunts, and uncles…but none of them are really immediate family.” Mary was an only child and Richard had a brother, but he died a while back, so this was no surprise to them.

Tony had been repeating every option back like an echo, “Family, that’s good. Right”

Steve folded his arms, Peter probably didn’t know any of them very well.

“You guys can also name a more suitable-”

“Okay,” Steve interrupted him again, “What if, what if just one of us wanted to take him in.”

“Or, or both,” Tony added quickly.

“Well, that would be relatively easy. We just set up a court date, sign a few papers, a case worker will be assigned, but that’s about it.” Why was it so easy? This was a kid they were talking about, “But for the sake of Peter and the process, we’d recommend that Peter stays in an environment where both guardians are present.”
Tony was quick to answer, as though he had been thinking about this already. “They’ll move into my place.”

Steve felt his heart stop for a split second, was he hearing him right? Steve could do nothing but stare, “What? Why would I move into your apartment when I own an entire building.”

“And what if I don’t want to?” Steve asked him.

“But you do, don’t you.” He said using that smug tone that always managed to irritate Steve.

He wasn’t wrong, it would be what’s best for Peter.

That didn’t mean he wanted Stark’s charity or living space, but instead of being stubborn about it. He wasn’t going to give him the satisfaction of being right. so he didn’t respond.

“All right then,” The lawyer spoke up, “Now that that’s out of the way, let’s go over the rest.”

They sat and listened to him drone on over who gets what, most of it was left to Peter anyways, and the rest of the legalities and details. It took a good hour maybe two for them to finally get through it all, but they did it.

On his way out he handed Tony a copy of the will and shook their hand and left.

Steve closed the door behind him.

There was a quiet between them, they took in everything. Did they just become parents...together?

“This isn’t the way I planned to start a family, though” Tony said, “Honestly I never actually planned to start one at all.”

“I wanted to, just not like this.” Steve said providing some input.

“Goddamnit.” Tony seemed to finally be grasping what was happening, “Why would they pick us? I mean you make sense, you’re Mr. Perfect straight A teacher’s pet. But ME! I can’t even take care of myself.” Tony was close to hyperventilating, “A kid. A kid. Oh my god.” He began pacing up and down the halls, “No ‘hey Tony just so you know, if we die, you’re getting your kid.”

Steve was pretty upset too; they hadn’t mentioned it, but he didn’t think he could respond the way Tony was, but it was still pretty amusing to watch. “Tony, stop.” Steve said realizing how loud he was getting.

But he wasn’t listening at all, “Thanks for the heads up asshats.”

“Tony, Tony shhh.” Steve followed him trying to get him to quiet down, “You’re going to-” They both began to hear Peter’s through the monitor, “Wake him up.” Tony froze and looked at Steve apologetically.

How were they going to make this work?

Natasha dropped the keys into the candy dish on the table near the entrance, “Hey I’m going up for a nap.” She told Clint walking upstairs to the guestroom.

They just got back from their errands. It was pretty tiring overall, emotionally and physically. “I’m
probably going to join you.” Clint said smoothing back his hair. He was pretty tired, being back in the house just made him more tired.

He could hear Peter crying in the kitchen and Steve and Tony bickering. What else was new?

"Just hurry up." Steve said urgently.

"I'm trying."

"Here just let me do it."

Clint came into the kitchen.

"Hey Clint." Steve said over the commotion, handing a baby food jar off to Tony.

Tony began trying to feed him, but Peter wouldn't eat. He just tossed his head side to side whining to avoid the little spoon. "Come on, we both know you're hungry."

But Peter still refused the spoon.

Clint didn't do anything but sit back and watch.

"You're doing it wrong, here let me see." Steve took the spoon and jar from him. Peter did the same thing for Steve.

"You're doing the same thing I did," Tony said standing behind him."You've got to do the airplane noises."

"I am not doing airplane noises."

Peter was already cranky and having the two of them bickering wasn't helping at all. He cried harder hitting the tray of the highchair in what was the beginnings of a tantrum. He caused the jar to fall from Steve's hand and shatter on the ground.

"Nice going. Some parent you're turning out to be." Tony blamed Steve.

"Would you grow up, you know that wasn't my fault."

They must have found out about who was getting Peter now that they were gone. Mary, Clint, Natasha and Richard came together to talk it over once around the same time Peter was born to write up the will. Him and Natasha were witnesses. They wanted to know how they would feel about Steve and Tony becoming his parents over them. And even though neither Clint or Natasha knew why they would choose them of all two people. They didn't object because, in all honesty, they preferred seeing themselves more as Aunt and Uncle.

They were hitting every last of Clint's nerves and he couldn't stand it anymore. "Oh my god, stop it, both of you." Clint practically stomped over to the cabinet where most of Peter's food things were kept and pulled out one of the fruit sauce pouches. He twisted off the top and came up to Peter.

Peter refused it until Clint forced him to try some of it from the little straw hole on top. As soon as he realized what it was Peter stopped crying and took it to feed himself, sucking happily through the small opening at the top.

"You two need to figure out your shit, if not for us then for him." Clint was more disappointed than angry, "This isn't going to be some game of house, it's a life long commitment and if either of you can't step up you should do something about that now and not before it's too late."
They both watched Clint storm off and heard them stomp up the stairs.

Steve and Tony looked at each other, he was right.

How were they going to make this work?
**The Tolling of The Bells**

**Chapter Summary**

Mondays are always dreary affairs; funerals are too, definitely funerals...

**Chapter Notes**

This is kind of a short chapter, I know, but it's leading up to a bigger one (fingers crossed).

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Natasha hiked up the hill past the tombstones; god did she regret wearing heels.

It wasn’t as grim as a day as it should have been.

If anything it was a beautiful day.

The sun was out with just the right amount of cloud coverage so that it wasn’t blinding. The temperature was just the right amount of warmth and a cool breeze, the kind that makes people take in deep breathes just to feel the cool air in their lungs.

Why did it have to be such a nice day?

She was holding Peter. He was unaware of what was happening. He was happy to be outside, it must have been like a trip to a park for him. Except there was no playground or kids and a lot of dead people.

He was too young to understand that it was his parents funeral.

Surprisingly, he had taken well to losing his parents. He was only a year old but that didn’t mean he didn’t notice that they weren’t there anymore.

There were times in the past couple days where he had thrown unstoppable tantrums and cried, which the four of them all knew could have only been handled by his mom or dad. But he was familiar with Steve, Nat, Clint, and Tony, the transition went okay.

Steve and Clint were a few paces ahead of her and Tony was right behind. They were leading the rest of the black dressed guests to their friends’ burial.

They were going to have a simple service that still kind of deviated from a traditional one.

That was fitting for both Mary and Richard.

A burial for two coffins with heartfelt words that were supposed to be said by anyone who wanted to speak; and afterwards they were all going to meet at the house for somewhat of a wake but not really. They should have had one a day or so before the burial. There were no bodies to be viewed,
so what was the point in having something like that in a funeral home?

When they knew had reached the spot they saw that the white chairs set up.

All were facing the two lily, tulip, and forget-me-not flower-covered coffins with a podium set up behind them. There was also a large picture of Richard and Mary next to it. The people who had carried the coffins ahead of everyone were standing off to the sides.

This was where Mary and Richard Parker were going to be buried. Their future graves.

Natasha sat down in between Steve and Clint with Peter on her lap.

The rest of the guests piled in, taking their seats as well. It wasn’t too hard to find people to invite on such short notice, they were good people. They invited the extended family, some of the other agents and heroes that they worked alongside, and even the neighbors.

When it seemed like most the seats were filled, Steve got up and stood at the podium to begin the service. The Parkers weren’t religious so they weren’t going to have a priest or anything like that; having family and friends speak instead just felt more right.

He cleared his throat and began. “I want to thank you all for joining us here to remember these great people that we have lost.” Steve wasn’t using his real voice, this was his Captain America voice. The one he used when he needed to draw strength. “They were good people. Mary and Richard were some of the very first friends I had when I first came here.”

They were all going to have to pick their words carefully, not exactly everyone there knew what their real careers were.

“They didn’t let anything get in the way of doing what was right; down to the very end. They leave behind a wonderful son and will be missed very dearly. Thank you.” Steve paused as though he was going to say more but couldn’t find the words. “Now if anyone else wishes to say anything, please feel free to come up.”

Tony got up walked over to the podium, Tony patted him on the shoulder in support as he went back to take his seat. She knew how much this must have bothered Tony, at first he was against having a funeral all together; he warmed up to it, or at least accepted it in the end.

Tony took a sheet of paper from his blazer and unfolded it. He came prepared, surprisingly.

“Well,” he began, “Well, let’s be honest, we all know why we’re here. We’re here to remember these damn awesome people.” Tony, even at a funeral, was always trying to lighten the mood. “They were fun loving and carefree, but also caring. As in the parent figures of our friends.” He was going to make this short and sweet. Tony went on to tell a few good stories here and there, he even managed to crack a few smiles.

Natasha listened to his speech closely. Peter, on the other hand, being the 1 year old with a 1 year old’s attention span, was not. He looked around him, he could see his aunt and uncles in the row. And the two boxes with the pretty colored flowers lined up parallel in front of him a few yards ahead. But his eyes then focused in on the large picture of his mom and dad.

Peter reached out to it babbling to get Natasha’s attention. Natasha wasn’t listening. Peter started squirming to get out of her grip. Having got her focus, she whispered to him, “No Pete not now.” He didn’t care and continued to try to get down, whining at not being able to do what he wanted, “Shhhhh.” She said to him soothingly, bouncing up and down to get him to stop.
Peter didn’t stop. He continued trying to get out of her grip pointing at the large photo of his parents.

“Here let me,” Clint whispered taking Peter from her. That didn’t make any difference. Peter was on the verge of crying, which Clint and Natasha both knew. Clint held him doing everything to keep him entertained as Natasha rummaged through the baby bag for anything to distract him. But nothing worked; not toys, food, juice, nothing.

He stopped struggling for a moment to stared at both of them before frowning and let out a loud wail.

Goddamn it.

Steve turned to try to offer some help.

“And I will take that as my cue.” Tony said finishing up his sentiment, “Mary, Richard we love you guys and will never forget you both.” He crammed the paper into his pocket and stepped down to let whoever was next to go.

Tony knelt down in front of Natasha. “What is it?” he asked Peter softly.

Peter continued crying pointing over at the picture. Tony caught onto something.

Something apparently the others hadn’t. He pulled out his phone and quickly tapping away at it, he pulled up the exact picture onto his phone.

“You want this?” He asked him, showing the screen to Peter. He stopped crying, sniffing he reached out for the phone which Tony let him have. Peter looked at it intently. “There see, nothing to crying over.” He realized how ironic that was seeing that he was at a funeral. He patted Peter’s head and went back to his place next to Clint.

Natasha had to hand it to him, Tony had a way with kids.

A good dozen other people went up to speak. Mostly SHIELD agents, a few neighbors and family members, and even a few others that they had worked side by side with, as affiliates with SHIELD; such as Reed Richards, Carol Danvers, Hank Pym, Luke Cage, and Danny Rand.

When that was over the coffins were lowered into the ground and the guests each threw a handful of dirt into the pits and began to make their way back to the cars.

Obviously there were tears, but still none from those closest to both Mary and Richard.

Clint sat in between a few women he only vaguely knew. All of them were discussing Mary and Richard and Peter, their lives and all these miscellaneous stories involving them. Clint found it best to just tune it all out.

He hated these social things. Plus it was extremely depressing. He distracted himself by filling his head with many other thoughts.

Tony was standing in the doorway of the kitchen talking to Sarah, she was both a neighbor and an agent.

“So I hear you’re going to be taking Peter?” She said.

As a parent herself it made sense that that was what she cared about. Tony nodded, “Yeah me and Rogers actually.”
She looked over at Steve who was in the dining room consoling another weepy guest. “Really?” She sounded surprised, “I didn’t know you and him were-”

Tony choked on his strawberry he had made the mistake of taking a bite out of, “No. No no, we were both named as guardians, that’s all it will ever be.”

Sarah looked a little embarrassed, “Oh, sorry, I just-”

“No don’t worry about it. I guess we’re going to be getting that a lot now.” Tony didn’t like the thought of that happening often.

That damn captain better not mess with his love life in any way.

Natasha was pacing around downstairs. She had Peter with her; really she’d had him for the better part of that day. She was also able to use him as an excuse to not have to talk to anyone she didn’t want to, so it worked out.

He was currently resting his head on her shoulder. She didn’t know if he was asleep yet or not. He hadn’t really moved in a while and it was almost time for his nap. But she wasn’t going to move him in case.

Steve walked out of the dining room, “Steve.” She whispered coming up to him. “Is he asleep?”

Steve bent over and pushed the hair away from Peter’s face, “Um, yeah. Did you want me to take him up?”

“No, I got it.” She made her way weaving and dodging the guests to the stairs. It was quiet and empty up there. It was a pretty good get away from the people downstairs.

It was so sad and dark down there. All the black which everyone wore in mourning made the house even darker.

She opened the door to the nursery and went in. She bent over and carefully placed him into the crib. Peter open his eyes for a second. Natasha stroked his hair carefully, the way his mom did for him, until he closed his eyes and went back to sleep. Natasha waited a little bit, not ready to rejoin the procession just yet, and in case he woke back up.

She thought about him back at the graveyard. He had cried for his parents' picture, he really did miss them. In a few years, he wasn’t even going to remember them.

No, that wouldn’t happen. She knew the four of them will make sure of that, even if the memories weren’t his own he’ll know who they were.

Natasha sat in the rocking chair facing the crib thinking about them and everything she’d have to share.

Why did it have to hurt so much?

Steve was talking to another one of the neighboring couples. Lillian and (ironically) Steve.

“But a car crash.” Lillian said shaking her head, pressing a hand to her chest, “It’s just so wrong.”

Steve was trying to be polite but this was the umpteenth time he’d heard this so many times in so many variations. He knew it was bad, he knew it was unfortunate, he knew it was a tragedy; so why did he have to keep hearing it?
Steve, the husband not him, put his arm around his wife. “It truly is.” He agreed.

“And if you ever need anything,” She added, “know that we’re here for you, we’re just down the street it’s really no trouble. We love Peter, babysitting is no issue if you or your boyfriend wanted to get out.”

Steve felt heat rise to his face out of embarrassment at hearing her say that. Did she mean Tony? Of course she meant Tony. How did she even find out that they were the legal guardians? Steve wasn’t going to interrupt her or correct her instead he stared, ready for this to over. She touched his arm, “I remember when my aunt died-” Steve nodded and smiled as though he was listening; which he was, but not fully.

He saw Natasha come down the stairs. She had been up there for a while. She wiped away at her face even though there was nothing there, continuing on to the kitchen.

He wondered what had kept her, but his attention was drawn back to the guest, Lillian, who had just burst into tears.

Tony was in the kitchen opening another of the pastries that someone had brought for this get-together. He didn’t want to call it a party, that would have implied that people were enjoying themselves.

Natasha walked in, she cleared her throat and asked, “Need any help?”

“Uh yeah,” Tony said turning around to face her. His eyes met hers. They were pink and puffy, there was a hoarse wavering in her voice. He knew she must have been crying.

It was about time. One of them were going to have to crack eventually. He just didn’t think it’d be her. He’d come close a few times in the past few days (especially the signing of their final death certificate, the whole thing was all a lie), he wanted to but the tears wouldn’t come. Funerals really brought out the human in all of them.

But he also knew that the last thing Natasha would want would be to catch her in this moment of weakness.

Tony took a napkin from the pile next him and handed one to her. “Goddamn allergies, it’s like the flowers are trying to kill us or something.” Natasha looked at him wordlessly, not taking her eyes off him even as she accepted the napkin.

She was reading the situation. She wasn’t trying hard enough to hide what she had done upstairs. Even he wasn’t that oblivious. But she caught on nonetheless.

Natasha sniffed and used the tissue to wipe her eyes and nose, “Yeah,” She said letting out a forced broken laugh, going along with it, “Such a bitch.”
Moving day

Chapter Summary

They leave the Parker's home and officially move into Stark Towers. This is their first night (day) there.

Chapter Notes

Sorry it's taken me a month to update this. I took the Captain America Civil War challenge so that took about 2 weeks out of my life. But thankfully I had spring break right after it so there's that. Anyways thanks for being so patient with me and enjoy!

It was a one hour and a half drive from the Parker’s home to Stark Towers. Usually, it would have been shorter but the traffic was a bitch. Clint and Natasha went in the moving truck that carried what was left of Richard and Mary’s things. All their stuff was left to the four of them and their valuables such as jewelry and money/life insurance claim went to Peter. Thank god they didn’t over complicate it.

They kept most of the family photos, Peter’s clothes, his crib (Tony was going to buy a new one so they wouldn’t need it, but Steve wanted to keep it), and plus some random thing here and there. The rest either went to the Salvation Army or to Clint.

Clint owned an apartment complex in Bed-Stuy see Hawkeye vol 4 issue 1 that he bought from some thugs a while back. Since then he’d been the caretaker of both the building and the people. He mentioned something about turning one of the empty apartments into a rec room for the kids there with all the technology and books he’d gotten along with whatever else he’d need to buy. It didn’t matter to Clint if it meant keeping those kids off the streets.

Steve and Tony were riding in the car the which had been loaned to them by SHIELD. Neither Tony or Steve fully wanted to go with each other. But, as Natasha reminded them, they were going to have to spend a lot more time together now since they were going to have to live under the same roof, raising Peter.

Secretly, she was the only one with a truckers license and just wanted Clint to ride with her.

Now here they were, Tony was in the front driving and Steve sat in the back with Peter.

Peter was still small enough to use a rear-facing car seat. Steve played with Peter, handing toys to him and turning them on to show Peter how they worked. Steve was only half paying attention to Peter; he was really skimming through one of the many baby care books he had found as they were packing up everything in the house.

It was a fairly peaceful drive. No tears or arguments.

Steve looked up from the book, “It says familiarity is one of the best things for a baby to have when
moving or traveling.” Steve recited directly from the book.

Tony’s eyes flickered to the rear view mirror for a second. “Well, I’ve already got the rooms set up and everything. Well except for the bed, I’ve got everything else covered.” Steve had insisted on keeping the crib that Peter had since he was born, so the nursery was only missing that.

“When did you do this?” Steve asked curiously.

“I had a week and the money.” Tony changed the station to a different song. He said it as though it was nothing. “Anyways what’s the plan.”

Steve knew he was referring to when they finally got out of this stupid traffic and got the city. “Well, we’re going to unload everything and if I have the time I’d like to get some things from my place.”

It felt strange to be moving into his house-- no not house-- building. Not in a million years would Steve have ever seen himself about to move in with Tony Stark. Hs didn’t even know if he wanted to, it just seemed like the easiest fix for the problem at a hand. Did Tony even really want this? Being a burden was the last thing Steve wanted.

“Thank you,” Steve said finally.

It took Tony a second to realize that Steve had been talking to him, “What for, the ride? It’s not like you have a license. Can you even drive?” Tony was starting to get off topic.

Peter chewed at Steve’s fingers. “I don’t know, everything I guess.” Steve was starting to feel uncomfortable, “The move, Peter, moving in-”

Was he actually trying to be genuinely nice? “It all nothing. I don’t care, really.”

“Still, thank you.” He went back to his book.

A silence fell over them. It wasn’t awkward quiet, but an empty one. It was one the seemed as if there was more to be said.

“Hey,” Tony said. Steve looked up expecting him to say something else in addition. “Do you smell that?” Not what he was expecting…

But Tony wasn’t wrong, something did smell off. Steve was beginning to notice the unpleasant smell. He thought it was coming from outside. It didn’t reek, it smelled like- and then it clicked. Steve sniffed around first hoping it wasn’t what he thought. Then lastly he checked Peter.

Yup, it was Peter, damn it.

“He needs a change.” Steve sighed closing his book setting a marker in place.

“Oh come on,” Tony complained. “Seriously Pete, you couldn’t hold it in.”

Peter didn’t notice or really care. If anything, Steve could say he was happy. “Well, what do I do?” Steve said.

“Change him or something.” Tony turned around to face the back seat.

“Keep your eyes on the road.” Steve snapped. Tony rolled his eyes, it’s not like they were moving they were stuck in traffic after all. Steve undid the buckles on the car seat hesitantly. “Is this even legal.” Steve took his own seatbelt off to reach over the back seat and get the baby bag out of the trunk.
Tony inched the car further a bit, “That doesn’t matter. Do it.”

Steve didn’t like being told what to do, least of all by him, but he took Peter out of the car seat anyways. Peter had stuck in that for a long enough time to be happy for being taken out of it. He tried to get down to move around the car. Steve had a strong enough grip on him.

“Hold on.” Steve said lying him down on the seat.

“Wait, wait put something down.” Tony spoke up, “Don’t mess the car up.”

Steve rummaged through the bag and found a medium sized duck patterned washcloth, that would have to do. He slipped it under Peter.

He then took off each of Peter’s little sneakers and took off his pants. Steve undid the snaps of the onesie, exposing the diaper. Peter began to fuss a little, but it wasn’t anything that Steve couldn’t handle. “Shhh.” Steve said taking the stuffed toy at his side and handing it to Peter.

Steve took a clean diaper, wipes and the powder from the bag to get started. He undid the two tabs on each side and opened the diaper.

The smell, which was already pretty bad, intensified. Steve grimaced but carried on; the quicker he could get through this, the quicker it would be over.

Tony wasn’t taking it as well. “Oh dear god,” Tony cried out opening all the windows to let the fresh air in, “Sweet Jesus Peter, why?”

“Maybe we should pull over.” Steve said. It didn’t feel very safe to be changing Peter in a moving car.

“Yeah let’s just somehow gain the ability to fly over all these cars to park safely on the side of the road.” They were in the middle of a five a lane highway, there was no pulling over. Tony rested his head against the steering wheel, “I think I’m going to actually die. Death by shit.”

Steve would have scolded him for the cursing around Peter but he wasn’t very pleased by the smells himself. “Well there’s going to be a lot more where that came from.” Peter gave Steve a big smile and reached for his hair. “You’re enjoying this aren’t you.” Peter’s smile grew bigger, “Aren’t you.”

He repeated in a slight baby voice. Peter laughed and grabbed hold of a lock of Steve’s hair and pulled hard, Steve quickly pried his fingers away before he hurt him anymore.

Steve got through the rest of the change as quickly as possible. He tied the dirty wipes and diaper in a bag and did the snaps on the onesie before putting Peter’s pants back on. He didn’t bother with the shoes.

Steve tried to put Peter back in the seat and buckle him in.

Peter wasn’t ready to go back. He bent back and squirmed around, keeping Steve from slipping his arms in through the loops. Steve didn’t want to be forceful and accidentally hurt him, but he tried his best.

Steve put his own hands through the straps first and pulled both Peter’s arms through. Steve quickly did the buckle that rested on Peter’s chest before he could get out. Peter began to cry to get out, but they both knew this wasn’t real crying. It was just him whining.

“Now Peter,” Steve said as he struggled to get the other part of the buckle between Peter’s legs done. “It’s for your own good.” He was beginning to sound like his mother. Steve put his own seat belt
back on.

Peter didn’t listen. He arched his back and screamed throwing a tantrum as though that would help get him out.

“Come on buddy,” Tony said. “You’re fine. We’re almost there.” Tony skimmed through his phone that was mounted on the dash of the car. Tony put on the same playlist he had been using for Peter when it was naptime or bedtime for the past week in an attempt to calm him down. The kid did like music.

Peter stopped for a moment.

Steve and Tony took a relieved breath.

It didn’t last very long. Peter started up once again.

They both sighed in frustration.

Peter did end up quieting down and taking a nap eventually, but not after a good 20 minutes of tears.

Clint and Natasha had a completely different trip back into the city. They spent their time listening to old music from their youth, eating junk food, and basically having fun.

It must have been the first time since Mary and Richard’s deaths.

They pulled up to Stark tower. Tony drove to the back to park in the garage under ground. Natasha followed behind him. She wasn’t able to go in completely because of the truck so she ended up parking and she and Clint walked the rest of it.

Steve looked around side to side. When they first got in most of the parking spots were empty but as Tony kept going more cars began to come into view. Expensive looking ones and average looking cars alike lined side by side in each space. “Are all these yours?” Steve asked.

Tony pulled into an empty space and Parked. “Yeah, some I actually use and some I just use for parts. And some belong to the people who’re using the second and third floors as office space.”

Steve wasn’t sure if he was joking or not; either way was a possibility. But that was a matter for another time.

“Well,” Tony shut off the car and got out, “Home sweet home.”

‘Home sweet home’ Steve repeated in his head.

Tony opened the back door to take the sleeping Peter in his car seat out. Steve got out through the other door.

“What are we going to do with everything else?” Clint called to them through the garage, his voice echoing.

Tony waited for Nat and Clint to get closer to answer. “I’m having some movers coming in at three for the bins and bigger stuff.”

“We could get started with some of it now.” Natasha said stretching from the trip.

“Well, first we should at least go up and put him down.” Tony lifted the car seat up a little for effect.
His phone went off and he checked it quickly. “And Pepper is upstairs waiting.” He handed Peter off to Clint and began leading the way to the elevator.

It was an average looking silver doored elevator with an average button the glowed orange when pressed. Not as high-tech as Steve expected to see that it was coming from the Tony Stark.

The elevator opened with a ding and Tony let them each in first before himself. He pressed a button that was almost at the top of the stack of buttons. It was blank and glowed blue when pressed. The elevator jolted and they all felt it rising upwards.

Clint shifted Peter from one hand to the other. He was still sleeping soundly. Clint guessed that probably had an hour or two before he woke up. “So how was it for you guys,” Clint said trying to strike up a conversation.

Tony and Steve looked at each other for a moment in understanding.

“That bad?” Natasha said leaning up against the railing.

Tony went off explaining everything that had happened to them.

Steve was only half listening. He was too distracted by the amount of floors this place had; it was labeled up to 83, the rest were either blank or had some symbol that Steve didn’t recognize. He counted them, 90, 91, 92, 93…

93 floors

Steve couldn’t even imagine what he did with that much space.

The elevator came to a halt with a ding. They were on the floor.

Tony walked out first and the rest of them followed.

“Hello, Jarvis.” Tony was happy to be home after what was a little over a full week. He dropped his keys on the counter that was connected to the kitchen on one side.

“Hello sir, Clint, Natasha, Peter, and Steven Rogers.” Jarvis answered in his disembodied nearly mechanical voice.

“Hey Jarvis.” Clint said back. He walked past the kitchen and down the few steps of the living room pit to set the car seat down on the ground. He sat down and turned on the tv, making himself right at home.

“Sorry, Jarvis recognizes you as a guest, I’ll get to that later.” Tony explained. “Jarvis where’s Pepper?”

“Ms. Potts is on the 90th floor, sir.”

Steve knew having this voice robot helper thing was going to also take some getting used to.

Natasha wandered into the kitchen, “Got anything to eat?” She asked opening the fridge and making herself equally as home. She didn’t find anything in the fridge and moved on to the pantry where she found and settled on a granola bar.

Steve just stood a bit past the entrance taking everything. Of course, he’d been there handful of times before, but all those times were at night when it was full of guests. This time was very different. He wasn’t even sure if the events happened on this floor.
The early afternoon sun shone through the windows which took up practically the entire curved wall, shedding light on the entire area.

It was all surprisingly...clean. Steve didn’t know why but he had expected it to be a lot dirtier. The place was very bright, upscale, and modern at first glance. He took a few more steps forward.

The kitchen was to his left, there was a hallway leading to closed doors on the right, and straight ahead was the bar and living room. The ceiling was high and made the room feel very open.

Tony seemed to notice that Steve was taking everything in, “I guess it’s time for a tour.” Tony walked near to the center of the room. “This is the main living area.” Tony said. Steve came closer. “Well at least the one I like the most.”

There were more?

Tony explained further on. “This it the second to top floor. And we mainly use the next 8 below us.”

Steve was speechless. This was more of a time to listen than speak.

“Don’t worry Steve.” Natasha said walking past him and descending to the couches to sit with Clint. “It’s not as much as he’s exaggerating it.” She covered Peter’s car seat with one of the blankets that were folded next to the couches, creating a sort of tent over him to keep the glare of the sun out.

“Don’t listen to her.” Tony began to walk down the hall and stopped at the second door on the right. “This is my room.”

He opened it to show Steve a very messy bedroom that gave off an actual scent. He couldn’t tell if it was good or bad. There’s the mess Steve had been expecting. As long as the mess stayed in Tony’s room he didn’t care.

Tony moved on to the next door on his left. “And here is Peter’s room.” He opened the door.

He really got an entire nursery ready in a week. And he did a pretty good job. The decor was simple but fitting for a nursery with no actual theme. There was a changing table and rocking chair set against the blue, white, and brown striped walls and corner with a colorful rug with all sorts of toys piled up against a bookshelf which was also filled with books.

“When did you get the chance to do this?” Everything that was happening to them was starting to feel even more real, parenthood and the move especially. But Steve swallowed these thoughts. “How?”

“Billionaire Rogers. I paid, Pepps supervised.” Tony opened the closet. There was a dresser inside which also probably contained clothes. The only thing missing was the crib which was in the truck downstairs. “There’s other things, walkers, playpens and I think a highchair in a hall closet somewhere too. So we’ll get to that eventually.” He led Steve out of that room and to the very next one.

“This one is for you if you want it.” Tony opened it to show him the bed with all the necessary furnishings, “And there’s a bathroom through that door.” Tony closed the door before Steve could even go inside.

He didn’t seem as interested in that as much as he was to show Steve what he had next to show him.

“Where are you taking me now?” Steve kept following him to the end of the hall which wasn’t actually the end of the hall but an intersection of sorts where one could either go left or right but not
straight ahead.

Tony took the left which led to another elevator door. Steve was sure he was going to get lost in this place a few times. He stepped in and Steve followed.

“Just wait.” Tony said. He seemed so excited about showing off what he had next in store that he forgot that they were supposed to have a rivalry going on. Steve followed along anyways.

They only went down one floor.

Tony stepped out and yet again, Steve was right behind. Everything was dark, the only light was what seeped through the cracks of the black-out curtains hung up. “Jarvis, lights on.” Tony said.

The room was instantly lit up.

They were in a simple living room. It wasn’t flashy or anything that would have been in Stark’s style. It made Steve feel as if he was at home. Steve walked passed Tony to look around.

The furniture, the colors, the patterns, the detail…

It was as if Steve had been sent back in time to his era, but at the same time was in the 21st century. How did Tony even do it?

“This,” Tony looked around, “Is your suite. There’s everything here as if it were an apartment plus an extra nursery for Peter. The entire floor is yours.”

“Tony.” Steve couldn’t believe what Tony did for him. He’d never be able to top it. “Why? I can’t accept this. It’s too much.”

“Well it’s already done.” Tony walked into the kitchen area and opened a few of the drawers until he found what he was looking for. “So there’s no going back now. You don’t have to stay here. That’s why there’s the room upstairs for you too.” He handed Steve a card. “This will give you access to pretty much everywhere in the tower except a few of my labs.”

That was understandable.

“Now we move on.” Tony said going to the main elevator that they had come up in and pressed the button to go inside. “You can go through all this by yourself later.”

“Thank you Tony.” Steve said once inside, “Really. I know we’ve had our differences. And with the guardianship and all this mess, I just want to-”

“Hey, this better not change anything.” Tony wanted to avoid the awkwardness that was beginning to unfold. Tony reached into his pocket and pulled out a sticker. “Gotta keep the baby mama happy, right?”

Okay, Steve was in a good mood so he was letting that one go.

Tony stuck the sticker on the button of the floor they were just on. It was a Captain America shield sticker, even though he knew how much having all that merchandise of Steve exist everywhere bothered him sometimes.

He’d let that one go too, just because of all that Tony was doing to make this work.

They were now on the 90th floor.
It was one of Tony’s labs. The entrance was a wall of glass with a glass door. Steve went in first this time.

It was a very impressive place. There were all sorts of parts and inventions on tables surrounded by all sorts of equipment. The rooms were all made of glass so Steve could see through them. He didn’t want to touch and ruin something, but Steve was still kind of wanted to.

“Pepper?” Tony called. “You in here.”

Steve saw her wave to them with a smile from one of the rooms. She came out to meet them.

“Tony.” Pepper said giving him a quick hug. “Steve.” She shook his hand.

They’d met a few times. She even came by the day after the funeral, Pepper hadn’t been able to come the day of because of work. He liked her so far.

“How’s everything been?” Tony asked. She wouldn’t tell him anything the day she came to see him the week before. Tony didn’t need to hear about the state of the company at that time.

“Good. Everything’s good.” Pepper said, “Happy to have you back, I’m not going to lie. Some people just respond better to Tony Stark at the head of Stark Industries then me.”

“Oh come on Pep. You know that you’re better at this whole thing than me.” Tony said putting an arm around her.

“Yeah I know, everyone else not so much.” Pepper sighed. “Anyways. Where’s everyone else?”

“Upstairs.” Tony said, “I’m playing tour guide here.”

Pepper put a comforting hand on Steve’s arm, “I’m so sorry.” She said with a joking smile, “He loves showing off.”

“Yeah I know.” Steve agreed, returning the smile.

Pepper checked the time on her phone, “Well, I think I’m going to go up and say hi before I have to go.” She walked to the elevator. “Have fun with the tour boys.”

Tony gave him a quick tour of the labs and training facilities he had for him, Clint, and Natasha.

Tony took a page out of SHIELD’s book and recreated a space similar to the one Steve used for his own training and conditioning. Again it was another thing that Tony went to lengths of doing for Steve; which Steve had no idea how to repay him for.

They went through it all and ended up back in the main living area. They stepped off the elevator to rejoin the group.

Natasha, Pepper, and Clint were all lounging on the couches as if they hadn’t gotten up since sitting down. Honestly, they probably didn’t.

Peter was still strapped in his seat but the blanket was off and he was awake. Peter had a confused frown on his face, he must have just woken up.

When he saw Steve and Tony walking towards them. Peter raised one arm at the two off them and made whining babbling noises as if asking to be taken out.

“I got you.” Tony said when he reached the bottom of the steps, stooping down to undo all the straps
and buckles to get Peter. When he had him in his arms Tony sat down next to Natasha and set his feet up on the coffee table with Peter on his lap.

“So what do you think?” Clint asked.

Steve was still standing at the bottom of the steps with his arms folded. “It’s a really nice place.” His eyes scanned the room again to take everything in. They rested on the view from the window, he tried to imagine how it would look at night.

“I could have told you that.” Tony said as he played with Peter, attempting to get a laugh out of him.

“But-”

“But what?”

Steve was looking for the right words to say, “But I’m not sure how safe it is for Peter.”

“He’ll be fine, we can protect him.” Natasha interjected, “You’re Captain freaking America.”

Steve sat in the recliner nearest to him. “No I mean, it’s not baby friendly.”

“This place is a kids playground,” Tony argued.

Steve felt a little frustration build in his chest. “That’s- that’s not what I mean.” Steve ditched inching tip-toeing around it all, “Tony, you’ve got a bowl of marbles on a glass table. Peter can reach them and what if he chokes.”

“Tony, he’s right.” Pepper agreed.

“Then I’ll throw the bowl out, okay.”

“It’s not just that. What if he hits himself on one of these corners. Or he could fall down those stairs. There’re dangerous electronics everywhere, what if he plays with the wrong thing and gets seriously hurt.” Steve must have been creating a list of ways Peter was going to kill himself as he was taking the tour.

“Okay, okay I get it.” Tony gave in.

“I just think we should baby proof the place.” Steve explained uncomfortably. He knew this was Tony’s place, he didn’t want to tell him what to do.

Tony set Peter down on the floor. “And I agree, alright. We’ll do it as soon as possible.” Peter used the table to prop himself on his knees and reached for the bowl of multicolored marbles as if to prove Steve’s point. Tony snatched the bowl up from off the table. “Starting with these.”

It was nice how easily they were able to compromise with this topic. Steve hoped that there’d be more like these in the future. “Thank-you.” Steve said to him with a slightly apologetic smile.

After they had unloaded the truck, Clint and Natasha took the rest of things Clint was keeping Clint’s place. They made it back to find Peter watching tv with his toys while Steve and Tony bickered about how to baby proof the floor. Natasha and Clint joined in to help. Yup, domestic bliss…

By 10 they’d actually covered most of the electrical sockets, put locks on the lower cabinets and kitchen drawers, baby gates at both entrances of the pit, and even covers on every possible corner.
If Peter managed to hurt himself it would’ve been an accomplishment.

They ended up ordering take out for dinner. After that Clint and Natasha went straight up to bed. The highest floor had the guestrooms that they always used when they slept over.

That left Steve and Tony with Peter for bedtime, it was already way past Peter’s who's usually in bed by no more than 9. But they’d been so distracted that everyone lost track of time.

“I think he can survive one night without a bath.” Tony suggested, too tired to do it.

“Agreed.” Steve said also tired.

“I’ll get his milk.” Steve got up and placed his plate in the sink. He found a clean bottle and onesie in the baby bag. “Here.” He said tossing the night clothes over to Tony who caught them.

Tony slid the messy tray off the highchair (another thing they had put together earlier) off and took Peter out. Peter was covered with teriyaki sauce from the noodles and chicken they had cut up and let him have for dinner with them. Natasha fed Peter for the most part, but Peter also wanted to feed himself. So he ate some of that with his hands.

“You ready for bed?” Tony asked Peter. Peter babbled with a smile and touched Tony’s face with one of his dirty hand as an answer. “Okay then.”

Tony made airplane noises as he held Peter out away from himself and walked over to the sink to quickly rinse Peter off. He washed his hands and face and dried him off before putting Peter in a clean diaper and into his pajamas to go to sleep.

“Here you go.” Steve handed Peter the warm bottle which he put to his own mouth immediately.

“Where’s he going to sleep anyways?” They hadn’t finished the crib yet. Everything was already in the nursery but they’d been so caught up in the unloading and then they had to go out and buy the baby proofing stuff which they also had to set up that they didn’t get a chance to do any of it.

Tony shifted Peter so that he was being cradled in both arms instead of being held up right. “I don’t know.”

“He could sleep with one of us tonight.” Steve suggested, “Or may the playpen, parents do that right?” Tony shrugged, he didn’t know.

“He can sleep in the pen, he’ll be fine.” Steve decided.

Tony just wanted to go to bed. “I’ll get it out.” Tony handed Peter off to Steve to find the pen and set it up.

Steve sat down with Peter on his lap. Peter had the bottle in one hand and his other was in his own hair. That was a good sign, that meant he was getting sleepy.

A few minutes later Tony came back, “I set it up in his room.” Steve got up and followed him inside. As Steve set Peter down in the pack and play pen. Tony dimmed the lights and used the speaker in the room to connect to his mp3 to play the same playlist that he always played for him. It was a pretty cool speaker, a orb that glowed in different colors in time with the music.

Steve was actually starting to learn these songs, he’d even taken the time to look up what some of them were. It always started with the same song, *Yesterday* by the Beatles and then it would shuffle through a bunch of random others in the same style of music for hours.
Peter stared up at Steve confused, he knew this wasn’t his room or his bed. “Good night Petey.” Steve said quietly bending over the side.

Tony came up beside Steve, “night little man.” Tony smoothed over some of Peter’s hair. Peter shifted around as if to get more comfortable and let go of the bottle, leaving it to fall to his side. Peter moved on to suck on his index and middle fingers. He looked ready to fall asleep.

Steve tapped Tony’s shoulder in direction to leave Peter alone. But as soon as they closed the door Peter began crying; loudly enough to be heard through the door.

“Just leave him, he’ll calm himself down.” Steve wasn’t sure in himself, he was just referencing the book he’d been reading.

Tony listened to him and waited it out. They went to the kitchen and kept waiting.

10 minutes, then 20 minutes passed he didn’t stop and he didn’t show any signs of stopping.

“Oh my god this is so cruel.” Tony couldn’t take it anymore. He went back to the nursery to see Peter.

Tony was right, it really was; screw the book. Steve got up to help.

Tony stood at the side of the pen talking to Peter even though they both knew he wanted to be taken out. Peter was sitting up looking at the both of them as he cried. He face was wet and rosey from it all.

“Come on Pete you’re fine.” Tony soothed him. “You’re all right.”

“What are you doing?”

Tony turned to Steve, “We shouldn’t pick him up, it’s self-soothing or something.” Steve wasn’t convinced, “Yeah, Rogers you’re not the only one who reads.”

Steve shook his head and went along with it, “you’re okay.” He said with a plastered smile, joining in with Tony.

This just made Peter cry even harder, “Okay, yeah no.” Tony said finally, “Screw this.” He took Peter out of the pen and bent over for the bottle as well.

“What happened to self-soothing.?"

“It’s just full of bs.” Tony paced the room and slowly Peter’s cries went from that to whines to nothing. Tony began to walk out of the room.

Steve wasn’t doing anything but watching it all unfold. “Where are you going?”

“To watch tv.” Tony said simply, “Maybe Superwhy or Storage Wars will bore the kid to sleep.”

“Tony.” Steve didn’t like the idea of dropping Peter in front of the TV whenever he got restless, it had to be unhealthy for anyone his age, “Can’t you read him a book or something instead.”

Tony stopped and turned to Steve, “Okay, you can do it.” He handed Peter off to Steve. “I’m going to go do some work.”

Peter wasn’t letting him. As soon as Tony was past the doorframe Peter would start up again. Tony sighed, defeated and sat down on the floor next to the pen.
The kid had them wrapped around his little finger and he knew it too.

Steve picked up a few books and sat across from Tony.

They spent what felt like hours reading through those books, but Peter still wasn’t getting tired. He looked wide awake if anything.

1:14am

Tony laid down on the ground, he was falling asleep slowly. Peter climbed out of Steve’s lap to crawl over and drop himself against Tony. Peter rested his head on Tony’s chest, making himself comfortable.

Steve got on his knees and reached to the shelf to replace the books. He sat back down and stared at the both of them. He was tired enough to be tempted to lay down. Steve hoped never to have a night like this one ever again. “You still up for the TV idea.” Steve was getting desperate.

“I’d say yes,” Tony said stroking Peter, “But I don’t think I’d I’d make it.”

Steve stood up and stretched. He had been sitting there for so long that even a few of his bones cracked. He bent over to pick up the empty bottle. He started walking to the door warily. Peter wasn’t facing Steve or the door maybe he wouldn’t notice Steve leaving.

“Where are you going?” Tony whispered.

Steve raised the bottle, “The kitchen, did you want something?”

“Scotch.” Tony said even though he knew Steve wasn’t going to bring it, “Hey, I’ve got some motrin in one of the cabinets. We can give him some, my dad did it for me whenever he wanted me to go down.” He joked.

Steve caught on but clearly wasn’t amused, “Funny.” He said dully and left the room. Peter didn’t cry, so that was good.

Steve rinsed the bottle out and refilled it about a third of the way with milk.

Steve fiddled with the sink to try and get the water to warm up. As he learned recently, bottles aren’t supposed to be microwaved but run under hot water to be warmed.

What should have been just a turn of a knob was actually a lot more apparently.

After five minutes of struggling Jarvis kicked in, “Do you require assistance, sir?” He asked.

Steve jumped, he knew it was going to take some time before he got used to the home’s AI. “Uh, I’m trying to get the water to warm up.” Steve used a slow, loud, clear voice as though he were talking to someone whose first language wasn’t English.

Jarvis took a short second to respond, “Press the button to the right of the faucet.” He responded.

Steve saw the small silver button that he was talking about. Steve pressed the button and it glowed red around the perimeter. Steve put his hand under the running water; sure enough it had warmed up.

Steve replaced his hand with the bottle to warm it up.

What should have taken five minutes ended up being fifteen, Steve walked back to the nursery.
“Sorry, it took-” Steve stopped.

Peter and Tony had both fallen asleep.

_Finally._

Steve set the bottle down on the changing table and took a blanket off the rocking chair and used it to cover Peter. They looked so peaceful together. Steve turned the light off, leaving the speaker that glowed in different colored lights on as a night night even though they had gotten through the whole playlist a while ago.

He didn’t want to move or wake either of them, so Steve left them where they were. Plus if Peter woke up during the night it would be Tony’s problem, not his.

Steve closed the door slowly as he left and went to his own room down the hall.

He turned on the lamp on the nightstand, he hadn’t gotten the chance to really look at it earlier.

Steve looked around. It was a large bedroom with a wall and large window that curved to the shape of tower. He could see a wonderful view from there. There was also bathroom and dresser; pretty much a basic master bedroom but a lot more high end to what Steve was used to. It all felt like a bit much.

Steve got under the covers. He didn’t even realize how tired he really was until his head reached the pillow. Steve turned to shut the light off.

They didn’t get the chance to stop by Steve’s place, as he just realized. So he didn’t bother with changing in or out of anything.

He thought that it was going to be a hard first night, but he was wrong. It ended up only minutes for him to fall asleep.
The four of them sat in the courtroom side by side. Today was the day Tony and Steve were going to officially be given guardianship of Peter.

“Steve Rogers and Tony Stark.” The judge said.

Steve handed Peter off to Clint as he and Tony rose.

“We have read through your submissions along with the will and seeing how we’ve been given no reason to go against the final wishes of the late Richard and Mary Parker.” She shuffled through a few of the papers in front of her. Tony and Steve gave each other a nervous look. “While permanent custody will be determined by an assigned social worker, I hereby say that Tony Stark and Steve Rogers are granted both full joint legal and physical custody of Peter Parker. You will be getting the documentation and paperwork in the mail in the next few days.”

She hit the gavel on the podium.

Steve looked over at Tony who was semi-staring at the ground.

That was it, now it was real. Too real.

The sound of that gavel just made it seem even more final.

*Where they really ready to dedicate the rest of their lives to this kid?*

Well it was way too late for any of that.

Natasha and Clint got up to follow Steve and Tony out.

“Wait that’s it?” Clint spoke up with still holding Peter. “A few words and they’re parents? Why is it so easy?” Well, they were all thinking it.

“Clint, shhh.” Natasha shushed him.
Clint didn’t care, “What if they’re serial killers or drug dealers?”

“Excuse me.” The judge took off her reading glasses.

“Clint shut up.” Tony said.

“Seriously.” Natasha slapped him on the back as they walked out.

“We’re sorry your honor.” Steve apologized using that smile that usually won people over. It seemed to be working for him.

“Drug dealer, Clint I swear to god.” He could hear Natasha shout at him half amused down the hall.

So that was their first real experience as official parents.

Steve was leaning on the railing at the top of the stairs. “What is he doing?”

Tony stepped out of the kitchen to get a better look. “Clint. Clint no the kid isn’t Simba.”

“God, I’m so tired.” Tony said trudging out of the elevator and dropping the case that contained his suit at the door.

Steve followed right behind him. “Oh. You’re tired, you can fly I had to run after him.” Steve wasn’t ever really the type to complain, Tony seemed to be rubbing off on him.

They’d been living together for nearly 3 weeks now. They definitely had their ups and downs (way more down than ups) but it had helped with their teamwork and compatibility skills in the field.

At first Steve wasn’t very sure about taking missions with Peter being in his care and all, but Steve also knew that there were many others depending on him out there. None of that stopped Steve from trying to be cautious when taking cases for both him and Tony. He didn’t want to leave Peter an orphan again.

This was their second mission together in the last week. Thank god for Pepper being able to babysit on such short notice. This wasn’t even a mission they were assigned on.

Steve, Peter, Pepper, and Tony were all sitting together and were halfway through dinner when Jarvis had interrupted them to inform them that Speed Demon and The Hood were terrorizing lower Manhattan. Natasha and Clint were away on a mission overseas. They knew what they had to do.

The Hood was taken out pretty easy, he was just a magic guy with magic bullets after all, but Speed Demon was a completely different story.

They had to keep chasing that guy for what must have been hours until Tony was able to get some kind of matter destabilizer that Steve still had no idea how it worked or what it did, to stop him.

Whatever it was, it worked and that’s all that mattered. It was late all they wanted was to go back and sleep.

Steve dropped his helmet a few paces away from the case and rested his own shield on the counter that was connected to the kitchen and hall.

Pepper stood from the table she was sitting and doing what was most likely work on her tablet to meet with both Steve and Tony. “Hey, I just got Peter to bed.”
“Thank you so much.” Steve said.

“Yeah, thanks.” Tony added as Pepper hugged the both of them. “Really.”

“I saw you two on the news. Looks like someone got their work out for the week.” Pepper joked as she let herself out. “Night you guys.”

Tony and Steve waved back and pretty much trudged past the baby gate to go down the few steps and to the couches.

Tony made it first and collapsed on one of the sides of the L-shaped couch. Steve followed his lead and took up the other.

Tony rolled over to face the inside of the couch and groaned, “Stupid Speed Demon. I swear I’m going to break that shit’s legs one day.” He closed eyes to rest them.

Steve was already falling asleep on the couch, he was too tired to comment on Tony’s word choice. Steve was drifting in and out of sleep until the sound of babbling and a banging noise right in front of him woke him back up. Steve didn’t bother moving but opened his eyes to come face to face with Peter who was standing and using the coffee table to hold himself up. He hadn’t even heard him come down the steps.

Peter smiled a little when he noticed that he had his attention and still holding tightly on the table, slowly took small inching steps to get Tony’s attention. “Tony.” No answer. Steve used his foot to nudge him in the side. “Tony wake up.”

“Mmmhh” Tony responded opening his eyes. “What.”

“Look,” Steve said urgently. “Peter’s cruising. He’s cruising look.”

Tony turned over to see. “Oh my god. Peter look at you.” Tony sat up a little. Peter reached an arm out slowly as if he was scared to fall but still wanted to get up. Tony picked him up and placed Peter at the corner intersection of the couch in between him and Steve.

“Wait.” Steve just realized something. “You know what this means right?”

“What?”

“Peter knows how to escape his crib and get around on his own.”

Tony took a moment to take that in. “Damn, he can’t even walk yet and we’re going to need a tracker on this kid aren’t we.”

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Tony and Steve were in the car together with Steve at the wheel. Peter was upstairs with Clint and Nat.

Steve had been working towards finally getting his license so he wouldn’t have to be driven anywhere any more. They lived in New York so everything was within walking distance but there were some things that required driving like when Steve had to go to the outer SHIELD stations for training reasons. Of course he had his motorcycle, but Steve hadn’t really been able to ride it since Peter, so having a license just seemed like a helpful tool to have.

At first Natasha started out by teaching Steve how to drive, but Tony eventually cut in saying he was going to show him the “right” way to do it (meaning his way). Steve didn’t really want to be taught
by him, but they was also using Tony’s cars to learn so he decided to give him a chance.

It wasn’t that bad. Tony knew how to drive on New York roads and highways and he was a good enough coach. But they obviously had their differences. For example, him and Tony had different definitions of 45 miles per hour.

Tony had the idea that it meant it was the slowest you can go and 10 over is fine, while Steve knew it meant it was the highest and refused to go above it otherwise. Which always ended up in them arguing and yelling over small things that they’d get over later.

Let’s just call these drives their own therapy sessions that let them get all their anger out in the car so it didn’t come home to the tower.

“Okay so back out slowly.” Tony said. They hadn’t even left the garage yet.

“I know how to get out of here.” Steve put the car in reverse to back out, but the car wouldn’t move.


Steve released the break and sure enough the car began to move out slowly. “Whatever.” Steve commented quietly. He checked the dashboard before moving forward towards the exit. The passenger seat belt light was on. “Put on your seat belt.” He told Tony.

“It is on.” Tony responded.

Steve knew he was lying. “Oh, you have it on?”

“Yeah.”

“Really.”

“Yes.”

“Okay then.” Steve slammed on the brakes suddenly, causing Tony to lurch forward, out of his seat and hit his head against the windshield. “Put your seat belt on.” Steve repeated sounding pretty pleased with himself.

Tony listened this time. He rubbed his forehead, it didn’t hurt but it was a bit red. He peered over to his side to look at Steve. The smug ass was smiling. “You enjoyed that didn’t you.” Steve’s smile grew a little bigger.

“No no, you just needed to put it on.” Steve was holding in his laughter.

Tony found himself smiling too, “Yeah, bullshit. Just keep driving and don’t do that again.”

“He’s bleeding.” Tony was holding Peter away from himself and ran up the stairs to the kitchen where Steve was making lunch with Natasha. “He’s bleeding.” He repeated more urgently.

Steve quickly saw what he was talking about. Peter had a bloody nose. He didn’t seem bothered by it but there was blood all over the lower half of his face and dripping down his shirt. Steve took Peter from Tony.

Natasha handed Steve a paper towel. “What happened.” She asked Tony.”

“He just started bleeding, I don’t know.” Tony was pacing the room unsure what to do, he couldn’t
even look at Peter.

“Just calm down, he’s fine.”

Tony was too busy freaking out. “Jarvis search causes for nosebleeds.”

Jarvis took a moment to respond. “The causes of nosebleeds are: nose picking, allergies, trauma, hypertension, leukemia, hemophilia, Ebola-”

Tony was beginning to panic even more, “Jarvis stop.” Natasha said cutting in before it could get any worse.

“He’s going to die. Oh my god he has Ebola. We need to get him to a hospital.” Tony said looking around for his keys.

Natasha rolled her eyes, “He doesn’t have Ebola.”

“Tony, he’s fine.” Steve wasn’t very sure himself, there was a lot of blood for someone his size. He got a fresh paper towel to replace the bloodied one and continued pinching Peter’s nose. “Does he look like he’s going to die.”

Tony stopped to look at them for a second. He stared at Peter who looked fine other than fussing because of what Steve was doing, but then he reminded of all the blood. He turned a shade paler.

Tony really needed a drink.

He went over to his bar and poured himself whatever was the first thing he could grab. He found that it did help a little after a minute of heavy breaths.

“Maybe you should go get some air,” Natasha suggested.

Tony nodded slowly and walked out onto the balcony to finish his glass.

Natasha and Steve sat at the kitchen table. Steve set Peter to sit on the table so he can have a better hold on him. “Well then.” Steve sighed. Peter reached up to try and push Steve’s hand away from his own face.

“Yeah.” Natasha agreed, “He can’t take blood from people he cares about very well.”

Steve was almost always the one who woke up first among the 4 of them.

That wasn’t to say they were all just extremely good and heavy sleepers. There were many hard sleepless nights between the each of them that weren’t caused by Peter. That just came with their line of work.

But on the good nights where they were actually able to spend an entire night with an average amount of sleep, it was Steve who would wake up with Peter in the mornings. Sometimes Steve would make breakfast or he and Peter would go out for a morning run.

But on this morning he was making breakfast for them all. He had no idea when any of them would be up. Clint and Natasha always were the ones to sleep in and Tony had been out late at a Gala hosted by one of his allied companies.

Steve stood at the stove mixing the scrambled eggs with one and using the other to hold Peter at his hip.
Peter was being clingy this morning and wouldn’t let Steve put him down. He did feel a little warm, so Steve gave in, he just hoped Peter wasn’t getting sick. That was something he had no idea how to handle.

Peter rested against Steve and held onto the Iron Man toy that Tony got him and eventually replaced his first comfort toy, the stuffed bunny toy attached to a blanket.

The eggs were just about ready. Steve shut the stove off and turned to put Peter in his high chair. He just needed to finish the bacon and cut some fruit which meant he’d have to put him down to use both his hands.

“Alright Petey, breakfast time.” He said removing the tray of the chair. He lowered Peter into the seat.

Peter held tightly onto Steve’s shirt until Steve had to pry his fingers off. Peter stared at him upset. Steve replaced the tray part and put out a few toys to hopefully distract him.

But that didn’t actually work.

As soon as Steve turned around Peter began to whine and squirm on the verge of crying.

“Come on Peter.” Steve said placing a little plate with some eggs in front of Peter. “Just give me a second.”

Steve put some bacon on the stove and let it cook as he washed and cut the fruit.

Peter began crying loudly and Steve heard the plate clatter onto the floor. He probably should have seen that one coming.

“Peter.” Steve said in calming voice, “I’m almost done.”

Peter obviously wasn’t listening.

Steve saw someone in his peripheral vision. He had dark brown hair. It had to have been Tony. He was facing away from Tony and concentrated on finishing what he was doing, but he was relieved nonetheless “Thank god you’re up, can you take him out.” Steve reached above in the higher cabinet for a few larger plates.

The silence meant that Peter stopped crying.

“He feels like he could be running a fever.” Steve shut the stove off and put the bacon on one of the plates. “Do you have a-” Steve began walking toward the table. “Thermometer.”

Okay, not that wasn’t Tony.

There was as man Steve and never seen standing there holding Peter. He was a fairly handsome guy; well-chiseled jaw, morning shadow, dark messy hair…

No, wait that didn’t matter. Who was this guy?

He was wearing a thin tank-top and Iron Man pajama pants, Tony’s Iron Man pajama pants. He must have come home with Tony last night.

Steve internally rolled his eyes. It was Tony’s place but a heads up would have been nice.

“Oh, thank you.” Steve said awkwardly setting the plates down and taking Peter.
“Um.” The guy laughed nervously, “I guess Tony Stark didn’t mention he brought home a guest. I’m Brian.” He held out a hand to shake it.

The guy was polite enough so Steve had no reason to be rude. He took it and shook it. “Steve.”

“Rogers? I’ve heard a lot about you.”

“All good things I hope.” Steve plastering a smile.

“Yeah. Mostly.” Brian joked.

Steve shifted Peter from one side to the other to bend down and pick up plate that Peter had knocked over. “Have you had breakfast yet? Please sit.” Brian sat down and took a plate from the stack at the table. “Just help yourself. Coffee?”

“If it’s not too much trouble.”

Steve went back into the kitchen to make a cup of coffee. That was one thing that Steve loved about this century. The coffee was so easy and quick to make with all sorts of flavors. Steve used the one touch single mug maker to make Brian a cup and set out some cream and sugar. Steve got the cup and added a little bit of everything and set it in front of him.

Steve sat down across from him with Peter on his lap. “So how do you know Tony.” Steve asked, making some conversation as he tried to feed Peter.

“We met at the Gala yesterday.” Brian took a sip of coffee.

Typical Tony Stark, one night stands with all sorts of people.

Peter fought against Steve trying to feed him the eggs. “Come on Peter, we both know you haven’t eaten today.” Steve moved on to the fruit which Peter had no appetite for either. Steve really hoped Peter was just cranky and not getting sick.

“If you like I can check over him.” Brian said in between bites, “I’m a pediatric nurse.” he explained. “I saw a small doctor’s kit in Mr. Stark’s room.”

Steve didn’t want to question why Tony had any of that or why it was in his room of all places, but it didn’t really matter. “Uh...yeah that would be great.”

Maybe there were some perks to Tony Stark bringing home strange men.

It took 2 weeks of Steve and Tony living together to begin doing the one thing Steve never imagined they would have-

Movie nights.

It started out with Tony being so overly shocked with the fact that Steve had never seen most of his favorite classic movies. Then it was him forcing Steve to watch these movies, and finally, it had become the norm.

Every couple of days when they all had the night off, they’d gather together, eat some junk food, order take out and watch a movie or two.

Steve began to develope a taste in movies.
Horror movies were off limits, Steve said it was because he didn’t want Peter (who usually watched the movie with them since he still didn’t know what any of it meant) to be exposed to anything of the sort at his age. While in reality Clint, Natasha, and Tony all knew it was because Steve genuinely couldn’t handle horror movies.

But Steve enjoyed strong drama movies with art and meaning or a strong message.

So this is why Tony chose *Schindler’s List* as their movie for that night. Clint and Natasha were at Clint’s place for the night. So it was just them.

“It’s a great movie.” Tony said, not wanting to spoil too much of it. “It takes place around World War II and is mostly in black and white. It’s perfect for you.” He walked down to the living room with two bowls of popcorn. “It’s just really, really long.”

Steve set Peter into the pack and play with some toys. He was already washed and ready for bed; hopefully, he’d be asleep by the end of the movie.

Tony handed Steve a bowl and then sat down in his usual seat, the recliner.”Jarvis, play Schindler’s list.”

The TV changed from no signal to playing the Universal Pictures globe opening. “Playing Schindler’s List,” Jarvis responded.

Watching movies or shows seemed to be the only time where Steve and Tony could sit in the same room together for over an hour without any banter or snark from either of them.

Steve sat cross-legged on the couch with the bowl in his lap watching the movie intently. Tony was reclined, eating popcorn and swiping away at his tablet, working on whatever new project that was cooking up in his head with the same buttery fingers. Tony would look up every now and again, he’d seen the movie enough times that paying attention wasn’t a requirement.

Tony’s eyes would flash over to Steve every so often to see whether Steve was enjoying the movie or not. It was always hard to tell with him, he always looked emotionless when ever he watched TV.

Steve was clenching onto the bowl hard, trying to get through the movie.

It was nothing like Steve had expected.

Tony didn’t say it was going to be such a brutal movie. Each gunshot and casualty brought him closer and closer back to the war. Memories flooded his mind, mostly good ones that now felt sour; ones about Bucky, Peggy, and his howling commandos. Steve tried to push them away but it was hard.

Steve felt tightness building up in himself. He didn’t know if it was frustration, or anger, or fear, all he knew was that hurt. He felt as though he was missing or forgetting something. The pressure kept building and as though he was going to burst. Steve tried to breathe and calm down.

They were at least half way through the movie.

It was at the part where the Jewish men were all standing, not lined up but spaced accordingly in between railcars and being shot in dead one by one by the Nazi soldiers.

It was all too much. Steve couldn’t take it anymore.

Steve shut his eyes tight and reopened them.“Stop it. Stop the movie.”
Tony straightened up in his chair, “What is it?”

“Just stop the goddamn movie.” Steve’s voice rose.

That must have been the first time he heard Steve curse. “Jarvis stop.” Tony set his tablet down, he didn’t know what was happening. “Should we watch something else?”

Steve stood up rubbing his hands nervously, taking a few lost steps. Tony had never seen Steve this way, he looked pretty shaken up. “Are you okay?” Tony was genuinely worried about him.

“Yeah.” Steve sat back down and took a sip of his juice in an attempt to calm his nerves. “No. I don’t know. It’s just, just that—” Steve paused, he couldn’t find the words, he stood back up, “I’m going to bed. You can have Peter tonight.” He began walking to the stairs.

“It’s just what?” Tony asked not expecting an answer.

Steve stopped half way up without facing Tony, “It’s just that... I should have been there. Maybe, maybe if I was there instead of in a block of ice things would have been different, maybe not so many people would’ve died.” he said in a low uneasy voice and continued up the steps.

Tony felt guilt fill up inside of him. How could he have been so inconsiderate? He just thought Steve would like something from his era, having it hurt him in any way never crossed his mind.

“Wait no-” He called to him about to go up those steps and apologize properly.

But it was too late, he was gone and the damage was done.

Tony sunk back into his seat and ran a hand through his hair. He sighed, frustrated more with himself than anything else. “Jarvis, delete Schindler’s List from my library.”

“Sir,” Jarvis’s disembodied voice spoke up, “this movie is filed under favorites, are you sure you want it deleted.”

“It’s not anymore, J.” Tony said with finality.

In the month that Steve had lived in Stark Towers, he had never used his suite on the floor below before other than a quiet space to read or work.

He just wanted to be alone.
Steve had just gotten out of the training room when Jarvis's voice filled the hall.

"Mr. Rogers, sir, you have a call from Mr. Thompson downstairs."

Mr. Thompson was the first face anyone saw coming in from the main entrance of Stark Towers. He let them know when they had guests and others who were there to see them. Of course Jarvis could have been programmed to do his job but Tony thought it was better to have an actual person to greet the people as opposed to a godly voice with no source.

"Put him through." Steve said walking to the elevator to go up and shower.

"Hello?" his voice replaced Jarvis.

"Hello, Thompson." Steve pressed the button of the elevator.

"Hello, Steve." Mr. Thompson said, "I have a woman here saying she's from the CPS."

"CPS?"

"Child Protective Services," he explained.

This must have been one of the surprise meetings which they had been expecting.

This was sure as hell a surprise.

Steve wasn't going to panic. They weren't ready or prepared in anyway, but that's okay right? It was a safe home and that was the important part.

"Okay," Steve said trying to formulate a plan, "Okay, give us five minutes then send her up."

"Yes, sir." Mr. Thompson said before hanging up.
Steve got into the elevator. First he'd need to inform everyone else. "Jarvis, find Clint, Natasha, and Tony and alert them that the caseworker is here."

"Very well, sir."

Steve was going to have to skip the shower. He tried to recall just how messy the main living floor was. He didn't think it was too bad.

The elevator door opened and Steve stepped out. The kitchen had some dirty dishes and the living room could use a little straightening up. There wasn't too much to clean, just a few things needed to be put away. Clint and Natasha came out down the hall to meet Steve.

"What's going on?" Clint asked. He was suited up as if he had been in one of the training rooms, while Natasha was still in her pajamas.

"The caseworker's here to see us." Steve said, "So go get dressed, both of you." Steve wasn't usually the bossy type unless he was in charge or stressed.

And right now he was really stressed.

Natasha and Clint listened and rushed back down the hall to go up to the next floor with their rooms to changes. "Wait, where's Peter?" That thought didn't even come to him until now. Natasha was with him last.

Natasha stopped and turned around, "He's with Tony."

"And where's he?"

Natasha shrugged and kept walking.

Both Tony and Peter needed to be there when that woman came. "Jarvis, call Tony."

Steve began making an attempt to clean the area as Jarvis made the call.

"Hello." Tony said. Telling by the sounds of the loud rock music and whirring of the machines, he was most likely in one of his labs.

"Hey, Tony. You have to come here now." Steve piled up all the toys in a corner next to Peter's walker. The living room and the space above it looked presentable enough. "The caseworker's here." He threw the pillows back onto the couch and rushed back up the steps to drop the dishes in the dishwasher, mostly to hide them then anything else. Then he went to his room to put on a clean shirt.

"Um, can I get a rain check, sort of in the middle of something here." Tony didn't sound very interested in seeing anyone. Really Steve wasn't either, but that didn't mean they had a choice in the matter.

"I don't care if you're bringing back the dead Stark," Steve wasn't dealing with this today, "Just get up here now or I will come down there and get you myself."

"Okay, fine." The machines stopped, Tony hung up.

"Our guest is on the way." Jarvis informed Steve.

Steve went back into main atrium, slightly out of breath, where Natasha was already there waiting.

"Steve, calm down." Natasha told him, sensing his nervousness. "It's going to be fine." Steve nodded
in agreement, she was right. There wasn’t very much that could go wrong.

Clint came in pulling a his shirt down over his head. "Where's the kid?" They did need him to prove they were capable of taking care of one.

"Tony should be here any second."

The elevator dinged. "That's probably him now." Natasha said.

But it wasn’t.

It was the case worker herself. How fast were these elevators?

She was well dressed and looked pretty professional but she seemed to have a warmthness to herself. She smiled and walked in to shake each of their hands. "Hi, I'm Joanna."

"Steve Rogers." Steve shook her hand,

"Clint Barton."

"Natasha Romanov."

They lead her to the dining table to talk. She sat down first and the others did the same. She pulled out a folder. "I will be overseeing the rest the rest of yours and Mr. Stark's case until the official signing for guardianship." She looked around for a second, "Where is Mr. Stark actually?"

"He'll be here any moment and with Peter." Natasha said, "He was just doing some work."

The case worker nodded and took a few notes in her folder.

"How about some tea." Steve suggested. He need to do something to keep his hands busy to help with his nervousness.

"Yes please." Joanna said.

"Same here."

"I'd rather have a Dr. Pepper." Clint wasn't really a tea person.

"So how's everything been since the move." the caseworker asked. "Everyone settled in okay."

"It was a bit of a transition, the place is a lot more than I'm used to." Steve admitted, "But Peter’s adjusted just fine." Steve set the teapot on the stove to boil.

"But overall everything’s been good." Natasha cut in.

"Tony and Steve are definitely getting along better now." Clint spoke up.

Steve wasn't sure that bringing up his and Tony's issues was really the best of ideas. The elevator rang, thankfully ended conversation on that topic. That had to be Tony with Peter.

He walked passed the kitchen. Steve froze when he saw them from over the counter.

Clint, Joanna, and Natasha stopped when they saw him too.

Tony had an AC/DC muscle shirt on and short shorts. Peter was attached to his chest in a front-facing papoose wrap so that all that was exposed was Peter's shoulders, legs, and barely his
hands. They were both wearing matching welding goggles and Peter wore noise cancelling headphones. Tony had dirt, ash, and soot up his arms and face and there was a little on Peter.

On any other day but today the sight would have been amusing. Right then it was just embarrassing.

"Well, hello I'm Tony Stark." Tony held out a hand to shake hers. He didn't seem to see anything wrong.

"Tony what the hell." Clint said.

"Clint, don't say hell." Natasha said quickly her eyes glancing from Clint to the caseworker and back to Clint.

"You just said it." Clint shot back, sounding as though he was back in middle school.

The caseworker coughed awkwardly and probably holding back a laugh.

Steve shook his head walked up to Tony. Why of days that Tony could have pulled a stunt like this it had to be today. “Just.” Steve was trying to keep his cool, “Just go get cleaned up.” Steve undid the wrap and took Peter out. He removed the goggles from Peter’s forehead and dropped them on the counter along with the headphones.

Tony finally seemed to realize what was going on and nodded without any quips, “I’ll be right back.” He excused himself.

“I'm so sorry.” Steve apologised handing Peter off to Clint so that he could finish the tea. “He’s not usually like this.”

“Quite alright.” Joanna said adding a few more notes to her folder, “It's definitely a first.”

Steve handed a mug to Natasha and her, then going back to get his own and Clint’s drink.

“I mean, at least nothing blew up this time, right?” Clint said trying to lighten things up a bit. He licked his thumb to get some of the dirt off of Peter’s face.

Natasha nudged him making a mental note to never let Clint attend one of these meetings ever again.

Steve joined everyone back at the round table.

Peter climbed up to stand on Clint’s lap and reached for the fruit bowl. He touched everything in the bowl, feeling the textures and attracted by the pretty colors, until his hand landed on one of the tangerines. He picked up and began chewing on it despite the fact that there was still the peel in the way.

“Is he walking yet?” Joanna asked, taking a sip from her mug,

Steve took the tangerine from Peter and peeled it. “No, not yet.” He handed the slices to Peter one by one to eat.

“Soon, we hope.” Natasha said.

Joanna smiled at Peter as he clumsily chewed on the fruit slices. “Well he seems ready.”

Their conversation seemed to be going better now.

Tony came back out at least 15 minutes later much better dressed, in dark jeans, a t-shirt, and an
unbuttoned non-formal blazer. He slicked back his wet hair, putting on the Stark charm that everyone loved for some reason. “Sorry for the delay.” Tony said sitting down next to the caseworker.

Joanna seemed to be entranced by Tony for a moment but snapped back to reality. She cleared her throat, “Uh, yes, let’s begin.” She stood and the other four of them followed. “We can start with the inspection.”

“Of course follow me.” Tony said leading her down to the living room. He was finally letting some of his professionalism shine through.

Clint handed Peter to Steve. Steve readjusted Peter to that he was more comfortable and then followed them down the stairs.

The caseworker inspected every inch of every room and taking notes of every detail. She checked the pantry, the fridge, and even the bathrooms.

Tony and Peter’s rooms weren’t very clean, but that wasn’t too surprising. After they finished with that floor they went through the other floors. Tony gave her a tour of his labs and other facilities.

They ended it by going to back to their main floor for the interviewing portion.

“You’re welcome to use my office if you like.” Tony offered.

“Yes please, that would be perfect.” She took up the offer.

Tony lead her to his personal study.

She interviewed them each alone first.

Clint walked out of the study followed by Joanna. “Okay now just you two.” She said pointing at Steve and Tony who were waiting with Natasha in living room, watching Sofia the First with Peter.

They followed her around the hall into the office.

Steve had never been in it before.

It was very clean room, probably the cleanest of them all, save the stacks of folders and papers on the desk. The decor was pretty simple but fit Tony’s style. There were a few pictures of his parents and some art hung on the walls.

There was a curved marble desk facing away from the large window that would give the potential guest who was sitting a view of New York if they looked over past Tony’s shoulder. There were a bunch of old toys and knick knacks scattered on the desk and a nameplate that said “Da Man”, which should have been his name instead; all very Tony Stark.

Steve and Tony sat down side by side in the two leather seats and Joanna sat behind the desk.

She folded her hands and leaned forward. “Let’s just talk.”


“Your plans, your goals, careers, that kind of stuff.”

“Well,” this was a question that was definitely up Tony’s alley, “We’re currently focusing on wearable technology and we’re planning to start with small interest groups and then take it to the
bigger market. There’s this one idea I had, obviously I’d need to patent it. where you take a ring and add-” Tony stopped suddenly noticing he was starting to ramble, “And there’s Peter. I forgot him, he’s definitely in the plan.”

“No, it’s fine.” Joanna smiled politely stopping him. “It’s good that you have a vision. Steve how about you.”

Steve took a moment to answer. He never really thought about it before. "I'm happy where I am. I've got a good job, it's flexible, and I'm able to take Peter with me to work."

"And was is it that you do exactly?"

"Mostly jobs for special forces; training, conditioning, field work. That kind of stuff." Steve wasn't lying, it was what he did, it just wasn't who he did it for.

Steve's position in his dual-identity life was a very confusing. Everyone knew who he was, his real name and identity wasn't ever changed when he woke up in the 2000's. But not everybody knew he was Captain America, unless they were given the clearance.

Obviously everybody knew who Captain America was and that he was named Steve Rogers; there was a whole freaking exhibit at one of the national Smithsonian dedicated to him for god's sake. Everyone just assumed that the Captain America that went down in that plane didn't survive in any way and it was a new guy behind the mask.

No one made the connection that this Steve Rogers was the same man in the Captain America suit. That the one out there fighting and protecting all those people was the same guy, or maybe there are those who had figured it out and the right people had taken care of properly.

Steve never tried to make a thing of it, he just lived life and tried to stay out of the spotlight as much as possible, which has been getting harder since moving in with Tony Stark.

That response was a good enough for the case worker to move on to the next question.

"So" She flipped through the folder and opened it to a certain page that neither Steve or Tony could see, "It was reported to me that you are both single and not engaged in a relationship. Is that correct?"

Steve and Tony stared for a moment, unsure what exactly the question was.

"You're not having sex." She added.

Steve felt an embarrassed heat rise to his cheeks. Why do people keep asking this? "No. We're not, that's never going to happen." He said quickly and defensively.

"No, no, no." Tony said talking over him, he was just as embarrassed as Steve. "I can do better trust me."

"Really?" Steve said turning to Tony because of the last bit of commentary, "Was that really necessary."

"I'm just saying th-"

"Okay, Okay" Joanna cut in between them before it escalated. "Good, that's good." She took a few notes. "With a transition like this, two single people living under the same roof and raising a kid together; people sometimes get confused and or fall in love. It's better this way, less drama and stress
for Peter." She closed her folder after taking one last note and stood up. "That'll be all then."

Apparently, that was it.

Steve and Tony followed her out to the living room.

Clint and Natasha were still watching *Sofia the First* on Netflix even though Peter had fallen asleep in his walker.

"Well I'll be going now." She said picking her bag up and walking over to the elevator.

Tony pressed the button for her and they waited for the elevator to come up.

"So how did we do?" Steve asked.

"I'm sorry I'm not able to say." Joanna said, "You'll be able to find out after our third and final inspection. But I've seen all kinds of cases, you wouldn't even imagine some of them, and let me tell you there are things far worse than bickering guardians or Tony Stark's ego." She lightened the conversation. The elevator doors opened and she stepped in, "I look forward to our next meeting." She quickly added, remembering formalities as the doors closed.

Tony waited for the elevator to have gone before he spoke, "That went well."

Steve wasn't forgetting what Tony said just a few minutes ago in the office. He rolled his eyes and began walking away to take Peter to his bed. "I don’t know. I thought you could do better."
Take your kid to work day

Chapter Summary

Tony is left without a babysitter and has to take Peter to work with him.

Chapter Notes

Sorry I know how late of an update this is, but good news is less than one month till the end of school for me. So more time to write, yay!!!. Anyways thank you to everyone who keeps up with this or just started reading this but for some reason kept going and made it to here. Shout out to all of you guys. This ones kinda long...so enjoy!!

Steve came into the nursery where Tony already was there pacing all around the room trying to get Peter to go to sleep. They both could sense that it was going to be a hard night.

Peter was crying so hard to the point where it was starting to sound more like screaming.

“Here,” Steve had a warm bottle in his hand. They had been trying to use bottles less and sip cups more but they were getting pretty desperate as the hour reached closer and closer to 2am.

Tony handed Peter to Steve. “Do you think he’s hurt, maybe we should see a doctor.”

Steve fed the Peter the bottle. He went quiet and drank from it a little, but after a minute he took the bottle and threw on the ground before he began to cry once again. “I don’t know.” Steve sighed. He had work in the morning, how was going to function like this? “Maybe he’s breaking in another tooth?”

“You guys.” Came a raspy groggy voice at the door. “Seriously, there's people sleeping. I can hear you from upstairs.” A disheveled and sleepy Clint stood at the doorway.

Tony and Steve threw Clint an irritated look. They knew what time it was and didn’t need to be reminded.

Clint took a moment before holding his arms out and motioning towards himself with his hands, “Give him here.” Steve wasn’t sure what he was about to do but complied anyways. Peter didn’t stop crying in between any of these exchanges. Clint picked up Peter’s red blanket. “Come on.” He led them down the hall to the elevator. Clint cradled Peter in his arms and used his elbow to press the button to go down. They all piled in. Clint leaned against the wall and rocked Peter as they went down.

“How are we going?” Tony asked. He didn’t recognize the floor number.

Clint yawned, “You’ll see.”

They stopped on the 81st floor. It looked like it was something that was going to be an office that wasn’t ever finished. There was wood, desks and furniture littered here and there. Not all the
florescent lights were functioning, some were flashing or not even on. They could hear the buzzing that came from the lights.

Peter’s restless cries echoed off the walls eerily.

“What are we doing here?” Steve asked.

“Just wait.” Clint walked over to the wall and stopped at one of the vents. “One of you, take that down.”

Tony, though still extremely confused, listened and took the rack off the wall and exposing the inside of the vents.

“Jarvis turn the air on and at 70 degrees.” Clint said, swaddling Peter in the blanket. The A/C began blowing as they heard it rumbling through the walls and out the now open vent in the wall.

It blew loudly in a noise that sounded as though it was a mixture of both a whistle and vacuum. The noise the air conditioning made was a different from any of the others that they’d heard before in the building. Maybe that was probably a reason why it wasn’t ever finished, though Tony couldn’t actually remember why.

Clint held Peter so that they were right under the vent. Sure enough, slowly Peter’s cries died down to basically nothing.

Steve and Tony looked at each other and breathed a sigh of relief, finally.

Clint took notice to this and said, “Yeah we were in the vents and he really likes the noise, I guess.”

“Thanks Clint” Steve said as Clint passed Peter back over to him. Steve took over in his place under the source of the noise.

“Seriously though.” Tony added.

Clint scratched his head and waved them off as he headed back to the elevators, “Yeah, yeah whatever.”

“Wait. Why was Peter in the vents in the first place?” Steve called to him after realizing it.

Clint ignored him and went back up to bed. That was going to be talk for them to have in the morning.

Peter sucked at his two fingers as his eyes closed slowly.

Steve met eyes with Tony. They looked at each other eagerly, he was falling asleep finally.

They waited for a few minutes not making a sound.

“I think he’s good now.” Tony said in a hushed voice.

Steve looked down at Peter, he was probably right. Steve nodded in agreement and started walking towards the elevator side by side with Tony, leaving the rack still lying against the wall. He’d get it tomorrow.

Tony pressed the button of the elevator since Steve had his hands full.

“I can’t believe it worked.” Tony said.
“Yeah who would’ve thought.” Steve said looking down at Peter. He was such an adorable sleeper. Steve wasn’t ever really the type to call something cute or adorable, but Peter was his exception.

“The real question is why they were in the vents in the first place.”

They were on the same page on that topic, “Honestly, Clint’s Clint. The important thing is that he’s more careful with Peter.” Peter shifted around dropping his stuffed Iron Man toy. Steve bent his knees to try and reach for it.

“Here, I got it.” Tony said bending over to get it for him.

They’d been getting along more and more lately. The whole domestic life thing was working surprisingly well. They had to learn to compromise and get along, but they were barely doing it begrudgingly any more.

Tony stepped closer to Steve. He tucked the toy into Peter’s blanket. Just as he was doing that the elevator rang and the doors slid open.

It startled Peter and he awoke with a start.

Steve and Tony held their breaths, maybe he’d go back to sleep.

Peter looked around getting a better baring of his area. He frowned and started to cry again.

Of course he wasn’t going to.


Steve was practically trudging back to the vent. He waited, but this time, Peter wasn’t giving any sign of stopping soon. Steve looked at Tony. “It’s not working.”

“You’re doing it wrong.” Tony took Peter from Steve. He rocked him a little. “It’s 2am Petey, time to sleep.” He said in a soft, yet irritated voice. Peter didn’t stop for him either. Tony rose Peter up to the opening of the vent as if that would help.

“No, don’t do that.” Steve said trying to take him back.

Tony got onto his tip-toes and turned away from Steve so he’d have the upper hand. “He’s fine.”

“You’re going to drop him in the vent, idiot.” Steve wanted to pull him back but afraid that if he used his strength Tony would actually drop Peter.

“Oooo, idiot. That’s a creative insult.” Tony laughed, not taking it seriously at all.

After nearly 10 minutes of back and forth arguing they settled on the fact that the vent wasn’t going to be very effective. So they moved on and went back down to the garage. Maybe a drive would lull him to sleep.

Peter’s crying was even louder in the echoing garage.

Tony entered a code and opened the cabinet that was down there that contained copies of all the keys. He took the first one his hand touched and pressed the clicker to find the parked car.
It was a normal looking four-door red Toyota, over a decade old.

“I can go.” Steve said holding his hand out for the keys. “You don’t have to come.”

Another thing about their strange so-called relationship that they had developed over the months was the ability to move past whatever argument or squabble they had, depending on how dumb or petty the conflict. And after some short time they were usually back to normal terms. In the similar way that any argument between family members tend to be forgotten come dinner time.

“It’s fine.” Tony shut the door of the car that he had taken Peter’s car seat out of. “You’re the one with work tomorrow anyways.”

It was Steve’s night to take care of Peter, which is why he felt more responsible for him but that didn’t mean he’d say no to Tony wanting to come. It would be a good distraction anyways.

Tony got in the driver’s seat and Steve sat in the back with Peter.

Steve had to badger Tony into driving more slowly, but they reached an agreeable rhythm quickly enough.

In the first hour of driving Peter had calmed down, but he still wasn’t sleeping.

They decided to drive until Peter actually went to sleep.

It was like an adventure. They drove round and round stopping only for gas once, to switch drivers twice, and for fast food. They talked a little and listened music. It was like a road trip even though they didn’t go anymore than 15 miles from the tower.

It was almost dawn when they made it back to Stark Tower. Tony’s eyes were burning and Steve was in back resting his chin under his hand, sleeping.

Peter was still awake.

Tony had given up trying. “Dude, wake up.”. Tony parked the car. He took off his seat belt and jostled Steve awake.

Steve opened his eyes squinting against the light. He sat up straight and stretched. “What time is it?”

“5:47” Tony got out of the car and stretched inhaling the cold morning air..

Steve got out, taking Peter with him. They went back upstairs.

“God I’m so tired.” Tony rubbed his eyes tiredly. “Why are you still awake?” Tony asked Peter. Peter gave him a crooked smile, “I feel so bad for you. You’ve got to be at SHIELD in, what 3 hours?”

“4.” Steve corrected him.

They said nothing else in the 5ish minutes it took for them to reach the floor. The early sunlight shone through the large windows so neither of them bothered to turn on a light.

Tony stumbled down the steps to the living room and collapsed on the couch. Steve followed after him.

“Here, you take him. I’m going to try and get at least a few hours in.” Steve said. He laid Peter on his back on the other empty part of the couch.
Tony, eyes closed, nodded and patted Peter on the stomach to show that he heard Steve.

Steve thanked him and went to his room.

Steve woke up at 8 by the alarm on his phone. He needed to be out of the house in half an hour, which would give him just enough time to get to where he need to be on time.

Steve rolled out of bed. He picked out his clothes for the day and got into the shower. He when he was presentable enough, he did his bed and left his room.

He looked round the floor for his bag and badge. It was seriously starting to make him late. He found it in one of the hall closets.

“Jarvis time.” Steve said as he tied his shoes.

“It is 8:49, sir.” Jarvis said promptly.

Steve cringed, he hoped Jarvis wasn’t loud enough to wake anyone else.

He left and went to the main atrium, the center of the floor. The TV was on and playing PBS Kids. At least it was and educational channel.

Steve went over to the kitchen for get some semblance of a breakfast. He started the coffee machine and made himself a turkey sandwich with lettuce and cheese. It was more of a lunch food but he couldn't care less.

As he waited he peered over the railing that connected to the steps of the living room. Both Peter and Tony were finally sleeping.

Steve did his best to rush quietly and leave on time, which of course he did.

But in that time he didn’t realize he had forgotten his phone on his bed until it was too late to go back.

“Tony Stark!” Came an angry voice blasting through the tower. Some how she had gotten through Jarvis's system to connect a call without needing Tony's permission.

Tony was forced out his sleep. His heart skipped a beat and he sat up quickly. What the fuck was that?

“Tony what the hell.” It was Pepper. She sounded beyond pissed.

Tony moved to sit over on the couch. He rubbed his face. “Yes.” He was almost afraid to answer her.

“So I decided to call in and check on you and see how ready you were for today’s meeting.” Her voice was scarily steady. “And you know what I found? That you hadn’t even come in yet.”

Shit…
Tony forgot about the correspondents meeting that day. It was almost the end of Stark Industries’ fiscal year.

*Shit, shit, shit…*

Tony opened his mouth to explain himself, but he knew it was pointless.

Pepper seemed to sense that he had forgotten from the quiet on the other end, “You have two hours to get there and be in that room. Otherwise it’s you ass. I’ll call you back in an hour, at your office, and you better be there.” And without any formal farewell she hung up.

Tony didn't understand how she bypassed Jarvis and got directly to him. He'd have to look into that later.

He quickly stood up and checked the time on the tablet and was on the coffee table 12:45. He recalled that the meeting began at 3.

Peter was still sprawled out sleeping soundly on the couch. Tony covered him with the blanket that had fallen to the ground.

He ran to his room to get ready.

Tony undressed and took a quick shower and ran of the bathroom, nearly slipping on the tiled floor on the way out.

He needed to find someone to watch Peter and fast.

"Jarvis, call Natasha." Tony dried himself off and pulled on his underclothes.

"Ms. Romanov isn't able to be reached at the moment." Jarvis said after a long pause.

"Is she in the building?" Tony pulled on his socks.

Another long pause. "No sir."

"How about Clint?" Tony was beginning to get worried.

"No sir. He isn't picking up."

He knew Pepper would have done it had she not been in Beijing working on international affairs. It was at that moment that he realized that it must have been almost 1am her time when she made that call. That would explain why she was so mad.

He tried calling Steve. He knew he could come and get him. Steve brought Peter with him to work before and it was fine. Tony called him a few times and left a couple messages. Steve was his last chance.

Tony did the buttons of his dress shirt and tucked it into his pants. Tony went back into the bathroom to shave, brush his hair and teeth, and put on some cologne. Before he left his bedroom he picked up his belt, blazer, wallet, watch, and shoes. He'd finish everything else in the main room.

Tony pocketed what needed to be pocketed and slipped his watch on as he entered the kitchen. He took a frozen breakfast sandwich and dropped it into the microwave.

He took out his phone and picked up his search for someone to take care of Peter. Tony really wasn't a very open person. He had many people stored in his phone but a lot of them were just contacts or
assets. No one he could leave a kid with.

He wondered how dead he would be with Steve if he just left Peter with a babysitter from a babysitting website.

No, that definitely was out of the question.

The sound of the microwave brought him back out his thoughts. He juggled the hot sandwich from hand to hand and dropped it on the counter. That and a coffee mixed with a small shot of rum was his breakfast. It wasn't Steve's cooking but it would have to do.

Tony stood over the counter eating as he began contacting as many of the department heads that were going to be at the meeting to be as prepared for this meeting as he could. He needed to be prepared. Hopefully they would be the ones doing more talking than him.

When he finished, Tony dropped his mug in the sink and threw away his trash.

It was 1:48. He needed to leave as soon as he could. If he left then and made it through the afternoon traffic and over to Stark headquarters in the next 30 minutes that would give him another 30 to get ready.

He slipped on his shoes, belt, and jacket.

Tony wiped his face and picked up his keys to go. He pressed the button of the elevator and checked his pockets to make sure he wasn’t forgetting anything. He stepped onto the elevator. Just as the doors began to close he realized what he was forgetting.

Peter.

With Peter sleeping, it felt like old times again, times as a bachelor.

Tony quickly walked back inside, Peter was still down. Tony saw no point in waking him. He went into the nursery and packed a quick bag of a change of clothes, diapers, wipes, and hand towels for all the potential messes. Tony went back into the kitchen and took whatever snacks and food Peter liked; some fruit sauce pouches, a sip cup that he filled with juice, and a few baby jars of colorful mushy foods that Tony didn’t have time to read.

He was jogging as he went up to get Peter out from the living room pit and back up the stairs with Peter in his arms. He shouldered the bag and finally left the floor.

Tony took the car they had used the night before mostly because it had Peter's car seat already inside. It wasn't really the most stylish one there but that wasn't the time to care.

Tony pulled back the straps and carefully placed Peter inside, trying to not wake him. He buckled him in and shut the back door slowly. Tony got in the car left the garage to go to work.

It was at that moment that Tony made the decision that he'd have to take Peter with him to work.

It wouldn't be that bad right? He had a few toys there for him that was mistakenly sent to the office and not his home in the week before Peter and Steve had moved in officially. He was the boss so there was no issue with that either.

*It would be fine...*
Peter had woken up on the way there. He looked curiously at everything he saw and the people who stared at him and Tony as they passed them. It was a new place for him to explore.

It must have been a sight to see their boss with a baby who still in his pajamas at his hip.

"Margret come with me," Tony said as he passed the one new intern that he actually recognized.

She was timid and simple but she was also willing to do anything to please. That was something Tony really didn't want to exploit but desperate times called for desperate measures.

She followed him into his office, in her hands a red folder, notebook, and pens. "Yes, sir." She said quietly.

Tony set Peter down on the rug in the small lounge-like area he had set up off to the side. Peter immediately began crawling around touching everything in his reach.

Tony walked into the side closet and rumbled through it for the toys that he'd bought and had accidentally been brought to his work instead of his home when Peter and Steve had moved in. "Did you get the notes for today's meeting?" He called to her from in the closet. He found the boxes and pulled them out, bringing them over to Peter.

"Yes, sir." She said opening the red folder. "I got emails back from, Jerris in accounting, Grail in HR, Leann in asset management and from Ms. P. I printed out the emails and whatever else they sent."

Tony showed a few of the toys to Peter. Peter took them from him one by one, inspecting each one closely until he laid eyes on the newer toy. At the bottom of the box Tony pulled out a folded metal and plastic contraption. After fiddling with it and unfolding it Tony realized it was a baby walker with wheels and a small table-tray in the front.

Perfect, Peter loved the one at home.

"Great, if you can set those on my desk." Margret nodded and set it down. "And if you could get me a coffee I will love you forever." Tony picked Peter up, putting each of his legs through the holes, he set him in the walker.

"Yes sir." She said. She held the door open hesitating for a moment. "Sir, if I may ask. Who's baby is that?"

Peter let out an excited cry at seeing the open door and began pushing himself over to the opening but Tony caught him before he got too far. Tony hadn't really publicly announced the arrival of Peter yet. He was trying to keep him out of the tabloids as much as he possibly could until the adoption really went through. Then there could be the TV interviews and public statement, but until then Peter was going to be as much of a secret as he could have it.

"A friend's, they needed a babysitter it was an emergency."

Her silence was judgmental, as if asking "who would trust you of all people with a baby?" But at the same time he did have a closet with baby stuff, so maybe he did know what he was doing. She decided to not dwell, and nodded in understanding as she closed the door behind herself.

"Okay Pete," Tony said handing Peter a fruit pouch from the bag and putting a couple blocks in front of Peter. "I'm going to try and get some work done."

He set his alarm to go off in 20 minutes so that he wouldn't be late.
Tony flipped through the pages, trying to take in all the information he could and familiarize himself. Tony was so stressed that he seemed to have reached this alpha level of stress where he just felt nothing but a headache. He took 3 high strength Advil and downed some of the juice from Peter's sip cup.

His eyes went up from the papers to Peter. Peter was pushing himself all over the large office space. He stopped when he saw Tony looking at him. Peter held up one of the blocks and babbled in some baby talk as if trying to tell Tony something. Tony couldn't help but smile a little to himself, at least someone was having fun with all this.

Tony was losing focus, he needed to stay on task.

He spent the next 15 minutes skimming, reading, and rereading the small stack of papers until his phone alarm went off.

Time went by so fast.

Tony was about to go out to the floor that they had all the meeting rooms on when he realized that he still didn't actually have anyone to watch Peter. He couldn't just leave him in his office. Well technically he could, but he knew it was a terrible idea.

As if by fate, Margret came back at just the perfect moment. A light bulb went off in Tony's head. She placed the cup on his desk.

“Margret, how much experience do you have with kids?” This wasn’t a question that Tony actually cared for the answer of, his mind was already made up.

“No-not much. I’ve got some cousins with kids. I had a cat if that means anything.” She wasn’t sure where he was going with this, but she had a pretty good idea. And boy, did she hope he wasn’t about to do it.

Tony picked up his coffee and stacks of paper with one hand and hooked two fingers under the walker and pulled Peter over to the intern. “Peter this is Margret. She’s going to watch you until I get back.”

Peter, who was chewing on the now empty fruit pouch, looked up at her curiously.

“Sir, no.” she was starting to get nervous and didn’t want to be held to this type of responsibility. “I-I can’t. I’m not qualified. I can’t even keep a plant alive.”

Tony didn’t have time for this. “He’ll be fine.” Tony held the door open and pushed Peter through. “Just keep him behind your desk. That bag’s full of stuff to keep him entertained. It will only take 3 hours. Please.”

Margret didn’t like saying no to her boss, "But, but this is another person.”

Tony went back to his desk to pick up the baby bag and pulled out a tablet with a small stand which he clipped onto the tray. After a few swipes he pulled up Netflix. “There he’ll be watching tv the whole time.”

She wasn’t sure how smart it was to be giving a baby a tablet. Yet to her surprise Peter knew exactly what to do with it and within seconds had picked out a show to watch by himself. It was strangely impressive. No this wasn’t time for admiration, “There’s plenty of other people here who are mothers ask them.”
“But I’m asking you.” Tony was basically begging at this point.

“No”

“I’ll give you 500 dollars.”

500 dollars was a lot to this 23 year old; it was only a few hours after all. She accepted her defeat, “Fine. fine.” She sighed, “3 hours only right.”

Tony’s eyes lit up. “Yes. That’s all I swear.” He felt a small weight lift off his back, “Thank-you, thank-you so much.”

She still wasn’t very sure about this.”What if he poops or cries or something?”

“We’ll hope he doesn’t.” Tony needed to be gone like 5 minutes ago. “Bye, Petey be good.” Tony said ruffling Peters messily curled hair. He took a sip from his coffee and power walked to the elevator doors.

Just as he left he could hear Peter beginning to cry. It wasn’t the ‘needs something cry’ but what he dubbed the ‘fake cry’. Tony hated hearing it either way and had to fight not to turn around and just take Peter to that meeting. “It’s fine, just separation anxiety.” he called back to Margret who looked like she was in as much distress as Peter. “He’ll stop when I’m gone.”

Tony hit the button to go up and to the floor which had all the meeting rooms.

He walked out of the elevator and navigated his way down the halls to find the right room.

Funny, Pepper never called him back, Tony thought as he walked.

Since this was where they conducted most of their most important business work it was definitely one of the most impressive floors they had.

The first this that was a seen when one comes off the elevator is a wall that hung a large framed picture of the building’s blueprints. On each side of that wall were the two wide openings that lead to where the real action happened.

Past the wall there was a waiting area with all sorts of refreshments and coffee. The people waiting had leather couches to sit in. The seats were put in what looked like circular clusters. There was always CNN playing on the two large flat screens bolted to the wall and there was also various kinds of Stark tech lying around for anyone to try out. It helped give perspective for some people who came in. To the left was a check in desk to guide any of the guests or notify the hosts.

Tony went passed that, through the people sitting in some of these chairs. He didn't recognize anyone there, no one important enough to stop and greet properly at least.

The meeting rooms were all made of glass, some were tinted for privacy and some were also clear. All of them were furnished with a long marble table, matching seats, a smart-board, and projector.

They were supposed to be meeting in room 5. This was one of their bigger room. The meeting was really going to have a lot of people.

Tony could see two of the assistants he had for these kinds of things already in there setting up everything before he even got to the door. Perks of having glass rooms.

"Everything looks great." Tony said walking into the room dropping into business Stark mode. He
took a grape from the fruit platter in the center of the table. Both the assistants were fresh out of college and other than the fact that they were on the young side, they were very delightful people.

"Thank you, Mr. Stark." Said one of the assistants, Jonathan was his name.

"Anyone here yet?"

“Smithers and Whitmen.” said Deija, the other assistant, without turning around as she set up the projector.

“Yeah, that’s really surprising.” Jonathan said with obvious sarcasm.

Tony couldn’t help but stifle a small smile at that comment, “Hey let’s be nice.” He said in case anyone heard him but he added a wink to show that he agreed.

Smithers and Whitmen were two grumpy old men with sticks up their asses who inherited their wealth (not to say people who do aren’t generally hard workers) and weren’t even their biggest client but sure as hell acted like it. Meaning they wanted to be involved wherever they could whenever possible and it was usually a pain in the ass.

If they were nicer and had some real input then maybe it wouldn’t be so bad. Tony wished he could let them have it one day but Pepper wouldn’t let him. Even if both of them didn’t amount to much, they still held the most influence over fortune 500’s and other corporations. What ever they said was taken on the same level as the word of God. Anyone ever seen The Help, imagine Hilly Holbrook had two other boys and it would be them.

Funnily enough, he hadn’t noticed them when he came in...oh well.

Tony took the seat at his usual place at the end of the table facing the front of the room. He loved that seat, anyone speaking or presenting would be forced to make eye contact with him multiple times. No matter how messed up it sounded, he liked watching the people he didn’t like squirm under the pressure and intimidation business-level Tony Stark brought to the table.

“And what about da Costa?” Tony asked. Shuffling through his note. He was pretty sure he got the important stuff down. Now he’d just need to hope for his short term memory to kick in. “He here yet.”

Roberto da Costa was the one, and probably only, person Tony needed to impress at the meeting. Roberto da Costa was a mutant who went under the alias of Sunspot. He had recently bought out AIM and reformed it. AIM, which used to basically be an organization of evil scientists who supplied weapons and tech to make money and sell to villains to facilitate their agenda, was now a tech organization, headquarters for the New Avengers with the primary goal to do good. If hadn’t been for SHIELD he wouldn’t have even known about him.

To have someone like that working alongside Stark Industries would be insanely amazing. Plus he was pretty much just like Tony Stark in terms of character.

The phone in the room rang and Deija picked up. “The department heads are here.” She told Tony.

“Have them come in.”

Deija relayed his message and hung up. Looks like it’s time for things to get started.

After about a quick 10-minute battle plan of a meeting with his people, they started letting in the guests from the other companies who were all invested into this industry.
They made small talk as they waited for the few stragglers to come in.

People from all over the country had come in, people ranging from representatives to CEO’s and or their heirs were there; all amounting to a little over 20 people.

*How did he even forget something like this?*

When the final person, Roberto da Costa himself, came in they were able to begin.

Tony started with the opening remarks and summed up what the meets was for and goals and all that good stuff.

Then they got down to business.

Their finance and accounting team went up first. They were a group of three. Each of them spoke about everything as a whole. They went over profits, gains, losses, stocks and all that jazz. Plus it had a power point with graphs to go along with it. The whole thing was just as boring as it sounded.

Up next was the part which was a part which Tony was most proud of; the summation of all the new products and milestones they’d had happen in the past fiscal year.

They really advanced and came up with some good things that year. And the visitors were clearly impressed. Except Whitmen and Smithers, who looked just plain bored, but fuck them they weren’t what mattered. Da Costa was the real prize and so far either he didn’t care or had a really good poker face.

Tony wasn’t going to try and let that bother him. Instead he was going to keep envisioning everything he’d be able to do if they got him on the team.

But suddenly a Tony saw something from the corner of his eye that brought him right out of that day dream.

Was that Peter?

No it couldn’t have been, maybe it was all the Advil and he was seeing things. Can Advil do that to a person?

He saw Peter in his walker rolling down the hall and passed the meeting room. Tony could only stare in disbelief. Nobody else seemed to have noticed and so Tony was going to ignore it, even though he knew he couldn’t.

How did Peter get on a whole other floor on his own? This was something on the level of Tommy Pickles.

*Where the hell is Margret?*

Tony fake stretched in order to get a better look at Peter.

Peter was turning around and made quick eye contact with Tony. He quickly ducked down.

The rooms were soundproof on the inside so no one could hear it, but Tony knew, he could sense it, Peter was about to pass by again.

*Where in the seven hells is Margret?*

Tony looked to his side and Peter was there right next to him just behind the glass. And this time
Peter wasn’t moving, he just stood there, eyes fixed on Tony.

Tony tried to wave and make discreet arm movements to signal to Peter to keep moving. Peter looked at it like a game and smiled waving back with similar movements.

“Is that a baby?” Said one of the business women who were sitting in a seat facing the glass.

Shit, now what was he going to do?

Peter began scooting over to Tony but was stopped by the glass barrier between them. He ran into it with a small thud. That got the attention of everyone else in the room.

“That is a baby.” A man spoke up.

“Whose child is he?”

“Where’s his mother?”

Who knew just one baby could grab the full attention of a room of grown adults?

Peter backed up and hit the glass again, reaching out for Tony.

Tony stood quickly in the way of Peter blocking him from view. “We here at Stark Industries-

*Thud.*

“-encourage new parents to bring their children in-”

*Thud.*

“Into work so that they won’t have to leave them behind.”

*Thud.*

Tony turned around and smiled at Peter to get his attention. Peter stopped ramming the glass and rested his hand on it in a way that strangely reminded Tony of Spock at the end of *The Wrath of Khan*. He felt a wave of guilt looking at Peter. Tony really wanted to go out there and pick Peter up and bring him inside with them. But he had this whole thing at stake.

It would be the story told at every gala, auction, meeting, and dinner party for months, and owning up to Peter would probably make things worse.

“I’m sure his parent will be here any minute.” Tony reassured them. “Thomas, please continue.”

Tony motioned the guy who had been speaking before.

A flustered Margret finally came down the hall and into view. She was red-faced and embarrassed. She mouthed ‘I’m so sorry.’ and went to Peter to push him away herself.

Peter didn’t want to go, he wanted to stay with Tony. Peter tried to hold onto the glass but there was nothing to grab onto. Peter frowned and opened his mouth as tears began to form. His hands dragged across the glass wall as Margret pretty much had to force Peter away.

“Aww, poor thing.” One of the older men said with a chuckle.

A few people in the room were laughing, a few were bringing up their own children and grandchildren, and a few looked pretty displeased with the inconvenience that Peter caused. Even da
Costa was smiling, at least it made for a good ice breaker.

They were able to get along with the meeting for another 5 minutes before they were interrupted again.

“Hey, look who it is.” Said the head of HR, pointing at the glass.

Margret was back. She had Peter squirming in her arms, she was struggling to not drop him. He was screaming and crying and doing everything he could to be put down. Margret was obviously considering whether or not to walk in and interrupted yet again.

He could barely watch.

She knocked on the door and quickly let herself in. “S-sir, I am so so sorry. I don't know what to do, he won't stop.” She was breathing heavily, clutching onto Peter tightly. “He followed someone onto the elevator and I didn’t see him go cause I was busy and then I lost him.” Her voice cracked. “And- And then I looked all over for him and I couldn’t find him and then Mary called me and said he was up here. But when I found him—” Margret was on the verge of tears herself. She was clearly embarrassed and Peter’s crying wasn’t of any help at all.

Tony picked Peter up “It’s fine, really.” But that didn’t console her at all, it might have made it worse. “How about you take the rest of the day off.” He put a comforting hand on her shoulder. She nodded and let herself out in a silent rush.

No one said anything, and Tony could feel what must have been 42 or more eyes on him. But he didn’t care, his attention was on Peter. “Shhh, it’s okay.” Tony soothed him as he walked back to his seat. “I’m here.” Tony used the edge of his sleeve to wipe away his tears. Peter clung to Tony in what was somewhat of a half-hug. “I’m not going anywhere, promise.” Tony rubbed Peter’s back and sat back down in his seat. Peter wasn’t crying anymore but hiccuped and whined a little after each one.

“Is this your son?” One of the men asked as if he knew the answer.

Tony’s attention went away from Peter back to the meeting he seemed to have forgotten he was in. “No, this is just someone I’m watching for a friend.” Tony answered nervously. He knew what people were thinking. Tony Stark had an illegitimate child and was trying to hide it from public eyes. Peter was fine now, sitting on Tony’s lap playing with the pen in front of him. “This is Peter.” Tony said downplaying the fact that Tony Stark had a secret baby with him. Tony was willing to place bets that this was going to make it to the papers, if only as a funny story that would be forgotten in a week. That would be the best case scenario.

There was a bit of awkwardness in the room; meetings were always awkward but this was a whole new level.

A few people coughed to fill the silence.

Thomas, who was still standing up front, looked at Tony for direction. Does he keep going or not?

But before he could give him any help Whitmen cut in. “Perhaps we should do this another day.” He suggested as though he was concerned for the sake of everyone else including Tony. “Clearly we should withdraw and reconvene on a day that would be more convenient for us and Mr. Stark here.”

This was not happening, that asshat wasn’t about to take over this meeting.

“No,” Said the same female who had pointed Peter out the first time, “I’m sure it’s fine.”
“I agree with Mr. Whitmen here.” Said Smithers joining into the conversation.

People began talking among themselves, discussing everything. The only ones who weren’t were Stark’s people and da Costa who was watching everything unfold.

“Well, I believe we should have a vote.” Smithers suggested. “Mr. Stark?”

Oh, now he cared what Tony had to say.

Tony’s hands were tied. This whole thing was so humiliating, what else was he could he do but give in? Tony nodded, “Yes, yes fine.” Tony wasn’t actually fine with this at all.

“All in favor of continuing this on another day?” Smithers said raising his hand. Whitmen raised his hand next and many others followed their lead.

It was clear which way this was going, Whitmen finished the vote, “And those opposed.” A little over a handful rose theirs. “Well then.” Whitmen and Smithers both stood. “We will be in touch.”

The others in the room got their things together in preparation to leave. Where they really going to do this now? It must have not been as important as he thought it was after all. But no it really was, so why were they all going to just up and leave like that?

“Yes of course.” Tony said remembering his manners. He held Peter in one arm and walked over and held the door open to say goodbye to everyone properly as they left. Tony shook their hands and wished them well. They said their goodbyes, some apologized for leaving, some were clearly annoyed, and some even stopped to say bye to Peter as well.

The two who were the cause of this exodus were the near to last to leave.

“Hopefully next time we meet your priorities will actually be in order.” Whitmen sniffed. He shook Tony’s hand.

“Yes, quite.” Smithers agreed without shaking Tony’s hand, he just left.

They always managed to put the worse of bad tastes in his mouth.

The last to leave was da Costa. Maybe there was a bright side to all this.

“I’m so sorry for all this.” Tony apologized sincerely, shifted Peter up a little.

Roberto da Costa picked up his coat and made his way to the door. “No, no don’t” He didn’t seem mad at all, “This was definitely one of the more interesting meetings I’ve had. Minus those two asses.” He paused, “I know who they are but-”

Tony held up a hand to stop him, “Don’t worry no one actually likes them.”

He put on his sunglasses just as he left. “No duh. We’ll be in touch.” He shook Tony’s hand, “And bye bye Peter.” he added stroking Peter’s cheek with the back of his finger causing Peter to smile and push his hand away. With a small casual salute he left.

Tony was left with his assistants.

They looked at each other then Tony. “Well, that went well.” Jonathan said trying to lighten the mood.

“No actually it didn’t.” Tony didn’t mean to snap at him, but he was really frustrated overall. He left
the room without another word.

Tony was quick to regather his things from his office and go home. He knew all too well how fast word traveled in the office, and really he was just ready to crawl back into bed and pretend the day never happened.

Tony spent the whole ride home overthinking everything that had happened, how he could have prevented it, and all those embarrassing mistakes he made. Tony wasn’t going to blame Peter, but he knew none of that would have happened if he didn’t have Peter with him in the first place.

Steve came home just past sunset. He’d had a pretty good day.

SHIELD had just built a new training room that was basically like virtual reality, so he had spent a lot of time in there. He had some new trainees come in recently, and he was probably going to have his hands full with them soon. Steve loved being a mentor and leader sometimes. And now he was back at the tower where he’d get to see Peter and he were even a little happy to see Tony (even though he wouldn’t ever admit it right out). Natasha and Clint were coming home from their DC trip very soon.

Yup, everything was going pretty well for him.

“Hello.” Steve called when he stepped out onto the floor.

No response.

He tried again. “Hello.” He didn’t see Tony in the living room or kitchen, he went to Peter’s nursery, “Hello?”

Tony was there sitting in the rocking chair with Peter sleeping on his lap. The room was dark minus the small night light in the room, giving it a foreboding feeling. He didn’t say anything but stare at Steve.

“What are you doing in the dark?” Steve said, he could sense something was wrong but didn’t want to pry.

Tony sighed and got up to put Peter in his crib. “No reason.” He said coolly walking past Steve.

Okay, strange. Steve followed him to the kitchen, “How was your day?” Steve made some small talk to alleviate the tension he could feel.

Tony sighed yet again and went to his bar to pour himself a drink. He downed it quickly and poured another one quickly. “Oh I’ll tell you.” Tony laughed bitterly. He sat on one of the stools nearest to him. “So turns out I had work today. And you know what I had to do?” Tony took another sip and didn’t wait for a response from Steve to continue. “I took Peter to work. And I thought ‘hey how bad could it be?’. Well the answer is really bad.”

Steve found this pretty amusing, but he was trying to hide it. “And then?” Steve rummaged the fridge to make some dinner.

“So then I had to leave him with an intern. And the freaking Rugrat escaped and she lost him.” He finished his second cup and this time filled it with Jack Daniels instead of the stuff he had before. “And I didn’t even know until I saw him outside the meeting room causing a whole freaking scene.
So then he threw a tantrum cause the intern took him away. Then the intern freaked out and brought him to me. And then those assholes I’m forced to work with postponed my meeting, ruining my chances with Roberto da Costa.”

Steve was thankful his face was hidden by the fridge door at the moment, he had to hold in his own laughter at this whole fiasco. “That sucks.” Steve said shutting the fridge door, arms full with ingredients to make a broccoli and cheese soup. “So then what did you do.”

“What else could I do? I came home, watched TV, and ordered a late take out lunch.”

“So this Roberto, was he going to be your next conquest.” Steve needed to change the subject before he said the wrong thing.

Tony finished his third glass, “No, he owns AIM now, I was going to see if we could do some business together. But I probably could have tapped that. Especially if Peter didn’t try playing bumper cars with a glass wall.” An anger-driven pressure built in his chest.

Steve couldn’t help it anymore. He snorted a laugh. He hoped Tony didn’t notice.

But of course he did. “So this is all funny to you.” Tony was already pissed just talking about the day's events, Steve finding it humorous wasn’t any better. “It’s all a big joke to you, huh.”

Steve knew he was going to regret that, “No, just,” Steve was being careful with his words, “It is pretty funny when you think about it.”

“I don’t get it.”

“That’s because it happened to you.”

Tony poured himself a fourth glass. “Oh, okay I get it now. You just like laughing at me.”

“Tony I think you’ve had enough for one hour.” Steve hated his drinking habits sometimes.

Tony heavily placed the glass on the bar counter. “Don’t tell me what to do.” Tony said near to shouting.

Steve flinched at the noise, he hadn’t expected it. “Look I’m sorry, okay.”

Tony wasn’t stopping just yet, “No, no it’s not okay. You always seem to think that you’re better than me, and that’s okay I don’t really care that much honestly. But what’s not okay is making it feel like my problems are less relevant than yours. Do you have any idea how important this was for me and the thousands of people who work for me. Other people’s jobs are at stake here. But you don’t care it’s just a giant joke. Alright okay.” He finished on a hint of sarcasm.

“Listen.” Steve put down the knife and turned to look at Tony. “I never said that I’m better than you. And I’m sorry your day didn’t go very well.” Steve was trying to be the level headed one here, “But you can’t just expect everything to go your way because of who you are.”

“It would have gone so much better if I didn’t have Peter.” Tony mumbled quietly.

Yet not quiet enough for Steve to not hear. “Excuse me?”

Tony regretted what he said, but it was done, no going back. “You heard me or are you just so old that you’re starting to loose your hearing too.” Part of him just needed to be mad to let everything out, “Peter caused all this.”
"He’s a baby, don’t put the blame on him.” Steve said slowly losing his temper. "All because you're mad doesn't mean you should act like a child."

Tony stood and walked up to Steve to get to his level. “I’ll say whatever I want. This is my house, my rules, and I will do whatever I want whenever I want. If you’ve got a problem you can leave.” This was probably the first real fight they’d had since their failed date. “Got it captain?” He said in an almost threatening voice.

Steve wouldn’t say he was afraid, but this was a new, darker side of Tony Stark he had never seen before. He had no idea how to respond to this. Was Tony kicking him out, or was he just angry and this would blow over by the next day. But he refused to give Tony an upper hand. He stared him back down hard, “Crystal, Iron Man.”

Tony felt uncomfortable and broke eye contact with him first. He stormed off through the atrium towards the balcony doors. “I can’t take this, I wasn’t cut out for this kind of life.” He vented. Tony opened the doors to the balcony and walked out onto it.

“What do you think you’re doing?” Steve said following him.

“Going out.”

Tony stuck his hand into what Steve had thought was a flower pot until he withdrew with one of his Iron Man gauntlets and gloves over his arm. He made a fist and the hand glowed, causing two spots to illuminate on the floor. Tony stepped each foot on a tile and the rest of the armor came out and covered over Tony. He was now pretty much suited up without the helmet.

“So that’s it, you’re just going to ditch your son to go out for a good time?” Steve yelled over the start up of Tony’s suit. “Typical Tony Stark.” He added sourly.

Tony felt a pang in his chest. “He’s not my son.” Tony said sternly poking a finger into Steve’s chest. The metal came out from his collar and down over his face to form the helmet. “I never asked for any of this and most of all I didn’t ask to become a father.” He shouted his last words in the mechanical echoey voice that came with wearing the suit and jumped off the balcony. He was free falling for a few moments until he boosters kicked in, he flew off to god knows where. "I never asked for this." He repeated to himself quietly.

Steve walked back inside and slammed the door shut.

He was so conflicted. Steve didn’t know if he was mad or frustrated. He didn’t know what he did and didn’t regret saying, it all happened so quickly. He needed to clear his head.

Steve finished his dinner and ate it alone. He finally went back to his room to get his phone and check where Clint and Nat were. Steve really wanted to talk with someone about everything.

They decided to crash at Clint’s place and were coming back in time for breakfast the next day.

Steve didn’t want to be in the tower alone with Tony, part of him was hoping that Tony didn’t come back until the next day either.
Reconciliation

Chapter Summary

A continuation of last chapter...picks up a few hours later.

Chapter Notes

I didn't like how I left things off so I decided to write a bit of an addition to the previous chapter. It's kinda divergent of my original battle plan. The next chapter will pick up on the plot. Anyways...thanks you guys for staying and baring with me. I've got like 2 weeks left of school so expect more updates soon. So yeah...enjoy!

Steve hit the punching bag hard, sending an echoing thud throughout the gym and splitting it, spilling sand all over the floor the training facility Tony had in Stark Tower. That was the third one so far.

He sighed, maybe that was enough for one night.

It was 1am, maybe more, which was pretty late by Steve's standards. But he couldn’t have slept even if he wanted to, not after all that had happened in the last couple hours between him and Tony.

Steve was so heated and angry that he found himself leaving Peter to sleep and going down a few floors to the facilities that Tony had made for the four of them for workouts, training, conditioning, and all that good stuff. They had pretty much everything that they could think of; classic gym equipment and technology such as robots and computers alike.

Steve channeled everything into working out and using that time to clear his head. But in reality, it may have made it worse. Steve nitpicked all bits of what had happened and couldn’t help but feel mixed about the whole thing, even the parts that he shouldn’t have blamed himself for.

Had he said too much? Had he said too little? What could he have done to prevent everything from escalating so quickly?

Those questions were all overshadowed by Tony’s last words that wouldn't stop playing over and over in his head.

'This is my house, my rules, and I will do whatever I want whenever I want. If you’ve got a problem you can leave.'

And.

'I never asked for any of this and most of all I didn’t ask to become a father.'

Steve was haunted by those words. What were they supposed to mean? They sounded as if Tony wasn’t actually happy with Steve living with him. They didn’t get along all the time, yes, but not once did Tony ever say he wasn’t welcome or a nuisance in his home.
Hell, Tony was the one who suggested he come live with him.

Okay, well it wasn’t really suggested so much as Tony convincingly forced him to move in willingly.

But Peter was who Steve couldn’t stop bringing his thoughts back to.

He felt bad for referring to Peter as their “son”. He was technically, but it felt wrong, as though by taking the role of parent parents they were erasing Mary and Richard from the picture. Steve was almost certain that Tony felt the same. Steve wished he could have taken that one back.

That wasn’t really the unsettling bit, though, it was the bit where Tony essentially said he didn’t want Peter or the life with him.

Steve knew that that may have just been the anger or maybe a little of the alcohol talking, but that didn’t mean Tony hadn’t ever thought about the life they both had lost and gain because of Peter building up to that moment.

He wiped his sweaty forehead, slicking some of his hair back. Steve picked that broken bag and put it with the other two. Tony had upgraded everything, meaning adding more weight to the fitness machines and purchasing the most thick and durable of punching bags. Not durable enough apparently.

He opened the broom closet to find a broom and dustpan to clean up the mess he had made. There was sand and chalky powder everywhere.

He swept it all into a pile and crouched down to push the pile into the dustpan.

It took a couple trips to get a much of it as he could off the floor and into the garbage. All his actions were mechanical, almost subconscious. His mind was elsewhere.

What was he going to do?

Steve knew that this whole experience was overwhelming and crazy, he knew this, but that didn’t keep Steve from being mad at Tony for everything.

They were moving so far forward, but now it felt as if they had taken 10 steps back.

If he wasn't ready or didn't want all this, then maybe Steve should leave. His job paid him well enough to be able to live on his own and pay for everything him and Peter would need.

Steve truly loved Peter and would do whatever seemed like the best thing for him at any given time. Did that mean taking Tony out of the picture?

Steve dismissed the thought. No, he was pretty sure that Tony cared for Peter too, even if he said he didn't.

Leaving over a fight would be a petty move. It would do more harm than good. He'd have to make it work for the time being.

Steve dumped the contents into the trashcan and turned around to pick up the final bit of in the dirt pile.

"Sir," Jarvis's voice reverberated off the hard concrete walls of the room. "Master Peter is in need." He informed him, then setting Steve up as if he were getting a call. Peter's cries replaced Jarvis's
voice.

Sometime ago Tony had programmed Jarvis to pick up Peter's crying and have him respond as if he was a phone call, since apparently it was easier than having to code a whole new thing. Steve didn't know how it worked something about functions and voice recognition software...Tony explained it once even though he wasn't actually able to keep up or understand it for that matter.

“Thank you Jarvis.” Steve said, “Can you-” He wasn’t sure what to say to stop the noise. “End it.” He wasn’t sure if those were the right words. But the crying stopped, so it must have been enough.

Steve swept up the rest of the mess and threw it away, quickly dropping the broom and dustpan off, and put away all the equipment he could before he went to go back up to the floor where they lived.

Steve wasn’t in too much of a rush. Peter didn’t sound like he was in trouble, and he had read somewhere that if they don’t try self-soothing then he’d never be able to go through one night on his own.

The training room, wasn’t actually a “room” but took up two floors near the upper middle of the building. And since Steve so happened to take the slower elevator, he knew it was going to be a while.

He pulled up the video feed of Peter’s baby monitor on his phone as he waited to get up there.

Peter was standing, using the railing to hold himself up, crying. He paused for a moment to look at the door if anyone was coming, then started up again. Peter was really starting to learn his way around things. Steve smiled to himself, at least he knew that Peter would be able to wait a little.

Steve held his phone to his side, Peter’s crying still coming from it. He looked up at the buttons to see where he was, 7 more floors to go.

Steve folded his arms and leaned up against the wall.

This was giving him more time to unfortunately think. How was he even supposed to deal with Tony when he got back to the tower? He could use the silent treatment, but that wouldn’t work. He could try avoiding him but that wouldn’t last long. He could apologize, but not unless Tony did first. Tony had more to be sorry for than him.

Steve looked down thinking. The silence wasn’t very helpful either.

Wait, silence?

Steve looked at his phone. Peter had stopped crying. There was a dark figure in the nursery moving closer and closer to him.

Steve felt his hands go cold. How did someone come in with being alerted? Tony said that his security system could put the NSA’s to shame. He shouldn’t have left Peter alone. He needed to get up there and fast.

There was no way to make it go faster.

The stairs, he could run up the stairs, he knew he'd be able to make it up there before the elevator. He pressed the button of the next upcoming floor to get off and run the rest of the way.

Steve’s heart was beating so quickly, it felt as if it was skipping some beats. He didn’t know what he’d do if Peter was hurt under his care.
Steve slammed his hand on the elevator, why was this damn thing so slow.

He looked down at his phone. What else could he do?

There was a glowing blue light in the room. The figure reached out and turned on the light.

*It was Tony.*

That goddamn son of a bitch.

Steve felt his knees go weak with relief. He had to hold on to the railing to steady himself. He had to take a few deep breathes to get it back to a steady pace.

God, Tony is going to be the actual end of him.

He watched to see what Tony was going to do.

The majority of Tony’s armor was already off. He must have just gotten back. He took his gloves and dropped them into the rocking chair. He sat down to take the boots off.

Peter reached out and let out a whine to get his attention.

“I know, I hear you.” Tony said struggling to get the first boot off. It must have been one of his older models. But Peter was impatient as ever and began crying once again. “Just give me a minute. Where’s the goody two-shoes anyways?” He asked out loud, finally pulling off the other boot.

Steve knew he was talking about him, he didn’t care. He wanted to see what Tony was going to do at this point.

Tony tossed the boots next to the rocking chair. He got back up slowly with a groan as if he were an old man or something. “Okay, come here.” Tony said in a baby voice lifting Peter up out of the crib. A voice Steve had hardly ever heard him use before unless in mockery.

The doors to the elevator opened and stalled for a moment. This wasn’t Steve’s floor so he waited for the door to close and move on up. He couldn’t take his eyes off the phone screen.

Peter didn’t stop crying at being taken out of his crib. “You’re fine.” He rested Peter so that his head was on his shoulder. Tony paced the room, patting Peter’s back gently. Peter gripped tightly onto Tony wailing into his ear. “Come on, you have nothing to cry about. You don’t have to work or go to school, or pay taxes yet.” Peter was obviously still too young to understand Tony’s humor. “And besides,” he added, “You’re a Parker, Parkers are and will always be amazing people.” Tony seemed to have been saying it more to himself than Peter. It sounded painful for him to say.

Steve felt a little warmth build in his chest. It was the first time he had heard him even bring up Mary and Richard since their funeral all those months ago.

Nothing Tony did seemed to be working. He shifted Peter from his shoulder into a cradling position. With one hand Tony turned the lights back off and turned on the nightlight that projected softly glowing stars on the ceiling that rotated like a mobile.

“Sshhsshh.” Tony whispered continuing the small circling steps around the room.

He then did something Steve would never have expected.

“Come stop your crying it will be all right.” Tony murmured in a quiet voice. He covered Peter’s hand with his own. “Just take my hand hold it tight.”
Steve recognized those words, they were part of a song he heard once in some cartoon movie Tony made him watch. But Tony wasn’t trying to sing them. It was more of a sweet recital then singing.

Peter stopped crying to listen to Tony’s voice. “I will protect you from all around you.” Seeing that Peter had calmed down, Tony pushed in equipment off the rocking chair to sit in it himself. “I will be here don’t you cry.” He pushed back and forth in the chair not once taking his eyes off Peter.

Peter was entranced by him. He laid against Tony’s chest, holding up one hand to stroke Tony’s stubbly face mindlessly.

Steve was stunned by what he was watching unfold.

“Sir this is your floor.” Jarvis’s voice interrupted.

Steve looked up, he hadn’t even realized that the doors had opened to the right floor already. “Thank you Jarvis.” He said as he walked out into the hall, not going further than that.

He turned his attention back to his phone.

“-small, you seem so strong. My arms will hold you, keep you safe and warm.” Tony’s voice was slowly coming closer to a level of singing.

This was a whole side of Tony Steve had never seen until now. It was as if the man who was in that room cradling and singing lullabies to Peter and the man who had just wished him away were two completely different people. What had caused the change of heart? Steve attempted to screenshot this moment on his phone, even if he wasn’t sure if he had done it right.

Steve could see Peter fighting to not fall asleep but was ultimately failing.

Tony had noticed it too. He held Peter closer, patting his back to the rhythm of the rocking chair. “Cause you’ll be in my heart. Yes you’ll be in my heart from this day on from now and forever more.” Tony stroked the top of Peter’s head the same way Mary used to when she put Peter to bed.

Steve was feeling a mod podge mix of emotions. He felt sad, guilty, soft, and something he couldn’t describe other than a fuzzy feeling.

“You’ll be in my heart. No matter what they say you’ll be in my heart always.” Peter lost the fight and had fallen asleep once again.

Tony shifted a little. He placed a small kiss on the top of Peter’s head. Not withdrawing, he whisper what Steve made out as “I’m so sorry.” before adding one more light kiss in the same place. Tony stayed in the nursery, not bothering to put Peter down just yet. He looked as if he were thinking long and hard about something.

Steve hadn’t seen Tony showing such genuine affection before. Something about it made him feel warm inside, He put his phone down finally. Steve went into the kitchen to get a glass of water.

Any doubt in Tony’s love for Peter was obviously diminished now. Sure Tony was hard headed, rude, standoffish, and a player sometimes, but he was also caring and kind sometimes as well (even if he didn’t like to show it). Steve would admit, not out loud, that he sometimes over looked the good in him.

Steve made up his mind. He knew what to do.

He sat down on one of the stools at the counter and waited for Tony to come out.
Some 10 minutes later Tony came down the hall holding the Iron Man suit parts in his arms. He met eyes with Steve but said nothing and dropped the pieces out on the balcony. He went over to his bar and poured himself something that Steve didn’t really get a good look at.

“Can we,” Steve asked hesitantly circling his fingers around the rim of his glass, “Can we just talk.”

At first, there was no answer, Tony seemed to be contemplating whether or not to answer. But he gave in, “About what.” He was apprehensive to hear what Steve had to say.

Steve couldn’t look at him. He was going to have to put aside his pride for this one. “I want to apologize. I was rude and forceful and I know how you feel about this whole thing but I ignored it. And” Steve couldn’t think of what else to say. He knew Tony had way more to be sorry for then him, but Steve was going to choose to be the bigger man, as he saw it. “And, and wow this is hard.”

“And you’re a bossy know-it-all who gets off on always being the good kid.” Tony added with a hint of humor.

Steve wasn’t completely sure what that was supposed to mean even though he knew it wasn’t meant to be anything good. “Yeah sure whatever.” Steve folded his arms.

“This is really hurting you isn’t it.” Tony said pouring a second drink and coming over to sit one stool away from Steve.

“That obvious?”

Tony took a sip, “You are you.” he was attempting to be funny so Steve went along with it. But going along with it was looking more like glaring. “Okay I’ll give. I’m sorry too. I shouldn’t have freaked out and blamed everything on a baby. I shouldn’t just left the way I did. We both shouldn’t have been shouting at each other.” Steve nodded in agreement with that one. “Am I forgetting anything.”

“You forgot that you’re arrogant, drink a lot, and have way too much confidence for your own good.” Steve added quickly without having to even think about it.

Tony laughed at the response, “Okay, point to you.” Steve smiled back.

They’d made up. The atmosphere felt less heavy or awkward. This was probably the first time they actually confronted their problems instead of ignoring and made some attempt to make sense of it all.

They sat in a content silence looking away from each other for a few moments until Tony sighed running his hand through his hair. “What are we doing here?”

Steve dropped his cup in the sink. “We’re trying to make the best of a crazy situation.”

“Oh it’s crazy alright.”

“We’re not the Andersons here. It’s not going to be some cookie cutter life with perfect everything and baked pies after every meal.” Steve said.

Tony didn’t seem to care about what Steve had just said as much as he cared about one part of the comment. “Wait, Andersons. Have you been watching Father Know Best.” Tony couldn’t believe what he was hearing.

“Yeah you said something about it a while ago and Jarvis helped me set it up.” Steve knew this conversation was beginning move elsewhere, not that he’d object to that. “It’s nice.” Tony had a
cooky grin on his face. “Stop it, don’t judge me.” Steve laughed.

“No. No it’s not that. You made a pop culture reference.” Tony got up off the stool. “Not the right decade but that doesn’t matter. You made an actual reference to a tv show. Ha, I win.”

Steve wasn’t aware that there was a competition going on in the first place.

He picked up a marker and went up to the calendar on the fridge. “This is a momentous day. On this day the Captain America made a pop culture reference.” He marked it on the calendar as if it were a holiday.

Steve rolled his eyes, growing annoyed with Tony. “Stop.”

“Cake, let’s have some cake. We need to celebrate.” Tony said looking for some of the leftover cake in the fridge.

Okay, now Tony was exaggerating. Steve was never going to make a reference to anything ever again. He looked at the clock on the stove, 2:17am. He didn’t feel tired at all.

“Now if we were living under any other circumstance,” Tony set out two slices of cake, “I’d say we go out clubbing, but that just might kill your 95-year-old ass.”

Steve knew he was referring to the fact that they had a one-year-old in the other room as to why they weren’t going to do anything like clubbing not his age, but Steve wasn’t going to bring that up.

“So let’s see you try that again.” Tony said with all seriousness, “Try making another one.”

Steve was done. It was late, he wasn’t putting up with it anymore. The joke was dead. Without saying anything Steve got up and began to head over to his room.

“What, where are you going?” Tony said with a hint of laughter. He was really enjoying himself. “Come on, was it something I said.” Tony knew that he was being obnoxious, but Steve wasn’t actually mad so he kept it going.

“Goodnight Tony.” Steve said in an annoyed voice without turning around.

“Night Margret Anderson.” Tony teased, “I’m going to start calling you that, is that okay?” He called after him. Steve was ignoring Tony. “Okay, thanks Margret.”

Steve couldn’t help but smile at himself during the exchange, but he had no idea why. Steve closed the door to his room and went to bed.

Tony remaining in the kitchen finishing both slices of cake with a tall glass of milk. He was thinking about the last five minutes.

They’d gotten over this so quickly, maybe too quickly. That was one of the few positive things they had going for each others. They were able to let some things go until they came back up for another time. Tony was happy that all these arguments they’ve had were easy to get past, even if this one was the worst yet. What he really feared was the day they would fight and they wouldn’t be able to forgive or forget.

But those were thoughts for a different day.
The Night Thor Came to Dinner

Chapter Summary

Remember that time Clint invited Thor over for dinner?

Chapter Notes

Hey! I know it's been pretty long, but guess what? I'm done with school so there'll be way more updates to come. So I know this is starting to be a really slow, slow burn but please bear with me. Patience is a virtue and all that jazz... Anyways, thanks to those who have been keeping up with this fic, those who binge read this and now it's 3am and you have no idea what you're doing with your lives, and to those in between. You all have no idea how much the response I've gotten means to me, so enjoy!!!!

“He was so cool.” Clint said as he balanced Peter to stand on his lap. “You guys should have seen him.” He added looking over to Steve who was still setting the table for dinner.

“I think he’s in love.” Natasha mocked in a dreamy voice, as she walked passed Tony to get the salad bowl and tongs.

“I just might be.” Clint said to keep the joke going.

“Is this the same Thor you nearly shot in New Mexico a few years ago.” Tony shut the stove off mixed the stir-fry one last time. Steve usually did the cooking and Tony, the assistant. “As in the SHIELD menace.”

Clint lowered Peter to sit on his lap. “Yeah but he works with us now. So it doesn’t count. He’s changed.”

Steve added some napkins to the center of the table and picked Peter up from Clint to lock him in the highchair. “And he’s a god?” Steve asked skeptically.

“Yeah like the ones you read in the books. Thor Odinson, god of thunder.”

“He’s such an airhead though.” Nasha sat down next to Clint and waited for Steve and Tony to take their seats as well.

Clint took a piece of lettuce from the salad bowl. “Yeah,” he said in between chewing, “But it’s not as bad now, he’s really awesome trust me.”

“I feel like I’m gonna be replaced.” Natasha nudged him.

Steve sat down after settling Peter in and Tony followed with the large bowl of chicken stir-fry. He placed it on the table. He held his hands out like a proud chef and said, “Dig-” Everyone grabbed a fork to serve themselves before Tony got to finish, “In” He finished sounding a little irritated. He sat down got his own plate. “Freaking savages.” He whispered under his breath.
“You guys have got to meet him though.” Clint wasn’t going to let this thing go anytime soon.

Steve put some noodles, chicken, and vegetables in a bowl and broke them up to give to Peter to feed himself. Peter still had trouble eating with a fork and spoon so he tended to end up eating with his hands, which was just fine. It was also saving them time since they didn’t have to always spoonfeed Peter anymore.

Steve put the bowl on the tray of the high chair and began eating his own food. “Maybe we should meet this Thor guy.” Steve said giving in and looking to Tony for his approval.

“I don’t see why not.” Tony said catching on to Steve’s look. “We could have him over for dinner or something.”

Clint looked down at his plate. “Good.” He twisted a few noodles onto his fork. “Cause I kind of already invited him over for next weekend.” Clint said quickly, shoving the fork into his mouth before anyone could ask him any questions.

Thor came to their floor not by the elevator or even the stairs but by a clap of thunder and a bolt of lightning striking the balcony, he appeared.

A bit dramatic in Steve’s taste.

Tony hid behind Steve clinging protectively onto Peter. Of everything in the world, the most irrational thing that could get Tony spooked sometimes if he didn’t see them coming, were thunderstorms.

Clint went over to the glass door and opened it to let Thor in.

He looked like the person they had all seen in the pictures Clint showed them, except he was wearing clothes more fitting of this time period. A normal looking red blazer, blue jeans, and tennis shoes. The only part of him which would let them know he was really Thor was the large ornate hammer he was carrying.

“Barton.” Thor said in a loud booming voice that had caught them all off guard. “You look well.” He said clasping him in an embrace which lifted Clint off the ground.

“Yeah.” Clint said as the air was being squished from his lungs. “You too buddy.” Thor put him down when he remembered how fragile some humans can be. “Here let me introduce you to my friends.” Clint said bringing him down the steps into the living room.

“This is Tony Stark, better known as Iron Man.” Clint said as Tony came out from behind Steve. “And Peter.” Tony wasn’t really sure what to think of him yet. But Peter was sucked in; he couldn’t stop staring at him. Peter reached out to try and grab Thor, but Tony stopped him.

“This is Steve Rogers, aka Captain America.” Clint said pointing to Steve who stood next to Tony.

“Ah, this is your mother as you put it.”

Tony snorted a laugh. Steve felt a little heat rise to his cheeks as he looked at Clint with a polite face and eyes asking for an explanation before something happened.

“No, no, he is not my actual mother.” Clint quickly corrected him, “He’s just kind of like our mom.”
Thor looked at him for a moment to compute what he was saying. “So he’s the maternal figure but not your birth mother.”

“Yes, like that.” Clint was happy to move on from that embarrassing moment. He’d have to remember to ask Thor later why he thought Steve would have even given birth to him in the first place.

Finally he came to Natasha. She wasn’t the greatest at meeting new people, she still promised to put on a good face for Clint though. “And this is-”

“Natasha.” She said taking his hand, “Romanoff, Black Widow.”

So introductions were over, now what? They didn’t even know what to talk about. There was an awkwardness that began to build.

“We’ve got two turkeys in the oven when that’s over dinner will be ready.” Steve said with a small smile, that made him subconscious of just how much of a housewife he was sounding like; maybe he really was the “mom”.

Tony switched Peter to one arm to check his phone quickly. “And Peppers on her way up now.” Tony slid his phone back into his pocket. “Jarvis can we get a time check on the oven.”

There was a pause and Jarvis said, “7 minutes, sir.”

Thor, startled by the disembodied voice, took arm, wielding his hammer. “What form of sorcery is this?”

“No.” Clint said, quickly trying to explain before Thor could do anything irrational that could cause any damage. “It’s just Jarvis.”

Thor put his hammer back down to his side, less tense now, “Jar-vis?”

“He’s the home automated system.” Tony said stepping in. This was his field. Thor looked at him still confused a bit. “Think of him like an invisible servant that’s also a friend.” Thor nodded he seemed to be getting it now. “Go ahead try it. Just ask any question.”

“Jarvis.” Thor shouted, making sure he could hear him. “What’s 2 plus 2?”

“4” Jarvis answered.

An excited, almost childish, smile grew across Thor’s face. “This truly is witchcraft.”

Tony was beginning to like this guy. “No it’s science.” Tony said patting him on the shoulder.

There was a ding as Pepper walked out of the elevator. “Hey you guys.” She called over the railing. “I see our guest is here.” She set her bags on the counter and came down the steps.

“I see our guest is here.” She set her bags on the counter and came down the steps.

“Hello Steve.” She said getting on her toes to kiss his cheek. “Clint.” He received the same treatment. “Nat” Natasha’s smile looked more like a grimace. She hated people invading her bubble. “Tony.” She said kissing his cheek. “And Petey.” She cooed tickling, making him squeal excitedly, before she took him away from Tony. “And you must be Thor. I’ve heard a lot about you.”

“I believe we haven’t reached that level of kinship to receive the same greeting yet.” He said with a smoldering smile. Pepper smiled back, hoping it was humor that Thor was aiming for.

“What’s got you in such a good mood?” Tony said wiping at his face in case she had left a lipstick
Pepper sat down with a glint of knowing in her eyes, “I’ll tell you later, but you are going to freak out.” She said.

Part of Tony wished she’d come out with it already, but he knew that for the night all work related talk unless someone brought it up first was off the table, as per Steve’s request.

“Fine.” He said sitting down next to her.

The alarm for the turkeys went off.

“I’ll get them.” Steve said. “Nat can you help me set the table.”

Natasha didn’t need to be asked twice. “Yeah of course. Excuse us.” She said with a smile to Thor.

Steve shut the timer off. He opened the oven doors and set both turkeys on the stove to cool. One would have sufficed to feed all of them but Clint had warned that Thor had the appetite of all of them combined. So to play it safe, Steve made double the amount of a normal sized meal.

“We’ll let this cool and go set up the table downstairs.” He said walking with Natasha to the elevator.

The reality was that they weren’t going to be able to fit everyone at the table on their floor so they were going to have to use what Tony referred to as ‘the party floor.’

And that wasn’t actually an understatement. The whole floor was made to hold almost every type of party spanning from a dinner party to a party party.

If there was a party being held it would start as soon as one got off the elevator. The main open area was pretty much like a club. There was a dance floor in the middle surrounded by the couches, lounge areas and tables high and low. There was also a balcony mostly made of plexiglass that surrounded the whole perimeter of this floor that could be accessed through the glass steps on the side. The upper part was pretty much like the bottom but smaller. Both levels were equipped with full bars. It felt strangely dead without the music, lights, or people. Even if Steve had never seen any of it in action.

But this wasn’t the space they were using.

Steve opened the door to the side. It was plain and bland, unless someone pointed it out, no one could notice it.

This room had a large fancy wooden dining table that could fit nearly a dozen people at a time with a small kitchen in the back that could be entered using the swinging door that was on the other end of the room. The decor was classy and old fashioned for Tony, but Steve thought it was nice.

It was rumored that Tony had an even larger dining room, but they were still yet to see it.

They both went into the small kitchen, where most of the food warm was already on the counters. “I’ll get the plates you get the food.” Natasha said her voice slightly echoing off the walls.

Steve began putting the mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, greens, cornbread, and sweet potatoes each in their own respective bowls and plates to be set at the table.

They were essentially having a thanksgiving dinner in the beginning of June, not that Steve minded. These were some of his favorite foods. The turkey could have been made in that kitchen too, but
Steve had wanted to keep an eye on them.

“So what do you think of him so far?” Natasha called to him as she put down the plates, forks, knives, and spoons.

“Who Thor?” Steve said scooping the mashed potatoes out of the pot and into a serving dish. “He seems okay.”

“Not as godly as I expected.” Natasha added. “Clint really hyped him up. And what was with Clint telling him our aliases, does he trust him that much?”

“I don’t know. He seems average enough.” Steve agreed. “Maybe a little out there, but average.” He came out with two plates, set them on the table and went back for a few more.

Soon they were done and headed back upstairs together to get the main meal and the rest of their group. “Do you like him?” Steve asked.

Natasha took a moment to answer, “I don’t know. As long as I’m the alpha bestfriend I don’t care.”

They reached the floor where everyone was in the living room talking.

“Guys, foods ready.” Natasha told them leaning over the railing, “Come on.”

The rest of them came up the steps.

“Hey Clint come here and help me with the other one.” Steve said, picking up one of the trays.

Clint came over and picked up the other one. He struggled for a moment but quickly regained his balance.

“Allow me.” Thor said taking the tray from Clint. “It looks rather heavy for you.”

Clint thanked him and they all piled into the elevator at once. Surprisingly, it was spacious enough to hold them all comfortably.

“So you have super strength.” Thor said noticing that Steve wasn’t struggling at all with the tray and trying to strike up conversation.

“Yeah.” Steve was caught a little off guard, it wasn’t something people usually brought up. “It was part of this program I did awhile back.”

“More like a century.” Tony added.

Steve fought the urge to elbow him in the ribs. “But yeah, super strength, faster healing, better endurance.” Steve added quietly in a mildly annoyed voice, “The ideal soldier.”

“And no getting drunk.” Clint interjected.

“Really.” Thor was taken more aback by that than the rest of this mortal’s abilities.

“Yeah.” He seemed a little embarrassed. “My metabolism pretty much takes away the effects of drinks faster than I can drink them. I guess there’s just not anything strong enough yet.”

“Which is probably why he’s the most level headed of us all.” Natasha said. They all laughed at that one.
They were getting along.

Tony led them to the dining room and Natasha held the door open for Thor and Steve.

“This is a nice room.” Thor said, remembering earth manners.

“Just set it down here.” Steve said motioning to where he was setting down the turkey he was holding. Thor followed his guidance. “Uh, Clint can you get the knives from there.” He pointed at the door to the kitchen.

Clint nodded and went to retrieve the carving tools.

Steve wiped his hands on the washcloth he had used as an oven mitt. “Okay everyone ready?” He said.

“Steve we’ve been waiting all day for this.” Natasha said.

Pepper still had Peter with her. “Where’s the high chair?” She asked Tony.

Tony and Steve looked at each other for a moment as if nonverbally asking who would be the one to go back up to retrieve it. “I’ll go.” Tony volunteered. He knew he’d be able to use that as an excuse for something later. “Be right back.”

They all sat down and waited for Tony to come back. The order went Pepper, Thor, and Natasha next to one another on one side and Clint, Steve, and the empty seat which would have been filled by Tony on the other. Only half the table was filled which caused for an unnecessary amount of extra space, about as much as there was at the table itself.

No one was saying anything.

Peter on the other hand was pretty entertained by sitting next to Thor. He bent forward and grabbed onto Thor’s red sleeve. He said a bunch of incomprehensible babble to get his attention.

Thor turned and smiled at him. “Hello there.” He said not sure what to do next. Peter smiled up at him and reached to get something, but Thor didn’t know what.

“He likes you.” Pepper said. Holding Peter up, “Right Peter?” Peter didn’t seem to understand her but still was reaching for him.

“Here little one.” Thor had an idea, he took the chain bracelet off his wrist and showed it to Peter. Peter tried to take it, it was a new shiny object, who could blame him. But Thor didn’t let him. “No, now watch closely.”

He gathered it into one hand and made a fist with both hands.

Thor had gotten the attention of the everyone else in the room.

He opened the hand he had put the chain in and it had disappeared. It was revealed to be in the other when he opened it. Peter’s eyes grew wide and he stared at both hands in concentration. Peter looked over to Steve and babbled away in his baby language, pointing at Thor.

“Yeah it’s magic.” Steve said equally as impressed.

“Now watch this.” He closed both hands again, clapped once, and reopened them. The chain had now disappeared completely.

Natasha and Clint made eye contact. She was surprised, it was an interesting trick. Clint nodded in a
way of saying, “told you so”.

Peter reached out and touched Thor’s hands to try and find the chain. Thor reached behind Peter's head and withdrew the chain as if from thin air.

Peter let out an excited scream and took the chain from Thor to inspect it. Peter looked all over it and even put it in his mouth, though he found out it had quite an unpleasant taste.

“Very impressive.” Pepper said with a small hint of a laugh. “How did you-”

Suddenly Tony came back into the dining room. “So I’m not going to try and cause a panic here but-”

“But?” Steve asked, he couldn’t imagine what it could even be.

“But, ummm, there may or may not be someone setting the city on fire.”

“Wait are you serious?” Clint said getting up from his chair. “Where?”

“It’s just one street and well you can kinda see it if you look out the east window.” Tony said.

Steve got up and walked past Tony out of the dining room and into the main area of the floor. “And why are you so calm about this?”

“Well first responders are already on the way. It’s your call, suit up or not.”

Thor got up quickly. “Yes finally, some action to build up an appetite.”

Natasha stood and joined Tony, Clint, and Steve. “You heard the man, let’s go.”

Steve looked over to Peter and Pepper, “Could you-”

Pepper held up a hand to stop him, “Don’t worry I’ve got him, just go already.”

“Pepps, we owe you.” Tony said as they all followed Steve to go suit up.

It took them almost 5 minutes to get ready, probably a new personal best, and prepare to leave.

“Do you think we’ll beat the traffic?” Natasha said as they got ready to go to the garage. Traffic always got heavier because of these sorts of things, god knew what a fire would do.

“I can fly over there and you meet me.” Tony suggested through his mask.

“I fly as well.” Thor added. He was as jittery as an excited puppy ready to get in on the action.

“Okay, okay what if Thor takes me and Nat there and Tony you take Steve.” Clint suggested.

“That,” Steve took a moment to think about it, “Could work.”

“It could?” Clint said surprised, he hadn’t expected anyone to take him seriously, “I mean of course it could.”

“Anyone opposed?” Steve asked, “Thor, Tony.” No one objected, but Steve was pretty sure Nat’s trust issues were telling her otherwise. “Okay then it’s settled. Let’s do it.”

They all set up on the nearest balcony.
Thor held onto Natasha and Clint was riding piggy-back. Natasha looked pissed by this arrangement, but they were wasting enough time already. Clint on the other hand looked as if he was going to shit himself with joy. He even managed to snap a quick selfie with Thor to put on Instagram later.

And Tony was holding Steve the way a child would hug a rag doll with both arms. “Everyone ready and let’s go.” Steve said pulling on his mask.

Tony took off and Thor followed behind him by the power of his hammer. None of them wanted to think how weird they must have looked.

Steve felt his heart racing. He held tightly onto Tony’s arms, as tightly as he could with his shield in the way at least. This was a terrible idea.

He could see the glow from the fire coming into view.

Looking down was an even worse idea. Steve felt his stomach lurch and he shut his eyes.

Tony sensing Steve’s nervousness. “Hey this would be a perfect time to practice trust falls.” Tony was enjoying having the upperhand. “Hey Cap, I can show you the world, shining shim-“

“Not funny asshole.” Steve said gripping even tighter.

Tony knew things were serious if Steve was cursing. They were minutes away, just a little longer. “Didn’t you jump out of planes during World War II, with no parachute. How is this any different?”

“You’re the one flying.” Steve answered curtly.

“Oh ouch.” Tony smiled behind his helmet. “You’re gonna be fine, we’re almost there.” he said in an empty tone similar to when a teacher says ‘you’re going to be fine’ before a test as words of encouragement, but doesn’t really mean it.

But as promised, they did get there soon enough. And much to Steve’s relief, in one piece.

They arrived at the same time.

The fire of was taking up a few buildings in the middle of the street and was spreading at a steady pace. The street was flooded with people who were probably from the two buildings.

There were already first responders on the scene trying to put out the fires and evacuate the buildings along with helping those who needed it. Some were trying to put out the source of the fire.

Which was actually a man. A man on fire. But not like a man set on fire, just a man on fire, kind of like Johnny Storm.

One of the firefighters, most likely the chief came up to them. “Thank god you’re here.” He sounded relieved. “We’ve got the fire under control. It that guy that’s the problem.”

He pointed over to the man. He didn’t look like he was trying to set any fires. If anything he looked as distressed as the victims of the fire though they could only assume with his motions. It was too far to see his face.

“The hoses aren’t enough. The chief added.

“Okay got it.” Tony said taking lead. “Clint, you’ve got those freezing arrows with the nitrogen in them.”
Clint checked his bag. “Uh, yeah. I’ve got 4 of them, and oh OoOoo I found a stun one, I thought I was out of those.”

“Okay good save them. We need to take him down before we can even think about the fire.” Steve said. They were beginning to formulate a plan.

“Yeah, no duh.” Natasha folded her arms in thought, “But how do we do that if we can’t even touch the guy.” She stared at the man. He was just running, not attacking. Maybe there was something actually wrong..

“Well long distance stuff only I guess.” Clint said, “Which works fine for me.”

Steve thought for a moment, and then he had an idea. “Thor?” He looked around, Thor was gone. “Where’d he go?”

“Oh my god.” Natasha said when she saw him.

Tony was trying to suppress his laughter, “What is he doing?”

Thor was running towards the man who was the source of the fire at full speed with no sign of stopping. There was still a good 50 yards between the both of them. “That idiot.” Steve hissed under his breath “Thor, no!” He shouted after him. “We’re supposed to work together.”

Clint cupped his hands and shouted, “Dude, come ba-” he stopped. Thor swung his hammer forward and to the sky.

There was a loud clap of thunder that caused Tony to quickly grab onto Natasha subconsciously. Thor had stopped running. With the thunder, came a bolt of lightning seconds later that struck the man. He fell to the ground dead in his tracks, making him now look more like a mini bonfire and not burning man.

“Oh shit.” Clint said running to Thor who was doing nothing but watching the small fire. The rest followed him closely. “What the hell man.” Clint shouted as he launched a freezing arrow next to his body that actually put out a bit of the fire.

Clint was able to get a better look at the person now. Clint couldn’t tell if he was breathing or not. He shot one more arrow to put out another part of the fire. It didn’t seem to have actually burned him anywhere. In fact the only marks on his skin was from the nitrogen that was starting to cause freezer burn.

The fire must have been linked to his state of consciousness because once he was out the fire had died down.

The rest of the group caught up.

“What were you thinking?” Steve wasn’t easily angered by people, but he was actually near to shouting. “We work together, not striking people with lighting. For your sake, he better not be dead.”

Tony, being the only one with the insulation in his armor that would protect him well enough to touch the man because of the nitrogen, turned him over. He searched for some sign of life.

Thor didn’t understand what he did wrong. They wanted to take him down and so he took him down. “I didn’t use enough to kill the man, Captain.” Thor tried to reassure Steve.
“Just mortally wound him. Do you know what lightning does to mortal humans.” Natasha felt as if she was scolding a child, not a god.

“Hey you guys, let’s take a step back.” Clint said trying to save the night. “He didn’t know okay. He’s new to all this. Steve you of all people should understand.”

Steve sighed. He was right. Not exactly the same thing. Steve knew not to strike people down with lightning, but Thor was new to this world and they should be a little more forgiving. He folded his arms stubbornly.

“I’ve got a pulse.” Tony announced. “Hey, we need a doctor here!” He shouted loud enough for the first responders to hear. They heard him and a few paramedics began running over with their equipment.

“See he didn’t kill him.” Clint added.

“Barton I do not need your defense.” Thor said slowly catching on to everything going on.

“Fine, fine.” Steve said. “I’m sorry for overreacting.” He wasn’t going to hold a grudge. He hoped the guy wasn’t too seriously hurt, but Thor was new to all this and the best thing to do would be to forgive and move one.

Natasha rolled her eyes, “Yeah what he said.” Natasha was doing it more for Clint then Thor’s ego.

“I’d say that was an under-reaction by his standards.” Tony said getting up once the medics had come and took the man to the nearest ambulance.

“Shut up” Steve snipped.

“Well this was all pretty anticlimactic if you ask me.” Natasha said to no one in particular looking at everyone else at work.

“Yeah because someone felt the need to hog all the fun.” Tony poked fun at Thor.

Thor stared at him trying to figure out the right response, “Next time I will allow you to have the larger portion your fun.” Thor said with a hinted smile.

“So now what?” Clint asked. “They don’t need us, do we just go home?”

“I guess so.” Steve said looking over at everyone. The fire was beginning to die down. No one was yelling about someone being trapped in the building. It looked under control. “They seem to be fine.”

“Let’s go then. I don’t know about you guys but I’m ready for that dinner.” Clint refolded his bow and put it in his bag.

“Alrighty then.” Tony came up behind Steve and started wrapping his arms around him. “You ready.”

Steve froze up. “No, no.” Steve said quickly escaping Tony. “No, I’m walking. I don’t want to do that again. Ever.” Steve walked down the road back towards the way back to the tower.

“I’ll come with.” Natasha said catching up for him. Clint and Thor also followed in suit.

Tony was the last one to join in, “Ugh fine. You all suck by the way.”

“Suck what exactly?” Thor asked curiously.
“Nevermind buddy.” Tony said clapping him on the shoulder.

The walk wasn’t a long one, but it wasn’t short either.

Steve was enjoying the fresh night air, while Tony was trudging in his armor. “So I think we should call up SHIELD for that guy. It didn’t seem like he knew what was going on or he set that fire intentionally.”

“Yeah.” Natasha agreed, “He was flailing and running all over the place.”

Clint reached up and stretched. “Maybe he’s an inhuman. Someone was saying something about a colorful cloud coming through.”

“So it could be terrigen mist.” Tony added.

“Possibly.” Thor cut in.

They got back almost a half-hour later.

“I am so ready for dinner.” Clint said as they all got into the elevator.

“Agreed.” Thor said.

Pepper met them at the dining room when they got there. She had gone back upstairs and watched some tv as she waited from them to get back.

“Where’s Peter?” Steve asked, it was the first thing he had noticed when she came into the room.

“I put him to bed.” Pepper said taking her seat and picking up a plate to serve herself a little bit of everything. “He fell asleep just before you guys got here. Oh Steve this all looks so good.”

“Hope you don’t mind we didn’t wait for you.” Natasha said mouth half full with food. “They couldn’t wait.” She pointed to Thor, Tony, and Clint. Thor was already on his second helping and his near-to-nonexistent table manners were rubbing off onto to both Tony and Clint.

Steve grimaced, but wasn’t going to correct them, for politeness’ sake.

“Don’t worry about it.” she said with a smile, she could understand.

They ate and cleared the table within the hour. There were practically no leftovers; Clint wasn’t wrong about Thor’s appetite.

Afterwards they hung out in one of the lounges that were off to the side of the dance floor.

They drank, told stories and laughed. It was all pretty nice overall.

Thor pulled a flask from his coat pocket.

“A man who brings his own.” Tony commented with a hint of amusement. “Nice.”

“I mean no disrespect, but Midgardian alcohol just isn’t enough for my taste.” He poured the flask into one of the empty shot glasses. “Now this mead is from the caskets found in the wreck of Brunhilde’s fleet, fermented for one thousand years. And not meant for the likes of mortal men.” He
“Sounds a bit dramatic if you ask me.” Natasha said uncrossing her legs from the center table.

“It sounds like grounds for liver failure.” Pepper said watching cautiously as he downed the glass.

Clint thought for a moment. “Steve you should have some.”

Steve shot him a look. “No. No thank you, I’m not dying over that.”

Tony was on board. “I’m rich; I’ll get you a new liver if you need one. Come on man, do it for science.

“No.” Steve rejected him again. “Science will just have to wait.”

“Would you like to try it?” Thor asked pouring him a glass.

Steve declined politely. “No thank-you, don’t listen to them they're just being stupid.”

“Oh come on Steve, live a little.” Natasha said jostling his knee, “Stop being such an old man.”

That did it. Steve hated being called “an old man”, he felt annoyance build up inside. But it wasn’t enough to make him do it.

“Not you too.” groaned Steve

“Oh Steve just do it, it won’t kill you.” Pepper encouraged him.

“Actually, it could.” He pointed out.

“Come on grandpa.” Tony said taking the glass from Thor and holding it in front of Steve. “It’s only a 1000 years old, that’s how old you are right?” Tony also knew what made Steve tick.

“Grandpa, grandpa.” Clint chanted.

“Grandpa, grandpa, grandpa.” Tony and Natasha joined in.

Thor smiled at him expectantly.

Steve hated peer pressure, especially right then. He let out a frustrated breath and took the shot glass. They all cheered him on. “I hate you all.” He said before taking the shot in one swig. They all cheered even louder. Tony and Natasha both slapped him on the back.

It burned his throat more than any drink he’d ever had before. Steve coughed a few times and sipped from a glass of water that was on the table. He didn’t know whose it was and he didn’t care.

“How do you feel?” Clint asked.

He felt the drink burning inside him. But, but he was actually feeling a buzz come on. It was actually working. The burning was beginning to subside slowly. He held the cup up once more. “Hit me.” He said.

Everyone in the room freaked out and cheered as though they were at college party.

He was finding some new form of courage in himself. Really, it was probably the drink talking. He wasn’t a light weight but he hadn’t been drunk in so long and it was some strong stuff.
Steve sat back with a goofy intoxicated smile on his face. It had only taken 3 shots to get him to that level.

Tony and Clint were entertained by every one of Steve actions.

“Nat, you’re hair is so pretty.” He laughed. “Can I borrow it some time?” He asked stroking her hair. She kept a smile as she pushed his hand away.

Clint, Thor, Tony couldn’t stop laughing, they were a little drunk as well; just nowhere near to Steve. Pepper wasn’t much of a drinker but were still laughing along with them.

“Thor, I love you so much right now.” Tony was referring to Steve laid-back fun state. “I could kiss you.”

Thor leaned forward. “Well if you must.” He said holding Tony’s head and bringing him forward for a deep kiss.

Tony grew redder with embarrassment, or maybe it was shock. “Hey I just kissed a god.” He announced as if none of them were there to see it.

“You sure did.” Steve said putting an arm around him. “Does that mean he’ll get godly powers now?” He asked Thor with some seriousness.

“No, no unfortunately.”


“Sir, Peter is in need of your assistance.” Jarvis’s voice echoed loudly through the spacious floor.

“God is that you?” Steve joked for a moment before laughing at his own terrible joke.

Natasha and Pepper were probably the most sober of them all.

Pepper checked her phone. It was nearly 3 am. She looked at Natasha at in alarm. “I didn’t realize how late it was, I’ve got work tomorrow.”

Natasha was already on her way up to take care of Peter. She stopped and turned to her, “Just stay the night. Tony won’t care.” She walked back to the group. “Actually, I think it’s time to call it a night.” She lifted Clint to his feet. “Time for bed you guys.” Steve looked a little pouty but followed her direction, dragging Tony along with him. “Thor, do you think you can make it home alright?” She wasn’t sure how Gods and their means of transportation were affected by being drunk.

“Yes of course Natasha.” Thor said getting up only to trip and fall over his own hammer after a few steps.

Clint, Steve, and Tony chuckled. “Maybe you should spend the night too.” Thor nodded slowly and picked his hammer up. It hung next to him like a dead weight.

“Yay sleepover.” Clint said lazily behind her. He sounded really out of it.

“Yeah.” Natasha mocked him, just to keep them going to the elevator. “Yay.”

Pepper helped usher them in and she pressed the button for the main floor with Peter, Steve and Tony’s rooms and the one above them with the other bedrooms.

Natasha got off with Tony and Steve. It looked like Peter was going to be hers for the night. She
could hear him crying from the elevator. “I’m getting Peter. Can you see they get to bed okay?” Natasha asked.

Pepper nodded. “For such a stoic person, you really do care for your boys.” She added as the doors began to close.

Natasha rolled her eyes, “Yeah whatever, good night.” She took a moment to smile to herself. She was brought back up to speed with Peter’s crying. Tony and Steve were guided back to their own bedrooms. With a little difficulty from Tony, who demanded a goodnight kiss “like mom used to do it.” (no surprise, he didn’t get it).

And then came Peter. All he needed was a quick diaper change and a few minutes in her arms in the rocker and he was back to sleep.

Natasha figured it was best if she spent the night on that floor, for Peter’s sake. But she didn’t want to sleep on the couch, so she settled for sneaking into Steve’s bed.

She silently crawled under the covers and into the small space she had available to her.

Steve tossed and turned for a moment. “You’re the best friend anyone could ever have Nat.” Steve murmured in a voice that made her think that he was actually talking in his sleep.

She didn’t say anything, but tried to go sleep herself.

Part of her felt a warmth heat up inside because it was true she really did care for them, even if she didn’t show it. While the other part of her dreaded that though she was sleeping there for the baby in the other room, she was going to be stuck with 3 hungover babies in the morning.
When you loose a bet...

Chapter Summary

Steve and Tony finally are confronting the elephant in the room...okay no not really...I don't want to spoil this one just read it.

Chapter Notes

Hey guys! Well thanks for being patient with me on this one. And it's kind of a long one so sorry for that. But thanks for all the support and readers that I've gotten it really really means a lot (yeah I know I say that every time, I don't care it's true!). Anyways since I'm out of school I was thinking of making it so that I release something that's part of the story every two weeks (but keep checking back cause I'll probably be adding little shorts here and there in between that time). So agian thanks for baring with me as we go through this together and most of all...ENJOY!!!

Tony was drunk, yet again.

These habits were really starting to bother Steve.

Tony did drink pretty much every day, but he didn't get full on drunk too often.

The effects the alcohol had on him was the real issue. It always did a 180 on his personality.

Steve never knew which Tony he was going to have to deal with. The angry drunk, the happy drunk, the silent and emotional, or just the normal Tony only 10 times more annoying.

Steve was thankful that Tony usually had the decency not to act out in front of Peter. Sometimes he’d just go out and come home at an ungodly hour after Peter was in bed (sometimes with a one-night-stand) and other times he’d just pass out in his room.

Steve knew they were going to have to confront this one day, he just never knew when.

But this night was a different one.

The elevator rang and Tony came stumbling out.

Steve closed his book and came up the stairs to meet him. “Tony, do you have any idea what time it is.”

It was nearly 2am. Tony smiled when he saw him coming into view. He was dealing with the happy drunk tonight, thank god. “You know what, never mind. Just keep it down, we’re trying to get Peter to sleep through the night without waking up, remember.”

“Yeah, I hear you, I hear you.” He said in a not-so-whispering voice. “Quiet.”
Steve wasn’t going to get mad, it was pointless. “Can we just go to bed please?” Tony nodded. He put a hand on his waist and guided Tony to his room.

“Wanna know how my night went?” Tony said with a laugh.

Steve didn’t really care that much but he indulged him anyway, “Sure.”

Tony stopped and turned to him. “So I was out with Luke and Danny, right, and so we kicked a few asses and went out for some drinks.”

“Sounds like fun.” Steve didn’t actually care. He was wondering just how okay Jess Jones was with it seeing she was probably home alone with her and Luke’s daughter.

“It was. Now here’s the funny part.” Tony hiccupped and paused before continuing. “So we were talking about kids and wives and husbands and all that good shit. Then Danny was all like ‘so when are you two tying the knot?’ and I’m all like what knot?”

Steve felt a blush coming on, he could guess where Tony was going with this. “He thought we were dating.” He pushed Tony forward a little more.

“He thought we were dating!” Tony repeated as if he didn’t hear Steve the first time. “Could you imagine.”

Steve really couldn’t. “Yeah if I ever lost a bet.” Steve muttered under his breath.

Tony heard him. “Really?” Tony stopped once again to look at Steve, surprised there was even a chance. “So if I won a bet you’d go out with me.”

“No, if I lost one.” Steve knew Tony wasn’t thinking straight.

“Let’s say,” Tony paused to think, “whoever brings in 25 criminals first, as in no help. I win I get a date, you win and you get all the TV you want for a week no objections; Father Knows Best, World War 1 and 2 in Color, Downton Abbey, the works.”

Steve scoffed, he opened the door to Tony’s room to let him in. “Yeah right.” He wasn’t taking him seriously at all.

Tony gave him a half mischievous look. “Shake on it.” He held out his waiting hand.

“No, just go to bed.”

Tony wasn’t budging. “Not until you shake.”

Steve rolled his eyes. Steve didn’t want to be bound to this, but then again he’d probably not even remember it the next morning. “Fine, fine.” He took his hand and shook it.

“It’s a bet.” Tony laughed as though he had already won something and went into his room, practically slamming the door behind him.

Steve cringed, hoping it wasn’t enough to wake Peter. Thankfully it wasn’t.

Steve went to bed himself, thinking nothing more of what he had just shaken on.
“Alright, Clint I have Trapster in sight.” Steve said through his earpiece, “I’m bringing him to you now, you ready?”

Clint was on the 4th floor of the building down on the same street as Steve. He sat on the frame of a window so that he was hanging on the outside of it. “Yeah bring on the glue man.”

The plan was to have him come down the road and Clint would shoot him with a tranquilizer then they’d turn him into SHIELD; an easy in and out mission. “Whatever happened to the good times, when we’d have to make a plan then get some actual fighting in. Now we need to just shoot the guy and that’s it?”

Steve was dodging the sticky traps the Trapster was shooting left and right. “Not really the time Clint.” Steve was letting the man run after him to lead him into his own trap.

Clint saw the speck of red, white, and blue coming into view. “Okay I see you.” Clint got into position, strung the right arrow and pulling back. He closed one eye and squinted to get a better shot. “On my count jump out of the way. And five, four, three, two-”

A flying blur came swooping in past Clint’s head. It was Tony; Clint was wondering where he was. “Hold on, Clint I’ve got this one.” Tony’s voice came in through Clint’s earpiece.

Clint lowered his bow. He wasn’t sure whether he should be following Tony’s or Steve’s direction; at that point, he didn’t really care.

“What’s going on?” Steve’s voice crackled through to him.

“I call this one man with a plan.” Tony’s voice came in instead. He flew over Steve and the Trapster and landed in between the both of them. Steve stopped running but Trapster didn’t. Tony held out a hand and a blue-green foggy mist.”

Trapster slowed down; Tony had shot him with a kind of knockout gas. The Trapster fell to the ground face first.

“Well, that works too,” Clint said as he watched the take down from afar. “Okay, I’m coming down now.”

Steve looked at the man for a moment. The police came within minutes to cuff and take the guy in. Why was it that it always came after everything had been taken care of? At least there were no big messes to clean up; aside from all the super sticky patches on the road.

“What was that?” Steve shouldering his shield. “We had it under control.”

Tony’s helmet came apart and folded into his Iron man suit. “Uh, it’s called winning.”

“Winning?”

“Yes winning.” Tony opened a compartment in his suit and pulled out a little thing that Steve couldn’t really make out.

He then proceeded to the one act Steve would never have expected or wanted.

Tony dropped down on one knee and opened his hand to reveal a cheap ring. “Captain America Rogers, will you do me the honor of going on the worst date of your life with me.”

Steve didn’t know what was going on and he didn’t like it. He looked around to see the few
bystanders who were watching the scene Tony was making unfold. “What the hell are you doing? Get up.” Steve took a few steps back.

“Um,” Clint’s voice came from behind Steve. “Did I miss something here.” He just came out of the building to find what looked like Tony proposing to Steve.

Tony stood up slowly with a small groan. It was a little hard to do in the suit. “Well, I just won, that guy was number 25.” Steve and Clint looked at each other in confusion and back at Tony for an explanation. “We had a bet. First to 25 criminals wins. Remember?”

Steve had to think about for a moment and then he remembered that night 2 weeks back. “You were drunk; you weren’t supposed to remember any of it.”

“Yeah and you shook on it so you can’t back out.” Tony was being smug and he knew it.

“He’s not wrong.” Clint was also relishing this situation as much as Tony was.

Steve, on the other hand, was not. He folded his arms stubbornly, “We’ll see about that.”

“He’s not wrong.” Natasha said looking up from the small stack of papers Tony printed when they got back. He had kept a record of everything the both of them had done. “He was very thorough with this.”

Tony was sitting on the stool at the counter next to Clint. “So it’s legit.”

“Looks like it to me,” Clint said. “Wow Steve, you really messed up with this one.”

“Well, it does explain why he was being so productive.” Natasha said showing Clint the papers.

Steve was standing in the middle of the atrium with Peter. Peter was standing on the ground with Steve over him holding both of Peter’s hands to practice his walking.

He was determined to get him to take his first steps more than anything else.

Plus, he had nothing to say on the matter at hand.

“How does tonight sound?” Tony said. “I’ll need to pull a few strings to get everything set up on such short notice.”

Steve still didn’t want anything to do with this ‘date’. “I’m not doing it.” He said simply and finally.

“But a bet’s a bet, you have to,” Tony said. “What kind of an example are you setting for Peter?”

“Come on Steve, you shook on it. It would only be for a few hours.” Natasha encouraged. Really, she wanted to see how this was going to end more than the following an honor code.

“We’ll watch Peter.” Clint said, “It can’t be that bad.”

Steve shot him an irritated look. Why was it that he always ended up seeming like the unreasonable one? He knew this whole thing was going to suck, but it was his mistake for underestimating Tony’s ability to think while drunk.

Steve picked Peter up and held him at his hip. He looked at Tony for a long time before sighing in defeat. “Fine, alright fine, only a few hours.” Steve went into the kitchen to give Peter his sip cup. “Why does this even matter to you so much?”
The cup was next to Tony so he handed it to Steve. “Well when I remembered this date thing I was originally just going to drop it, but then I thought about just how much fun I can have. I do get to pick out every detail after all. You can’t back out on any of it Rogers, you got that.”

Steve refilled the cup with juice after rinsing it out and gave it to Peter. “You’re an actual 5th grader.”

Tony hopped off his seat. “You know it babe, I’ll pick you up at 7, wear something nice.” He stretched his arms over his head, “I have work to do.” He went to the elevator and pressed the button to open the door and go down to one of his labs.

They all watched him leave.

Once he was gone, Steve sighed, “I can’t believe this is happening.”

Clint laughed as he jumped down the steps to watch something in the living room. “Trust us Steve, neither can we.”

“I cannot believe I’m doing this.” Steve called to Natasha from the bathroom in his room.

Natasha was lying on his bed with Peter. He was entertaining himself by bouncing up and down and fooling with Natasha’s hair. “We heard you the first 100 times.” She called back to him. She unknotted Peter’s fingers from her hair.

He looked at himself in the mirror and ran a comb through his hair. “So Tony didn’t say anything about what he’s planning.”

That was another thing he was worried about, he didn’t know what Tony had in mind for all this, but knowing Tony it was not going to be a conventional date.

“Nope, I haven’t even seen his since he went to the labs.” Natasha grabbed Peter’s hand before he could get ahold of her hair again and fake nibbled on his fingers, making him laugh.

Steve took one last look at himself and left the bathroom, shutting the light off as he left. He faced Natasha, “Well, what do you think?”

Natasha sat up on the bed to get a better look at him. “You really care about appearances.”

“Too much?” Steve asked looking down at his clothes. He was wearing a casual gray blazer with lavender canvas dress pants, which Steve didn’t even realize he owned until he went through his closet, and a black button up shirt with a gray bow tie that matched his blazer. “It’s too much isn’t it.”

Natasha stood up. “No, you look very handsome.” She straightened and centered his tie a little. “A little like you’re about to go to an open mic night as some jazz cafe, but still handsome.”

Clint came into the room without knocking. He looked like he had something to say until he saw Steve. “Well, well, well Steve. What poetry slam are you going to?” He teased. Natasha looked away a stifled a laugh.

Steve found himself somewhat smiling too. “Shut up, I get it I look like a hipster.”

Clint picked Peter up off the bed. “I didn’t even know that word was in your vocabulary.” He laughed.
“Yeah really.” Natasha agreed.

“Come on, I’m not that old.” Steve said picking his wallet and phone off his nightstand and pocketing it.

“Anyways,” Clint said, “Tony’s ready and waiting. He said he wanted to wait for you to figure it out.”

That was very Tony Stark.

*Way to start a night,* Steve thought. “Thanks Clint.” He said leading the way out.

Tony was sitting on one of the stools at the counter. He stood up when he saw them come out into the atrium. “It’s about time, we live under the same roof and you’re still late.

It was only 7:13, he wasn’t *that* late. Steve’s jaw tightened, “I’ve been ready, *you* didn’t tell me.”

“Whatever, let’s get going.” Tony said walking up to him.

At least Steve wasn’t the only one who dressed up. Tony was in a black and red plaid waistcoat, black khakis and a light gray button-up underneath. Steve had to admit, he didn’t look too bad.

He heard a camera shutter come from behind. Steve turned to see Nat holding her phone up.

“Caught.” Clint whispered with a hint of amusement.

“What?” She said defensively, “I’m just trying to document this momentous occasion.”

They were treating them like two parents watching their kid go off to prom.

Tony nudged Steve on the side. “Okay.” He said dodging the embarrassment, “Time to go.” He slipped on a leather jacket to complete his total look.

Steve began following him until he remembered, “Wait.” Steve turned to Clint and Nat. “So Peter needs to be bathed and put to bed by no later than ten. No more juice for the night, the sugar keeps him up.”

Tony joined Steve at his side. “And don’t let him watch any more TV and if you put him to bed and he wakes up and cries wait 15 minutes before going to him.” He added.

Steve counted off on his fingers, “And, oh, there’s a few toys in his playpen, so if you put him there to sleep make sure to take them out, and...and.”

“And just go already.” Natasha turned Tony around and pushed him towards the exit. “We know what we’re doing.”

Tony got the message and began to leave. “Come on dear, we’re doing to be late.” Tony said smiling to himself, he knew he was annoying Steve by using pet names.

Steve was hoping ‘dear’ and ‘babe’ weren’t going to become a common thing. Steve gave Clint and Natasha a look that was pleading for help. “See you guys in a few hours.” Steve said in a voice that was obviously lacking in any form of joy.

Tony was holding the elevator for him, waiting; such a gentlemen move. Steve stared at him with a glance of contempt as he walked in. Tony smiled back unphased and pressed the button to go down. The elevator began to move.
Steve walked to the side opposite of Tony and folded his arms.

“So you ready for tonight?” Tony said trying to strike up a conversation.

Steve looked up at him and gave him a stare that was meant to serve as an answer.

“Okay, got it.” Tony paused to think of what to say next. “You look good.”

Steve didn’t know what he was playing at, “And you.”

They stood in silence for the rest of the ride.

They walked out into the garage to whichever car Tony was picking for the night.

“So as you know I’m picking every aspect of this night,” Tony said without turning around. He pressed the lock button on his set of keys to have the car sound to locate it. “Where we go, what we do, even what we eat.” He found the car and unlocked it to let them both in.

Steve rolled his eyes and got into the passenger seat. “How long is this going to have to last?” Steve said.

“I don’t know, until we’re done I guess.”

Steve half-scowled at him for a moment. “You’re really enjoying this aren’t you” The look on Tony’s face was enough of an answer. It was a look of complete and utter satisfaction. “God you’re terrible.” He buckled himself in and shifted so that his head rested against his hand and the window of the car.

Tony started the car. “And one more rule. No falling in love.”

Steve let a mirthful laugh, “No worries there.”

“I hate you so much right now.” Steve said looking around subconsciously. They were seriously overdressed. “Why would you say to dress up if we were just going to come to this kind of a place.”

Tony gave him a playful look, “Now, now, Dave & Buster's is a very dignified establishment.” He took a sip from the blue margarita he ordered. “And I never said we were going anywhere fancy.”

Now Tony was doing this on purpose. “You suck.” Steve said. He knew that he’d look back at this and laugh...at least he hoped so.

“Yeah I suck.” Tony agreed barely paying attention as he scrolled through his phone.

Steve wished he could have his phone right now; that way he wouldn't have his full attention on his ‘date’.

“I think we’re done here.” Tony said wiping the grease from his fingers from the chicken fingers, nachos, and fries that he had ordered. Yes, it was basically like a kid’s meal. “Now the real fun begins.”

“Oh more fun than what we’ve been doing so far?” Steve said in a sarcastic, fake excited voice. What they’d been doing so far was nothing but eating and dumb side conversation. Boring at it may have been, he wouldn’t complain he knew it could have been worse; especially with Tony’s mind.
Tony put a hand into his jacket pocket and pulled out an orange and blue card. “There’s 75 dollars on this card to blow on that.” He said motioning over to the arcade area.

“Games? Really?” Steve didn’t understand the appeal of games anymore. He used to love the games that would come to carnivals when he was younger. He tried to go to an arcade once probably over a year back and didn’t really like it at all. But this one did seem flashier and more high tech.

“Just shut up and come on,” Tony said sliding out of the booth. “I’m in charge, remember.”

He was right.

Steve sighed and slid out. This was going to be a long night. Steve picked up Tony’s jacket that he had left behind on his seat. Tony was already further ahead. He was like the other excited children rushing over to all the games.

“Come on Rogers keep up.” Tony yell over to him, drawing even further attention onto him.

Steve caught up. “You forgot this.” He tossed his jacket to him.

Tony caught it and draped it over his arm. “Now this is how you do it.” He explained. “You slide the card and then follow the directions.” It was just a crane machine; how hard could it be? Tony played it aiming for the easiest possible stuffed toy.

The claw hovered over the toy. Tony pressed the button and it dropped landing directly on the toy and closing around it. The claw and toy were both lifted up for a moment until the stuffed toy slipped out and fell back down amongst the other toys.

Steve found himself smirking at the failure.

Tony noticed it and said, “Fine if it’s so easy you do it.” He slid the card and stepped aside to give Steve a turn.

“Alright then.” Steve wrapped his hand around the joystick and followed the same actions as Tony. And yielded the same result. Tony folded his arms expectantly. Steve didn’t want to give Tony the satisfaction he wanted. “Whatever, it’s just a stupid game, it’s all rigged.”

“That’s what they all say.” He teased.

Steve avoided eye contact, “Let’s try something else.” he was quick to change the subject.

“What next?” Tony said looking around until he caught the one game he knew he’d love. “Let’s do that.” He pointed at a video game that was a little way off, nearer to the center. Tony took off without waiting for Steve.

Steve sighed a little but followed regardless. He stopped for a second when he read the title of the game. “You’ve got to be kidding me.” Steve rejoined him. “You have your own video game.”

“Yup, it wasn’t my idea but I’m not complaining.” Tony scanned in the card, walked onto the little platform, and set his coat down. “Basically you put these on and fight bad guys.” He put on the two gauntlet arms that were designed to look like part of the Iron Man suit. “They’re a little inaccurate actually.” He said as the game started.

Steve studied his movements and how the game is played. It seemed simple enough, or maybe Tony was just that good. The gloves responded with Tony’s movements so that if he punched the digital Iron Man punched and if he held up a hand he shot a repulsor beam. Tony was good, he even started
drawing somewhat of a crowd.

Eventually, he lost. “Ha, high score.” He turned to see Steve’s reaction. Steve actually looked impressed. He had to enter his name, but there was a 3-letter limit. Instead, he put in the letters: “p-o-o”

“That’s mature.” Steve said as Tony stepped down. He wanted to give this a try. “Alright my turn.” He took the card from Tony to scan it and put his hands in the gloves. They were warm from Tony having worn them.

Steve played it, at first he was keeping up and doing well. Then as the game actually began picking up, Steve fell behind. Minutes later ‘game over’ flashing on the screen.

Tony laughed. “Well Cap.” He held his arms out to his side in victory, “Looks like you can never be Iron Man.”

Steve saw this as a challenge and he never turned down a challenge from Tony Stark of all people. He felt a small something ignite.

Steve took off his blazer, “Hold this.” He gave it over to Tony. He undid the buttons on the cuffs of his shirt and rolled them up to his elbow.

Tony scanned the card to give Steve a play. “Ohh, getting serious here.” Tony was actually intrigued to see Steve show some interest in one of his ideas. “Are you wearing suspenders?” Tony taunted him. “Now remember, no one likes a sore loser.”

Steve shook his head. He wasn’t listening to Tony; he was getting in ‘the zone’.

Steve may actually be a sore loser...not that he’d ever own up to it.

The game starting brought his attention back.

Steve was a lot better this time around. He did nearly as well as Tony did. Tony was also getting into the game. He leaned on the railing that was on the perimeter of the game and coached Steve, even though he knew Steve wasn’t fully listening to his advice.

Steve was too focused on the aerial attacks that he didn’t have the chance to see the ground attacks that were sneaking up on him. And so as a result, Steve soon lost.

They both held their breaths and waited for the points to be calculated on the screen.

“Okay then.” Tony said when the score showed up. “It’s good, but not as good as me.”

Steve now held 2nd place on the high score list. He smiled at himself contently. That was a major improvement. “That’s because you’re actually Iron Man.” Steve snipped taking his jacket back from Tony but not putting it on.

Tony began walking off to play the rest of the games he could. “Let’s finish up here, we’ve got other places to go.”

Steve was starting to have some fun, something that he hadn’t expected at all. And the night had only just begun, he wondered what else could be next.
“Have I ever told you that I hate you.” Steve said.

“You keep saying that like it makes a difference or something.”

This was beyond stupid. And Steve knew that Tony knew it was.

They were walking down the street on their way to whatever other place Tony was dragging him when an open nail salon got Tony’s attention. And since it was his night and every decision was his, Tony wanted them to get manicures.

“Just stop being such a spoilsport and go with it.” Tony said inspecting his semi-finished hand and going back to conversing with the other two Asian women there working on their nails in what sounded like Mandarin. Tony said a few quick words followed by some laughter. The two women laughed as well and looked at each other, then Steve, and back to Tony before laughing some more.

They were seated in side by side stations.

Steve felt oddly subconscious at all this, as if a language barrier wasn’t bad enough.

He didn’t even know Tony could speak Mandarin. He was almost positive they were talking about him. He felt awkward. The hairs on his arms were standing in the well air-conditioned room and he wished he hadn’t left his jacket in the car with Tony’s before going on their walk.

“You have pretty nails.” The woman who was working on Steve’s nails said in choppy English.

Steve smiled politely, “Thank you.” He wasn’t sure if she was actually complimenting his nails or was saying that he will have pretty nails once she was finished. She’d already cleaned, cut and filed them down, now she was taking care of the cuticles and finally it would be topped off with the colors.

Tony continued conversing with the women, he was a strangely good people person when it came to strangers. “What do you think about the colors?” Tony said holding up his one finished hand from the UV light before the woman scolded him and took his hand back under it.

“Well, they’re very you.” Steve answered.

And he wasn’t lying; Tony had picked gold, red, and yellow gels, Iron Man colors. “And why did you pick these of all colors?” He said referring to the colors Tony had picked out for Steve to wear. They were neon blue and silver. The plan was to have all the nails be blue and the index fingers silver.

“It’ll look good just trust me.” Tony said very sure of himself.

“And that’s getting harder and harder as each minute passes.” Steve sighed.

“Drama queen.”

“Jerk.”

Tony picked his phone up and rose it high enough to get a good shot of all four of them in the picture. “Hey Cap.” Tony said to get Steve’s attention. He quickly took the picture before Steve got the chance to protest.

“What was that for?”

“I’m sending it to Nat and Clint.” Tony said texting the picture to them.
Steve knew he’d never hear the end of it. Natasha had been trying to get them to go out and get Mani Pedi’s for a while. Steve had absolutely no desire to try it out. “Please don’t.” Steve knew Tony wasn’t going to listen but it was worth the try.

“Too late.” Tony said. “And Clint says that you should have gotten mint green instead of neon blue.”

“All done.” The woman who was working on Tony’s hands said.

Tony inspected his nails and said something in mandarin, probably thanking her. He wheeled his chair over to see Steve’s progress. He had one hand finished and the other was almost finished as well.

When she finished them Steve looked at them more closely. Okay, they weren’t that bad. And it was pretty relaxing after all.

Tony paid the women and made sure to give them a pretty hefty tip and they left. He looked left and right as if trying to think ‘what next?’. “This way.” Tony said taking a left and going down the street.

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The fun was just getting started for Tony. “No not yet. It’s not even midnight princess.”

Steve wasn’t moving, “I’m done. I fulfilled my end. We went out and now it’s time to go back.”

“But-“

Tony was interrupted by a shrill scream and a cry for help coming from somewhere farther down the street.

They gave each other a look of understanding and put everything on hold and took off running to the source of the screams.

Steve was running more ahead. “No over here,” Tony called Steve back to him. He took a right into the alley, not waiting for Steve to catch up.

Steve was at his side seconds later.

The alley was dim, uncomfortably warm, and moist. It reeked of the garbage that lined the walls. Near to the middle, he found the source of the distress. It was a young woman surrounded by three men. One was holding her back, the second just standing to the side and the third was standing over her in an uncomfortably close proximity.

“Well, well, what do we have here.” Tony said walking slowly and cautiously towards the men. The three of them stopped and faced Tony.

“Fuck off.” One of them said. “This is none of your business.”

“You see; from what I see here I think it just may be.” Tony put on the dark no-nonsense personality that he only used if he was mad or to intimidate someone.

One of the men pulled out a switchblade and unsheathed it. He pointed it at Steve and Tony. “No it isn’t.”

It was Steve’s turn to intimidate. “This is no way to treat a woman.” Steve said lining up next to Tony.
The girl looked at them with frightened eyes pleading for help. She couldn’t speak.

“Look, man.” The guy who was in the girl’s personal space said. He pulled out a knife of his own.
“We don’t want any trouble, just move on and there won’t be any.”

This guy had no idea just who he was talking to. Tony walked up and met him face to face. “Just
move on?” He reiterated with a smile. “Okay then. Let’s go” Tony said turning and motioning to
Steve.

Tony took a few steps out to give the man a chance to lower his weapon. Tony quickly turned
around and shot his arm up, elbowing the guy in the face. “Come, let’s go.” He challenged the man
who was now nursing his nose.

He let out a yell of frustration and threw himself towards Tony, but he was too quick for him.

The guy fell forward, unable to compensate for the amount of energy he just exerted and began
losing his balance. Tony came down on him by punching the guy in the forearm making him drop
the knife. Tony kicked it away and knee’d the guy in the stomach. He fell to the ground doubled over
in pain.

The other two there were just standing, waiting to see the events unfold. But the takedown of who
must have been their leader got them to take action.

The man holding the girl back threw her aside as if she were nothing.

The woman took a moment to compose herself before grabbing her bag and running away as fast as
she possibly could.

Luckily she was able to get away before anything got too bad. Steve and Tony knew they could take
these guys easily.

There was a roll of thunder and rain began to fall lightly. As if god himself wanted to add a bit of his
own dramatic effect to this altercation.

The man who had brandished his knife first went for Steve.

Steve caught him by the wrist, effortlessly holding on against the man’s protests. “Now son,” Steve
said twisting his arm to make him let go of the knife. “Is this really how your mother raised you.”

“Stop sounding like a dad.” Tony called over to Steve as he took on the final guy. This one was
much stronger than his ringleader and had a good foot and a half over him.

Tony aimed up to punch him in the throat but ended up hitting him in the shoulder instead. The guy
grabbed Tony’s arm and dragged him to the ground. “You better not ruin my fucking manicure.”
Tony said kicking the guy in the shin and slowly getting back up.

Steve could see Tony’s trouble from the corner of his eye. He needed to take care of his own
problem first. He twisted the guy’s arm back and pushed him, face first, into the brick wall.

“What the hell’s wrong with you? Mutant trash or something.” The guys said still trying to struggle.

“First of all, mutants a people too and not trash.” Steve said twisting even more tightly. “And second
what’s wrong is that you’re acting like some yuppie thugs who harass women to help their
nonexistent ego. I’m going to give you a chance, either you take your crap friend and get the hell out
of here or you can have Iron Man and me kick your asses. Take your pick, you have till the count of
five.” Steve loosened his grip and turned the guy around to face him. “One, two, three, four, fi-.”


“And I better never catch you guys bothering anyone ever again.” Steve shouted. Louise ran past Tony and Steve.

Tony rubbed at the dull fading pain in his arm. “I cannot believe that just happened.”

Steve nodded, “I just hope the girl got back home alright. You okay?” Steve did feel a bit guilty, he hated having to fight normal people. It always felt a bit unfair on his part.

“Just a little bruised.”

Steve looked down at the guy on the ground, the leader. He was starting to regain the strength to get back up. “What to do we do with him?”

Tony stood behind him. “I don’t know. Lock him up and call the cops, god knows he probably deserves it.”

“And how do we do that? Just hold onto him and wait it out?”

Tony reached into his pocket and pulled out a set of handcuffs. “With these, help me bring him over here.” Tony waited for Steve at the side of a fire escape ladder.

Steve picked the guy up from under his arms and dragged him to Tony. Tony attached one end of the handcuffs to the ladder and the other to his wrist. Tony pulled out his phone and called the proper authorities. It was a quick and brief call. “They’ll be here in 15 minutes.” There was another loud clap of thunder and the rain got heavier. “We don’t have to wait here.” Tony said, a little phased by the surprise weather. “Let’s just go.” The car wasn’t too far away anyways.

They looked back at the guy. He was cursing and pissed but neither could find the ability to care.

“So you just happened to have those in your pocket.” Steve said finally.

“No, they were meant to be friendship bracelets.” Steve gave him a puzzled look. “Get it we’d both be wearing them and we’d be inseparable for the rest of the night. It’s genius.”

Steve would never understand his sense of humor. “Kinky.” Steve said in a tone to match Tony’s “Not as sexy as being called a yuppie thug.” Tony laughed.

“Don’t. I know what I said. I was trying to think on the spot okay.”

They were pretty wet and cold by the time they reached Tony’s car. This was starting to become the makings of a strong mini-storm.

Tony slicked the wet hair from his eyes and unlocked the car. Tony shivered and turned the heat on in the car. “Really should have checked the weather. It looked so nice in the daytime.”

“Yeah.” Steve agreed. He reached into the back to get his blazer and Tony’s leather jacket. He checked he took his phone out from the glovebox to check his notifications. Surprisingly there were none.
Tony drove home. “So worst date ever?”

Steve didn’t really know. Steve didn’t like any of the stuff Tony had set up for them; the food, the places they went, the nails, any of it. None of it were in his character, yet he couldn’t say that there weren’t any moments that he didn’t enjoy. “Not good, but definitely not the worst.”

“Oh really.” Tony looked at him, defeated.

“Yeah.” Steve looked out the window. “Once I went out with this one girl but she didn’t want me, she just wanted to get closer to my best friend. He was such a good guy that when she ditched me mid-date for him he left her and said we’re were already infatuated together.” Steve smiled fondly. “The look on her face was priceless.”

“Well that doesn’t sound too bad.”

“No, then a couple hours later her older brother and his friends jumped us and beat us up for being gay and not respecting his little sister.”

Tony was taken aback. He’d been called names and disrespected for liking men, but never beaten.

“We weren’t actually an item but I don’t think I would have minded a boyfriend back them when I really think about it.”

“I’m sorry.” Tony felt an angry heat inside, though he couldn’t explain why. “I’m sorry that happened.”

Steve looked away from the window to make eye contact with Tony. “Don’t be.” he gave him a small sad smile. “I think this is the first time in a long time I’ve been able to talk about him.”

Tony blushed, thankful that the car was dark enough to hide it. He pulled into the garage and parked they walked to the elevator.

“It’s really raining.” Steve commented on the echoing noise caused by the rain beating down against the cement.

Tony nodded in agreement and got into the elevator first. “I wonder if Peter’s in bed yet.”

Steve checked the time. It was passed 10. “He should be, but probably not.”

The elevator was halfway up when they heard a loud clap of thunder and the lights of the elevator flickered.

That couldn’t have been good.

The lights flicked once again. This time going out completely.

They were momentarily plunged into darkness. The dim emergency lights came on.

The elevator came to a halting stop.

“Um Tony?” Steve knew he didn’t need to ask what was going on. Tony would explain it for him.

“I’m not sure. Jarvis?” Tony called out to him. “Jarvis?” He tried again. There no answer.

Steve’s phone rang. “Hello?” He picked up.
“Hey Steve.” Clint raised his voice over what sounded like Peter’s crying. “The power’s out here, can you ask Tony what we should do?”

“He’s working on it now.” Steve said watching Tony pace back and forth past him. Tony was mumbling something to himself.

“You guys are here.”

Steve was a little distracted by Peter’s crying. “Yeah we’re stuck on the elevator. Is that Peter, is he alright?”

“He’s fine, don’t worry mom.” Clint’s voice was starting to crackle on the other end, “He’s just spooked. We’ve-”

“Clint?” Steve said loudly, “I can’t hear you, you’re breaking up.” The call dropped. Steve looked at his phone and sighed. “Tony the power’s out.”

Tony stopped pacing. “Oh is that all.” He looked nervous. “That-that’s fine, the backup generators will kick in then. In 20 minutes.”

Steve could see that he was shaken up by their predicament. “Tony-” He reached for his shoulder to give him some words of comfort.

“No.” Tony dodged away from Steve. “No, no, no.” Tony shied away from him.

Steve put his hands up to show that he wasn’t going to touch him. “We’re fine it’s just for a few minutes.”

“No not a few; 20, 20 minutes.” Tony’s breathing was starting to quicken, he rubbed his hands together. “Do you know what could happen in 20 minutes.” Tony gripped the railing for support. “I think I’m going to be sick.”

Steve wasn’t sure how he should handle Tony. He was having a borderline panic attack. “You’re going to be fine.”

“Stop!” Tony shouted he took a deep breath, “Stop saying that. It’s not fine. It’s tight and closed and we’re going to fall. Steve we’re going to fall.” Tony repeated heavily.

He knew this had to be serious. Tony actually used his name, Steve couldn’t remember him ever actually using his name unless it was him saying ‘Steven Rogers’ in some form of mockery.

Steve recognized that he was being irrational, but that wouldn’t help anyone at all. “Just, just sit down.” Steve held one hand out and sat down to invite Tony on the ground with him. He was trying to use the same approach he used for people in distress.

And it was working.

Tony didn’t accept his hand but still joined him on the floor. Tony framed his face with his hands and took rapid heavy breaths in concentration. “My hands are going numb. Should they be doing that.” Tony was worrying about one thing after another.

“It’s cause you’re hyperventilating,” Steve said. “Just take it easy. In-” Steve took some air and held it. “And out.” Tony copied his technique and Steve repeating it so he could follow it better. “In-” Deep breath in, “-out” equal exhale. He was beginning to calm down.
There was another bout of thunder that shook the elevator.

Tony’s hand quickly grabbed Steve’s thigh and he shut his eyes, continuing the breathing exercise. The other hand held up his head, his fingers intertwining with his damp hair.

Steve was also a little freaked from the shaking but he wasn’t going to show it. That was the last thing Tony needed. He’d never seen him like this; so open, natural, and...vulnerable.

This was a side of Tony Stark he’d never seen. There were no fake facades, sass, sarcasm, banter, or even quips; what he was looking at was the real and raw Stark.

Steve covered Tony’s hand and wrapped his fingers around it gently. “Shhhh.” He soothed. “We’re almost out of here.”

Tony edged closer to him, not opening his eyes. “Don’t be so mushy, remember our rule for the night.” He said that but did nothing to leave Steve’s grasp.

Some of the Tony Steve knew was starting to come back.

This was a good sign; or was it?

Steve could feel Tony’s cold hands slightly trembling through his fingers. “Who knew it was so easy to scare you?” Steve tested. He didn’t know if that was the right thing to do at the moment, but a part of him knew that if the roles were reversed Tony would be doing the same thing. It wasn’t out of malice but really to help Tony cope. “You’re always in a metal suit, this has more room than that. How’s it any different.” The talking seemed to help a bit.

Tony shifted to sit back against the wall. He let go of Steve’s hand and drew his knees up to his chest to rest his chin on them. He took a few small breaths before answering. “It’s different. I trust my suits, they’re reliable. I didn’t make this; I can’t trust this.” The thoughts that flooded his mind was regressing him back to a panicked state. “I need to get out of here.” Tony’s voice shuttered and he said no more.

“I’m sorry.” Steve thought he was helping, but it didn’t.

Tony kept his eyes shut and held his hand over his head. “Don’t-don’t be, it’s not your fault. Once-” Tony paused, it hurt to bring up the memories. “One time, this is when I was still in the single digit suits, I was testing one and the rockets gave out. I-I was free falling and the parachutes didn’t deploy or anything. The air around me hitting the suit- reminded me of thunder. Thank god I landed in the ocean.” Tony stopped again. “But-”

“Tony we can save this for another time. You don’t have to tell me, not now or like this.”

He didn’t care, Tony needed to get his mind elsewhere. “But the suit filled with water and I couldn’t breathe. I thought that I was going to die. The floatables actually worked and I resurfaced, but since then…” Tony felt queasy again and couldn’t continue.

Steve felt a small pang in his chest. No wonder Tony was panicking. Steve let out a large sigh. It was just a night of oversharing for them, wasn’t it? Steve moved over to sit next to Tony shoulder to shoulder.

Steve nudged him with his knee. “Just a little longer, don’t hold your breath.” He said with a half-smile in another attempt to help.

“God do I hate you sometimes.” Tony said trying to keep his breathing steady. He put a bit of his
weight on Steve’s side.

“That’s just our thing I guess.”

Tony elbowed him in the side without taking his hands off the sides of his head.

The lights suddenly came back on and within seconds they were moving again.

“There we did it.” Steve said.

Tony was still a bit stiff and shaken up. “God I could really use some bourbon right now.”

Steve hardly ever supported Tony’s drinking, but this time he found it forgivably understandable. He held on the railings of the to pull himself up to stand. They were almost on their floor. “Tony.” Steve held out a hand to help him up.

The elevator rang and the doors slid open. Clint and Natasha were waiting for them. Natasha was holding a crying Peter and wore a slightly annoyed face. He had probably been crying all this time.

Tony took Steve’s hand and hoisted himself up with a groan. Tony felt blood rush to his head momentarily darkening his vision and he stumbled for a few steps. “I think- I think I’ll go to bed.” Tony began falling forward Steve caught him.

“Is he okay?” Clint asked coming to help.

“Yeah, just got up too fast.”

There was another shot of thunder. Tony’s grip on Steve tightened and Peter’s volume increased.

“Steve please take your kid; I’m starting to go deaf.” Natasha loved Peter to pieces, but even she had a limit.

“I’ve got it.” Tony said looked away, he paused to straighten up and slowly walk to Peter. “C’mere.” He mumbled taking Peter from Natasha. “No one likes thunder, it’s okay.” He said rubbing circles in Peter’s back. It didn’t make Peter stop crying, but it did decrease the noise.

“Tony let me,” Steve said holding his arms out. He didn’t know how okay Tony was; seeing what had happened just moments ago.

“Nice try, but he’s mine too.” Tony made a half-assed attempt at a joke. He walked away with Peter in tow and went into his room.

Natasha knew something wasn’t right. “What happened in there?” she asked when he was out of earshot.

Steve went into the kitchen to get Peter a bottle of warm milk and Tony some bourbon. “He was really shaken up. He had a panic attack I think.” Steve didn’t know if it was his place to tell or not. Steve ran the milk under hot water as he poured out a glass of the drink.

“You’re giving Tony alcohol,” Clint pointed out, “It must have been pretty bad.”

Steve sighed, “It was, it was like I’d never seen before. This wasn’t some Tony Stark meltdown.” He picked the warmed bottle up out of the sink and dried it off, giving it a few shakes to let the heat distribute itself a little more. He walked off to Tony’s room.

Steve had gone to Tony’s room only a handful of times. Those times were hardly ever to really go
inside for more than 2 minutes. This time Steve didn’t bother knocking and opened the door with the side of his foot.

Tony was on his bed cradling Peter ad they watched an animated movie on his TV. His waistcoat and the top 3 buttons of his shirt were unbuttoned and his tie was loosened. Tony looked much more relaxed there than before. Tony sat up a little straighter when he saw him come inside. Peter let out a whine and reached for Steve.

“You wanted this?” Steve offered, holding up the cup.

“Oh god, yes.”

Steve came over and gave him the glass. He sat on the edge of the bed and fed the bottle to Peter until Peter picked it up to feed himself. Tony took a few sips and put the glass on his night stand.

“How are you, really?” Steve asked.


There came two knocks at the door and Clint and Natasha walked in. “Knock, knock.” Natasha said like an old suburban neighbor.

“What’s going on in here?” Clint asked.

“You told them.” Tony said catching on to their demeanor.

“Yes, I did.” Steve wasn’t going to step around it.

“I really don’t want to.”

“And we’re not going to.” Clint said quickly. “We just want to know that you’re okay.”

“You know I am.” Tony said fooling with Peter to not have to make eye contact.

Natasha clapped her hands together. “Alright, we’ll be going then.” She began to leave with Clint and Steve just behind when the sound of thunder in the distance with a crack of lightning got their attention. It was definitely quieter and farther than the rest. The worst of it was over and going away.

“Actually on second thought,” Tony said, “How does an impromptu movie night sound?”

“Uh yes.” Clint said jumping into the bed beside Tony.

“Careful” Tony scolded pushing him aside. “Peter’s trying to sleep.” Peter did in fact look tired and his eyes were beginning to droop.

“Count me in.” Natasha said crawling onto the bed more gently and laying down horizontal at their feet. “Steve?” the three of them looked at Steve expectantly.

Steve wasn’t tired but he wasn’t sure. He looked at them all on the bed. It did look nice and warm. He felt like he wanted to take a picture and press pause at this moment. Everything was good, he was happy, and it all was going right. “Okay fine. I’m going to change; you don’t have to wait up on me.” Steve left to change.

“And bring food.” Clint called to him.
“Nothing messy, this is my room.” Tony added.

“Tony, your room’s already a mess.” Steve heard Natasha say.

Steve quickly changed into his pajamas. He then went into the kitchen and popped a few bags of popcorn to put in a bowl and a bag of gummy worms from Tony’s candy stash in the pantry.

He returned to Tony’s bedroom. “Here.” He said handing the bowl to them and opening the bag of candy. “So what are we watching.” Steve asked taking a seat on the couch against the wall on the right side of the bed. He put his feet up on the couch and shut the light off.

“We decided on Rise of the Guardians.” Tony said moving Peter to lay down in between him and Clint. Peter immediately sat up and let out tantrum-like whine as if he was about to start crying and flung himself onto Tony’s chest and crawled on him. Peter got comfortable by tucking his head under Tony’s chin and wrapped an arm around Tony’s neck. He stuck the middle two fingers of his free hand in his mouth and rested once again. “Well fine then.” Tony mumbled to Peter.

“You spoil him too much.” Natasha said taking a handful of popcorn for a voice.

Tony poked her with his foot. “Like you don’t.”

Clint took Tony’s hand. “Nice colors.” Clint commented.

Natasha rolled over to face away from the TV and to Tony and Clint. “Let me see.” Tony held his hand out to Natasha to see. “They did a good job.” She moved her attention to Steve. “Let me see yours.” Steve leaned in to be close enough for her to get a good look.

“How did you even get Steve to do it.” Clint said in an amused voice.

“It was part of the bet and he is a man of honor.” Tony said with a hint of sarcasm.

Clint laughed at his answer. “How was it Steve?”

“The date or the nails?”

“All of it.” Natasha said, “We need all the details.”

Steve didn’t know where to begin. “Well first off we went to Dave & Buster’s.”

“No, he didn’t,” Natasha wasn’t that surprised, it was Tony after all. “But you looked so formal.”

“Exactly!” She understood the problem. “Like you’d’ve thought we were going to a restaurant or something, but no.”

“Hey, I’m still here.” Tony wasn’t very bothered by their slumber-party-like gossip.

They ignored him.

Clint was now invested too. “And then what.”

A couple hours later their second movie was over.

They hadn’t paid attention to Rise of the Guardians so they chose to watch another. This time they
actually had watched more than talked. It was movie called the Pursuit of Happyness. Steve really enjoyed that one.

As the credits rolled Steve looked at the bed to see that he was the only one still awake.

Steve turned the side lamp on to give some dim illumination for Steve to navigate.

“Clint.” Steve said shaking Clint by the shoulders. “Come on go to bed.” He lifted Clint up to wake him and laid him back down. Clint opened his eyes and squinted in the light. He had a confused look on his face. “Go to bed.” Steve repeated. Clint nodded and took a moment to groan and quite literally roll off the bed. He got up off the floor and trudged out of the room. “Nat.” Steve shook her side. “Nat get up.” Natasha gave him a tired noise and curled into a ball. “Nat, come on go to bed, you can’t stay here.” Actually she probably could have when he really thought about it. She opened her eyes and stared at him with cold murderous eye.

“Fucking asshole.” She muttered getting off the bed and rubbing her eyes. She trudged out of the room without giving him any attention.

Steve knew how much she hated being woken up. Last was to get Peter to bed. Peter was still laying on Tony’s chest fast asleep. Steve walked over to them quietly. He tucked his fingers under Peter’s arms in between his and Tony’s chest.

Peter held on to Tony tightly, unwilling to let go. Steve sat on the edge of the bed for a better grasp. He pried each of Peter’s fingers away from Tony. Steve was being as careful to not wake either of them. Tony’s eyes opened and looked straight into Steve’s. “Sorry.” Steve mouthed to him.

Tony nodded and sat up to help hand Peter off to him. Steve held Peter for a few seconds to let him settle.

Tony was whispering something too low for Steve to hear. He leaned closer to Tony, “What?” Steve asked. Tony had stopped talking and was staring at him. “What is it?” Steve waited for an answer.

Before either Steve or even Tony could react Tony had Steve’s head in his hands. He came in close, eyes closed, and gave him one small quick kiss.

Steve sucked in sharp and surprised. He felt his cheeks warm and his pulse rise. Did what he thought just happened happen? He didn’t know what to next. Tony still had his hands covered over the back of his head. His eyes were darting over Steve’s face uncertainly, not sure how to read him.

Tony’s face was growing red. He made a mistake, he shouldn’t have done that. Why did he even do that?

“I’m I-” Tony stammered to find the right words. “I’m sorry-”

Tony didn’t get to finish. Steve had silenced him by returning the same kiss. He held it a bit longer than Tony had. When Steve withdrew his whole face was emotionless except for the eyes.

Tony didn’t know if it was desire, confusion, fright, or a rush that he saw in his eyes. But there was weight that Tony had felt lifted in the room, a weight Tony didn’t even know existed until that chaste kiss.

Neither of them was doing or saying anything. They were trying to gather the right thoughts to form words.

Then finally Tony let out a nervous scared laugh. “Well Steve.” He used his name again, it sounded
strange on Tony’s lips. "Looks like I broke my own rule."
Steve, Clint, Natasha, and Jessica Drew (aka Spiderwoman) were spending their day at the children’s museum just outside the city.

Clint and Nat immediately went off to go explore the museum. It was meant for babies up to 12 year olds, but that meant nothing to either of them. Natasha went with Clint to babysit him more than anything else.

So while they played, Jess and Steve went to an area more age appropriate for the actual children they had brought. A fenced off area that had everything a kid 2 and under would want.

“I just don’t get it.” Steve said leaning against the backrest of the bench he was sitting on with the other adults. He watched Peter play with the other babies his age. “All the books say he should be walking or talking by now but he’s not doing either.”

“I wouldn’t worry about it.” Jessica said pushing the hair out of her face to get a better look at her infant son as she breastfed him. He was about 6 months old now, he’d gotten so big so fast. “Those books are only made to make us feel like our kids will drop dead if we don’t follow them. I never listened to that Dr. Spock crap and he’s still alive.”

Steve recalled when Jess’s son was first born and she didn’t leave the house for a month out of pure paranoia because of Dr. Spock, but that just wasn’t any of his business.

Steve’s eyes followed Peter crawling and playing with all the colorful foam toys and balls that surrounded him on the many mats and play equipment they had out in the baby area of the museum. While he crawled all the others that looked his age were either walking or toddling only to fall on the mats and get back up again. Steve hadn’t even really noticed any problems with this until he saw these other 1 year olds.

Jessica’s baby stopped feeding. She redid the snaps on the cup of her bra and pulled her shirt back down with one hand. She sat her son up and patted his back to burp him. Noticing Steve’s gaze, she said, “I’m sure he’ll walk when he’s ready. Just keep practicing I guess.” She really didn’t have any experience with babies until her own so she wasn’t sure how much truth there was to her words.
They were meant for comfort not honesty.

“I don’t know. He can stand if he holds onto something and if take steps if he’s in a walker but that’s it.” Steve folded his arms, “Maybe we should take him to see someone that could help. Does that even exist?”

Jessica shrugged, “Hell if I know, maybe.”

Peter began crawling over to Steve and Jessica. Peter used Steve’s pant leg to pull himself up to stand. Steve picked him up and placed him on his lap. Peter stared Jess’s son who was staring back at him. Peter let out a sound of awe and pointed at the baby. He looked up at Steve to get his attention and pointed again.

“Yes.” Steve said with false enthusiasm, “Baby.” He told him. Peter whispered something as though repeating Steve and reached out to touch him. “Be gentle.” he reminded Peter. Peter held the baby’s hand and shook it like a greeting.

The baby smiled and laughed. Contagiously, it made Jess and Steve smile as well. “What are we doing with our lives?”

“What do you mean?”

The baby burped and spit up a little on himself. Jess cleaned it up using a wipe from her bag. “I mean look at us. Last year we were fighting off cataclysmic invasions and interdimensional creatures and now here we are. And you’re living with Tony Stark of all people. I’m pretty sure you never saw any of this coming.”

She wasn’t wrong, he didn’t. “But I don’t think I could ever go back.” Steve said wistfully.

Jess looked at her son and Peter then all around for a quick moment. “Me either.”

Steve sat in the examination chair nervously bouncing Peter on his knee.

He was at the eye doctor with Peter.

Well, actually, for Peter.

He didn’t want to be alone doing this. He checked his watch. Tony was supposed to meet them at the office, and of course, he was late.

It started with him talking to Tony about a week prior about his worries about Peter’s possible delays.

And even though Tony thought he may have been over reacting he gave in and they took Peter to see a pediatrician.

The doctor looked over everything; bone and muscle strength, hearing, and motor skills. The thing she thought seemed off was the fact that Peter’s hand-eye coordination and how he couldn’t follow objects at an average level. She told them to not worry but to be safe she referred them to an optometrist.

That wasn’t going to keep either of them from staying up late the night before, worrying.
Not much had changed between them since the kiss they shared.

Okay no, big understatement. *Everything changed.*

They couldn’t stay alone in the same room together without feeling awkward about all of it. Even the simplest brushed hands when passing plates at dinner made at least one of them blush. Sometimes it felt as though they were school children crushing on each other on the playground.

But that didn’t mean they were *completely* rendered incompatible.

They still talked and even bickered but still didn’t know where their relationship was going to go from there.

Neither of them even had a real conversation about it yet.

But Clint and Nat were able to sense something was up, even if they didn’t pry.

Steve checked his phone to see if there were any messages. The doctor was going to be there any minute and Tony was nowhere in sight.

Was he avoiding him?

There was a knock at the door and a doctor walked in. It was an old lady with glasses at the end of her nose. “Hello.” She said warmly sitting in her chair and wheeling it up to Steve and Peter. “And who do we have here.” She cooed at brushing the back of her finger against Peter’s cheek. Peter didn’t smile, he didn’t know who this stranger was and didn’t want to be touched. He just gave her a hard stare. “Oh, it’s okay.” She moved on to Steve. “My grandchildren are the same way.” She assured Steve.

She flipped through her clipboard once to double check everything and then began the checkup.

It took a little more than an hour.

She shone lights in his eyes, made him follow toys, and look at pictures. To Steve, it seemed to have all been going okay, but he began to doubt himself when she started holding small glass circles to each of his eyes.

She explained to him that technically everybody has a prescription so she was just trying to find Peter’s.

By then end of the checkup, Peter looked worn out and tired from all the action. Steve hoped he could get out there soon before Peter had a meltdown.

He was feeding him fruit-flavored cereal pieces to keep him calm when the doctor returned with a knock at the door.

She looked more serious than when she first came in.

The doctor sat down in her chair and clasped her hands before sighing a little. “Well.”

“Well?” Steve asked not sure how to read her. “Is there anything wrong?” He subconsciously held Peter a little closer at the thought of anything being wrong with him.

“Yes, sort of. You see Peter is farsighted. Which isn’t as bad as it sounds.” She could see the worry on Steve’s face. “It’s very common for young children. This may also explain why Peter hasn’t been walking on his own yet.”
“So what next?” Steve was struggling to keep Peter in his arms, he knew this meant the beginnings of a tired tantrum. He picked up a toy from the stroller and gave to Peter for a temporary fix.

“He can grow out of it possibly if he gets glasses and hopefully that will straighten it out eventually. I recommend we get Peter setup with a set today and we’ll check back up in 6 months. You can go out to the front and there’s a man who can help you pick out a frame and set the lens in; it won’t take more than 2 hours.” She stood up and Steve stood as well. She placed a hand on Steve’s shoulder. “I wouldn’t worry, he’ll be fine.”

Steve thanked her as she held the door for him to leave. Steve held Peter with one arm and used the other to push the stroller out to the front.

He felt a pang of guilt for not taking him earlier. Who knew how long Peter could have been going through all this. How come no one else had detected that anything was wrong.

Out front, he quickly picked a set of red baby glasses that looked more like a set of goggles than glasses. He left to get lunch with Peter while they waited for them to get ready.

Steve sat at one of the small desks set up for people to buy and try on their new glasses. Peter was on his lap. He was past due for his nap, and he was making sure Steve knew it.

Peter had slept a little in the stroller while Steve had eaten but that didn’t do much for him or last long. Peter was playing with everything on the desk and not listening to Steve when he told him to stop.

The guy who was helping them came back with a glasses case in his hand. He opened the case. “Now let’s try them on to see if they fit okay.” He said holding the glasses and coming over to Steve and Peter.

He got down on one knee and tried to slip them over Peter’s head.

Peter pushed the man’s hands away. “Now Peter,” Steve said in a cooling voice. “Be nice.”

This time when the man tried he was able to get them over his head but not yet to set on his nose and line up with his eyes. Peter wasn’t happy at all with them.

Whining, he held onto the glasses and tried his best to pull them off. The glasses were designed to stay on even if a one-year-old tried to take them off. Steve tried to hold Peter still.

Peter kept fighting against the man and Steve. He let out a scream and began crying as though he was being hurt by them.

The man froze and looked to Steve not wanting to overstep any bounds. Steve shook his head, “He’s just cranky.” He stood up. “Can I take them home and if there’s anything wrong, we come back?” He raised his voice over Peter, who was screaming in his ear.

The man stood up and put the glasses back in the case. “Of course.” He said with a polite understanding smile. He put the case in a bag with a few other papers. “The receipt, care instructions, and a paper copy of the prescription.” He explained handing the bag to Steve.

“Thank-you,” Steve said as he put Peter into the stroller. Peter continued to cry and fuss. Steve straightened up and shook his head.

Steve walked out into the parking lot and found his car.
He took Peter out of the stroller and unlocked the door to buckle him in. As soon as they got to the car he silenced.

“Now you stop.” Steve joked putting Peter into the car seat. “Honestly I’m sure you get all this drama queen stuff from Tony.” Peter’s face was tear-streaked and blotchy from crying. He sniffled and gave Steve a small grin. “You’re lucky you’re cute.” He gave in to the smile, stroking back Peter’s hair and closing the door to the car.

Tony walked down the stairs to the living room where Pepper, Steve, Clint, and Natasha were all waiting. Peter was finally up from his nap.

“I’m sorry I wasn’t there,” Tony said sitting Peter on the coffee table so he was facing all of them.

“You could have gone, I told you there wasn’t much work to do,” Pepper said.

“I didn’t think anything was serious. Plus, you work too much.”

“You guys,” Clint said from kneeling behind the couch. He leaned over the back of it holding his phone to record the moment. “Just get on with it, this is going on YouTube.”

“You really want to exploit my nephew,” Natasha said with false hurt.

“Yes, now come on.”

Steve just wanted to get on with this. He opened the case and took out the glasses and leaned forward to slip them over Peter’s head.

“Red really?” Tony commented, he seemed to have forgotten that the majority of his suit was red in the process of dissing Steve’s color choice.

“Yeah well too bad you weren’t there to pick a better color,” Steve said to himself in a not-so-quiet voice. He heard Natasha and Clint chuckle at his sass from behind. He placed the glasses in front of Peter’s eyes and straightened them out. “There.” Steve sat back and waited with the rest of them to see his reaction. Peter’s eyes looked bigger as if behind bubbles or a magnifying glass.

Peter blinked confused and froze up. He looked across from him with wide shocked eyes.

“Petey.” Natasha got Peter’s attention. His eyes were transfixed on her. “Hi.” She was using her baby voice, the one she used only for Peter and mockery. “Hi Petey.”

A small smile started to grow on his face.

“Do you see us better?” Tony added, knowing Peter couldn’t actually answer. Peter was now staring at Tony, his smile growing bigger.

“Is that better?” Steve asked, adding to the baby talk. Steve wasn’t really one for a baby voice so much as talking softly and kindly in a warm manner with babies and maybe repeating himself with some words. “Huh?”
Peter let out a gleeful laugh and moved forward to be picked up by one of them. Steve took him off the table and to his lap.

“Petey where’s Uncle Clint.” Clint said.

Peter pointed at Clint.

“Where’s Aunty Nat?”

Peter pointed at Natasha. He was getting more and more happy with all the praise he was getting.

“And where’s Aunty Pepper.”

Peter took a moment to find her.

“And where’s grandpa.” Tony interjected.

Without hesitation Peter pointed up at Steve, giggling.

“Don’t teach him that.” Steve said gently kneeling him in the side since his hands were full.

Tony was getting his and Peter’s lunch ready. He turned off the stove and prepared to come down the steps to the living room to get Peter.

“Okay buddy, lunch time.” Tony wiped his hands on his pants. “Sure hope you don’t mind-” Tony stopped Peter was standing in the middle of the room, holding onto nothing. He was teetering back and forth as if...as if he was getting ready to step forward. “Oh shit.” Tony looked around looking to see if anyone else was seeing this. “Oh my god. You wait right there don’t move.” Peter chewed on his fingers and gave Tony a blank stare.

It had been a week since Peter had gotten his glasses and they all were instantly able to see a bunch of differences. Peter was now eating a bit more neatly and starting to explore more (much to everyone’s worries).

But the biggest leap was that the next day after he’d gotten the glasses was that Peter started standing on his own without anything to hold onto. Each time only lasted for a few seconds before he fell back to the ground and he made no attempt to walk, but it still was an improvement.

Tony ran up the stairs. “Nat, Clint, Cap?” no answer, was he the only one there? Tony looked down the hall to the bedrooms. “Steve you home?”

He ran back to the atrium to look over the railing. Peter was still rooted in the same place but rested one hand on the coffee table to keep his balance. Good, he hadn’t moved yet.

“Jarvis is Rogers in the building?”

There was a pause then the voice broadcasted, “Yes sir, he is with Natasha in training room four.”

“Call Steve.”

The voice was replaced with the sound of Jarvis patching him through.

“Yeah Tony?” Steve was breathing heavily. Natasha must have really been doing a number on him.

Tony was still watching Peter. He knew he’d never hear the end of it if Steve missed his first steps.
“You’ve got to come up here now. It’s Peter.”

Steve’s voice shifted in worry. “Peter, is he-”

“Yes he’s fine, but I think he’s going to walk.”

“Walk?” He heard Natasha shout in the back.

“Stall him, do something we’re on our way.” Steve hung up urgently.

Stall him.

Tony could do that. He hoped this wasn’t going to be another false alarm like all the other times, especially with all this trouble.

Tony went down the steps to Peter.

Upon seeing him, Peter smiled and reached out. He let go of the table and turned to Tony.

Peter out one wobbly foot ahead of the other.

_Oh no. No, No, No._

“Petey stop.” Peter obeyed with some confusion, but started to repeat the action with the same foot. This wasn’t good, he needed to stall for another minute. “Peter no.” He said more sternly.

Peter froze, startled by Tony’s tone.

_Too stern?_

Peter frowned and let out a loud wail. At that same moment the elevator rang.

“Tony?” He heard Steve call out to him.

_Shit perfect timing…_

Tony picked Peter up and rushed up the steps. Steve and Natasha weren’t going to be too happy about this.

“What happened?” Steve asked upon seeing Peter crying.

“I may have told him to not walk.”

“Oh, come here,” Natasha muttered. Peter opened his arms for Natasha to take him. As soon as Natasha held him, Peter stopped crying; making Tony feel even worse. “Let’s get you a snack, hmm.” She nuzzled the side of his head with her cheek.

She’d let Steve and Tony hash it out on their own.

“What do you mean ‘told him not to walk’?”

Tony threw up his hands defensively. “I said, ‘stop’ and ‘no’ that’s it.”

Natasha opened the fridge to get some strawberries for them to share. “I’m just gonna put you down right here.” She walked out of the kitchen area to put him on the ground, in the atrium, near to the counter. It was safer than the kitchen floor, plus he’d be in Steve and Tony’s line of vision. Peter didn’t seem to mind being put down.
“Tony.” Steve sighed frustrated, “I said stall him not make him cry.”

“You know I didn’t mean to.”

Natasha rinsed the strawberries in a bowl and went out to sit with Peter and eat. She found that Peter was no longer sitting but standing. He had somehow found a way to balance himself on his own once again (probably by using a stool up against the counter to stand).

“Hey, you guys.” Natasha tried to get their attention but Steve and Tony were too involved with their own bickering.

“You scared him,” Steve said.

“Yeah, I know.” Tony wasn’t liking the back and forth. “It was an accident. Like you’ve never accidentally done something you weren’t supposed to with Peter.”

“Steve, Tony.” Natasha rose her voice. Peter was trying to put a foot forward to take a step.

“No, not that I can-”

“Guys!” Natasha shouted, throwing a handful of fruit at them.

Steve and Tony turned around to her, “What!” They shouted in unison.

“Look!” She pointed down to Peter.

All the anger they had seemingly melted away.

“It’s happening again.” Tony sounded hopeful. He walked until he was a few steps away from Peter. “Come on.” Tony coaxied him.

Steve joined him at his side and crouched down to be at eye-level with Peter. “Come on Pete.” He said in a way similar to Tony. “You can do it.” Tony got down to Steve’s elevation.

Natasha pulled out her phone to record them. Clint was going to be so pissed that he wasn’t there to see it.

Peter looked at them with determination and certainty in his eyes. He put his arms out to his sides and shuffled one foot forward. Peter began to fall forward but caught himself quickly with another uneasy step.

Steve felt Tony’s fingers wrap tightly around his arms in anticipation. “He’s doing it!” He shouted excitedly shaking Steve’s arm “Come here Petey come to Uncle Tony.”

Everything was happening so fast.

Peter breathed heavy ecstatic breaths and took another uneasy step.

“You’re doing it.” Steve encouraged him, laughing. “You’re almost there.”

Another two steps.

These ones at a better rhythm than the rest. He gave them both a toothy grin when he saw the joy on their faces.

Peter was about a good four paces away from Steve and Tony. He took another stiff wobbly step but
began losing his balance. He tried to keep from falling with another few fast misplaced steps. But they weren’t as sturdy as they ones before.

Peter fell into Steve’s waiting arms. Steve sat on the ground overcome with pride. He hugged Peter and kissed him twice on the top of his head; kissing him was something he didn’t do often in front of anyone.

“You did it.” He praised in between his hugs. It was only maybe six steps but felt as if all they had been doing finally hit a major milestone.

Tony was happy as well and not getting in on any of the action. He had meant to take Peter and give him his own congratulations but really ended up joining in on what became a group hug.

He came in with enough force that it knocked both Steve, Peter, and himself over.

Steve laughed it off and accepted the hug. It was closest they had been in weeks possibly. Tony managed to pry Peter, who was enjoying all this attention and laughing so hard that barely any audible noise was coming out, away from Steve.

Tony sat up and showered Peter with his own kisses, hugs, and praises.

Steve sat up as well watching him interact with Tony. He felt a warmth rise up, the same kind that he felt the night of that kiss they shared. What was this feeling supposed to be?

Natasha cleared her throat.

They had seemed to have been able to forget her presence there (as so many for some damn reason seem to do).

Steve stood up quickly and offered a hand to Tony to help him up. “Did you get that?” He asked tiptoeing around the real question; Did you get all of that?

“Yup.” Natasha answered putting her phone down on the counter, “Now let me see my little monster.” She picked Peter up from Tony. “Ugh, you need to stop growing, you hear that?” Peter didn’t. He was too preoccupied with the fruit that was also on the counter.

“Hey, that’s my line,” Steve said handing Peter a strawberry, though he didn’t want to ruin his appetite. Steve could see a lunch already set up for him.

The elevator doors slid open and Clint walked out.

He was in his normal street clothes and, as usual, was carrying his bow case and quiver. He was off doing some work at his apartment building. It wasn’t some run down tenement, but it still could use a little work. Thankfully, SHIELD paid incredibly well for the specialized work he did and those who paid rent helped him in fixing the place up.

They didn’t know what he did there. They knew he was the owner, everyone saw him as some Robin Hood figure, and that all kids loved him. Natasha was really the only one who was with Clint at his place often enough to know what it was really like, but other than that it was mostly a mystery.

Clint was easily able to sense something was different, but not in a good way. “What’d I miss?” He asked scratching his head out of habit.

“Watch.” Natasha stepped a few paces back and set Peter up to get ready. “You can do it.” She encouraged Peter as she gave him a few guided steps and he did the rest on his own all the way to
Clint.

He quickly dropped his stuff to catch Peter and pick him up. “Oh my god. I missed this and no one told me.” He held Peter at his hip with one arm to pick up his bag and quiver. “No one ever tells me anything, honestly.” He mumbled quietly, walking past them. “Peter you see what I’m dealing with.” Peter tugged at the black and purple beanie and took it into his own hands. “And you don’t care either.” he sighed.

Natasha, Tony, and Steve were standing in their own small group, mildly amused by Clint.

They spent the rest of the day lounging and helping Peter walk back and forth between the four of them. Well until Peter got fed up with all the practice and went back to crawling and playing with his toys.
Chapter Summary

It's Steve's birthday!

Chapter Notes

Hey you guys! Sorry for the late update. This was meant to be out by the 4th of July but I lost all connection to any form of internet from about 2 days before it until maybe 3 days ago. And quick peice of advise, never use google drive unless you have it backed up somewhere offline, cause I wasn't able to write anything unless I was at bookstore or friend's house ((plus my dumb ass kept forgetting to download the thing onto my laptop)) until I got the internet back. So again I'm really really sorry. So anyways huge thanks to everyone who have supported me and cheered me on through this fic. And as always...ENJOY!!!

“Guess what today is!” Clint burst into Steve’s room.

Steve awoke with a start and gathered the blankets of the bed to his chest protectively. “Clint!” Steve shouted when he realized who had woken him.

“Happy birthday Steve!” Clint tossed Peter onto the bed. “Surprise attack!”

Peter squealed with laughter and crawled up the bed to Steve. “Hey be careful with him.” Steve said pulling Peter to his lap.

Clint rolled his eyes, “Whatever, just come eat.” He left the room.

Steve sat up and carried Peter with him down the hall. He hadn’t forgotten it was his birthday, it just didn’t mean too much to him. It was just the Fourth of July to him. He walked out into the atrium and stopped in his tracks.

“What happened in here?”

Everything was red, white, and blue.

There were streamers, balloons, small American flags were hung on the walls and the upper railing of the stairs that lead to the living room. The floor was covered in so much confetti that there was no way in hell Steve was even going to let Peter touch the ground because it was a choking hazard. It was ridiculous, tacky, and would probably take hours to clean, yet part of him found the humor in it all.

Natasha looked up from the table. “Happy birthday Steve.” She gave him an apologetic smile, reading his expression. “It was Tony.”

Tony came out of the kitchen at the mention of his name. He was wearing a frilly American flag
apron that was stained with all sorts of red, white, and blue food stains. It must really have been a special event, Tony hardly ever cooked. “Morning dear.”

Tony also somehow accomplished ingraining those stupid nicknames into his vocabulary sometime since that ‘date’. It got on Steve nerves, which just made Tony want to do it even more. “You like the decor?”

He knew Steve hated it when people made a fuss over him.

“Oh it’s something.” Steve couldn’t imagine how early they had to wake up to do all that, so he wasn’t going to be rude on purpose.

“You love it and you know it. Now go sit I’ll get you plate.”

Steve put Peter in his highchair and sat down next to Natasha.

“We’ve got this whole day planned.” Clint sounded like a child with a secret. “Just you wait.”

“Really don’t-” Steve started but Tony interrupted him.

“Hey no spoilers.” Tony gave Steve his food and took his seat again. Tony was being strangely nice to him and he couldn’t quite point out why. He knew it couldn’t only have been because of his birthday.

The rest of them had already started eating.

Everything was red white and blue; the eggs, the pancakes, the fruit, and somehow even the bacon. Steve looked down at his plate. The odd colors threw him off, but it tasted the same. “So patriotic.”

Steve said in between bites.

“Captain America, born on the 4th of July; how could we not make this patriotic.” Clint pointed out.

“And you wouldn’t imagine how easy it is to buy 4th of July stuff in bulk.” Tony gestured at everything, “Hence all this.”

“How old are you now anyway?” Clint asked.

“98” Both Steve and Tony answered. Steve looked at him surprised.

“Anyways.” Tony coughed a bit embarrassed, “You and Peter coming with me somewhere and we’re leaving at 4.” Steve opened his mouth to protest. “And it’s non-optional.”

Steve sighed, he knew that he wasn’t going to be able to opt out of whatever it was, “Fine. Is this another manicure?” He tried guessing.

“Not unless you want one.” Tony winked at him while giving Peter another helping of eggs. Peter was liking all the colorful foods. So much so that he was playing with them about as much as he was eating them.

Steve felt a little warmth rise in his cheeks. He didn’t like how, how...flirtatious Tony was being today.

“Besides.” Natasha said not looking up from her phone, “I’ve already booked us for an appointment at 2.”
“Why am I even here?” Steve complained, “Doesn’t it being my birthday mean I get to pick what we do.”

“No Steve,” Natasha picked up a bottle of nail polish from the rack and handed it to the woman who was doing her nails. “And you owe me.”

Steve had his colors picked for him by Natasha, and no surprise it was red, white, and blue. Steve was really starting to hate those colors. He was having his nails painted white. “I lost a bet, I had no choice.”

Natasha sat down and the woman got started. “That doesn’t matter, I asked you first and so you should have gone with me first.”

She began talking to the woman doing her nails using Mandarin. Why did everyone know Mandarin except for Steve?

They were at the same place they had gone to the last time Steve had gotten his nails done. The people there still remembered him.

The two women who were working on their nails laughed at something Natasha said. Steve felt subconscious.

The woman who was painting Steve's nails looked up and said in slow English, “Your friend right.”

Steve didn’t know she was talking about. He smiled politely at her and turned to Nat, “What did you say?”

Natasha shrugged, “Just that not many guys like getting their nails done, but you do.”

Steve couldn’t stop looking at the finished product as they rode the elevator up to meet back up with Clint, Tony, and Peter. His nails were so shiny and distracting, though he wasn’t the big on the color choice he did like the clean feeling he got from the manicure.

All in all, it was a good waste of time until he had to go with Tony wherever he was taking him.

“We’re back!” Natasha announced when got to the floor.

“No, wait, stop.” Tony called from the kitchen.

“You’re going to ruin the surprise,” Clint added. “We’re not done with the cake yet.”

Natasha held her arm out to stop Steve just before they would have passed the counter.

“Okay, you’re good,” Clint said.

They continued walking.

Steve looked over the counter and stopped. He didn’t know how to react. “What the hell?” was all he found to say, more to himself than anyone in particular.

The kitchen was in ruins.
The was flour, eggs, milk, sugar, and other ingredients all piled onto the counter on the left of the oven. All were open and spills of each one surrounded their respective containers. On the opposite side of the oven was the dirty mixer with cake batter sprayed on the wall and cabinet above.

The island in the center of the kitchen was covered in red, white, and blue frosting. Some of the frosting colors mixed to create shades of pink, light blue, and lavender.

Tony and Clint stood side by side in front of the sink, both as dirty as the kitchen and looking a little sheepish after reviewing their mess.

“And what are you hiding behind you?” Natasha asked. She was holding back her laughter badly at that point.

“Clint? Tony?” Steve folded his arms, raising an accusing eyebrow.

They looked at each other and slowly moved aside to show them.

Peter was inside the sink licking his hands and fingers. He was completely coated in blue and red frosting. It was in his hair, on his face, clothes, and arms. There was more red and blue visible than his usual skin color. Peter smiled at reached for Steve and Natasha upon seeing that they were back, as if he didn’t look like the byproduct of a rejected Candyland character.

“Oh my god.” Natasha burst into laughter.

Steve wasn’t reacting. Clint and Tony still were looking at the ground. The corners of Clint’s mouth twitched in a repressed smile.

Steve walked up to Peter to slowly and shot Tony a look.

“I didn’t see him. We were so distracted and I dropped two of the jars and didn’t notice it and-“

Steve began to laugh a little, and it grew until he was laughing so hard that he had to turn for a moment to compose himself. Which worked until he turned at saw Peter again, in the sink and covered in red, blue, and purple.

Tony slowly joined in until pretty much all of them were dying of laughter.

Steve, still laughing a bit, took Peter out of his shirt. “I can’t believe you turned him another color.” Steve was nearly out of breath. “Oh, wow.”

Natasha came up next to Steve and sat on the only clean patch in the kitchen counter. “He’s probably never been so hyped up on sugar before.” Natasha said watching Peter turn the sink on and off rapidly.

“So you don’t care?” Clint asked.

“No, I do. And you 2 are going to clean this whole thing up before you do any more ‘decorating’.”

“Okay mom.” Tony said. He was putting the ingredients away already.

“Can you watch him.” Steve asked Natasha, he knew the answer but asked anyway. He went to the nursery to get a clean towel, diaper, and set of clothes, along with a washcloth.

He got back and took rest of Peter’s clothes off to clean him right then and there. Peter sat still and played with the water a bit.
“Really.” Tony said when he saw him, “In my sink.”

Steve rolled his eyes. “My mother used to do it for me all the time.” Tony shook his head and said no more about the subject. “And if you really cared about your kitchen you wouldn’t have trashed it.” He added quietly for only Natasha to hear.

She snorted a laugh and licked a bit of frosting off one of the spoons. “Well it does taste good.”

“Steve stop it.” Tony hissed. They were currently sitting in the back of a black SUV that was chauffeured. It kind of reminded Tony of the first time that they met. Except this time, they weren’t fighting and there was a baby in a car seat between them.

“Well maybe if you didn’t dye the kid blue I wouldn’t need to.” Steve was scrubbing with at Peter’s face and hands vigorously with a baby wipe. Peter whined in protest and squirmed in his seat to escape Steve. His face and hands were still tinted blue and red from the frosting.

“He loved it, sorry for being creative.”

“I’m not saying it was a bad idea. But I don’t want people thinking we can’t take care of him properly.”

“Have you seen other kids his age. There’d be a problem if he wasn’t stained or a little messy.” Steve smiled a half-crooked smile at Tony’s reassurance. Tony caught it and let out a small chuckle. “See he’s fine. Right Peter, tell him you’re a normal happy baby.” Peter babbled a bunch of gibberish and hit Steve’s hand what must have been some type of comfort. “There see.”

Steve leaned against the window with his arm to cover his smile. “You’re so weird.”

“Thanks, I’ve heard.”

The driver cleared his throat to get their attention. They hadn’t even realized that the car had stopped. “Sir, we’re here.”

Tony leaned forward. “Sorry, thank-you.” He paid him along with a good tip. “If you could take the car to the parking garage, drop the keys off in the front, and here,” He handed another 20 dollars to him. “take the rest of the day off. Get a cab and go home or something, it’s a holiday after all.”

“Of course sir. Thank-you Mr. Stark.”

Steve unbuckled Peter, it was easier than taking the car seat out and having to carry it around. Tony offered a hand to help Steve balance as he got out of the car. Steve took it and stepped out onto the sidewalk. “That was nice of you.” Steve commented after he closed the car door.

Tony waved as he drove away. Tony went forward and the automatic door slid open. The cool air-conditioned air blew past them as they walked in.

He read the sign on the door. “Brookdale Battery Park senior living solutions.” Steve didn’t understand why they were there of all places. “Tony I’m not that old.” Steve thought this must have been some type of a joke.

“Yes you are, but we’re not here for you.” Tony came up to the front desk to check in. “Well it is for you but not for you.”
“Yeah I got that.” Steve shifted Peter from one arm to the other. He looked around. It was a really nice place. The furniture, carpet, and curtains were all fancy and old fashioned. The lobby gave off a vibe as if they had stepped back in time and not through the doors of a nursing home.

“Okay this way.” One of the women from behind the desk came out around it to guide them to where they were going.

Tony and Steve followed her up to the third floor and down the hall to the right. The nurse was a cheery one and clearly loved her job. She greeted every old person that passed her by first name as if they were friends.

The nurse made small talk with Tony, Steve didn’t speak as much. He was too occupied with trying to figure who it was they were seeing that would be part of a birthday surprise.

“Here we are.” She said cheerily, unlocking the door. “If you need anything, just call. Don’t hesitate.”

They thanked her as she left.

“Now Steve.” Tony stopped him just as he started to go in. He used low hushed tones. “They say she’s not as well as she used to be so we have to be careful.” Tony stepped aside to let him go.

The whole room was in the same taste as the lobby; old fashioned everything, except there was a TV and kitchen that reminded them they were still in 2016 and not 1916. The place they were standing in was the living room with an open kitchen on the left. There were a few doors that were closed and one was half cracked open. Steve was willing to guess they went to either the bedroom, bathroom, or closets. This apartment was even better than his old one.

“Hello.” An elderly woman’s voice called out to them from the partially opened door. “Who’s there? Sharon dear, is that you?”

He knew that voice, why did he know that voice?

Steve handed Peter to Tony without even looking at him and he rushed into the bedroom, completely ignoring manners.

An audible gasp escaped his throat. He knew he recognized the voice. It had clearly aged but he’d be able to recognize it anywhere, even in death.

Steve’s hands began to shake, he felt cold, very cold, and afraid suddenly. He shut his eyes tight.

_If this was a dream she’d be gone when he opened them._

Steve opened his eyes and his heart rate accelerated. She was still there.

“Steve.” She whispered to herself. “Steve is that you?” her voice growing louder with each word. When she saw him. A grin that defined every crease and wrinkle appeared on her face. She seemed so calm, though maybe a bit bewildered, and less surprised than Steve was, though Steve could tell she hadn’t been expecting him.

“Peggy.” Steve’s voice was failing him.

It was Peggy Carter.

So many questions flooded his mind, there was so much he needed to know. But Tony’s words rang
in his head, and he decided against bombarding her.

Just her being there was enough for him.

“Steve.” She repeated holding a weak shaking hand out to beckon him to her.

Steve had no idea what to do or say. He was still in a state of shock. She looked so old and frail. He wanted to take her into his arms but he was afraid he’d break her.

Slowly Steve came closer and closer. He turned around to see Tony at the door frame watching them; his face had this mixed indescribable look of 2nd-hand happiness, satisfaction, and something else.

“How?” was all that he was able to say to Tony as he took Peggy’s hands into his.

“It’s a long story.” Tony said simply. “We’ll be outside, just, just...yeah.” Tony couldn’t seem to find the right words either. “Take all the time you need.”

All the time he needed? Steve couldn’t even see himself leaving her side.

“Oh, have you finally come to take me away.” Peggy hadn’t lost her charm in all those past decades. She looked as if she were fighting back tears. “I finally kicked it haven’t I?”

Steve pressed his lips to her hands. “No Peggy. I’m real, I’m here.” He said softly.

“You’re back.” Her eyes were scanning him in disbelief. “I knew you would be.”

“Yeah,” Steve was overcome with emotion, he brought his chair to be closer to her. “I still owe you that dance.” He gave her a weak smile.

“I think you’re a little late for that.”

Steve laughed softly. His eyes wandered to the side table. Among the empty half empty cup of water, and colorful pill bottles were a few picture frames.

One picture had her, Howard, and another man he didn’t recognize all standing together, cups raised to toast, in front of what he could only guess was the original Shield agency logo. He had seen the same picture somewhere in Stark Tower.

Another picture was Peggy in a wedding dress and veil with another man he didn’t recognize. In the frame beside it was her holding a baby and two other children on each of her sides. Peggy got married and had kids, settling down was the last thing Steve would have imagined her to do.

The last picture on the table had a crudely made frame. It was covered in glitter, macaroni, paint and stickers; clearly made by a child, but it wasn’t the frame that caught his eye, it was the picture in it. It was a significantly aged Peggy in the center surrounded by the same three kids but now much more grown with several children of all ages surrounding her; most likely her grandchildren.

Peggy caught his gaze. She breathed out a laugh, “I have 3 kids and 8 grandkids, who would have thought.”

“I think that’s great.”

She looked up wistfully. “Yes, it is. I got to live a full life and didn’t have to give up my career for it. I was blessed.” She squeezed Steve’s hand sadly. “Something you never got to have.”
Steve thought of the whole life he may have had if he hadn’t been frozen for those decades. Could he have had the same life as Peggy? A life that covered everything that he could only dream of. A life where he could make a difference in the world and still come home to a family that loved him.

“What is it Steve?” Peggy asked pointing out Steve’s silence.

Steve sighed, “I don’t know Peg. Sometimes I regret crashing that plane. I missed so much and there was so much I could have done.”

“Steve.” Her tone reminded him of a scolding parent. “You saved hundreds, maybe thousands, of lives that day. And you’re young and healthy there’s still time for you to have what you’ve always wanted. This is a whole new world for you, if you don’t like it then change it. You’re too selfless, try thinking about what makes you happy for once.”

“I don’t know if I’m even doing the right thing. I feel so lost. Sometimes I don’t even know if I’m fighting for the right cause. If I hadn’t known that you started Shield, I doubt I’d even be there now.” Steve felt strange he was revealing so much about himself at once. Peggy was such an easy person to talk to, he’d forgotten how much he missed talking to her. She always knew what to say, whether you wanted to hear it or not.

“And there’s this kid, Peter, really he’s more of a baby. I’m raising him with Tony Stark, Howard’s son. I’m also living with a few other friends, it’s great really.” Steve continued. “We hated each other at first, but now I’m not so sure. I love Peter, but I’m always questioning myself, like is this really the right thing for him.”

Peggy shifted herself to sit up a little more. “Steve, it sounds like you do know exactly what you want. You just need to stand up for it.”

Steve was confused, he didn’t say that there was anything he wanted.

“He loves you too you know.”

“Yeah Peter’s wonderful.” Steve felt a little proud at the mention of him.

“I meant Stark. Who would’ve thought Howard would reproduce.” She was starting to get off topic. Steve blushed, suddenly they were both young again. “Really Peggy.”

“Come now Steve. You say want a life where you get both a career and family, it’s standing right there outside that door.” She was more than the Margaret Carter he’d left behind in the 1940’s those years and years of experience made her wise and smart. “And if he’s anything like how I remember him, he needs you just at much.” Peggy laughed at her own small joke. She closed her eyes slowly in thought.

So Tony had met Peggy before, he’d never told him that. Steve smiled to himself. This was probably the best birthday he’d had since the one where Bucky took him to the beach where they had ice cream, swam, played games, and finished the day with a fireworks show.

Peggy slowly opened her eyes again and looked at Steve.

Her eyes were filled with confusion, disbelief, and bewilderment. “Steve?” she whispered. “Steve you’re alive!” She gave him a watery smile.

*What was going on?*
“Peggy?”

“Steve you’re back.” She held his hands. “I knew you’d be back.”

Steve understood now. She couldn’t remember a thing. To her, that whole conversation never happened.

He felt a wave of hurt flush over him as the realization set in.

*Why couldn’t someone have at least told him in advance?*

He tried his best to put on a face that spoke sincerely that there was nothing was wrong. “Yeah, I’m right here.” He kissed her forehead. “I’m back, I’m not going anywhere.” His voice wavered. “I-I still owe you that dance.”

After almost another 45 minutes of conversation Peggy fell asleep mid-sentence.

Steve took that as his cue to leave. He stood up and brushed back some of her grey-white hair to place a small kiss upon it. “Goodbye, Peggy Carter.” He whispered pulling up the covers a bit.

He paused a moment, just watching her sleep at peace. Steve sighed and wiped the tired from his face.

Steve walked out into the living room. His eyes stung and he felt fatigued for some reason. It was already getting dark out, how long had they really been talking.

Tony was sitting on the couch watching the news with Peter laying down on the couch with him. He was resting his head on Tony’s lap.

“Hey.” Steve said getting Tony’s attention.

Tony turned around on the couch. “How’d it go?”

Steve felt a small pang in his chest. He wanted to say ‘well’, but that wouldn’t have been the right word to describe it.

Tony stood up slowly. It was then that Steve realized that Peter had actually fallen asleep. “Hey what is it?” Tony left Peter to sleep and he walked around the couch to properly face Steve.

Steve couldn’t meet his eyes. “It’s just, this is all so surreal. I always thought everyone I knew was dead.” Steve looked at the door to the bedroom, “But one of the most important parts of it is right there.”

“Yeah her location was supposed to be secret, but I was able to pull a few strings.” Tony sounded pleased with himself.

“How long have you known?”

“I used to see her at parties, her and my dad were close.”

“No, I mean that she was here and alive.”

Tony knew where Steve was getting at, “I looked her up a month ago and found her last week.”
Steve was silent. He didn’t know if he was mad at him or not. “Look I’m sorry, I should have told you earlier, but it was meant to be a surprise.” Steve still wasn’t fully looking at him. “I was wrong, I should have-”

Steve came quickly up to Tony, wrapping his arms around him in a tight hug. “Thank-you.”

Tony returned the hug. It was warm and sincere.

They stood there for a moment, neither of them pulling away.

“No problem.” Tony’s face was buried into Steve’s shoulder so it came out muffled. Steve smelled of fragrant soap and peppermint. ‘Like an old man’ Tony thought to himself, but not out loud as to not ruin the moment.

Steve felt some relief in their embrace. He hardly wanted to leave Peggy behind but it also hurt being there. Somehow having Tony just be there helped take some of the pain away, as if he shouldering some of it for Steve.

They withdrew eventually. They both stared at each other awkwardly for a moment.

“Let’s-” Steve had the hint of an embarrassed smile on his lips. “Let’s go.”

Tony reached over the back of the couch to pick Peter up. “Get the bag.” He told Steve as they left.

Steve looked out the window, slowly gathering his thoughts and thinking about all that had just happened. It was still so unbelievable.

Her words, couldn’t leave him.

*You say want a life where you get both a career and family, it’s standing right there outside that door.*

His eyes wandered to Tony who was driving the car back.

*He loves you too, you know.*

Steve didn’t know how he felt about Tony. He liked him a lot more than he did when he first moved in and he was sure Tony felt the same, but love him? It seemed like too much at once.

He knew that if Tony asked him out on a proper date he probably wouldn’t say no this time. Tony changed so much and there were times when he saw his friendship with him as a little different than the ones he had with Clint or Natasha. He always thought that it was because they were sharing custody with the same kid, but maybe that wasn’t it.

Maybe there was something more.

The whole car was silent except for Peter.

Peter woke up when they put him in the car seat. Tony said he had fallen asleep a little after they went to the couch in the apartment.

That meant Peter’s nap was only about an hour and a half long and that was going to have to suffice as his nap time. Steve wasn’t too worried; Peter was probably going to sleep early which was good.
“Tony that was the wrong button.” Steve was holding Peter and the car seat he was strapped into with both hands. He couldn’t correct the error Tony had made in pushing the button for the wrong floor on the elevator. He knew he had been on that floor but couldn’t remember what was on it.

“Are you sure?” He had that wild Tony Stark glint in his eyes.

Steve caught on, “Oh god.” Steve leaned against the wall, “Tony I don’t know what else you’ve got planned, but can we do it tomorrow. I’m tired, I just want dinner and to go to bed, please.”

He was really pleading, which made Tony feel a bit guilty but not enough to act on it. “Sorry man, it’s too late.”

The doors to the elevator slid open. The whole area was dark but not pitch black. Steve could still make out some silhouettes here and there. But they were all shapes he couldn’t guess.

“Really I-” Steve began.

He was quickly stopped by the lights flicking on.

“Surprise!” shouted everyone at once, making both Steve and Peter jump.

Steve looked around. Everyone wasn’t just the usual Natasha, Clint, and maybe Pepper. It was Danny Rand, Luke Cage, Jessica Jones, their daughter Danielle, Jessica Drew, her son, Carol Danvers, and of course, Thor.

He was on the party floor; he hadn’t been on it since the night that they had hosted Thor for dinner.

Steve was definitely surprised, though he probably should have known better.

He walked in to greet everyone.

“Happy birthday.” Jessica Drew said, holding her son on her hip with one hand to place the other on his shoulder with the other.

“Yeah Steve.” Carol added coming up to Jess’s side.

As Dany and Jess Jones came to offer similar greetings. Steve saw Clint go by him and whisper something in Tony’s ear. He then came over and said, “I can take that.” He took Peter who was still in his car seat from Steve.

“I thought this was supposed to be a party, not a meet and greet.” Luke said from behind the bar. He and Thor were clearly having their own mixology kitchen science session.

Tony stepped up as host and walked quickly across the dance floor. “I got it.” He called to them from across the room. He climbed up the steps and stood where a DJ would have been and set up the tablet on the table to begin playing music.

It was house music that could have been heard at a club. They could all feel the thumpa thumpa in their chests from the bass. The colorful strobe lights and projections made it feel even more like a club.

“Hey!” Carol shouted over the music. “Turn it down, we’ve got babies here.” She wasn’t wrong, all the kids were under 3, but they all knew it was mostly because she was just as overprotective of
Jess’s baby son as Jess was.

Tony quickly turned down the base and volume with an apologetic grin, but he kept the lights, he liked the lights. Luke and Jess Jones’s daughter seemed to as well. She was alone on the dance floor staring at the ground stomping in a circle, watching the lights.

At the mention of babies, Steve’s eyes scanned the room for Peter. He wasn’t anywhere in sight and neither was Clint.

The whole place was very large and offered up way more space than they need. It was obviously for holding parties for 50 maybe 100 people tops, not 14. Steve couldn’t see why they couldn’t have just done this up in their usual dwellings.

“Hey where’s Clint?” Steve asked Natasha, thankful to not have to yell over the music. “He’s got Peter with him.”

Natasha shook his head, “I don’t know.”

He knew she was lying. This was all way too many surprises for him in one day.

“Okay.” She said quick to change the subject, “Pepper can you come help me get the food from the dining room. She meant the room that had the fancy table and small kitchen in the back.

“I can do it.” Steve offered.

“No, no don’t worry about it.” Pepper said. “It’s your birthday. Relax go have a drink, Thor brought some of his own for you guys.” She smiled at him, remembering the last time he’d gotten drunk off that stuff.

Steve felt warmth rise up in the tips of his ears at the mention of that night. There was no way he was ever getting that drunk again.

Luke and Jessica Jones’ daughter, Danielle, came up to Steve and tugged at his pant leg curiously. He hadn’t seen her in months and doubted she would have remembered him. “God, Luke. She gets bigger every time I see her.” He said picking her up and sitting her on the counter of the bar, smoothing the ruffles of her light green frilly dress. He sat down on one of the stools.

Tony came up and sat beside him with Carol following closely.

Luke beamed with pride. “I don’t care how big she gets; she’s always going to be my princess. Isn’t that right?” He cooed over her.


Luke picked her up. He tickled her and placed a large kiss on her cheek, which she quickly returned. “Okay go to mommy.” He gave her one more kiss on the top of her head and put her on the ground.

There was a time where Luke was more of a serious, no-nonsense, straight to the point kind of guy; meeting Jessica changed all that and having a daughter softened him even more. This Luke was a way different Luke Cage than the one any of them had first met. Yet he still seemed changed for the better.

They watched her run off to the little area of couches that Jessica, Jess, and Danny were having their own conversation. “I’m telling you guys, this makes everything worth it. You two will see, parenthood changes a guy.”
Steve and Tony gave each other a look. *Parenthood?*

They were both still uncomfortable with calling this arrangement parenthood. Steve figured they’d reach that level of comfort eventually. Tony thought accepting the role of parent and not guardian would be writing Mary and Richard out of the picture, Steve also agreed with him in that part.

“Yeah, kids just aren’t for me.” Carol said picking one of the green colored martinis that were already made and waiting on the counter to be taken.

“I don’t know.” Tony said taking one of the drinks as well, “The way you fawn over Jess’s son-” He began in a skeptical way that didn’t need to be finished because they all knew what point he was getting at.

“Shut up that’s different.” She snipped. “And what about you, Mr. “I’m never going to get married and have kids that will only weigh me down…”, what do you call your life now?”

Tony took a large gulp to finish his drink and picked up another, “Okay, okay point taken.” They all laughed it off.

Steve really hoped he wasn’t going to drink too much; Tony was always so unpredictable when he was too drunk.

“Rogers?” Thor said getting his attention. “Would you like a drink as well?”

Steve felt the burn of Thor’s mead just thinking of it.

“Don’t worry, we watered it down and added a bit more flavoring.” Luke explained, “He told me about your experience with this stuff.” Luke was smiling, he found the story just as funny as everybody else did. “I tried a bit myself. Damn these gods can really make a drink. It was like a drop and I thought I was going to die.” Luke patted Thor’s arm.


Steve thanked him and accepted the drink. He could still taste the mead, but as promised it tasted much better and the effect didn’t take hold as fast as it did in its original state. “It’s good.” He said after another sip. “Thanks.”

He felt a pair of arms wrap around his waist and chin rest on his shoulder. It was Natasha. “Sorry we couldn’t tell you.” She seemed to sense there was something off with him.

“No it’s fine.” Steve quickly reassured, “Honestly it’s nice to see everyone together.” The truth was that he didn’t think a party was really the kind of thing he wanted to do after seeing Peggy, but have his friends around him did help.

“Oh!” Clint was standing nearer to the center of the room. “Your attention please.” He was being purposefully dramatic.

“This one’s from me, Clint, and Nat.” Tony whispered closely into Steve’s ear.

*Even more freaking surprises!*

“Steve, if you’d please.” Clint’s arm stretched out to signal him over. Steve, a feeling a little awkward being the center of attention, reluctantly stepped off the stool and joined Clint.
“Really.” Steve waved his hands to show that all this was too much. “I don’t need any more—”

“Petey no.” Clint called out in a mildly annoyed tone.

Steve looked up and saw Peter running to him and Clint. He was still getting the hang of the walking thing, so he was doing more of a teetering fast walk than an actual ‘run’ per se.

But that wasn’t what Steve was really paying attention to, “You didn’t.” Steve said meeting Peter halfway to pick him up, “Where did you even find something like this?”

Peter was decked out in a suit completely identical to Steve’s Captain America suit. Iron Man was more marketed and merchandise for him was seen everywhere, while Captain America, Hawkeye, and Black Widow, though known and popular, had near to no merchandise for them whatsoever.

Every detail was nearly perfect. Steve couldn’t stop trying to find some flaw. Even the color of his glass matched the suit. Steve felt swelling pressure that could only be described as pride, even if it wasn’t really the right word for the feeling. Peter was wearing his suit. “Look at you.” Steve said hugging Peter. Which granted them a chorus of ‘aww’s’ from the majority of the party.

He knew Peter didn’t understand what he was wearing meant to Steve but he did seem to understand it was still was important to him.

Tony and Natasha met with them in the center. “I take it you like the outfit. We had it custom made for him.” Tony said taking a sip from his drink. Tony didn’t ever not have on with him at parties for some reason.

“How could he not.” Natasha said taking Peter from Steve. “He’s so handsome.” She tossed Peter lightly up and down a few times to make him laugh and set him down on the ground.

“There was a shield too.” Clint added. “But he couldn’t carry it. And you,” Clint looked down and moved his focus to Peter, “You were supposed to wait for the signal.” Clint poked and prodded him. He squealed from the excitement and hid behind Tony, gripping tightly on his pant leg.

“You didn’t really expect him to wait for a signal.” Natasha said. “He’s still a baby.”

Clint shrugged, “I don’t know, he’s a smart kid.”

“I, for one, believe he will make a fine warrior.” Thor was standing behind Clint, making Clint flinch in surprise. It was almost as if they had forgotten there was more people there than just them. “One worthy of his caretakers.”

“Jesus man.” Clint stepped to the side to include Thor.

Upon seeing Thor, Peter let go of Tony to quickly make his way to him. Peter absolutely loved Thor. He had not very many reasons to, but for whatever reason whenever they met up with him or had Thor over Peter would cling to him as if he were his little shadow.

Thor obligingly picked Peter up and held him with one arm as Peter pulled at anything of Thor’s he could; hair, clothes, and necklaces mostly.

Tony and Steve looked at each other for less than a moment and turned to Thor. “No.” They said in unison, practically yelling.

“You know what.” Clint sounded uneasy. “Tony what is with all this crap music. I’ll show you how it’s really done.” He left them all to go to the DJ station and change the music. Really it was to
escape what he foresaw coming.

“He is never going to become one of us.” Tony scolded Thor.

Thor’s face lit up with surprise, he wasn’t expecting that or a lecture.

“It’s dangerous out there.” Steve felt worried just thinking about that. “He’d get hurt. Do you have any idea just how much heroes get hurt on a daily basis? What if we’re not there to help him.”

“Or worse they could take him from us and brainwash him.” Tony added, “Hell no, he’s never getting a career like ours. Over my dead body.”

“Maybe a lawyer or a doctor,” Steve built upon Tony’s comment, “But not anyone under a mask or even part of Shield.”

Thor held up a hand with an apologetic smile waiting for a chance to take it all back.

Natasha shook her head and rejoined Luke and Carol at the bar. They watched Tony and Steve’s freak out. “Poor guy.” Natasha picked up a mini sandwich from the platter on the side table.

Carol was enjoying the entertainment. “The sucker never saw it coming.”

Luke crossed his arms and laughed. “Oh he’s regretting it.”

It didn’t take very long for Steve and Tony to calm down. They weren’t really mad at Thor at all. It was just the thought of Peter being in the way of danger such the sort they constantly put themselves in that just got them going.

Thankfully they hadn’t hurt Thor. He understood their point and it was impossible to bruise his ego. Everything was fine.

Soon it was dark enough for the final part of Steve’s birthday to finally happen.

Tony nudged Clint in the side and called him over into the small kitchen to have him help Tony.

“I don’t know about this one dude.” Clint said, “He’s not going to like this.”

“This time I don’t care.” Tony was putting on the finishing touches, “I’ve been doing the kind of stuff he likes all day, so no, this one’s for us. And don’t lie, it’s going to be hilarious.”

Clint thought about it and let out a single laugh, “Yeah it really will be. Nat better get this one on tape.”

Tony agreed and opened the door to the main area where everyone was. “Okay you guys, time for cake.”

Tony and Clint wheeled out a circular cake made to look like Steve’s shield. This is what had caused that catastrophe of a mess in the kitchen upstairs. Tony was sure Steve was going to be fed up with those colors by the end of the night.

Everyone stopped to crowd around the cake. They moved aside to let Steve through.

As soon as he saw it he stopped and let out a little gasp. “What’s wrong with you?” He didn’t say it
in a way that was filled with venom, it was more playful than sour. Steve knew this had to be Clint or Tony’s idea.

“Dear god, this better not be a reenactment of that Christmas party.” Carol mumbled.

“Hey, the man’s turning 98. He needs to have 98 candles.” Tony took some sort of a mechanism from his pocket. “Jarvis music off, lights 20%” The music stopped and the lighted dimmed. Tony handed Natasha a second mechanism identical to the one he had produced.

He turned it on. It was like a miniature welder’s torch. Natasha followed his same motions and they got to lighting all the candles. The flame size helped light them all much faster.

“This is ridiculous.” Danny laughed.

“Honestly Tony, you’re going to set the place on fire.” Pepper agreed, equally as enthralled.

“Plus all that wax is going to ruin a perfectly good cake.” Jessica Drew added.

Carol elbowed her playfully, “Of course you think about the food.”

“Hey, at least my priorities are straight.”

Tony stepped back to look at the fire. It looked more like a bonfire on a cake than candles. “There, now quick let’s do this. Ready and Happy Birthday-”

The rest of them all joined in singing the happy birthday song.

This was always Steve’s least favorite part of his own birthdays. Having everyone sing to him made him feel…itchy, it was a weirdly unpleasant feeling. And everyone always insisted on doing it. But he smiled and waited for them patiently to finish to blow out the candles.

It brought him back to that same birthday where him and Bucky had spent the day at the beach.

It was his first birthday since his mom had died. She always made him a small cake and breakfast, and she’d somehow manage to save up the money to buy him maybe a book or something of the sort every time. But she wasn’t there to follow any of those traditions.

Steve had planned to not do anything at all on that day until Bucky had let himself into Steve’s home and quite literally dragged him out of the house and to the beach. They ended up having one of the greatest days of Steve life and ended it with a ride back home on the back of a stranger’s pickup truck well past 10 at night.

That was when Bucky had conjured up a cupcake. Steve could still picture it. It was a bit squashed but still maintained the qualities of a cupcake.

Bucky then pulled out a matchbox and lit one since he didn’t have a candle. And despite every single one of Steve protests, he sang Happy Birthday to him, pretty badly as Steve remembered.

“Okay Steve.” Natasha put a hand on his arm bringing him back to reality. “Go for it.”

“And don’t forget that wish.” Danny added.

“No wish.” Jessica said, “Hurry, save the cake.” She got a few laughs and smiles out of that one.

Steve’s eyes looked around; from Danny on his right to Luke to Thor who was holding Peter still and all the way down to Nat, Clint, and Tony who were all gathered on his left. He was surrounded
by friends, maybe even family. He felt like he was in a place where he truly belonged. What could he really ask for?

There wasn’t anything.

Steve began blowing out the candles. It proved to be way easier in theory. Everyone was clearly entertained by Steve struggled and a few were even videotaping it. When the final candle was out he straightened back up. “Whew.” He breathed, slightly light-headed. “That was hard.”

They all applauded his work.

Tony grabbed Steve’s head to give him a dramatic kiss on the cheek in front of everyone in the room.

Steve felt a chilling prick run up his neck.

He let go of it such as how a Disney princess let’s go of a bird; with his hands hovering and fingers splayed. “Happy birthday old man.” He cheered, clearly unphased by the kiss, and handed him a knife to cut the cake.

Steve couldn’t sleep.

Everyone was long gone.

They ate cake and watched fireworks from the balcony. Peter and Danielle loved them...Jess’s son not so much. He wouldn’t stop screaming and crying, even after her and Carol brought him inside and away from the noise.

They’d cleaned up the mess and by the time that was over, Clint and Nat were ready to go to sleep and Peter had already fallen asleep on one of the couches.

Tony carried him to his room, Steve followed, and Clint and Natasha went up the extra floor to their rooms.

Steve tossed from side to side in his dark room, he couldn’t find a comfortable position at all. There was so much swimming around in his head; so many old memories that he’d tried so hard to shove down were creeping back up. Not all of them were meant to hurt him but they all still did. He needed a distraction, something to make it all stop.

Eventually, he gave up. Steve turned the light on and left his room.

He checked Peter’s room. He was asleep in his crib, obviously worn out by the day’s events.

Then Steve did something he normally wouldn’t do, he knocked once on Tony’s door and opened it.

The four of them suffered from insomnia to some degree, all for their own personal reasons. On those restless nights where one or more of them couldn’t sleep they were left alone to go off and do their own thing until they could get at least a few hours of sleep in. The only kind of interaction they’d have is if they were getting food or watching crap nighttime tv together at the same time. That was just the way it worked for them, but sometimes knowing another person was awake as well was enough to break some discomfort.

Tony was sitting on the side of his bed closest to the door. He was in pajama bottoms and shirtless.
He had a laptop to his side and a tablet that was projecting what looked like blueprints in hologram form was on his lap.

“Steve.” Tony said sitting up. Steve looked just as surprised as Tony did that he was in his room. “If I knew I was going to have company I would have dressed better.” He joked to clear the air in the room that was thick and heavy.

Steve quickly turned to go, “I’m sorry to interrupt. I don’t think I’ll be sleeping tonight, I wanted to tell you that I’ll take Peter tonight.”

Tony knew there was more, that something was bothering him. Peter had been sleeping through the night for some time now, and if he did wake up he was able to go back to sleep on his own. “Bullshit.” Tony set his tablet aside to sit cross-legged on his bed. “What is it really?”

Steve stopped leaving. “It’s nothing really.”

“Shut up, yeah it is.” He cleared a space on the bed and patted it for Steve to sit.

Steve for whatever reason actually found himself taking that spot that Tony opened for him. He wasn’t sitting nearly as comfortably as Tony was, he could have been if he wanted to. “It’s just.” Steve felt strange opening up to Tony, “It’s just that I realized that Peggy wasn’t going to remember seeing me.” That wasn’t the whole of it, but is was one of the things that were nagging at him the most.

Tony didn’t understand. He knew that she suffered from short-term memory loss but he didn’t think it would bother Steve as much.

Steve clasped his hands together and propped his elbows up on his knees to rest his chin on his hands. “I don’t know, I mean I thought I was alone. I woke up and nearly 70 years went by, everyone I looked for was dead. Well except my best friend he was already-” Steve sucked in a sharp breath, “He was already dead.”

Tony inched closer to Steve. “You mean Bucky Barnes. My dad and Peggy told me he was a good man.”

Steve found his mood brightened at that. His memory lived on in a way. “Yeah, he really was.” he undid his hands to run them through his hair. “But now with Peggy, it’s like I’m not alone anymore, but I still am. She still thinks I’m dead. To her I still died and no matter how many times I go see her she’ll never remember it. It’s just not fair.” Steve’s eyes stung. He felt like selfish child using those words.

Tony put a comforting hand on his back. He didn’t feel that same pain, but he could understand it. “I’m sorry man. It sucks.” he wished he knew what to say to help, “So how is she now, is she still that same gal you knew back in the day.”

Steve let out the strained chuckle at Tony’s terrible use of that sort of lingo. He wiped at his eyes, though no tears had fallen and put one leg up on the bed to face him. “She got married, had kids and grandkids and got to keep her life before it all; all the while making a difference. She seemed so happy and content with it all.” Steve thought wistfully “She got the life I wanted and I think I got the one she might have wanted.”

“Funny how that sometimes works.” Tony felt a warm fuzzy feeling inside. The same that he felt at the end of their so-called date. They were talking openly with each other. Steve was able to come to him with his problems, it felt strangely like a compliment. “You know it’s not too late for that.”
said after some silence.

Steve’s eyes lit up a little. “She said the same thing.” Steve wanted to think that it was just Tony being a good friend, but his mind went back to their kiss and another part of Steve felt as though it meant more than that. Tony was still looking at his with that analytical gaze. As if he were trying to take Steve apart and study him with his eyes. Steve looked away.

Tony stared at Steve again, he was still averting his gaze. What was with all this tiptoeing around the subject. The subject being the nature of their relationship. Tony didn’t know if he was actually in love with Steve. In reality, he didn’t even know if he’d ever really been in love with anyone before. Yet still a part of him found himself thinking about Steve when he was alone; every little thing always could be brought back to him Steve. Whenever they were alone together he’d get flustered and put on the ‘Tony Stark’ charm, but that didn’t work on Steve, he was different, he was special.

Tony felt conflicted, but was driven by one impulse.

Tony used on hand to balance himself on his bed as he went on his knees to lean forward closer to Steve. God he felt like he was in high school again. He used his other hand to tilt Steve’s chin to align with him.

“What are you doing?” Steve said quietly in an uneven voice.

“What do you think?” Tony matched Steve’s tone but remained inches from Steve’s lips. “Do you not want this.”

“I don’t want what we have to change. Think about Peter.” Steve was thinking about how bad it would be for Peter if whatever this was didn’t end up working out. He didn’t want Peter in the middle of it all.

“Then it won’t.” Tony whispered slowly coming in to meet his lips with Steve’s in a deep kiss.

Steve didn’t back out or protest. He found himself kissing Tony back. It was as if all the pressure that had been building between them was finally being released into that one kiss.

Tony was the first to pull back. They were both beet red in embarrassment. Steve was chewing at his bottom lip unable to look fully at Tony. Like a flustered teenager, he thought to himself. They really were back in high school. “So what does this mean?” Tony had no idea if they were now an official couple or not.

Steve leaned forward to kiss him once and quick.

“You tell me.”
Steve rapped gently on the door of Tony’s room. He had Peter resting his head sleepily on his shoulder. It was pretty late in the night for the both of them, 2:38am.

They were mostly awake because of the lightning storm that was going on that night; somehow being so high up in a building just made thunder, lightning, and rain worse. Steve had no problems with these things, but Peter and Tony did.

There was no response. *Maybe he’s sleeping before 3am for once?* Steve thought before dismissing it and opening the door himself.

Sure enough there he was, Tony Stark, awake in bed. He was wearing a set of headphones and working away on his tablet. Only the table lamp was on, the glow from the tablet reflected off the set of glasses that were balanced on his nose.

Steve liked that look for Tony. The glasses made him look more scholarly or sophisticated.

He walked further into the room and waved to get his attention.

Tony looked up from his work. He took his headphones off, allowing the faint tune of the Beastie Boys to be unleashed into the room. The music was probably why Tony couldn’t hear the knocking. He was using them to block out the noise of the storm.

“Rough night?” Tony asked sitting up and placing his tablet aside.

Steve didn’t wait to be invited and climbed onto the bed. He sat cross-legged next to Tony and laid Peter down between them. “I should be asking you that.” He said absentmindedly stroking Peter’s hair to soothe him the same way Peter was soothed by his mother as a younger baby. “He’ll be sleeping soon.” Steve hoped so at least.

“Well I’m fine. You came to check on me, right?” Tony took the reading glasses off and set them on his nightstand. Steve didn’t respond, he recognized that silence. “Aw, you do care.” Tony continued just to tease him.
Steve nudged his side with a hand, “Don’t do that.”

“Do what?”

Steve shook his head. “Anyways, yes I was.”

Tony was surprised he didn’t expect him to own up to it. “Yeah I’m okay, these help.” He said holding up his headphones. “Besides the way it’s going, it should be over soon.” Steve was still not saying much. “Did you want me to take Peter tonight, you’ve got work with the new people tomorrow don’t you?”

“No,” Steve said quickly, he didn’t want him to think that was the only reason why he came in. “I don’t have to be there until noon, I’ll get enough sleep.” He shifted to pick Peter up again. “Well if that’s all, good night then.”

Tony held Steve’s hand to keep him from going, “Stay, we can watch something.” Steve still looked a little unsure of himself, “Just until Peter sleeps.” He added. In reality part of him didn’t want to be alone, maybe Steve didn’t either.

Steve relaxed once more, “Until he sleeps.” He repeated in his own words. “You pick something; I’ll be right back. I forgot his cup in the nursery.”

Steve left and returned.

Tony was lying down close to Peter. He had his tablet standing up against Peter and his head was propped up on one hand as he continued to work. As soon as he saw Steve come in and back onto the bed he began the show he had chosen.

“Sofia the First.” Steve read the title on the top of the TV screen as the video loaded with mild annoyance.

“Hey, it’s Peter’s favorite, and it’s grown on me.” He added the latter with a hint of shame.

Steve shook the cup gave it to Peter. “He’s 1, he doesn’t have a favorite show. And don’t use him a stand.”

“He’s fine with it.” They were starting to bicker. “Plus if he can have a favorite person, me by the way, he can have a favorite show.”

“Peter come here.” Steve opened his arms for Peter to come to them. Peter rolled onto his stomach and half crawled-half scooted his way to Steve’s side. He curled up to use Steve’s chest as a pillow as Steve shot Tony a victorious look.

“Oh, I see how it is.” Tony sat up. “Come here Peter.” He said it as sweetly as a person calling a puppy. Peter’s eyes were glued to the screen as he sluggishly drank from the sip cup. “Whatever.” Tony stared at Steve and Peter for a moment.

Steve caught onto his look. “Did you want to get in on this?” Those words felt strange in his mouth. They weren’t his, those were more of Tony Stark’s words. He’d adopted a lot of his terminology and phrasing since he’d moved in and vice versa.

“Can I?”

Steve motioned for him to come over. Tony edged to rest his head on Steve’s thighs. He ran his fingers through Tony’s hair as they watched the children’s show.
This type of affection was slowly and slowly becoming less and less foreign to Steve and Tony. It was a little over 3 weeks since the kiss they’d shared on Steve’s birthday. There were more kisses since that one, but that was the one that really set off what they had going.

Neither of them were calling each other ‘boyfriends’ just yet, but what they were could clearly be defined as being a couple. They sat together, flirted, kissed and more showed other kinds of affection in their own privacy. Tony was more that comfortable to give and receive, while Steve was more reserved.

All this was done behind closed doors. Nobody knew what the nature of their relationship was yet, and they were trying to keep it that way for as long as they could. This included their friends as well. But this, what they were doing, was a sign of the progress they were having with becoming more and more comfortable with showing affection towards each other.

“Can I ask you something,” Tony said tracing shapes into the sheet right beside Steve’s leg.

“Mhm.”

“About today, I tried to hold your hand when we were watching that movie.” Tony felt awkward about being so confrontational about what had happened. “And you went stiff and moved away, you couldn’t even look at me until it was over.”

Steve knew exactly what he was talking about, but he didn’t think it would have bothered him so much. “Well, Clint and Nat were there, Tony. We agreed to keep this secret until the time is right.” He reminded him.

“I know, but it’s just- it felt as if you didn’t want to cause it was me.”

“You’re sounding like a child, here.” Steve held Tony’s hand, “See it’s just a hand.”

“Okay, yeah I get it.” Tony was happy to have gotten that out of the way, though he did feel weird and childish for even bringing it up.

He waited for some time, in fact until the transition to the next to add another comment. “But how long do you think we can keep this up?”

Steve didn’t answer.

Tony turned over to see that Steve had fallen asleep as well as Peter. Tony shut the TV off. He sat up and carried Peter to the pack and play he kept in the corner of his room. Tony waited to watch Peter settle before he went back to Steve.

He was sleeping so peacefully that Tony didn’t want to wake him. Instead, Tony went over to Steve’s side of his bed and slowly moved his shoulders and back off the backboard of the bed to place him on the mattress itself.

Steve’s eye shot open and he looked up at Tony a bit bewildered. “Shhh” Tony whispered, “Go back to sleep, stay with me.”

Steve must have been seriously tired. He nodded and drifted to sleep without even saying anything or questioning him.

Tony breathed a sigh. He got in from the other side of the bed and switched the lamp off.
Despite the rain and light thunder, Tony found it surprisingly easy to fall asleep somehow. Tony was willing to contribute it to the fact that Steve was there beside him. Something about it brought comfort and it just felt right.

They were sharing the same bed together.

This was another sign of their progress.

Steve wasn’t necessarily in a rush, but that didn’t mean he wasn’t trying to leave early to get to work early. The new recruits fresh from the academy were starting that day, Steve and another agent was supposed to be the first people to work with them as official agents.

It was a pretty big deal and he didn’t want to be late.

Steve didn’t have time to make breakfast for everyone since he had slept in a little more than he had expected.

Steve was in the kitchen packing a bit of a breakfast for the drive there. He zipped the lunch box closed and got to making his coffee. He opened the cabinet above the maker to get a thermos.

There weren’t any there, only mugs, sip-cups, and bottles. Steve pushed a few mugs aside to see if there was any in the back. He spotted one. Steve reached to pick it up.

It was an Iron Man thermos.

Steve sighed, he didn’t want to take a thing like that into work. But he also knew that if he wanted to take any coffee with him it would have to be that. So he put aside his pride and rinsed the cup out once before filling it with the one touch maker.

God, did he love that machine.

Steve was adding cream and sugar when he felt two arms brush up against his waist and wrap around him.

“Morning.” He heard Tony whisper into his ear.

Steve quickly turned around, breaking out of his embrace. “Don’t do that.”

“What?”

“You know that.” Steve gestured at Tony up and down with one hand.

Tony came over to hug him again. “You mean this.”

Steve felt an embarrassed heat. He didn’t mind all the affection, but he wasn’t sure whether being this comfortable was rushing it all or not.

“You don’t need to be so shy.” Tony took a slight step back to give more space without letting go of his waist. Tony was easily able to read him, “You did sleep in my bed after all.”

Steve grew hotter. “Shhh,” he shushed him, “Someone could hear you.”

“Oh come on you know none of us, except you, would willingly wake up before 10.”
He heard a clanking noise from behind Tony. Peter was trying to open the lower cabinets again. Thank god they invested in the baby-proof clamps.

Steve cleared his throat and turned back around to finish closing his cup, “And why are you two up then.”

“Ask him.” Tony pointed at Peter.

Steve shook his head giving him the slightest of smiles. “Anyways, I’ve got to go.” He took his coffee and lunch bag in one hand and picked his backpack off the table.

“Um, aren’t you forgetting something?” Steve looked at Tony confused, he had everything; keys, phone, wallet, badge... “A goodbye kiss.” Tony answered for him.

“Oh right.” Steve said playing along with him. “Petey, come here.” Peter stopped what he was doing to toddle over to Steve. Steve picked Peter up to give him a large kiss on the cheek. Peter laughed and hugged Steve’s neck giving him the same sloppy kiss in return. “There, happy?” Steve said, passing Peter off to Tony.

“Haha very funny.” Tony said with obvious sarcasm. He kissed Steve’s cheek. Steve felt the same heat return and hastily got into the elevator. “Have fun at work Margret Anderson.” He heard Tony call as the doors closed.

Steve smiled to himself, replaying the past 10 minutes in his head.

It was strange acting this way with someone he once despised being in the very same room as.

Steve did enjoy it all though. This was kind of relationship was completely foreign to him; they were experiencing exactly what would be defined a romantic relationship, but they were chose not to call it as such. And he couldn’t see which way it was going but he was in it for the ride.

There were, of course, times where he second guessed himself too. The last thing he wanted was for everything go sour and have Peter in the center of the mess. But then, just those moments ago, it couldn’t feel more right.

“That’s very good.” Steve complimented Peter, ruffling his hair with a paintbrush in between his fingers.

They were both on the floor below the one they lived on. Tony had designed it as a suite for Steve to live in that fit his taste and style. It was very nice but Steve just got into the habit of living above.

So he ended up making it into kind of a studio/relaxing area. Steve went there to paint, draw, read, or just be by himself when he wanted to be.

Steve was painting the view he had from the largest window, which was really more of a giant glass wall than a window. Peter was with him painting his own masterpiece.

Peter was painting himself more than the canvas on his Little Tikes easel. It didn’t matter how messy he got, the plastic on the floor, that had many small open paint-cans scattered and splattered around Steve’s bare feet, protected the floor. He still smiled up at Steve proudly none the less. Steve smiled back and returned to his work.
The elevator rang. Steve looked up to see Tony walk out, he turned back to his painting.

“Okay, I’m leaving.” Tony said buttoning the last button on his cuff and checking his watch. Tony waltzed up to Steve and hugged his waist from behind. It took Steve about a week to get used to Tony doing that every time he wanted to greet him or say bye. Tony pressed a kiss into his shoulder. “I’ll be back before dinner, promise.”

Steve turned to face Tony properly. He didn’t mind Tony’s affection, there was no one else to see but them. “Okay then.” He straightened Tony’s tie, “Good luck with your meeting.”

Tony kissed his cheek. “Pray for me.”

Steve couldn’t help but slip a smile, “Will do.” Tony began to leave. “And don’t be cocky.” He added.

Tony began to walk backward to talk to Steve again. “When am I ever co-”

“Tony no-” Steve reached out to pull him back as he tripped over a few of the paint cans. All he managed to grab was a hand.

Tony’s dead weight ended up dragging Steve down with him.

He landed on top of Tony in quite a comedic fashion, such as one would in the beginning of a romantic comedy. The fall knocked over a few more cans, spilling paint everywhere and a little even ran off the plastic and on to the tile flooring.

Peter clapped his painted hands together and dipped his hands into the plastic bowls of Crayola finger paints that Steve gave him to play with. He was completely unbothered by their struggle. He clapped again and smeared his hands on his canvas.

Steve’s hand fell into a puddle of yellow paint that was pooling against Tony’s body. “Sorry about that.” He tried to get up but that paint and plastic cover together made everything slippery.

Tony wasn’t saying anything, he seemed too caught up in the surprise of it all. He tried again to get up slowly but his foot caught in another puddle of paint and he fell back onto Tony; his paint-covered hand hitting Tony’s face.

It wasn’t one of his most dignified moments of his life. “Sorry” He apologized again.

“Don’t,” the Tony Steve knew was coming back. His own hand was in a puddle of blue paint. He reached up to wipe some of it on Steve’s face in small petty revenge. “You’re cute when you’re flustered.”

Steve swallowed. Tony never called anything he did ‘cute’, and he couldn’t tell how serious Tony was being. “Grow up Stark.” He said in a low voice.

“Oh, last name.” Tony matched Steve’s voice.

“Hey, Steve have you seen the-”

Steve and Tony turned their heads to see Clint standing nearly above them. Steve quickly rolled off Tony and into the space next to him. He didn’t care how much paint he just sat in.

Neither Tony or Steve said anything, they couldn’t even look at each other.

“Seriously man,” Clint sounded annoyed but also amused, “In front of the kid.” He picked the paint-
drenched Peter up and placed him on his shoulders like a monkey. “Let’s go get you cleaned up and we’ll let the adults finish up here.” He kicked open the door and took the stairs back up.

For a moment that sat in silence.

“Did that just happen?” Tony asked.

“Yeah, I think.” Steve responded, “Do think that means he knows?” That what Steve was most worried about. He didn’t want Nat and Clint to stumble upon them one day. The idea was to tell them over dinner one night once they were in a more stable place in their relationship.

“You can never really tell with Clint.” Tony looked at his clothes. “Anyways, I’ve got to go change.”

Steve looked at Tony’s ruined suit. “Sorry about that.”

“Don’t worry about it, I’ve got more.”

Steve stood slowly and offered a hand to Tony.

He took it and got up as well. “Hey Cap,” Tony said with a sly grin, “Since you’ve got blue and I’ve got yellow, want to make green?”

It took Steve an extra second to understand he meant kissing him. “Nope, the moment’s gone.” Steve pushed Tony to the elevator. “Get out of here, go change.”

Tony laughed at his own joke and left without any protest.

Steve knelt down to pick up some of the mess.

Steve smiled to himself, sometimes Tony Stark was just something else.

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Tony looked up from his laptop when he heard the elevator door slide open. Steve was back. He was staying late for work at SHIELD but was also stuck in terrible traffic. It was 8:49, Steve usually came home at 6:30 tops on his long days.

“I’m home.” He called from the atrium.

At what point did Stark Tower become home, and not Tony’s place.

“We’re down here.” Natasha called back.

Tony watched Steve kick his shoes off and drop his bag at the top of the staircase. He looked extremely worn out trudging down those step.

Peter dropped everything he was doing to run up to Steve excitedly since he was finally back. Steve picked Peter up and swung him back to his spot on the couch in between Clint and Tony. Peter grinned and went back to playing on the iPad.

Steve groaned tiredly and collapsed on the couch, burying his head into Natasha’s lap like a child. He let out another whiny groan.

This wasn’t exactly something Steve wouldn’t do but it was very very uncommon.

Steve was usually composed and kept himself together pretty well. As composed as he may be, that
didn’t mean that he didn’t let it slip every once in a while. Natasha was probably the only person he was 100% comfortable with collapsing into their lap.

“Hard day?” Clint asked the obvious question. “You’re acting like Tony.”

“Thanks, man,” Tony said in an obviously ungratified tone. Clint shot him back a playfully unsorry grin as a response.

Steve peeked his head out from her lap to face the TV. They were watching Sofia the First, again; was there no other show they could watch. “No, long. So, so long.”

Natasha ran her fingers through Steve hair smoothing and twisting parts of it. “Poor baby.” She cooed over him. “Tony did Chinese for dinner. There’s a plate for you on the kitchen counter.”

“You cooked?” Steve shifted his head without lifting it to make eye contact when he asked.

Tony held up his index finger dramatically, “Ah, she didn’t say anything about me cooking.”

“He bought it.” Clint interjected.

“Did you want me to get you some?” Tony offered.

“Well, that’s nice of you,” Nat said twisting Steve’s hair into spikes.

“What can I say, I’m just a nice person.” That earned him odd looks from all three of them. “Whatever.” He rolled his eyes.

Natasha continued to play with Steve’s hair. It was pretty soothing. Steve found himself closing his eyes as he allowed himself to drift off to a limbo between awake and asleep.

“Hey what about me?” Tony said with mild envy. “Why don’t you ever do that for me?”

Steve opened his eyes and stared at him annoyed; from both being disturbed and Tony’s jealousy. He couldn’t tell if it was his or Nat’s attention that he wanted, but he was willing to assume the first option.

Natasha and Clint exchanged a shared glance for a moment.

“Hey man if you want,” Clint patted the empty space on his lap.

Peter looked up from his iPad to Clint then Tony. He then picked up the tablet up babbling incoherently and half stumbled half crawled to take up Clint’s invitation. He plopped onto Clint's lap, got comfortable and went back to playing whatever coloring app he was fooling with before. He kicked at Tony to shoo him away.

They all found Peter’s immediate response funny.

Steve, though smiling, said, “Petey no. You have to be nice.”

He hadn’t yelled at him or even said it sternly, but Peter obviously took it the wrong way. He stared a cold stare at Steve and frowned until he let out a wail. He let his tablet fall on the ground as he began to cry.

Clint hugged Peter pressing his cheek to the side of his head. “Look what you did.” He said in false anger.
Steve felt a pang of guilt. He sighed and sat up to take Peter. “C’mere.” He said holding his arms out for him. Peter shook his head and squirmed out of Clint embrace to go to Tony. That made Steve feel even worse.

“Oh was that old man mean to you,” Tony said in a baby voice. He closed his laptop and put it aside to cradle Peter. He wasn’t really crying anymore but still whining a bit.

Peter curled into the space in between Tony’s chest and his arm that was on propped up on the armrest. Tony lifted Peter’s glasses to wipe away his tears and straighten them back on his face. Peter put one hand in his hair and two fingers of the other hand in his mouth. “Someone’s tired huh.” He held Peter a little closer.

“He’s got wrapped around your finger.” Natasha laughed. She looked at Steve who had shame written all over him. “Steve.” She shoved him playfully, “Don’t feel bad, he’s fine.”

Steve didn’t feel fine. He couldn’t take his eyes away from them.

Tony caught his glance and mouthed, ‘sorry’ along with a sympathetic smile.

A few episodes of that show later, Steve was completely forgiven. Peter didn’t even react when Steve took him from Tony and put him to bed since Peter was starting to fall asleep.

A couple hours and drinks later everyone went to bed. Steve changed into his pajamas when there was a knock at the door. “Come in.” He called after pulling on his flannel pants.

Tony walked in. He looked a little apprehensive, shy, maybe nervous. It was a weird look for Tony Stark. “I was thinking- well really, wondering-” Tony paused to gather his thoughts, “Do you think maybe I could sleep here tonight.”

Steve thought that based on his state that there may have been something wrong, but then he realized this just maybe Tony’s way of wanting to get closer. He wasn’t going to pry. “Yeah sure.” He said getting into bed. “Everything alright?”

Tony nodded and slowly got in as well with a short thank-you.

Steve shut the light off. They laid side by side. Steve felt a bit strange in sharing the same bed as him. They’d done it once before, but this time was much more intentional.

“So,” Tony said into the darkness. “Peter really didn’t like being told no.”

“I wonder who’s fault that is.”

“Hey man you spoil him too.”

“Did you want to go sleep in your bed.” Steve snipped.

“No, no never mind.”

And with that, they both went to sleep.

“So,” Joanna, flipped to a new part of her binder, “Are there any other developments I should be made aware of that would affect Peter in any way whatsoever.”

This was their second drop in from their caseworker.
She already repeated the same steps as the last one and did one on one interviews with Clint, Nat, Steve, and Tony. She took notes on every physical change from the last time she visited.

Now it was time for the internal ones.

“Well, me and him have been getting along much better since last time,” Tony said. He was trying to watch his words carefully, something he didn’t do often or was really good at.

Steve felt Tony’s hand work his way onto his knee under the table. Steve went cold for a moment then moved it away from Tony’s. He nodded in agreement. This wasn’ the time or place.

Joanna took a light sip from her tea. “That’s nice.” She marked that down in her binder.

“Oh yeah they have.” Clint muttered under his breath with humor. “Somethings you’ve gotta see to believe.” Natasha elbowed him to stop talking.

Steve knew something was off; not bad off but still off. As if it was something they all knew but her and he hoped with all his heart that it wasn’t what he was thinking it was.

Joanna put her cup back on the table with an arched eyebrow. “Meaning?” She asked looking for an explanation.

“What he means is-” Steve looked at them for some help.

“Well you see-” Tony couldn’t think of a good lie to cover up the can of worms Clint had opened.

Why couldn’t Clint have waited until after she left to be passive aggressive?

Clint regretted what he. He hadn’t meant to be loud enough to be heard. “I meant that they’ve-” He jumped in.

Joanna was having enough of whatever was going on. “You have to understand, withholding any information from me could severely harm your chances of keeping Peter.” She rose her voice just enough to talk over all of them.

Steve sighed, this wasn’t how it was supposed to go. “Well miss, we, Tony and I are-” He really didn’t want to be the first one to say it out loud. “We’ve-”

“You’ve had sex!” She sounded a little aggressive and hysterical in the way she said it. “That’s it, just say that.”

Steve and Tony’s faces glowed red. “Well not exactly,” Tony mumbled not looking their caseworker in the eye. “Not yet at least.”

“Tony,” Steve whispered at his inappropriate choice of words in that moment.

Natasha leaned forward to give them some help. “You see right now they are in we like to call: the honeymoon phase.”

Their faces grew even hotter. “You knew,” Steve asked Clint and Natasha across from him. His asking sounded a lot more like yelling.

“Well yeah, duh,” Clint said. “How could we not.”

“With all the sideways dreamy looks.” Natasha added.
“And the polite gestures,” Clint said.

“And stolen kisses.”

They were starting to list things.

“Oh, and you can’t forget, ‘want to make green’.” Clint stifled a laugh and Natasha joined in.

Tony buried his face in his hands, no one was supposed to hear that.

“Honestly you two,” Natasha calmed down but still had a hint of laughter in his voice. “How long did you think you could keep this going?”

“As long as necessary.” Steve’s voice was flat. How long had they known?

“Anyways.” Joanna spoke up. They had nearly forgotten she was there. She looked a little lost and mildly annoyed. “Come on you guys.” She smoothed back her bun. “What are you guys gonna do, how are you gonna make this work?”

Steve and Tony looked at each other waiting for the other to answer.

Finally, Steve turned to her. “We don’t really have a plan.” He knew how that must have made him look, but it was the truth. “It just...happened.”

“We promise you, this won’t hurt our caring for Peter in any way.”

“So you’re gonna get married?” She asked bluntly.

Steve saw the alarm on Tony’s face. “No.” He said for him.

“No.” Tony repeated, “I mean this happened like a month ago.”

“So if this doesn’t work out what are you going to do then, huh?” Neither of them had the answer. “Relationships always complicate everything.” She closed her binder to leave. “Especially unstable ones.”

She shouldered her bag and stood to go. “You guys were supposed to be my easy case.” Her whole demeanor became lax all of a sudden. “You know rich bachelor, classy old-fashioned man, both hard working with a fairly clean record; people can only dream to have a case like this.”

“Ms. Joanna-” Tony said standing to say something.

She wasn’t giving him the chance. “No, I don’t care. This isn’t about any of us it’s about him.” She pointed down at Peter who was taking a nap on the play mat in the living room. “Look, you’ve got one more visit to work all this out, okay. Until then I think you need to sit down and discuss your plans for the future, that goes for all of you.” And with a humph she turned on her heel and let herself out.

Clint, Natasha, Steve, and Tony stared back and forth at each other. What next?

“How long?” Tony asked calm and quiet.

“What?”

“How long have you known?”
Natasha drank the rest of her tea. “Well we had our suspicions for a few weeks, but the other night when I came to return your book I saw Tony sleeping in your bed and that kind of confirmed it for us.”

“And you thought bringing it up during this was good timing?” Steve asked Clint. He was annoyed but not mad. He was more bothered by what Joanna had said as she left than he was with Clint.

“Sorry dude, it slipped.”

“Oh it slipped?” Tony said skeptically. “It just slipped.” He picked up an orange from the fruit bowl in the center of the kitchen table and chucked it at Clint’s head.

Clint ducked and picked up a grapefruit and threw it at Tony. He was a sharpshooter, so Clint definitely didn’t miss.

Tony picked up an apple and attempted to hit him again. This time Tony didn’t miss. Clint smiled a devilish smile and picked the apple and threw it at him like an MLB pitcher.

Steve and Natasha watched their fruit war with some fun. Steve felt Natasha’s hand touch Steve’s shoulder. “You’re not mad are you?” She asked.

“No, are you?”

Natasha shook her head and smiled. “But you do realize you’re going to have to tell me everything that happened between you guys in the last month right? And you can skip any det.”

Natasha was cut off by a flying pear hitting her upside the head. Clint and Tony immediately stopped their squabble. They both pointed at one another to blame the other. She picked up the pear and threw it at Tony hitting him in the stomach, knocking the wind out of him, “Stop throwing.” She got a fallen orange and gave Clint the same treatment “Goddamn fruit.”

She stood and took Steve by the hand and dragged him towards the elevator, “We’re going out for ice cream.” They needed time to talk alone and catch up, “pick up and wash all those, we’ll be back later.”
A trip of a life time pt.1

Chapter Summary

Tony does a good thing...

Chapter Notes

Hey guys, so this is going to be a two parter. Expect part 2 pretty soon. There's not much to update you guys on. My biggest hope is to be done with this by the end of the month, before school starts, but I can't promise anything. Thank you all for the support and the comment. So anyways...as always, have fun and enjoy!

“What’s that?” Tony asked coming up from behind Steve to look over his shoulder at his laptop screen. Steve was looking at something to do with Disney World. Steve instantly slammed his computer shut before he got the chance to get a good look. “Was that Disney World?”

Steve was tight lipped for a moment then he said, a bit sheepishly, “Yes. I saw this commercial so looked it up and then I got kind of invested in it. Good marketing, I guess.” Steve tried to add some humor.

Tony didn’t know what that meant. A place like that wasn’t really the type of place he’d have imagined Steve wanting to go to. He wasn’t really the amusement park type, as Tony figured, but he could be wrong.

“Did you want to go?” Tony asked without thinking. “Cause I can take you, we-”

Steve hadn’t expected an offer from him. “Tony no.”

“We helped design parts of the Shanghai Park, you know.” Tony was adamant and serious. “I get access to all the parks in the world. We could go over the weekend, make a vacation of it.”

Steve touched Tony’s arm. He was grateful that he had someone like Tony willing to go to lengths if it would make him happy, but that was too much for him. “Really Tony, I can’t.” Tony gave him a blank stare, probably because any of the men and women he’d dated in the past would have jumped at the opportunity without a second or third thought. “It was just a thought.”

“No really-”

“No really,” Steve cut him off. “If I went it would be more for Peter than anything, and besides there are definitely more families that deserve a trip like that than us.”

Tony was taken a bit aback by his reasoning. It was sound and noble, very worthy of America’s prodigal son. There were many who could only dream of going; even if they made that dream a reality who knew how long would they be recovering financially from such an adventure.

He had an idea, a beyond brilliant idea.
Tony straightened up and patted Steve’s shoulder. “Okay then, as you wish.” He ran off to his study.

He had some calls to make.

Tony was acting strange. Steve knew there was something up, but he couldn’t quite put his finger on it yet.

He was spending a lot more time in his labs. This was saying something since he already spent a lot of time there in the first place.

Him coming into the kitchen at 9am for breakfast with a big box of mystery was the icing on the cake. This wasn’t because he’d woken up early for once in his life, but because he’d most likely had not gone to sleep at all that night.

Tony plopped down in a chair next to Peter’s high chair.

“I didn’t see you last night.” Steve said handing him a mug of coffee.

Tony drank half of it in one go, “I was busy working.”

“All night?”

“It was long distance.”

There was truth in his voice so Steve dropped the matter. He went back to cooking. He wasn’t going to mother him about the importance of sleep if Tony wasn’t even going to listen.

Tony swirled the foam in the cup with a spoon.

“So what’s in the box.”

“It’s a surprise.” Tony had a tired but secretive glint in eyes that said you’ll see eventually.

“As long as it’s not another baby assistive device that you’re going to test on Peter.”

Tony rolled his eyes, “Oh come on, that was one time.”

The elevator rang and Clint walked out. He’d spent the night at his apartment, as he had on and off for the past couple nights.

Steve knew that whatever all this was Clint had to be in it as well. He’d never leave his place willingly before 10 at the least.

“I’ve got these for you, boss.” He said waving a considerably large stack of papers in Tony’s direction. “All signed and ready.”

Steve turned around and wiped his hands on a dish cloth. “What is that?” He asked trying to not sound too suspicious as he came over to Tony to see what he had.

Clint looked at Steve and then at Tony. He didn’t know what to say, he was waiting for Tony’s explanation that he could follow along with.

Tony smoothed some of the dark loose strands back out of his face and into the messy mop that he
called hair. Tony sighed and slid the stack across the table towards Steve. “Take a look yourself.”

Steve looked down expecting the worst, based on how they were acting.

What he saw didn’t seem bad at all.

Well really, none of it made sense.

It was what looked like legal documents and contracts with a bunch of packets of information gathered on people he didn’t know. The same title that was on the top of each paper, *A Trip of a Lifetime*.

Steve didn’t know what to make of this. “I don’t get it.” He sat down at the table.

“Well you see,” Tony began, “Remember a couple days ago when we talked about going to Disney?”

“Yeah for like a minute.”

“Yes, anyways, and you said that you didn’t want to go because there were other people who deserved it more.” Tony words were coming out faster as he got closer and closer to the point.

“No, I didn’t say—”

“You said something like it.” Tony was starting to gesture with his words, he was really excited about this. “Whatever anyways that got me thinking, why not?”

“What he’s trying to say is that his good deed for the year is taking us and shit ton of other people to Disney World for four days.”

Steve choked on his coffee.

Tony slapped Clint, “You were supposed to let me say it.” He ignored Steve’s coughing fit.

“You were taking too long.”

“I was building suspense.”

Steve took another small sip, recovering and clearing his throat. “You’re what?” talking made him cough a few more times.

Tony had a wild look on his face. The one he had right before he was about to take some hair-brained idea into effect. “These are the first step.” He put a hand on the papers, “This is just legal stuff and registration information. All I need to do is enter it all in the computer and then it’s official. Plus, Clint knows all these people so it works out even better.” Tony looked up at Clint who was still standing over him. “How many are coming?”

“13 families; 18 adults and like 30 kids.” Clint folded his arms, “You’re going to have so many thank-you cookies after this you have no idea.”

Everyone going lived in Clint’s apartment building, so he knew better than anyone that an opportunity like this probably would never happen to these kids while they were still kids. There was no way he’d pass up the chance to give them such a surprise. A couple of the families were going with only one parent or a grandparent because some of them couldn’t afford to miss work for so many days.
“We can’t, you can’t.” Steve stammered. As much as he wanted to go on a vacation, that wasn’t at all what he expected. “Do you have any idea how expensive this would be?”

It was probably the side of him that grew up as a kid of the Great Depression that brought his mind straight to the cost. Steve loved kids, and making them happy was part of what being Captain America meant. He didn’t want to turn this down and disappoint a bunch of Children, but he knew the price must be high, even for Tony Stark.

Tony’s elation grew even more. “It won’t cost me anything.” He waited for Steve’s reaction to continue.

Steve gave him a hard stare, trying to figure it out for himself. He gave up. “How and don’t say you ‘pulled a few strings’. That’s not going to work this time.”

“Remember, Stark industries did work for the Shanghai Disney Resort. So I get a certain percentage in revenue every month.”

Mr. Stark, the businessman was starting to come out. “So I called the right people and we made up a deal, they get to keep that percent for two months and we get three nights and four days at a resort of my choice and all access to all the parks. Trust me, that money was way more than the cost of all this.”

Steve’s mouth was cracked open a bit. It was all so genius, he had everything planned out. That was the overseas work he was doing all night.

“And-

Oh, there was even more.

“I’ve got a passenger jet that I bought in a spur of the moment decision, so you don’t have to worry about plane tickets either.”

“You bought a plane cause you felt like it?” Clint cut in.

“Yes, multimillionaire here, hi.” Tony said curtly before going back to the subject at hand, “So I’ve got everything covered. Well I do plan to buy some stuff for the kids and parents to make the trip even better, but other than that this is basically a free trip.” Tony clasped his hands together. “So?” He looked at him wide-eyed and expectant.

Steve stood up and walked around the table until he was standing beside Tony opposite to Clint. He needed to think this over. There was no logical reason that he could think of that could be wrong with this idea. Well taking this many people that far from their homes was a liability on their part. That was obviously a looked like a risk Tony was ready to take.

“What about New York, what if something happens?”

“I’m sure it won’t crash and burn in the course of four days.” Clint said.

“Besides I called the Heroes for Hire, god that’s such a dumb name,” Tony added. “I called Luke, Jess, and Danny. They’ll cover for us if it does.”

“I don’t know. This all seems a bit sudden.”

Tony straighten the stack of papers. “That’s cause it is. The kids start school in a few weeks, so it’s now or never.”
“I don’t-” Steve took a deep breath, “I don’t know what to say.” He knew it was for almost 50 other people, but it still felt as though he was doing all this for him.

Tony held Steve’s hand. He knew how uncomfortable them being mushy in front of anyone made Steve feel. It was Clint, he didn’t care. “Say yes.”


Clint jostled Steve’s shoulders. “We’re going to Disney World!” He cheered. “Look a little more excited!”

“I take it by the yelling you guys finally told him” Natasha said in a tired voice that seriously contrasted Clint’s.

Steve looked at Natasha then back at Tony and Clint. Everyone seemed to have known about this crazy plan.

Why was he always the last to hear?

In the course of a week and a half Tony had reserved the hotel rooms and sent in all the information needed. He also got a freaking plane inspected and registered, along with hiring a pilot and crew for the trip there and back.

It all would have taken months to get in order, but Tony was efficient and quick when he had his mind set to something.

They were doing some last-minute packing.

Actually, they were already packed and their bags were at the door. What they were packing was each individual backpack for the people they were taking on the trip.

Tony had bought 30 Disney themed children's backpacks and 20 adult ones to stuff with the other stuff he’d gotten in bulk. There were Disney coloring-books, autograph books (for kids to get the autographs from their favorite characters), pens, markers, stickers, stuffed toys, small miscellaneous toys, Mickey Mouse ears, candy, water bottles, and sunglasses in every bag. The only difference was that the bags were themed by age group; for anyone under 3 included a onesie and sip-cup instead of a water-bottle and ears and the ones for anyone over 14 and under 18 had an iPod (Clint thought the latter may be a bit too much and could cause conflicts for the parents or their younger siblings, but Tony did it anyways).

The adult bags had a water bottle, sunscreen, sunglasses, Mickey Ears, candy, pamphlets that explained everything they may need to know about Disney World that came with each of the family packages, a note from Tony and the Magic Bands.

The bands were what gave them access to the parks, their hotel rooms, and a bunch of other things. Other than their personal information, Tony also loaded 100 dollars onto the adult bands to spend on whatever them or their kids would need and 50 on the kids to get whatever they wanted. He figured they’d be bringing their own money, but some extra wouldn’t hurt.

It cost him a little over 4,000 dollars to get all these together, including the money on the bands

“We’re doing this so last minute.” Steve said handing another completed bag to Natasha to add to the Johnson family.
They had a system going; Clint would read off the family and the kids ages, Tony would put the contents of a bag in a pile which Steve would pack inside an empty backpack and he’d hand them to Natasha who organized the bags by family and strung together the handles with a ribbon and the family’s name on a tag. The idea was to give them to the families in the morning.

“Well next time you tell the Wrecking Crew not to try and embrace their inner wreck-it-ralphs 2 days before we go on vacation.” Natasha said writing ‘Johnson’ on a tag and pinning it to the ribbon with a safety pin. “Besides it’s not that late anyways.”

“It’s okay Steve,” Tony added, “You’ll still get your beauty sleep.” He put more of the trash and wrappers into one of the packing boxes. Even with all the furniture pushed back there was hardly any floor space to work in the living room. “Maybe we should have done this on one of the empty floors.” Tony changed the subject. Steve and Natasha nodded in agreement.

“Yeah we’re all packed here.” Clint came down the stairs, he was on the phone with one of his neighbors whom he had tasked with helping them out with organizing the people to get ready for everything when he wasn’t there. “Okay Simone.” Pause. “I’ll be there around 9 I’ll show you the whole battle plan.” Pause. “No really.” Pause. “You don’t need to thank us, it’s what we do.” Clint let out a semi-fake laugh “Yes fine I will, bye-bye.” Clint slipped his phone into his pocket. He stepped over the sea of bags, boxes, and candy.

“All good on the other end?” Tony asked when Clint took a seat on the floor next to him.

“Yeah she was just thanking us again for everything that you’re doing.” Clint stretched and picked up the packet of papers. “Okay the Lee’s, mom, grandma, and 3 kids.”

Tony heard a thump and turned around to see Peter laying down on the pile of stuffed toys, watching TV with a sip cup cradled in one arm and his, now worn out, Iron Man plushie next to him. Tony took his phone out to snap a quick picture before getting back to business.

“Petey want to help us?” Steve called to him. He knew Tony ordered extra of everything but he didn’t want to risk Peter spilling his juice on the toys.

Peter rolled over to look at the group. Assessing what they were doing, he stood up and walked over to them.

“Here,” Steve said using the voice he used when he was teaching Peter something, slow and gentle. “Take this and put it here.”

Peter took a second to understand. He took the water bottle from Steve and dropped it in the bag. “Good job.” Steve clapped, “Here want to do it again.” Peter gave him a slight nod and took the markers and dropped them in the bag. He looked up at Steve smiling, waiting for his praise. “Very good.” Steve clapped once. Peter laughed and did a mix of a happy dance and march. He dropped down next to Steve and took stuff from the pile Steve was getting his supplies from and did the process by himself, cutting out the middle man, Steve.

“Oh that’s nice, get the baby to do your work.” Tony prodded as he opened another box of ears.

“Am not.” Steve really wasn’t meaning to, “He wants to help.”

“He gets it from us.” Natasha said dramatically flipping her hair back with her hand.

“You’re having fun right Petey.” Steve smoothed back Peter’s hair.

Peter smiled up at him and pointed at Mickey Mouse on one of the stickers. He babbled something to
“Yeah Mickey.” Steve went along with him, “Can you say ‘Mickey’.?” He chopped the word up for Peter. Now that he was walking the next thing was talking. There were moments when Peter’s babbling sounded vaguely like words, but he was sure they weren’t. Peter ignored him and shoved the stickers into the backpack.

“No, don’t make his first words that mouse.” Tony said, “Here, Peter say ‘Tony’.” He cut up his name such as Steve had. Peter stared at him blankly.

“Let me help.” Clint bent towards Peter. “Pete, say ‘asshole’.” He pointed Tony as he said it. Tony laughed and shoved Clint a little.

“Clint, really.” Steve scolded him with a hint of a smile.

“Hey.” Natasha bared her sharpie marker, “If my nephew’s first words are even remotely close to a cuss word, I will kill you both.”

“It’s so early.” Tony banged his head against the window of the bus.

With a number of people, they had it required two charter buses and a van to put store their luggage.

“Poor baby.” Natasha patted his shoulder.

Steve was sitting in the row next to them with Peter. He wasn’t showing it but internally he was very very excited. He couldn’t understand how Tony could be tired, it was only 7:30am anyways. They’d been up since 5 getting ready to go. There were some many bags to take down the Tower that it took 2 trips and that wasn’t including Clint, Nat, Steve, Peter, and Tony’s luggage.

It was probably going to take another 30-45 minutes to get everybody situated and ready until they could really leave the apartment building. The flight itself wasn’t until 9:45am so they were still on schedule.

“They’re on their way down now.” Nat said reading a text of off her phone.

“Okay then.” Tony said standing and groaning as he stretched. “You guys know the plan right?”

Steve and Natasha nodded.

“Yeah and,” Tony leaned to get a look out the door, “Here they come.” The driver opened the door and Tony leaped out.

Steve and Natasha followed, he didn’t mind leaving Peter by himself in his car seat. Peter wasn’t sleeping, he had entertainment, the bus was air conditioned and it was only for a few minutes. “Tell me if he cries.” Steve asked the bus driver as he walked out.

“You got it.” The driver said without a second thought.

Not everyone had come out yet. But they were a sizable amount of people streaming onto the sidewalk. Clint was at the helm. It was probably causing a scene for the people in neighboring buildings.

“Okay.” Clint cupped his hands and shouted. “You guys are going to drop off your bags in the van
and get on the buses. A-J over there K-Z there. You’re going to get a surprise, just don’t open it until me or Simone says so.” Simone, Clint’s neighbor who was by his side waved to them to make herself seen. “Right then, let’s go. And I know we’re all excited and it’s early but please try and make a line and keep this orderly.”

Tony whispered something in his ear. “Oh and does anyone want to help, it could make this a little faster.” A few parents and older teens raised their hands and made their way to the front. “Thank-you. Now let’s do this.”

It was an easy process. They’d give them the duffle bag, carry-on, or suitcase and then get on the bus. Within 20 minutes, everyone, except a few late stragglers, was on. It actually may have gone even faster if so many people weren’t stopping to thank them or stopped to stare in awe at Tony Stark. It was a welcome delay.

The buses were alive and loud with people of all ages making lively conversation with one another over the seats and across the rows. There were people of all ages too, old grandparents and babies even younger than Peter. Not a single person looked unhappy; tired or sleepy perhaps, but not unhappy. There was such a strong sense of community that could be felt.

Natasha did roll call and Steve and Clint handed back the packs they’d piled into the front rows of both buses for the family whose name was called by having it passed back row by row until it reached the proper owners.

“Please don’t open them yet.” Clint reminded them.

When the last set was handed off and every person was present and accounted for they waited for the text from Simone to see if her bus was in the same state.

Once they received that they hit the road. Steve and Nat sat down while Clint and Tony remained standing to talk.

“Uncle Clint.” One of the girls, maybe 5 years old, raised her hand. “Can we open them now.”

“Patience Deja.” Clint said in a funny dramatic voice that made him sound like a movie villain. A few of the children laughed. “And that goes for you too Izaiah.” Clint kept the same voice going. Even more children joined in on the laughter. The boy who Clint had pointed out was attempting to open the bag, and quickly let go of the zipper.

It was Tony’s turn to talk. He stood and cleared his throat. Talking to families made him nervous, meetings were easy since they all had the same interest, press releases were fine since he was talking about himself; with families it was so much harder, he had to appeal to all these different people. “Hello, I’m Tony Stark.” Tony put his hands together. “And we all know why we’re here.”

“We’re goin’ on vacation.” One of the moms answered for him. Everyone on the bus clapped and cheered.

Clint put his hands on Tony’s shoulders and guided him to the closest open seat. “I got this.”

_Oh thank god._ Tony gladly sat down next to Nat.

“Right then we all know why we’re here.” Clint’s entire personality changed, suddenly he was like a cool camp counselor that everyone loved. “To have fun. Now,” With a pause, “You can open the bags.”

He gave them a moment to look at everything and let the kids get excited with what they got before
continuing. “Quick things we’re going over. First we’re staying together until we get to the park but after that you guys are free to do whatever you want. Second, adults, there’s a white box, those have your magic bands. They get you around so you can do everything you want to do. There’s more stuff on them in the boxes themselves.” Clint thought about what-else there was. “Oh third, kids stay with your group; if you get lost go to someone who works there, they’ll help you find them. Now boring stuff aside, remember to have fun and make memories. I know not all of you guys know each other but this could be a chance to make friends, and best of all you know exactly where they live.” Clint got some laughs out of that one, “Now who’s ready to go to Disney World!” The bus was now filled with clapping, screams, and cheers.

“That was nice.” Steve said. He was feeding Peter his breakfast but stopped to hear Clint’s speech.

“You’d make a great hype-man” Tony agreed.

“Did I forget anything?” Clint asked.


“Oh right.” Clint opened the overhead compartment and took down 3 boxes. Tony bought neon green shirts that read ‘guess who’s going to Disney’ in a Disney font with a silhouette of the Cinderella’s Castle. “One more thing.” Clint quickly got their attention once again, “We’ve got you guys these.” He pulled out one of the shirt. “Yes they’re not the most attractive things ever, but the point is to keep us together until we get on and off the plane. We’d hate to lose anybody or leave them behind.” Clint looked at one of older teens next him. “Josiah can you help me with this.”

“Sure Clint.” He answered without any apprehension. Him and Clint got to passing out the shirts in the right size for the wearer.

“You guys can wear them over your clothes.” Clint said busily. “Or there’s a bathroom in the back to change. Yes kids, a bathroom on a bus.” He added when he heard the excited gasps of the younger ones. “There’s also Wi-Fi.” He waited for another excited gasp before smiling to himself.

When he was done he retook his seat next to Steve. He’d taken Peter out of his car seat and set it on the ground to give Clint some room to sit.

“You go, boss.” Tony said from across the aisle in the row directly next to him. He was pointing out the leadership role Clint had taken up.

They all boarded the plane in an easy and efficient manner. It took about a half hour to get the airport; they could have gone to the classic JFK airport, but instead Tony set them to take off in LaGuardia to avoid attracting a crowd. In the course of the hour of getting at the airport it took another hour to check in every bag and stroller, then they had to get everybody through the scanners and to the terminal to get them on the plane itself.

This was all done with only a few meltdowns and temper tantrums out of all the kids, one of them from Peter himself.

After they took off, everyone got fed breakfast to fuel them up for the three-and-a-half-hour flight to Orlando.

As soon as Tony ate, he downed 4 wine coolers and took a large sleeping pill. Natasha, though she didn’t drink anything, took a pill from Tony as well. Both of them were currently tangled together
and sleeping in first class. Steve was with Peter in the row behind them and Clint was with the families in the back.

First class was reserved for the elderly, disabled, nursing mothers, and those in the similar situations. It was quiet and boring. The people in the back were clearly having more fun.

Steve, bored of his book, closed it and decided to join in. He unbuckled Peter and took him out of his car seat.

Steve walked down the aisle to find an empty seat. There weren’t any actual assigned seats, everyone got to sit wherever they wanted. Little Mermaid was playing on the TV’s that hung over head. Not everyone was watching it though, they were just as content with entertaining each other; some were talking with their friends, some were trying out their new iPods and some slept.

Steve went past a group of Hispanic women who rapidly speaking to each other in Spanish all at the same time, pausing only to laugh. Steve smiled politely at them and kept going.

“You can sit here if you like.” An elderly woman said waving to him. She patted the empty seat beside her.

“Thank-you,” Steve said sitting down in the open aisle seat. “Steve.” He said shaking her hand.

“Ruth.”

Peter reached to look out the window. Steve sat him back down. He was worried about how Peter was going to take flying, but Peter absolutely loved it. At first he was a little freaked out by the take off. After they straightened out it took only a minute for him to fall in love with the sight from the window. It was only blue sky and white clouds now, Peter didn’t care he wanted to see.

“Sorry.” Steve apologized. Sitting Peter down again. Peter began to fuss in the way that was a sign of an oncoming tantrum. The great thing about a plane full of children meant that a crying child didn’t bother anyone. That didn’t mean Steve wanted to deal with one.

The woman, Ruth, held out her hands to take him. “It’s fine.” She said as Steve obliged to let this stranger to hold Peter. Peter pressed his face to the window and was calm once again. “I remember when my children and grandchildren were this age. It goes away all too quickly.” She smiled fondly at Peter.

“You have grandchildren?” Steve said in an attempt to make conversation.

She nodded slowly. “Yes, 6 of them. I live with my daughter, so there’s four of them here but the other two are down south. There’s Ester and Josiah.” She pointed to two teens who were on the other side of the plane with their friends. The girl looked about 14 or 15. Steve recognized the boy from earlier. He maybe 17. If he were to guess. “And Jordan and Liza.” She pointed to two twin girls who were with Clint.

Clint was sitting cross legged on the ground with a small crowd of children around him. He was in the very front row that gave him enough space to have that many to sit on the ground with room. All the youngest girls and a few boys were covering him with make-up, glitter, and colorful hair clips with extensions. He looked like he emerged from some sort of My Little Pony layer of hell. While they did that he was also playing Uno with 3 other kids.

Tony also bought a bunch of kits and games to keep them busy for the flight.

“They kids love him” Ruth said, catching Steve’s smile. “They younger ones call him ‘Uncle Clint’ or
just ‘Clint’ like everybody else; it’s never Mr. Barton with him. He’s one of the best landlords anyone could ever have, he’s nothing like the rest, he really cares for us. Plus, he’s a great role model. You’re lucky to know him”

“I know.” Steve said watching Clint interact with the kids. This was a side of his he’d never seen. He always knew that it must exist. He’d just never seen it in person.

“Uncle Clint, Uncle Clint.” One of the girls said shaking his shoulders. “Pink or purple.”

Clint placed down a card. “Purple Sasha. Purple’s my color.” He went back to the game, paying no attention the child who was smearing lip gloss on his lips and eyelids.

“Can you do my nails Uncle Clint.” Another one pestered.

Clint continued to play but answered her question, “Yeah Liza, right after- HA UNO!” Clint shouted throwing a card into the pile.

“Keep down back there, people are sleeping!” yelled an elderly man on the first class side.

All the kids giggled that Clint was in trouble. Clint gave them a false annoyed look and called back in a lower voice, “Sorry Hank.”

It took an hour to leave the airport with everyone's things in tow. After a quick roll call they were on their way to Disney World.

Tony got them set to stay at Disney's Contemporary Resort. He could have got them to stay in any of the other resorts but he chose that one for its convenience and view.

Each of the families were checked in and given their rooms. They weren’t going to see them again until their last night were they were all invited as a group for dinner together. Tony, Clint, Steve, Nat, and Peter were the last ones to get theirs in order to have everyone else get set first.

“I still can’t believe you actually did this.” Steve put Peter on the ground to unlock the door to their room. They had two rooms with two bed that with an adjoining door to connect the rooms.

“Well believe it, Cap.” Tony walked in first and Steve and Nat followed. Clint went in through the other room to unlock the door that would connect the rooms.

It was like any other standard room with 2 beds, a bathroom, closet, and a TV.

Peter ran inside exploring every inch of the room with excited squeals. He ran into the bathroom, opened the closets, turned a side table lamp on and off repeatedly, then finally he saw the view from their room. He ran to the glass sliding door and pressed his face to it. He laughed and pointed at it looking at the group of adults.

“Well he definitely likes it.” Tony put down his bag and Peter’s stroller.

Steve shrugged off the baby bag, put his bag next to Tony’s, and the car seat on the stroller. “Yeah really.”

“This place is so cool.” Clint said walking into the room from the other one.

Natasha took her bag into the room Clint had come from. “I’m going to change.” She was still in her sweatpants and t-shirt she had slept in.
Peter babbled excitedly when he saw there was another room and he followed Natasha.

“So when are we going to the parks?” Clint called to them as he followed Peter.

Steve sprawled out onto the bed. He hadn’t even realized how tired he was. A nap felt like a good idea. “This is nice.” Steve sighed and stretched closing his eyes, rolling onto his back.

“Is it?” Tony said getting onto the bed next him. He lied on his stomach and rested his head on a Steve’s out stretched arm. “No regrets?”

Steve kept his eyes closed and said. “Not yet.”

Tony propped his head up with his own arm, hovering over Steve’s face. “Yet.” He’ll never understand Steve Rogers completely. “Yet.” He said again placing a kiss on Steve’s lips.

Steve’s eyes opened with a hint of a smile, staring at him mildly annoyed from being bothered.

“You guys are so gross.” Clint said.

They looked up to see Clint and Nat with Peter in the doorway.

Tony quickly sat up. “Yeah and you look like Edward Cullen died on you with all that glitter.”

Steve remained lying down for a minute longer to let the embarrassment to burn away before getting up to move past it.

Clint and Natasha were smiling, entertained by their flustered state.

“I say we do Hollywood Disney today and Magic Kingdom tomorrow.” Natasha moved on. She lightly tossed Peter onto the couch that was lined up against the wall and sat down on the empty bed. Peter ran to her to be thrown again, but Natasha wouldn’t do it from that distance.

Clint joined Steve and Tony on the bed with them. “Fine with me, I just want to get going.” He pulled out his phone to check something.

“I want to do Epcot too.” Tony said.

“You only want Epcot cause it’s the only park you can drink in.” Natasha picked Peter up to sit with her.

Before Tony could respond the room’s phone rang. Their eyes darted to one another. Who could be calling them?

Tony leaned over to pick it up. “Hello?” All eyes were on him. “Yes, speaking.” He waited a moment. Tony sat up straighter. “What, really? Yes, yes of course send him up please.”

“Who was that?” Nat said.

Tony looked at the phone and hung it up with a delay. “Thor’s here.”

“Thor?” Steve and Clint said at the same time. Clint a lot more excitedly than Steve.

Clint now looked like he was going to have some real fun. “Hell yeah.”

“Clint.” Steve scolded. If Peter was going to talk soon, they had to start watching what they said around him. “Did you tell everyone about this trip before me?” He asked Tony specifically.
“No, we invited him after.”

“But he said he couldn’t make it.”

In a few minutes Thor was at the door.

Clint open it and Peter ran after him.

“Thor.” Clint said bumping knuckles with him.

“Barton.” Thor walked in just as Peter rammed into his legs. “And young Peter.” He bent over to pick him up.

Peter smiled broadly and began babbling madly as if he were telling Thor a story. He pointed at Thor as Steve, Tony, and Natasha came over to greet him.

“Hey Thor, glad you can make it.” Tony shook his hand.

“Rogers. Romanoff.” Thor shook Steve hand then Natasha’s. “I’m very pleased to accept your invitation.”

“Of course.” Tony said patting Thor’s shoulder. “We were just heading out to the parks.”

“Wait don’t rush, let’s get ready first.” Steve said picking up Peter’s baby bag. “Does everyone have their bands.” Everyone nodded except Thor who looked lost.

“We’ll get you one on the way out.”

“Wallets?” Steve continued, “Water, sunscreen, anything you guys need.”

No one wanted to wait, but Steve was right.

Clint sighed, “Fine mom.” he began walking into the other room to get his and Nat’s water bottles. “Come on Thor.” He was sounding like a stubborn child.

Thor handed Peter to Natasha. “So he’s not your mother, correct?” They could hear Thor asking quietly as he went with Clint. “Then why do you refer to him as such.”

Tony smiled to himself. Thor was a pretty entertaining person. “We’re taking the stroller right.” Steve nodded. Tony unfolded it and set it up so that it was rear facing without the car seat.

“I’ll put some sunscreen on him.” Steve said taking Peter from Natasha.

“It’s 3:30 the sun's almost gone.” Natasha said.

“But it’s still out and I’m not going to let him burn.” Steve smelled something off. It was Peter. “Oh god.” He held Peter away from himself. “Tony here, it’s your turn.”

Tony folded his arms. “No, no thank-you.”

“I did it last time. On a plane. It’s your turn.”

Tony sighed in defeat. “Fine, give him here.” Tony took Peter and a clean diaper and wipes. He laid Peter on the side desk and got to changing him. “You suck you know that.” He talked to Peter.

Peter smiled up at him, chewing at his fingers.
“Jesus Christ.” Clint came in covering his nose. “Warn a person man.” He was the only one that was bothered. “I can’t, I’ll wait outside.” Clint went out into the hallway.

“There.” Tony said also covering him in sunscreen. “Now let’s go.”

They all left the room.

“How about we get lunch?” Tony said as they walked out to the elevators.

“I’m down for food” Clint said.

Natasha laughed. “You’re always down for food.”

‘Would it be called lunch, it’s past lunchtime.” Thor brought up a good point.

“So dunch?” Clint quipped.

“Linner?” Natasha suggested.

“Like hobbits.” Tony added, not directed to anyone specifically.

“You guys are ridiculous.” Steve smiled.
A trip of life time pt2

Chapter Summary

A collection of things that happened on their second day in Disney.

Chapter Notes

We've reached the homestretch for this fic. I think it will end at 25 chapters (hopefully?) if not less. Anyways, as always, enjoy!!!

“Go have fun.” Tony said taking Peter from Thor.

“Are sure you want to split up?” Clint asked.

Steve wasn’t sure about this idea either. “Really?”

“Look,” Tony said, “I finally have a kid with me so I can go on every baby ride I’ve ever wanted to go on with getting looks from adults. I’m going to utilize this.”

His reasoning was pretty sound.

“So what were you thinking to do?” Natasha said.

Tony put Peter on the ground for a moment to let him walk. “I don’t know. There’s some here and there, but their all in the park. You guys can come too, but it’s mostly going to be like that.” He pointed at the door to the theater they had just come from.

“Oh hell no.” Clint took Natasha by the hand and began leaving. “Never again.”

Natasha went with him with no complaints. Thor looked back and forth unsure who to go with.

Steve stopped for a moment, he wanted to spend some time with Peter and Tony alone, but that didn’t mean subjecting himself to whatever attraction Tony had in mind.

“Go.” Tony caught he conflicted look. He put a hand on Steve’s arm. “Really, we’ll be fine. There’s a lot more you can do without a baby.”

“Oh okay fine.” Steve was semi-relieved that Tony said that. “And keep an eye on Peter; don't lose him.”

“Don’t worry I got him.” Tony’s heard the same speech 100 times before. They’d even gone as far as having Peter get a temporary tattoo of their contact information stuck to his arm.

Steve looked over his shoulder, Clint and Nat were already a considerable distance away. Thor decided on going with them and wasn’t too far behind. “Alright then. Call us to meet up in a little.”

Steve began walking away, “Oh and take pictures.” He wanted to make an album of their
experiences.

“There they are. Say hi!” Tony waved at the group. Peter gave him his sip cup and scrambled out of Tony’s grasp. He let Peter run up to them as he pushed the stroller behind.

They had decided to meet him at one of the stores on main street to get a late lunch together.

Steve picked him up and walked up to Tony. “How was it?”

“Fun.” Tony said “We went on a Small World and met Belle.”

“Well,” Clint butt in, “We went on Splash Mountain and got a good picture together.” He pulled out his phone to show it to Tony.

“And Thor nearly got kicked off the Haunted Mansion ride.” Natasha looked over Clint’s shoulder to see the picture as well.

“They were very convincing monsters.” Thor said in his defense.

Steve let Peter walk and look at the princess things. “He tried to jump off to fight one of the animatronic ghosts.”

Clint found it. Steve was in the front row completely unaware of them, Natasha was behind him dabbing in one to the left, Thor’s had his hands together as if in prayer, and Clint was in the back dabbing to the right. They looked like a couple of high schoolers in that pose.

Tony laughed once, “How did you get her to do that?” He knew Natasha wouldn’t dab that simply.

“It took a bit of convincing.” Clint put his phone away.

“He owes me a churro.”

“Ah.” Tony could understand the power of the promise of a churro.

Peter came around and bumped into the back of Tony’s legs.

“What’ve you got there?” Tony turned to see Peter hold up an armful of purple fabric. He took it from Peter to get a better look. He’d found a Sofia the First dress that was bigger than him. “You want one?” He crouched down to get Peter’s attention better. Peter tried to take the dress back, as a way to say yes.

Peter now had the attention of the rest of them.

“Alright then.” He picked Peter up, “Let’s find you one in your size though.”

Steve took Tony’s arm and pulled him aside. He clearly didn’t approve. “Tony you can’t let him wear a dress.” He said.

Tony couldn’t believe what he was hearing. This was something he’d expect an ex-asshole soccer mom to say, not Steve Rogers. “Why?” Tony snapped, “Cause he’s a boy? You don’t want to make him gay.” Tony said the last bit sounding purposefully dramatic. “What do you call our thing, hhmm?”
“Tony,” He used the same voice that he usually used when Tony was doing something wrong or annoying. “You know that’s not what it is.” Steve didn’t actually care if he wore a dress or not, it was just clothes. He kept looking for one in Peter’s size as Steve talked to him.

Tony was getting a bit irritated with Steve. Not Steve, but the fact that he was so against having a little boy wear a dress. “Why then?” He turned and gave Steve cold unmoving eyes.

“Because,” Steve was starting to feel stupid, “Because, the other kids will be mean to him. I don’t want him getting hurt or laughed at.”

Tony wasn’t sure what to say. This was something Steve went through as a child; it was understandable that he wouldn’t want Peter to go through the same thing. Tony softened. He used a gentler tone, “That won’t happen and you know that. He’s a year old and if anyone says anything they’ll have us to deal with.” Tony motioned to Clint, Nat, and Thor who were busily playing with the toys and stocking up on candy. Steve still couldn’t meet his eye. “Besides, it will make Peter happy. Right Petey.” Tony bounced Peter to make him smile.

That was Steve’s weakness; anything for Peter. “Alright let’s do it.” Steve tried to smile. “He really likes Sofia the First doesn’t he.”

“Unfortunately yes.” Tony found a dress for Peter. He handed it to Peter and traded it for the bigger one Peter was clinging to. “How about we try it on?” He looked for Steve’s approval, which he got without having to ask.

He quickly found a changing room for Peter. “Tell Steve, ‘I’m gonna look so pretty and make all the other kids jealous’.” He said in a high baby voice as he took Peter to put it on. Peter laughed and babbled instead.

Steve smiled and shook his head. Tony started using all sorts of ridiculous voices after Steve asked him to start talked to Peter more often in sentences that told Peter to say something or tell someone something.

He went and rejoined the group.

“What was that about?” Natasha asked when he saw Steve coming to them.

“Peter found a dress so Tony’s going to let him try it on.”

Clint’s hands were full of lollipops and gummies, “I’m sure he’ll be cute in it.”

“My brother was quite fond of dresses as well,” Thor reminisced, “He even designed his own...before...he tried to take our father’s throne.” Thor was trying to add to the conversation even if it was an overshare.

“Oh my god look at him.” Natasha said turning Steve around to look as Tony came back into view with Peter.

Steve couldn’t say his heart melted (because his heart didn’t melt), but Peter did in fact look adorable in the dress. He was smiling proudly and reached out for Steve to look at him better. Peter babbled and pointed to different parts of the dress showing it all off. “Yes Petey very pretty.” He placed a loving kiss on the side of Peter’s head.

“Let me see him.” Natasha cooed taking Peter. “So freaking adorable.” She bounced him up and down. “Here take a picture of this.” She gave her phone to Thor.
Steve felt a hand touch his waist. He turned to see Tony to be the owner of the hand. “He really does love it.” Tony said.

They watched as Thor took about 10 accidental selfies before turned the camera around to get one of Peter and Nat. Clint was too busy with his candy hoarding to care to help Thor.

“All right guys.” Tony clapped once, “Let’s go get lunch.” He took Peter back to pay for the dress. “Petey time to change so we can go.”

Peter let out a whine and shook his head. He didn’t want to take it off.

“Come on Peter.” Steve tried.

Peter again began to whine at near tantrum levels. It was past his usual nap time and it was hot out; he was already a bit agitated.

Tony shook his head. “I don’t have time for this.” He said to himself walking up to the counter to pay. He put Peter on it. The girl at the front could scan the dress with Peter in it still.

“Sorry.” Steve apologized quickly. “He wouldn’t let us take it off.” He explained.

The girl smiled, “No problem, it happens more often than you would think.” She rang up the tag on the dress. “Will that be all.”

“And this.” Clint dumped about 20 kinds of candy onto the counter.

Clint looked hopefully at Tony with he could swear were puppy dog eyes. Tony couldn’t say no. “Okay, yes those too.” The girl was holding back some laughter as she rung up the candy.

Steve picked Peter up and got started on putting him in the strolled. “You don’t think it too hot.”

Tony got the bag and paid. “I don’t think so, it’s pretty light. I kept his onesie on under it, we can take it off it is.” Steve nodded in agreement and bucked Peter.

“You two are such sweet parents.” An old lady behind them commented just as they were beginning to go.

“Thank you.” Steve smiled pushing Tony and the stroller away before he tried to start a conversation.

They stopped caring who called them parents a while ago. They knew neither of them were being called dads by anyone other than strangers they probably would never see again. It wasn’t a comfortable label for either of them yet, but they were caring less and less about it.

"This is what hell looks like.” Natasha grimaced looking at the stage.

Clint had an equally pained face, “I’ve looked into the pit of hell and it stared back at me in the form of this show.”

“Agreed.” Tony couldn’t take his eyes off what was playing out in front of him. “They say it’s 25 minutes, I want to call bullshit.”

Steve had literally dragged them to watch a Disney Junior live show that was in Hollywood Disney.
“Tony, there’s kids here.” Steve hissed to him. He wasn’t enjoying it either but he was going along with it anyways for Peter.

Thor on the other hand, really got into the show. He was responding to all the directions these puppets were giving the audience with more rigor than the children. His voice was the loudest and no doubt the oldest.

Peter stood on Thor’s lap clapping happily to the music and the show.

Clint buried his head into Natasha’s shoulder. “This is it. This is how we die.”

“I always imagined it would be in a fiery explosion with some awesome music in the background.” Tony didn’t move his glazed over eyes. “Maybe Beastie Boys, I’d settle for Def Leppard.”

“But not Jake and the Neverland Pirates.” Natasha finished for him.

At least it was air conditioned in there.

“Last thing.” Steve said.

“Then we can go to Epcot?” Clint was ready to go to another park.

“Yes then we go.” Natasha said.

They were waiting in line for Peter to get a picture with his favorite princess. Peter was dressed up and everything. Steve needed the picture for his album.

“We are next there’s no rush.” Thor said.

“Yeah there is.” Tony said unbuckling Peter. “I want to make it back to the Magic Kingdom in time for wishes.”

“That’s almost 5 hours away.” Natasha said.

Steve had no idea what wishes was. They told him it was a fireworks show, but he couldn’t see the excitement if it was just fireworks.

“Next!” Called out a cast member.

“That’s us.” Steve took Peter by the hand and walked him up to the princess.

“That. Is. the scariest thing I have ever seen.” Clint whispered to Natasha.

She snorted a laugh, “It’s not that bad.”

The person dressed as Princess Sofia wore the outfit, along with felted arms and a face mask to make her look like the cartoon character. It was definitely creepy.

Peter walked up and gave her a hug as though he’d known her all his life. They weren’t sure how he was going to react, but thankfully it was a good one.

Steve motioned for Tony to come get in the picture with them. Natasha took it.

Thor came in expecting another. “Can you?” Natasha handed the cast member her phone and
jumped in dragging Clint with her. They all smiled as he took the picture. Natasha thanked him and took it back.

“Time to go.” Steve said lightly. Peter was tired and he hoped with everything he had that Peter wouldn’t throw a tantrum while leaving. He took his hand and began to walk away. “Say bye-bye Sofia.”

Peter didn’t budge.

Tony took his other hand and guided Peter away with Steve. “Come on Petey say bye-bye Sofia.” Peter began to walk slowly along.

“Bye-bye.” Clint and Nat sang as well while waving away to get Peter to go along with them.

Peter froze and took his hand out of Steve’s and waved. He babbled and waved again. “Bye-bye Sopia.”

Steve and Tony froze and looked at each other. “Did he-” Steve started.

“Did he just say-” Tony looked at Nat, Clint, and Thor who were also equally as shocked. “Oh my god, Peter.” Tony quickly picked him up.


Peter was smiling. He knew he just did something very good. “Bye-bye Sopia.” He laughed and waved at Clint. Peter couldn’t pronounce ‘f’s’ but they all knew exactly what he was saying. It was clear.

“Petey.” Tony hugged him.

Steve threw his arms around Tony’s neck and kissed Peter once. He was so overjoyed didn’t care who was watching them. “His first words.” Peter laughed and patted Steve’s cheek.

Natasha took Peter out of their entanglement. “You two are squishing him. And causing traffic.” She pointed at the other people behind them trying to leave. The people saw that they were having a moment and didn’t look annoyed at all. She hugged Peter as they walked away. “You’re growing up too fast.” She swung him in her arms.

“Wait,” Tony said after everyone had calmed down.

“What is it.” Thor asked.

“His first words were that goddamn princess.” Tony was actually mad. “Damn it. I lost. Damn it, damn it.”

Peter laughed at Tony’s little venting session. “Damn.” Peter repeated.

They all stopped. Two phrases in one day. They looked at Peter, then all eyes were on Tony.

“Oh hell no.” Natasha handed Peter to Thor. “What did I tell you?” She smacked Tony upside the head.

Tony didn’t do anything but take it. No one bothered stopping her. It was his fault.

“Sorry.” Tony said dodging her next blow. “I won’t do it again.”
Steve watched the fireworks reached its finale with amazement. He was so wrong. These were nothing as he’d seen before.

It was an extreme fireworks show done with music to fit. The castle was also lit up and had all sorts of projections on them; some themed to the music and some just a solid color.

Overall it was amazing.

Steve felt a bit overwhelmed with the beauty and the majesty of the show. He felt Tony’s hand slip into his. This time he didn’t pull back or reject him. It was dark out and it couldn’t feel more right.

Natasha sat with Thor and Clint on the ground just in front of them.

Tony held Peter so he could see better. It really was one of the best ways to end the night at the park.

Steve’s heart was beating quickly with the exhilaration. His breathing was unsteady, he felt as if he needed to go something though he had no idea what.

“Tony.” Steve said into his ear so that Tony would hear him.

Tony looked at him for a moment.

Steve came closer and held the small of his back with his free hand. He moved his hand so that it cupped his cheek and chin. Steve brought Tony’s face closer to his and kissed him. Not a short peck of a kiss, but a deep and sincere one.

Tony kissed him back without hesitation. This was the first time they kissed in public. And Steve did it first.

Everything went dark and the show was over.

Steve quickly pulled away.

“That.” Tony said wiping at his lip, “Was awesome.”

Steve smiled and rubbed the back of his head. “The park’s closing.”

They gathered everyone up and went back to their hotel rooms.

“Peter don’t splash.” Steve said. He was on his knees next to the bath tub already wet. He had no idea how Peter still had energy. Steve was ready to crawl under the covers and not wake up until noon.

Tony and Natasha came in to brush their teeth. They made the bathroom cramped.

“Look.” Tony bit down on his toothbrush to use both hands. He took a handful of suds and gave Peter a beard. “Merry Christmas.” he was muffled because of the toothpaste and toothbrush but they got it.

“Hilarious.” Steve said flatly. He drained the tub and rinsed Peter off once more and wrapped him in a towel to dry him. Steve lifted him out of the bath and deposited him on the closest bed. He then
went through the bags to find his footie pajamas and a diaper.

Thor and Clint were watching TV and eating pizza. Peter got off the bed butt-naked to sit with them on the floor.

“Where are your clothes.” Clint laughed poking Peter in the stomach.

“Peter.” Steve said sounding amused. “Get back here.” He went to get him back.

Peter laughed and streaked past Steve. Tony caught him and lifted him in the air. “Got you.” Tony said spinning him once and dropping him back on the bed.

Peter was out of breath with laughter. He didn’t fight with Steve as he was dressed and set free again.

Another hour of watching TV and a pizza later it was midnight. “I’m going to bed.” Natasha said standing and stretching.

Clint stood up too, “Same here.”

“I will retire as well.” Thor said taking Peter off his lap.

Steve stopped Peter before he could follow them. “No Petey, you sleep in your bed.” He pointed at the crib they had brought up to them the night before. Peter frowned and looked sadly at Steve then the three that were leaving and back to Steve.

“Oh I can’t take it.” Natasha lifted Peter up. “He can sleep with me.” Thor and Clint were already sharing a bed, which according to her was a struggle of its own kind. They fought for space and snored. Natasha snored even louder than them but she didn’t know it.

“Are you sure?” Tony asked. Natasha was already gone. “You can bring him back if he gets to be too much.” He added loudly.

Thor followed after him and finally Clint.

“Hey you two have the room to yourself.” Clint’s eyebrow was raised in a suggestive manner. “If you know what I mean.” Tony threw a pillow at Clint. “I’m keeping this.” He took the pillow and shut the door. They heard the lock slide into place.

Steve walked over and closed the door on their side and locking it as well. He shut off the main light so they were left with the dim light of the side lamp.

Tony watched him come to the side of the bed. “He’s not wrong you know.”

“Very funny.”

Tony took his hands. “No really.” Tony was full of seriousness. “All you have to say was yes.”

Steve wasn’t sure. Sex wasn’t completely foreign ground to him. He just never thought when it would happen with Tony. But they were in the most magical place on earth. What kind of a better place than there to do it?

“Yes.” Steve got onto the bed and kissed him. “Do you have, you know.”

“I always do.” Tony kissed him again. He couldn’t believe what was happening.
Tony stopped and sat up, semi-out of breath. “Have you ever?”

“Yes.”

“With a guy.”

Steve stopped for a moment. “No.” He sounded embarrassed.

Tony kissed his cheek. “It’s fine. That’s fine.” He took his shirt off. “If you want to stop at any point just say so, don’t you dare hesitate.”

Steve nodded uncertainly and took his shirt off as well. *This was really happening.* Steve was feeling a mix of desire, nervousness, and what could only be explained as a hot tightness in his stomach.

Tony pushed him onto the bed. Steve kissed him, not holding anything back. Tony kissed his cheek then moved down his neck. He peppered kisses on his neck. He didn’t want to leave a mark, but he also did. He wanted everyone to know at that moment that Steve was his and Tony was Steve’s.

His warm hand brushed against Steve’s bare abdomen and gripped his thigh before sliding up beneath his mesh short. Steve felt a cold zing rush down his spine.

He didn’t know what it was; something didn’t feel right.

Tony’s hand worked its way up past his hip and pushed at the band of his underwear.

Steve froze and shut his eyes, everything was going cold. *What was he thinking?* He couldn't do this; he couldn’t go through with it. He wasn’t ready yet.

“Stop.” Steve’s voice was too quiet. “Stop.” He said again louder.

Immediately without hesitation Tony stopped what he was doing. “What is it?” He didn’t seem bothered but concerned.

“I-” He looked at the lamp on the side, unable to meet his eyes. “I can’t.”

Tony took a moment and sighed. He rested his forehead on Steve’s collar bone before quickly getting off and rolling into the space next to him.

“I’m so, so sorry.” Steve felt guilty. He led Tony on, only to back out.

Tony put an arm around Steve’s shoulder and brought him closer. “Don’t be.” He was careful and gentle. “I’m happy you were able to say before it would have been damaging to us.”

Steve’s eyes grew wide. Tony said *us.* He was think collectively and not solely for himself. He truly cared. Not about how he wasn’t able to get some, but that Steve didn’t force himself go through it knowing he wasn’t completely on board. Part of him knew that Tony cared. This just solidified it.

Steve rested his head on Tony’s bare chest. “You’re a good guy.”

Tony toyed with Steve’s hair, “Not a dickhead?”

“I never called you that.”

“You didn't have to; I know you thought that of me.”

“That was before.” Steve moved onto his back to look directly up at Tony.
“Before this.” Tony hesitated to kiss him so soon after what had transpired, but nothing in Steve showed apprehension.

Steve gave him a small grin. “Yes that. You’re still a dick sometimes, but not a bad one.” He got off his chest to turn the light off and lay down properly to go to sleep.

Tony had no clue what that was supposed to mean. He decided not to bother and go sleep instead of dwell.
New friends

Chapter Summary

A new part of the team is introduced.

Chapter Notes

I had some fun writing this one. The next update should be up sometime on Friday or Saturday. So anyways, Enjoy!!!

“Nat fall back I’m going for it.” Steve shouted running at Attuma as fast as he could. He threw his shield with all his strength.

It merely ricocheted off the Atlanteans bladed trident.

Steve caught his shield, it was useless. “Any ideas?” he went back up to Nat and Clint.

“No clue.” Natasha said. “Why is the so-called destined heir to Atlantis in the middle of Manhattan anyways.”

“Such a good movie.” Clint added the completely unrelated topic, referring to the mention of Atlantis.

They watched as he walked towards them slowly. He didn’t seem to be in any rush.

“I don’t care why.” Steve said “He’s a threat either way.”

“The farther away we get him from the water, the weaker he’ll get.” Clint was watching him as he got closer and closer.

“If we can take him down where he can’t run; we can turn him into Namor.” Steve built up on.

“Then he’ll be the sea’s problem.” Natasha had no qualms about dumping him on the merpeople.

“Exactly.” Steve readied himself to fight again. Attuma had a wide wild grin spread across his face. He was enjoying watching them struggle.

Natasha tried throwing a few tasing balls at him. Electricity travels through water, right? They sent a shock through his body. For a second she thought she had him. He stood rooted in his spot, the grin swept off his face. Once the tasers ran out of juice, he resumed his course.

Clint tried slowing him down with a few of his special arrows. Nothing phased him. “Maybe we should call up Tony.”

Steve threw his shield again. “And who’d stay with Peter.”
Clint was about to come up with a witty response when he saw a gunmetal grey glint in the sky coming towards them. “What the-” He pointed at the spot that was growing bigger and bigger.

It was a person.

“You see that too right.” Natasha watched the person come close enough to be seen clearly. Even Attuma stopped to watch.

The person had metal wings, speeding towards them, showing no intention of stopping. “On your left!” He shouted. The air flowing around the wings whooshed above their heads.

“Duck.” Steve shouted. Clint and Natasha followed his lead.

The bird-man swooped down kicking Attuma in the head. He couldn’t pick up altitude fast enough to not nearly hit the three of them. “Sorry.” The guy flew up shooting at his target.

“Who is that?” Natasha asked.

This wasn’t something foreseen. They now had a new asset to use. “No idea.” Steve watched him. This new guy wasn’t hurting Attuma but it was affecting him. It was pissing Attuma off more.

“Okay let’s go.” Steve ran up to Attuma and threw his shield. This time it hit hard enough to send him staggering backwards.

Clint and Natasha joined in with everything they had.

“It’s working.” Clint said giddily. “This dude is so cool.” He shot another hand full of freezing arrows.

Attuma stoic face was now pained. He swung his trident in attempt to fight back. There wasn’t a chance for him though; he’d been out of water for too long to use his powers and they were too far away for him to do close combat. He was growing weaker and weaker.

The bird-man flew high above them. He dropped down for the final attack. Using both legs, he put all his weight on Attuma’s back knocking him to the ground face first.

As he went down he clawed at the winged being.

He let out a gasp. Attuma had managed to dig his claws in to produce three nasty looking scratches in his arm horizontally. The wound wasn’t deep and blood didn’t gush out so much as pool the surface slowly. There was less bleeding in comparison to how the cuts looked. That didn’t keep it from hurting like hell.

“You asshole.” He stepped away, nursing his wound with his other hand. “That’s not right.”

Attuma grunted as he got back up, yelling in his native tongue. “There is no need for niceties human scum,” He shouted in accented broken English. “I will rule Atlantis, then the wor-”

“God he’s annoying.” Clint shot him with an arrow. He added another for good measure. Attuma said no more, he was knocked out like a light. “Large animal tranquilizers, they make the world go round.”

“Why didn’t you do that earlier.” Natasha caught up with him.

“I wasn’t close enough and these ones aren’t cheap.”
Steve ignored them and turned his attention to their technical savior. “You did good.” He held out a hand to shake his.

His wings folded into the pack on his back with ease. “Sam Wilson, codenamed Falcon.” He removed his hand from the wound. It was covered in blood. He grimaced, unable to shake Steve’s hand. “No problem.”

“Here.” Clint handed him a small washcloth. It was one of Peter’s that Clint had put in his pocket and forgotten. Sam accepted it and pressed it to the wound. “Clint Barton.”

“I know who you are,” Sam said. “Clint Barton, Natasha Romanoff, and Steve Rogers.” He took the panicked, suddenly uneasy looked into account. He gave them an apologetic friendly smile. “I work for Shield, level 7. Same as you guys,”

“Oh new guy.” Clint exclaimed with a hint of false excitement. He started gathering the arrows he could reuse.

“You want to come get cleaned up at our place.” Natasha offered. He’d just helped them majorly in taking down a villain. She also wanted to know more about this guy before she just let him go. “We live a couple blocks up.”

“In Stark Tower right.”

“Right.” Steve didn’t know if he really liked how much this guy knew about them. “It doesn’t need stitches?”

Clint nudged the fallen Attuma with his foot. “What about him?”

Natasha folded her arms in thought. “We can’t leave him here. How long do you think he’ll be out?” She asked Clint.

“An hour, maybe two.” Clint shrugged. “I say we take him back and make Tony take him to Namor. That guy freaks me out sometimes and Tony hasn’t done anything today.”

“I’m down for that.” Sam agreed with him.

Steve didn’t know if they were joking or not. He didn’t care at that point. “Sure why not.” He stuck his shield to his back. “One of you guys get the trident.” He bent down and threw him over his shoulder effortlessly.

“Oh, dibs.” Clint excitedly picked up the weapon.

Natasha took a couple steps away. “Don’t come near me with that.” She warned.

“You guys are something.” Sam smiled, “So y’all are just going to walk down the street with some blue semi-aquatic creature like its nothing.”

“Yeah.” Clint swung the thing over his head.

They went down the street, ignoring all the strange looks they got.

Having Captain America was like having a free pass. No police or citizens stopped him to ask questions (except maybe to take pictures).
“So this is Stark Tower.” Sam whistled getting out of the elevator first. He looked around impressed. It was gigantic. He walked in further. The whole place outweighed the dull throb in his arm. He came up to the railing of the atrium that connected to the stairs that lead into the living room.

Tony was down there with Peter and a heavily bandaged sleeping hazelnut-colored dog. Tony was still in the tank top and boxers he’s woken up in and Peter was in his Sofia the First dress. It quickly became one of his favorite articles of clothing since getting it.

Michael Jackson music was blasting at high volume. Peter was jumping and stepping to the music while he dragged Tony around the room in somewhat of a terrible dance. Tony went along with it smiling and unaware that anyone was watching.

This was rich. Sam watched them for a moment. It was entertaining to watch Tony Stark dancing with a kid. “Nice taste in music.” He shouted finally over the music.

Tony stopped and looked up at a stranger staring at him. He suddenly became frightfully subconscious. “Jarvis stop the music.” Tony yelled, picking Peter up protectively. Once it quieted he called to him, “Who the hell are you?”

“Sam Wilson. Your friends brought me.” He held up his arm. “Got into a bit of trouble.”

Clint came into view next to Sam. “Hey we’re home.” He waved. The dog looked up at hearing his voice.

Tony smoothed back his messy unkempt hair as though it would help his terribly disheveled look. “What’d I say about bringing home any more strays.” He got to the top and saw Steve drop Attuma on the ground. “Seriously, on my good carpet too.” Tony shook his head and set Peter down. He ran up to Nat and Steve, jumping and raising his arms to be carried.

“Don’t talk about Lucky like that.” Clint went down the stairs to greet his own baby.

Lucky was a dog that had saved Clint from his previous owners. They were part of a mafia gang that had tried to hurt Clint. They were terrible and abusive so he was more than happy to do it.

As a result, Lucky accidentally got in the way of a car and was hit by it. He had many broken bones and lost his eye. He was lucky to be alive, hence the name.

He was extremely loyal to him. He being Clint.

Sam watched all these people, feeling somewhat left out. All their interactions were so normal and natural. The baby and the dog were a surprise though. Whose kid was he anyways?

Nat picked Peter up. She tossed him in the air once and caught him. “What’s my name?” She cooed stepping over the knocked out villain.

Peter laughed and said, “No.” Peter’s vocabulary was still limited but growing. Aside from bye-bye and Sopia, he learned “mik” for milk, Lucky for the new dog, and his most used word no.

Clint had brought Lucky to the Tower less than two weeks back and Peter had quickly learned his name. So now they were all competing to see who’s name Peter would say first.

“Come into the kitchen.” Steve motioned to him. He took off his mask, gloves and shield, place it on the counter. “I think the first aid kits in here.” He went into the pantry to look.

Sam removed the blood soaked washcloth next to the sink. He couldn’t figure out how to turn it on.
“How do I-”

Tony came into the kitchen. “Like this.” He touched the faucet and it started.

Sam ran his arm under the cold water turning it pink orange. “Thanks.”

Tony wasn’t happy that they didn’t tell him they were bringing a guest...well two, but he wasn’t going to be rude about it. “It’s not too bad.”

Sam turned the sink off and picked up a few paper towels. “It’s not. I’ve seen way worse.”

“Found it.” Steve called resurfacing with a large first aid kit in hand.

Sam held out a hand to take the kit. “I’ve got it.”

“No you’re our guest.” Steve said, “Sit down.”

Sam reluctantly took off his pack and sat down.

Steve got down to work, opening the kit and digging out what he’d need; gauze, disinfectant, Neosporin, and tape.

“Hey don’t you think he’s going to wake up soon.” Natasha said. She put Peter back on the ground and joined them.

Peter wanted to see what was going on. He tried climbing on a chair to watch Steve. Tony helped him to sit on the table.

There was whip-like swishing noise that made them all turn around and look. Clint had shot him with another arrow. “Not anymore.”

“Oh by the way you’re taking him to Namor.” Natasha opened the fridge to get a snack. “Sam you want anything; lemonade, milk, beer?”

Sam hissed as Steve wiped the cuts with an alcohol soaked gauze pad. “Lemonade please.” He breathed out.

“Sorry about that.” Steve turned his attention to Tony who clearly didn’t want to go. “And you’ve gotta do it before he comes to.” He nodded towards Attuma who was lying in a heap on the ground. He was starting to feel a little guilty for it but he’d live.

“Do I have to?” He came up next to Steve. Tony hugged his neck. “Do I really?” He said in a whiny voice.

Steve pushed Tony away embarrassed, trying to hide his smile. He couldn’t be acting like this in front of someone they just met. “Yes now get going.”

Tony walked out with a *humph*, “Okay dear.” He knew using pet names annoyed Steve. He went to his room to put on more suitable underclothes for his Iron Man suit.

Nat set a cup in front of Sam. “How’s he even going to get in contact with Namor.”

“With a shell-phone.” Clint laughed as his own joke while the other three groaned.

Peter held up a Band-Aid to Clint. He tore open the wrapping to stick it on him. He’d seen everyone covered in enough Band-Aids to know how they worked.
Clint let him crawl across the table and stick it to his face. Peter smiled proudly at his work and got another one for Clint.

“Peter don’t waste them.” Steve didn’t take his eyes off of Sam’s arm. He’s put on some Neosporin and covered it with gauze pads. It began bleeding through so Steve added another layer of gauze. It didn’t look deep enough to need stitches. It was probably because they’d washed it out that it began to bleed again.

Natasha gave Peter a few more to play with and took the box from him. “Cute kid.” Sam said watching him stick more on Clint’s face.

“Thanks.” Steve said. He added another layer for good measure and began wrapping his arm with rolled gauze.

“Yours?” Sam noted Steve’s prideful response.

Steve paused to answer. He hadn’t thought it through well enough, bringing in this whole new guy they’d never met before. Sam could be a double agent for all they knew, and they were bringing him into their home and introducing him to Peter. “Not exactly.”

“Stark’s?” Sam guessed again.

“Not exactly either.” Steve said again, “It’s kind of a long story.”

Natasha was catching Steve’s uneasiness. “Anyways, Sam. You seem to know so much about us and we know nothing about you.”

Sam gave them another apologetic glance. “Yeah I’m new to Shield. Just moved back last month actually.”

“Back?” Steve asked. He tied off the gauze.

“Yeah I’m from Harlem; born and raised.” Sam inspected Steve’s work. He was good. “Then I enlisted and moved away.”

Steve actually had something in common with this guy. “Brooklyn.” He started cleaning his mess, “Army?”

“Air force.” Sam answered.

Tony came out in full black under armor. “I called up Strange to get in contact with Namor to meet him at the docks.” He interrupted. “Cap can I get some help here, just get him onto the balcony.

“Excuse me.” Steve said. The helped drag Attuma’s limp body to where Tony wanted.

“Wait, wait hold on.” Clint said suddenly. He ran up to them and took out his phone. “Gonna use this for blackmail if he ever comes back.” He positioned himself on the ground to take a selfie. “Okay there. Oh eww he drooled on the floor.” Clint got back up to show Nat the picture.

Tony sighed, frustratingly. They continued on and got him out on the balcony.

“This is so disrespectful.” Steve said when they got out alone. It was a warm dusk outside.

Tony stuck his hand in one of the flower pots and his suit began building up around him. “You're too nice.” He teased. “He won’t even know any of this happened.” The helmet was yet to come on. “Okay I’ll be back soon.” He kissed Steve on the cheek so effortlessly, it was practically out of habit.
at this point.

Steve gave him a bit of a flustered look. It was strange how easy it came to Tony, but he liked it.
“Alright be safe.”

The helmet came down over his face. “I always am.” He took Attuma into both arms and slowly bag taking off, to test if the suit could bare his weight. “Oh and don’t worry about dinner I’ll pick something up.”

Steve waved him off and came back inside.

“You two are so incredibly gross.” Natasha sighed.

Steve stopped and made eye contact with Sam. He hadn’t even thought about how he was there, able to see and hear their exchange. How had he let his guard down so easily? “Sam-”

He put his injured arm up to stop him. “Don’t. I didn’t see anything, okay?”

Steve was relieved to hear that. He was beginning to like him. He gave him a grateful look and returned to the table.

“Where were we?” Sam said.

“Airforce.” Steve answered. He was still recovering from that minor bump, but it hadn’t phased Sam at all.

Natasha wasn’t ready to trust him yet but she was always up for a good swapping of war stories. “So why’d you leave?”

“There was a mission. It went wrong, a good friend of mine went down and nothing was never the same.” He drank solemnly. “So I left and moved to DC. I did counseling for veterans; addictions, alcoholism, ptsd. I cover as much as I can.”

Steve understood his pain. “I lost someone too.” He said quietly. He wasn’t trying to make it about him but provide perspective.

Sam nodded. He knew he meant Bucky Barnes. “Now I’m here working for Shield, special ops mostly.”

Sam was so easy and open to talk to.

“That’s pretty much what we cover too.” Natasha said. “You should put in a request; we can work together sometimes.”

“That would be nice.” Sam said considering he didn’t have anyone he knew at work yet. “I’ve seen him at the northern branch before.” He was referring to Steve. “You do training too right?”

Steve hadn’t ever seen him before. “Really?”

“Yeah.” There was a hint of annoyance in his voice, but something also laxer about it. “I go in the mornings for conditioning and training, right.” He’s shifted his focus now onto Natasha and Clint. There was a story to be told. “And almost every morning I’m there running, he’s out there too. Every time he passes me he goes, ‘on your left’. Every 10 minutes, ‘on your left’. It’s so, so--I don’t even know.”

Natasha and Clint looked at each other amused. It was very Steve Rogers.
Steve on the other hand felt pretty subconscious about it. He hadn’t meant to annoy anyone; he was being safe.

“Wow Steve.” Clint joked. “You’re such a show off.” He began peeling off the Band-Aids.

Peter held Clint’s hand to keep him from taking them off. “No.” He screamed adding some extra babbling to it.

“I didn’t mean-” Steve started to explain.

“Wait.” Natasha interrupted, “That’s why you came down saying ‘on your left’.”

Clint pointed at her with agreement. “Yeah, I thought you were just trying out catchphrases. Like every other new hero on these streets.”

They laughed in agreement. A lot of the younger heroes were pretty bad with banter.

Peter put his arms out to be taken off the table.

“I got it.” Sam said lifting him up and putting it on the ground.

Peter climbed down the stairs to the living room. Steve watched him closely to make sure he didn’t fall.

“Hold on.” Clint got up and picked up the abandoned trident, “What do we do with this? I’m gonna keep it.”

“No, put it down.” Natasha said.

Clint tossed it from one hand to another. “Why it’s not--ah!” Clint dropped the weapon. He’d managed to hit himself in the head with it.

“That’s why.” Natasha went to check if he was okay.

Clint swatted her hands away like a child. “I’m fine.” Clint’s hand was firmly pressed to his forehead.

Natasha moved his hand away smearing some blood across. “Oh that’s nothing.” she said. There was a knick about an inch and a half long just above his eyebrow.

Clint went back to the table and reopened the kit. He got a large enough Band-Aid and stuck it over the mark to join the others that were already there. “I know, I said that.” He turned to look back at Nat. The smeared blood wasn’t covered but the cut was, he could wipe that away later.

Steve didn’t like having that dangerous of a weapon just lying around. “I think we should lock that up downstairs.” Steve went to pick it up.

“Agreed.” Natasha said.

“Plus now we can give you a tour.” Clint added.

Sam lit up but was quick to hide it. He’d love to get a tour of Stark Tower. “Why not.” He stood to follow them out. “You coming?” He asked Natasha.

She nodded and followed them. “Come on Petey let’s go.” She called down to him. Peter was petting and cuddling Lucky. “Say bye-bye Lucky.”
Peter patted Lucky softly. He learned quickly to be careful and gentle with Lucky. “Bye-bye Lucky” He sang. Lucky licked his fingers in return. Peter laughed and climbed the stairs.

Natasha held his hand rejoined the leaving group.

“Sir, Mr. Stark on the line.” Jarvis’s voice echoed off the walls of the training room. The tour was almost over.

“Thank-you Jarvis.” Steve said to accept the call.

Tony’s voice replaced Jarvis. “Hey where are you guys.”

“Training room.” Clint answered. “We’re giving Sam the grand tour.”

“Well I’m upstairs I brought Chinese.” The sound of crinkling bags and boxes could be heard in the background. He was most likely setting the table. “Sam stay for dinner if you like.”

“Did you get-”

“Yes Clint I got the pizza for the dog.”

“Thanks.” He called out to him.

“I’m waiting, hurry before it gets cold.” Tony hung up.

Steve picked Peter up. “Sorry to cut it short. We can pick up after dinner if you like.”

“Don’t be.” Sam waved him off, “I’m always up for food.”

Natasha was already at the elevator door waiting. “Come on you guys.” She echoed to them.

“I’m so ready to change.” Clint said.

Natasha stared at him for a moment. “You wear a t-shirt with cargo pants and boots. I’m in a one-piece suit that rides up my ass if I sit for too long and Steve’s wearing the American flag in the form of a suit that probably does the same thing. It also gets really hot really quick in that.” She’d tried it on before. It was way too big for her though. “I’m ready to change too.

“So what’s it made of?” Tony asked inspecting the wings.

They’d finished dinner and were now lounging in the living room eating dessert.

“Carbon fiber.” Sam said, “It used to be titanium I think. I stripped it and replaced it myself.”

“I’m impressed.” Tony finished the rest of his bourbon and refilled it with the bottle on the table. “Lighter weight, more durable.”

“And quieter.” Sam added.

Tony acknowledged his extra point. “I bet if you used a smaller engine with more ducts you’d gain more speed.”
“But what about altitude.” Sam took a sip from his own glass. It was his still first.

“True true.” Tony was starting to like this guy. He was a good match when it came to brainstorming.

“How about-”

“A different fuel source?”

“That’s exactly what I was thinking!”

Natasha and Steve watched them from the love seat. “Looks like you’ve got some competition there.” Natasha nudged Steve.

“It’s love at first sight.” Steve agreed. It was strange how quick they were getting on, a good strange.

Clint was sitting on the ground in front of Lucky on the couch. “Freaking nerds.” Clint sneered in a more joking than malicious manner. He changed some of Lucky’s dressings gingerly. Peter was hovering closely watching them.

“Petey come here.” Steve offered him another spoonful of ice cream. Peter ran over to get the ice cream then ran back to Clint. He repeated the action a few more times; getting ice cream, going back to Lucky, getting ice cream, going back to Lucky...

Clint peeled back the dressings on Lucky’s back leg and applied the ointment and wrapped a new clean gauze over the wound. “Ow, ow.” Peter chanted pointed at Lucky.

“Yeah.” Clint didn’t look up. “Ow, ow.” He mumbled more darkly, lost in his own thoughts. The final part was to check on the place where his eye used to be. He didn’t want Peter to see it. The spot was sewn, purple, and heavily swollen. The sight oozed fluid and blood so it required a bit of attention. “Steve can you-”

Steve nodded. “Peter come here.” He held out another spoon of ice cream. Peter came over and accepted it. Steve fed it to him continuously to distract Peter from going back until Clint gave him the okay.

Lucky whined in pain and tried to move away from him. “I know buddy, it’s not my favorite part either.” Clint soothed. “I’m about to give you good stuff in a second, you won’t feel a thing.” Clint covered the grotesque eye with loosely tied gauze. He gave Steve the look to let Peter go.

“He really loves his dog.” Sam told Tony. “What happened to him?”

“He saved him.” Tony watched Clint cut a slice of pizza into little pieces and feed Lucky with some help from Peter. “And got hurt on the way. Clint refused to put him down.” Tony swigged the rest of his glass.

Tony wasn’t on board with the idea of bringing a dog into his home. Dogs meant mess and responsibilities and they had a baby, so it was a risk.

But Lucky was a very good dog. Clint clearly cared for him and Peter adored him. It was making everyone happier. Which made Tony happy. Even if he’d done nothing but sleep on the couch (only getting up to relieve himself on the terrace because he couldn’t make it downstairs to go out yet); he’d already made a difference.

Tony refilled his drink again. “That’s your third one.” Sam counted. It wasn’t a healthy amount in such a short span of time.
“I can hold my liquor.” Tony shrugged, “Why is it a challenge?”

It most definitely was not. Sam sighed, it wasn’t his place to say anything. He shook his head.

“Anyways.” Tony moved on, “I’ve got an entire lab downstairs, really multiple labs. You’re more than welcome to come back and used them whenever you like.”

It was a generous offer. “Thank you. I’d like that.”

Tony gave him a friendly, slightly tipsy smile. “Sam Wilson I think this is going to become a wondrous friendship.”

Steve walked Sam down and out of the tower.

Sam held out his hand to shake Steve’s. “This was great.” He’d just wasted his day away in the best way possible. And he’d more than likely gained new friends.

Steve smiled. “You have to come again, soon.” He’d had a good time with Sam too. He wasn’t sure if completely trusted him yet. It was too soon for that, but he liked Sam and he had no reason to yet.

“I’ll see you at work?”

“Definitely.” Steve said letting go of his hand. “Are you sure you don’t want me to drive you?”

Sam opened his wings. He planned to get home in style. “I’m positive. This is a way cooler than a car and you know it.”

It really was. Sam slipped his goggles back on. There was more that he wanted to say but he didn’t want to hurt what he had going with Steve and everyone upstairs.

“What’s on your mind?” Steve was easily able to recognize that look.

Sam looked at him for a moment, he considered what he was about to say. “I don’t want to-- it’s not really my business. We just met and I don’t want to say the wrong thing but this was my job after all and-”

“Sam just say it. It’s fine it won’t change anything.”

“It’s Stark.”

“What about him?”

Sam wished he hadn’t even brought it up. “It’s his drinking. Five glasses of bourbon in two hours isn’t healthy. Even if they can hold it.”

Steve was caught a bit off guard by that topic. This wasn’t a foreign concept to him at all. Everyone knew Tony drank too often. To have it pointed out out loud was different, it made it feel all the more real.

“I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have said that.” Sam apologized quickly.

“No, it’s fine.” Steve ran a hand through his hair. “You’re right. It’s something that’s been going on for a while.”
“I can talk to him if you like.” Sam offered, “I’ve dealt with it before. Not just with veterans.” Losing his friend hit him hard, he found his own ways to cope.

Steve wasn’t sure. He’d always planned to just leave it be. So far it didn’t seem to be hurting anyone, accept Tony and his liver perhaps. Until it became a real visible problem he hadn’t planned to confront him. “I’m not sure. Not yet at least.”

Sam could understand that. “Well,” Sam got ready to take off, “The offer remains open.” He jumped up and took to the air. “Night Cap.” He waved to him.

Steve waved back and went inside.

He came back to find Tony laying on the couch with Peter sleeping on his chest. He’d passed out before he got his bath or changed for the night.

“Come on, let’s go.” Steve picked him up to take him to the nursery. Tony rolled off the couch and followed.

Tony went to his room while Steve put Peter to bed.

Steve changed into his own pajamas and came into Tony’s room. The shower was running, Tony was inside. He got into the bed regardless and turned the light off, keeping the side lamp on.

He couldn’t stop thinking about what Sam had said. It wasn’t that what Sam said was standoffish or necessarily rude. Yet something still bothered him.

He was right.

Tony came out shirtless in shorts. He crawled into bed and gathered up next to Steve. He kissed him once and pressed his head into Steve’s shirt. “You smell nice.” Tony hummed.

“And you’re getting my shirt wet.” Steve stroked back his hair. Tony got off him and stared at Steve expectantly. Steve rolled his eyes, grabbing the back of Tony’s neck. His fingers buried in Tony’s dark wet hair. He brought him forward and kissed him quickly.”

“There.” Tony smiled sweetly. He plopped onto the bed. “G’night.”

Steve turned the light off. “Goodnight.” he said quietly. He didn’t sleep as easily as Tony had. His mind swam with thoughts. Thoughts about Tony, his own father, and just what alcoholism could do to a person and the people around them.
Mistakes were made

Chapter Summary

I really don't know...

Chapter Notes

So here's the next chapter. I really don't have much to update you guys on. I do feel a bit bad about this one but I'm going to make it better. Anyways, as always...enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“This is so stupid.” Tony said after falling for the umpteenth time. “Whoever the hell decided to strap blades to shoes then use them to slide on ice was a dumbass.”

Steve helped him up. “How was I supposed to know you’d never skated before?” Steve held Tony’s hands and skated backwards to guide him on the ice.

“What gave you the idea that I had? All because you spent 75 years in ice doesn’t mean you have make us suffer too.” Tony began falling forward again. Steve caught him quickly. Tony let go of his hands and grabbed onto his forearms instead. “It’s August man.”

It was Steve’s turn to pick the outing. He chose something he’d been wanting to do for a while; ice skating. Everyone was totally on board. Nat, Clint, and even Sam agreed to go. The only person who didn’t was Tony. He didn’t know how to skate at all.

They’d found an indoor rink just outside of the city to go to.

They split up and went off to have their own fun. Sam and Clint raced each other around the rink. Peter was even getting in on it. He was bundled up in enough layers of jackets, sweaters, and pants to have padding if he fell down because he too was skating with them on his own baby-sized skates. It was pretty cute to watch. Natasha held each of Peter’s mitted hands in hers and pulled him across the ice slowly.

They were all having fun and blending in pretty well.

All except for Tony.

He couldn’t get the hang of it.

“Okay I’m letting go.” Steve said slowly releasing himself from Tony’s grip. Tony held his hands out, he was balancing on his own. They met each other’s eager looks. “Now take a few steps and slide.”

Tony’s skates clicked against the ice as he took a few uneasy steps. He tried sliding; and he did. He
slid embarrassingly slow until he ran into a wall and fell. “I hate you so much.” Tony held out his hands to have Steve pull him up.

Steve breathed a laugh, skating over to help him with ease. “You’re being a baby.”

“No a baby can stay up.” Tony pointed at Nat and Peter as they passed. Peter’s rosy face had a large grin spread across it. Peter was pretty much didn’t have to do anything but balance; which he caught onto quick enough. “He just learned to walk and now we’re making him skate?”

Steve held onto Tony and skated backward to keep them moving among the other skaters. “That was a couple months ago. And he’s having fun.” He looked over his shoulder to see Peter fall over. He almost turned to check on Peter himself but he quickly saw that Peter was laughing.

“On your left.” Sam shouted speeding past the both of them. Clint let out an adrenaline fueled yelled and powered by, just on Sam’s heels.

He was never letting that one go.

The surprise and speed caused by the two of them made Tony loose his balance again. Steve tried to keep Tony from hitting the ground again. Tony couldn’t get both feet set on the ice again and fell down, dragging Steve to the ground with him.

“Damn it you two.” Tony shouted in a very angry old neighbor-like fashion as he went down.

Steve ended up landing nearly on top of Tony. Everything was tangled together. “Sorry.” Steve apologized getting off him. Tony sat up with an entertained smile. That was the first positive emotion he’d shown since they got there. Steve cracked a smile and got up slowly. Nothing was bruised or hurt too much.

Tony was determined to get up on his own this time. “I got this.” He got onto his knees and pushed himself up. “See I got this.” Tony sounded so sure of himself.

Too sure. Quickly he began to wobble, waving around to find a sense of balance. He couldn’t and began tipping forward. His skates skidded against the ice as he fell once again.

This time instead of landing on the ground he fell into Steve’s arms. It would have been defined as a hug had Tony not caught himself on Steve forearms. Their position looked as if they were going to waltz more than anything else.

Tony looked up at him with grateful eyes. Steve met his with the similar gaze of adoration. He felt a sudden urge to kiss him but had to keep himself from acting upon it.

“Wow you two are so gay!” Clint shouted with a hinted humor as he passed them after completing yet another lap.

Steve’s face was already pinkish from the cold, but now it became a darker shade from embarrassment. “Yeah no shit Sherlock.” Tony yelled back. Steve turned another shade of red.

Tony came down the stairs to the living-room with a freshly bathed Peter at his hip. He had his pajamas on and was ready for bed.

Clint sat on the ground with Lucky upper torso rested in his lap. He was playing ds. Sam, Nat, and
Steve were piled in the corner of the l-shaped couch talking.

Steve and Sam had gotten on very well since they’d first met. They talked nonstop; about being part of the military, swapping great stories back and forth, and other topics that didn’t even relate to their similarities. It came so effortless for them.

Tony didn’t mind it, he did feel a pang of envy now and then. Steve and him could talk and be honest with each other too; only after months of living together. But Tony liked him too so he didn’t actually care that much.

“Here we go.” Tony put Peter on the couch and sat next to Steve. Peter climbed off the couch and moved sit with Clint and Lucky. He plopped himself on the ground, using Lucky as a backrest.

“Jarvis turn on the TV.” Tony lied back on the couch. His legs strung over Steve’s lap. “Turn to channel-

“No, wait look.” Nat said pointing at the TV.

They all stopped what they were doing to turn their attention to the television.

It was one of those TMZ/ Access Hollywood-type news shows that annoying covered the lives of celebrities without covering and real relevant news stories.

There was a picture taken of Steve and Tony holding each other. Steve’s back was turned to the camera so that it only showed the back of his head and the littlest bit of his face. Not enough to actually show his face though. But without a doubt that was Tony smiling up at him.

“Today, bachelor and CEO of Stark Industries, Tony Stark was spotted ice skating, and mostly falling, in the arms of another man. Has our man finally taken himself off the market?”

“The hell.” Clint said grabbing the remote to turn it up.

Steve met eyes with Tony with a shocked gaze. They both looked back at the TV. How had they even gotten a picture of them together? It didn’t even seem like anyone had recognized Tony.

“This picture is taken just one month after Tony Stark’s get away trip with several other families to Disney World where he was spotted multiple times with the same unnamed man.”

Another picture of Steve and Tony at the Wishes fireworks show came up on screen.

It was the same picture they’d seen a hundred times over on every possible social media platform.

Tony had caused a bit of an uproar by taking the trip. People praised him for his generosity and some shamed him for using children “as a publicity stunt”.

What brought that out of the headlines was a leaked photo of them during the show.

It was a picture of Steve and Tony. They were kissing. It was them kissing in a darkened shadow surrounded by fireworks and Cinderella’s castle behind them. And Peter was in it as well, he was being held by Tony. It was a really well taken, pretty picture; if it didn’t mean risking such a scandal for the public to eat up.

It wasn’t too conspicuous. The picture was clearly of Tony. It was taken at an angle so that Steve was hardly seen and Peter was turned around so he wasn’t really in the shot either. But there were other clearer photos of the three together.
That didn’t mean it wasn’t enough to start rumors and have paparazzi hounding them for some time.

It took Natasha a moment to compute what she was looking at exactly. Then she got it. “Well damn.”

Steve still hadn’t said anything. He was trying to think his way through it all; find a foreseeable end. Now what? He didn’t see anything that meant that he was in any trouble. His mind kept going back to Peter. Would being in the tabloids hurt their case?

Tony was obviously holding a child and there were already pictures floating around of Tony on outings with Peter, though none of them got Peter’s face. With them came rumors of Tony having an illegitimate child.

On Pepper’s recommendation, he later came out and clarified that the baby was a friend’s that he was watching. He didn’t give them the full truth and that didn’t diminish the existence of the rumors. It did help them a bit.

They soon died down and got more interested in even more drama the world had for them and moved on.

“Oh, well, that’s just messed up.” Sam said. Even if he hadn’t known them the last time they’d been in the tabloids, he knew the gist.

Tony sat up, clearly miffed by what he was seeing. “Damn.” He ran a hand through his hair sinking into the couch. He felt Steve’s hand rest on his knee comforting. He hated when these things happened.

It didn’t matter if it was Tony, he was in the news every other week. This was different. This included someone he cared about.

Tony got off the couch. “Damn.” He breathed out irritated.

Natasha looked up at him. “I’m sure it’ll blow over soon.”

“Well, definitely.” Clint agreed.

Tony ignored them and went the steps to the kitchen. “Someone change the freaking channel.” He got himself one of canned margaritas they kept in the back of the fridge.

Steve watched him from his place with thin lips. Ever since Sam’s mention of Tony’s drinking, he’d become more aware of just how much he was drank. It was a lot. He was hardly ever drunk though. Or maybe he always had alcohol in his system so they couldn’t tell the difference well enough.

Sam could see Steve staring with a bothered and worrisome gaze.

Tony picked up a bottle of something and headed to the elevator. “I’m going to go do some work.” His voice was low and paced. There was clearly something wrong. It was nearly 9 after all.

“Hold on.” Steve said getting up. He didn’t know what he could do to help but he was going to try to say something.

Tony left before he could.

Steve felt guilt. There was no other way to put it. He had brought him to the rink, he was the one who kissed him when they were on vacation. It was his fault over and over.
“Leave him.” Natasha advised.

“He probably just needs some alone.” Sam agreed.

Steve nodded and sat down with a sigh.

Peter looked up. He could tell something was wrong even if he didn’t understand it. He got off of Lucky and walked over to couch, holding his arms out to Steve to get on his lap.

Peter was easily able to brighten anyone’s mood. Steve pulled him up on to his lap. Peter patted his head affectionately similar to how he comforted the dog.


It would be okay, they’d get through it together.

They were getting tired of the same story.

People weren’t ready to let this one go. The internet was still sharing, posting, and reblogging the same picture over and over. There were followed by edits and captions.

Steve felt as though the whole fiasco was his fault.

Tony was seemingly taking it with grace, yet he was being more distant and spending more time in the labs since. He promised it was because he had work to catch up one, while Steve suspected otherwise.

The job of putting away the dishes away after dinner that night was tasked to Steve.

As he did so, Tony was watching TV and Peter from his spot at the counter of his mini-bar. Clint, Sam, and Nat went down to get in some training together. They’ve been working with Sam to get him up to speed with being part of the team in the field. Sam was smooth and easy to work with, he fit in perfectly.

Peter laid on the floor of the atrium playing with a tablet with Lucky curled around him.

In the past few weeks since Clint had brought Lucky to the tower beaten and battered, he’d made a lot of progress in terms of healing. He could walk around for short spans despite the two casts, accept up the stairs. That may never change, according to the vet. The swelling in his eye went down so it looked like a black eye around the part that was forced shut.

“So when do you think this will be over.” Steve asked.

Tony poured himself another drink.

That was another problem that was making Steve feel even worse. Tony was coping by drinking more than usual.

According to Clint and Nat, that was about as much as he usually drank before he came along. Apparently having Peter and Steve move in got him to drink less. The fear was that he’d slip back into his old ways.

Sam still offered to talk, but it was Tony’s problem. If he wanted to do it, it was going to have to be
him who asked. It wouldn’t happen otherwise; Tony was too stubborn.

Tony swirled the drink in his hand. This one tasted particularly strong. He wasn’t paying attention to the labels on the bottles. “I don’t know.” he took another swig. That one really burned. “If-if it doesn’t blow over soon I’ll go do something stupid to top it.”

Steve could tell he was drunk. It was the early stages of it, he still was a few away from having to intervene. Steve placed a plate in the dishwasher. He faced him with a hint of a smile. “Don’t hurt yourself.” Knowing Tony, he was probably serious about it.

He sighed once. “It’s just annoying. I keep thinking-” Steve paused he didn’t want to make this about himself.

“About what?” Tony refilled his glass with the same stuff.

“I keep thinking that someone’s going to find out who I am. Not just me, but, like, Captain America.” Steve already found sites online dedicated to finding out his identity. Very few were guessing it was the same person who was in the suit during the war. Those few were still enough to be a problem. “And if they do, then what? We’ll become an even bigger target.”

Neither of them wanted to say it but they were both thinking it. What about Peter, would he become a target as well?

It was good for Steve to be talking about it. He felt selfish, but he also felt better. The weight caused by all the stress was lighter.

Tony leapt off the stool, ungracefully. He stumbled and caught his balance, laughing at his fumble. Maybe he had a little too much this time. “Don’t worry.” He came over to Steve. “I’ll help you.”

His words were slurring together. Tony had progressed to drunk faster than usual. What did he have?

Steve finished the dishes and started the dishwasher. He turned in time to have Tony come around and hug him tightly. “Tony.” Steve chuckled trying to push him off.

“I’ll take care of you.” He kissed Steve’s shoulder then the corner of his lips, refusing to let go.

Steve could smell the alcohol on Tony’s breath. “Okay, you’ve had enough.”

Tony wasn’t listening.

Before Steve knew what was happening Tony had him with his pushed against the counter. This wasn’t Tony. It was the alcohol. “Tony, no.” Steve said in a grave serious voice.

Tony pulled back but not completely. He had a glint in his eye. Not an angry or malicious one, but it couldn’t be a good one. “I’m trying to help.” He didn’t understand. He couldn’t think straight. Everything felt like a blur. What was he doing wrong? “Trust me.”

He hooked his fingers at the hem of Steve’s shirt in an attempt to take it off.

Steve was paralyzed, he now knew exactly where this was going; what Tony intended. This definitely wasn’t the Tony he knew. Tony worked his shirt over his waist, exposing his stomach.

Steve let out a noise and grabbed Tony’s hand. “Stop, this isn’t you.” Steve knew better than anyone how bad alcohol could hurt a person. “Not in front of Peter.”
It was a low blow, but he needed to get through to him.

Tony was still looking at him. Eyes fixed. Neither of them breaking contact, waiting for the other to make his move.

The only noise that was being made came from Peter’s tablet.

The dark glare didn’t leave Tony’s eyes. He leaned in and tried for a kiss.

Steve dodged him. He pushed Tony off him using some of his extra strength. Tony stumbled back and caught himself on the adjacent counter. Steve didn’t mean to use that much force. But he was too heated to care. “Don’t do that. What are you thinking?”

Tony laughed and straighten up. “I told you.”

He seriously thought he was helping. “How did you think that me would help?”

“Works for me.”

Steve gave him a hard look. He wasn’t angry with him, but he was still extremely pissed at his relentlessness. He scoffed and shook his head. “Go to your room, sleep it off. We’ll talk when you're sober.”

Another thing switched on inside Tony. “Don’t tell me what to do!” His voice rose to a volume loud enough to get Peter’s attention.

“You’re shouting.” Steve kept his tone leveled, something was he finding harder to do.

“Why do you always have to do this? You think you’re always right. America’s favorite baby.” He said a decibel lower. “All because you knew my dad doesn't mean you get to act like him.”

It was Deja vu, they’d had this conversation before.

“Tony-” Steve was now leveling up from pissed.

“Guess what, like my dear old dad you’re not as perfect as you think. You’re just as messed up as me and him and everyone else in this goddamn world!”

“I said stop!” Steve’s voice elevated to match Tony’s. “Can’t you see what you just did. You know exactly how I feel about this” Heat rose to his cheeks. He tried to keep his breathing steady. “And now we’re supposed to turn it into a pity party for Tony Stark.”

“I’m not looking for your sympathy. I’m stating the obvious, just saying that-”

“You think I don’t have problems. You know my history, there’d be a problem if I didn’t have any.” Steve’s mind and mouth were starting to disconnect. He’d never be so open and self-centered in any other scenario. “I watched my best friend die because of me. The only person from my past that’s alive can’t even remember that I’m alive, the only person who I could have- who I could have...”

Steve was going to say ‘really fallen in love with’, but that wasn’t completely true.

He had Tony too.

Though in the moment him and Tony were feeling like less and less of a possibility. “And what’s yours? You’re a drunk!” he continued. Tony rolled his eyes. He was taking nothing he said to heart. “Just like my dad. And if you ever come close to being like him I swear I will leave you.”
Peter abandoned his game. He watched as Tony and Steve fought and yelled at each other. It was scaring him. Lucky barked once to get their attention.

“Then why don’t you do it.” Tony shouted. “Cause I’m never going to change.” He slapped himself in the chest. “This is all me.”

“You-” Steve was cut off by the sound of Peter’s cries. Crying caused by both him and Tony. It grounded him back to reality. Steve sighed and gave up. “Whatever Stark.” He went over to pick up Peter. “Go to hell.”

Steve went into his room, locking the door behind him. Lucky followed at his heels.

Tony didn’t follow.

Peter helped him get a better grip on his senses. He slumped into a chair. He picked up his cup, there was still a bit left.

Tony brought it to his lips, but didn’t drink. He put the glass down. Tony groaned and rubbed his face, burying it in his hands. It was pointless.

He could hear Peter still screaming and crying in the other room.

*What had he done?*

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Steve paced his room back and forth, trying to comfort Peter as best he could. “It’s okay.” He murmured patting his back. “Nothing’s wrong.” These words were going to help Peter but he found them more relevant to himself.

Peter hiccupped and held tightly onto Steve’s neck. He wasn’t crying anymore. Peter sniffed and wiped his face in Steve’s shirt.

Steve sat on the edge of his bed. He gave Peter a false smile. “See, all better.” Peter smiled back and crawled off his lap to the bed and onto Lucky. He licked Peter’s face comfortably.

Steve picked up the remote turned to the channel that only played black and white television. The silence caused for an unsettling atmosphere.

It wasn’t completely because of his age that he liked those shows and movies. It was because of the stories. In them, all the people were classy and happy all the time with these perfect families that had flaws but always ended on a happy note. Something he could only wish for.

Peter crawled onto Steve’s chest and stretched out. He sucked on his middle two finger and watched TV with him.

Steve tried to distract himself with television to push back all his nagging thoughts.

There was a knock at the door. Steve didn’t want to hear anything Tony had to say. He ignored it.

The knocking stopped and was replaced with clicking.

The door slowly opened and Natasha walked in. “Did you really think a locked door could keep me out.” She replaced the bobby pin in her hair.
Steve didn’t say anything.

She sat down next to Steve’s legs. “I heard what happened. Well, I know there was a fight, even though I don’t know why. Tony was pretty hard to understand. Clint’s with him right now.”

“I don’t want to talk about it.”

Natasha shifted to lay next Steve. “It’s okay, you don’t have to.” She intertwined her fingers with Steve’s.

“What did Sam have to say?” Steve asked. If there was any opening for Sam to use his counseling skills to step in, it would have been then.

Natasha sighed, reading his mind. “He went home after the workout.”

Steve held her hand. “I don’t know what I’m doing wrong. Whenever it seems like we’re getting along something happens.” Pressure built up behind his eyes like a migraine. He wasn’t going to cry.

Natasha turn onto her side to look at Steve. “Relationships are always complicated.”

Steve laughed once sourly. “Isn’t that the truth.” Peter scooted off his chest and into the space in between them. “What am I supposed to do?”

“Talk to him and if talking doesn’t work use force.”

Steve found himself smiling. “God.” He turned to come face to face with Natasha, “This is all a mess.”

Natasha pushed the hair out of her face. “Today?”

“No our lives.”

“That is also very true.”

There was another knock at the door. “Hey guys.” Clint said walking in. “I talked to Tony. He went to go do something in his labs or something. He likes to be alone after these kind of things.” Clint kicked off his shoes and joined them on the bed; on the other side of Steve.

“What’d he say?” Natasha asked.

“He’s full of regret and self-loathing as usual when he gets hella drunk.” Clint took the remote and flipped through the channels to find something better. “Most of it didn’t make much sense.”

Steve didn’t care what Tony’s state was. He wasn’t ready to just yet.

“Oh and,” Clint added, “So turns out he drank some of that mead Thor brought from Asgard that him and Luke watered down.”

That explained how he’d gotten that drunk that fast. It didn’t excuse his behavior, though it did give him a more valid reason to act out.

“That poor man’s liver.” Natasha joked. She stretched and buried herself further into the pillows. She might just spend the night with Steve. Part of her wanted to go down to see how he was doing as well, but Tony liked being alone when things like this happened, while Steve like being surrounded by his friends. So she decided otherwise. “Wait how do you know.”
“He left a cup on the table, I was taking it to the sink. There was some left so I tried it. It hurt and I didn’t even swallow.” He whispered under his breath “That’s what she said.”

“Grow up.” Natasha kicked him and by default Steve.

“He drank two glasses of that I think. Along with like 6 others of different kinds of drinks.”

Natasha and Clint had nothing to say. They knew how bad his drinking habits were, but they couldn’t do anything about it. Tony was too bullheaded to listen.

“Anyways.” Steve sighed. He didn’t want to talk about it anymore. “It past someone’s bedtime.” He with obviously fake brightness. He picked Peter up to give him his usual bedtime routine.

Peter was given a bath, then slipped into a onesie and pajama bottoms. Steve read him a story and put him to bed. He set up his usual music playlist to play at a low volume and shut off the light, taking the baby monitor with him. Peter hadn’t fallen asleep but Steve was sure he would soon.

When Steve got back to the room he found Nat and Clint both still in his bed. They’d fallen asleep. Natasha was sleeping in a normal position while Clint slept horizontally at the foot of the bed, hugging Lucky like a stuffed toy. Lucky was also sound asleep and snoring loudly like an old man.

Steve didn’t mind it. He had enough room for himself too. The bed was surprisingly big enough. He went into his bathroom to slip on some pajama bottoms. He then turned off the light and went to bed.

He may have gone but that didn’t mean he slept. So much swam in his head that sleep didn’t come until very far after.

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Steve awoke with a start. It was morning.

He opened his eyes and sat up to find Tony in his room, far from his door. He’d knocked over one of Steve’s many stacks of books.

Had he been watching for them? Maybe waiting...

“Get out.” Steve hissed simply and lied back down.

Tony walked toward the door but stopped at the bed. “No, I want to talk.” Tony seemed sober now. He was groggy and horse. Pulling an all-nighter and not sleeping at all does that to a person.

Steve didn’t want or cared to hear what he had to say. But the look on his face of desperation and sincerity moved him. Steve found himself getting out of bed.

“If you hurt him again, I will kill you.” Natasha grumbled as they walked out. She rolled over to go back to sleep.

Tony didn’t have to respond, He got the message.

Steve closed the door to a crack and flicking on the hallway light. It was morning but still dark enough to need some proper illumination.

He wasn’t going anywhere else. He folded his arms and waited to hear what Tony had to say.

“Can you turn that off.” Tony was seriously hungover and the light wasn’t helping.
“No, consider it part of your punishment.”

“Fair enough.” Tony looked for where to start. “I was out of line last night. I said something I shouldn’t have.” He was full of guilt and regret. When he was he tended to ramble. “I can’t remember what exactly but I’m sure it was wrong.”

“And?” Steve waited to hear the rest.

“And I shouldn’t--I shouldn’t have done what I did. I completely ignored you. I--I was just too damn drunk to think straight. I’m sorry.”

Steve wasn’t mad, but he wasn’t alright. “I accept your apology.”

Tony looked up at him hopefully.

“But that doesn’t mean I forgive you.”

The hope was gone.

Tony wasn’t surprised. He didn’t deserve or expect it. “No, that’s fine. I don’t want you too.” He took Steve’s confused expression into account. “I want to earn it properly.”

There was a time Tony would have been offended to have not been so easily forgiven after apologizing to someone he’d annoyed. But Steve was different, he was more special. Even if there was no way to explain why.

Tony rubbed his arm awkwardly. “I’ve decided--I’ve decided to start talking to Sam. For-- my problem. If he’d do it.”

Steve hadn’t expected this from Tony at all. He was finally doing something about his drinking. This was truly a whole new side of Tony. “Okay. That’s good.”

“Yeah.” Tony didn’t know what else to say.

Steve was at a loss too. “Yeah.”

Tony took a step towards him with semi-opened arms. “Can I.”

Steve shied away. “No, not yet.”

Tony backed off. “It’s fine. I get it.”

They were interrupted by loud noises coming from the nursery.

“Looks like someone’s up.” Tony gave him an uneasy smile. Steve was still obviously not in position to be joking with.

Steve sighed. “Go take a shower and go to bed. I’ve got him.”

Tony nodded and left.

Steve opened the door to get Peter. Peter stood in his crib holding onto the railings, bouncing up and down smiling as Steve came closer. There was no chance of him going back to sleep. Meaning there was no chance of Steve going back to sleep.

Still a bit preoccupied by his own thoughts, Steve lifted Peter up and carried him down to go to the
fitness room downstairs together. He needed to vent and they had a closed off play area for Peter, so it was safe.

He stopped to pick up a sip cup of juice and his tablet before heading to the elevator.

So much had happened, none of it felt real.

But Steve didn’t regret a single word he said. Every single one of them spoke truth.

Steve kissed the side of Peter’s head. “Nothing’s ever going to happen to you, I promise.”

Chapter End Notes

Like I said, I do feel kind of bad about how I wrote Tony in this one. I feel as though I antagonized his character while I didn't mean to, or I'm not giving him enough justice. I promise the next one's going to resolve as much as I can. ((Real sorry to who ever this may pissed off))
"This feels so stupid," Tony grumbled as he attempted to copy Natasha’s tree stance.

Natasha stood on her yoga mat perfectly balanced. Hands together, standing on one leg to bring the other foot to rest on her thigh. She breathed in the cool morning air deeply with her eyes closed. "It’s not stupid. It’s relaxing." She put her leg down to move into downwards facing dog then, after a couple seconds, on all fours to table position. "It’s therapeutic." She exhaled arching her back slightly.

Tony begrudgingly followed her direction. "Therapeutic my ass."

Since that night, Tony had decided to take a new path. A path to betterment.

He started by detoxing, eliminating alcohol altogether. Sam had mentioned being able to reintroduce it into his life later, but for now cutting off was the way to start.

That part didn’t really set in until Tony tried to have one last one for old time’s sake, and found that all of the bottles in his personal bar had been dumped, washed, and refilled with sodas such as cream soda, root beer, ginger ale, coke, and the bane of Tony’s existence: club soda. This was done courtesy of Clint and Sam of course.

With cutting it out so suddenly came what could have been easily defined as withdrawal symptoms. Nothing like what terrifying a search on WebMD would yield, though. For the first week Tony got headaches, migraines, he was irritable, and could hardly sleep.

After some time, the headaches and migraines went away or were taken care of with an Aleve. He took melatonin to sleep. And got his fixes in the form of caffeinated drinks. He was becoming quite the barista actually.

His irritability eventually went back to his usual moodiness and was only really bad when something was wrong.
Everyone pitched in as much as they could. They didn’t hound him or were too persistent because they knew Tony wouldn’t try that way. It had to be through his choices. Though they were actually controlling more than he seemed to realize.

Sam coached him and gave him recommendations on what to do and what not to do. Funny thing was that Tony had imagined it go down like sessions with a psychiatrist, but it wasn’t that at all. They went out to lunches and talked. It wasn’t always just about Tony or alcoholism, making things better and more enjoyable.

Clint and Nat chose to go the healthy route. They’d spent one night where either of them couldn’t particularly sleep researching and found that exercise and healthy diets were the way that others took.

So Natasha invited (more like pushed him out of bed at the crack of dawn) to do yoga with her on the terrace. It was already something she did to relax and loosen tenseness. Doing at sunrise was different, neither of them was morning people, Natasha even less so. She didn’t care, it was for Tony.

Clint helped where he could, mostly it was him helping Tony internally. He did his best to keep him entertained and in a good mood. This was done mostly by pulling dumb pranks on the others together. They also had a prank war of sorts going on because of Clint tricking him into drinking disgusting health shakes for a week that weren’t actually meant to be for Tony’s health, so much as to see how far he could get with him.

Tony got back at him by messing up his junk food stash; replacing the Oreo frosted fillings with tooth paste, putting ghost pepper chili powder the Doritos, that kind of stuff.

Steve stayed by side. They were going through a rough patch, but they stuck together. They talked and did things together and went for outings with Peter (with more caution of the public eye than before).

Though he was still more on the distant side. He accepted some of Tony’s affections but they hadn’t kissed since that night. Tony had only spent the night in Steve’s bed a handful of times on particularly bad nights.

It was a real team effort.

Tony didn’t particularly like being dotted on or the center of attention. Well in this kind of situation at least; public events were a different realm in itself. Yet he understood their intentions so he took with a grain of salt and as much grace as he could muster.

Natasha exhaled and brought her hands to her feet to touch her toes and sat down cross-legged. She put out one leg to bend over and stretch to touch her toes again. “So how’s everything.” She switched legs.

Tony didn’t bother with the fluidity and preciseness that Natasha had in her moves. He just went down next to Nat and reached. “Fine, I guess. You see how it is, you do practically live here.”

“I meant with Steve, stupid.”

“Oh,” Tony said moving on to the left leg. “It’s okay I guess.”

She knew what that meant. “So still rocky?” She reached up and brought her leg to her chest.

“Yeah.” Tony sighed, “But I think I have an idea and I’m gonna need your help.”
Steve just got home from work.

It wasn’t a particularly long day, nothing out of the ordinary.

“I’m home,” Steve called, announcing his arrival. He walked in and set his bag down on the ground.

Peter came up running to him screeching a bit but also clearly happy. That was always the best part about coming back.

Steve caught Peter in his tracks and picked him up. “Where is everybody?” Steve smiled gently squeezing Peter’s side to make him laugh.

Peter pushed his hand away and pointed at the living room area.

Steve went and looked over the railing to see Sam, Clint, and Nat lounging around.


“Hey,” Natasha said as well.

They sounded forced and fake. There was something up.

Natasha smiled sweetly as Steve descended the steps. “Peter, didn’t you have something to give him?”

Steve noticed something balled up in Peter’s hand. “Can I see that?” Steve asked him taking it. It was a small piece of paper. He put Peter on the ground at the bottom to read it.

It said:

Steven Rogers, you are cordially invited to meet me on the 72nd floor ASAP. Semi-Formal dress not required but recommended.

He read it over again and crumpled it up. He shoved the wad of paper into his pocket. “Very funny Clint, I’m not falling for another one of these.” He took a seat beside Sam on the couch. “He got you in on it too?”

“It’s not a prank I swear.” Clint defended.

“Where’s Tony? Is this one of his?”

“No,” Sam said. “not this time.”

Steve was tired, he didn’t want to go.

“Do it,” Natasha said. “What’s the worst that could happen?”

Steve sighed. “If this is joke, I swear-”

“Just go!” The three of them shouted in unison.

“And change,” Natasha added.

“Yeah, t-shirt and blue jeans aren’t gonna cut it.” Sam agreed.
Steve did the last few buttons on his shirt and tucked it into his black pants. He didn’t bother with a tie or anything special. It couldn’t be that big of a deal.

He had no idea what floor he was going to. He knew he’d been there before but not many times. He only knew less than 10 of the floor numbers by heart. Where he slept, the studio below, the workout and fitness, training simulations, and Tony’s labs, there wasn’t much use in memorizing the rest. A list would be helpful.

There was a ding and Steve stepped out.

It was pitch black dark.

“Jarvis lights 40%” Steve cautiously walked into the room. There was a delay in the lights coming on. He was on the party floor.

Steve breath hitched.

The room lit up. Not by the normal ceiling lights or colorful bulbs, but several round flickering string lights crisscrossed from the balconies above. They gave the room just enough light to see but also give off a calming serene effect. There were so many strands, it must have taken hours to do.

A man stood in the center of the dancefloor, with his arms held behind his back.

It was Tony.

“Hey.” He said when Steve was close enough.

He was wearing navy dress pants with a matching waistcoat a white dress shirt underneath, and a pair of black and white dress shoes. His hair was greased and slicked back as though he was auditioning as a character from Hairspray.

Steve was at a loss for words. He looked up at the lights above, shining like large stars or summer fireflies.

“Tony,” Steve said quietly, trying to contain the youthful grin that was forming. He met him at the center of the dance floor. “What is all this?”

Tony looked at the ground. “It’s-” He started but stopped. “I don’t like how we left things.”

Steve was easily able to figure out he meant his apology. It was a short one with words that any person would have said, making them feel less important. Tony didn’t get Steve’s forgiveness from his words and sweet nothings.

He was gaining it by his actions.

“That doesn’t mat-”

“Yes, it does.” Tony was adamant. He wasn’t looking for forgiveness or brownie points out of what he was about to do. He wanted to do something that would make Steve happy, to show he cared even. “I don’t like how things are right now. I don’t know if it will ever be the way it was before, but-” Tony didn’t have to say the rest.

Steve set a hand on his arm. He felt the same way. He never said it out loud, but it was true. “I understand.” He said solemnly.
Okay, the mood was getting too bleak, the opposite of how it was supposed to go. Tony quickly brightened the tone of his voice. "Which is why..." Music began to play. It was high pitched piano music accompanied by strings.

Steve took a step back. He put two and two together.

Tony reached out for Steve’s hand. “Dance with me?”

A man’s voice began to serenade them.

*Someone longs for you and your caress.*

It wasn’t a request or a demand, it felt more like pleading. Needing for this, to show there was a chance to make things right.

Steve hesitated. “I can’t.” Steve broke contact, looking at the ground. He felt a pang of guilt. He couldn’t do it. It brought him back to his era; his promise to Peggy. That dance, a dance that could have been theirs.

It should have been theirs.

“Please.” Tony smiled at him. A soft, caring, slightly impatient smile. He didn’t take his hand back. “It’s time to move on.”

Steve’s heart skipped a beat. Time became syrup; slow, thick.

It was as if he was reading Steve’s thoughts. What he said was relevant to not only them but everything that had been going on. **It was time to move on.**

He glanced at Tony and looked away, biting down a smile. “I haven’t done it in years. I don’t really...” His voice trailed off.

Tony came closer and took his hand. “It’s just me and you.” He murmured softly. “Trust me.” He put the other hand on the small of his back.

Steve eased into it, putting his arm around Tony’s back torso.

Tony led. He swayed them side to side, stepping in beat to the music. It wasn’t any complicated, romantic musical worthy type of dance. Just them slow waltzing to the song.

*How he misses you and must confess...*

“I got onto the live feed on the security camera’s.” Clint stood on his knees holding his iPad up to Nat and Sam from the couch.

“Oh, coming...” Sam practically ran down the steps, skipping a few to get down faster. He peered over the back of the couch and over Clint’s shoulder. “This I’ve gotta see.”

They’d spent 3 hours throwing those damn lights back and forth from those loft balconies. It had better be worth it.

“Shouldn’t you give them privacy.” Natasha came to join them, with Peter and Lucky at her heels. She took her usual seat on the couch. Peter put his arms up to get on with her.
Clint and showed no sign of stopping.

“They’re talking.” Sam narrated. There was no sound, unfortunately.

“Oh, oh and Steve’s coming in.” Clint added. “I don’t think he’s going to do it.”

“No,” Sam disagreed, “He’s going to just watch.”

They were starting to sound like sports newscasters.

“Wait, there it is.” Clint cheered as though it was a goal for the Fifa world cup.

Sam gripped Clint’s shoulder shaking it, “I told you so.”

Okay that piqued Natasha’s interest. “Fine, I’ll give.” She rolled her eyes, scooting up next to Clint to watch. “This is so wrong.” She added under her breath. She watched Steve and Tony slow dancing to the music. There was no way to help not feeling a sense of satisfaction in it.

Since the very beginning, they were meant for each other, it was about time for them to realize it for themselves.

“What if they get laid?” Clint asked casually as though he was asking what the weather was going to be the next day.

Natasha and Sam stared at him.

“Eww, Clint.” Natasha cringed at the thought.

Sam pushed Clint’s head forward. “That’s just gross,” Sam said over top her.

Clint laughed ducking from another hit.

Perhaps there'll come a time when you're alone...

“Who sings this?” Steve asked.

“Nat King Cole.”

“Good choice.”

“I went for something more your time.” Steve looked at him mildly bemused. “What?”

“He’s more of a 50’s thing. Is this supposed to be our story or something?” Steve took notice to how the lyrics were similar to their current situation.

“What? It’s fitting.” He took his hand out Steve to string it over his shoulder. “Who cares?” he added defensively. Steve let out a small laugh. Tony couldn’t help but smile back.

“I’m sorry too,” Steve mumbled quickly out of nowhere.

“What for?”

Steve didn’t break their rhythm. “I’ve been hard on you. I know I have.”
Tony agreed with him. It was true. The cold shoulder and third-degree treatment were pretty annoying. Yet at the same time, that was what really helped bring him to his senses. “Well, it’s nice to know you’re aware of it.” Tony joked.

Steve was happy to see he was taking it lightly. He wanted to shift the conversation to something else.

“Do you ever stop and think what are we doing with our lives?” Tony mused calmly, as though asking a philosophical question. “You hated me, now look what we have.”

“Hate’s a strong word.”

“Fine, you *strongly disliked* me.”

“Ever think about that date.”

“Where we were set up?” Tony interrupted. He moved to hold his hands around Steve’s neck.

“Yeah.” Steve adapted by putting his around Tony’s waist. “If we went through with it, what it be like for us.”

“It probably would have ended the same way but worse.” He joked. Steve laughed slightly. “Why did you even leave me like that in the first place.”

Steve looked back it now with more humor than sourness. “You said you wanted us to get drunk and laid less than ten minutes after getting in the car. Oh, and you were also a few hours late.”

Tony sucked in a sharp breath. “Oh, oops.” It was starting to come back to him. “I also tried to set up a booty call didn’t I?”

“Yeah.” Steve breathed out with some exaggeration. “That too. How about me?”

“What did I think of you?” Tony clarified. Steve nodded. “Well, I thought you were a bland square. No fun, stick up your ass, bossy-”

“Okay, I get. It.” Steve stopped him. “And now?” He was a little uncomfortable making Tony talk about him, but he was also curious.

“Still a square.” Tony chuckled at Steve’s furrowed brows. “But one of those that have the rounded outer corners.”

*Your heart still haunted by a memory*....

Steve decided to take it as a compliment.

The song was beginning to draw to a close. At least it seemed so.

“You’re such a romantic.” Steve sighed pulling him in tighter.

Tony tightened up. “No, you are.” Tony rested his forehead against Steve's shoulder momentarily before looking back up at him. “This is something you’d like.”

Steve was a bit surprised by the comeback. He wasn’t wrong. It *was* his idea of a romantic gesture. Not big, overdone, or extravagant, but simple yet beautiful. This was something simple, pure, from the heart.
Tony stepped closer. He locked eyes with Steve.

Steve could guess what was coming next.

Tony stopped in the middle of the wooded floor. “Can I?” He asked; his face inches from Steve’s.

Steve didn’t have to respond. He held the back of Tony’s head and kissed him deeply. “Yes.” He whispered. Tony leaned in to kiss him again. This one lasted a few extra seconds.

The music faded off until it was quiet altogether.

Tony turned his head to the side, a bit breathless. “Talk about good timing.”

Steve found himself in a better mood all of sudden as well. He stared up at the twinkling lights above him momentarily. “Yeah.” He said loosening his grip on Tony.

“You know,” Tony confessed, “I didn't really think what happens next.”

That wasn’t really a shocker or that bad. “We go back up.” He suggested, “It’s almost time to put Peter to bed.”

“Sam, Nat, and Clint have that covered.”

Of course, they were in on it too, Steve figured. “We can go out somewhere.”

“No, let’s stay in,” Tony said slowly getting on the ground. He motioned for Steve. “How about we talk for once.”


Tony lied back and pulled out his phone to play another song. “No, but it’s something we haven’t done.” He looked away from his phone and up to Steve. “It’s something we should do.”

It really was something needed to work on. Tip-toeing and avoiding the subject with passive aggression wasn’t going to cut it to make things even come close to working out.

He couldn’t argue with that. Steve lied back next to him and plucked the phone from Tony’s hand. “But I’m picking the music.”

Tony didn’t really care.

Steve settled on another song by Nat King Cole.

Tony shifted his head to the side to face Steve. He was focusing on the lights above, he had something on his mind.

“Sometimes I think why they picked us of all people,” Steve said finally. “Mary and Richard I mean.”

Tony held his breath before letting it out slowly. Those were names that hadn’t been mentioned in a while; months perhaps.

But they were supposed to be talking after all. “I wonder what they saw in us, too.” He worked his fingers through Steve’s. “There was something there.”

“And I guess they were right.” Steve agreed.
“Okay.” Tony nudged Steve’s side with his leg, “Enough depressing shit.”

They shifted their conversation to other things. Work, politics, personal stories, and pretty much all of the above.

After hours and hours (and a whole carton of ice cream they found in the freezer in the small kitchen on the floor) of sharing they realized just how late it was.

“It’s 12:38.” Tony said taking his focus from the cat video he was showing Steve on his phone to the time on screen.

It didn’t even feel like it.

“I had no idea,” Steve said putting the spoons in the carton. There was a small melted pool of mint chip at the bottom. He stood up slowly. His legs ached from the soreness of sitting for so long. “I think I’m going to head up.” He held out a hand for Tony to help him up.

Tony had a question but was unsure about asking it. One that was in regards to their sleeping situation. He’d gotten so used to co-sleeping it was harder alone.

“You coming with me?” Steve offered. He picked up the trash to throw away.

He’d answered it for him with another question.

It came out so natural and easy.

Maybe they were going to be alright after all.
“Petey, come on, this isn’t the time for games.” Tony looked under one of his lab benches. This wasn’t the first time he’d lost him after bringing him to his lab. Steve would kill him if he found out. Well, it wasn’t like Steve was there anyways, so it didn’t matter.

Tony pushed back his bitter thoughts and kept moving.

He checked in a few bins against the wall; no Peter. He stood still in place, waiting to hear a noise; nothing.

“Peter.” Tony groaned, he’d been looking for nearly half an hour. It was dinner time. There was a schedule to maintain.

Tony felt his phone vibrate in his pocket then he heard his ringtone, Hollaback Girl.

“Hello.” He sounded a bit distracted, checking in the bathroom.

A familiar voice answered, “Hello.”

He couldn’t have heard it right. “Steve?” He nearly shouted in surprise. “What the hell?” He quickly tried to stand. His head hit the top of the desk as he got up. With a grunt of pain, he rubbed the spot.

“Tony.” it seemed painful for him to speak, “I don’t know where to start.”

“How about where the hell you’ve been?” Tony momentarily abandoned his search, rooted in his spot, “What were you thinking.”

Steve was quiet, “I-“

“You know what, I don’t care.” Tony cut him off, “Do you have any idea how worried we’ve all been?”

“I’m sorry. I’m fine, I promise.”

Tony didn’t want to hear it. He was relieved to hear his voice after so long, but that feeling was walking hand and hand with borderline anger. He had to stay calm. “Where are you?”
“I can’t say.”

Tony had seen the news. He knew why but at the same time Steve was being plain stupid.

He sighed, kicking some papers on the floor. “Fine. Just-just when are you coming home. Peter misses you.” Really he missed him too. “We can help you, it’s not that bad really.”

“Tony,” Steve was searching for the words to say, “This, this was a mistake I’m sorry. Send everyone my love if you can.”

“Steve no wait-”

There was a click and the phone line went dead.

Steve had hung up.

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*Three Weeks Ago…*

Tony rolled onto his stomach reaching over to put an arm over Steve’s chest. Instead, he was met with an empty space; Steve was gone.

*Had he already left to work?*

Tony crawled off the bed, wrapping the blanket like a wizard’s cloak. He tread silently past Peter’s nursery to look.

Steve’s bag was gone, so were his keys. He’d left early.

Tony didn’t feel like going back to bed. He spent the rest of the morning, or at least until Peter woke up, in the living room catching up on Mad Men and doing a bit of work on a nearby tablet.

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“I’m getting worried.” Natasha was staring at the opening to the elevator as though Steve was going to walk through any second. “Did you try calling him again.”

Tony was leaning up against the kitchen counter, arms folded. “He forgot his phone, we’ve gone over this already.” He was on edge; Steve was always home by no later than 7.

It was well past 11.

Clint came entered the atrium with Peter who was still crying. It was past his usual bedtime, so he was cranky, yet wouldn’t go down to sleep. Clint handed Peter off to Tony. That should have helped with the volume but didn’t. “Maybe we should go out and look for him.”

Natasha heaved a stress induced breath and stood up. They still hadn’t cleared the table. She didn’t make eye contact with either Tony or Clint, choosing to pick up the plates instead. “Where?” she was just as worried as the rest of them. “This isn’t like him.”

Tony rocked Peter in his arms, pacing the kitchen. “I don’t know.”

“Wait, how about Sam?” Clint suggested. “They should have met up at SHIELD.”
Natasha nodded in agreement. “Yeah, that’s a good idea.” She dropped the dishes into the sink.

Clint pulled out his phone and called Sam. “Hello?” he paused. “Yeah, it’s Clint. It’s not that late.” He went a few steps away to talk.

Natasha washed her hands and wiped them on her pants. “Here. Come to your favorite aunt.” Nat cooed as she took Peter from Tony.

Peter had stopped crying. He laid his head on Nat’s shoulder.

“Well, that works too.” Tony mumbled. He opened the cabinet to make Peter his usual warm milk. “It’s probably because Steve isn’t here.” Peter always had to have both of them in the tower to go to sleep. He was able to tell someone was missing.

Natasha watched Tony busy himself with a meaningless task. She rubbed Peter’s back soothingly. “I’m sure he’ll be back soon.” She wasn’t actually…

“Well.” Clint breathed out. He was holding back what he had to say. “Well, Sam says he hadn’t seen him at all today. He didn’t come into work.

That was the one thing that really set him off. He gave the cup to Natasha. “That’s it.” Tony said with some finality, “I’m going out.”

“Tony let’s be sensible.” Natasha sounded as calm as she could.

Clint touched Tony’s shoulder. “Seriously dude, we have to think clearly.”

Tony shrugged him off. “I am thinking clearly. I’m going to look for him.” He continued to the balcony to put on his suit. “Call me if anything changes.”

Natasha sighed and shook her head. There was no stopping Tony Stark when his mind was set. “Fine, be safe.”

Clint didn’t agree with her, but he stayed quiet.

Tony nodded once and went outside. Within 5 minutes he was gone.

The elevator dinged and Tony walked out. He dropped his armor off on in the middle of the hall and threw the mail onto the kitchen counter.

Nat and Clint were in the living room with the still-awake-Peter.

Upon hearing the sound of the clanging metal, Peter began to cry to get Tony’s attention. It was nearly 1, he shouldn’t still be awake.

“Someone’s going to have a long night.” Tony sounded sour and frustrated. That’s because he was. He went down the steps to pick him up.

“So no luck?”

“I don’t know.” Tony went back up to the kitchen for some juice. “You tell me.” He poured himself a cup and gave Peter a strawberry to snack on.
“You don’t have to be rude about it.” Clint muttered.

Tony closed the fridge. “I know, I know.” He was a bit sorry for snapping.

“Now what?” Natasha asked as they came back down to the couch. “Do we call the police?”

“That won’t do anything. I called Carol, she put out an alert.” Tony laid Peter across his lap to cradle him like a much younger baby.

They sat silently none of them wanting to ask the question on all their minds.

“Do you think he’s okay?” Clint asking finally.

“We can only hope.” Natasha said. In reality, hope wasn’t going to do shit for them, action would and they all knew it. As well as they knew that the reason for their lack of action was because it was too late to do anything with any real impact.

Peter curled up closer to Tony’s chest. He stuck two fingers in his mouth.

“God.” Tony leaned farther back into the couch. “I hate this.”

Nat and Clint agreed totally and entirely. Steve left no trace. He could be hurt or lost or dead and they couldn’t help it. They were all so powerless.

“I’m going to bed,” Tony mumbled. He needed to be away.

He took Peter with him. There were all these stories about parents accidentally killing their kids by co-sleeping; they nagged at the back of his head as he climbed into bed with Peter. One night wouldn’t hurt. Peter wasn’t going to sleep otherwise.

Steve probably wouldn’t have agreed with his choice.

Tony tried to push that all away. It was hard; basically impossible. There was an itch for something. Tony knew exactly what it was for.

He needed a drink.

No, not needed wanted. He wasn’t going to throw away all that work for nothing.

Tony didn’t sleep that night. Too much clouded his mind. After the 4th hour of tossing and turning and thinking, he gave up.

He needed to occupy himself. Tony put Peter in his crib across the hall, so he couldn’t roll off his bed, and went down to his labs.

It was a helpful distraction.

Steve still hadn’t come back. Now it was time to freak out.

Clint, Nat, and Tony were gathered around the kitchen table. They were formulating a plan of sorts. Peter was still sleeping; something none of them really got.

“I don’t like all this standing around.” Tony confessed, pouring the rest of his coffee down the sink.
He picked up the forgotten mail.

“Me either.” Clint agreed.

Natasha took a forced sip from her mug, “I’m sure he can take care of himself.” There was a lie hidden somewhere in those words.

“Then why hasn’t he called yet,” Clint asked. “Remember when he called us as he flew over Russia that one time cause he wasn’t gonna make it for dinner. He always keeps in touch.”

Tony leafed through the envelopes. “Yeah really. It’s not like-” Tony dropped all the other letter to hold onto one. It was blank, no stamps or address, only 2 words; for everyone. “That son of a bitch.” Tony very nearly shouted.

“What? What is it?” Nat tried to take the envelope from him to see.

Tony dodged her and tore it open frantically. “It’s from Steve.”

Clint and Nat glanced at each other then back at Tony. Clint lunged for the paper as Tony unfolded it. Tony pushed him away. “Well, what does it say?”

Tony’s eyes scanned over the words before he read it aloud:

“I’m sorry that I have to do it like. I’ve been compromised and this is the only way to do it without having anyone else get hurt. Sometime in the next week I will be exposed, which is why I have decided to go into hiding. I am fine and alive.” Tony read quickly.

They weren’t sure how to react to this. There were no signs, no warning, not even the slightest heads up.

“What kind of bullshit.” Clint started.

Tony continued, “Tony, it’s up to you now to raise Peter. I’m sorry. Nat and Clint, you two have to make sure he does it right. I will never forget everything that you all have done. Maybe we’ll meet again one day. I hope you can find it in your hearts to forgive me. Steve.”

Tony leaned back, running a hand through his hair. Nat took the paper from him and reread it with wide eyes. Clint peered over her shoulder and read it as well.

“What the fuck?” Clint was starting to grow angry, “What the actual fuck?” Clint stood and paced the atrium.

Nat was just as pissed but she hid it better. She took a deep breath. “Just like that, with some badly written short note.” She held the paper so tight in her hands that it became crumpled around the edges.

It felt like a suicide note.

Tony rubbed his face, “No, we’re going to find him.” He laid his hands flat on the table. “He’s doing that stupid self-righteous shit again, that dumbass.” Tony pushed off to stand up. He was hurt.

They all were.

Steve could have gone to them, talked to them; not runaway.

“Oh hell yeah, we’re gonna find him.” Clint agreed, “Then I’m gonna kill him.”

Clint stopped his aggressive pacing. “I don’t know, but I want to right now.”

Tony walked past him to his room to change. He was going in to talk to Shield.

He had so much running through his mind. A wild mix of emotions, searching for an answer to the questions; when, where, why.

He didn’t bother with a shower or dressing to impress. He simply put on clean jeans, a shirt, and picked up a jacket. The local branch of Shield always had the air conditioning on high.

Tony checked on Peter.

He slept sprawled out and blissfully unaware. Tony brushed his hair back and pulled the covers down so it wasn’t covering Peter’s small face as much.

There was an amount of time that passed. It was still and quiet; as though nothing was wrong. Tony tore his eyes away from Peter and left the door behind him partially open.

Natasha and Clint were still where he had left them.

Clint was the first to notice Tony pick up his keys and wallet. “Where are you going?”

“Out.” Tony didn’t have time to talk, every second wasted was supposed to be put towards their search. “I know Shield has a hand in safe houses, and I’m sure that he would have done it though them.” The fire in Tony’s stomach burned more fiercely at the thought of Steve choosing some stupid agency for help instead of them.

Natasha stood up. “I’m coming with you. I might be more persuasive than you if it comes to it.” She wore the same clothes from the night before and had no intention of changing. Tony nodded. He knew what she meant by that. “Clint. Looks like you’ve got Peter, that okay?”

Clint, only half listening, looked up from his phone. “Uh, yeah me and Lucky have it covered. Sam’s coming over to help and Jess Jones is going to see what she can do.”

This was taking a whole different kind of teamwork.

Tony and Nat hadn’t said a word to each other since leaving and getting into the car. Natasha couldn’t stand it. She switched on the radio and flipped through the stations until a particular one caught their attention.

“Breaking News. It has been revealed from a reliable inside source that our country’s very own hero, Captain America, is none other than the very first man of action himself, Steve Rogers. While details as to how haven’t been released yet there are several videos and photos to support this claim. We are still waiting to hear from Cap himself as to-”

Tony punched the radio off.

“And so it begins.” Natasha sighed, resting her head against the glass.

This just wasn’t right. It wasn’t fair.
A week had passed.

Still no Steve.

The news was having a field day over this. There was no definite support but it was the topic of many debates and conversations in the media. The sudden disappearance of Captain America wasn’t helping either.

Steve’s absence was felt everywhere.

The lack of an extra voice of reason. The missing nice soulful breakfasts that he made because he almost always woke up first. Not having an excuse to watch old crap classic movies and shows.

Peter knew he was gone too. He didn’t sleep or eat easily and cried much more often. He was an easy going baby but the loss of Steve just threw him off. Watching videos and going through the pictures of all of them together seemed to help Peter calm down.

For the rest, it just made things worse.

Shield was no help. Every hero who knew Steve was on the lookout for him.

None of them were going to accept that he was gone for good.

That was impossible.

But after the first five days when everything settled, their denial seemed less and less justified.

There weren’t many changes.

Tony stayed home from work a little more to take care of Peter. Sam was over more for support wherever it was needed, and secretly to prevent Tony from slipping. Everyone was also a lot more on edge.

They argued a bit, but nothing big and hardly ever involving shouting.

Needless to say, this transition was hard for everyone. It wasn’t exactly the transition as much as all the loose ends that were involved.

What had actually happened to cause this mess? Where was he? Was he truly alright?

Present…

Tony yelled out in frustration and threw his phone. It hit against the metal work bench with a satisfying bang.

What was the fucking point in calling if he was just going to hang up?

Instantly the noise was complemented with another. Crying; Peter’s cries.

That had managed to scare him enough to reveal his location.

Tony felt slightly guilty for making him cry. He followed the sound and found Peter under Tony’s main desk.

“Hey there.” Tony soothed. He got onto his knees to pull Peter onto his lap. “I’m sorry okay?” Peter
stopped crying and sniffled. Apparently, it wasn’t as bad as he made it seem.

Peter reached and picked up the frame that was at just in front of them. He held it up for Tony to see, smiling proudly with himself.

“What have you got there?” Tony’s leg began to fall asleep, so he sat down in a better position. He tilted the frame to get a better look. It was the picture that was taken on Peter’s first birthday with the four of them crowded around Peter and Peter wiping cake on Tony’s face. It was one of Tony’s favorites.

Peter pointed at him and babbled them pointing at himself.

“Yeah that’s you.” Tony agreed, listening to Peter tell him everything else.

He pointed at Nat and Clint and talking using his own way of talking. Tony nodded with some commentary to make it seem as though he understood. Then Peter moved on to Steve. He started it off by saying one thing that made Tony do a double take.

“Dada.”

Tony figured it must have been his imagination. Until he looked up at Tony expectantly and point at Steve again and said, “Dada.”

No, it wasn’t a mistake. “Peter.” Tony gently tried to correct him. “No, that’s Uncle Steve, or grandpa if you like.”

Peter laughed at him like it was a game. “No, dada.” He pointed again with a smile. “Dada.” This time, he pointed up at Tony.

Tony felt a chill run up his spine, a numbness ran through his arms, his breathing became unsteady.

He called him and Steve Dada.

“Now Peter,” Tony tried to explain a bit more firmly, “Not Dada. Tony and Steve.” He pointed at the picture respectively.

This couldn’t be happening. They’d spent so much time denying that identity that it had never crossed their minds what Peter would think. Being called a dad by the child he had practically been raising for almost half a year wasn’t particularly bad. Yet it made him feel guilty.

Peter had forgotten Mary and Richard.

“Dada.” Peter repeated shaking Tony’s arm.

A pressure built up in Tony’s head like a migraine pressing against the back of his eyes. His throat tightened as he tried to swallow.

It was too hard. All this was too much. He couldn’t do this alone. He needed Steve back.

He hugged Peter tightly, kissing the top of his head. “Yeah okay, fine. Dada it is.”

There was no use denying it anymore. He had no choice but to accept the reality.

“Now.” Tony cleared his throat and stood with Peter in his arms. “Let’s go eat.”
“I still can’t believe you didn’t put any tracking device on him,” Sam said as he helped Clint with the dishes. “You disappoint me Stark.”

Tony was in his own world at the moment. After the shock of what had just happened in the lab an hour before was setting in. It put Tony a strangely good mood. He was the a father in the eyes of someone. It was terrifying yet exciting.

He wasn’t sure if he’d tell them the news. He still hadn’t told them that Steve had called either. There was no point in ruining a perfectly good dinner just yet.

“Really Tony.” Natasha elbowed him. That brought him back to reality. “You wouldn’t have done that, would you. You know, putting a tracker on him.”

“Actually, I did.”

“Seriously.” Sam spoke up, contrasting to Natasha’s look of disapproval but not surprise.

“Yeah. two actually” Tony poked at the remaining food on his plate. “There’s one in his phone, which was left behind, and the other in his shield which is currently in my goddamn wall.” Tony said the last bit with obvious annoyance.

Clint, Natasha, and Sam looked at the shield that was half buried in the wall in the atrium with amusement. It looked kind of like a decorative piece of modern art to impress guests when they came off the elevator.

There was a bit of a discrepancy as to who could be the next Captain America. They agreed that while none of them could ever replace Steve, it would fit the same logic as Thor’s hammer.

Long story short the three of them were all worthy.

It was all going well too until Clint tried to catch the Shield by the straps and it ricocheted off the floor and into the wall.

Clint put the last plate in the dishwasher. “You forgot the constitution.” he reminded Tony.

“Oh yeah, the pocket constitution.”

“A pocket constitution?” Sam sounded skeptical.

Natasha helped Peter out of his chair. “You can’t just say that and not explain.” She watched Peter duck to play with Lucky under the table.

“Well,” Tony began.

Clint finished it for him. “When Steve first moved in me and Tony were joking that Steve is so American that he’d carry a pocket constitution with him wherever he went if he had one.”

“So I got one and put a GPS tracker in it to see if he would.” Tony held back a chuckle.

“And?” Natasha asked genuinely interested.

Clint burst out laughing, probably the first time in a while. “He did! It literally went everywhere he went.”
Sam, Natasha, and Tony were also joining in on the hilarity of it.

“Whatever happened to that anyways?” Clint asked.

Tony thought for a moment. “I think he still keeps it…” Tony trailed off, the gears in his head were working something out. “In the front pocket of his bag.” He quickly pulled out his phone to check the app that they used with the GPS.

It took them a few seconds to catch on.

The entire atmosphere of the room changed drastically suddenly.

“Wait.” Natasha said, “Are you saying-”

Clint and Sam dropped everything. “Oh my god. It can’t be that easy.” Clint said coming over to see the screen.

Tony watched a red dot appear on the map.

_They’d found him._
Too easy

Chapter Summary

A continuation of the previous chapter

Chapter Notes

So expect the next chapter on Friday ((hopefully)) it might be last, if not it's going to be the second to last. Oh, and I thinking of making a few one shots to add to this as a series when it's over, if any would be down for that please say so, I'm just curious if it's worth doing. Anyways ENJOY!!!!

Steve dropped his keys and groceries on the table.

The safe house Shield set him up in Oregon with was 10 miles from civilization. It was well-sized old cottage at the edge of the woods. It smelt of old wood itself. It was beautiful and quiet.

Too quiet.

The first couple days were okay.

Steve was extremely guilt ridden and homesick. He spent many restless nights playing everything over in his head. He was constantly second guessing that choice.

He had no one to talk to or distract himself. Steve found himself suddenly with way too much free time on his hands. There was a TV that was connected to an antenna and a radio, no internet, or phone.

It left him alone with his thoughts at an almost unhealthy level.

After a week and some had passed, he found a way to fall into this new life.

The pain and guilt that didn’t leave dulled eventually. He wished he’d remembered his phone. That at least had pictures and videos that could have helped with his bad nights.

Slowly he was getting better at being alone. Now he was just straight up bored.

He occupied himself by listening to music, reading, maybe watching tv, and doing art. There was a small town about a half hour out that he went a handful of times to restock on supplies.

This wasn’t the life he dreamed of or wanted but he’d have to get used to it.

He didn’t want to risk having every person he’d ever pissed off coming after him and potentially hurting the ones he cared about the most.

Steve put the food away quietly and shut the fridge door. He took a quick look at the photo of
everyone at Disney World that was hung on it. The one they had taken with Princess Sofia.

Steve sighed, forcing down the emotions he felt before going upstairs.

Steve was upstairs. There wasn't really a hallway up there but a semi-round open space with doors that lead to either his room, the guest room, the bathroom, or a closet. The open space had a good view from one of the larger windows which also gave great lighting for painting. The space had pretty much become Steve's art studio. There were voices coming from downstairs. It was impossible, no one knew about this place and the nearest neighbor was 10 minutes away. Steve abandoned his things at the top of the stairs. He made his way down slowly with caution.

He was painting a few books and the lamp that was stacked on a small table. As the songs on the jazz station faded from one to the next, Steve noticed something off. There were voices coming from downstairs. It was impossible, no one knew about this place and the nearest neighbor was 10 minutes away. Steve abandoned his things at the top of the stairs. He made his way down slowly with caution.

There were voices coming from downstairs. It was impossible, no one knew about this place and the nearest neighbor was 10 minutes away. Steve abandoned the work and made his way down slowly with caution.

The house was pretty old. When he hit a middle step it creaked. The voices stopped.

He’d been found. Or he’d finally gone crazy.

Steve took a deep breath and raced down the rest of the stairs ready to fight.

But what he came face to face with frightened him more than any villain or criminal ever could have.

Tony, Peter, Clint, Nat, Sam and even Lucky stood in the middle of the living room.

*How did they even find him?*

“Hiya.” Clint waved at him.

Everything around seemed to slow down. It was all too much at once, all Steve could do was stare frozen and face to face with the ones he'd left behind. It was like a dream, in a few seconds he'd wake up and be alone. Steve relaxed but still didn’t say anything. In all honesty part of him wanted to run. Where to start? What to say?

It was hard to read whether they were happy, pissed, or both. Well, Lucky was wagging his tail, so it must have been the first.

Natasha stepped forward. “We’re taking you home.” She said with finality.

Steve took a step away. “No, I can’t.”

It was Sam’s turn to speak. “Come on Steve.” He came next to Nat. “It’s time.”

Steve still wasn’t listening to them. They didn’t get it.

“Why are you being so stubborn?” Clint added.
“You guys.” Steve was having trouble forming words. “I just- you don’t.”

Tony whispered something. He stood in the back holding Peter, which was a bit difficult because he was squirming to be put down.

“What?” Sam had heard him.

Tony pushed forward. “Why are you being so damn stupid?” He shouted at Steve. There was no use in coaxing him.

Steve flinched at the harshness in his voice. “I didn’t want to loose you guys.” He confessed sheepishly. It sounded stupid out loud.

“So you chose to leave us instead,” Clint said sourly.

Steve went on, “Someone found out who I was. I didn’t want you to get hurt or lose you because of me. I’ve had enough of it already. So I thought--I thought if I could do it on my terms--”

“Cool it with the hero bullshit.” Tony’s voice didn’t waver.

“That’s a bit extreme Tony.” Natasha muttered. No one was going to stop him. He was saying exactly what they were thinking.

Steve couldn’t look any of them in the eye.

“Don’t you get it!” Tony’s voice rose. “I’m Iron Man, everyone knows it. I’ve been on the same fucking boat. Did it not cross your mind that we could help you, that we’re all in this as a team.”

Weeks of built up emotions and frustrations were beginning to spill out. Every word was a thorn digging deeper and deeper into Steve’s hands. He clenched into a fist, trying to keep everything at bay; the sadness, the guilt, the heartache. His breathing and heart rate were rapid.

Tony’s control over himself was beginning to fail him. He was trembling. “That we’re family.” His head began to throb with the suppressed feelings. “Because I love you.” Tony sucked in a sharp breath, wishing to take back those words.

The room went dead silent.

“Dude,” Clint whispered slightly ruining the mood.

A cold prickle ran up Steve’s spine. Words weren’t able to be formed. Nothing could even match as a good response.

All Tony could do was stare at him with hard burning eyes. Everyone was stopped, waiting for the other to act. Peter continued maneuvering to escape Tony's grasp. He didn’t take his eyes off Steve while Tony gave in and put Peter down.

Peter ran up to Steve, his arms thrown up to be lifted. “Dada!” Peter screamed with excitement.

Steve’s heart skipped a beat. How much had he missed?

He couldn’t take it anymore. This was a lot to take in at once. He knew he’d messed up badly. Remedying this wasn’t going to be easy. Steve picked Peter up holding him tightly and kissing him once. Steve shuttered shakily, hiding his face into Peter’s small shoulder. He tried not to cry but was
also failing.

He turned away slightly not wanting them to see.

“Oh, come here.” Natasha wiped away an invisible tear and came up to Steve with open arms. Steve loosened up on Peter to accept her hug. She kissed his cheek and held him like a comforting mother.

“I’m so sorry.” Steve’s voice was a bit broken and muffled by Nat’s clothing.

Clint went over and put a hand on his back. “You know we’re not that mad.”

Sam had a slight smile. His arms were folded as he watched their exchange a few steps away. He wasn’t as touchy-feely as the rest of them, but that didn’t keep him from being both touched and happy. “Didn’t you threaten to kick his ass into next Wednesday on the way here.”

Steve straightened out of Natasha’s embrace and looked at Clint. “Really.”

“It was hyperbole,” Clint explained.

Steve’s eyes drifted to connect with Tony’s. He still was stuck in place as though glued to the floor.

He was unreadable. There was some shock, anger, relief, and maybe regret written all over. It was hard to tell what was standing out the most.

“Tony,” Steve’s voice trailed off. He passed Peter off to Clint and walked over uneasily. He didn’t expect him to be forgiving, he didn’t deserve it.

“Shut up.” Tony pulled him into a deep kiss. He pulled back fiercely, “You’re such an asshole.” He kissed him again.

“Get a room.” Clint called out.

Tony and Steve ignored them momentarily while Tony flipped them off without looking. Steve pulled away first embarrassed at the attention they drew to themselves.

“Dada.” Peter said wanting to be taken by either of them.

Clint handed Peter off to Tony.

“So.” Steve thumbed away a fallen tear off of Tony’s face. “Is this a thing now?”

Tony bounced Peter to make him laugh. “Yeah it started a little while ago actually.”

Steve wasn’t sure if he was comfortable with being called ‘Dada’ by Peter. Being a dad was something he always wanted, but this wasn’t the way he imagined it. Peter wasn’t born to him, he had other parents, even if he wanted to be his dad he couldn’t.

Yet the way Peter looked at him, with the same unconditional love that any other person’s child looked at his parent, made him want to be more than anything.

So why couldn’t he be?

Tony had the same thought. “I guess you degraded from grandpa to dada.” he teased.

“Well you’re on the same ship too, dada.” Steve threw back.
Natasha powered past them to the kitchen. “Ugh, you guys are so gross.” They heard the fridge open, “When’s wedding anyways?” She called.

Sam laughed at their red flushed faces and went to get something himself.

“You better have Zebra Cakes.” Clint pointed at Steve as he followed behind.

For some reason, everything felt like closer to normal than it had in nearly a month.

Tony rested on Steve’s chest. There was a 3 hour time difference in butt-fuck nowhere Oregon compared to New York time. So though it was about 4am back home, it was only 1am there.

They’d had dinner, really second dinner for everyone then hey went up to bed.

The house had two bedrooms. So while Steve, Tony, and Peter slept in one room, Clint, Natasha, Sam, and Lucky took up the other. They could have gone home but it was late and no one was feeling the flight back.

Steve looked over the edge of the bed where Peter slept. They could have had him on the bed but Steve was afraid of him getting hurt or falling off so they created a nest of sorts on the ground to put him down on.

There were dumb infomercials playing on the tv in the background. Neither of them was paying attention, it was more for background noise.

“So you stole from Shield?” Steve said rubbing Tony’s back with the arm he had wrapped around him.

Tony turned to lie flat on his back but kept his head on Steve. “It wasn’t stealing. I just told some level three that we had clearance to take a quinjet and he couldn’t say no. It’s not like we’re keeping it.”

Steve breathed a chuckle. “I hope that guy doesn’t get into much trouble.”

“I wouldn’t worry. I’ll call Phil in the morning.” Tony closed his eyes. He wasn’t too tired, but it felt nice. Tony hummed getting comfortable once again, “One day when you’re sleeping, I’m going to stick a locating chip in your head.”

Steve hoped he was joking, but wasn’t sure. “I can’t believe you bugged my book.”

“It was all in good fun, Cap.”

Steve rolled his eyes. He brought Tony closer. Something about having him back was fulfilling. Tony rest his head up to Steve’s shoulder leaning for a kiss.

There was a knock.

“Sure hope you guys have clothes on,” Clint called throwing the door open and coming in with Natasha behind him.

“Dude,” Tony yelled at being scared and so rudely interrupted. “Get out.”

Clint flung himself onto the bed in the space next to Tony. “Can’t sleep.” Tony got up to try literally
kicking Clint off the bed.

“Quiet.” Steve shushed him looking over at Peter. He fussed a little at all the sudden action but quickly settled.

“Sorry,” Natasha said crawling onto the bed on Steve’s side more silently than Clint had. “But he’s right. It feels like we’ve been up all night, though.” She took Tony’s place on Steve. Tony threw her a half-jealous stare.

Sam appeared at the door. “You guys are gonna wake the kid.” He watched them as he leaned against the doorway.

“That’s what I said.” Steve sighed, sitting up a little.

“You want in?” Clint asked as he wrestled Tony down. He meant joining them not his and Tony’s spat.

Sam politely put his hand up to decline. “Ha, no thanks.”

“Yes, you do come on you’re one of us now.” Tony nearly had Clint in a half-nelson. Steve and Nat took up the other half of the bed, trying their best to not get in the way of their fight. “It’s what we do.”

It was a king-sized bed. There was enough room to fit all of them, well for the most part and with little space.

“Alright fine.” Sam got on as well lying on his stomach horizontally across the bed. “So you guys do this a lot? Sleepover parties like a bunch of middle schoolers.” Sam picked up the remote to change the channel. Sure there were only like 20 channels, not all of them were playing infomercials.

“Hey, every night with us is a sleepover party,” Clint grunted getting out of Tony’s hold. Tony pushed him back down. He ended up landing on Steve and partially hitting Nat.

“That’s enough.” Nat kicked Tony impulsively, “Calm the fuck down.” She didn't mean to do it that hard, it was supposed to just be a playful nudge. Tony fell off the bed and dragged Clint down with him.

Peter awoke with a jump and immediately began to cry.

“Seriously.” Steve had finally gotten him down. Natasha mouthed ‘sorry’ apologetically.

“Yeah I know Pete,” Sam said hanging his arms over the edge of the bed to pull Peter up. “They all suck.” He stole the space left by Clint and Tony with Peter on his lap.

His tears quickly subsided to nothing. “All suck.” Peter sniffed in agreement.

Sam’s eyes shot from Steve to Tony and Clint, who were getting back up, to Natasha. He knew just as well as them about her campaign against teaching Peter any cuss words or insults.

She rested her chin on Steve’s chest looking up at him, nostrils flared and eyes locked on her target.

“Ohhhh, you are so dead,” Tony warned him.

Clint could see the anger on Natasha’s face. “You should run.” He advised.

Natasha gave Sam the sweetest of all smiles.
“I should, shouldn’t I.”

Natasha sat up and picked up the nearest pillow and nodded.

Sam bolted off the bed, dodging the flying pillow. “Oh shit.” He ducked down and picked up the pillow.

Steve didn’t bother doing or saying anything. It was pointless.

Tony retook his place with Steve with a triumphant *humph*. Peter crawled to cuddle in the angled space in between Tony and Steve.

Yeah...everything was slowly going back to normal.

“You’ve got this.” Tony said straightening Steve’s tie.

Pepper was in just over in the other room filled with reporters as she gave opening remarks, after that she was going to introduce Tony who would introduce Steve.

Within days of coming home, they’d gotten started on solving the problem of Steve’s discovered idea. They decided on using Tony’s personal experience as a reference. The next step was a press conference.

If it were any other circumstance Steve would never have agreed to go on live television to reveal his identity to the world. No person should ever be forced to.

This wasn’t any other circumstance. If he did nothing these rumors and people’s curiosity would only grow, and that could only lead to even more trouble. By doing this no one could also potentially use it as blackmail at any point.

“I’ve got this.” Steve repeated bouncing on the balls of his feet to pump himself up.

Tony held his hand. They were both nervous, Steve even more so. This was going to be his first time speaking to a large group since the war. “We’ve just got to get through this and in a few hours we’ll be off.”

The idea was to go on a bit of a holiday to give the public time to calm down before going back to their normal lives.

“And now Tony Stark.” Pepper’s amplified voice was heard from the small room in the back.

They’d cleared out one of the lower floors to contain all these people from different news reporters. It used to be an office space.

Steve and Tony were currently waiting in what was probably the break room. The room was more like a large storage closet than anything.

“That’s my cue.” Tony said smiling nervously. He came up to Steve, holding his head in both hands he gave him a quick but meaningful kiss. “You’ve got this.” He didn’t let go of Steve just yet.

“Thanks.” Steve covered Tony’s hand with his, Steve kissed him once more and stepped back. “Okay now, go, people are gonna think something’s up.”
“Doesn’t matter, people ship us already.”

“Where?”

Tony laughed silently. He shook his head and put a hand on the doorknob. “Nevermind.”

“Wait,” Steve hesitated for a moment before continuing, “I love you too.”

Tony gave him a two-fingered salute. “I know.” He said simply, slipped into Tony Stark: Businessman mode and exited the space.

Steve put his hands behind his back, trying to inhale and exhale slowly to calm his nerves.

He’d be fine, nothing he hadn’t done before. Different script and no musical number, thank god. Besides, all his friends were out there in the front row.

Not just Clint, Sam, and Natasha, but also Carol Danvers, Jessica Drew, Jessica Jones, Luke Cage, Danny Rand, and Thor. Peter wasn’t able to come though, they figured it better to eliminate any risk of having him exposed to the media. He was currently napping in one of the closed off offices on the floor that would have been used for a higher positioned employee. There was a live feed monitor connected to Tony’s phone to watch him and in the case of any emergency.

It would be fine. This was going to be a pivotal moment in his life.

“Now I’d like to introduce to you the man of both my dreams and all of yours. He was on all our walls as kids, the one, the only, man with a plan himself.” Tony was the worst hype man ever, “And the nicest piece of ass you’ll ever see.” Yup, totally the worst.

Steve allowed himself an embarrassed smile at having to go out after that introduction.

Tony got quiet and said in a low voice, “Steve Rogers AKA Captain America.” There was a clanging sound that came only from the speakers.

Did Tony seriously do a mic drop? Steve thought to himself.

He took a deep breath and opened the door.

Immediately he was greeted by some applause that was drowned out by camera shutters and flashes.

Steve tried not to look directly at it as he walked over to the podium. The mic was lying on the top of it. He did do a drop. Steve picked it up and stuck it in its stand.

No one made a sound, they watched Steve awkwardly fumble with the mic and the stand but he got it quickly.

Steve cleared his throat. His eyes scanned over the room. So many people…

They quickly fixed on the only one that mattered, the ones in the front row.

All his friends were giving him their full attention, all of them looked both proud and nervous at the same time. Not for that meeting, but for the future, what he had left to come.

Tony sat down in between Pepper and Clint. He smiled and blew him a kiss mockingly.

Steve blushed and looked away, he cleared his throat again. “Um, we all know why we’re here. In regards to was the media has been saying about my identity and Captain America.” Steve paused to
contain himself. His heart was beating so rapidly out of fear but also excitement. “It’s true. I, Steve Rogers, born 1918, am Captain America”

At those words, the whole room lost their collective shits.

“You did great,” Natasha said from the pilot’s seat of the quinjet.

After taking for that one joyride/rescue mission to bring Steve back, they ended up keeping it. Of course, Tony paid but it never quite made it back to Shield HQ. It’d become their signature aircraft vehicle for far away missions.

This time, it was being used to go on vacation.

“Thanks.” Steve beamed. He was proud of himself. He did it. A weight was lifted off his shoulders.

“Well people still don’t seem to believe you.” Clint said scrolling through twitter.

Tony called back from the co-pilot’s chair, “I’m telling you if you’d gone with my idea it would have been so much effective.”

“You wanted him to go out there in his suit and unmask himself.” Natasha commented, “It’s the oldest revealing method in the book. You didn’t come up with it.”

“Yeah.” Sam agreed as he fed Peter peach yogurt. “It’s such a clique.”

“Fine, god.” Tony gave in. “Next time I order 5 pizzas for you two at 2 am I’ll remember that.”

Natasha laughed and shoved Tony playfully. Tony shoved her back in equally good faith.

“Hey, quit it.” Clint still was getting used to riding in quinjets again. He had bad memories from them. “Focus.”

Steve relaxed back in his seat. He got a good enough view of the front window from where he was. Tony turned to look at him, he made a funny face and went back to his work.

It was strange how quick everyone was to welcome him back into their lives after what he had done. Sometimes it seemed as though he was madder at himself than they were with him. Part of him hated it.

But another part of him was thankful for it.

Maybe they just knew how much he didn’t want that life almost he went for out of desperate misjudgment.

At that point, it didn’t matter.

He had Clint and Nat and Sam and Tony. He had Peter who at that point was practically his son. (They needed to get through to the hearing and final Caseworker visit, but no one was too worried about that.)

Life was good, none of them would do anything to change it.

Peter patted his side to get his attention, his hands and face covered in yogurt. “Hey, Petey.” Steve
brought him over to sit on his lap.

“Dadadada.” Peter chanted clapping his hands against his face.

Suddenly Peter’s face fell. He looked up at Steve and turned as shade paler.

Making a horrendous retching noise Peter threw up all over the front of Steve’s shirt. It was gross and milky with flecks of other food. He immediately began to cry and threw up again.

“Aw man.” Sam cringed, he had to look away.

Clint felt sick to his stomach all of a sudden. He was a sympathetic vomiter, “Dear god.” He said lunging for the small bathroom. Equally, as bad noises were heard coming from him in that bathroom that matched Peter’s crying in volume.

“Everything okay back there?” Tony turned around to find Peter and Steve covered in vomit, Sam completely turned around and Clint was gone. “Oh shit.” He felt his stomach lurch at the sight. “You need help?” Every part of him prayed Steve would say no.

“Just airsickness,” Steve answered.

Steve took off his shirt and balled it up, careful not to let any more of the mess fall on the ground. He then stripped Peter down to his diaper. Peter cried even harder and shivered. “I know, I know.” Steve soothed in a baby-voice and he got up slowly. Thankfully not much got on his pants. He found Peter’s blanket and wrapped him up.

“Here take him.” Steve dropped the still crying Peter onto Sam’s lap. He then handed him a sip-cup with water. “Don’t let him have too much.”

“Had no idea it was that kind of trip.” Sam made an attempt to lighten the mood, taking note of his lack of a shirt. “Can someone please open a window.” Sam was trying his best to make Peter stop crying, but also without having to look at Steve who was busy cleaning the throw-up.

“Not unless you want to die.” Natasha rose her voice to be heard over all the commotion.

Sam grumbled, “Fine by me.”

Clint came out slowly and discombobulated, he took one look at the vomit and ran back into the bathroom.

Yeah, this was just the perfect life...
Almost there

Chapter Summary

Just read it, it's hard to summarize...

Chapter Notes

Okay so this is actually going to be the second to last. We've made it guys! Thanks for all the support and readers and people who left comments, they've really helped me keep this going. So anyways, ENJOY!!!!

“Don’t drop him” Steve yelled at Tony from the ground.

It was tradition that the youngest child put the star on the top of the Christmas tree, and the tree was so tall that it had to be brought up in pieces and reassembled in the living room. Tony needed a ladder to reach the top of it, meaning he carried Peter with him up.

Steve was mildly freaking out.

“Just calm down and enjoy the moment.” Clint called to Steve from the kitchen table where he and Sam were assembling a gingerbread house. Well, more like eating the parts of a gingerbread house.

“Dude I’ve got him.” Tony reassured as he reached the top. Peter held onto the shiny star, more distracted by it than how high off the ground he was.

The way Steve had a hand rested against his cheek and the other across his chest said that he thought otherwise.

“He will be fine.” Thor added. He was too occupied with learning how to wrap a gift using these patterned papers to look up. Natasha was trying her best to teach him.

Tony held Peter out. “Okay guys, here we go.” Everyone stopped what they were doing to watch. “Alright Petey, put the star on the tree.” Peter looked at the star then Tony, not sure what that meant. “Like this.” Tony moved Peter to his hip to take Peter’s wrist to stick the star on the tree. Peter got the message and finished it himself.

“See they’re fine.” Natasha patted Steve’s leg from her place on the floor.

Clint and Sam began to clap and Nat and Thor joined in. Steve kept his eyes glued to the ladder and the people on it.

“Hey, hey Cap look at this.” Tony said, he held Peter all the way out, “It’s the circle of liiiife.” He sang badly. Peter laughed and squealed, holding his arms above his head.

Steve felt a wave of anxiety wash over him, “Tony no!” He shouted loudly not able to look, “That’s not fucking funny.”
“Whoa.” Natasha muttered. She never heard Steve never dropped an f-bomb before.

Tony complied and began making his descent down the ladder. “Language dear,” Tony used a mocking voice.

“Three! two! One!” Everyone chanted counting down the clock to New Years. “Happy New Years!”

Tony looked around for Steve among the crowd of thirty-something people who were invited to the gathering. Some were drunkenly singing and cheering or kissing their significant others. He was aiming to the latter.

If there was anyone he wanted to ensure his next year wasn’t going to be one of loneliness it was going to be with Steve.

He found Sam, Clint, and Thor talking off to the side.

Working past a few other, he waved to get their attention. “You guys.”

They looked over as Tony made his way to them.

“Happy New Years.” Sam said clapping him on the shoulder.

“Yeah thanks.” Tony’s mind was set on a different task, “Where’s Steve?”

Clint pointed at the elevator with his margarita glass, “Him and Nat took Peter to bed. They should be back by now, they missed the countdown.”

“Okay,” He touched Clint’s arm in thanks getting ready to head up.

“Stark.” Thor grabbed him by the arm before he got too far.

Sam and Clint stared dumbstruck as Thor pulled Tony in and kissed him. They didn't think he'd actually do it.

Tony too frozen by surprise, just stood there during and after the fact.

“What the-” Tony mouthed.

Someone cleared their throat behind Thor. Tony leaned to look past him.

Steve and Natasha were beside Clint and Sam, all trying their best to suppress their laughter.

Thor turned to them then back to Tony. *Had he done something wrong?* “I was told it is customary, in your culture, to kiss someone when the new year began.” He began, hoping for a bit of clarification.

Clint snorted a laugh. Sam punched him to be quiet.

Of course, this was their doing. A perfectly good first New Years kiss wasted.

“No, bud you’re fine.” Tony patted his arm. “You’re not wrong either.” Thor gave him a slight smile of gratitude. “Now then.” He walked past Thor to Steve. “Happy New Years.” He said coolly
leaning in for his kiss.

Steve put a hand on Tony’s chest, stopping him. “Are you sure you don’t want to kiss Thor again?” Steve smirked humorously.

Sam, Nat, and Clint couldn’t hold their laughter in anymore, even Thor joined in.

Tony ignored them, rolling his eyes. “Whatever.” The moment was gone.

It was Peter’s second birthday.

It was being held on the usual floor for large gatherings. Everything was covered with pirate and princess balloons and decorations. They had games, play equipment, and toys to keep the kids entertained along with booze and food for the adults.

They’d invited all their friends and their kids, which was a good enough amount for a party.

All in all, for a 2-year-old’s birthday, it was going pretty well.

“Guess who’s here.” Natasha said leading Logan to Steve and Tony.

He had two little boys holding each of his hands with a gift bag hanging from his wrist.

One was blue and looked incredibly afraid of everything around him, he looked around Peter’s age and other was blonde, covered with scratches and band-aids with an excited look on his face and was a little older.

Logan was doing a little work in New York for a few days, mostly picking up the new mutant kids with some of his other teammates to bring back to the school. He was invited very last minute, mostly because they had heard that he was going to be in New York for a couple days. It was about time to catch up.

Steve and Tony turned around.

“Hey,” Steve waved as he came over with the toddlers. “And who are these two?” Steve said bending a little to be at eye-level with them.

Tony shook Logan’s hand. “Stop, you’re scaring them.”

“This is Kurt and the other’s Wade.” He answered handing the gift to Tony.

“I want a cupcake.” the blonde one, Wade, tried to squirm out of his hand. “Cupcake!” He shouted again.

Judging by the annoyed huff, Logan must have been dealing with this a lot longer than he wanted to. He jostled Wade by the hand he was holding, “You won’t get it acting like that.”

“It’s fine.” Steve stepped in, “Here let’s go.” Steve held out a hand for Wade to take it and go get sweets. Neither Logan or Wade needing asking twice. “You want some too?” Steve offered his other hand to the blue child.

“Ah, Kurt doesn’t speak english.” Logan explained, “Only german. Haven’t gotten a word out of him since we got him.”
Natasha got down on a knee to face Kurt. He shifted uncomfortably and hid behind Logan’s leg. She held out a hand and said something softly to him in what had to have been German. Kurt peeked out and unsteadily responded her in few words. Natasha said something else and he slowly took her hand. She followed Steve over to the table of food.

“I had no idea she spoke german.” Logan folded his arms as he watched Steve and Natasha put smiles on his wards’ faces as they were spoiled and introduced to the other kids. None of them were phased by Kurt’s blue skin if anything they were fascinated.

Tony sighed in agreement. “She is a woman of many talents.” He switched the subject, “How young is the professor taking them now anyways?”

Logan knew they were very young compared to the other students. “They’re special cases. Kurt was found in some convent, kept barely alive, they thought he was the antichrist or a demon or something, and Wade was about to be put into the system. He was part of an underground experimental project for cancer patients that was supposed to give him rapid regeneration, it worked well; too well. His dad was trying to sell this blood and DNA to make extra cash on the side.”

Tony felt a pang of sympathy. He couldn’t even imagine the thought of that happening to his own. “The poor kids.”

“Yeah.” Logan swiped a beer off the table and popped off the top, “Things are going to be better for them now. Kurt’s okay, a bit sensitive, but Wade’s a piece of shit.” It sounded mean but he said it with a hint of fondness for them. “Enough about this. How’s your kid?”

Tony beamed with pride at the opportunity to talk about Peter. He pointed him out for Logan. “Right there.”

Peter was surrounded by Luke and Jess’s daughter, Danielle, Wade, Kurt, and Jess Drew’s son, Gerry, almost a year old and starting to walk. They weren’t going for anything impressive, just friends. It goes without saying there were more adults than kids.

Peter was yet to notice the difference.

“Jesus, he’s gotten so big.” Logan took a swig of his drink.

“I know right.”

Steve walked back over to them while Natasha left to go be with Clint and Carol.

“Cute kids.” Steve smiled.

“Yeah cause you haven’t been stuck with them for four days.”

All heads in the room turned at the sound of crying coming from the area in the center of the floor where all the children were gathered and playing.

Kurt was the one crying. Wade had something in his hands, he made eye contact with Logan that clear was a confession of guilt. “And that’s my cue.” Logan sighed handing his bottle to Steve. “Wade, what did I tell you!” He shouted across the room.

Steve and Tony grinned, amused by Logan’s current predicament.

“He seems miserable.” Tony laughed.
“I don’t know. I think he’s enjoying it. Two kids must be a handful though.”

Tony linked arms with Steve. “I don’t know, sometimes I think about adding another.” He rested his head against Steve’s shoulder.

They watched Logan shout at Wade while Kurt tried to be picked up. When Logan wouldn’t do it, he poofed himself onto his shoulder. Peter and the others laughed while Logan tried prying the crying Kurt off.

Steve didn’t mind having another one, maybe when Peter was a bit older, “You do know the process would be harder than it was with Peter. We’d probably have to be married too.” He added in a joking matter.

Tony took his head off Steve to look him in the eyes.

“That could be arranged.”

Steve felt time stop.

Did he just ask ‘the question’?

Was it really done that easily? All those YouTube videos of people proposing with flash mobs and skydivers made it seem like they were a pretty big deal, but Tony said it smoothly as though it was an offer to go for a walk.

“Did you just-”

Tony stopped him, “Yes.”

This wasn’t how either of them expected it. Well really, the thought never had seriously crossed their minds before.

Steve took a few steps back, both mentally and physically. “We need to think clearly about this.”

Was this really the best for Peter, for either of them? “We haven’t really been doing this for even a year yet. Are we ready for this kind of commitment?”

Tony took a moment to think about it. He wasn’t wrong, it was pretty soon for a proposal, maybe it wasn’t the right decision.

But if it wasn’t, then why did it feel so right?

“Steve.” Tony said gently coming closer so that there was less than a step between them. “We live together, sleep together, have a kid together, and even go grocery shopping together. We’re already a married couple. Why not make it official?”

Steve was truly touched. That was straight from the heart; no sugar coating or snarky comments, just the truth.

“I don’t know what to say,” he whispered, trying to contain himself.

“Yes, would be nice.” Tony took a brass band off his finger and took Steve’s hand in his. “If you’ll have me.”

Steve took a deep breath, filled with a mix of emotions; excitement, happiness, overwhelming joy, and maybe a hint of hesitation. He looked around the room, at all he had, and finally, his eyes rested on Tony’s expectant ones.

“Yes.”
Relief spread over Tony as he slipped the ring on Steve’s hand. “Good, cause I didn’t really-” He was cut off by Steve’s lips pressing against his.

This was the first time they’d ever kissed in front of their friends.

It was okay, they needed to get some practice in time for the wedding anyways.

Tony pulled back first, holding Steve’s face to memorize every bit of it and that moment before kissing him again. He held him tightly for a moment.

“That’s just a piece of a pipe I cut and stuck on my finger a while ago and never bothered to take off.” Tony confessed while still hugging Steve. “I’ll get you the real thing.”

Steve let go to rest his head on Tony’s shoulder. He looked at piece of pipe on his finger, “No, this is perfect.”, he said, making a mental note to go shopping with Natasha the next day to buy Tony a ring as well.

“So we’re getting married?” Tony asked nervously.

Steve smiled back, “We’re getting married.”

“Oh my god you’re what!” Clint shouted from behind at an unreasonable, purposefully loud level.
You make me want to say 'I do'

Chapter Summary

It's time for a wedding!

Chapter Notes

I can't believe we did it you guys! We're here, we made it! Thank you to everyone who's encouraged me to keep going and helped me get through to the end. This has been a huge project that (even if it isn't perfect) I'm still proud that I completed it. It really fucking long, (twice as long than intended). Again gigantic thank you to everybody. There's going to be a small mini-series that's going to be a follow-up to this one so stay tuned. So anyways, I'm off to finish editing the typos I may have missed throughout this fic, and as always, for the last time, EN-FREAKING-JOY!!

It was finally the day.

Months of petty arguing and planning built up to this day.

The idea was to go for a simple classic wedding but they soon found it was impossible to do that and have what both Steve and Tony wanted.

So they settled on having it at a hotel that could hold the 100-something people that were invited. There were friends from all over the country (and some outside of it) flew in to attend. They also invited a few co-workers as well. It didn’t seem like a lot initially but once they and their plus-ones were calculated it came out in the three-digits.

It was being called the wedding of the century by the internet. It wasn’t every day that a superhero got married, let alone two.

The public took it fairly well. There were haters who voiced their own opinions, but that was always to be expected. It definitely came up as a bit of surprise since no one had come out and confirmed that Steve and Tony were even an item, then one day out of the blue it’s announced that they were engaged to be married.

Pictures of them were floating around the internet beforehand anyways, so it couldn’t have been that much of a shock.

Their biggest concern was Peter.

With all the photos that were going to be taken and posted on social during the wedding, they were bound to have a good handfull of him turn up. They weren’t fully ready to have Peter surface to the public eye, but that was just another hurdle they’d have to get through together. It was bound to happen eventually.
It wasn’t time to dwell. It was time for a wedding!

“Steve,” Carol called over the music and bustle of the bridesmaids scrambling to get ready. It was less than 2 hours till it was time to walk. “Steve.” She rose her voice a little higher.

“Over here.” Steve poked his head out from the bedroom of the hotel suite he was staying in. It was also where the girls were getting dressed. He was dragged back into the room by an unidentified source.

Carol came in carrying Peter. He was only in a onesie, the chances of him staining his tux before the ceremony was very high. He looked guilty and a bit mad. She too was only in a robe, her hair was done. All that was left was make-up and the dress.

She walked into the room. It was a bit of a mess with strewn clothes and other articles needed for the bridesmaids and smelled of hairspray and straightened hair. “He keeps says he peed on you or Tony?” She didn’t know what it was supposed to mean other than him literally peeing on Tony who was on the other side of their floor with the guys also getting ready. “Him calling you two the same thing is getting confusing.”

Steve was in the pants of his tux and the button up dress shirt. He was putting the finishing touches on his own slicked back hair. “We started potty training. Tony got him Iron Man pull-ups, so he’ll tell us when he wants to go cause he’s afraid of messing them up.” He came over to take him from Carol.

“That’s genius.” Jessica Drew spoke up. “I’m so doing that.” She said looking down at her own son as she fed him applesauce with a spoon.

Natasha nodded in agreement from the side of the bed she was sitting on as Clint curled her hair. He both had an experience with doing hair and make-up and found staying with the girls more entertaining. “You should have seen him the first week, though.”

Clint laughed at the memory of it. “He cried every bowel movement.” He said gesturing his words with the curler.

Peter held out his arms to be taken, he looked on the verge of tears. “I pee-pee on dada.” He whined as Steve came closer.

“Oh Petey.” Steve soothed about to have Peter handed off to him by Carol.

“No you don’t.” Jessica Jones said coming out of the bathroom with her daughter who she had finally managed to get into the frilly flower girl dress. “You’re not getting anything on that white shirt. You take her, I’ll do it.” She traded kids with Carol. Peter didn’t seem to have any objections so it was fine. “You’re welcome.” She left to the living room area just outside to change him.

“Don’t you look like a princess.” Carol cooed over Danielle as she sat down next to Jess on the bed. Danielle ignored her, rolling onto the bed to jump. Carol wasn’t phased and proceeded to go through the bags to find the one that contained her dress.

She went into the bathroom to slip it on, “Steve, zip.” She said walking out in a light blue chiffon dress that came up just past the knee. It was pleated at the waist with a lace bodice that overlaid the chiffon one of the same color.

He zipped up the back. “You look beautiful.” He complimented her. Tony and Natasha had picked the dresses, they made a good choice; formal, elegant and yet simple.
“Thanks.”

“Oh me next,” Jess called out. She screwed the top of the food jar on and put Gerry on the floor so he wouldn’t fall off from Danielle’s jumping. She went through the black coverslips and found her dress.

“Clint hurry up,” Natasha complained, “I want to put mine on.”

“Patience, beauty is a process.”

“I’m already beautiful, I want to wear the damn dress.”

Peter came back running, clearly in a better mood than he was before, with Jessica right behind. He saw the fun Danielle was having and immediately decided to join in. She picked up her own dress to try on.

The room suddenly became a bit hectic all of a sudden with the kids screaming, Clint and Nat’s small bickering, and Jess and Carol taking selfies while Jessica (Jones) put on her dress, and Steve in the middle of it all.

“Steve.” Pepper came in. She was downstairs making sure everything was in order and on schedule. She along with Clint, Natasha, and even some help from Sam, helped them in planning this wedding. So there was no way in hell that she was going to let anything go wrong. “Tony’s outside waiting for you.”

Steve nodded and went to the door.

“Pepper you haven’t even started getting ready yet!” He heard Jess yell.

Steve pulled back the door but didn’t see Tony there.

“I know you don’t want to see me.” Came a voice in the hall. Tony was pressed up against the wall of the door’s entrance.

Steve and Tony hadn’t seen each other since last night and they didn’t plan to until it was time to walk down the aisle itself. Steve didn’t want to risk the bad luck no matter how ridiculous Tony said he was being.

“You make it sound so bad.”

“Cause it is.”

“Nerves?” Steve asked leaning against the doorframe.

He heard Tony’s sigh, “That obvious?” Steve didn’t answer. “You?”

Steve was a bit nervous. This was a gigantic step, hopefully in the right direction. He just wanted it to all go smoothly. “Yeah.” He breathed out.

There was a heavy pause.

Tony’s hand appeared at the door. Steve took it. The hand made it feel even more real.

“You ready?”

“As I’ll ever be.” Tony held it tighter.
“Do you have everything ready, no one hurt or lost anything yet.”

“Well,” Tony smiled to himself, “Luke dropped Danny’s shoes over the balcony because he called the Mets overrated. Other than that we’re golden.”

Another pregnant pause. Just their presence was just enough.

“Tony,” Steve said finally, “Tell me everything’s going to be alright.” He meant that day and every single one after it.

He squeezed his hand. “Everything’s going to be alright.” He promised, to Steve and himself. Nothing was ever going to ruin what they had. “Close your eyes.” He whispered.

Steve obeyed.

“They closed?”

“Yes.”

Steve felt Tony’s lips brush against the back of his hand, sending a shiver up his spine. He felt like a teenager, the way they were acting.

“See you at the altar.” he said in a suave class-A Tony Stark voice.

“Wait, take Peter you have his suit.” Steve remembered, letting go of his hand.

“Aww come on Rogers, you ruined my epic one-liner.”

Steve shook his head and turned to get Peter. He found, both Jessica’s, Pepper, Carol, Natasha, and Clint stacked like a totem pole, watching their exchange from the doorframe of the bedroom.

They quickly jumped back into the room when Steve made eye contact.

The wedding march began. It was loud and echoed off the walls of the large ballroom.

First was the bridesmaids and groomsmen, walking down the aisle, side by side. The girls were in light blue dresses and white heels with matching ruby jewelry that followed the same color scheme of Steve’s light blue tux with a white dress shirt and red bow-tie. The boys in a pastel-soft shade of red with yellow dress shirts and a black tie which was nearly identical to Tony’s except Tony had a bow-tie instead. The colors of Captain America and Iron Man.

They were then followed by Danielle in a fluffy light blue tulle dress and Peter in a tux that was a miniature version of the rest of the groomsmen.

They were cute walking down together both trying to concentrate on their small jobs.

Peter stopped and looked to the side. He was getting distracted. “Wade!” Peter shouted waving at the kid who was standing on his chair and also waving. Logan dragged Wade down to sit in his seat.

“Petey” Clint hissed to get Peter’s attention as Sam waved. Peter stared at them for a moment before he remembered his task as ring bearer.

That got some laughter out of a few people.
When they’d finally made it to the end of the aisle it was time for the grooms.

They spent a lot of time trying to figure out a way to have them walk down; the traditional way with one waiting for the other to walk down, have them both together at once, and so on.

Until finally they found one.

They didn’t walk down the same aisle which everyone else came down. Instead, they walked to the altar from the wings of the ballroom; Steve from the left, Tony the right. Pepper walked arm in arm with Tony and Natasha walked with Steve as though giving them away.

This method let them see only each other as they made it to the center, unless they looked to the side. They stared wide-eyed and smiling, both unable to contain the joy they felt in that moment.

The four of them stepped up to the altar where Charles Xavier waited for them. The altar was on a platform, decorated with two large fake trees and garden lights strewn in them with whites drapes behind in.

Charles had offered to officiate when he called to congratulate them on their engagement and they said yes in a heartbeat.

They were given away by Pepper and Natasha. Pepper hugged Steve as put Tony’s hand into his. Natasha kissed Tony’s cheek and hugged him, repeating her actions. She touched Steve’s shoulder and followed Pepper to the bridesmaid’s side.

“Dearly beloved” Charles began, “We are gathered here today for the union of Anthony Stark and Steve Rogers. These two have defied all odds and somehow still managed to end up together. Many of you know what I mean by this, how I don’t know.” A few people chuckled in agreement. “These two have done so much to keep our people safe, committing several selfless acts in the process. They’ve done all they can to keep us all safe and happy. I’m sure they are making many teenagers on the internet happy by this wedding as we speak.” More laughter. “But with selflessness must come times to think of themselves, what makes them happy. Today they have chosen to do that by making the ultimate commitment. To come together and join hands in marriage in the eyes of us, their friends and family.”

Steve and Tony couldn’t tear their eyes off the other. Tony was shaking a bit in Steve’s hands. They were smiling nonstop.

“And now the vows.” Charles inched forward in his chair. He was pretty excited, this was the first wedding he’d done before. “Do you, Steven Rogers, take Anthony Stark to be husband.”

“I do.”

“And do you, Anthony Stark, take Steven Roger’s to be your husband.”

“Oh hell yeah.” Steve tightened his grip around Tony’s hands wide- scolding eyes, “I, erm, yes. I do.”

The crowd laughed it off and Charles moved on.

“Peter the rings,” Charles said bending forward to look at Peter.

Tony and Steve turned to watch him proudly parade up to his dads and hand them their rings. They were plain gold bands with braided knots etched into them and their wedding date on the inside. Simple but meaningful.
Tony went first, “With this ring, I promise to love and cherish you and look past all your type-A faults, let you pick the music in the car, and a movie once in awhile.” He was trying to hide his how scared he really was with jokes. He grew serious. “You make a better person and I love you.” He slipped the ring onto Steve’s finger with a heavy exhale, keeping his emotions down to a minimum.

Steve cleared his hand, “With this ring I promise to love and cherish you, to make you sure you don’t spend so much time in your labs that we die and never find out, let more things slide, and to try one of those disgusting peanut butter pickle sandwiches you’ve been into recently.” He was matching him in humour, “You make me go out of my comfort zone, to take risks, and be more adventurous, and I love you for it.” The gold band slid onto his finger with ease.

Charles gave them a moment until saying, “Now, by the power vested in me and witnessed by all these people here, I pronounce you man and man...I guess…” He hadn’t thought that part through. “Anyways, you may kiss your groom.”

“Finally.” Tony mouthed as he pulled Steve in for a kiss.

The room erupted with applause, cheers, whistles.

The cheers grew to shouts of surprise and even louder applause when Steve dipped Tony.

Their first dance wasn’t going to be like the ones everyone else had. No surprise hip-hop, evolution of dance numbers, or a slow dance with a hundred pairs of eyes awkwardly watching with the floor to themselves.

No one wanted that.

Instead, they played what Tony called ‘their song’, It Happens To Be Me by Nat King Cole, while the newlywed couple and the guests waltzed and slow danced together dimly lit room and mellow colored lights. The others had subconsciously given Steve and Tony a halo of space around them.

“Are you happy?” Steve asked with they danced.

Tony smiled to kiss him again, “Of course I am.” Steve smiled back. Tony looked around the room at all the others dancing and having fun. His eyes rested on Peter. He and Wade were holding hands, swinging their arms and spinning in circles in a beat that contrasted with the music.

Logan brought Wade with him and the others that came down from Canada for the wedding. Peter and Wade got along very well and liked each other.

Tony was happy for Peter to have a friend. Even if he felt uneasy letting that feral child play with his son, it made Peter happy and gave him company so he’d let it go but keep a watchful eye over them either way.

“What comes next?” Steve asked wistfully.

“We covered love, marriage, and the baby in the baby carriage. I think we’re done.”
Steve and Tony held the knife together as they cut the first slice of the cake.

The room was lit up by the camera flashes.

The placed the slice of the red velvet cake on a plate. Natasha and Pepper picked up a knife to help cut more slices to let Steve and Tony eat.

Steve scooped a bit of the slice onto a fork and waited for Tony to do the same so they could feed it to each other; another wedding tradition. Except that isn’t was Tony did.

Instead, he picked it up with his bare hands with every intention to messily feed to Steve.

“Tony, Tony no.” Steve warned him as he stepped out of the way.

He followed closely, “Come on, it’s just a little-” Tony nearly tripped over the small group of children. He managed to dodge them but also nearly losing his footing. Stumbling a bit, the piece of cake ended up connecting with someone’s head.

Tony caught himself before he fell down completely. “I am so sorry, you have no idea.” He looked up to make eye contact with Nick Fury. “Sir.” Tony added quickly.

Fury said nothing. He seemed more irritated than usual. It was a little hard to be afraid of him with that slice of cake sticking to the side of his shiny bald head.

“Oh, he messed up.” Sam whispered to Steve. They had to hide their laughter behind their hands, watching Tony try to clean the mess up and apologized again.

Steve relaxed onto the bed as Tony closed the door of their hotel room

It was a good night, possibly one of the best.

People danced, ate, had fun, and no one was unhappy or mad. They can’t say there weren’t any fights though. Archangel got into a pissing contest with Sam over who was a faster flier, it was an entertaining sight but the hotel shut it down before there was a definite winner.

Tony sat down next to Steve and kicked away his shoes and pulled off his tie. “We’re married.” He couldn’t believe it. “I’m married.” He undid the buttons on his tux and dress shirt, taking them off so he was only in a white cotton t-shirt.

“We’re married.” Steve agreed. It sounded just as foreign on his tongue.

“It’s finally over.” Tony sighed dropping back onto the mattress.

“Over?” Steve lied back next to him. “Did you not like it?” He wanted everything to be perfect, and while he knew that was impossible, Tony enjoying it was a huge part of it all.

Tony rolled over to his stomach so that he was pressed up against Steve’s side. “Of course I liked it you dumbass.” He stroked back Steve’s hair with some fondness, “We don’t have to stress about organizing this anymore and now we can relax.” He came up and to kiss Steve on the temple.

Steve smiled and cupped Tony chin to kiss him on the lips. “It is nice.”

Tony kissed him again this time more deeply. Steve waited for a moment before letting go. His eyes
scanned over Steve’s face reading him. He realized why Steve backed down. “Look, about tonight, I know we have everything and they’ve got Peter for the night, but I told you-”

“No, no.” Steve cut him off sitting up a bit. “I want to.” Tony didn’t look convinced. “Really.” He kissed him once and quick. “really I do.” Steve was truly determined to do this.

Not wanting to hurt Steve or pressure him was Tony’s top priority. Sex could wait, he’d waited long enough already so what was a little longer to him.

“If you feel even the slightest doubt.” Tony told him covering Steve’s hand, “Tell me.”

Steve paused for a moment, thinking Tony’s words over. He was nervous, there was no doubt in that, but he also wanted to do it. He trusted Tony enough to take care of him.

Without speaking Steve undid his tie and tux then his dress shirt. Tony watched, still with uneasiness but it was beginning to fade. Steve then took off his own undershirt. He pressed his lips against Tony’s neck then his jawline and finally his lips.

Tony could hardly stand it. Warmth pooled and bubbled within and up to the surface.

“I told you.” His breath sent pulsing shocks down Tony’s body, “I’m ready.”

*That did it.*

Tony took his own shirt off. Kissing Steve =, he slowly eased him down onto his back. He trailed light kisses down to his neck.

Steve breathed heavily, his arms loosely wrapped around Tony. He was a bit nervous but mostly excited.

He felt Tony’s hand come down his side and stopping at the waistband of his suit pants. Tony stopped.

“Can I?” Tony was just as nervous.

Steve took his hand and brought it to the fastener. “I’m yours tonight and you mine.” Steve undid the first button himself.

“God that was so cheesy.” Tony did the rest himself. He undid his own pants and stripped down to his boxers while Steve did the same. After casting aside the pants aside, Tony climbed back onto Steve.

Steve sat up enough to hold Tony’s head with one hand and bring him down close enough for another breathless kiss. His tongue slipped slightly out and brushed against Tony’s lips.

Tony’s eyes widened in surprise, he didn’t see that coming.

This was going to be a night of surprises.

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When Steve awoke it was still dark out.

Stretched out on his stomach, too tired (and a bit sore) to move, he turned his head to the side to check the time on the clock.
He stretched out, his bare skin against the soft sheets, to touch Tony. Nothing. The bed was empty.

“Tony?” He called out to him.

The light from the area just outside the bedroom flooded in as the door crept open. Tony walked in with a plate in his hand and closed the door to allow a crack of light in. He wore only boxer shorts as he walked and got back into bed.

“Was I too loud?” He asked taking a bite out of the sandwich he’d just made.

Steve cringed at the thought of all the crumbs that were going to end up on the bed. Moving past that, he shook his head and got closer to lay his head on Tony’s lap.

“Wanna bite?” He asked offering some of his sandwich to him.

Why the hell not? This wasn’t their honeymoon, but it was close enough. Steve took a bite and handed it back. “Thanks,” He said, his mouth half full of what tasted like a BLT; probably some left over food Tony had smuggled upstairs after the reception.

Tony picked up the remote and flipped through the channels.

“Oh keep that.”

Tony went back a few channels and stopped. *Father Know Best* was on. “You really like that show don’t you.”

“Shut up.” Steve mumbled, pulling the blankets closer. He probably should put something on before he got sick. At the same time, he found it oddly comfortable.

Tony sighed a small laugh and finished his snack. Reclining back against the backrest, Tony got comfortable again. He put an arm around Steve as he watched the dumb show with him. He found it hard to pay attention since they’d jumped in right at the middle of it all.

“How you feeling?” Tony rubbed Steve’s shoulders mindlessly.

“Fine.” Steve whispered. The warmth of the blankets and from Tony’s body was lulling him back to sleep. “Tired.”

That was to be expected from his first time.

Tony reclined even further down. “No round two?”

Steve’s hand splayed on Tony’s chest, “No round two.” He affirmed.

Tony nodded in understanding, burying a kiss in his messy blonde hair.

They were both beginning to fall asleep when there was a click at the door. In their own little world, they didn’t even notice.

Until a loud voice shouted, “Wakey wakey, honeymoon’s over.” followed by the door swinging dramatically open.

They both shot up, wide awake. Clint was at the door completely suited up with bow in hand.
“Oh dear god.” Clint yelled and quickly turned around.

“Clint what the fuck!” Tony shouted pulling the covers up to give Steve a little more decency. Tony walking around in his boxers was nothing new but Steve naked was. “Get out.”

Clint was still turned and had a hand over his eyes to further protect them from being traumatized. “I would but first; remember how we joked that whoever tried to attack during the wedding would be really smart or really stupid and then you were all like-”

“Clint!” Steve shouted. His cheeks were burning with embarrassment as he fought the urge to throw something at Clint to leave.

“Get to the damn point.”

“Well anyways, there’s a bunch of them outside right now, and they’re not that happy. It’s a big group too. There’s Taskmaster, Speed demon; I’m sure he knows how much you guys just love him; I think an Adaptoid, um...I think Sam said he saw Hyperion--”

They let him go on his ramble. These were middle to high-level villains but that didn’t mean they were in any trouble. Everyone who was a part of the wedding processional and a lot of the people who came in out of state was staying at that hotel.

Meaning these villains were going have to deal with the classically feared heroes along with most of the X-Men and a few Shield agents. To put it bluntly, they were royally fucked.

Tony and Steve looked at each other for a moment. They were thinking the same thing, ‘seriously on my wedding day’.

“Why didn’t you start with that.?” Tony got of bed. “Now get the hell out.” Tony pushed him out the door to get ready.

“What the did I tell you?” He heard Natasha scold Clint. “Leave them alone.”

Tony found the case the contained his suit. He struggled a little while fighting with the black under armor pants and sweater. “Now before you say anything; yes, I brought Iron Man with me.”

Steve shook his head and found his boxers somewhere buried in the blankets. He slipped them on and got up. “No, I brought mine too.” He opened his own case and started suiting up. The mechanical whirs from behind was a clear sign that Tony was ready.

“I knew there was a reason why I married you.” Tony smiled as though they’d been married for 10 years and not 10 hours. The mask still hadn’t come down, it would when they got out. “Wait, your shield.”

“I hid it with the girls earlier.” Steve push on the helmet and left the room. Tony followed after.

Natasha and Clint were waiting for them. Natasha tossed Steve’s shield to him. “Hope we didn’t bother you.”

“Duty called so we answered.” Tony sighed, he’d rather be in bed sleeping. Regardless of how interesting this was going to be, it was almost 3am what the hell were these guys thinking.

Clint was a little more impatient. “Small talk later you guys.” He was at the door, wanting a piece of the action.
They all went out to the hall. It was quite a bustle. Heroes all over and suited up or something close to it as if it were a convention. They were migrating to the elevators or stairs or just straight up jumping out the window. The whole floor was checked out to their guests but they would have loved to see the faces of normal people as they saw this. It was crazy.

None of four were that phased by it.

These villains were so fucked.

“Sam and Thor dropped Peter off with Jess Jones.” Natasha said, stretching before the fight. “She’s volunteered to stay with all the kids.” Not everyone was out there, it was late so they were sleeping and more powerful heroes out there to take care of it.

“That’s a whole other kind of challenge.” Clint joked. He was really considering jumping out that window that someone had broken open. If anything it would look pretty cool.

Sam and Thor found and met up with the group.

“Do you see this?” Sam sounded excited.

Matt Murdock ran by them and to the staircase. “I can’t.” he called out.

That got a slight laugh out of them.

“I would like to take on Hyperion if possible.” Thor called dibs.

Sam caught sight of the open window. “Okay see you guys downstairs.” He began to jog to the hole and spread his wings out to get ready to jump.

“Hey wait up.” Tony’s mask came down as he ran after Sam with a bit of difficulty because of the suit.

Thor broke out into a jog. “I can fly as well.” He called out as he ran passed Tony and Sam. He flung out his hammer and jumped. Well, he was supposed to go through the existing breach but actually ended up making a whole new Thor-sized one.

Tony came after him. “I’m not paying for that!”

“Oh come on.” Clint complained, “I’m the cool one, you can’t do the cool stuff.”

Sam laughed at him in mockery, saluting as he fell back dramatically like a dead weight and caught air.

“Dada!” Steve heard Peter’s voice from behind.

Steve turned around to see Peter peeking out from an open door in his Paw Patrol footie pajamas. He looked as if he’d just woken up. He should have been asleep, but woke up when Sam moved him to Jess’s room. “You go on ahead.” He walked back to pick Peter up. Peter hugged Steve tightly. ”I'll catch up.”

Jess came out of the room. “He was just going back to sleep when he heard you guys.”

“Petey, daddy’s got to go to work,” Steve explained gently. “I need you to be good for Aunty Jess okay?” Peter was always particularly difficult when he woke up in the middle of the night.

Something was different this time. “Okay dada.” Peter kissed Steve’s cheek.
Steve handed him to Jessica, “Thanks Jess.” He picked his shield back up, “Goodnight.” He waved, quickening his pace to catch up with his group.

_This was their life now._

A mixture of fluffy domestic crap, but also with the career of a superhero. It sounded impossible and reckless to handle or even attempt, but somehow it managed to work itself out no matter how hectic it got.

One minute they could be basking in the joys of the honeymoon phase and the next jumping out of broken hotel windows to fight villains with like 25 other heroes.

But none of them would trade it or have it any other way.

They had each other and depended on each other like a community, like a _family_.

There were ups and downs and jokes and arguments. No matter how bad it got, they found a way to work with or around it. That’s just how they got by.

_That was life as they knew it._

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**End Notes**

I really hope to continue and to see this to the end. Any reviews or comments to know how I could make this better, please feel free to say.

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