Weapon X chose Wade Wilson because of several factors in his life. He was a preternatural. He had extraordinary abilities that could be expanded upon. The cancer just made him desperate enough to agree to whatever they wanted to do with him.

They didn't just turn him immortal. They destroyed his very soul, tearing him apart and shaping him into something new and never seen before. They took everything he had been and left him with ashes and bones. Soulless.

He killed his creators and went on with his life.

Then he met Spider-Man.

Things started to change.

Something inside him, something that had come out of the ashes and was a nightmarish, terrible thing, sat up and took notice. An intense, single-minded notice.

Why does this always happen to me?! I didn't even watch the Deadpool movie, rarely ever read a comic and still I slid into the Spideypool fandom for no apparent reason. Writer's block and the internet somehow got me there. And this is what happened.
No apologies.

In my head, I'm using the movie version appearance of Deadpool's scarring, as well as the lack of voices talking to him. I can't write the boxes. I'm leaning heavily toward the movie in many aspects, including Weasel’s relationship with him. So you should probably see this as 80% movie Deadpool and 20% stuff from all over the fandom.

As usual, I created my own kind of world to write in, ignoring oh so many things and giving the characters a little twist. Hence the slightly to not-so-slightly supernatural twist.

People who have read my other stuff will probably recognize the general outline of the AU I'm setting this in.
Chapter 1

When Peter Parker was six he was tested and found to be nothing but human. He was neither preternatural – nor supernatural. Just human.

His parents weren’t really surprised since the altered gene didn’t run in their families. Now and then it would crop up in lines formerly completely untouched, which baffled researchers, and then would die down again.

In a world where under five percent of the population was supernaturally gifted – able to shapeshift – and just about the same percent were preternatural – gifted with an extraordinary ability that didn’t involve shapeshifting -- being human was normal.

A third kind had cropped up over time: people who had altered their physiology due to experimentation, an accident or technological additions.

They were called mutants.

Supernaturals kept to themselves. They were mainly shifters like wolves and foxes. They ran in packs or families. The military was always interested in the wolves, even if the pack mentality was a weakness. Many were soldiers, officers of the law, worked in security, and went into jobs that suited their sometimes primal nature. It wasn’t uncommon for those with a predator alternate form to be found at the frontlines.

Winged or waterbound shifters were unheard of. They were true myths, and while history had artistic renderings of such supernaturals, no one had either heard of or seen them in the past five centuries. Anyone able to present wings or turn into a waterbound creature was usually the result of human experiments or technological help. A mutant, not a preter or super.

Preternaturals didn’t out themselves as different to the general population and it wasn’t part of an employment record. Some were faster or stronger, had better reflexes, lived longer, had heightened senses. Some had mathematical abilities that surpassed the best computer. Some didn’t need any sleep.

The world was aware of them as more than myths and legends, though the rarity of some kept them just that: myths.

Research into the difference to a regular human bordered on ethically dubious and human experimentation had made the news again and again. Secret labs used human guinea pigs, some of them children, some of them homeless or desperate individuals, some even terminally ill, to get closer to the secret of what enabled someone to shape-shift.

Weapon X was just one of those many labs that had come into secret existence, that answered to dubious commanders and worked under the radar. They were like civilian contractors, but so much more.
They had order sheets. They had expectations to meet.

The lab was one of those who had had results in the past. Their history was filled with blood and screams; and countless deaths.

Peter became more than human when that radioactive spider bit him. He became a mutant.

His life became more complicated, too.

He had to relearn his body. He had to work on controlling his sharper senses, his enhanced reflexes, his speed.

Being able to stick to a surface was scary at first, but he got a hang of it. He managed to go on with his life, despite tragedy, loss and pain, and he became Spider-Man.

He was still human. He hadn't been born with a different set of DNA. And yet, he was a preternatural of sorts. No shapeshifting, just abilities and some altered physical traits.

Of course he caught the interest of others, mostly the Avengers when they set up their headquarters in New York after the infamous alien invasion attempt, but they more or less left him alone.

Part of Peter wanted to be an Avenger. Another part was happy with being his own boss, with being anonymous and doing what he thought was right. He caught the small criminals, now and then put down a lunatic or two, and left the big fish to the professionals.

Yeah, that sounded about right.

He was broke half of the time, but it was his own life.

His aunt didn’t know about his changes.

No one did.

Those who had… had died. Gwen had been the first victim of his bumbling along in his new life.

Peter had stopped trying to make both worlds work after that. He had to keep his family and friends safe.

He was Spider-Man and his identity remained a secret. He was Peter Parker, struggling to make ends meet, and he was about to graduate.

* 

Wade Wilson was born a preternaturally gifted human. He had had heightened senses from an early
age, he was always faster, more agile, tenacious and had insanely fast reactions.

His parents never had him tested.

There was no interest there.

And neither of them had been preternatural as far as Wade was concerned. His mother had passed away early from cancer and his father continued to drink himself into a stupor.

He was classified when he entered the military. The recruiters were rather ecstatic when the results came back: Cerberus. Hellhound.

It earned him a place in Special Forces.

And no, he was neither hellish, nor did he have any hound features. No shapeshifting needed. He just belonged to the category of preternaturals who suffered under the misnomers of their gift.

Hellhounds were good hunters and killers, but primarily protectors. Guardians. Like the creature myth had taken the name from: the Cerberus. Very intelligent, very resourceful, and very sharp. They healed fast, were resilient, and when a handler could create a bond to the hellhound, he had a preternatural willing to die for his cause, shaped into the perfect killer.

Wade became an extremely adept assassin.

He excelled as a sharpshooter, as an infiltrator.

He was one of the best.

He was a pain in his superiors’ asses, he talked back, he had opinions, he didn’t knuckle down. He had an opinion and he wasn’t afraid to let a superior officer know about it.

But he was the best.

He worked best alone. While he trusted his handlers to a degree, he never felt the need to connect to them on a more permanent basis.

Hellhounds could connect to another person, a handler or a partner. They could give everything to one individual, hand over their soul, trust one person absolutely. With the connection came a closer bond, one that wasn’t always platonic, but it wasn’t unusual for a hellhound to be happily married and otherwise connected to a third party.

Wade had never found that one person.

His handlers, while capable individuals, rubbed him wrong. He did his job; end of story.

Until he was diagnosed with cancer and kicked out.

Weapon X made use of that.
All of it.

They offered him a cure for his cancer and took everything else in exchange.

Everything.

They shaped him to fit what they wanted him to be: a mindless slave, an operative used to fulfill a mission, then stand down until he was of use again.

They shot him full of experimental drugs that changed his very DNA. Wade had no idea at the time what exactly they were doing to him on a molecular level. He had no idea that they were applying DNA from the supernatural and preternatural, fusing it with his own, adding or detracting as if they were cooking up the perfect meal.

He became faster, stronger, surpassing his already high scores easily. His senses sharpened.

They accelerated his already present healing factor to the point where it beat his cancer – but it turned him into a scarred freak.

They made him immortal.

They made him a monster.

They gave him a partner, a possible handler, forced an anchor bond on him.

And then broke it.

Wade had never felt such pain until the moment they killed his handler, then him. The primal, twisted thing the hellhound had become screamed out its pain, roaring to life to kill those who had taken what was his, then they blew his brains out.

He dropped toward the abyss, clinging to the edge with a strength born out of desperation, fighting to come back.

And Wade woke up, with a hole in his mind that had nothing to do with the bullet that had torn through it. It was deep down in his soul, and the knowledge that he could never bond again.

Nor would he ever die.

Because hellhounds anchored to one human being they had sworn eternal loyalty to would die if that person perished.

Wade had died and he had come back. His preternatural side had stayed dead. It had become ash and rotting bones inside a soul that had been torn apart by the loss and pain.

He couldn't die.

Not anymore.

Never again.

He would always resurrect and the acidic burn of the dark space inside him would always be there.

Consuming him.

His mind.
His soul.

Everything.

It consumed the person, the identity of Wade Wilson.

He was Deadpool now and he was unstoppable. He was soulless.

Weapon X had made a mistake and they knew it the moment the thing they had created killed whoever got in his way as he fought his way out of the lab that had created him.

Sure, he died in the wreckage as the whole thing exploded, but he couldn't stay dead, right?

Right.

Deadpool proceeded to hunt down and kill those responsible.

He was relentless, cold, and calculating. He didn’t stop until the last of them was a smear of brain matter against the wall.

Still, it wasn’t enough.

It was a purpose, sure. He loved having a purpose. But it wasn't enough.

It would never be enough.

Inside him, there was this numb place, bled out and dead. It was a death he hadn't resurrected from.

He never would.

His preternatural core had changed beyond recognition.

Not just the physical aspects, the stomach-turning scars.

He was beyond classification, an amalgamation of traits that formed a grotesque thing, a hunter and killer, an assassin. He was a mercenary and he took life without thought.

Point him in the right direction and he did the job.

It paid well. Really well.

He still couldn’t shape-shift, but the vicious thing that clawed through the ashes and gnawed on the blackened bones inside was a far cry from what Deadpool had once been.

When he had still been just Wade Wilson, mouthy sharpshooter and Special Forces.

He used the darkness, the cold-blooded thing that slithered around his mind, and he turned it into a weapon.
It was him. Deadpool.

Insane. Crazy. Totally off the rocker. Erratic.

Without mercy.

And annoying as shit.

*

New York was just another city with another contract to fulfill.

Deadpool was still the best at what he did.

No one saw him coming and if they did, they had no idea what to do with him. He was unpredictable. He was lethal. He would make a kill once he took a contract.

The mercenary business paid royally and sometimes even the goody two-shoes organizations like SHIELD contracted him. Totally under the radar, hush-hush and behind closed doors, with threats and all.

Deadpool didn’t mind where the money came from. It was never boring in his line of work, even if he had to dodge the occasional bullet, even from SHIELD now and then, or dig it out of his immortal body.

Then New York became the most interesting place on God's green earth.

Deadpool met Spider-Man.

Well, he saw him swing by and something clicked.

Something that hadn't clicked in too long and that set off an avalanche.

The twisted thing inside him sat up and took notice. Milky white eyes narrowed, became glacial with an added glint, and long fangs were bared in a snarl.

Yes, Spider-Man had caught his interest on a basic, rather primal level.

It should have been a warning, but Deadpool was really bad at listening to warnings.

Extremely adept at not listening to them.

He wouldn't call what he did next stalking per se. It was more of an observation.

A continuous, intense observation.

That became fascination.

And infatuation.
And something else.

For the first time in too long did emotions creep in and make a mess of his already messed-up mind.

The nightmarish thing inside him hummed in agreement at his observation. Spider-Man was interesting and he wanted more of him.

Much more.

*

Peter wasn't sure when he acquired a fan in the shape of a renowned mercenary who was called, among other things, insane. It was also one of the nicer things Deadpool was called.

And still…

He couldn't explain why he let the other man tag along.

He was erratic. Crazy. Insane.

“Hey, I’m not crazy,” Deadpool had once told him, drawing a crude looking picture with crayons that was probably meant to resemble him and Spider-Man. “My reality is just different from yours.”

And that was about the most exact description for it.

Deadpool radiated danger like no one else he had ever met, but then his whole demeanor would abruptly change to that of an overgrown puppy and he was spouting nonsense, was playful, rescued cats from trees and held open doors for little old ladies.

Teaming up on occasion had its perks and Peter had to admire the sleek fighting style, the way the other man handled himself, though the rational part of him pointed out the finer details.

Like the katanas.

The guns.

The love for explosives and all things weapon-related.

Disarming Deadpool was like trying to empty a TARDIS. He was a bottomless pit of weapons.

So he set up ground rules that Deadpool whined and bitched about, but he followed them. As long as he didn't kill anyone, Peter was fine with having back-up, and that all by itself should have been a warning sign.

It should have set off an even bigger alarm when sharing Mexican food on rooftops became a regular event.

And he should really have packed up and left when not meeting up with Deadpool on their roof top had him feel slightly worried, downright disappointed.
Maybe there was a spider-sense warning, but he didn't hear it.

Only once did his senses alert him, and that had been the first time they had run into each other. After that, nothing at all. His senses didn’t pick up any ill intent, any murderous actions, when it came to Deadpool interacting with him.

Peter Parker was a bright young man, but in this instance he was suddenly struck with stupidity.

Deadpool had become part of his life as the protector of New York City's streets.

Yes, it should have been a clue-by-four, but apparently it was one of Peter's and Spider-Man's denser moments in life.

Deadpool; loud, rude, crass, more than a little off kilter sometimes and way off mostly. The Merc with a Mouth.

“If you can’t baffle them with your brilliance, blow them away with your bullshit,” the man proclaimed one day. “Motto of the millennium!”

He made Peter laugh, forget about the mess his life was, between trying to survive and trying to make ends meet. Between being Spider-Man and Peter Parker.

Deadpool had become something of an anchor in his crazy life. Because Deadpool's crazy counterbalanced his own whirling vortex of a life, and between them… it was normalcy.

It was the calm center of a storm raging all around them.

It should be scary, but to Peter it had become something he was looking forward to.

tbc...
"You should be careful," Hawkeye warned him. "He's dangerous. More than that, kid. He's highly unpredictable, totally erratic, a trained killer with a lust for blood, and his kill-count is higher than anyone's I've ever met. And that's saying something, if you get my drift. Deadpool doesn't care about collateral damage."

"Noted," Spider-Man answered levelly.

There was no way to ignore the weapons on Deadpool, the katanas strapped to the merc's back, the guns, the knives, the explosive devices, and whatever else he hid on his body. There was no way to ignore Deadpool in general.

Period.

And of course Peter understood what being a mercenary was all about; he wasn’t stupid or innocent in the ways of the world. But he also understood what Black Widow and Hawkeye had been before joining the Avengers. The Avengers weren’t innocent players either. Death happened around them and they had killed, too.

Including collateral damage.

The only difference was that Deadpool had been hired to kill a mark.

But the man hadn't killed anyone while they had been working together. It was Spider-Man’s one and only rule: no deaths.

And the other man followed it.

Knives that would have ended up in a head or throat now lodged in a shoulder or a thigh. His blades cut into limbs, missing the main blood vessels. Tendons were severed, but the victims didn't bleed out. And the one time a katana got stuck inside a would-be rapist, it missed all major organs and was simply an agonizing wound. And decapitations had gone down to zero.

Trying to make Deadpool leave his weapons behind was like asking Spider-Man to leave the web shooters, maybe even his whole outfit. They were a part of Deadpool. They were also parts he didn't use unless necessary.

Spider-Man had watched him fight with blunt force, pulling a gun when things got a little too dicey, and he had simply shot out a kneecap. The man was a skilled fighter, extremely dangerous, absolutely deadly even without a gun or a knife.

Deadpool was holding back.

He was still learning, exuding less and less force, and the twitches toward his guns became more infrequent.

“You can’t expect him to show mercy. Not in his nature. I’ve never seen him show remorse.” Hawkeye tilted his head a little, looking intrigued. "I know he hasn't killed anyone on your watch, Spider-Man, but taking a life is easy for him. Like grocery shopping. He won’t think much of blowing someone’s brains out. You can't trust him."

But Peter did.
Had after a while and he had no explanation as to the why and when. It had happened. Spider-Man trusted Deadpool, despite everything he knew or had seen. It was like an instinct, like a spider sense he hadn’t felt like this before.

“So how is he any different compared to you or Black Widow?” Spider-Man asked coldly. "You and she are just as morally flexible as Deadpool."

Hawkeye didn’t look too shocked, just slightly surprised, then he smiled coolly. “In many ways he’s not. We are all trained assassins. Deadpool’s just all that, with the added bonus of his preternatural side, and absolutely uncontrollable. Unpredictable. And insane,” the Avenger added forcefully.

_Aren’t we all?_ Peter thought, eyes on the streets again, watching. He was a former college student swinging through the streets on a webline he had developed himself, who just about managed to feed himself on his part-time job and selling pictures of his alter ego to a paper that tore him a new one every issue they printed. He had been a teenager when he had started, learning by doing, teaching himself about his powers and abilities. Everything he was… was self-made.

"You might find yourself on his hit list one day," Hawkeye drove his point home, "if someone decides you should be out of the picture and has enough money to pay him. He wouldn’t think twice. He will take the money and you’ll have a bullet between the eyes."

He turned his head, looking coldly at the other man. “And again, how is that different from you and Black Widow? Before SHIELD. Maybe even now?”

Hawkeye’s lips became a thin line. “We still have a working conscience.”

“Who defines what your conscience has to be like to be considered working?”

“Spider-Man, listen…”

He held up a hand. “No, I heard you. I understand it all. But this is my decision and mine alone,” he repeated again. “Stay out of my life, Hawkeye. I’m not an Avenger. You’re not my guardian or my fucking mother! I’ve made my decision and I trust my instincts.”

Then he shot out a line and swung off the building.

*

An Avenger giving him advice was nothing new. Peter had entertained thoughts of becoming one for a while, but then had decided that no thanks, he was better off on his own for now.

For one, he didn’t want to give up his secret identity. Then there was the fact that those he had met already kept treating him like he was just out of high school and innocent in the ways of the world.

It rubbed him the wrong way.

Yes, he had actively petitioned them to join up, and he had been shot down repeatedly for all the aforementioned reasons. He had been persistent, had wanted to be a hero that was recognized as such in the eyes of the public, to finally silence Jameson and his propaganda.
It all blew over and his dreams of being more than the ‘menace’ disappeared. Jameson had published an article about the downfall of the Avengers, their moral disintegration, after Spider-Man had helped put down a new threat to the city.

It had felt good, until the moment he had read the papers. Even working alongside the famous and loved team, Spider-Man had been torn apart by the Bugle and the Avengers had been called ‘tainted by this vigilante’.

So no, being an Avenger wasn’t a goal any more. He would never be able to change the Bugle’s headlines about him, even if there was a large crowd of Spider-Man fans. People who loved him, who adored him, who bought merchandise and who were grateful for his presence.

Talking to Hawkeye was okay. As far as Peter knew, the man was a preternatural with heightened senses, just like Black Widow. They never really talked about it. Banner was a mutant who had gotten his abilities through an accident. Iron Man was human. Captain America was the result of human experimentation.

No, Peter didn’t think of himself as Avengers material anymore.

He liked what he did and he evaded SHIELD and the recruitment speeches.

Sure, they kept watching him, but he ignored them.

It was working for him so far.

Hawkeye giving him advice on who he worked with fell into the category of being mostly ignored, though he had heard every word.

Spider-Man wasn’t a kid anymore.

It was his decision, his instincts to trust.

Something very deep inside him told him that he could trust Deadpool. Yes, the man had a taste for blood. Yes, he truly was morally flexible, had said so to Peter already.

But Peter was safe with him. Whatever the man was or had been, he was different around Peter.

That alone should worry him, but Peter wasn’t worried. Not really. It was more like a strange kind of understanding, a closeness, that had him want to spend time with Deadpool.

Yeah, weird.

But he liked it.

*

Deadpool had no idea when he had started to gravitate toward Spider-Man on a regular basis. The fascination and intrigue concerning the most likely younger man had made way for something else.

Yes, he had to be younger. Lots younger. Considering that what was left of his memories of his life before Weapon X was severely scrambled and he hardly recalled anything that made a lot of sense, Deadpool had stopped counting years. He had no idea how old he truly was. It was a little bit like
what Wolverine was going through, though he had a shitload of more problems. Logan was so much like him in so many ways, he had felt like a long lost brother for a while.

A growly, continuously pissed-off and snarling brother who would rather skewer him with his shiny claws than share Christmas presents and punch with him.


Hitting on Spidey was a game to him. He never stopped ogling that amazing ass. And he copped a feel if he could.

He liked watching. A lot. Not just the ass, but everything.

Spider-Man was extremely agile and fast, not to mention strong. Deadpool was fascinated by the twists, turns, jumps and backflips. He was agile himself, but Spider-Man was a class of his own. The proportional strength was just another topping on the yummy plate of goodies that was Spiderbabe.

But then…

Then there were the calmer moments.

After fighting the bad guys, shooting out kneecaps or breaking bones, after admiring the agility of his partner, the way he twisted and turned with the grace of a dancer and pro gymnast, there were those other moments.

Sharing food.

Sharing just a moment to unwind, to come down from an adrenaline high.

Like now.

Added bonus of ouchies and pain.

But it had been worth it. No one would hurt children on his watch. That scum had taken hostages while trying to rob a jewelry store. Two of them had been children.

Well, he now had a lot of time to think about what he had done wrong. After he got out of intensive care.

"Ow," he murmured and looked at his thigh where a sizeable hole had been a while ago. Right now it was just raw flesh, muscles and nerves knitting back together again.

Spidey shot him a quizzical look.

"Stings."

It had been one of those new bullets, capable of ripping chunks out of whatever got in their way. Walls, cars, Deadpool.

"This will be a bitch to repair," he complained, picking at the ruined leather. "I should sue the idiot."

"Good luck with that," Spider-Man replied, head cocked as he studied the bloody wound.

"Watch me. It was also my best suit. Really! And I just paid off the last of it, too! Should have
leased the crap."

His favorite spider smiled as he chewed on one of the pizza slices. Being able to see that smile, be allowed to see the unmasked lower half of Spider-Man, did things to Deadpool that he really didn’t want to think about too deeply. That he felt comfortable enough to show enough of his face to eat was testimony to the pull the younger man had on him.

Spidey hadn’t even stared when the merc had pushed up the mask to eat. He had simply held out the hot sauce to the spring rolls and continued.

After that glorious moment, Deadpool had only fallen all the harder for Spider-Man.

Now he searched through his various pockets and pulled out a Hello Kitty patch, slapping it on the ragged tear and bloody skin.

Spider-Man snorted a half-laugh. "Not making it any better."

"Hey! It's two hundred percent better, baby boy! This is the epitome of better!"

“Clashing colors.”

“Hello Kitty goes with any and all colors,” was the aloof answer.

“And the blood distracts from the cute cat.”

“Meh.” He flapped his hand at him. “Always the critics.”

It got him a shake of the head and Spider-Man grabbed another slice, almost inhaling it.

The silence descended again, interrupted by chewing and soft noises of pizza appreciation.

And Deadpool was suddenly just Wade. Something dark and vicious inside of him unknotted, wanted to be closer to Spider-Man, his Spidey, and the preternatural creature that had once been a hellhound snarled at the impossibility of it all.

He was broken. Twisted and broken, beyond repair. He was a shadow, a grotesque rendering of what had once been a normal preternatural. And he wasn’t what he had been born as anymore. He was a vicious force, an infernal thing that defied definition thanks to too many ingredients in the cocktail at happy hour.

His fingers trailed along the edge of the Hello Kitty patch, blood marring the comic perfection with its pink and white adorableness.

He was calmer when they were together. His mind seemed to be...

Focused.

It was his own.

There was no background noise, no pressure, nothing. The primal thing was quiet, almost peaceful in a way he hadn’t ever felt before.

Spider-Man… grounded him.

He made it real.
He made it bearable.

He made him Wade again.

The blackened remains of his ruined soul seemed to shiver, twist and rattle in the darkness that was nothing but numbed pain. The part where he had once been able to feel, reach out and connect to another soul, was feeling almost restless.

The calmness became quiet moments between them. Shared tacos. Tacos and talk. Sometimes neither as they drifted together and shared... just themselves. There was companionable silence and the silence scared Deadpool more than anything ever before in his life.

Because he liked it.

He liked the tentative connection that part of him roared couldn't ever be real.

He liked to pretend at night, holed up in his private little cave, his fortress of solitude, rival franchise be damned.

Wade got the best orgasms out of his fantasies.

And he was falling in love with the other man, knowing nothing but what Spidey told him.

The primal beast snorted at the thought.

Love.

He couldn't love.

Love was soft and warm; he was anything but that.

And what did he really know about Spider-Man? For all intents and purposes he would be a trap laid out to capture the merc, though there were better ways, in his humble opinion. They wouldn't need a delicious morsel like Spidey to get him to walk into a cage and happily hum daytime television tunes while staring at the spandex covered behind.

No, it wasn't a trap.

It was like an instinct, a need, to be this close and let himself drift in the normality of it all.

Sitting together, so close and feeling the younger man's body heat. Bumping shoulders, fingers brushing when sharing food, and even though there was never any skin to skin contact, it was more than Deadpool had had in the past years.

Hellhounds were tactile creatures when they let their guard down, but he knew there was nothing of his original preternatural state left. Still, the need to touch was there. Something of is had survived.

Part of his tortured soul screamed out its pain, the inability to be even closer to Spidey, to the man he had started to trust after everything that had torn him to pieces so many years ago. Part of him wanted to kill those responsible over and over, again and again.
And some tiny, fragile thing whispered in the back of his mind, pushed him nearer to Spidey, wanted him to touch and caress, wanted to open up and ground himself.

It was the beginning of a downhill slide.

One night he just dropped his head on the other man's shoulder, rambling on about the beauty of the city at night, and waxing poetic about sexy butts and illuminations of aforementioned anatomical perfection. His mind went on about soft lights, sweet colors and lean bodies twisting through the air in graceful moves.

Spidey didn't push him off. He just stilled for a moment, then continued to sip his hot coffee, watching his city.

Deadpool – Wade – let the rambling taper out, felt the calmness settle, and he remained leaning intimately against his personal cushion.

Soaking it all up.

Breathing calm and slow.

Perfection.

He did ground himself.

As insane and impossible as it sounded, he did.

On Spider-Man.

The nightmare inside him was quiet and content.

It just didn't register how completely, how intensely, and how irrevocably he had come to center his messed-up preter side on Spidey.

They were an incredible team. They fought perfectly well together, anticipating each other's moves, having each other's backs, and Deadpool started to rely on Spider-Man in a way that was both insanely dangerous and beautifully new.

He had a partner.

He loved his partner.
He craved his attention, wanted to be good, do good. He didn't kill, as Spider-Man had asked – never ordered, no. He only incapacitated.

And Deadpool felt more like a hero.

No one else trusted him, but meh! He didn't need anyone else. Spider-Man trusted him to have his back, to keep him from harm, and he did his best.

Even took bullets for his hero.

 Died twice.

The second time stung a little, but hey. He had had worse.

Just another day in his life.

tbc...
Then Spider-Man was shot out of mid-swing by some weirdo in a high-tech suit that featured metal claws, stubby little wings, wielding a fancy gun that ejected arrow-like bolts. He had the crazed look of a guy who had gone over the edge a long time ago.

Deadpool was an expert in all things over that edge. He had looked into the abyss and was friends on a first name basis with it.

They had been chasing the perp, who had robbed a few stores and one bank within the past weeks, escalating to murder at the bank job, and now had him cornered.

Arrow Guy got lucky in shooting Spidey, using laser-guidance and the fact that Spider-Man was busy getting people to safety. He was already featuring a few claw marks that had cut up his nice costume.

Deadpool would have shot him just because of that. Now he had one more reason.

He didn't even look as he aimed and shot the man in both kneecaps, and into his dominant elbow just for good measure, to cripple him for life, while jumping after his falling partner. The metal armor was truly shabby and the joints easily penetrated by his bullets.

They crashed through a skylight, into an abandoned warehouse, Deadpool turning to cushion the impact as best as possible by using his own body.

It hurt.

It didn't matter.

He broke too many bones to count and he dislocated a few limbs, but it didn't matter either.

What mattered was the limp form in his arms.

"Spidey?" he whispered hoarsely.

Deadpool moved, broken bones and dislocated limbs grinding against each other as they healed, as cuts closed and blood stopped leaking.

"Hey, baby boy, what's kickin'?"

His ribs clicked back into place and his spine started realigning, which meant he was able to crawl closer.

Part of him surged in forward and a snarl escaped his lips as he saw the arrow sticking out of the unmovimg body. The shaft had broken off and it was deep inside the lithe form, blood soaking into the red and blue costume.

The twisted mess of the hellhound in him continued snarling, wanting a kill, preferably after making the man who had dared inflict such damage on his Spidey suffer. A lot. For a long time.

The possessive feeling was almost choking, suffocating him, and Deadpool whacked it on its nose. He pushed the monstrous creature back into the darkness, focusing on his injured partner.

He would take care of Arrow Guy later.
Right now he had to deal with the sensation of unaccustomed worry, intermingling with flares of what might be panic, and the fact that he had to inflict even more pain on his favorite web-slinger to keep him from bleeding out on a warehouse floor.

Something shuddered through him, violent, vicious and wicked, and he felt it surge through his very being.

Deadpool let out an almost animalistic hiss as he checked the wound, then set to work on removing the arrow.

Spider-Man never woke, though there were breathy moans and one whine when Deadpool manipulated the torn flesh.

It had him stop, frozen, the jittery thing inside him whining in sympathy, too.

It had never bothered him to hurt anyone, even while helping patch up a wound. Now… right now… it would probably haunt him until the next time someone blew his brains out and he knitted himself back together.

He didn’t want to cause Spider-Man pain. Ever. His protective nature, twisted and mangled as it was, rose sharply and he whispered apologies as he checked the wound for any foreign material left behind, then cleaned it thoroughly.

* 

Peter woke to hot pain flaring in his side, taking his breath away, feeling like someone had run a spear through him. It spread from his left side to encompass his whole body and a whimper involuntarily left his lips. One hand twitched toward the source of his pain and was caught in a strong grip.

His mind exploded in fear, followed by an almost blind panic at being restrained, and he acted on instinct.

He lashed out with his other hand while twisting away and kicking hard into the general direction of his attacker.

Fight. Then flight.

It was automatic, instinctual, and adrenaline surged through his abused body, overriding any and all other signals.

There was a brief moment of triumph as his blurry sight located a window in the room he was in, then he was suddenly flat on his back and held by an iron grip, and a heavy, muscular weight was keeping him down.

"Wow, Spideyboy! That's a no go right now. You're undoing all my hard work in one seriously freaky move."
Recognition. On a level Peter would have analyzed if he hadn’t been so out of it. It came from deep
down inside, an instinctual reaction to the tone, the presence, the very energy.

Deadpool. It was Deadpool. He knew that voice without even seeing the other man and part of
Peter had him go limp in the other man’s grip.

"… you…” he managed, throat dry, voice hoarse.

A shiver raked through him.

Hands brushed over his chest, petting, caressing, giving him something to anchor himself on. He
concentrated on the touch, the sensation of it all, and his racing heart calmed down. The pain was
still there, but the panic had disappeared, leaving him more aware.

“Me.” Deadpool hummed, sounding pleased. "The one and only. Accept no cheap copies."

He blinked and the red and black mask with the white eye covers swam into blurry focus.

Deadpool sat above him, straddling him, though he kept his full weight off Peter. His hands were
still running over him. It was an amazing sensation somehow.

"No fighting the sexy nurse. I'm here to help."

One hand came to rest over his heart.

Peter felt a shiver run down his spine. The point of contact was focusing him more than anything
else.

"Where…?"

"Somewhere safe," came the reassuring rumble, the voice dropping into such a calm, serious mode,
Peter felt himself relax even more.

Something trickled along his spider senses, but it wasn’t an alarm. It was something he had started
to notice a lot lately, something that resembled a thin, wavering connection to the other man. A
two-way road. Peter had no idea what sat on the other end of that road, but it was sleek, dangerous,
radiating darkness, and still it was familiar and he felt no fear of it.

The stabbing pain in his stomach was momentarily back and he curled in on himself for a second,
riding it out.

Fuck, he thought.

"Oh, yeah, that. You got shot."

"I figured," he hissed through clenched teeth.

"And your healing factor sucks."

"Hn."

Deadpool leaned closer, one hand cupping his masked cheek. "You allergic to anything, Spidey?"
he asked, voice all serious again.

"No."
"Good. 'Cause all I've got is the illegal stuff of questionable origin."

"No. I need to go," Peter whispered, pushing himself up.

Deadpool tsked softly and easily had him on his back again, Peter breathing harshly through a new wave of pain.

"Nope. Not an option, baby boy. That hole in your side isn't the prettiest of battle wounds and I'm not letting you flaunt yourself like that to the general public. Adoring public, I'm sure, but still a fat old no."

"I can't… stay…" Peter fought, dizzy and trying to breathe through the pain.

"Too bad. Bed and board all paid for."

Deadpool was still touching him, calm caresses that were as far from sexual as he had ever come.

"This was bad," he murmured, voice dropping again to that serious rumble, an inflection of something else underneath. "So bad. So much blood. Couldn't stop it at first. Maybe the arrow was laced with something. You need to rest. Recover. Please."

Peter stared at the white eyes, momentarily breathless, something deep inside him reacting to that rumble. His vision wavered and that probably explained the overlaying, twisting vortex he saw. Dark and foreboding, an abyss of ravenous hunger and untamed killer instinct.

Deadpool rubbed a gentle thumb over his cheek, the expressive mask showing nothing but concern, a kind of worry Peter would never associate with the mercenary.

Deadpool didn't do worry. He looked only out for himself. His survival, his best.

That's what everyone had told him, mainly Hawkeye, but it was a lie.

Peter's pain-laden brain tried to make sense of it, but he was failing.

And there was also something else.

The shadowy mass.

Sharp. Intense. Knife-like teeth and dagger-like claws. Focused on Peter and Peter alone. Pushing forward and reaching for him in a physical way that was beyond the caress he felt.

He closed his eyes, feeling like he was losing his grip on consciousness now that part of him started to relax.

"You'll be safe," he heard.

He trusted that voice. That man. Deadpool.

There was a familiar sensation, one that was trying to pierce through the pain, and he instinctively leaned into the touch to his temple.

The pain lessened.

It lifted like a veil and he blinked, focusing on the darkness, the cool, even blanket that enveloped him. Milky eyes, inhuman, surreal and yet not, regarded him.
Gentle.

Soft.

Warm.

He leaned into the sensation that wasn’t simply physical. It was everywhere, inside him, around him; it was part of him.

He would be safe.

*

Deadpool watched the younger man as he slept, his abdomen tightly bandaged, strong painkillers and even stronger antibiotics running through his system. He was healing, though not as fast as the mercenary would have himself.

Running a feather-light caress over the gloves of Spider-Man's costume, he allowed himself a smile.

The mask was still firmly in place. There was no doubt in his mind that he would leave it on. Spidey trusted him, had given him a chance to show the world he wasn't just a mindless, blood-lusting killer, that he could be a good guy.

He honored that.

Despite all the rumors and absolute truths about Deadpool concerning his work and lack of conscience, he had honor.

His preternatural side purred and rumbled in pleasure. He still remembered what he was, underneath all the crazy and the mutation, all the experimental DNA shot into him.

He was… had been… still was?... a guardian, a protector. He kept what he treasured safe.

And killed everything else.

Nothing had been precious to him since the death of Vanessa Carlysle, and even that emotion had been artificially created to make him suffer.

Had he ever really felt a connection to her on an emotional level? Had it been all just a figment of his jumbled brain? Had all feelings been out there to make her the one and only choice for the hellhound?

Deadpool didn't know. Wade Wilson had thought so, had died for that belief, and Deadpool was just a wreck now. Chaos and disarray.

They had destroyed everything of him, remade him into their little slave, but the primal nature had survived. It had changed beyond recognition and he wasn’t truly safe to be around, but Spider-Man wouldn’t be harmed. The monster inside him turned into a puppy dog when it came to the other man, prowling closer in a very non-puppy manner, showing teeth that would scare the hardiest of hunters, and flexing claws ready to rip anything and everything apart.
Not Spidey.

His baby boy was precious and safe.

The merc checked Spider-Man’s temperature and nodded to himself.

"Crappy healing, but still healing," he mumbled to himself. "But you really need to eat more, babe. Gotta keep those spider muscles working, all that strength up. Poor thing."

He stroked over the bandage, smoothing the edges.

Everything was fine. No fever. The bleeding had stopped.

"You're safe," he murmured, giving in to his more tactile sense and trailing his fingers over the red and blue costume.

Spidey would always be safe with him.

Something warm and strangely soft curled through him.

Far from the crude sexuality he usually displayed. Far from just copping a feel and using the image of that nice little ass to bring himself off in the shower. Or outside. Or wherever.

Spider-Man was at his mercy. He could do whatever he wanted and… This wasn't… that. This was real. He didn't do soft. He had never been soft.

This was an emotion he hadn't felt in too long and that scared him shitless.

It was also something he craved and didn't want to miss any more.

The primal thing inside him rumbled in agreement, curled up in his soulless body, waiting patiently.

*

When he woke a second time it was to the feeling of someone being with him, very close, hovering. Peter was confused as to what had happened, his mind fuzzy, and his body didn't seem to respond to his brain's commands.

Spikes of pain radiated from his abdomen and he didn't even want to think about the other parts of his body that felt terribly bruised and battered. His back seemed to be the center of the mess, closely followed by all limbs.

It was a distant pain, dulled by medication, but it was there.

Peter tried to remember why he hurt, but he drew a blank.

The presence drew closer, calming him as panic flashed because he couldn't remember, soothing his fear.

Someone touched him, drawing gentle fingers along his arm, clasping his hand and squeezing it for a moment.
He squeezed back.

Memories leaked back and he blinked his eyes open.

Deadpool was the first he saw again.

It was a reassuring sight.

"Hey there, baby boy," the merc said playfully.

Peter tried to move and the pain intensified once more. The hand on his shoulder was heavy and like a grounding connection to reality.

His brain, rattled and completely out of whack as it was, kept pushing memories at him.

And emotions.

And something else.

"...how long..." he whispered roughly.

"You were out another hour. Your little mutant healing thingy is crap, but it's better than a human's, I give you that."

"... gee, a compliment," he rasped. "Thanks."

"Always, baby boy. You know me. Love to compliment your fine form. Now a bit riddled with holes, but still very attractive. A bit on the scrawny side, but I love the muscle. Had to peek."

Deadpool gave him an apologetic look. "You know, underneath that flattering costume of yours. Sorry about the mess, though. In my defense, Bad Guy was the first to put a hole in places there shouldn’t be holes in a human body. So it’s a goner now. Hope you got a spare or two."

Spider-Man reached up, touching his masked face. Still in place, just rolled up over his nose to help him breathe.

"I didn't peek there."

Deadpool sounded extremely serious.

"Thank you."

"Your secret's absolutely safe with me, Spidey. I wouldn't look. I enjoy salivating over what I can see, so I’m easily pleased with little things. Not that you’d be little. I doubt it. I think yours would be adorably perfect."

Peter closed his eyes, exhausted, mind still not working on all cylinders. "Need to leave."

It got him an exasperated sigh. "You are relentless. I love that in a man, but right now the sexy is severely dampened by the bloody. You do remember that you were shot, right? Just three hours ago."

The heavy warmth of one hand now rested on the bandages, over the abdominal wound. It wasn't painful, just a reminder of what had happened.

"You got a hot date I don't know about?" Deadpool asked playfully. "Lemme tell you from experience, bloody holes in your body are a turn off. Not as bad as severed limbs. Those turn off
even the hardiest of sex fiends. And you really can't get it up without having it in the first place."

Peter grabbed Deadpool's arm and pulled himself up, hissing a curse at the pain. He screwed his eyes shut and breathed through it all, each breath coming as a short, harsh pant.

"Yeah, you metabolize painkillers as quickly as I thought. And this was the good stuff. No wonder. Gotta give it to you, Spideybabe. You are just as crazy as I am."

"Thanks, I think."

"You already had me with that ass in spandex, but now? I'm completely yours!" Deadpool gushed.

Peter dug his fingers into the hard muscles as his own spasmed around the wound. He breathed through the pain, felt a hand on his neck, fingers squeezing gently, reassuringly, helping him ride through it.

"Help me up," he demanded, sounding way too shaky for his own liking.

But he had to get out of here. He had to get to his own place, curl up and take care of his injuries.

"I know you can't always tell the crazy from the insane, but I was serious about that wound," the merc told him, voice suddenly low and intense.

His mouth was right next to Peter’s head, their heads almost touching.

"I can take care of myself."

"Huh. Right. You weigh like half a Chihuahua on steroids, baby boy."

"What?"

"Are you eating? And if that's a yes, what are you eating? You need to keep that spider strength up, right?"

"I eat," Peter muttered defensively.

Sure, not as much as his rather outrageous metabolism really needed, but after rent and necessities there was always room for a little splurge here or there. If he did the overtime.

"And I can take care of myself just fine."

Deadpool shrugged. "I'll just go then and…"

Spider-Man held on to the other man with a strength still surpassing a human's, though he was weaker than normally.

"Your crushing grip is my command."

Deadpool hoisted him up and it was almost too much. Peter whimpered and fell against the hard-muscled form, felt the steadying arm around his back, away from the shot wound, and he just breathed.

Fuck. Fuck, fuck, fuck his life!

Deadpool was silent; giving him space in a way, while keeping him physically close.
“You are safe here,” he said into the silence after a while. “You can recover here.”

“No,” he replied automatically. “No, please, I…”

Deadpool sighed softly, pulling him closer to help steady him. “Well, baby boy, have it your way. Which reminds me, which way is your little Spider Cave?”

Peter had absolutely no clue how they made it back to his apartment building.

Well, close to his real address.

He couldn't risk Deadpool knowing where he lived. Maybe the merc already knew, maybe he had given him privacy, but no matter the truth, Peter wanted to at least believe he had some secrets.

Deadpool was clearly humoring him as he left Peter in a side alley, leaning against the wall, legs shaky, knees weak, and his vision swimming. He had put a wide sweater jacket on Spider-Man, the hood hiding his masked face, together with the I Love New York basecap. The pink basecap.

When Peter was inside his own four walls he just collapsed with a pained, weak whimper.

He hurt.

So very, very much.

The stairs had almost killed him and he had nearly blacked out in front of his door.

It took him an eternity to gather the strength to make it into the bathroom and check Deadpool's handiwork.

Clean wound, closed with neat little stitches, underneath the tight bandage.

Peter stared at it, shaking from stress, from too much pain. He looked at the painkillers Deadpool had stuffed into the pockets of the sweater jacket.

The good stuff, he had told Peter. Not laced with anything, scout’s honor and all.

He met his own eyes in the mirror, saw the bruises and cuts, the dark smudges under his eyes that spoke of his exhaustion and the pain.

At the end of his rope, emotional and otherwise, he just swallowed them before he crawled into bed.

tbc...
I want to thank everyone for the warm welcome in this fandom! I’m truly flattered and happy that you like this!

Deadpool hadn’t been able to leave his partner in crime fighting in the alley. He had hovered in the shadows, watched from the dark, as Spider-Man stumbled toward his home. People had barely looked at him, probably thinking he was a homeless drunk, and only when he had made it into one of the apartment buildings had Deadpool breathed a little easier.

It was a new situation for him. Completely new. Just a few months ago he would have sworn on his broken soul that he would never care for a partner, would dump their silly asses for getting shot up, and be done with it.

With Spider-Man, things were different. New. Unaccustomed to him.

He had stitched him up, made sure the wound was clean and bandaged, had carefully brought him close to home… would have carried him over the door step if Spider-Man had revealed the full information.

Deadpool had still slipped in after the injured man, hovering out of sight, waiting for him to get into his place and not collapse halfway.

After that the mercenary had left.

He knew where Spider-Man lived now.

No name – no, he didn’t look at the mail boxes – and no face, but he knew where.

Safe. Spider-Man and his identity were safe with him. Always would be.

The fierce protectiveness surged through him again, a mangled form of what had once been his preternatural nature. Now it was vicious and sharp, relentless, and a nightmare.

It was a raw feeling, all serrated edge and ground-up glass, but it was a good one. It opened up old wounds, made them bleed sluggishly, but it cleansed something, washing away the ash with fresh blood.

Setting up camp on the building adjoining Spidey’s home, Deadpool spent the night watching, observing, making notes of who came and went, assessing the danger level. His eyes were on the window belonging to the apartment Spider-Man had crawled into.

He never came closer. Never peered inside.
Peter felt better the next morning, though he still looked like a ghost in the mirror. The bruises in his face had lessened, but he needed to apply make-up to hide them, unless he wanted to be asked about getting into a fight or something.

His upper body was riddled with dark splotches of healing bruises and the shot wound was painful, but at least not inflamed.

Work was agony and his colleagues commented on his pallor, asking if he was coming down with a stomach flu or something like it.

He still pulled the overtime needed to make it through next month with rent and basic food groups, even if he grew more and more pale by the hour, drawing looks again.

Peter let them all speculate as he wrapped up work and took himself home, sleeping some more, absolutely exhausted.

He missed patrol that night, sleeping through it after taking more of Deadpool’s painkillers.

And the next.

Deadpool was there on their roof the third day after the arrow incident, looking almost relieved and suddenly extremely ecstatic.

"Spideybaby!" he greeted the younger man, hugging him close, though in a way that showed awareness of the injury.

His usually exuberant hugs were gentle, almost feather-light in comparison, and he looked slightly apprehensive to touch the injured man.

"Hey, Deadpool."

"I patrolled for you. I was a good boy," the merc proclaimed, puffing out his chest. "No one died!"

Spider-Man laughed and real amusement raced through him.

"Do I get a lollipop?"

"No."

He gave the other man a little shove. "Just pay for them with money and we're good."

"Hey, I did you a favor, baby boy. You should be paying," was the grumbled reply, but Deadpool was already heading for the staircase. "But I'm in a good and favorable mood today. Settle back, enjoy the balmy night. I'll bring the booze and we schmooze."

And he was gone.

Peter had to honestly say he had missed the man.

The man who was a highly skilled, absolutely lethal killer. Who had caught him, had patched him up, had guarded him in those first few hours, and who hadn't lifted the mask.

He had missed someone who was completely unlike him. Who was absolutely different. And whom he trusted.

With his life.

Deadpool brought enough food to feed a small army, which was an apt description for the two of them.

"How's the wound?" the merc asked after the last taco had disappeared.

"Fine."

"Show me."

"It's fine, Deadpool."

The intensity of that gaze, hidden behind the expressive mask, was almost frightening. The very presence of the man seemed to grow, singling out Spider-Man.

"Show me."

His voice wasn't loud, rather level, close to threatening, but there was no alarm going through Peter. He felt no threat against him.

Spider-Man hesitated, then reminded himself that this was the guy who had had him at his mercy. He had stitched him up, had guarded and protected him, had hauled his sorry ass home.

"I have a healing factor," he argued, though with less power now. "And it's not my first tango. I had worse before. I heal, Deadpool."

"Show. Me."

This time the words went deeper, touching something inside him that thrummed in response. It was a pull. Gentle but insistent.

Spider-Man decided to not press his luck. That luck would have him on his back and Deadpool
tearing off his costume to check the shot wound if he didn't cooperate.

So he slowly peeled up the costume, showing the tight bandages underneath.

Deadpool placed a careful but firm hand over the location of the injury. His focus was on Peter, on the bandage, and something shivered down Peter's spine.

Then a knife was in his hand and Spider-Man balked.

"Not gonna hurt ya, baby boy," Deadpool told him with a drawl. "Just want to check my handiwork.

"You can just unwrap it!" Peter snapped, not willing to lose the bandages. He hadn't brought new ones.

Deadpool, mind-reader he seemed to be, dug into a pouch and came out with a still wrapped, sterilized set of medical bandages.

"Why…?"

"You tend to get hurt, Spideybabe. I'm prepared." He stepped closer again. "Now lose the bandage. I don't want you running around with an infection."

"I'm not! I've been taking care of myself long before you came along," Peter replied icily.

"Strip or I'll do it for you."

There was a threat and a warning in there, delivered in that calm, flat voice rarely anyone ever got to hear from Deadpool. Spider-Man knew he could just use his speed and strength to get away, jump off the roof and web-sling away. Then again, he didn't want to. He felt Deadpool's intense focus again, his need to check on his partner's well-being, that pull that had Peter closer than was normally healthy around the mercenary.

"No knife," he only said and undid the webbing that held the bandages stuck together.

That night, after they had done a quick check through the neighborhood, Peter lay in bed, one hand resting on the healing injury.

He could still feel Deadpool's intense concentration, his careful probing of the already well-closed scar. He had been almost tender. That had thrown Peter the most, and his low-voiced declaration that the stitches could be removed soon.

Peter knew the merc had offered.

He closed his eyes, breathing slow and deep, the sensation of that moment still whispering through him.

Something pulsed through him, something he had felt before. It was no longer weird, almost welcome.
Routine was back after another week later.

The wound had healed, leaving a new scar that would fade in time.

He had removed the stitches himself, though Deadpool had once again insisted on checking the result. He had appeared satisfied and a lot calmer afterward.

Peter could still recall the incredibly gentle touch of the gloved fingers against his sensitive skin. Exploring, probing, making sure. Just pressing against the former shot wound had Peter feel like a million nerves had come alive, the pull between them a million times stronger.

For a moment there were also a million possibilities and if he had known what to do, Peter would have done it; probably. So he was reeling, fighting to understand.

What remained was the intense sensation of a connection between him and Deadpool, looking down a road where the end resembled a whirling, dark nothingness.

Inside that darkness something moved, trying to get closer, trying to touch him.

*

"You should think about training."

Spider-Man glanced at Deadpool. "Training… what?"

"Evading laser-guided arrows."

"I can usually rely on my spider sense."

"It went bust on you last time."

He shrugged. "There is a limit to how fast I can move."

Deadpool clicked his tongue. "Training helps."

Another glance. "Wait. Is this you offering to shoot at me?" Peter asked.

The other man grinned. "I knew you were a bright boy, Spidey."

"Uh, no, thanks."

"I wouldn't hurt you!" Deadpool immediately insisted, all humor gone. "I have dummy ammo. Stings, you might need to wash your costume, but it's not going to turn you into Swiss cheese."

"Let me think about it," Peter murmured.

"Sure thing."
They sat close together, not touching, and still there was a connection between them that didn’t require physical contact.

Peter had enjoyed a fabulous hot chocolate that had warmed him as the cold weather threatened to freeze him into a popsicle. Deadpool seemed unaffected by the freezing temperature. He sipped his own hot chocolate, though his smelled like it had been spiced up a little. Alcohol had no effect on him, as Deadpool had told him once.

His legs swung on the low wall, his whole posture kind of thoughtful.

Peter got up after a while, his cup sadly empty. He stretched and warmed up his frozen muscles. It was time to go on a last patrol before heading home.

"You ground me," Deadpool suddenly said, the voice right next to him.

And when had he moved so close without Peter noticing? The fierce protectiveness was there, almost palpable, intense and unwavering. It was like a living thing, wrapped around Peter, drawing him close.

"I… do?" Spider-Man just stared at his partner, brain racing, cold forgotten.

Deadpool studied him, slowly tilting his head from left to right and back again.

"Like no one else. No one. It shouldn't be possible. I'm broken. Beyond repair. All black ruins and burned bridges. I'm… I can't…" He shook his head, hands clenching and unclenching. "I shouldn't be able to…"

Spider-Man watched him, stunned. "Huh?" he managed.

Maybe working all day after a long night of patrolling, managing only three hours of sleep before meeting up with Deadpool for dinner, hadn't been the wisest of choices.

But he needed the money. Money was made working in the labs and selling Spider-Man pictures. His rent was due and he really needed the hours and the overtime. He wouldn't ask Aunt May for help, nor would he try his luck with the banks. Student loans were still another horror he needed to take care of regularly.

"You know my file," the merc stated coolly.

Spider-Man blinked. "No?"

Deadpool snorted. "You're buddies with the Avengers. I'm sure they showed you my stuff. Well, not all my stuff. They might have a good pic of my stuff, as far as I know, but…"

"Deadpool!"

The other man grinned brightly behind the mask. "Yes, dear?"

Peter sighed. "They told me you're dangerous and to keep away, but they never gave me your file. I know some of it anyway. Like your name, that you were involved in the Weapon X program…"

Deadpool snarled softly.

Peter fell silent. Then, "That you're probably a preternatural… maybe a supernatural by birth…"

It got him a hollow laugh. "Preter."
Spider-Man waited silently.

“A good, clean little preternatural,” Deadpool murmured. “Not too special, but useful. How good is your knowledge of the gifted and cursed?”

"I know some preters. Some supernaturals, too."

"Know any hellhounds?"

“Uh, no?”

“Well, too bad. You could draw up a nice chart and compare.”

"Huh?"

Deadpool spread his arms. “Hellhound. What’s left of it. Not much of it is, actually. My pretty little DNA has gone all bad and twisted with whatever Weapon X decided might be helpful in creating the perfect weapon, the mindless slave to do their bidding, kill when killing was needed. Never ask a stupid question, jump into the fray, damn the torpedoes.”

Peter knew about hellhounds, their loyalty, their determination and tenacity, the way they operated independently of a pack, like werewolves needed to function, and how their loyalty was their greatest strength and also their weakness.

“You should read my file. Probably a good book-to-movie candidate. All the suspense and thrill, though they might have to cut a few scenes because of the gore factor. They would only make it into the Director’s Cut,” Deadpool went on. “Blockbuster material for sure. They can even make up a new breed of preternatural: the chimera.”

“Chimera?” Spider-Man echoed, mind scrambling to keep up.

“All me, accept no substitutes.” Deadpool grinned underneath his mask, the expression all too visible. “I’ve got so many bonus tracks, it’s like a frat party in there.”

Peter felt the connection twist and waver, the agitation radiating from Deadpool almost physical. He felt erratic blips shiver along it as he watched the other man, took in the tension in the powerful frame, the way he was clearly torn between fight and flight.

Despite his words, Deadpool was not okay with actually talking about himself.

So Peter did the only thing he had ever done when it came to the mercenary: he followed instinct.

He reached out and touched one arm, barely a caress, but the result was immediate.

Deadpool stilled, seemed to relax, a whisper of a breath escaping him, and Peter smiled slightly behind his mask as he curled his fingers around one strong forearm.

"You're doing this to me…” Deadpool said after a while, voice near-impossible to hear, but Peter caught it. "It shouldn't… be... but you are…”

He withdrew his hand, stunned. "What…?"

The loss of contact was almost painful and Deadpool stepped immediately closer, another hiss coming from him.

"No!”
"Deadpool?"

Peter didn't move back, didn't feel like he needed to. Whatever he picked up from the preternaturally gifted man, it wasn't dangerous. This man was the embodiment of a killer, without conscience, for hire to take a life of whoever you wanted, but to Spider-Man, Peter Parker, he felt… different.

A leather-gloved hand pushed against Peter's chest, fingers splaying over the spider logo. It was warm and heavy, like an anchor attaching to his chest; and deeper.

Memories shot through him, the sensation of having Deadpool’s hand on his chest. Caressing. Calming. Memories of being injured, helpless, weak, and Deadpool’s touch.

"You touch me," the mercenary whispered.

"Shouldn't I?" the younger man asked, confused.

"You ground me, Spidey. It hasn't happened… since then. I lost that ability. I am broken. I shouldn't be able to feel like this. You... you are calmness. You are…"

Peter looked into the white eye covers, felt the pull, the need, and he felt the vicious thing at the other end of the road. It was snarling, snapping, hungry. It felt like something was about to snap, a chain breaking.

The hand moved away and Peter experienced a sudden loss, like losing his balance.

"Well!" Deadpool proclaimed suddenly and loudly, clapping his hands together, startling Spider-Man. "Enough maudlin for one night! You need your beauty rest, I got things to do and more things do ignore. See you around next time, baby boy! Take care and look twice before crossing the road!"

“Huh, what?”

Peter felt like he had just been pulled out of a relaxing meditation, mind not yet able to keep up with the real world.

Deadpool gave him a messy salute, then jumped off the roof and parcouring over the next in a flash.

Peter was left stunned and confused, still feeling Deadpool's touch like a phantom caress on his chest. The memory of that dark thing was frightening and exhilarating in one.

"What the heck…?" he murmured.

There was hardly any time to give it all a much deeper thought or analyze each word as. Peter was burdened with a ton of work and Jameson was yelling at him to get him better picture of the menace that was Spider-Man who was now hanging around with the lunatic mercenary called Deadpool.

The lunatic mercenary who was suddenly and suspiciously absent from patrol nights. At least when Peter managed to stay awake for patrol, because he was absolutely exhausted. He almost always
fell asleep the moment he managed to make it home from work.

And then, after two weeks of slave labor and pulling two fourteen hour lab days, the lab was making cutbacks.

His hours were reduced and no overtime permitted.

Wham, bam, thank you, man!

Peter felt like someone had pulled the rug out from under him.

Fuck his life!

tbc...
"The guy has issues."

Spider-Man frowned behind his mask, sure that Hawkeye could most likely see it to a degree. They had met up almost by chance, though Peter doubted it. Hawkeye didn't do accidental.

With too much time gone down the drain job hunting, Peter had taken to web-slinging to clear his head.

Now he was on a roof with Hawkeye, felt tired, trying to figure out his life – secret and public – and he was listening to an Avenger warning him off Deadpool.

Again.

And again.

"We all do."

The archer chuckled. "True, but his are way out of your league."

"So are Tony Stark's and I don't see you hightailing it out of Stark Tower."

Clint laughed. "Point," he agreed, shaking his head in clear amusement. "I gotta give it to you, though, you do bring out the best in Deadpool. And that means something when it comes to his kind of crazy."

Peter looked at the traffic below, then turned to focus on the Avenger again. "I treat him like a human being," he only said.

Barton was silent for a moment, then his expression softened somewhat. "Kid, he isn't human."

"He was born human. A preternatural human. So he is human. Whatever else happened to him, it wasn't his fault!"

"No, it wasn't."

"Then why do you keep pushing him over the edge?"

"Because he's unstable. More than all of the Avengers thrown together. We all have issues, yes, but he is truly gone, Spider-Man."

Peter felt a spike of anger at the words. Sure, he was often accused of trying to save everybody, had been told before that not everyone could be saved, but this time was different.

He could feel it on a level he couldn't explain.

Yes, Deadpool was a very deadly man, a trained killer, a weapon, but there was also something else in that cold, dark core. He was damaged goods, but he wasn't inhuman.

Peter knew it. It was like a different kind of spider sense. It wasn't just wishful thinking either. He wasn't stupid or too idealistic to see the harsh truth, understand what being a mercenary entailed.

No, he felt something, a small shiver going through his very soul whenever Deadpool was near
now. Whenever the other man was calm, collected, so intensely focused on… him.

"What happened to him?" Peter demanded. "You have his file! Tell me!"

Clint was silent, fingers drifting along the bow resting on his lap. "You know what kind of preternatural he is?"

"Hellhound. Perfect soldier-type."

A nod. "Best there is. Wolves are too pack oriented to work alone, but the military loves them anyway. Hellhounds are special because they embody the tenaciousness of the wolf, the resiliency, but lack the shapeshifting. They heal faster, too."

"I know all that, Clint."

"You know they can be bonded to someone? For life?"

"I read about it."

"It's a trust exercise. Complete trust to the end. Hellhounds don't bond lightly. It's their ultimate gift."

Peter was silent, watching the tense set of Clint's shoulders.

"Tony hacked into the Weapon X program, got the files. And the videos. Stomach-turning, I can tell you. Deadpool… Wade Wilson… volunteered. He had cancer. Did you know?"

"He mentioned something."

"Yeah. It was bad enough that his own preternatural ability was helpless against it. Would have killed him. So he let himself be recruited and they made him into what he is today, but not without killing what he was. Tony said they gave him a cocktail of DNA-altering stuff, concocted to mix the best of the super- and preternatural world. Like a hybrid, just worse. He became this artificially produced individual with parts of several species grafted to his DNA. A chimera. Then they used his instinct to bond him to a handler."

"You can’t force a bond," Peter scoffed.

It was one solid fact he knew about supers and preters. Those who were able to bond themselves to a mate, a partner, or, in some cases, a handler, couldn’t force it, nor could they be forced.

"You apparently can by taking apart the DNA of a hellhound and putting it together as something new, like some freaking biogenetic puzzle." Hawkeye’s expression was dark. “He stopped being Wade back then. Weapon X tried to create a soldier slave, a human weapon with all the abilities of various preters and supers, unkillable, and no own mind. They wanted to control every aspect of the chimera. Even the handler. Her name was Vanessa."

"Was?" Peter asked softly.

"They killed her when the bond was confirmed stable and solid. Then killed Wade. He came back. She didn't."

Peter felt a wave of nausea run through him at the cold, hard words.

"Hellhounds die when the handler does. They connection is so intense, so final. But Deadpool can no longer die. He came back," Hawkeye continued, voice almost monotone, eyes far away. "He
came back and his bonded handler was gone. You see what happened to him. Aside from scarring his skin, Weapon X also took his soul."

Peter swallowed; hard.

"Makes him so good at what he does, being soulless."

"He isn't soulless!" he whispered immediately.

Hawkeye shot him a sad look. "He is, kid. He isn't normal anymore. Everything he was, everything that was Wade Wilson, was erased and made into Deadpool. His DNA is a cocktail of everything Weapon X could get their hands on. He's a chimera, something artificial that shouldn't have survived but did."

Spider-Man felt a hot surge of anger at the words. “He is a human being, Barton!”

“No. He’s a total mess of all of what they cobbled together, with the added bonus of borderline insanity, because all the different creature traits mess him up even more. The healing factor tried to remedy that, but it’s not working. He’s a nutcase. That’s what he is.”

Renewed anger raced through him, red hot and filled with screaming outrage at the words. Deadpool wasn’t a soulless, mindless tool to be discarded after use. He wasn’t just the chimera; he was a human being! He was loyal and protective of those he chose. Yes, he sold his abilities and killed people… had killed people… but he listened to Peter.

He listened… not to an order. A request. Peter had never made it a command.

Something skittered through his mind, pushing that fact at him.

"No!" he now growled. “He’s not! If he was, he wouldn't be able to change. And he is changing. He doesn't kill anymore."

"Because you told him?"

"Yes!"

Clint was silent, then his eyes widened a fraction. "Because you told him," he repeated.

"He listens. He wants to change! He's trying and it's hard, but he is," Peter insisted.

“He’s a nightmare. The chimera is a nightmare that shouldn’t exist. No one has an idea what his true abilities are, whether or not he has reached is limit. That’s why he is so dangerous, kid!”

“Yes, he’s dangerous and Deadpool does exist, against all odds! He tries to live the best life he can with all the shit that has been done to him! We’re a good team and it’s working.”

Hawkeye smiled a little. “You’re the first to say that about him. I know a few people who would rather shoot him on sight than work with him in any capacity again.”

Spider-Man shot him an evil look, feeling the tension in his body. It infuriated him how others saw Deadpool. The man had been experimented on, for crying out loud! He was a victim!

Sure, he took getting used to, and maybe he was biased because of past events, that weird pull he felt, that gentleness, the intense protectiveness…

Peter exhaled sharply, forcing himself to relax. “You’re not saying that about Cap or even Banner.”
Clint blinked, then chuckled, shaking his head. “Human experiments, I get it. And Bruce was persona non grata for a while. The Hulk isn’t a favorite either. Not even of Bruce’s. Cap’s just… Captain America.”

“Who can do no wrong,” Peter grumbled.

He liked the guy, looked up to him to a degree, but if all came down to DNA and how they came to be, Deadpool was no different. He had just started out on the losing side of the game.

“Listen, Spider-Man, I know you and Deadpool had this partnership running strongly, but he is and always will be a wild card. He might just turn around and shoot you one day, no questions asked, because someone took a hit out on you. Or because something inside his fucked-up DNA sparks up a storm, makes him lose it.”

Nope, he wouldn’t, Peter knew. Never. It was a line that couldn’t be crossed. As for sudden outbursts of violence…

Peter remembered the two-way road he had so often experienced, the connection, that anchor line between them. Sometimes he thought he could just reach out, tug a little and bring Deadpool closer, back to him, away from the messy vortex of fragmented memories and blackened ruins.

“The chimera is something out of deep, dark myths and it’s not natural,” Clint repeated. “It could never form naturally. You can’t trust anything he does, Spider-Man.”

*He said I ground him*, Peter thought, catching himself from blurting it out loud.

*I ground him.*

I…

He almost rocked back.

*Holy… insert swear word here.*

He really had been slow. Private stress, the injury, worrying about his job, his security, it had all come together and really pulled the wool over his eyes.

It should have been so clear right from the start.

*I ground him!*

Him. Wade. Deadpool. The chimera. All of him. The touches, the nearness, the tactility. The bond between them, flimsy yet strong, unfinished and almost hesitant, and Peter looking into the abyss that Hawkeye was describing so vividly – and the abyss was watching with hungry eyes and sharp teeth.

Patiently.

"Gotta go," he whispered and shot out a webline.

He needed space.

To think.
It really cleared his head to swing along the skyscrapers, the traffic below nothing but blurred lines.

I ground him.

He listens to me.

He trusts me.

But he can’t… He told me he can’t…!

Mind whirling, Spider-Man gracefully landed on the roof they, him and Deadpool, had so often shared food on.

No one was there.

In a way he was thankful for it.

The hellhound had bonded, had lost its handler and had died. The chimera wasn’t even close to what it had been born out of. It was nothing of the like of a hellhound. Then again, who knew what a chimera was? It shouldn’t be able to exist.

So it couldn’t connect, right?

Then why did it feel like Peter was getting closer and closer to the preternatural creature that had come out of Weapon X’s experiments?

The sun set and the winds picked up. Peter was still on the roof, thoughts no longer tumbling all over, but he still didn’t understand for real.

Could a hellhound who had lost his bonded and turned into something else find someone else?

And what did it mean for Deadpool if there was a chance? If that person was Peter Parker? How did the chimera know Peter was the one? Why him? Because he was Spider-Man? Because of the artificial mutation?

He didn't know who Spider-Man really was. They had never come close to showing more skin than was necessary to eat. Peter had seen the scars, comparing them to a burn victim. He knew Deadpool didn't show his face to anyone, hid behind the rather expressive mask, and he knew his name. And now a little more of his history.

That was all.

Wade Wilson knew even less about Spider-Man.

But Peter knew he had started on a path that was probably rather unhealthy for him. He had let someone inside his own soul, had started to trust in someone he knew so little about, but his instincts told him Deadpool was okay.

More than okay.
More than a friend.

Despite all the touching and crude jokes, the innuendo about his ass and other assets, Peter had started to fall for it. For him.

He had no idea what Deadpool looked like underneath that mask, aside from the chin up to the nose, as well as part of his throat, but he had developed feelings.

Like a blind date. A literal blind date.

He had been drawn to the impossible man and now… now he couldn't let go. He had been warned repeatedly, had been told to keep away from Deadpool.

Spider-Man… Peter Parker… couldn't.

He was human, with not a preternatural DNA strand in sight, but he was reacting to something that wasn't normal in a human. He was reacting to Deadpool, to the preternatural, to Wade Wilson; all of it. And he wanted the closeness.

All of it.

No matter what.

Peter scrubbed a hand over his face.

Fuck.

Fuck, fuck, fuck!

He wasn't a virgin in any sense of the word. He had had relationships, closer or sometimes more casual, and he had slept with women and men. Gwen had been his first love, and she had died because of him.

Ever since then he hadn't trusted anyone with anything more than his most surface persona.

Deadpool… knew more already than even Mary Jane did.

*I ground him. Get a clue, Parker. I ground him and his messed up mind... and the chimera he is!*

*

“Dude, you look like shit!”

Deadpool plopped down on the ancient chair and shot Weasel a scathing look. His best friend pushed a glass of a clear liquid across the table and Wade downed it without hesitation.

Alcohol didn't do anything to him. If it was poisoned he'd just pop back to life like a maniacal jack-in-the-box.

“Why, thanks, old friend. Always so nice to know what my partner in crime thinks of my fair complexion.”
Weasel snorted and flapped a hand at him. “Not that. It’s not like I get used to seeing it, but hey, time and all. In the right light I can almost not see you. But honestly, you look worse than usual. Not like you really can. Really. So, what gives?”

Wade leaned back, refusing to give in to his instinctual reaction to pull up the hood again at Weasel’s words. His friend had known him for longer than anyone, had seen him before and after getting turned into a walking advertisement for crispy chicken and bad life choices. His words, while they stung, were also the most honest conversation Deadpool had.

Aside from people trying to shoot his face off when they saw what was underneath the mask.

Well, mostly they tried it with the mask on, too. The risk of being such an awesome assassin.

“I need a job.”

Weasel frowned.

“Just something quick and dirty. Some time-out from the big city.”

“You and Spidey having a spat?”

He glared at him.


Deadpool looked icily at him, refusing to answer.

“Geez, man! Just because he got your panties in a bunch isn’t the right reason to flee the country.”

Wade felt the chimera growl angrily at the words. He didn’t really want to leave, but the memories of what had happened on the roof, that instant grounding sensation each time they had been together…

Something was happening and it was getting worse every time he was around the younger man. His Spidey. His role model. The guy he admired and wanted to do good by.

He was opening up, saying things that were way out of line. Yes, he was usually out of line, but that was just verbal diarrhea.

This… this was more serious. Like really serious. He was spitting out private things, intimate things, and he felt himself reach for Spider-Man on a wholly different level. Touching him had become a necessity. Just feeling the physical connection had him unwind and relax on a whole new level.

Wade drummed his fingers on the table top.

“Something’s happening,” he said out loud.

“You’re not sayin’.”

He glared at Weasel, who looked rather unimpressed.

“Dude, you either spill it or suck it up and go on with your life.”

“I think the chimera is trying to bond,” he hissed through clenched teeth.
Weasel’s eyes grew comically wide behind the lenses of his oversized glasses. His mouth opened, then snapped shut again with a high wheezing sound. He quickly grabbed a glass and downed the potent content in one swallow.

“Say what?!?” he blurted, coughing as the alcohol burned on the way down.

Wade stared at him, hard.

Weasel’s eyes watered slightly and he sniffed. “You can’t bond, man! That part shriveled up and died with Vanessa!”

“I know,” he grated, the old pain still there, though foggier. "Thank you for bringing it up again. Really! Nothing like tearing at the old scars and making them bleed, Weasel."

“And you’re not a hellhound anymore!” the bartender continued like he hadn't heard him. "You're a fucking chimera and that's just a freaking melting pot of really volatile fury and pain, right?"

“I know!” he snapped angrily, exploding from the chair in such a display of volatile fury and pain. “I know all that and it’s still there! I know what it feels like to want to connect, to give up part of your soul and share it with someone you trust! But that soul is a fucking pile of ash and primeval sludge!”

Weasel watched as if Deadpool was an extremely interesting specimen right now. A stupid one on top of that.

"And it still works."

Wade groaned and fell heavily onto the chair again. "It’s him, Weasel! He’s…"

“Special?” the other man asked after a moment of silence, twitching a grin.

“Human.”

“Aren’t we all?"

Wade expelled a breath, his mind in uproar, the chimera screeching.

"He has no idea what's happening," he snarled.

"Maybe he does. Ever thought about it? I mean, I’m only human and even I get it. Finding that perfect person. Well, a real person, not some made-to-order handler. Twice in your lifetime, which, in your case…” He fell silent at Wade's death glare. "If he's a potential partner… go for it?"

"Have you taken a look at this lately?" Deadpool gestured at his face. "That's not just the beautiful wrapping that you peel off and keep in a special place. That's everything right there, on display for all the world to see. Nothing different on the inside! Ugly as fuck, dead and gone!"

"You're not dead, Wade. Just a hard to look at motherfucker with issues up the wazoo."

"And I'm not going to force him into this life of fugly and crude!" he snarled. “Do you know what bonding means?”

"Who says you're forcing anything, man? Bonds can't be forced."

"With the right drugs they can."
"Are you on drugs?"

"No!"

"Is he?"

"Shut up, Weasel!"

"You started it, dude." Weasel leaned forward, arms resting on the table. "Did your Spiderboy ever really see you?"

Wade took a long pull from the bottle, making Weasel sigh in exasperation.

"Keep it," his friend just said. "And I think that's a big, fat no concerning Spideyboy knowing what you look like under the mask?"

He glared.

“So what if you don’t show him and bond anyway? If that’s what you feel?"

“Won’t work like that.”

“How do you know? You’re no longer a hellhound. You’re a chimera, right? Just take what you want.”

Deadpool slammed his hands onto the table, startling Weasel a little. “I won’t force this! Never! You can’t force a bond! And I’m not going to just take his body either! I’m not a monster! Not that kind of monster!”

It got him a small smile. “Yeah. ‘Cause you care about that kid, right? There’s a lot of firsts in there already, dude. Make up your mind. Before your preter side does it for you.”

Deadpool pulled up the hood and left, hands pushed into the pockets, head down.

He needed space. He would prefer a job, away from NYC, but a part of him balked at leaving his little spider alone.

_Suck it up, he told himself. _It’s nothing. _It’ll pass._

But he was so wrong.

It didn't pass.

It got worse.

tbc...
Chapter 6

It took Peter a week to come to the decision. A fateful, irrevocable decision that would probably change his life, but maybe Deadpool's, too.

Peter had spent a day in the library, researching preternaturals like Deadpool, and it had left him reeling. The Avengers probably had a more complete file and maybe Hawkeye would give it to him, but he was reluctant to approach him or them with the request.

He didn’t need it, he decided. He didn’t need outsiders barging into the fragile thing he had with Deadpool, probably destroying everything.

Knowing what Weapon X had done to him, to his preternatural side, without remorse... it had Peter want to hurt someone. Kill someone.

Everything Wade had gone through had been horrifying. So very wrong all across the ethical board. But breaking a bond on purpose to make him their slave?

Horrific was a too soft word for it.

And still… he was trying. So hard. So badly. Wanted to be better, wanted to be like his personal hero...

Peter knew there was so much more involved than just hero worship. It was something coming from deep inside, latching onto the younger man in a way that shouldn't be possible, and it left Peter shaking a little.

Deadpool wasn’t just a fangirlish addition to the crazy that was New York on a good day. He wasn’t pretending.

*I ground him,* Peter repeated to himself over and over. *The chimera.*

It was an artificial construct; made in a lab, put together from smaller pieces and existing through sheer willpower and determination.

But it had instincts.

It was hellishly protective.

Deadpool had saved his life, had sown up a rather bad shot wound, and he had kept Peter’s secret intact.

All Hawkeye had ever told him led to the belief that Deadpool was a cold, calculating and emotionless mercenary, looking out only for himself and killing people for money. He would have nothing to gain from partnering up with Spider-Man or saving his ass.

But he had.

Peter knew something was happening between them, had been feeling the pull for a while now.

So he had made a decision.

The ultimate trust exercise.
He had already laid his life in Deadpool's lethal hands.

The man was a preternatural creature and he was deadly; very, very deadly. He had seen him fight, had admired the style and strength, the smooth moves that were truly supernatural. Deadpool was a force to be reckoned with.

Peter trusted an assassin with his life, yes.

Now… with the rest of him.

Revealing his identity was a big step, the biggest he could take in any relationship.

It had killed Gwen… her father… Harry…

It had endangered so many more. Like MJ.

And before all that, it had taken his uncle, had destroyed his only family.

Then there was Deadpool, the man who couldn't die and who was very well able to take care of himself. Deadpool was immortal. He could come back from even the worst of injuries.

He was safe.

*He is safe,* Peter thought. *In every single way.*

Peter removed the mask and looked into the white eyes of Deadpool's own mask, meeting the gaze head-on. It was amazing how animated it was, the whites widening, the whole expression reflecting shock and disbelief. He had always marveled at how the other man was doing it, that a twitch of an eyebrow, a widening of the eyes, a frown, and so much more was reflected on the cover.

"Hello. My name is Peter Parker," he said evenly. "I'm twenty-two years old. My birthday is tomorrow. In an hour, actually. I’ll be twenty-three then."

Deadpool was silent, one hand twitching as if to reach for the bare face, then it fell to his side, close to the ever-present guns. Fingers tapped over the metal, restless, nervous…

"I freelance as a photographer for the Daily Bugle. I've got a part-time job at a research lab. And I'm Spider-Man."

Peter took a step forward.

"I'm human. I was bitten by a radioactive spider at Oscorp when I was fifteen and became what you see. A mutant."

Deadpool stood stock still, the twitch gone from his hand. Normally his spider sense would be ringing loudly, but Peter didn't hear a single blip. The man in front of him was radiating danger, but it wasn't directed at Peter.
"You know my name already," Deadpool whispered, voice harsher than normal, almost painfully
grating like he was speaking through clenched teeth. "You know I'm a preternatural. You know
where I came from and what happened to me. Wish I could say I was bitten by a radioactive Shar-
Pei, but this is just shoddy patchwork and big, fat bad luck."

Peter watched ever miniscule movement the other man made, though there was hardly any.

"I know," he confirmed. "And I trust you."

Yes, there was a flinch. Not just a twitch.

"You have proven that. You saved me, Deadpool. Many times. You talked yourself into my life."

There was a tiny head tilt.

"You never stop talking. Unless you… calm down. There have been some very calm moments,"
Peter added softly.

He took another step forward.

"You showed me your face, baby boy."

"You could have found out already. You are good at your job."

"The best," came the immediate correction.

"The best," Peter agreed.

Another step forward.

"And I was at your mercy, unconscious, after I got shot."

"You trust me with your face," Deadpool murmured, slowly shaking his head.

"I've trusted you with my life already."

"Not the same."

"Maybe. For me, my life is worth a lot. My identity… I know it's safe with you."

Deadpool seemed to tremble a little.

Peter was now so close, he could feel the other man's body heat. He was always so much warmer.

"You could have taken a look under the mask. It's a valuable secret. There are some very bad
people out there who would want to know. I have enemies. They'd love to know who I really am,
about my family and friends. You could give them that. I trust you not to sell me out, Deadpool. I
trust you with everything."

The other man shuddered.

"I'm safe with you."

"You are not," was the derisive mutter. "I'm not safe. I'm broken… and what's left is a mess.
Dangerous. It kills. It loves to kill. It's my job and I love my job. I'm good at it. The best,"
Deadpool kept going on. "I'm not safe and never will be!"
Peter looked into the white eyes. "You said I ground you. You seek me out. You like to be around me. You spend free time with me, even if there's nothing to gain. I can feel there's... something. It's leaning toward me. I can't really describe it, because I'm human and not super or preter. I'm a mutant. My senses are different from yours. Trust in your instincts, Wade. I trust in mine."

And then he leaned forward and pressed his lips against the mask.

Deadpool felt something inside of him shatter and then reform itself. It was a brief, harsh pain that turned into a burst of yeswantneedplease!

The brief moment, that strange kiss, had his mind go blank, reboot, then crash again. Alarms were shrilling through him. Abandon shop, this is not a daffodil! All hands on deck and what's our vector, Victor?

The panic surged, then the tsunami collapsed in on itself as there was nothing to back it up.

The chimera, the nightmare, was silent. It was a stunned coil of darkness, blinking owlishly, completely flabbergasted. For the first time in its life, the surreal and horrible creature resembled more of a confused kitten than the monster it was.

Spidey... had kissed him.

He looked into the brown eyes, older than the twenty-two, soon twenty-three, years of age Peter had revealed to him.

"You are insane," he breathed. "And that’s my territory," he added, mind sparking briefly. "I staked a claim there. You're poaching. This is plagiarism!"

Peter smiled softly. "If I'm insane then we fit perfectly together, don't you think?"

The smile was amazing. The whole face was... stunningly amazing and surreal. Beautiful. So young and beautiful.

So very much not what Deadpool was.

Something whispered through him, warm and needy, wanting this man and wanting what he offered.

All of it.

Forever.

Wade Wilson wanted to be able to anchor himself again, to choose Spider-Man, Peter Parker, and feel that connection, have a balance to his crazy.

But he couldn't.

And again, the sensation racing through his shattered soul, was like before.

Meeting Vanessa Carlysle, trusting his instincts, trusting her, handing over his self... because they had made him do it. They had twisted his very soul on a molecular level to do their bidding. They had destroyed Wade Wilson and reformed every part into the shape they had wanted.
Peter's touch drew him out of the impending spiral into the past, the vortex that held nothing but pain and blinding memories of having her die in front of him.

He had known Vanessa for a very short time, had reacted to her in his altered state, and it had felt like a lifetime had been taken from him.

Instincts.

He still had them and they had served him well.

Now those instincts were painting a new picture, one that included Spider-Man, had included Spider-Man for so long now. The young man with the perfect skin, the beautiful face, the dark eyes, the tousled bedhead hair…

He wanted.

Wade Wilson… Deadpool… the chimera… they all wanted, clamoring to take and claim and give up what he no longer had… It was a dark storm rising inside his fractured mind, overtaking his last rational thought, and a growl left his lips. He startled himself with the primal sound.

He grabbed Peter's wrists and pushed the younger man against the wall, leaning in close, feeling the steady rumbles in his chest. It was like a vice around his heart, his lungs, everything. It was constricting, pulling ever tighter, trying to suffocate him as it tried to get free.

There was no fear in those amazing eyes.

"You have no idea what I am!" he whispered.

"I do. And I want this, Wade. As fast or as slow as you want it."

"I can't! I'm broken! It doesn't change!"

"Maybe it has and you didn’t notice."

“This can’t!” he snapped. “It won’t ever heal because it’s ashes and blackened bones! It’s incapable of…” He groaned. “It can’t,” he repeated desperately.

Spider-Man would be able to easily shake off the grip he had on him, but he wasn't even trying. He just looked at the mercenary, waiting.

Waiting…

For…

The curl of wantneedplease!

Wade let his head drop against the slender shoulder, feeling a renewed tremor. He was in trouble. Deep, deep trouble.

"You are crazy, baby boy."

There was a hand resting on his neck. When had he let go of Peter's wrists? The hand squeezed it gently.

Lips brushed over his temple. Covered temple.
"Crazy," he repeated.

Peter hummed softly.

The hand on his neck was still resting heavily there, warm and strong, forming a connection that was growing stronger by the minute.

"Do you want me?"

Wade groaned and shook his head against that nice, strong shoulder, feeling that nice, strong hand on his neck.

"Do I want you? Do I want you?! I want you so badly… I want to grab that ass and never let go. I want to push you down and have my wicked way with you. So, so wicked. Been touching myself thinking of your spandex-clad body. I want everything. And it's all bad. It's amazingly bad. So bad, bad, bad…"

The hand squeezed gently, interrupting his flow of words.

He inhaled sharply, Peter's scent heady and heavy, enveloping him. He felt that grounding sensation, that fragile anchor that had calmed him so many countless times before.

Deadpool raised his head.

Peter was smiling.

"This is bad," he murmured again.

"I think it feels good."

Another squeeze.

Deadpool dared to wrap an arm around the slender waist. "Too good."

"Calmer?"

He shivered. Yes, calmer. So much calmer and clearer. Peter was his balance, his anchor…

Maybe it was possible.

After such a long time.

Maybe something had healed, recovered, reset. Maybe… he could have this, make it his.

Mine, came the purr through the chaos in his head.

It sounded sinister, hungry, like the beast it was. There would be no controlling what he might do if he let go, let himself fall. Hellhounds didn't take, didn't hurt, didn't bite into the soul of the person they chose. But Wade had died and that part was long gone now. The chimera had no such safe guards.

Mine.

He balked. His defenses started to flare into existence as his mind presented him with what he truly was, what was underneath the suit, what broke mirrors and had people change to the other side of the road. It told him that the ugly was also inside him, would touch this beautiful person and tear
him apart.

The chimera wouldn’t stop.

It would only take.

No one could handle that. Nothing in this crazy world had been born to bond to a chimera, because a chimera wasn’t natural.

"You don't want this, baby boy," he ground out. "Getting bound to this… this… You don't know what's underneath this sexy getup!" he suddenly snapped and pulled back abruptly.

Peter let his hand slide from its resting place on his neck and Deadpool mourned it while simultaneously calling himself a fool.

"Do you know what they did to me?!!" he hissed, gesturing at his face, his whole body. "Do you know what this looks like? Your nightmare, Spideyboy! You wouldn't touch this with a ten foot pole! You wouldn't want to catch any of this! And I can't promise not to ravage that perfect body of yours if you give yourself to me! The chimera is viciously territorial when it comes to a mate."

"So are we normal humans. Especially this one."

Strong fingers flexed. Deadpool felt his preternatural traits rise, snarling softly at the words. He wanted this and then again he couldn’t let himself have it.

Once burned… or in his case, head shot and bye-bye Wade.

"I know you have a skin condition."

He snorted disdainfully. Yeah, right. Skin condition. The lab heads from Weapon X had been convinced they had failed when the healing factor had turned him into this monster. He had seen the horror and disgust in their eyes, the pity.

"I know of the scars. I've seen part of your face."

"Seen a part, seen all? Think again! It's everywhere, baby boy. And I mean everywhere! You don't want to touch this. You don't want to fuck with it either. You don't want the night terror touch your very soul! Because that’s what you’re offering, do you understand? Your soul! To this! It’s just as ugly, just as twisted as my shell!"

Peter approached him again, so very open and accepting, so very patient.

Oh, Deadpool wanted. So much. So very, very much.

Bad Deadpool.

Now, now, now, clamored in his head. Not really a voice. Just… instinct. So very much pushing forward and overruling everything else.

Bond.

Not just grounding himself for the moments they shared, but giving him true balance and purpose.

Everything he had had for moment.

Before Vanessa had been killed.
"I can't lose this again," he blurted, fingers clenching into the fabric of his mask as he sank to his knees. "No bullet to the brain can erase that hole again! It happened once. It was enough. It created this. I can't!"

Peter knelt down in front of him. "I'm not Vanessa."

Deadpool pushed his fists against his eyes, feeling those nightmarish memories rise unbidden. His mess of a mind twisted them into something even worse and he felt like throwing up.

Peter touched him, calming the uproar of darkness. It was so easy to let himself fall…

He wanted… wanted and needed… craved…

Not Vanessa.

But he would destroy this. There was no proof he could really bond, that this sensation was more than wishful thinking on his part. The chimera wasn’t real. This couldn’t be real.

This was him about to destroy purity and goodness.

And Peter pressed his lips against the mask again.

Deadpool bolted.

Fled.

Scrammed.

His mind short-circuited, drowning in the deafening roars of the chimera, sounding like a million screams from a million voices.

The flight reaction was automatic. He had reached the end of the rope, emotional and whatnot, and he pulled the emergency stop.

His already chaotic mind erupted into a cacophony of sounds and Deadpool did the only thing he could, aside from shooting himself in the head: he jumped over the wall, dropping several stories, crashing through a skylight.

And he was gone.

Peter didn’t follow.

His expression reflected sadness and longing, and deep down inside something warm and gooey curled up, waiting.

He wasn’t desperate, he wasn’t ready to scream out his frustration. Actually, he had kind of expected this.
Deadpool was a complex man with a terrible past and more demons than he could count. It had to be hell inside his head sometimes; a hell Peter had been able to ease.

“Well, damn, that went well,” he muttered and pulled on the mask again.

He needed more patience.

And he had it.

Peter was serious about all of this, about the anchor bond, about the connection to Deadpool. He felt the blossoming little buds inside him, could clearly make out the vortex at the other end. He looked at it and felt no fear.

It looked back and it was terrified.

tbc...
Chapter 7

The panic racing through his very bones was nothing Wade Wilson had ever experienced before.

He had been in countless threatening, dangerous and downright fatal situations before, but he had never felt like this. Had never been this…

…broken…
…vulnerable…
…human…

All too human and too open and too…

The chimera hissed, confusion dominant, and it prowled restlessly around the confines of its human shell. It shied away from exploring the tiny form of intimacy it already shared with Spider-Man, that fledgling connection Deadpool could feel and neither wanted to have, or really wanted to miss again.

He buried his fist in a wall, breaking every bone and watching it knit back together again with a detached air.

Inside, the charred remains of his broken preternatural heritage whimpered, twisting and turning like a leashed thing.

Spidey had offered.

Spidey had revealed himself, shown him his face, given him his name, and he had offered the chimera… everything.

But Deadpool… Wade… he couldn't bond any more. He was dead. It was something that didn't recover.

Liar, liar, liar, something inside of him chanted, nasty and dark, and he curled away from it with a groan.

It had been so long since that time. So many deaths and returns. So many broken parts arranging themselves back into the monster that he was, the disfigured thing that was no longer Wade Wilson.

He was Deadpool.

And he couldn't…

Can, too! Can, too! Can, too!

He hadn't been human in such a long time. Just a collection of altered DNA, thrown together, given a good shake, watching it turn into the thing they had wanted. His skin was a reflection of his soul.

No, he hadn't been human ever since…

Now… now he was… what?
Still Deadpool, but now with a weakness. His Spidey was a weakness. He hadn't had one in too long either.

He craved it.

He wanted it.

It gave him a thrill like nothing else.

He wanted this man in his life.

It was a hunger he couldn't explain, couldn't feed unless he hung around his favorite hero, his idol, and now he had a face… a beautiful, smooth, human face, to go with his fantasies.

It wasn't healthy, but his life had never been.

Peter had kissed him. He. Had. Kissed. Him!

The chimera was extremely confused by that act of intimacy. Sitting close together, yes. Copping a feel, sure. But Peter, not Spider-Man, but he was Spider-Man, not just Peter Parker… Wade gave a groan.

Spidey-Peter had kissed him.

It had been incredible; breath-taking. Like the man himself.

He made a soft, keening noise, echoed by the vortex. The chimera, for all its ferocious nature and killer instinct, the apex predator of the preternatural world – maybe even of the supernatural world – had been reduced to a confused little presence that was lashing out and trying to hide itself in one.

The kiss, the intimacy, the offer had been all Deadpool had ever wanted, presented to him on a silver platter, and he had… run. He had bailed out like the coward he was, and he was…

He was lost. Adrift.

Cue Pirates of the Caribbean soundtrack.

"Fuck."

The single word seemed to lance through him, cutting his mind apart. With an extreme effort he managed not to just curl up and crawl into a corner.

He wanted to shoot himself in the head.

He wanted to drive his katanas into his gut and be done with it.

But, fuck his life! He wouldn't ever be able to end himself.

Not that he really wanted to anymore. His death wish had long since withered away and ever since Spider-Man, something new was driving him. Something blossoming slowly, unfolding like a horrifying piece of origami coming apart, stretching and growing, wanting to break out of its original shape.

Deadpool let himself fall face first onto the ratty old couch.

"Fuck it all sideways!" he moaned.
Within twenty-four hours he knew everything there was about Peter Benjamin Parker, single, no relationship status to speak of, twenty-three years old as of a few days ago.

Deadpool wasn't the best of the best because of just his mouth. Yeah, that was a bonus and kept his mind from overflowing and finally breaking completely. He loved to talk endlessly, even through getting shot, stabbed or even beheaded. The last wasn't all too much fun, but it had happened more than once.

People had dumped acid on him, had dismembered and gutted him, but he had always had his mouth, except for that one memorable moment when he hadn't.

Yeah. Not fun, with a running commentary going through his still present brain and no outlet.

Go figure his crap life.

So he was good. He wasn't a tool to be pointed at a target and told to fetch. Deadpool was his own man. He made his own decision, what job to take and which one to tell the client go stick up his own butt. He had connections, he had contacts, he had informants, and he had whatever he needed to find out what he wanted about a target.

Peter Parker was his target.

His adorable, ‘I’m-fucking-robbing-the-cradle’ target.

He knew about his life, his family, his education, his jobs, his lack of true funds in a woefully empty bank account. He looked into his history, saw the amount of student loans that needed to be paid, the lessening income as of last month.

The bank was biting at his heels.

Explained why he didn't eat right, part of him mused. That kind of income was just above poverty level.

Poor baby boy.

That cemented the fact that he would bring food to their crime-fighting outings. Taking care of his little spider, offering what little he could, aside from his endless wit and charming personality. And the firepower to end the scumbag who dared to hurt his Spidey.

Deadpool drew himself out of his musings. He knew Peter's address already, had checked out all the prior addresses. No new secret revealed there.

What was his angle? What did the geeky kid that was Peter Parker, biophysicist, get from being best buds with the likes of Deadpool?

What did Spider-Man?

Spidey was a goddamn, true, down to the very bone and marrow hero. He was essential good, all pure, all tasty and delicious, wrapped up in tight, body-defining spandex.
What was it?!

Deadpool sat in front of his laptop, staring at the intel, fingers tracking along the edge of the machine in a mindless pattern.

His mind, though, wasn't just tracking. It was jumping all over the place and trying to look at the information from every angle.

No one would gain anything from trying to connect to him, the hellhound. That broken wreck of a man. He wasn't useful anymore.

The Avengers hired him to do the dirty work, never associating with him openly if they could help it. He had had run-ins with Black Widow and Hawkeye, had gotten the stink-eye from Tony Stark, the cool, distant, downright judgmental one from Cap.

He would never be good enough.

Not even by loose association with Spidey.

His hero.

Who was more now.

Who was Peter Parker and so much more.

Wade drew a sharp breath, leaning back into the old, ratty couch, burying his hands into the pockets of the too large hoody.

The numbness had made way to a distant ache. Like an analgesic that had worn off, the ache was getting stronger with each day.

The chimera had always been strong, but now it was growing more confident, more assured in its existence. It had gotten a taste of something it wanted.

It was hungry.

And with his preternatural side, Deadpool was yearning for something that shouldn't be possible, that shouldn't be his anymore. It had been erased, remade, destroyed. They wanted a clean slate to make him into what they had wanted.

Wade Wilson had looked into the amazing brown eyes, that youthful, amazingly handsome, downright beautiful face, and all the other amazing attributes… Yes, amazing. All of him.

Peter. Spidey. Petey.

He smirked a little to himself.

The yearning was gnawing at the wreckage of his soul, all those tiny splinters, those charred bones, blackened and dead, left over from a time when he had hoped to find the one person to trust.

Vanessa had seemed like the perfect choice.

They had made her like that. They had made him want her. Weapon X had manipulated his drugged mind, had twisted his DNA to accept her as his bonded handler. Wade wasn't sure he would have consciously let her be that one for him if he hadn't been plagued by hallucinations, half starved, close to asphyxiated, yearning for release and fighting to survive in the same breath.
Peter wasn't Vanessa.

He simply wasn't.

For one, he was male. Very much so. Very, very manly in all the right places. That part of him smirked, fangs showing behind hungry lips. A man after his own, dark heart.

But he also hadn't been created for him, made perfect for Deadpool, to bond to the chimera and control it.

But he was.

So perfect.

So tasty and sweet.

Wade dropped back his head and stared at the ceiling.

His very soul ached, a phantom pain in someone who was soulless and incapable of forming a connection his kind was capable of achieving.

Phantom pain.

That ache that wouldn't go away. And the thought of Peter's touch, his expression, that touch of bare lips against his masked ones.

Deadpool closed his eyes with a soft groan.

He wanted. With a passion that he hadn't felt... forever. This was real yearning, real need. Nothing induced by drugs.

He was in deep, deep shit.

Really deep.

He wasn't stalking Peter.

Nope.

Just watching.

From a distance.

Completely not creepy and completely normal.

Watching.

That wasn’t really stalking, right? Right?!

Sure, he had taken a peek through the windows into the nerdy apartment with its stacks of books, papers everywhere, a laptop on the coffee table, a desk overflowing with geek stuff, but he hadn't broken in.
Deadpool had a limit.

Then again, not really.

But he watched and he waited, and he didn't so much as glance at the red and blue figure dropping gracefully on the roof beside him. Wade was too much aware of him anyway. Too intensely, too acutely, too minutely. Every cell in his body responded to the nearness of the other man.

Reach out.

Touch.

Feel touch in return.

Skin on skin.

Watch him turn and run as he finally saw the wrecked skin and hollow man underneath the cool mask.

"In anyone else I'd call it creepy," Spidey remarked casually and settled down on the low balustrade. "In you? Normal behavior."

"Getting to know the objective."

"I'm an objective?"

Deadpool turned at the teasing note, taking in the tilt to the head, the almost playful aura around the younger man.

Who had kissed him.

Who had offered.

Who wanted… Deadpool? He had to be out of his mind.

"With a great ass," he commented with equal playfulness, pushing all the darkness and scathing thoughts back into their cold, dark and dank cesspit of his mind. "Great assets, too." He winked.

Spidey chuckled. "You could come in, y'know," he then remarked. "You're invited. Just in case that's what it takes to get you across the threshold."

"I'm not some fucking vampire," he grumbled. "Sure, I'm kinda undead, but then again, not really. Heartbeat and all. I also have a reflection. Not one you'd wanna see, but I got one. So not a vampire. But hey, maybe they put some of that into the mix, too. Who knows? Might have lost their notes. Didn’t read about bloodsucker on top of the other shit. Do you think real vampires exist? Never met one, though there have been some suspicious characters I could have sworn…"

"I'd like to."

Deadpool blinked, rambling coming to a full stop. "Huh?" Oh, smooth. Really smooth.

"I'd like to see you. At my place." Peter shrugged. "You know who I am. You probably researched me."

He knows me.
He kissed me.

He wants... he can’t understand what he wants!

"And it isn't like that big of a step to get my address, right? Just in case you didn’t have that one already."

Spidey nodded at the building.

Deadpool watched him silently, all kinds of scenarios running through his head. Then, when Spider-Man dropped over the side of the roof and swung to his own, he followed.

Automatically.

Not really thinking.

The chimera purred; pleased. It stretched through the ruins of his soul, darkness oozing out of the void and curling happily around the charred ruins. Milky eyes held a silver glint, watching Spider-Man with fascination and longing.

He was so fucked.

Fucked up and fucked in one.

The phantom pain was back and it felt no longer like a phantom at all. It was a clamoring noise, a scream to follow his instincts.

*

It became a thing.

Between them.

Just without the kissing. Neither spoke of that incident again, the closeness and Peter’s offer.

Deadpool could feel it, though. That invisible connection, the way he leaned closer without physically moving, and how it affected him to be with Peter.

Deadpool would be Wade, would be spending time with Peter, not Spider-Man, though they were one and the same, and then again they weren’t.

He would bring over pizza or Mexican food, sometimes sub sandwiches and a family bag of chips, would sit on Peter's old couch and watch the younger man work, or they would just enjoy a TV show, play video games, make fun of B-movies…

Normal, and then again not.

Peter would sit in his jacket or sweater, in old jeans or sweat pants, he would give Wade bright smiles or just shoot him quizzical looks when the runaway mouth made short work of normalcy. He understood Wade's TV references, from way back in the Seventies to today.

But it was normal. For them.
Peter didn't run. He didn't hide.

Like Wade did all the fucking time. Hiding. Hiding himself.

He also wore glasses.

Large lenses, plastic frames, nerd glasses.

He looked like a fucking college boy, not someone who had already finished school and was struggling in the job market.

*What have I gotten myself into, brain?* Deadpool wondered. *And when? And why him?*

What was so special about this man that the chimera was so focused on him, gave in to Peter, calmed down and curled up into a fluff ball of terror?

*What power do you wield?*

tbc...
Chapter 8

They would patrol together. Still go out every night, watch the streets, apprehend the occasional bad guy, and now and then one of the more advanced baddies made a run for something or other.

Peter would shoot pictures of Spider-Man, now with his sidekick Deadpool, and sell them.

"Why?" Deadpool asked as they waited out a viciously cold and stormy shower underneath a low overhang on a roof top.

"Pays the bills."

He snorted. "Barely, I'd say."

Because Peter was struggling. He was still interviewing for a full-time job that paid above minimum wage in a lab. So far, no luck. Either labs were looking for cheap help, refusing to pay more than absolutely necessary to keep someone for longer than a month or two to finish a project, or they were asking for work experience rivalling Peter's actual age, while the candidate still had to be under thirty.

Spider-Man shrugged. "Gotta make a living anyway I can."

They sat very close together, Spidey in his crouched position, a warm, welcome weight next to Deadpool. Deadpool in turn was leaning a little into the lithe body, humming softly to himself, watching the rain. People below were hurrying through the shower, some with umbrellas, most using newspapers or their bags to attempt to keep dry.

Lost cause.

Spidey shivered a little and Deadpool cocked his head.

He didn't say anything.

His protective instinct was clamoring at him to keep Peter warm, but he knew he would get more than a verbal whack on the nose.

Still, it was hard to hold his tongue.

But he did.

Good Deadpool.

Somehow they migrated back to Peter's place anyway, both sopping wet. Spider-Man's costume, already skin-tight, was now truly molded to his body, showing all those nicely defined muscles.

Spidey disappeared in the bedroom for a while, coming out in fluffy sweats and towel-tousled hair, glasses firmly on his nose.

Wade felt something in him stir with a vengeance.
He wanted this.

So, so badly.

He clamped down on the all too human desire... no, not human. Never human. It was his preternatural side and it was hungering. Dangerous. Lethal to everything it touched. It would destroy this forever, twist and mangle Peter into something he wasn't and never wanted to be.

"You might want to dry off."

Deadpool caught the towel out of reflex.

Yes, he was soaked through. He was cold, but didn't really mind. He was leaving a puddle where he stood and, well, oops.

"I'll go. Think I left the lights on or the stove burning or something. Might have a cat to feed."

"Wade. Don't."

There was no heat behind the words. Never an order or a command. Just a request. A voice so soft and low, so intimate in his own ears, it touched the broken parts and made them shiver.

Peter had offered once more. It was clearly an offer and the chimera wanted it, whining low and needy in the back of Deadpool's mind. For once it didn't try to grab onto the flimsy connection, bite and claw at it. It was slinking around the anchor, nosing at it, wanting to curl closer.

It seemed an almost tame reaction that had Deadpool thrown and unsure.

Looking into the open face, seeing the seriousness, the acceptance, the very need Wade felt himself reflected back at him...

"I think I've got some stuff that might fit you," Peter continued as if he was oblivious to the inner chaotic turmoil. "You can wait out the weather. We can have leftover take-out? Watch TV?"

So tempting. Like baby boy was tempting. Like he was perfection wrapped in beauty, topped with an enticing cherry surrounded by deliciously sweet, whipped cream.

This was the apple and the apple pie all in one. A la mode, too. Big glob of delicious vanilla ice cream, though Deadpool somehow doubted Peter was vanilla. Nope. Never vanilla.

It was his downfall. Not his first sin, really not very original either, but it felt like it.

He should leave.

Staying only made it so much worse each time, but Wade wanted that pain, preferred it to the numbness of before.

Peter just shrugged and walked over to the couch, plopping down. Deadpool had no idea when he consciously decided to go into the bedroom, strip off the soaked costume. He grabbed some of Peter's clothes that were baggy enough to hide inside.

His eyes fell on his scarred hands, then he glanced into the mirror.

Brown eyes, a silver ring surrounding the irises, gazed back. The only ever outward sign of his preternatural side. Now on full display as the chimera pushed forward, scrabbling at the door of its cage to be let out and take what had been presented to him.
Weasel had described his condition in all kinds of creative ways. Wade tended to agree. Weasel was also one of the few people he had been himself with, without the mask.

Because he had seen the way others treated him when he sat in a booth at the bar, drinking, eating, his face for them to see. He could see their revulsion and pity, the questions in their minds.

Deadpool drew up the large hood, letting it fall as far into his face as he could, then pulled the sleeves down as far as they would go. He would have preferred gloves. And his mask.

Peter didn't really do more than look up, like a glance, when Wade exited the bedroom, dressed in layers and hiding within the borrowed clothes. There was hardly anything to see, the hoodie functioning almost like his Deadpool mask, and he kept his head down.

Food was on the table, microwaved leftover Chinese, Thai and some Mexican. It was an odd mix of half-eaten rice with beef or chicken, burritos, one taco, half a pizza, and some garlic bread he had managed not to turn into a soggy mess.

Deadpool hesitated for a long second, then settled down on the couch, scooting a little away into a corner and cradling the burrito in his hands.

Hands that were hidden inside the too long sweater.

"You get the sleeves greasy, you wash it," Peter only remarked.

The other man stilled, then, after another long second, pushed his hands out of the safety net that was the hoodie.

Scarred hands, looking like covered in uneven burns that had healed badly, interlaced with white lines and some still reddish slashes. There wasn’t a good patch to be seen, but they looked hardly like Peter wanted to bring up his dinner again. There were no open, weeping sores, no tumors, no bleeding cracks, just… bad skin.

He had actually seen worse.

He had fought against super-villains who had looked like something the cat had brought up again.

This… this wasn’t stomach-turning. This was far from the horror Wade always made it seem.

Peter grabbed the remote and switched on the TV, zapping through it until he settled on a rerun.

Wade started to eat, face in shadows, angling himself in a way that insured Peter couldn’t catch a glimpse. He had seen the lower half of his face countless times, covered in taco or pizza sauce. He had seen him eat.

Still, Peter never turned to stare, just keeping his own body relaxed.

Wade started to mirror it after a while.
This was how Casual Fridays started.

Not always on a Friday and casual was open for interpretation, but it meant masks off and no costumes.

Deadpool always wore a basecap, pulled deeply into his face, with a big hood covering the rest of his head, or just a vastly oversized hoodie, his face in shadows.

But he more readily showed his bare hands.

Peter counted it as a win.

He didn't try to peek, respected the boundaries, and the low lighting Deadpool chose for those get-togethers. He stayed out of immediate reach and kept himself turned at an angle that didn't allow much peeking anyway.

The mellow feeling between them was growing, both comfortable in their skins.

For Wade, being comfortable in that skin was a new sensation.

For the chimera, the skin was changing, becoming less oppressive. It started to flex claws that had been dull and blunt, now sharp and gleaming. And behind it, wing-like shadows spanned the vortex it resided in.

It stretched languidly, unfolding to its full size, all sinewy power and grace.

Deadpool could feel the changes, could almost touch a part of him that had been undead for so long.

It felt good.

Insanely good.

Peter never verbally offered again, but he made sure that Wade knew it was still on the table.

When Deadpool stopped sitting as far away on the couch as was humanly possible, when he let himself relax into side-to-side contact, especially with lights off and only the TV shedding any kind of illumination, Peter saw it as a next big step.

The hood was still pulled down low, but it was a win.

Sometimes he wished he could talk to someone about this. Whatever this was. It might help to get an opinion from someone with an outside view. It might help to just talk.
But there was no one.

Hawkeye, or any of the Avengers, wasn't on his list for heart to heart talks. Aunt May had no clue about Spider-Man, about Peter's secret life and everything connected to it, and she had no idea her nephew was getting close to a preternatural. A preternatural who might just be able to bond, and that person was Peter Parker, who was willing to be the chimera’s anchor. MJ, while a friend who knew who Peter was, wasn't high on the list either. Peter wanted to keep her out of his hero life as much as possible.

So, there was no one.

He was on his own and so far, he thought he was handling matters as best as possible, in his very humble opinion. Wade was taking small steps in accepting that Peter really wanted to be close to him, wanted to get to know Wade Wilson, not just Deadpool.

And he wanted him to understand that he accepted the chimera. Wasn't afraid of it.

Never really had been.

Peter briefly wondered if there was a self-help guide out there tackling that specific problem, but he doubted it. Not even the trashiest of boulevard magazines could come up with their crazy-ass connection, let alone a chimera to start with.

When he saw him inspect the web shooters, fascination and pure interest on his masked features, Peter had to laugh a little.

"You made these?" Deadpool asked, sounding intrigued.

"Yeah. My first shooters were cobbled together from a watch and bicycle parts."

Deadpool gave a soft whistle. "And you made the sticky stuff."

Peter nodded. "A variation of a so-called bio cable. Ten times stronger than steel."

"Smart little spider." Deadpool peered at the tiny nozzles. "That's how you vary the web designs."

"Kinda. Lots of trial and error. I changed a lot over the years. I still keep developing stuff."

"Smart," the other man repeated, voice soft. "So very, very smart."

Peter took the web shooters from him, slender fingers brushing along Deadpool's. He felt the uneven skin, just for a moment, but that wasn't what had him fight the goose bumps.

He wasn’t a teenage girl and hormones, while there, didn’t rage through him unchecked. He was reacting on an almost abstract level, one connected to the preternatural in the other man, and it was flaring now and then.

"Oscorp would sue the last penny off my broke ass if they knew how I… borrowed from them to make these. Stole a few of their ideas here or there."

Wade chuckled. "Peanuts for them, baby boy."
Peter shrugged and fiddled with the web shooters.

"You are very talented, Petey. A self-made hero."

"Like you?" he teased.

"I'm still in training," Deadpool answered with an audible smirk. "Learning from the best."

Deadpool still marveled at the whole situation. At Peter, being so relaxed around him, so accepting. That he wanted to touch him. Not as Spider-Man and Deadpool touching; as Peter caressing Wade’s skin and enjoying warm, human contact.

He didn't need to force himself onto the other man; Spider-Man let him.

Voluntarily.

It boggled the mind.

He had tried to discuss it with Weasel, but the other man had waved him off.

“TMI, dude. I don't want to know about your sex life any more now than I did before! Leave me out of the perv.”

But there was no perving. It was weird and strange and he was unaccustomed to it, but while he still enjoyed the sights, still made crude jokes about assets and more, he privately thought of other things.

While wanking in bed or the shower.

Repeatedly.

Deadpool was simply glad he had a healing factor or he might just develop carpal tunnel or, worse, his dick would spontaneously combust or fall off.

He loved his little spider.

Deadpool was pretty sure of that.

They patrolled together every chance they had, kicking alien ass when the Avengers couldn't contain their latest dimensional problem and some of the things escaped, running rampant.

Deadpool got to shoot them for their troubles of trying to invade New York City.

He was a very happy camper.
It had been Liberty Island, of all places, where the latest Portal Incident™ had taken place.

Lady Liberty had survived, with just a few scratches and one massive burn mark near her right foot.

The alien invaders were smoking husks.

Deadpool sat on an overturned alien… chariot, for lack of a better description. He looked like fried chicken, all charred and flaking leather, humming the Indiana Jones theme to himself. There were a few holes in the suit, but nothing too bad, and the skin underneath was covered by soot. He was moving his head in rhythm to the theme song, wiping off blood and grime from the katanas.

Peter joined him, hopping easily up onto the alien machine. He was exhausted, his own costume singed and featuring burn holes. His skin was reddened, but nothing really bad. Nothing that blistered or oozed.

Deadpool… well, there might be just that underneath all the charred bits sticking to him. It was always hard to tell with the color scheme and the leather armor over the spandex.

They didn't talk, just shared closeness, and Deadpool seemed to relax a little more than he usually would himself allow to in such situations.

"Spider-Man."

He looked up at his name. Iron Man stood in front of him, face plate up. There was a bruise on Tony's cheek, the armor featuring dents where dents shouldn't really be.

"Deadpool," Tony added, though he sounded like he didn’t want to even acknowledge the other man was here.

The mercenary inspected his damaged glove, then wriggled his fingers happily at him. "Man of Steel. Whoops. Copyrights and product placement! My bad, Tin Can."

Tony ignored the words, looking at Peter instead. "You did good."

Despite being ignored, Deadpool visibly beamed. "Do we win a prize for most shot down aliens? I got fifteen of them at least. Do triples with one bullet count as doubles? I was down to three bullets and I really made them count. Not that bullets can count, but it counted." He winked exaggeratedly.

Tony rolled his eyes. "No."

"Aw, shucks. Should've read the fine print. You always stiff me out of my prizes."

Peter couldn't contain an amused smile underneath his mask.

"SHIELD will have a clean-up crew here ASAP," Captain America announced as he joined the group. "The EMP blast has taken out a wide radius. Police and emergency response units are having a hard time getting through. The Quinjet is unaffected. The EMP shield held."

Cap nodded at Tony, then gave Wade a frown as the merc continued to list his kills, doing crazy ass calculations on how much alien hides would go for these days to compensate for time and money spent on this.

Deadpool ignored the look. "Save it, Pops. You called us, remember? And you said anything goes."
That means any force necessary."

“We asked Spider-Man,” Iron Man snarled.


“Slight mix-up,” Spider-Man murmured.

“Whu-at? No way!” Deadpool turned back to the two Avengers. "So… bonus?"

"We don't pay for your help."

“You always say that and then Fury pulls out the big bag of money and I come skipping.”

Deadpool sighed and pulled out a decidedly charred piece of paper from one of his many pouches. He had a pen in his other. Peter wondered how those pouches worked anyway.

"Overtime. Travel expenses. Loss of income due to emergency response to Spangled Ass's call. Dry cleaning. Just look at my suit!" he gestured dramatically. "Getting blood out is almost impossible without special products. And those costs. We also got ammo, blood, sweat and tears. Then there's two of us, so twice the costs. I get full compensation since I've finished my hero training, which Spidey can attest to. So…?"

"Not paying," Tony ground out, looking a little closer to shooting the merc than a mere five minutes ago.

Peter just watched the exchange, trying not to let his amusement show. He figured he wouldn’t intervene. The Avengers called, asked them to help. Technically they asked Spider-Man, but Deadpool was truly the bonus. He had tagged along and his fire power and fighting abilities had helped. So Tony had to deal with the mercenary on his own. Peter wouldn’t step in.

"Do we get at an invite to the after show party?" Deadpool wheedled. “Puleeeeeeaze?"

"There is no partying."

He snorted. "Right. That's what they always say when I ask, then there's a roaring orgy going on and no one invited me!"

Iron Man's face plate snapped down and he fired up the repulsors. "Hawkeye will fly you back," he growled. "Cap? Need a lift?"

"I'm waiting for SHIELD."

Deadpool raised a hand, looking excited like a little kid seeing his hero. “Me, me, me!” he cried.

“In your dreams.” Iron Man lifted off.

Deadpool switched from Indiana Jones to the Imperial March as Cap walked off.

"He's pissed," he stage-whispered at Spider-Man.

"What gave it away?"

"He’s usually such a charming persona." He batted at a persistently smoking piece of leather. "All American goodness and so on. The chocolatey core of the fluffy muffin."
Peter leaned a little against him, just a moment, sharing closeness in a wide-open space. It was risky, but they were alone. The media helicopters were unable to fly due to the EMP blast and the Avengers weren't really paying them any attention.

It stopped the humming and Deadpool gazed at him, suddenly focused and quiet.

"You did good, Wade," Peter told him. "Thanks for tagging along."

"Wouldn't let you have all the fun, Spidey," he replied, humor in the low voice. "I get to shoot stuff. Deadpool happy."

"You're so easy," he teased.

"And don't you know it."

Hawkeye flew them back to the city with the Quinjet, dropping them off on a roof top of their choice.

His expression was a mixture of curiosity and reluctance to ask. In the end he didn't ask.

Peter had never been more glad.

Right now, talking about him and Wade wasn't on top of the agenda. Especially to an Avenger.

*

Deadpool made breakfast on weekends when Peter didn't have to work.

So domestic.

The pancakes were amazing.

The frilly apron was just a little too much, but Deadpool made I work. Somehow. Yes, he was wearing the mask and only showed his mouth and nose when they were eating, but it worked.

One step at a time, Peter mused as he chewed on the most incredible blueberry pancakes he had ever tasted.

"Secret recipe," Deadpool whispered as he leaned close, waggling his eyebrows. "If you're a good boy, I might tell you."

Peter grinned and pushed the masked face out of his personal space. "Dream on."

"You are part of each of them, Spideybabe."

Deadpool went back to flipping pancakes, humming to himself. Peter just enjoyed a breakfast that left him full and warm.

That feeling deep inside his chest, that mellow warmth, hummed with pleasure.
They had started a kind of living arrangement that was part roommates, part best friends, and part something that couldn't be put into words.

They worked perfectly well together, cleaning up the streets.

Sometimes they ran into the Avengers without having been asked to assist and Deadpool was his annoying, mouthy self while Peter just face-palmed and finally pulled him away. He ignored the various looks he received, though Hawkeye simply grinned now.

Deadpool was trying to change.

He really was.

He didn't kill. He rarely took any missions or assignments, and when he did, he swore on his soullessness that it was for SHIELD and had contained no killing.

Peter didn't ask in what kind of condition his enemies had been left after the fight, but he was strangely proud of the effort.

tbc...
Okay, huge update today!

And I promise, next chapter will be the beginning of Deadpool making that big step you've all been waiting for. And I think I need to raise the rating to Explicit for the one following that. Just my suspicion after looking over the scenes I've already written and that need to get fleshed out now.

Anyway, here's some stuff to read and tide you over till next time. My guesstimate is I've reached halftime for the fic.

Have I ever mentioned how crap I am at writing quick little ficlets? Or anything closer to just 5k? *hides*

It took Spider-Man getting kicked in the head so hard he fell unconscious right away, bleeding copiously from a head wound, for Deadpool to really lose it and for something else to click into place. For the chimera to break out, mowing down a bunch of drones until only spare parts were left. He had no measure of time and space any more. There was just the lifeless form of his partner, the blood, and then the darkness descending on him like a shroud.

"Daddy needs to express some rage," he whispered harshly.

The chimera reveled in the kill, even if the robots didn’t bleed. Some fluids were spilled, but it was no blood. It strained against the chains, wings spread and glinting like blades.

Behind the mask's white eyes, Deadpool's eyes were glowing an intense silver, reflecting the powerful thing inside as he shot, sliced and stabbed at whatever got into way. He never moved from Spider-Man's motionless form, reveling in the high-pitched screeches from the dying machines.

Protecting.

Avenging.

Hey, he was an Avenger, shot through his head for a tenth of a second, then that cheerful voice was drowned by the chimera's roars.

And suddenly it was over.

Harsh breaths sounded in his ears, his mind roiling with the carnage he still wanted to spread, and he bared his teeth. A growl left his lips.

He was bleeding from shot and stab wounds. There was a piece of metal sticking out of his side and he pulled it out with an almost careless move. Blood leaked copiously from the unplugged entry wound, but Deadpool ignored it. It would stop in a moment, and it did.
His eyes fell on Peter.

Motionless.

Bleeding.

Not again! the chaos screamed.

"Shit, Spidey," he whispered, falling to his knees and raking worried eyes over the torn costume.

There was a lot of blood. Headwounds tended to bleed copiously. And for his resilient little spider to go down like a felled tree and stay unconscious, it must have been a pretty big blow. One that would have killed an ordinary human.

The whine of engines alerted him to the arrival of Iron Man, Cap hanging on to him like a Christmas decoration. A very nice, edible, muscular and dreamy Christmas decoration, Deadpool mused, just before pulling his guns and aiming them at the two Avengers in an almost casual manner.

Safeties off.

Fully reloaded.

"Fuck off," he said evenly, voice low and grating.

"Deadpool, we can help," Cap offered, holding up his hands in a placating manner.

"Thanks but no thanks, Spangled Ass. Me and my pal Spidey will just leave the party on our own."

The usual lightness was missing and even Captain America got the warning in the flatly delivered words, but he wouldn't be the All-American Hero if he didn't press on.

"He is injured, he needs medical help."

"No biggie."

"Spider-Man doesn't have your healing factor, Deadpool," Iron Man snapped. "He needs professional help. He's unconscious!"

"He's got the most professional and sexy nurse right here. Now get out of my way before you need more than a nurse, sexy or not." He raised an eyebrow, the expressive mask mimicking the move. "One…"

Iron Man growled something under his breath that was meant as a curse, but to Deadpool's very good hearing it was actually a compliment. The repulsors started charging.

"Two…" Deadpool continued, voice amicably light, nut the mask reflected deadly seriousness.

"Deadpool, please."

"Three. You know I can count all the way to ten. I was first in my class. Gold sticker star and so on. Four." He tilted his head. "And the next one is five."

Cap expelled a breath. "Okay. We'll go. Should you need help…"

"Six."
Another sigh. "Tony, let's go."

"We can't leave Spider-Man like that! With him!" the Tin Can protested. "He's a maniac and we have no idea what he'll do!"

"Se-ven!" Deadpool sang. "And seven ate nine!"

“Call if you need help,” Captain America offered seriously, giving Tony a little push that had the armored man actually sway. "You know how to reach us. Tony, let's go."

"You trust him with Spider-Man?!"

"Spider-Man trusts Deadpool. I believe we shouldn't judge that."

Stark opened his mouth, then his eyes fell on Deadpool once more. "Fine!" he growled.

And they were gone before Deadpool could add a song about ten.

Muscles relaxed slightly, but his senses were still on high alert. The chimera was predominant, spoiling for a fight that was already over.

Spidey was starting to move, making soft noises of pain. Deadpool secured the guns and holstered them, sure in his ability to undo all of that and kill whoever dared threaten them in a heartbeat.

"Hey, baby boy," the merc murmured, touching the bruised body. "You got a bad kick to the head. I'm gonna get you home."

"I can websling," came the groggy reply.

Completely on automatic.

Deadpool had to smile. His baby boy was adorable. "Sure can't do, kid. Now, let ol' Deadpool handle this." He smirked under the mask. "Handle. Yep. I'd love to handle this."

Spidey leaned against him, a weak chuckle leaving his lips. "Ask me again in the morning."

"You wish. One time offer, Spidey. Now or never."

"Rain check. I think I’m gonna be sick."

"That's what they all say when they get a load of this. Upsidaisy," he proclaimed. "Up we go, webhead."

Spidey groaned and locked his knees. He cursed softly under his breath.

He didn’t throw up, thankfully.

*
Peter slept off the bruises, though the head wound took a little longer to close and stop bothering him.

Deadpool was a protective, worried presence, refusing to budge and even going as far as trying to call Peter's workplace.

"No!" he hissed, grabbing the phone and ending the call. "I need this job!"

It got Peter a shrug and an hour later his table was groaning under a ton of food from seemingly every take-out place in a five block radius.

"You look way too skinny," was the mercenary's comment as he plopped down with tacos in his hands.

"I'm not skinny!" Peter chose Thai, sitting down next to his partner. "And you know the rules." He gestured at the outfit.

"It's not Casual Friday."

"I don't care."

"Oh, Petey the rulebreaker." He stuffed a taco into his mouth. "You're a real bad boy."

"Watch me."

Deadpool pulled off his gloves as a compromise and they ate in silence. He relaxed into the cushions of the sofa and Peter felt the same calmness.

Something curled around his very soul. Huge, dangerous, absolutely lethal and easily the most nightmarish thing to ever be born, but it was warm and protective when it leaned into Peter.

Like Deadpool leaned into him, careful of his injuries.

Peter let him. Him and the chimera. Everything he was. Because he wanted this and wouldn’t revoke the offer.

He fell asleep right after eating.

Deadpool kept waking him at intervals, checking his reactions, his memories, even though Peter bitched and growled and downright cursed at him for it.

“You’ll thank me for keeping that handsome head in peak condition, baby boy. Wouldn’t want you to wander off into the area of memory loss and whatnot.”
When he woke on his own, without the insistent shaking, it was the next morning. Peter had slept for more than ten hours, with interruptions, the food was in the fridge and Deadpool sat on his couch, dressed in his civvies, laptop on his lap.

Working.

Or watching porn.

Whatever.

The hood was again pulled down to hide his whole face, but the hands were bare.

"Look who's gracing us with his radiant presence?" the older man crooned. "How y'doin', baby boy?"

"Head's okay."

"Good to hear."

Peter plopped down on the couch next to him. "I missed work," he breathed.

There was a surge of panic, then just resignation.

Deadpool hummed in agreement.

"I'm probably fired," he sighed and dropped fully against his partner and friend.

Deadpool froze momentarily, but since Peter had turned his upper body to keep himself from accidentally catching sight of Wade's face, he relaxed again.

"You should ask your buddy Stark directly. I mean, he’s the head honcho. You work for one of his myriad companies. I'm sure he could get you in somewhere. Isn't there some kind of Avenger Buddies card?"

"We're not buddies," he grumbled, wriggling slightly to get more comfortable, suppressing a wince as his head protested.

"Or you could save on rent and stuff."

Peter rolled his eyes. "The only way I could save anything is to move into a cardboard box under the bridge," he stated flatly. "This is as affordable as it gets in New York."

Deadpool was humming softly. "I know a few places. Better than this cubby hole in the wall. I mean, your heating is shit."

"Who did you have to shoot?"

It got Peter an amused laugh, but the merc didn't expand on his statement about affordable living space.

Silence sat between them. Companionable, warm silence.

The rest of the day passed just the same way, sharing space and physical contact. Peter sent pictures of Spider-Man off to the Bugle as an offer and got an almost immediately reply, selling a few of them.
It would tide him over until the rapidly approaching end of the month.

If he reduced food to shared meals with Deadpool.

Yeah, sounded about manageable.

Who needed regular meals anyway?

*

Deadpool kept close when they went out, costumed, keeping the streets safe.

Hovering. Touching.

Peter let him.

He so badly needed it. It was like an addiction that the other man was aware of but never spoke about. Deadpool had to viciously fight down the desire to snuggle into him, nuzzle against the warm skin, maybe just nip at it.

Just once.

It was reassuring to feel Spider-Man alive, warm, in motion. It was...

Grounding.

Anchoring.

Making his life less unstable.

He had nearly lost that.

Yes, Spideybabe was more resilient than the run of the mill human, but he wasn’t immortal. He wasn’t like Deadpool.

He could die.

The mere thought of that loss had Deadpool want to drive his katanas into a handy criminal and gut him for daring to touch his… his…

He swallowed.

It was harder to ignore everything now.

The offer. The need. Peter’s acceptance of what he had already seen of what Wade Wilson really was.

He was losing the fight; the whole battle and with it the freaking war.

Wade kept recalling the kiss, the touch of lips against the mask, and he wanted that again. Preferably without the mask.

Peter was still giving him space, letting him handle his freak-outs on his own. And they were
freak-outs. Sometimes quite massive ones, going on and on inside his head.

The chimera was trying to bond. Its own twisted and probably terrifying way of bonding. Deadpool was frightened of what it might turn Peter into.

His perversion, his artificial existence… his darkness.

In another lifetime he would have known how to do this, but that life had ended and that ability had been ended. What was left was a monster that shouldn’t exist.

How could Spider-Man… how could he even think about wanting it? How could he bear the thought to connect to a lethal monster that no one knew anything about?

It was getting harder to keep the chimera in check, though.

The desire was overwhelming. And Peter didn’t really push him away.

‘Life begins where your comfort zone ends,’ a postcard told him.

He burned it.

This was worse than fortune cookies.

*

"Voila, as the French like to say," Deadpool proclaimed and spread his arms wide with a flourish.

Spider-Man blinked at the huge, open space. This was easily large enough to make four family-sized apartments out of it. He hadn't seen much from the outside, but it was five storeys tall and located in a rather quiet area, surrounded by a lot of warehouses and storage facilities.

"Whao," he murmured.

It was perfectly habitable, though absolutely bare, down to the walls. The high windows were a nice touch, as was the view. Stairs were leading to an upper level that consisted of another empty room with high windows and a terrace spanning half of the roof. The view wasn't anything to pay for, but it was nice and still rather private.

"Plumbing still sucks," Deadpool told him amiably. "Well, there is none to speak of, but that can be changed. Money can get you a lot of things. And walls might help with the whole echo canyon feels. Though listening to the echoing cries of ecstasy throughout the throes of pleasure…"

Peter ignored him as he rambled on about all the places where sex was an option in this place, and just took in the nice open space.

"So what do you think?"

He blinked. "About?"

Another flourishing spread of arms. "This. With the plumbing and good heating it should be okay, right?"
Peter had really lost track of things. "For?"

"You, my confused little Spideycake!"

"What?! Deadpool, I can't afford this place!"

"I'm sure you can. The landlord's a pretty cool dude. You could probably pay him in sexual favors or some ass groping. He isn’t picky."

Peter knew he was staring like an idiot, though it was hard to see behind the mask.

"This is your place!"

Deadpool cocked his head. "I knew you were a sharp cookie."

"Wade…!"

He closed the distance between them and Peter was suddenly looking into the white eyes, taking in the serious expression, the way Deadpool's body was all tension. He felt the chimera, the power it was, the untamable nightmare inside an indestructible body. It was regarding him with cold eyes, but the warmth and longing were plain to feel.

"You offered me something more than this is worth, Peter," he said, voice low, touching something deep inside the younger man.

"What…? Wade, no! What I'm offering isn't connected to anything like this!" he protested. "No strings attached. Ever! You don't have to give me…" He flailed his arms. "This!"

Deadpool clenched his hands into fists, the leather creaking softly. "What I feel around you… is too real sometimes. It's intense and shouldn't be possible. It happened... It happened and I can feel it, but seems unreal! Losing you is not an option. Ever! Protecting you is everything, Peter."

He shivered at the words. Calmly delivered words, absolutely level and with such an intent… almost like a dark promise, a vow.

"I can take care of myself!" he heard himself protest.

The white eyes were burning from behind the mask. "Spider-Man can. Peter Parker can, too. But Peter needs money for that. A job. You have neither. I have both. I need to do this, keep you safe…"

The whole presence of his partner was mesmerizing. The intensity would have been enough to make even the weakest empath fall over in a dead faint.

"Instinct," Peter murmured, voice incredibly soft, like realization was finally hitting him.

Deadpool was so close now, crowding him against a window, warm and heavy in his body and mind. His fingers ghosted over Peter’s sides, his arms, never inappropriate and still more intimate than anything else.

So tactile. So very much still who he had been before everything had become such a mix of DNA and mutation.

"I shouldn't have it any more, that desire, the whisper of the bond. But I do. And it's clamoring against the crazy and insane inside me," Deadpool told him hoarsely, one hand coming to rest on Peter's rib cage, the other on his hip. "I want this… you… so much. And it hurts. Because the
hellhound died. The ability is gone. The chimera isn’t capable of it. I feel the phantom echoes and it’s killing me.”

Peter looked into the white eyes. "You're not dependent on me, Wade," he said softly. "You're so strong on your own. You survived so much and you didn't give up. You went on and you made a new life. A crazy, erratic life, but it's life, Wade."

Deadpool was silent. It was an unusual state outside their calm, centered moments.

"And I don't want to be dependent either. I've always made it on my own, with my own money. I can't take this. I can't owe you for… this. I appreciate what you want to do, but this is overkill. You can't push me into a life I can't live. Like I won't ever ask more of you than you can do either."

Deadpool dropped his head against Peter's shoulder with a soft groan. "I'd never call on whatever favors you think you owe me, Spidey. Never. I'm good. I'm not a monster. I'm really good."

Peter brushed a hand over the mask. "I know. It's just… I… can't accept it, Wade. I just can't."

There was a moment of absolute stillness, the air thick and heavy between them. Then the merc stepped back abruptly, his mask suddenly unreadable. He was out the door and gone within a second.

His habit of running was starting to grate on Peter’s nerves. He wanted to yell, to just sit on Deadpool until he understood, but he knew it was the wrong way. They were getting closer. He could feel the chimera more now, watching him with sharp eyes, its attention always on Peter.

Wade's instincts were running haywire, but he was reacting not like a sane human being would.

Spider-Man looked around the huge space, exhaling slowly.

Damn his life.

He understood Deadpool's offer, but Peter's pride was getting in the way. He had always managed to live his own life, working two jobs, juggling it with being Spider-Man. He supported his aunt as much as he could, made sure she was safe from his secret life. He had never taken money from anyone. He had never accepted rent-free room.

Deadpool… Wade… wasn't just anyone.

His protective nature was rising, overwhelmingly oppressive sometimes, and it was getting them nowhere.

"You don't make it easy," he murmured.

He needed to think.

Thoroughly.

In the end, Peter borrowed money from Aunt May out of desperation, promising to pay her back right away.

Wade said nothing. He was actually suspiciously absent for the next days.
He just fed Peter. There was take-out in the fridge whenever Peter opened it, which meant Deadpool had broken into his place and filled up the fridge.

He didn't have it in him to yell.

*  

"Why am I the Agony Aunt again?" Weasel peered at his best friend, a frown on his scruffy features. "Jesus Christ in a bathtub! You really are dense, y'know!"

Deadpool buried a knife in the worn table top, making Weasel jump a little. He pulled it out again, then repeated the exercise. Wood splintered, the knife leaving ugly little scars.

"I know I'm just plain human and don't have a preternatural instinct in my bones, but looking at you? Hellhounds don't court and you aren't a super, but some of them do that. Like a ritual. Offering pressies to the mate of their choice. Dude, you want this so badly."

"I can't," he bit out.

"If you feel it, why do you think you can't? It's instinct! It's there for a reason, right? Not that you and Spiderguy start popping out kids. Not that you can, right? You might be a fucked up collection of DNA grafts, but they didn't change the whole set-up. So why are you so dense, Wade?"

"Because the ability to balance myself was taken from me with Vanessa! Torn out and left a wasteland!" Deadpool hissed.

This time the force of the blow drove the knife deep, anchoring it in place. Weasel winced.

"You owe me a new table," he grumbled. "Listen, I know they killed the hellhound, but there is more in there, right? The chimera is more. And something in there can connect, maybe even bond."

Deadpool stared at him like Weasel was insane. "That 'something' is a monster, Weasel. It's worse than anything naturally born out there. A rabid werewolf is a puppy compared to it! You want Spidey to be forever chained to this?" He gestured at his face. "Because this is what the inside also looks like! Not fluffy and warm and cuddly! It's nasty and ready to tear your throat out! Way more teeth and claws, too."

Weasel shrugged. "I got used to it. Somehow. Well, mostly. In bright light and not in a dark hallway, where you scare the shit out of me. Literally, man. What I'm saying is, there's much worse than that. You got all your limbs, nose, eyes and ears. The hair's optional. Bruce Willis makes it work. So give it a shot. If it bites you in the ass, hey, you tried, right?"

"The outside is not the problem!"

"But you hide it. And you think you're hiding the rest. Spiderboy isn't stupid, dude. He has this alarm, right? He'd be running for the hills if he felt threatened by the chimera. Why don't you start easing yourself into this? Show him your face."

Deadpool didn't answer.

"You come in here all the time without the mask on. You don't even crawl into a hoodie. You sit
there and let the freak out. It never bothered you."

"It bothers me," he ground out.

"Fact is, you don't show him your ugly mug, just us," Weasel pointed out. "No one's called the
Ghostbusters on you in the past. Just show him, Wade! I never met he guy, but he sounds like a
cool dude who wouldn't throw up his lunch in your lap. Stop pushing gifts at him like you're
fucking courting the girl in the ivory tower with the hair like gold! Man up and start with
introducing yourself. Properly."

Deadpool pulled out the knife with such force, a chunk of table came loose.

“Man!” Weasel moaned and watched his friend go.

Deadpool spent the next hours hunting down a werewolf who had gone off the deep end and killed
a few innocent kids not too long ago. He took pleasure in going up against the claws and teeth,
feeling their bite and delivering his own blows in return.

In the end he left the bleeding rug of worthless scum for the cops.

His own bleeding rug he took home, mourning his costume. Werewolf claws were a bitch on
leather and spandex. It would take a while to repair it.

He felt better at least.

The crazy in his mind more on the down low.

Sitting in his living room, cleaning off his katanas, Wade finally made up his mind.

Weasel had been right.

Weasel was almost always right.

He had to take a first step; the right first step. That meant to stop hiding.

The fear racing through him was almost overwhelming.

For once, the chimera didn't curl up and whimper in shared terror. This time it sat in the void,
strong and proud, completely aware and awake. It was waiting, with a patience it had never shown
before, and it was watching Wade with infinite eyes.

So his most primal side had already made up its mind.

Deadpool closed his eyes and wished he could just shoot himself in the head.

He was about to leave his comfort zone. He was about to really… live.

He was scared shitless.
"Fuck. Me," he murmured.

tbc...
Peter had had a crappy day and it was turning into an even more crappy late afternoon. There had been two failed job interviews. One had looked at his resume and told him he was overqualified and they weren't about to pay him that much money. The other had told him he didn't have the experience necessary for a really simple test run that would last about six weeks and any college student in their first year could have done it.

Peter was frustrated. Extremely and utterly frustrated. He would have drowned his sorrows in greasy fast food and a ridiculous amount of sugar, but his budget for this month was tight and he couldn't spend more than he already had.

At least the Bugle had given him something for his latest batch of pictures, even if that meant just two weeks of rent were now secured and he would probably have to eat Ramen for the rest of the year.

He evaded some cars as he sprinted across the streets, listening to the honks and yells, then dove under an overhang.

Sleet came down heavily, turning the pavement treacherously slick, and there were smaller accidents all over the place. The police were busy and pedestrians tried to stay out of the freezing rain.

Peter ducked into his street and breathed a sigh of relief when his key worked right away, without the necessity of jiggling the lock. He was cold and hungry, feeling tired and worn.

His apartment was thankfully warm, though the heating was still pretty much unreliable. Today was one of the better days for warmth.

Peter was greeted by the sight of pizza and donuts on his table, and he had to smile involuntarily. Those were about the calories he would need to make it through the rest of the day and not fall over half dead throughout patrol.

So he grabbed a large slice and dumped his bag.

It was then that part of him rippled, though not in alarm. It was just a reminder that there was someone else there, but no one with an ill intent, and Peter knew before he turned.

"Hey," he greeted Deadpool, giving him a wide smile. "Thanks for the food. I really need it. Crappy day. Job interviews were a bust. So how was yours?"

The first slice disappeared lightning fast and Peter grabbed a second one. Wade just shrugged.
almost nervously. He was wearing one of his habitual plain hoodies, face in shadows, and his hands were stuffed into the pockets of his aged jeans.

They had both unanimously and without any words decided to ignore the whole 'I offered you a humongous apartment for free' incident. It had been eight days ago and those eight days had been Peter trying hard to find work, even if he only worked for five days in a pizza joint that gave him barely minimum wage, but he could eat for free. After the five days the regular worker had come back and Peter was jobless again.

He wasn't desperate yet, but he was getting close.

Deadpool had been at his side throughout those nights he was Spider-Man, enjoying patrols and helping people. There had been no private get-together and Peter had respected the distance.

Now he was here.

"Epiphanies and all," Wade said with a one-sided shrug. "Weasel says hello, by the way. He would have sent cake, but his baking is shit."

Peter finished a third slice. He was really hungry. "Epiphanies?" he queried, mouth full.

"A sudden, intuitive perception of or insight into the reality or essential meaning of something, usually initiated by some simple, homely, or commonplace occurrence or experience," Wade quoted, sounding like a walking dictionary.

"Oh-kay?"

"Happens from time to time, even to me. Usually in the shower. Or while unaliving someone. Rarely when I eat. Somehow tacos require all my braincells while the rest is just… well, like getting off in the shower. Practiced motions. No brain required. All blood down south and busy elsewhere."

Peter blinked, still chewing. The pizza was heaven and he was ravenous. He picked up a donut after he had swallowed the last pepperoni piece.

"So I got my ass kicked. By Weasel, who happens to be my best bud, and my brain, which happens to be my worst enemy," Deadpool shrugged again. "Two against one, what can I say? And it's me against me, too. I should listen to myself when I lose against myself, right?"

"Wade, what…"

And suddenly the hood was down, the scars there for all the world to see. Peter stared, the donut halfway to his mouth, now forgotten.

It had come so out of the blue, without a real warning, he was dumbstruck. All he could do was take in the face revealed to his eyes. All of Wade Wilson; not just the chin and lips.

All.

Peter felt something inside of him unfold at the sight, something that was sending an unexpected surge through him.

"Wow," he whispered.

"Yeah," Deadpool snorted, averting his eyes. "I know, right? Stomach turning. My very own horror
movie. It walks and talks in all its haunting reality."

Peter slowly shook his head, the words not really making any sense.

Despite Deadpool’s continuous statements that people would turn tail, puke their guts out, Peter felt no revulsion. Curiosity, yes. Questions welling up inside him, sure. The surge turning into a relentless push to get closer, to touch, to feel all he had never been allowed to see. He wanted to explore the texture of the scars, compare them to the fleeting touch of the already revealed hands.

Wade Wilson wasn't a monster. He wasn't a freak. He wasn't the stuff nightmares were made of.

He was a man marked by the ordeals of his life, by his terrible illness, by the experiments. The scarring resembled gruesome burns that had healed badly in places. Here and there a web of scars crawled along the strong jawline or up a sharply defined cheekbone. There wasn't a single visible hair. No eyebrows, no stubble, nothing on his head. Neither his ears, nor his nose, were deformed.

What stood out were the eyes. Expressive, brown eyes that reflected fear, longing, apprehension and need. Eyes that were so much older than Deadpool could ever be, full of anger, full of self-loathing, doubt and self-hatred, all flashing through them in a second.

Eyes that averted their gaze as Peter tried to look into them, with a stubborn set to the tense jaw. A muscle twitched.

And there was something else. A fine sheen of silver along the edge of the brown, almost like a hallucination on Peter’s part, but it was there.

Wade Wilson was a man, a human being, not a monster. He was a preternatural. He was a lot of things, but no abomination. Not a freak.

"Hey," Peter murmured when he had slowly closed the distance.

"Hey," was the hesitant reply.

Wade’s eyes tracked quickly over his face, refusing to meet his own eyes, and he was visibly fighting not to hide underneath the hood again. There was a stubborn determination there, to ride this out, to face it all, even if instinct told him to cover himself and run.

Peter felt the bond coming to life between them. Slowly unfolding. Slowly reaching out. And at the other end sat the chimera, strong and unwilling to back down again, that strongest of instincts in Wade, the one that had finally outvoted the human fear.

Something seemed to scout around the forming connection, looking to get closer but still strangely hesitant despite its nightmarish hunger, wanting more of Peter, but afraid to take it.

Wade swallowed, mouth dry, as he finally looked into Peter’s open face. He was waiting for the grimace, the expression of discomfort, the pity maybe.

None of it came.

The chimera stretched, purring, almost smug. It was scooting closer toward Peter’s end of the connection they had, sharp claws ready to strike and lodge themselves into the other man’s very
self.
For good.
Forever.
If the last barrier fell... when it fell... it would strike.

A million thoughts that normally ran through his messed up mind were suddenly silent, hiding behind a corner and leaving him out in the open, lost for words.

Traitors.

"It can't be real," Wade murmured, sounding almost frightened.

That feeling, that pull. This singular need.

"Why not?"

"She died... and I died with her."

Peter regarded him steadily. "You didn't. The hellhound did, yes, but the chimera came to life and it is so much more. It can bond. I've felt it before. Several times."

He shook his head, less in denial than in desperation. Wade wanted this man. More than he had ever wanted Vanessa. What he remembered of the time before her death was fragmented and sometimes a little like a freakish trip, just without the fun drugs. They had made her appealing, had pushed his preternatural side into craving her, seeing her as perfect.

Even now, asked about how they had met, he would think of the beautiful woman who had shared his warped sense of humor, hadn't balked at his crude answers to teasing questions, and he wondered whether it was real or not. How much had been Weapon X’s manipulation and how much was at least based on real events? Were his memories planted, a manipulation? Was there a core of truth?

He would never know.

She was gone.

Peter was... hadn't been made for him. He was beautiful and very real, so tasty to the hunger inside him.

And he offered.

Patiently.

Repeatedly.

His very presence was overwhelming.

"I can't do this," Deadpool groaned. "I want you so much, but this... this thing... it's a monster! I can't let you touch it!"

"You're not a monster, Wade," Peter told him calmly. "Neither you nor the chimera."

"It's not just the outside!" the other man snapped, fury briefly surging. "This... this is the ugly-ass
wrapping to a horror that you can't define! Look up every synonym of ugly in a thesaurus! It's not enough! I don't know what this would do to you, Spidey!"

"You wouldn't hurt me, Wade. No part of you would."

"You don't know that! You know nothing of what's inside me, because no one does! I don't know! Fuck, I haven't touched another human being outside of killing them, breaking bones and dealing out bruises and open wounds! I could lose it… hurt you… and I couldn't live with that, Spidey! Ever! I can't let you… Because… I can't trust myself!"

"But I trust you. I trusted you when we fought together, to have my back. When I was injured, at your mercy. You were never anything but protective. I trusted Deadpool without knowing who was underneath the mask, who you really were. It was part spider sense, part human instinct. But… bonds don't have to be sexual," Peter said slowly, offering an out. "I know it. I researched it. We wouldn’t have to touch more intimately."

Wade gave him a tired smile. Horror and hope warring inside him.

The horror of not getting to touch Peter more than he already did, listen to him voice his pleasure. And the hope that Spidey understood, that he would finally just… go. Leave Wade to suffer alone until the end of time.

"Yeah,” Deadpool breathed, tethering on the edge and about ready to jump, simply to end the torture. “No sex needed. What a relief, right? You don't have to touch this cabinet of horrors more than you should have to. I won’t touch you either. Not any more. Pinky promise."

Hellhounds didn't need sex to confirm a connection, to get close to a person they trusted. It was just… surrendering to the need inside him, handing over his life, his soul, his everything… and give power to someone else.

Deadpool was soulless and his hellhound was dead. He was a chimera.

Deadpool's life was… nothing. All sharp, serrated edges and pain.

He had nothing to offer and everything to take.

The chimera wanted the physical side, wanted to taste Peter’s skin, hear his cries of want and need. It was a lot more sexual than the hellhound it had been born of. It wanted to take what wasn’t its to take, wanted to make him its own, and Wade was terrified of how strong those needs were.

No one knew what could happen.

Peter saw and almost felt the warring emotions running through Wade. His eyes were truly a window to his soul, what was left of it, and the terror of hurting Peter, physically or on a psychic level, was plain to see.

He felt no revulsion, no fear. He knew he was staring at something powerfully dangerous, something that could erase his very self, but he knew it wouldn’t harm him.

It wanted him. He filled an empty slot inside the chimera’s being. The hunger was plain to see and he felt it coming along the ever-strengthening bond, but it wasn’t dangerous.
“I didn’t say I don’t want you, Wade. I never said that. You keep running when I come too close. I want to touch you,” he said calmly. “Very much. And more. A lot more. Do you think you’re the only one jerking off in the shower?”

Wade’s jaw dropped, then snapped shut again. His eyes were huge, reflecting shock and disbelief. His inner turmoil was now very plain to see. It pained Peter to realize how much the man was into the self-flagellation, how much he hated the exterior and thought it was all there was left.

Peter reached out. Deadpool jerked back reflexively, minutely shaking his head in denial. "Please?

And he was touching Wade's skin, running an exploratory caress over it. Peter felt the unevenness, the raised scars, the slightly rougher patches. It was warm, human skin. Nothing but human skin. For all Peter cared it could be scales. This was Wade. This was the man he had wanted to touch for ages; forever. This was the human being underneath the mask of Deadpool.

The contact was firm, but still gentle, giving Wade ample time to retreat, but he didn’t. He was frozen to the spot, just about catching himself from flinching back once more, and then his so expressive eyes closed.

It was like a surrender.

The tension that had locked his body in place flowed out of him, shoulders lowering a little, and there was a soft whine, barely audible as he leaned into the touch more firmly.

Peter smiled. “I also want to kiss you. May I?”

The eyes flew open again. Wade's expression was thunderstruck, mouth opening slightly.

"Really?" he whispered.

"Yes. Really."

"How much did you drink?" he blurted.

Peter let his amusement show. "Nothing at all."

Then he leaned forward and pressed their lips together.

This time he moved with more purpose than on the roof, with the mask between them. There was no mask now. His tongue licked over the chapped lips, asking gently, never pushing too hard.

And finally, finally!, Wade reacted.

An arm around his waist, pulling him toward the hard-muscles, firm body. Lips opening, meeting his tongue, responding warmly, hungrily.

It was a bone-deep hunger, surging forward, along the anchor line, pulling Peter closer on all levels. Wade made a desperate sound, still controlling himself, still not letting go completely, but he was losing.

Quickly.

Peter felt it, the wave of desire rising along the connection they shared.
It couldn't be compared to Gwen. Or anyone else he had ever kissed. It was Wade and Wade was unique. The texture of his skin, of his lips, was strange, but it felt nice.

Another wave thrummed through him. He felt Wade shudder, the low whine barely audible.

_Let go_, Peter thought. _Trust me. Trust me to trust yourself. Let go._

The kiss grew deeper, Wade wanting more.

Peter was all too happy to comply.

It was a shock to the system, feeling the soft, pliable lips against his own rough ones. It was human contact, intimate contact, one he hadn't had in too long.

It was freely given. It was voluntary, not forced under pressure, not because Deadpool had threatened him.

_Intimacy._

Not just crude words falling from his lips, reflecting his admiration for a certain anatomy.

Wade felt himself react, the kiss hesitant and close to shy, then growing in intensity, ending with the sensation of a smile forming on Peter's perfect lips.

His mind blossomed with warmth, the sensation running down his spine and settling there. All his senses were on overload.

Something ruined and forgotten seemed to knit itself back together, surging forward and enveloping Peter with everything it could muster.

There was a hum.

Peter didn't fight, welcomed the presence with open arms, wanted it.

The next kiss was harder, hungrier, with more intent. No hesitation. Just need.

There was a soft groan from his perfect little Spideyboy. It went through him, making the darkness unfold with a vengeance.

This… this was it. This was what he had so desperately wanted. This was what he needed.

And more. So much more. He wanted to never let go and just fall into the so freely offered contact.

Then there were hands on his neck, sliding up his scarred skin. No hesitation. Firm touches. Driving him crazy. A warm body flush against him, all hard muscles and lean lines that begged to be touched.

Emotions lay thick between them and they both knew that only one step would turn everything upside down, destroy their old world and create a new one. One step, one action, and things would never be the same.

“I want you. Like you are. Wade. Deadpool. The chimera. Let it go.”
“Peter… don’t…”

The plea was there, open and bright, Wade vulnerable and close to the edge before him.

He hadn’t been touched by anyone in a very long time. It had been only own hand, or the enemy driving a knife or assorted other lethal objects into his body. There hadn’t been any other touches.

“Just let it happen, Wade. You won’t hurt me. I’m not that breakable. I can take it. Fuck, I want you so much!”

Wade drew a shaky breath. He wanted this, too. He wanted this man. He didn’t think there was a time he hadn’t wanted him deep down on that primal, carnal level.

Peter nipped at his lips, those eyes open and without shields. There was pure desire there, the still standing offer, the longing, and in the middle was this core of strength that wasn’t just Spider-Man.

_Do you know what you're doing? Are you aware of the consequences? How can you want this?!! How can you accept this?!_ ran through Wade's already whirling mind.

Peter's answer was just as wordless. He was this steady, calming presence, open, accessible, offering everything.

The last barrier went down, crumbling to ashes. The cage opened. Deadpool’s whole world collapsed and then realigned itself.

The harsh, cold whispers along the ever-strengthening bond increased, sounding comforting and reassuring. There was no maliciousness, just unbridled, almost wanton desire.

The chimera gave a triumphant shout and tore free, turning the ancient ruins of his shattered soul to dust, wiping the slate clean. Like a phoenix from the ashes the unrivaled apex predator rose, insubstantial, black wings spreading.

And insanely sharp claws buried in Peter’s soul forever.

tbc…
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

Okies! I left the rating since this isn't THAT descriptive with in-depth details all the way. If anyone thinks M is too low and should be upped to E, lemme know :)

Also, I've been fretting over this since Saturday. Won't get any better. So here you go!

Wade ran his hands over Peter’s body. It was wonderful, intoxicating, and it was bittersweet. It was purely his Spidey in his openness, his silky feel where he brushed over exposed skin, his delightful warmth, and it was his pain and desperation and own damaged soul.

His hands slid under the t-shirt, encountering more of that warm skin and the bump of old scars from a life as Spider-Man. He recognized some of them; others he wanted to explore. Touch. Taste.

Peter's hands weren't idle either and they easily found their way underneath his hoody and onto his skin.

Wade stiffened, but Peter's touch never faltered, even when feeling all the horror that he would also soon see. If Wade took off the hoodie. And his pants.

Everything.

He closed his eyes and willed the panic back into its cage.

The chimera rumbled impatiently.

"Are you okay with this?" Peter asked.

Are you freaking kidding me? his brain screamed.

Did he want this? Was he okay with this?! Hell, yes! He wanted it all. He had been dreaming about this. He had spent time and again trying to deny his body the release, then caved and gotten himself off.

Wade had wanked off to the image of Spidey's perfect little ass, those strong, defined legs, those nice arms, that lithe physique.

He had fantasized about having this man bonded to him, to be normal once more, like before the cancer and before Weapon X.

"You have to ask, Petey?" he managed, taking those perfect lips in a hungry kiss. "Just working through another crisis. Keep getting a load of them. In waves."

Peter kept caressing him, hands on naked skin, finger-tips following scar patterns in a way that made Wade shiver.

"I know you still doubt this, but I never did. This is what I want. And I want to see it."

“It’s not getting better underneath.”
“Wade.”

He drew a deep breath.

Peter tugged at the hoodie and the merc finally let him help remove it. Wade looked away when his upper body was revealed, but there were no retching sounds, no gagging, no door slamming in the wake of running feet.

Peter placed his palm flat against Wade's chest, drawing it over the uneven skin with such gentleness, the chimera looked up and blinked. There was almost something like reverence in Peter's eyes, something so deep and warm, so intense and only focused on him… it was breathtaking.

"You're not a monster, Wade," the younger man said softly. "You're not horrible. You never were. You are human. Maybe you look different, but you're not disfigured. I like this," he added in a low, warm voice. "A lot."

He leaned forward, sliding his hand around Wade's ribs and around his back, pulling him in close. The kiss grew into more, skin sliding against skin, and Wade reveled in the smoothness, the slender, warm form, the strong, defined muscles on display.

_I want this_, floated between them. _So badly._

“You’ve been forced into something similar before,” Peter said breathlessly when they separated. He sounded so serious, so worried, Deadpool wanted to cry and yell at him in one.

“Not the same,” he growled.

“Wade…”

“Not the same!” he repeated, the chimera breaking through in a flash of silver eyes and a snarl heard in those three words. "My choice. This time it's my choice."

And it was already too late.

He couldn’t go back. Peter was his. His! The chimera had claimed him, had attached itself deep inside, even without the added bonus of a roll between the sheets.

Possessiveness flooded him and he claimed another kiss, a little harsher now, feeling the need rise.

And he felt Peter, full body contact, and it seemed to throw him off balance and complete him in one.

His world shrunk down to one particular sensation, one feeling, one need.


_Mine!_ the chimera crowed.

No fear, no pain, no harshness.

Just them.

Everything else was… unimportant.
The bond was forming quickly, loose strands between them twisting into each other, knitting together, curling and flowing into one strong representation of what they were. The chimera hovered protectively over the new-formed connection, snarling. Its claws were still lodged firmly inside Peter’s soul, refusing to let go.

When Peter sank to his knees in front of him, taking his time to open the too tight pants, playful and hungry in one, Wade nearly lost it.

This had only happened in his rather perverted fantasies. Too much porn, the internet, DVDs found in obscure shops that sold to hardcore wankers with a taste for some really sick stuff… Yeah, Deadpool knew all the depravity out there, had lazily jerked off to what he wouldn't show anyone else.

This wasn't depraved. Or sick. Or just an actor.

This was Peter on his knees, about to…

With the first touch of moist lips to his dick, Deadpool did groan a curse.

He hadn’t gotten any for too long. Just him, his hand, and an endless supply of hand lotion.

There was no hesitation on Peter's part, touching his scarred, despicable skin and caressing it, tongue and lips sliding along his hard dick.

So much better than fantasy. So very much better, so real, so…

“Fuck!”

It was almost embarrassing how fast he spilled into the hot, sucking mouth, breathing hard, watching the younger man lick over his sensitive head.

Peter looked up, eyes bright and hot, still playing with the semi-hard erection in his hands. Wade wanted to curse him and worship him in one. Better than porn. No porn site had ever managed that look, that desire.

“My turn,” he managed roughly.

Want him. So badly. All of him. Want to take him and never let go.

Peter eyed the hardening cock. "Low refractory period?" he breathed teasingly.

"I'm like a fucking rabbit. The one with the good batteries. It keeps going and going…” He winked.

Peter rose and kissed him, so close. He was this powerful, all-encompassing presence, taking away rational thought and replacing it with raw instinct.

The chimera pushed.

Spider-Man pushed back. Strongly, relentlessly, and it let him. It revelled in the energy this bright, young soul projected, soaking it all up, soaring, spreading shadowy wings and crowing in delight.
“Fuck it,” Deadpool snarled, backing the other man against the wall, hands sliding wherever he could reach, palming against Peter’s dick.

It got him an encouraging groan.

“How’s your refractory period?” he asked roughly.

Peter arched into his palm, demanding more, eyes sparking.

“Let’s find out?”

It was a mess.

And it took the edge off.

Wade grinned, unrepentant. “This should hold.” He wiped his hand against Peter’s jeans.

"Planning on more?" Peter asked, breathing a little harder, though not from exertion.

The fire in those brown eyes was going to be Wade’s undoing. And those undone pants. The shirt had long since been shed, both men now equally half naked, and Wade wanted to lose the rest, too. All of it. He wanted to see Peter all naked and while part of him still clamoured at what a bad, bad, ultimately insanely just bad decision it would be to show Spidey all of him in return, he had learned to ignore that part.

"'S not like you aren't,” he rasped. “Seems like coming back up is one of your super powers, after all."

If the grin was just a touch predatory, so be it. If it showed a little more sharp-edged teeth than was human, so be it.

Uh, wait, what? Part of his mind waved frantically at him that his teeth did not, in fact, have sharper edges. Never had. He wasn’t a wolf!

The rest of him bludgeoned that voice of maybe-reason into silence.

Peter didn’t comment on the fact that he probably felt Wade's own hunger, still there and raging unabated.

“Can we take this to a bed now?"

“Oh, we can. Because it's a place we aren't going to leave any time soon,” he promised darkly, voice a growl.

Peter stepped out of the jeans, and with them his underwear, and Wade felt his brain stall.

This was his.

His!
It was almost obscenely pleasurable and arousing to have Peter push him onto the bed and crawl over his lap.

The kiss was hard, demanding, needy. Messy. With more teeth. And yeah, he had fangs. Not Spidey; him. Deadpool.

Cool.

Just something else to add to the list of what the chimera encompassed.

Hot spiders in his arms got him fangs.

Peter’s eyes looked blown, his face flushed, and he was a sight of pure arousal and untamed need.

The chimera approved.

Then Deadpool took control, the preternatural side surging forward and wrestling Peter onto his back.

Wade’s intent was clear and Peter had no objections.

He looked into the badly marred face, saw the intensity in the brown eyes, now ringed in silver, and he groaned in hunger.

It was almost too much to bear, to have that talented mouth and those strong fingers work him relentlessly.

Wade was very fixated on having him come and come hard.

With his long dry spell, Peter did; again. With a groan of relief that was almost a sob, hands digging into the mattress, pushing into the hot mouth and feeling teeth scrape lightly over his cock.

“Fuck,” he breathed.

Deadpool was above him, lips reddened, wet. His eyes glowed silver and he leaned down to give Peter small, biting kisses.

“Want you,” he growled. “So, so much. All of you. In every position imaginable. You have no idea how far my imagination goes…”

A sense of overwhelming desire and need pushed through him.

Peter curled a hand around the muscular neck, pulled his partner into a long, intense kiss that was as dirty as the prior encounter had been, and he felt the hard evidence of Deadpool’s hunger against his hip. He wrapped his other hand around that hardness, squeezing playfully.

It got him a growl, teeth nipping at his lips, at his chin.

Peter bent a leg and Wade slotted himself more comfortably against the other man, trailing biting kisses along the smooth neck.

"Been a while? Or first time?" he murmured.
The younger man grunted. "Not going to break. Not my first time."

And while he didn’t have Deadpool’s healing factor, his recovery time rivalled the merc’s. He hadn’t even gone completely soft.

Oh, this was going to be so much fun.

Deadpool licked his lips, feeling the relentless hunger of his preternatural side eat away at him.

"Not gonna hurt you," he promised, voice low and throaty.

"I know you won't. And I'm not made of glass," Peter replied, relaying his own hunger for this.

And he didn’t inflict pain.

Preparations were meticulous – and driving Peter insane. He was pushing back onto those fingers inside him, hungry and demanding.

And strong.

So much stronger than Deadpool in everything.

"Wade," he moaned. "Please…"

He silenced him with a kiss.

"Now!" Peter demanded when they parted, looking so wrecked and close to breaking.


His mind was rambling that over and over at him. His Spidey. His mate. Matematemate! Not just a handler. So much more. So much just for him…

The chimera didn’t need a handler. It didn’t want just a connection. It wanted it all, basic, primal, sophisticated and refined, no matter. It needed an equal, a balance.

And Wade slid into him in one long, hard stroke.

Sensations sparked through him, nearly drowning out rational thought. He groaned, feeling tight heat and his own surging hunger.

There was no pain, no fear, just the pleasure. He went deep with each stroke as Peter pushed back, fingers digging into the hard muscles, encouraging, wanting more.

For all his hunger and need, Wade wasn’t coming as quickly as before and he pushed Peter into almost getting completely hard once more.

Both felt loose and raw and oversensitive and it was too much and not enough and too soon and not soon enough.

Emotions flowed together.

Sensations became mirrored by the other mind.
When the climax hit him, Peter’s groan was almost like a release of its own, even if there was little he had left to give. The incessant slide, the pressure, the hard form pushing against him, had him want more while simultaneously cursing the other man for his teasing play. He was overstimulated, felt like electricity was crackling through him.

He felt teeth puncture his skin as fangs bit down, and it shocked him into a second spurt that had him cry out.

Holy shit, Deadpool had fangs!

For a single moment he saw the chimera in all its glory, black as night, put together from a dozen different other things, winged, clawed, fanged, and displaying fur and scale. It was a wild, wicked thing, a melting pot of all the good and bad of every super- and preternatural donor that had made it what it was now.

It was his. Peter felt a possessive surge go through him.

Then there was just a rumbling purr of satisfaction coming along the bond and nothing but calm, warm darkness enveloping his soul.

Keeping him safe.

“Wade,” he groaned, batting at the fingers around his flagging dick.

He was done. Absolutely done and done for.

Peter shuddered in pleasure when Deadpool withdrew, half-collapsing over him. Peter wrapped his arms around him, feeling scars under his fingertips, feeling heated skin and sweat.

The bond was alive, thrumming with the echoes of their release.

“Fuck,” the merc groaned into his shoulder, lips sliding against smooth skin. "Thought I was broken before. Nope. This is broken," he slurred. "You broke me, Spideyboy. Fuck, you broke me and my dick."

Peter chuckled, running a feather-light caress over the warm skin, calming his partner, centering himself and Deadpool in turn. His fingers traced over the uneven skin, feeling the rougher patches, the scars that had risen to the surface and felt like a web over the warmth.

“We also established you’re a kinky ass,” the younger man stated playfully.

Wade lifted his head and those expressive brown eyes fell on the red bite wound. Not just two punctures like a vampire. No, a jagged, irregular mark with four more pointy indentions along the blunt teeth impressions.

Silver encroached on the brown, the chimera satisfied and proud.

“Yikes,” the merc huffed.

Peter had to laugh, pulling him into a messy kiss. “Got any other shifter abilities I should know of?”

“I didn’t even know of that new freak show. But hey,” Wade said brightly, “I might just develop a knot next. Now that’s kinky!”
Peter snorted, shaking his head. “Only you would think that.”

“Wouldn’t you want to try?”

“Nope. Pass.”

“All the fanfics make it sound extremely hot. I bet I could drive you crazy with lust, let you hang on the edge and oof…”

The next kiss was deeper, more involved, ending only because Peter really needed the air to breathe. He framed Wade's face, smiling into the dark brown eyes that held so many emotions. His thumbs rubbed gently over the scarred skin.

“This is hot already,” the younger man stated quietly.

He felt a shudder run through Wade. Like this was what he had needed and had been afraid to ask for.

Support.

Confirmation.

“You shouldn’t have to ask,” Peter said softly, voicing the emotional backlash out loud.

“You’re okay with it,” Deadpool stated, stunned. “All of this.”

It sounded almost like wonder. Like reverence. Like hope.

Those eyes were intensely expressive. It was a feature that still stunned Peter. So deep, so very gentle and open and vulnerable right now.

Peter ran a gentle caress over the bare skin, drawing a stuttered breath at his apparently daring move. Heck, they had just gone at it several times. How could Wade still be this doubtful? How could he refuse to accept that another human being found him desirable?

“I’m more than okay with this,” he said out loud. "A lot more than okay. I stand by everything I offered, and more.”

The silver was dominant once more.

Peter found it incredibly sexy.

“Hope your healing ability can keep up,” the chimera murmured, voice rough, hungry.

“I thought I broke your dick.”

“Healing factor, baby!”

He smiled widely. “Good to hear.”

Peter prayed his neighbors were either at work, asleep with earplugs in, or couldn’t care less about what their usually so quiet neighbor was doing right now.
Because there wasn’t a surface they didn’t try out.

Or a wall.

Wade was resourceful and Peter was flexible. And he could stick to surfaces.

Establishing a bond didn’t need sex when it came to a hellhound, but the chimera wasn’t that any more. The hellhound had perished long ago with Vanessa. The chimera was just now spreading its wings, being reborn with its mate. It was a possessive creature, harsh, demanding, and yet gentle in the way it made sure Peter wasn’t harmed, that all that was left was the bite mark on his skin.

It had demanded his soul, but it didn’t want a pound of flesh, too.

Wade looked at the exhausted, sleeping man in bed next to him. He felt strung out himself, like he hadn’t even after a painful, long regeneration. This was an exhaustion coming from a different side.

And with it there was the wonder and disbelief still deep within him.

Spidey. His Spidey. Peter Parker. They were mated. Peter had accepted the gruesome outside and the nightmarish inside of the soulless being that was Deadpool. He had handed over himself, had opened up and been vulnerable, and the chimera hadn’t destroyed him. It had nuzzled and caressed, had kissed and lovingly held the other man, their bodies moving together like they had never not been lovers.

It was an amazing sensation, powerful and empowering, hissing and snapping around them, making Wade yearn for more.

The protective instinct of his former nature was still strong and unbroken. He would die for this man, again and again.

The chimera would make sure to punish who tried to break Peter from him. The Avengers. The X-Men. Whoever. He just knew there would be cries of outrage. There would be those claiming he had forced this, that the chimera was capable of taking what it wanted against the will of the intended bond-mate.

The very thought sickened him.

It would be like… rape.

It made Deadpool want to blow his brains out repeatedly.

Wade wrapped himself around his bonded partner, the soft skin in complete contrast to Deadpool's own, and he closed his eyes.

He knew he would have to face possible accusations of that nature, that Peter would be confronted with them, that he would be seen as the victim to Deadpool's perversion.

Wade inhaled deeply, feeling the unease of before again, the nervous chitters. The bond responded, even though Peter was asleep. As if he felt the chimera's restlessness, the younger man seemed to flow closer, warm and heavy, drawing Wade close.

Calming him, evening out the nervousness. It gave him a boost nothing else, no drug, no energy
drink, had ever been able to give him.

He could do this.

He could face the world with Peter at his side.

tbc...
Chapter 12

Peter woke slowly.

_Huh, must have dozed off after all_, he thought fuzzily as his brain slowly came online, taking in the situation.

He was absolutely relaxed like he hadn’t been in ages. Actually, since becoming Spider-Man. Since Ben had died.

There were faint echoes of what had occurred the night before, but nothing too bad. It wasn’t even an ache. It was a… little prod into remembering.

He smiled.

Yeah, he remembered.

He was wrapped up in warmth, human warmth. Breathing, living warmth.

As new as it was, Peter felt no alarm. His mind lazily informed him that things were just as they were supposed to be. He was waking up with his newly bonded preternatural, with Wade Wilson, and it was a good way to wake up. He hadn’t had anyone in his bed for so long, it was a feeling like no other.

He had missed it.

The last time had been with… MJ. A very long time ago. And a very different time, a very different feeling.

Peter smiled wistfully at the butterflies in his stomach. He felt like a teenager after his first time.

Because of Deadpool.

Wade.

The chimera.

His.

The possessiveness was still startling him, but it felt good. Like the whole bond felt good. Nothing about it was wrong, dark or painful. It was a beautiful, calm center in his very soul, connected to a dark vortex of endless energy that felt silky and cool to him.

There was a little shift, muscles moving under skin, and a mumble as Wade woke. A hand stroked over his side, then came to rest on his stomach, and Peter involuntarily made a little noise of approval.

The movement stopped, the muscular form freezing beside him.

Peter blinked his eyes open and looked into the scarred face of Wade Wilson, Deadpool, his bonded partner… mate…

Wade's expression was slightly cautious, like he was waiting for the other shoe to drop, for Peter to come to his senses now that the sexy was over and make a run.
And, Peter realized, Wade would let him run. Deadpool would simply give in and accept it as fate. Well, screw that!

"Regrets?" Wade broke the silence, voice rough and a little raw, and there was so much caution and reservation swinging in it, it hurt. Like the other man had already resigned himself to accepting the certain outcome of this morning.

"No," Peter replied easily. "You?"

The wide-eyed shock was answer enough. "Me?" he squeaked.

He touched Wade’s face, seeing apprehension, then pulled him down into a kiss.

Wade relaxed abruptly, kissing back, hungry and apologetic in one. He trailed the kisses down Peter's neck, teeth scraping over soft skin. It had a desperate touch, mixed with something so much deeper, loving, warm and soft, it was in complete contrast to what Deadpool was associated with.

It had Peter shiver. It felt so right. It felt perfect. It felt… absolutely… unmistakably… positively…

Wade nuzzled the soft throat, kissing him gently, not trying to arouse. His fingers brushed over Peter's sides, his hip, his thigh. The younger man closed his eyes and let himself fall into the touch, an arm wrapped around Wade's broad back, their breaths almost in sync.

"Falling asleep again?" the merc murmured roughly, teething at the pulse point.

"No," he mumbled, then ruined it by yawning.

It had nothing to do with Wade lacking in making out. Peter was way too mellow right now, all the stress as of late forgotten. He hadn’t been aware of how badly he needed this, the intimacy and closeness, finalizing a bond that had been months in the making, until now.

Deadpool had shown the emotional stress and upheaval by being way overboard in is gestures, the protectiveness. Spider-Man had dealt with the crisis by locking everything up inside, trying to calm his partner as much as he could, reassuring Wade that nothing had changed, shouldering way too much.

Now that tight knot was no longer there.

“So I still got it,” Wade laughed against his neck, shoulders shaking a little. “Putting you to sleep.” Peter liked that sound of happiness. He liked feeling this human side of Deadpool. "Coffee? Tea? Me?"

"Coffee?" he yawned again.

Brown eyes, alive and warm with amusement, so very different from Deadpool's other persona, met Peter's half-lidded gaze. This was the man Wade Wilson had been.

"And here I thought you were a morning person, baby boy."

He was and he wasn’t. He could patrol all night, get up early in the morning for his part-time job, then the Bugle, and collapse before going on patrol again.

Now… now he felt warm and mellow. Very, very mellow. Peter didn’t want to get out of bed, even if his body disagreed and pointed out the merits of a toilet run.
“Think again.”

Wade laughed, sounding almost careless; free. Yes, Peter decided. He liked that.

“Strong?”

“Very.”

“One Deadpool Special, coming up. It’ll melt your spoon and put hair on your chest. Then again, I don’t really want to melt your spoon. It’s such a nice one. As for the hair… Baby boy, I love the bare chested look.”

Peter batted at him, silently laughing to himself.

The kiss was soft, without demand, just nipping gently at his lips.

The living warmth rolled away from him and Peter curled up on the spot of mattress the other man had vacated, soaking up the left-over warmth. He lazily watched as Wade slipped into a pair of boxers. He liked what he saw, the hard muscles, the grace with which the man moved. It showed a complete awareness of his body and its flexibility and strength. Yes, he liked what he saw.

And he wouldn't let Wade hide it under baggy clothes when they were alone, in private, and especially not when they were making out. Whatever Wade thought of himself, it wasn't true. Deadpool hadn't let anyone see him in too long, had hidden behind the mask or inside oversized, civilian clothes. He had convinced himself that he was a monster, hideous and horrible to look at.

Peter sensed a fluctuation along the bond and smiled as the chimera flowed around him, unbound, beautiful, so amazing and unique, a cool, silken touch. It had no clear shape, was ever-changing, but the silvery eyes and the gleaming teeth were always there, a mouthful of them, like a dragon's maw and yet not scaring him.

This had always been a two-way road. Wade hadn't been the only one profiting from their friendship, from getting closer, becoming partners and adjusting to this relationship. Where it calmed his chaos, it also brought order to Peter's. He felt more in tune with himself, ready to take on the world that was so intent on beating him down on a regular basis.

He tugged at the bond, feeling the preternatural slide closer.

Part of him.

Forever.

His bladder interrupted his lazy thoughts and he grumbled softly, climbing out of bed to follow nature’s call. And brush his teeth.

*

Wade stood in the tiny kitchen, watching the percolator, waiting. He was stark naked, feeling no shame, no embarrassment. There was this loose sensation whispering through him, all muscles relaxed, no tension knotting them together.

The smell of the coffee was already enveloping him and he smiled a little to himself. His eyes
roamed around the tiny kitchen, the old cabinets, the even older floor. Everything was a wonderful vomit green. The percolator was probably as old as the apartment, huffing and gurgling, but it worked. Like most of everything in here.

This was so… domestic. So not him. So nothing like his life and his job was.

So not Deadpool.

Inside, the revitalized… resurrected… strange anchor-line thrummed. Strong and stable, balancing his messed-up mind with his healing soul pieces. Fragments were still sliding toward one another, trying to fit. Not like before, because that was no longer his life. Not just his energy knitting the holes and weaving a net.

This was new.

This was… Spidey.

Peter was healing the wounds, had taken the charred pieces and put them back together again.

It had been so easy in the end.

After months of fighting, of denial and stupidity, it had been so easy.

His walls had crumbled like brittle paper in a gust of wind. In their stead was the solid presence of the anchor.

Deadpool wanted to laugh, he felt so relieved, light, carefree. Like he could walk out into the world, in broad daylight, with only shorts and a t-shirt. For all the world to see, because that was what he felt like.

On top of the world.

Screw everyone else and their bigoted opinions!

His preternatural side was purring, like a big, sinewy predator all curled up and watching the world with a lazy flick of its tail. Dangerous, protective of its bonded mate, and still in awe that this beautiful man had allowed him… this.

Not just the connection. Deadpool was sure he could have established half a bond without the physical involvement. It wouldn’t have been enough, but it would have had to be. He would have made it work, protecting Peter from the darker, uglier parts of him.

Well, Plan A to probably Z hadn’t worked and he was now in the double-letter area.

It was so amazing and new to touch and be touched. He hadn’t felt caresses on his hideously marked skin for too long. Peter hadn’t hesitated, had treated him like he was the most desirable thing he had ever seen, and he had let him fuck him.

Again and again.

And again.

And once more for good measure, because Wade had been starving for this. Spidey had to be sore from all that.

The blowjobs hadn’t been bad either. Hell, who was he kidding? His Spidey was a pro and he
hadn’t gagged at taking the scarred dick in his mouth and sucking out the last of Wade’s brain cells.

Damn, he was going all soft and gooey again on the inside, though one part of his anatomy was growing a little harder at the rerun of last night’s prime time movie with the adult rating.

The last gurgling puffs of the coffee machine drew him out of his reverie. Wade poured a mug and headed back.

He stood in the doorway to the bedroom, raking his gaze hungrily over the athletic form on display. Peter was too handsome to be his, too beautiful, too much.

But this man was his. Body and soul. The bond heavy and deep within him, making the chimera puff its chest with pride, looking content and at peace. Peter was probably the only one in the world who could look the darkness in the eyes and not run screaming in terror at the violence and blood and death the gaze promised. He touched it voluntarily, without hesitation, and it pushed into those hands, purred and leaned closer.

A regular fluff ball.

Wade had no words to describe what Peter was doing to him, to the primal side that would have torn everyone else apart. It was amazing and beautiful, shouldn't be possible.

The coffee in his hands was almost forgotten at the sight of naked skin, red marks showing against the paleness.

Peter shot him a lazy smile and got up gracefully to take the coffee from him. He was gloriously naked.

Wade felt the need to reboot his brain at the sight.

And with it came a surge of doubt again, the good feeling of before sliding sideways.

Mine, came the possessive purr from deep within him. There was a fierceness laced into that one word, an absolute knowledge, that had Deadpool shudder.

Catastrophic hardware failure imminent. Software virus possible.

How could this be real? How could this be his reality?

"I'm not going to disappear, Wade."

He swallowed. "There are second thoughts. And third. Maybe more. I know thoughts come in pairs or groups," he rambled automatically, defenses struggling to come online. "'Cause looking at this in the harsh light of day… realizing you let this fuck you… makes you want to think about your life choices, right?"

"No."

"No," Deadpool echoed feebly. “No?”

"No. It will always be a 'no', Wade. Always. It's my choice. I made it." Peter wrapped his arms
around him, coffee cup forgotten on the desk. His smooth skin aligned with Wade’s scars, the sensation almost too much to bear for a moment. "Stop trying to give me an out. There is no out; and I don't want it. Instinct isn't wrong. In our case, it was right from the first day we met. You just didn't trust yourself, your preternatural side. I had to learn to trust Deadpool."

He shivered with the words. The chimera was so dark, so vicious, the instincts all death and destruction, but when it came to Peter… Spidey… it was soft and loving, caring.

"Why aren't you terrified of this?"

"Maybe I read too many bonding romance novels?" Peter quipped.

Wade huffed a little laugh. "That wouldn't even surprise me. You're a closet romantic, aren't you?"

"Look who's talking. And I was never terrified of what was happening. Preters and Supers can bond with mere humans."

Wade scowled. "You're not…"

"I am. I was born a normal human. I became a mutant. College taught me something about bonding in certain classes, but I didn't think I'd be so lucky to get a chimera."

"Lucky?" Wade echoed.

"Lucky," he confirmed. "I'm not painting this in fluffy clouds and pink colors either. I know what the bond means. For both of us. We are compatible, Wade Wilson. That's why it happened."

The preternatural closed his eyes. You’re amazing, he thought. I don’t… I just can’t… how are you this perfect?

The power Peter had over him should be terrifying, but it was like a warm blanket, a calmness he hadn't felt like this before. It kept in check the nightmare, the lethal force that always took and never stopped hungering for the kill. And the next. And more. Eating up emptiness and leaving ash and ruins.

Peter leaned his head against Wade’s, so warm and alive, so pliable and seemingly vulnerable. The strength in the lean, athletic form was almost palpable and Wade wanted to touch and explore all day.

Because he could.

He was allowed to.

This was his.

His confidence soared again. The tightness in his chest, one he hadn’t really been aware of until now, suddenly eased.

Peter was compatible. To his level of crazy and insane. To his chaos and everything that followed it.

*Mate*, the thing inside him whispered, voice like serrated glass and sharp-edged blades. *Mine. My precious.*

And it was stealing iconic movie lines, yep. As long as he didn’t start quoting Darth Vader, fine. Deadpool drew a line at borderline incest.
Peter pressed a kiss against one temple, startling him out of his thoughts about twins and fathers. The next kiss was on the lips.

Wade slid a broad hand over the tight little ass that had always taunted him in dark blue and red spandex. Wade had wanted that ass since the first time he had seen it. It had been a game. The game had been upped slowly and now… now he was free to touch. It wasn’t even clad in any kind of spandex or underwear. It was flaunting, it was daring him.

Yeah, he wanted it.

Right now.

Bonding didn’t necessitate sex, but screw necessity. This was more than a balancing anchor for the terrifying weapon he was, for the horrific creature that had replaced his soul. This was his mate. This was his little baby boy spider.

Peter inhaled sharply when he pulled him impossibly closer, trapping the hard evidence of his own arousal against the rough, scarred skin.

"Hope you can call in sick," the merc rumbled.

"Hope you can compensate my lost pay."

"Hm, paying for sex with my bonded? Kinky. Me like." He silenced any comment with a hard kiss, demanding and hungry now, apologetic and loving the next moment.

They kissed messily, Peter not really ready to submit in any way, and the chimera loved the challenge, surging forward and challenging its mate in turn. Both men tumbled onto the bed, hands sliding over each other, Wade roughly jerking the younger man closer to orgasm. He suddenly stopped, listening to the whine of protest with a wolfish smile.

He swallowed the complaints in a kiss, urging Peter to turn.

Taking that ass now was just as heady as the first time. There was hardly any preparation needed.

Peter was completely on board, pushing back, demanding, fingers digging into the mattress, muscles straining.

Wade wrapped his arms around the lean waist, bringing them closer, deeper together, and Peter groaned when he bottomed out.

"Yeah," the merc whispered. "Just like that."

"You drive me crazy."

"My specialty, baby boy."

He moved a little, making Peter groan in delight.

"Glad you have a healing factor," Wade murmured as he continued the agonizingly slow movements.

"Yeah," was the breathy answer. "Just like you are going to need yours."

"Is that a challenge?"
"Fact. Solid fact."

"Hm, speaking about solid and up the ass…"

Peter groaned again, this time at his words. He reached back one-handed, fingers digging into Wade's buttock he could grasp. Urging him on. Demanding.

Wade was only too happy to comply.

tbc...
some people have asked about an Avengers confrontation... well, I've still got a lot of story to post, so you'll get that part later :) Next chapter has Hawkeye's talk with Peter, but there will be more. And I've got more planned. There are so many loose ends I need to tie up and so much to still expand upon that was only briefly mentioned. So be patient.

Matters calmed down after a while.

‘After a while’ equaled two days.

Two very intense but important days that involved athletics that rivalled Cirque Du Soleil acrobats, but also quiet moments not interrupted by fighting bad guys or getting shot at.

They had both needed this. As much as they could have. Right here. Right now.

It wasn't just about tumbling together and having wild, raucous sex. It was also about just sharing contact, the chimera extremely tactile, stroking over its mate's skin with wonder and awe, kissing and caressing Peter, who let his own hands explore the other man's body.

Food became delivery or nuking what could be found.

Peter learned Wade's body, every inch, every scar and mark. It had left the merc tense and ready to run in the beginning, but he had started to relax into the unaccustomed caresses that weren't meant to hurt. It was absolutely new to him that anyone wanted to do this, to taste and touch.

Peter wanted.

A lot.

And he did it studiously.

There were hours spent in front of the TV with him exploring Wade's fingers, sliding along every digit and interlacing them with his own.

"Scientist," Wade teased him, but there was an undercurrent that spoke of something so much deeper.

"Have to be thorough," Peter replied softly, smiling. "Are you okay with it?"

Wade drew him close, kissing his nose and grinning at the cross-eyed look.

"Very," had been the serious answer. “I’ve never felt more balanced than now.” He trailed the kiss down his jaw, gently biting against his neck without leaving a mark.

Sitting nearly naked next to Peter, on the couch, wearing only sweatpants and nothing else, was both new and scary. He had never shown this much skin to anyone, had never really wanted to look
at himself like this, and his bonded made it so… normal.

It was okay.

Completely okay.

"So, I'm out of a job now," Peter sighed, head on the chimera's lap, staring at the ceiling.

Wade was running his fingers through the messy hair. He liked that hair. He loved the feel of it against his skin.

"Sorry?" he tried.

"Not your fault."

"Well, in the right light, and looking at it from the correct angle… it is? Maybe I can write you a note? Sorry, Mr. Boss… or is it a Boss-Lady? Sorry, Mr. Boss-Person, sounds better, with all the equality bullshit and so on… Well, anyway, sorry I fucked Peter through the mattress and he couldn't come in the last few days. Sincerely, your friendly neighborhood merc."

Peter's shoulders were shaking with quiet laughter and he turned, face pressed against Wade's stomach.

"Too casual?" Deadpool asked cheerfully. "I can do formal. I can do almost anything anywhere anytime."

"I'll just start looking for something else."

Wade dragged strong but gentle fingers through the brown strands. "Sorry," he said again, voice quieter, very serious.

"Not your fault. I jumped your bones as much as you did mine. Mutual bone jumping."

"Huh. Yeah. You were kinda insatiable in bed. And outside. Actually, all over the place."

Peter chuckled. "You could have said no."

"After a dry spell that puts the Sahara Desert to shame? Have you actually ever met me? No way! I wanted that ass and still do. As well as any other body part of yours, my little love bug."

"Spider."

Wade bobbed a finger against his nose. "Spider," he confirmed with a soft smile.

Peter wrapped a hand around the chimera's neck and pulled him into a kiss.

* 

Peter bore the renewed bite mark under his clothes, a mark that was already scarring in a way that
would suggest an old, terrible bite wound that had happened decades ago, but it hadn’t even really broken the skin. Just once a little blood had flown and Wade had nearly lost it the moment he realized what the coppery taste meant. He had bolted out of bed and into the bathroom like the place was on fire.

It had taken some time to calm him down and they had spent the rest of the day watching TV.

That night the hesitant cuddling and long, slow make-out session had been in complete contrast to the intense coupling of before.

Peter pulled him close. It was like a switch had been flipped and Wade’s body relaxed into the familiar embrace. He almost sighed.

The younger man smiled, fingers running over warm skin. He followed scarred lines like he was drawing an image, exploring known and very familiar terrain.

The small injury healed.

The mark stayed. Much to both men’s surprises. Peter’s healing usually took care of bruises and scrapes within a day or two. Scars happened, but only with more serious injuries.

This… wasn’t serious.

But it stayed.

The silver in those brown eyes spoke of how pleased the chimera was with the result, even if Wade himself didn’t understand his so possessive and satisfied reaction.

* 

It was so easy to lay back and have Wade drape himself over Peter, a semi-possessive arm around his waist. Peter ran a mindless caress over the bald head, blunt nails dragging over it, leaving no marks, only shivers.

Wade made a soft noise of contentment.

And suddenly there was this presence, this sure and heavy weight against Peter’s very being. His partner. His chimera. It fit into a slot Peter hadn't been aware of being empty.

It was amazing and no one would ever be able to understand how simple it was, how welcome, how needed.

Not just for the sex.

That had actually been the last step.

No, they had come together differently before that. They fit, being so opposite in many things and still so much alike.
He pressed a kiss against Wade's head and felt a hum.

"You can feel it," the merc whispered, voice so low, he almost didn't hear him.

"All of it. It's incredible. Like you. Absolutely perfect."

"Sweet talker."

"Powerful," Peter murmured, lips moving against Wade's skin, breath warm and moist. "Like raw energy. All coiled up."

"Hn. You make it sound fascinating."

"It is. It's not a monster. You never were one, Wade, never will be."

"I'm a killer for hire, Spideybabe. I'm good at what I do. Monster goes with the job description."

"Not a monster," Peter repeated.

And he believed him. Where there had been doubt and self-hatred, that dark void of loneliness and pain, there was the chimera now, content and peaceful.

“How do you see the chimera?” Peter asked softly.

He was silent. For a while. Which was unusual for Deadpool.

“...never really looked? I mean, not right in the ugly. I just... caught it out of the corners of my eyes.” he finally hedged. “It’s normally just this raw instinct and not something... really real?”

“It is real.”

“You see it,” Wade stated softly.

“Yeah. And I think it’s the most amazing thing I’ve ever seen.”

“You really are into horror flicks, baby boy.”

Peter pushed him back, looking down into the scarred face with the brown eyes. “No,” he said firmly, voice cutting. “Nothing about this is a horror flick. You are not! What people fear is the unknown. The chimera is probably the first of its kind. It can’t be born natural and everyone’s scared of what’s inside you. They think you’re are insane, uncontrollable... but you aren’t. I know you, Wade. I touched this part of you and it’s amazing.”

Wade stared at him, open-mouthed, disbelief coloring every line of his body.

“You are this incredibly powerful being,” Peter added with awe in his voice. “You were never soulless. All of you is energy and this vortex where the chimera rules. I can feel it so very close to me and it’s nothing I want to ever give up.”

“I...” He licked his lips. “Wow. That’s... you should write prose, Spidey.”

Peter grinned.

Wade hummed softly to himself. “I felt it sometimes. Never really looked. It was just all feeling, no true sight, and I didn’t want to think about it. When you came into the game, it was more powerful. All primal instinct and hard to really push back into the cage.”
“No more cages,” Peter murmured. “It’s not bad and never was. Just… wild.”

“And you tamed it?” he teased.

“There is nothing to tame. I accept you, and it, as you are, Wade. Completely. That’s enough.”

There was no doubting Peter’s words. The truth.

“And it’s you. You are a preternatural and you shouldn’t chain yourself down or keep that part of you behind doors.”

“Big, reinforced doors. Vibranium, adamantium, you name it. And if I have to, I would shoot it.”

“No,” Peter rumbled. “Not ever again.”

“Okay,” Wade replied softly. “No more easy way out.”

“Damn right.”

He tugged gently at the bond and watched as the merc’s eyes widened a little. “Holy shit!” he breathed. “I felt that. You did that, right? I’m not having nervous tics now?”

“I did that,” was the smug reply.

“Mother…fucker,” Wade whispered, awed.

Peter shrugged.

“Where the hell did you learn that?!”

“Instinct? I have no idea, really. It… I tried it and it worked.”

“Fuck, I’m so lucky to have you,” Wade murmured, sounding so absolutely stunned.

“And don’t you forget it.”

“Nope. Nothing can make me forget how lucky I got, no matter how often I get shot in the head.”

Peter kissed him, silencing the morbid words. Wade smiled into the kiss and closed his eyes, soaking up the very presence.

*

They managed to go on patrol for a few hours, though Spider-Man fought off grabby hands and lewd suggestions with a vengeance.

“Deadpool!” he snapped as the other man pressed in close, looking like a very happy camper as he let his hand slide over his partner’s thigh, dipping precariously close to his goal.

“Yes, baby boy?” the merc sang.

“This is the job. Not playtime. Definitely not bond time.”
It got him a pout. “There’s nothing going on. I bet we could get something going! Something very hot. You wouldn’t even need to take off more than your pants, Spideybaby. Have you ever fucked in full gear?” he added throatily.

Peter knew he was getting precariously close to just throwing caution to the wind. But this was his life as Spider-Man, not Peter Parker. This was where he drew lines and where he wouldn’t submit to those maddening fingers.

“And we won’t,” he said firmly.

Deadpool’s shoulders sagged. “Aw, shucks.

When they got to Peter's place, all lines that had been firmly in the 'no crossing' zone were suddenly right in the 'anything goes' one. Wade pushed himself against the slender form, trapping Peter forward against the desk and running his hands all over the athletic form. The chimera had grown more tactile lately, needed to feel with his hands, needed to just stroke and caress, explore, even through clothes.

"Wade," Peter murmured, head falling back and onto his shoulder.

The curve of his spine, the arc of his ribs, Deadpool wanted to never miss this again. He pushed his face into the warm neck, groaning softly at the heady scent.

"You have no idea what this does to me, baby boy…"

Peter reached back, his hand touching Wade's head, rubbing over the mask.

"Wade," he repeated.

He whined. "Please? Just… let me…? I know I fucked the life out of you just a few hours ago, but this isn’t that… I want to just…" He exhaled, arms wrapped around the narrow waist, pulling Peter tightly against him. "Please?"

Just feeling this. All of this. The human warmth, hearing Spidey breathe… such a simple act… and feel his heart beat under his palm. So wonderful.

"Not complaining about that," was Spider-Man's soft answer. "How about we change first? Maybe a hot shower?"

Deadpool shivered at the words. "Sounds good."

"You'll have to let go of me, Wade."

"Don't wanna."

"Please?"

Another groan. "Okay. You got me with the begging."

He loosened his grip and Peter turned in the embrace, smiling. His mask was already off and he reached for Deadpool's, removing it in a practiced move.
The kiss was all Wade had ever wanted.


Oh fuck, he was so gone on his little spider. So very, very gone.

They didn't even attempt shower sex. The stall was tiny, fitting only one person, and Wade just amused himself watching the slender form move behind the curtain. Peter, hair wet, skin covered in droplets, was a delicious sight.

"Go shower," was the amused order. "I'll order something."

Wade just knew he was completely gone on his bonded. Completely. As was the chimera, who was humming happily inside its nest of dark energies and whirling vortex.

They slid together on the couch. It was too small for Wade to wrap himself around Peter full body, but he still pressed close to him, side to side, then dropped his head on his bonded's shoulder.

He ended up with his head on Peter's lap, dozing peacefully, his mind calm and quiet.

Peter simply dragged the thumb of his left hand along the back of Wade's head as he cradled it, the right hand resting on the curve of his ribs.

It was a homely scene; peaceful. Absolutely not something that came to mind at the names Deadpool and Spider-Man. It was Wade and Peter, and that was perfect.

tbc...
Hawkeye took one look at him, then groaned and shook his head.

"You wanted to prove them wrong, huh, kid?"

Spider-Man scowled behind the mask. "This isn't a dare, Barton!"

"So you bonded to that lunatic?!"

"I thought the consensus was that a broken bond cannot be repaired, which means he cannot bond."

That got him a scoff.

And how did Hawkeye take one look and think he had done anything with Wade? Sure, the guy was a preternatural, but he didn’t have a superior sense of smell. His hand-eye coordination was preternatural. His reaction time was abnormally fast. And his sight, of course. That was far out.

But that was it.


Hawkeye rolled his eyes and sat down beside the webslinger. He scrubbed a hand through his hair.

"Sure, everyone says he cannot bond. Well, everyone who knows his background, which is pretty few. But who knows what he can really do? Deadpool’s something no one knows anything about. He’s a chimera. He might just be able to bond and if that happened, it happened to you."

Spider-Man remained silent.

"So you connected," the Avenger stated, trying to prod a little more out of him.

"Maybe."

"That's a big, fat yes then. Don't think we haven't noticed the changes in the two of you, Spider-Man. For the past months Deadpool’s been keeping a low profile in the world of guns for hire and assassinations. SHIELD is getting more ‘no thanks’ notes from him than ever before. He never turned down a job, Spider-Man. Not when it pays like that for pulling a trigger."

Peter grimaced, refusing to be baited.

“He keeps hanging out around you. The two of you are always seen working in tandem. It isn't that hard to connect the dots.” Hawkeye gave him a half-smile. “You’re not really trying to hide.”

“There's nothing to hide.”

“Sure there isn’t. Big bad mercenary hanging out with the friendly neighborhood spider-kid?”
He bristled. He wasn’t a kid anymore! Still, Peter bit back on a more juvenile response.

“There has been some footage Tony got his hands on. Of you and him, fighting. You calm him down. You can get him to listen and focus. It’s not just a gift. It’s something deeper. And it’s been going on for quite some time.”

Hawkeye was fishing in the dark, but he was good enough to know when he came close or had hit bull’s eye.

"Before you start off on that particular tangent, Deadpool didn't force me into anything," Peter stated flatly. “We work well together. He didn’t blackmail me into being his team partner.”

Hawkeye snorted a laugh. "Of course not. After we caught the first signs of your team-up being permanent, Bruce looked into the whole hellhound business. I heard more about those preternaturals in the past months than I ever heard in the years before. This kind of connection can't be forced. Both parties need to agree and be compatible. I'm just trying to think as to how come it's you."

Peter shrugged again. "Deadpool's not a hellhound anymore."

As casual as the words were, he didn't feel casual about it. The loss was part of Wade, had shaped him, but it had also brought him almost to his knees.

"We all know that. His file states it quite openly. SHIELD researched him pretty thoroughly after he popped up and started un-aliving people, as he calls it." He sighed. "Cap's gonna flip shit. Nat's probably winning some kind of obscure betting pool. You might be getting invitations from Stark and-or Bruce. Just because you've become a person of interest."

"Not interested. This is my life. I made my choice. I don't like being quizzed and interrogated about." Maybe the tone was a little sharper now.

The other man smirked. "You did make a life. And from the looks of it, you didn’t just bond, you went at it like rabbits, cementing the fact in many, many ways, probably in all kinds of positions, too."

Spider-Man’s head whipped around and he glared at the Avenger. “None of your fucking business, Barton!”

“And that little cursing confirms it.” He whistled. “You don’t do it halfway. You really slept with the chimera. And survived. Any permanent marks? Damage?”

“He’s not a monster! Deadpool doesn’t just… he didn’t use force and he didn’t have to!” Peter felt a surge of anger and something dark stirred at the other end of the bond. “You make him into a mindless nightmare, unable to think on his own, just following instinct!”

“Ah, well, depends on who you ask. His victims might disagree. If they could still talk. And his past employers, too.”

Spider-Man glared more, fingers digging into the stone. A crack appeared in the concrete. He shouldn't let this get to him, but Hawkeye's words touched something sore and still new in him. It touched Wade through him, someone who had been the target so often before. He wanted to defend his bond mate. With whatever he had.

Hawkeye was either oblivious to it or he was willingly playing with danger.
“But it’s common knowledge that even a mate bond can’t be faked or forced from one side. It always takes two. One to offer, one to accept. You offered?”

Peter stubbornly kept his silence, fighting the anger.

“Okay, you did,” Clint answered his own question, whistling softly. “You got balls, kid. And Deadpool accepted, which is mindboggling all on its own. The man’s a mess on a good day. He’s a force of nature; a very dark one. You should be terrified, Spider-Man.”

But he wasn’t. He had never been terrified. Not even remotely. He had faced the vortex, knowing it would never harm him. He had felt the claws in his soul, had felt the chimera claim him, and there had never been any pain or discomfort.

“Stop analyzing what we did!” Peter growled. “Stop looking at me like the innocent victim and Deadpool like the cold-hearted rapist!”

“I know he didn’t rape you.”

“You’re treating me like I was victimized anyway! It was consensual. I wanted this! I’ve wanted it for a lot longer than you think, Barton! It was Wade who wouldn’t let me take those steps.”

Hawkeye smirked at him. “I really don’t want to hear the details, but the mind’s a curious thing. And the internet is full of kinky porn stuff. I get distracted.”

“So I can expect Captain America to come down on us like a vengeful den-mother and read me the riot act?” he snorted.

“Nope. Not sure I can even tell him, actually. He’ll have conniptions. I’ll leave it to Tony.”

Peter grumbled something under his breath. Just what he needed. The Avengers judging his sex life and life choices.

“Listen, kid,” Clint spoke up, sounding serious all of a sudden. “I know you went into this with your eyes open. I know for a fact that despite his big mouth, Deadpool wouldn’t force this on anyone, especially with his history. Even if he could. Even if the chimera was able to do what no other preternatural can: take a mate against their will. I also know that this is a kind of trust he places in you I can hardly grasp. No one knows what a chimera is and what it’s capable of. We’ve only ever seen the results. You, Spider-Man, changed him from the moment you met. I think it could only ever end in this.”

Peter was stunned by the calm, clear words. “Uh, thanks, I think?”

Hawkeye nodded. “If you run into anything you need help with… call. The chimera is an unknown factor.”

“The chimera is Wade. And his basic nature never really changed,” Spider-Man said sharply. “He is still a protector! That’s what he always was and what fundamentally never changed.”

“A protector with a fucked-up sense of right and wrong.” Clint tilted his head a little.

“Yes, he’s a mercenary,” Peter stated coldly, hating to go over the old argument again and again. They were turning in circles. “I’m quite aware of what he did and probably still does. I know he killed people for money and has no qualms about it. I’ve seen him kill. Yes, I’m dealing with it, Hawkeye. I’m not an innocent, delicate wall-flower!”
“Never said that.” Clint studied him with an unreadable face. “He’s a loaded weapon. In your hands. He would kill for you.”

“I won’t let him.”

Another nod. “We all know that. Just… take care. This is uncharted territory. He is the only one of his kind and you’re the only one to get this close, to form the anchor. You’re both unique.”

With that he shot an arrow toward the next building and swung away. Peter cocked his head, part of him judging the performance and finding it lacking compared to a webline.

He then chose his own way home, taking the scenic route and apprehending a mugger on the way. It helped work out the tension that had settled between his shoulder blades, the growing anger at people interfering in what wasn’t theirs to judge.

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“Holy shit, the kid bonded to a chimera!” Hawkeye breathed, the shock still deep in his system, as he paced the length of the common room at Avengers Tower. "He really did it! Fuck… No idea if this is good or bad."

Spider-Man had… he had mated himself to whatever Deadpool really was. To a preternatural who had been artificially created and enhanced, defying classification. To an artificial construct of unknown power, who was a loose canon on his best days and the worst enemy you could think of.

Natasha leaned against the wall, face a thoughtful mask. “You really think it was voluntary?”

“Hell, Nat, I can’t even say if it’s real!”

“I doubt Spider-Man would lie.”

“Nope. Not in his nature. But Deadpool?! Of every preternatural out there… Deadpool?”

She shrugged elegantly. “Some things can’t be explained.”

“Like Tony and Steve?”

She shot him a smile. Then the smile disappeared. “Something else bothers me, though. He is immortal.”

“Kinda.”

“He hasn’t been killed so far and people have been very creative.”

Hawkeye nodded. He was aware of it.

“What happens to Spider-Man now?”

“Huh?”

Nat tilted her head a little. "They are bonded."

“Not something I need to know about.” She grimaced. “It’s a life-bond.”

"Yep."

"Deadpool can't die."

Clint was silent, his mind coming to a sudden stop. "Uh."

"Hellhounds die with their partner. Deadpool won't. The chimera is eternal. He is soulless, his original preternatural nature completely obliterated and replaced by something unknown. How does it connect to Spider-Man? How does he anchor to that thing? What kind of connection do they have?"

Clint blinked. "I reeeally don't want to think about that, Tasha," he muttered.

"We should. Bonds break through death. Soul bonds separate and the surviving partner dies within a short amount of time, too. Bruce said the hellhound's soul is dead. Deadpool is soulless," she reiterated. "I doubt his own death will affect whatever this is. Nothing can be taken from him anymore."

"So what does he connect to then? That's what you mean?"

"What does Spider-Man connect to if the preternatural is soulless?"

Hawkeye chewed his lower lip. "Think we should ask Bruce for his opinion? He might be the better source for an answer."

Natasha shrugged. "He will research it anyway. Now that the cat is out of the bag." She cocked her head a little. "Or don't you plan on telling the others?"

"Is it my place to tell?"

"It's important intel, Clint. Everyone needs to know to assess future cooperation and maybe confrontations."

He expelled a breath. "Yeah, maybe. This is a completely fucked up situation, Tasha. If your suspicions are correct… and I somehow think they are, even if I don't want to believe them, then Spider-Man is… what? His conduit? His control?"

"The chimera was created to be the perfect weapon," Black Widow reminded him. "And he is, just not under anyone's control. I doubt Weapon X made the mistake to make him vulnerable by enabling him to bond and then lose the mate again."

"They had no real clue what they were doing," he argued. "They consciously destroyed the bond to destroy him."

She shrugged elegantly. "No one knows anything about the chimera, except that it's a wickedly real nightmare. I doubt it would let its partner go, Clint. I highly doubt it. As to what Spider-Man is now, I wouldn't give it a name. Officially he’s a mutant, but he’s life-bound to a preternatural that actually doesn’t exist in any books."

Hawkeye stared at her like she was insane. And it sounded insane. He really didn't want to think about it all too much.
And still it would most likely keep him busy, thinking of the possibilities.

*Do you know what you got yourself into, kid?* he thought.

tbc...
“How did the Avengers Peace Meeting go?” Deadpool asked, lounging in an old deck chair on the roof of their choice this evening, showing lean lines and muscle that had Peter want to jump him.

The costume highlighted a lot of him. All the good places, as Deadpool liked to point out. His muscles, his ass, his butt. He had to smile at that. Yes, Wade's ass was a highlight and highlighted. With the body armor over the spandex, and the various weapons, Deadpool looked both dangerous and desirable to Spider-Man. Sexy. Very, very sexy.

Damn. It was either hormones, a side-effect of the bond, his long dry spell, or just plain desire stemming from nothing more than Peter being in love with this man.

He dropped lithely down and tossed the take-out bag of Mexican food at him, biting back on those desires. Deadpool wouldn't bat an eye at public sex. Well, semi-public, on a roof, where a media copter or an innocent neighbor might catch them going at it. He would probably enjoy himself a lot.

Peter… not so much. He didn't mind public displays of affection, but that's where he drew a very firm line.

“Ooohhh! Azteca! You splurged!” Deadpool cried excitedly as he sat up.

Yes, Peter had splurged, even if it hurt his weekly allowance. Well, the allowance he had set for himself as he hunted for work.

“Why am I not surprised that you know about the not so accidental meeting?” he asked conversationally.

“Got eyes and ears everywhere. And eww, that sounds nasty, right? So, am I pardoned after defiling the little spider boy with the heart of a fluffy unicorn? Do I still get to play in their sandbox? Or are they convinced you’re no longer all kitties and rainbows after I had my dick in you? Repeatedly. In all kinds of sexy positions.”

Peter rolled his eyes under the mask. “Defiling?” he echoed.

Deadpool gleefully hummed as he dug around the bag and pulled out his tacos. “Lots of it,” he mumbled around the food.

“Why do you think they are interested in what we do outside hunting perps?”

“Perps and pervs,” the other man chuckled. “Which I don’t get to kill, but hey. Compromises, right? I can do compromises. Looked up the word and finally got an explanation. Cool thing, compromises. I really should google shit more often. Or wiki. Or whatever comes up next. Is Bing a thing?”

Peter sighed and pushed Deadpool’s legs off the deck chair to claim a spot. “Hawkeye thinks I’m crazy. I’m sure they all do. I suppose they were worried to a degree. It’s like they’re scoping out a new threat.”

Deadpool shrugged carelessly. “Better good intel than ending up dead.”

“Wise words. But we’re not a threat for them. Or are we?”
It got Peter a smirk. “What do you think, Spideybabe?”

“I think you got sauce on your chin.”

Deadpool wiped it away. “And aside from that, yep, we are. I know I’m near the top. Persona non grata wherever I go. I think there isn’t an Avenger or X-Man out there who isn’t offended by my mere existence.” Another shrug. “I’m up there with the evil big shots. I’m really honored. Not sure I could make first place. I mean, I’m not trying to take over the world. We could try, though. You up for some world domination, Spidey?”

Peter shook his head with a chuckle. “No world domination.”

He didn’t need to ask why Deadpool thought of himself like that when it came to the super-heroes in town and around. He also knew how dangerous his partner was, how powerful. Immortality was something not even Thor could bring into a battle, and the Asgardian was hard to bring down. But he could die and stay dead.

The chimera would always come back.

Yes, maybe they were a threat. The Avengers were apprehensive of what Deadpool was, but they had used his services in the past. They had actively hired him to take down or even kill someone. Black, black ops. No one would confirm it. No one would even mention an association with the merc.

But Deadpool had changed. He wasn’t killing just for kicks. He would disable, even if it meant permanent disabilities. Killing was reserved for extreme situations.

He made an effort to follow Peter’s wishes. Never commands. Peter would never order him to do anything; he wanted this to be an equal partnership and had wanted it from the beginning.

“I don’t care,” Spider-Man said after a while, Deadpool fully plastered to his side, both men done with their food. “I don’t care what they think. We don’t depend on their good will.”

“If they want me out of this fair city, they’ll find a way. A permanent way.”

Peter felt tension creep into his frame. “I’m not going to just turn tail and leave! I live here, too! This is my city!”

Wade hummed softly. “I love it when you become so forceful, baby boy.”

“I’m serious, Deadpool!”

“Well, I am serious as a heart attack. Which, for me, nothing at all. But I am. Very serious.” And he did sound serious all of a sudden, sitting up straighter. “I’m not going without a fight either, but I doubt they would let it come to that. They’re scoping out the potential new threat. Hence all the fuss. They don’t trust me not to abuse you, Spidey.”

“Bullshit,” Peter grated.

Another hum. “Yeah. But they love their bullshit. Never cared, never will.”

Neither did Peter. He had long since decided not to become an Avenger. Maybe an occasional assist here or there, but he wouldn’t give up his identity or his life, which included Deadpool, because of them.
"They probably won't ever give you another recruitment speech."

Peter snorted. "Not interested."

"What is it with you and them anyway? Why do they want you to join?"

"No clue. Fresh blood? Maybe I left an impression. I mean, okay, there was a time I wanted to be an Avenger, but…" He shrugged. "Not anymore."

Deadpool raised an eyebrow, the mask as expressive as ever. "You applied?"

"Kinda. I thought it would be cool."

"As a cucumber," Wade quipped. "You’d be a great Avenger. The best!"

"Thanks for the vote of confidence, but I’m not really going down that path any more. I like flying solo."

Wade raised a hand. "Uhm…"

Peter grinned. "Solo for two, okay?"

"Very. I’ll always be okay with flying solo with you, Spideybabe." Deadpool cocked his head.

"Hey, that’s an idea!"

"What? Joining the Avengers?"

"No! No, no, not that. That’s boring. But!" He held up a finger.

Spider-Man looked at him, patient, waiting.

"Wait for it…." the merc sing-songed. "You are the child of Captain Underpants and the Tin Can!"

"What?!"

"It all makes sense! Maybe you were adopted! I mean, mpreg is so fanfic and alternate universes today."

"Deadpool."

"They want you to take over the family business one day."

"Deadpool," he repeated with a sigh.

"Yes, dear?"

"I’m not related to any of them." He held up a hand to stave off another splurge. "And I’m also not adopted. My parents died when I was young and I was raised by my aunt and uncle. But you know that, Wade."

It got him a shrug. "Files can be faked."

"This isn't faked."

They settled into a comfortable silence, Deadpool's head resting on Spider-Man's shoulder, the
chimera focused on its mate and a calm, even presence along the bond.

"The X-Men once came knocking down my door," the merc broke the silence, sounding almost casual "Motherfuckers wouldn't take no for an answer. I got all those warnings. Don't abuse you powers, Deadpool. Be a good boy, Deadpool. Your gift can help people, Deadpool," he quoted, voice a little higher. "I was helping! I unalived the bad guys and the not so good guys and those I got paid for. But noooo… They threw the rule book at me."

Spider-Man stared at him. "The X-Men?"

Deadpool sat up straight. "The very same. Rude bunch. Had to cut off my hand to get away from them that one time and back to business." He waved his right hand. "Took a night to grow it back. Bitch. They have no understanding of how the world works for us hardworking blue collars."

Peter chuckled, ignoring the part about the self-mutilation. "Blue collar?"

Deadpool dropped his head back on the younger man's shoulder. "Hard working. I earned every dime in my bank account. Or accounts. Whatever."

He sounded content and was a welcome, warm weight.

"They finally pissed off. Fuckers. Not interested in all their goody two-shoes nonsense. I think they got it now."

"Huh."

"You know what they called me? Reckless! Me!"

"Who woulda thought."

"Riiight, right? Oh, forgot the shameful. I shamefully use my recklessness. Recklessly use my shame? Hm, something with shame and recklessness anyway. No idea. Dictionary anyone? Do I need to wiki that?"

"Why, you'd never be reckless," Peter said dryly.

"Yep." Deadpool popped the 'p' and hummed a little to himself. "Mr. Silver Balls McTightyPants went on about abusing my powers, at nau - se - um! He sounded extremely righteous. My old pal Wolverine hangs out with Professor X, but he's got reason to." There was a smirk audible in his voice. "A very fuckable reason, if you get my drift. Not sure what they threw into his mix, but it's horny like hell when it comes to his bub. I'd just get in the way. He's a little too territorial when it comes to his piece of ass."

Peter snorted. Deadpool was territorial. Very much. As well as protective and he had possessive streaks that embarrassed him most of them time. He was also hanging around a goody two-shoes, he mused. He had told Spider-Man often enough.

"Hey!" Wade sat up straight. "Maybe I'm someone's secret love child! Maybe that's why Baldy wanted me in his fan club! Granted, his recruiters were a bit… unprofessional, but that's water under the big, fat bridge!"

"You're not a secret love child," Peter sighed.

"How can you tell?"
He pushed their shoulders together, jostling Deadpool into almost sliding off the deck chair.

“You’re definitely not. Just leave it at that.”

Deadpool snuggled up close again, looping an arm around Spider-Man’s waist. Peter felt the warmth inside him, expanding through his soul, entwining him with Wade, forming a bond that was unlike any ever seen before. The chimera was a terrifying thing, artificial in its origin, completely new and not understood, but around Peter it wasn’t.

It was life and warmth, determination and power. It was Wade’s emotions, all his pain and fear, his hopes and his longing. It was a primal instinct, from before time, and it was terrifying in its nature.

Peter loved it… him.

They were good together. Absolutely perfect.

No doubts. No second guesses.

*

With winter coming in hard and heavy, Peter cursed his apartment, the shoddy heating, and curled into his bed, a mountain of blankets over him.

Outside the wind rattled against the panes and the rain was coming down. A storm warning had been issued for the East Coast Area and there might be worse on the way.

Anyone with any sense was at home.

Like Peter.

Who was still cursing his life and his landlord.

It was a sad, sad fact of that life that he would need to leave and grocery shop sometime today, because if the storm really hit them like the forecast predicted, everything would be shut down. It would mean braving the elements and hoping for warmth in the subway and the shop, but it also meant coming home cold and wet in the end.

By next morning the updates were looking even worse. It was a low-pressure storm system that was coming in from Canada and had by now developed into a blizzard, threatening tons of snow.

Peter made it to the grocery store throughout a brief relief in freezing rain that was by now more like snow, though the drizzle never stopped. The winds were nasty and there was a foreboding wall of clouds boiling up.
The news warned of two to three feet of snow. 'Prepare for something worse than what we have seen before' could be heard every time. Vehicles were ordered off the streets by eleven pm tonight and with the exception of emergency and government vehicles, anyone driving in New York City after 11 pm would be fined.

The store was filled with people shopping in bulk, stocking up for a possible shut-down, and Peter grabbed what he could and, more importantly, what he could afford.

When he was done, the downpour was back, with the added bonus of snow.

His personal luck.

Great. Just great.

A cab stopped in front of him and the window on the passenger side rolled down. Deadpool’s red and black mask was looking at him, a wide smile clearly visible.

“Hey there, Petey-pie. Need a lift?”

Peter was too worn out, cold and drenched to argue. He wanted to. Wanted to point out that he was perfectly capable of getting himself home and he didn’t need a ride.

But he didn’t.

He just slid into the back seat and dumped his groceries next to him.

The cab pulled away and Peter sank back into the cheap leather seats. “Did you stalk me again?”

“Nope.”

“You were waiting for me?”

“Nope.”

Deadpool sounded downright cheerful.

Peter gave up with a long-suffering sigh and just let the warm air blasting into the fond dry him a little. His eyes roamed around the used looking but well-maintained cab, then fell on the sticker on the dash. A Deadpool logo sticker.

Huh.

When the cab stopped, he frowned. “This isn’t my place…”

“As observant as ever. Your mouse trap is a cold, dreary place,” Deadpool stated. He pushed a wad of money at the driver. “Keep the small change, Dopinder. Great service as always. Say hello to that lovely girl of yours. Now go home before you get fined.”

The man responded with a bright smile. “Thank you, Mr. Pool. Always a pleasure to drive for you.”

“Aw, you’re just saying that.”

Deadpool slipped out of the cab, in full battle gear, which had Peter wonder how comfortable two katanas and two guns were when sitting in a small cab. He hurried over to the building and opened the door with a flourish. Peter, groceries clutched in his hands, sighed and decided to just go along
He wanted to be dry. And warm. He wanted to crawl into a bed and sleep.

Well, the place wasn’t a five star hotel, but it was dry and warm, just this side of messy, with Christmas lights tacked to one wall, another wall smothered in post-its and newspaper clippings, colorful string and tacks, and a work bench containing gear Peter really didn’t want to look too closely at. Some of that stuff looked suspiciously like explosives.

There was a rather scraggly, fake Christmas tree in one corner. It was pink.

Peter had to remind himself that Christmas was in about a month. Geez. Time really flew by.

He had never been to Deadpool’s place, had never really thought about why, and now it felt like a big reveal. A warm reveal, with working heat.

He already loved it.

“Welcome to my humble abode. Now strip.”

“Huh?”

“Strip,” Deadpool ordered, stalking past him with a purposeful stride. “You’re dripping.”

He grabbed some things and pushed the wad of clothing at Peter, simultaneously taking the groceries.

“Don’t mind doing it here. I like to watch.”

So Peter did just that, amused by the slack-jawed expression on Deadpool’s face for following his suggestions. There was a clatter as weapons were hastily shed and Peter languidly shrugged into the Deadpool sweater and the black sweater pants.

Wade pulled the mask off, looking hungry and longing. “Fuck, baby boy…” he breathed.

“I think that was your intention when you abducted me here?” Peter teased.

Gloves were removed. “Uh, yes, no, maybe, kinda? All of the above for one hundred, Alex? I mean, your heating’s out, like it always is when you need it, and you looked like something the mangy cat with an attitude problem dragged in. Also, choice of food? Atrocious. You wouldn’t feed a dog with that crap. I had to come to the rescue. You’re my…”

Wade stopped all of a sudden, warring emotions flickering over his face. He was visibly fighting down a wave of emotions he wasn’t used to. He had closed the distance, looking completely serious, the intensity radiating off him breathtaking.

Protect. Guard. Keep Peter safe.

Peter didn’t really want to know how the chimera had known about his heating, though it was a good shot in the dark at any given day, and he also didn’t want to know about the cab.

“Partner?” Peter now probed. “Anchor?”

“Mate,” he whispered roughly. “Counterpart. My so much better than me half. Also, I missed you,” Wade added with a small smile that bordered to impish.
He had been out of the city for a week, taking a job – “No killing involved, really, scout’s honor on my nana’s grave!” – so Peter understood about missing him. He had missed his partner, too. Taking the job that had apparently involved some kind of bodyguard duty had been Deadpool’s way of dealing with events as of late. He needed space and he needed to work.

Peter had given him space.

The kiss was slow, deep, growing in depth and intensity, and Wade pushed his hands under the Deadpool sweater, seeking naked skin. Peter was more than happy to let him lead, maneuver him toward the bed, then used his greater strength to topple them to end up on top.

Wade smirked, eyes dark and pupils blown.

Then he settled over the athletic form, still in full leathers, and Peter felt something inside of him react with a vengeance.

tbc...
Their romp between the sheets had Peter limp and aching in all the right places. The chimera was watching its mate with silver eyes and inhuman fangs, Wade trailing irregular patterns on Peter’s skin, tracing old and newer scars, or playing with his spent dick.

“Wade,” he breathed when those fingers stayed down south.

“Hm? Warm enough, Petey?”

Oh, he was plenty warm. Almost too hot.

Wade claimed a kiss, exploring, Peter feeling a hint of sharper teeth. He felt the prickle where Wade had renewed the mark on his shoulder.

Deadpool trailed biting little kiss along his neck, then continued his path to one nipple.

Peter groaned, then yelped when those teeth reached it. Okay, so he was getting it back up again.

Wade smirked at him.

“Knew I could make you scream twice,” he said roughly.

“You’ve already proven that.”

“Hm, I like to hear it from time to time.”

Outside the storm gained in force, snow coming down in buckets and blanketing the streets in white. It didn’t stop until well into the morning hours.

Three feet of snow altogether.

New York was suddenly a quiet place, brought to a stop by natural forces where alien invasions hadn’t really put a dent in.

Subways, busses, taxis… all had come to a hold. Shops were closed, people stayed home.

*

Peter regarded the winter wonderland with almost quiet contemplation. It was freezing cold outside, but Wade’s apartment hadn’t lost heat or power. Food wasn’t going to be an issue. Wade had stocked everything they would need to survive for a month and he had pointed out the generator in case of a power failure.

"Boy scout," Peter had teased.

Spider-Man was without his suit, though. He hadn't packed it when he had decided to go grocery
shopping, and now he wondered if he should try and make it to his place. Sharing Wade's stuff was okay. He didn't need fresh clothes, he already had a toothbrush here, and everything else.

"Don't," Wade suddenly said, joining him at the window.

He was dressed in faded jeans and a woolen sweater that looked like someone's grandma had knitted it. Colorful patches, soft and cozy. Peter almost couldn't stop looking at him.

Yeah, sometimes he was struck by the other man's so different look when he was out of the Deadpool costume. Human. Relaxed. Still dangerous, but more Wade than Deadpool.

The costume was sexy as hell. Wade out of it was no less attractive and Peter sometimes just wanted to look. Or jump his bones in a very straight-forward way.

"Huh?" he made a quizzical noise, trying to drag his brain away from jumping bones.

"Just don't. Whatever you're thinking about."

"Mind-reader?"

"Wouldn't that be neat?" He grinned, dark eyes lighting up. "But nope. I just know that look. If you really want to go out there, call Santa."

"I'm not going out."

"Good." Wade leaned into him, as tactile as always, and sighed. "Wouldn't want my baby boy to get eaten by a snow drift."

"I'm not going to get eaten." Peter didn't try to keep his exasperation out of his voice.

"Cause you're staying inside," was the smug reply.

"Snow doesn't eat people."

"Ever seen Frozen?"

"That's a Disney movie and no one gets eaten by snow."

Wade frowned. "Huh, coulda fooled me. I thought it was a nature documentary on the dangers of mutant princesses and their pet monsters, up against a world that doesn't understand them and men who just want to fuck them for the crown."

Peter chuckled, shaking his head.

The kiss was long, slow, deep. Peter kept his hands running over Wade’s back and sides, under the sweater, feeling strong muscles and warm skin.

“You still feel so good,” Wade told him, voice wavering a little, almost filled with wondering realization.

“Hm, I hope so. I think an anchor should.”

“He should,” his partner confirmed. “And you do. Better than I could have ever imagined. And I got a really good imagination.”

Peter pulled him into another kiss.
The spent the next hours watching TV. Wade insisted on a My Little Pony marathon and Peter humored him. When his partner pulled a long-sleeve Bronie shirt out of his closet, he snickered and shook his head.

“Only you.”

“Not just me. There are thousands of us!” He pumped a fist into the air. “Bronies Assemble! Oh, wait, no. That was… Bronies Unite? Bronies… whatever.” He shrugged and settled down again.

Sometimes they switched over to a news report, but there was nothing that had Peter scrambling to help.

Not that he could. Maybe in a ski mask, jacket and gloves, but he really didn't think he was needed. Deadpool agreed.

Everything was under control.

*

Christmas came and went. Peter tried to ignore the holidays, though he did get Aunt May a present and they had their Christmas together, just like every year. He loved her home-cooked meals and he usually left with a ton of leftovers that would tide him over until the next year.

Wade went a little overboard on the decorations in Peter's apartment, but Peter just let him. Sure, it looked like Santa had thrown up in there, but it had a certain kitschy charm.

There was a whole green house of mistletoe and it led to a lot of making out, which he didn't really mind. That also led to a lot of sex. Also not something he minded.

He drew a line at matching Christmas sweaters.

"Ohhhh, you'd rather see me out of it," Wade murmured seductively and tossed the brightly colored and really ugly shirt into a corner. "Can do, baby boy. Easily."

Yes, he liked to see him out of the sweater. And the rest of his clothes.

A lot.

Peter didn’t think he had had this much sex in all the years prior to meeting the chimera. Not just sex, also intimate moments that were nothing but touches, caresses and a kiss.

Wade was… sensual, for lack of a better word. Touchy-feely, but in a good way. It was nothing anyone would think of him, the crude, loud and rather rude mercenary that he showed to the
outside, but Peter had gotten to know the man underneath in the months leading up to the day they had finalized the bond.

He loved him.

All of him.

The loud and the soft, the crude and the gentle. He loved his erratic mind, his pop culture references, his addiction to Mexican fast food. Underneath that was the vulnerable, the self-doubt, the insecurity, and Peter worked hard on giving Wade Wilson what he had missed in his past years: unconditional acceptance. Intimacy that went past a quick roll between the sheets.

It still stirred something inside Peter when Wade’s expression turned from tense to amazed to wanting when Peter touched him without hesitation, didn’t shy away from Wade’s touch in turn.

He knew it would need more time for Deadpool to accept that this was truly his life now, that it was reality, not a hallucination or a temporary fluke.

He went out in costume a few times, swinging between the buildings, enjoying the fresh air, even if it was freezing in costume, his mind relaxed. Webslinging always did that to Peter. He loved it, how it eased all kinds of stress, took his mind off his problems, and if he caught a few would-be thugs, then well: bonus!

Deadpool came along, wearing a garish scarf that he proclaimed was there to keep him warm, and a Santa hat.

New York was busy again after all the snow from the storm had been cleared from the tracks and roads, the airports now open again. People waved at Spider-Man, some asking for photos to take home to wherever they came from to show that they had met one of New York's superheroes.

Spider-Man was only too happy to oblige.

*

They migrated to Wade's apartment the day after Christmas because his heating went out – again! – and with it running water, and it didn't look like it would be up within the next twenty-four hours. Pipes had busted. Great. Just great.

Peter cursed his luck, his general situation, his lack of funds and lack of a decent job.

He actually packed for a longer sleep-over. Including but not limited to all his Spider-Man gear. The spare costumes, the replacement web-shooters, his tools, his experimental shooters, and his laptop.

Wade didn't make a comment on the large backpack and carry-on bag that was filled to the bursting point he hugged out of the cab – Dopinder's – and into Wade's apartment. His eyes were unreadable, except for the flicker of hope in there.
They worked out how to live together in the confines of the apartment. Deadpool just pushed some of his stuff into a corner and set up a work space for Peter where he could keep his web-shooters, the tools and his laptop. The clothes went into the wardrobe, which had been cleared out enough to make room, and sharing a bed wasn't really a problem.

It took some getting used to.

Somehow it worked, with a minimum amount of arguing.

Peter felt the chimera's contentedness, how it flowed around the bond like a silky mass of affection and warmth. He sometimes reached out and touched it, amazed that he could do this. He hadn't been taught how to use the bond, how to use his mind, but it was so natural to just… do it. He wouldn't be able to describe it to anyone. It wasn't physical and yet so much more than a mere touch.

Wade sometimes looked at him, that softness in his eyes that threw Peter at first.

Human. And yet not at all.

Open.

Never vulnerable, never weak, just… open.

*

It was the day after New Year’s that Peter finally made his decision to accept the offer from before: moving into the wide open-space apartment Deadpool had wanted to give him months ago, now with plumbing and heating.

In the past months their partnership had solidified in more ways than just sexually. The mark on Peter’s shoulder attested to that part.

But the other side of their relationship, sharing more than just a bed and bodily fluids, developed, too. While Peter knew that introducing Wade Wilson to Aunt May as his partner was currently still a no go, he had achieved small victories.

In private, Wade refrained from hiding his face now. He would go out into public with his hoodie and basecap, hands covered by gloves, but he wouldn’t often join Peter for a meal. He did like a certain bar, though, where he didn’t hide and even pulled down the hood, much to Peter’s surprise.

No one looked twice at him.

He was known here.

It was a curious moment for Peter, that first time there. And then he was introduced to Weasel, who had squeezed the living daylights out of him and called him a bro-in-arms.

"I finally get to meet the man who shagged up with Avocado Guy!"
Peter glanced at Wade, who rolled his eyes. The bar was moderately busy, but no one gave them a second glance. It was a rather rough looking crowd, but they clearly respected Wade. Some eyed Peter curiously, but quickly went back to their own business. It was clear that he had a reputation. Whether they knew he was Deadpool or not.

"Beer's on the house."

"Make it water and we have a deal."

"Huh. Sure. Not a drinker?"

"Not at ten in the morning."

Weasel shrugged and pushed a bottled water at him, then opened a bottle of Coke for Wade and plopped it in front of the merc.

"Can't tell you how glad I am you two finally got your stuff together. I'm not the Agony Aunt and I'm not Ask Fucking Hilda. You have gotten your stuff together, right?"

"Shut up, Weasel," Wade grumbled.

Peter grinned and sipped at his water. "Yes, we got it together."

"The chimera bonded. Whip out the party hats!" Weasel looked utterly relieved. "I told you, dude." He stabbed a finger at Wade. "You can bond. You did. You could have gotten that way faster and a lot easier."

"Shut up," Deadpool repeated, thumb scratching at the label.

"Nope. I get to tell you I told you so for a while. Told you so!"

“I’m going to kill you, Weasel.”

“Nope. You’re going to love me for the rest of your life, which will be forever.” The man grinned at Peter. “You have no idea how relieved I am you finally got this hard ass out of his moping shtick.”

“I did not mope!”

“Did, too.”

Wade’s expression was lethal, but there was embarrassment coloring his eyes.

Peter decided he liked Weasel. He leaned a little closer to Wade.

“You did mope,” he murmured.

“Et tu, baby boy?!” came the outraged exclamation. “You’re so sleeping on the couch tonight!”

“You are going to sleep at your place tonight,” Peter shot back.

“I’m going to lock the door!” Wade replied firmly. “No sneaking in to cuddle up to this pinnacle of human perfection and studliness.”

“Your loss, Mr. Snuggles.”
“Take that back!” he exclaimed, scandalized.

“Nope.”

“I like the guy,” Weasel proclaimed.

“You would,” Wade grumbled, but it didn’t sound serious and the humor dancing in his eyes was real.

Peter could feel how relaxed he was, how much he saw this bar as safe, a place where he could be himself outside his apartment, outside Peter’s. The banter wasn’t over the top erratic or borderline weird. It was just… banter. It was fun. Wade Wilson was having fun.

“Hey, anyone who can get you out of your fugly shell and kick you into accepting a good thing is a hero in my book. I was this close to opening a betting pool on whether you’d get your act together in this millennium or wait for the next! Peter, I could kiss you.”

“No thanks.”

Deadpool shot his friend a narrow-eyed, warning look and Weasel waved him off.

“You’re one protective motherfucker. Chill. I’m not poaching. You can have him all to yourself.”

They drank their sodas, Weasel dropping by every time he was done serving alcohol to another customer, and when they left, it was already past noon.

And it was drizzling outside, the sky slate gray, the wind picking up a little.

Wade pulled up the hood and Peter jammed a hat onto his head. Traffic was murder, everyone already way past the cheerful celebrations and back into the everyday madness of life in NYC.

He didn’t sleep on the couch that night. His own or Wade’s. Actually, he shared the bed with a very cuddly Wade, who was unabashedly naked.

The chimera was growing slowly, every day of the week, evolving, becoming stronger, testing the waters of newfound traits. It was a frightening sight to see Deadpool let go now and then, the fights close to deadly, just shy of killing a target, but he was in total control.

More than ever.

No accidental dismemberment or beheading. He didn’t go overboard.

He was amazing to watch.
Even if he kept running his mouth off. That would never change.

And when the chimera looked at Spider-Man, he knew he was gazing at a surreal, primordial creature that had shaken off its chains and was soaring. It was unique, the only one of its kind, with no predecessors and most likely no followers.

It was anchored only to him.

Looking at him for guidance, to calm itself, to be balanced.

Learning from him.

And its long, sharp talons were irremovably latched in Peter’s soul.

“I’m sorry,” Wade whispered one night, face pressed into Peter’s neck, arms around the slender form. “I’m sorry.”

“Wade?”

“It’s in you now. It…, well I…, we can’t let go anymore. You’re trapped.”

Peter blinked, resting his hands on the powerful arms snaked around him. “It… the chimera?” he asked.

It got him a sharp exhalation. “Yes. Its claws are in you.”

“Well, we’re bonded?” he answered, making it a query. “I mean, that’s the whole meaning of it, right? Establishing a balance, anchoring one another.”

Another sharp exhale. “Yeah,” the merc finally murmured. “Yeah. That’s… it.”

He kissed the exposed neck and loosened the embrace. Peter turned and captured the dry lips, enjoying the hum coming from Wade.

Part of him was a little confused as to what had just occurred. Another part decided to just ignore it for now and simply give Wade the comfort he sought.

Deadpool hadn't mentioned the wide-open place they had looked at so long ago ever since their first visit. He had tried to help his bonded in other ways.

And still… it had become necessity. The chimera relied on Peter in a different way now.

They were together more intimately, and the primal thing that had awoken inside Wade Wilson wanted its territory protected. It prowled restlessly and snarled at the lacking safe environment its mate resided in.

Peter had only stayed with him for a month, longer than it had needed for the broken pipe to be fixed and the heat to be back. He didn't have to pay rent for the time of the repair, but he had
dragged out his rooming-in with Wade. Now he was back in that little shabby place and the chimera was restless.

Wade looked uncomfortable whenever his more possessive, protective side came through. He usually fought it down by chasing villains around the city and getting killed twice in a day. Actually, within three hours.

Peter had nearly thrown a fit.

"I want this," he told the chimera. "I really do. With you, but not on still such uneven scales. You bring the money, this amazing property, and what do I bring?"

"Your sexy bod?"

"Wade."

Deadpool shook his head, gesturing violently. "You bring yourself! Don't you understand? All of you is everything, Petey! Everything! I need it safe and I'll always need it, because the chimera needs it! You! You're so fucking important I can't… Why can't you see what this means?" he demanded. "I already took everything from you! Your… soul! Your fucking soul! It's right there and it sits and waits… and it's not letting you go! You are my soul!"

Peter’s mind was reeling.

Inside him, the space he had come to identify as the connection forming with the preternatural pinged sharply.

"Wade," he tried.

But he got a wave instead. "No. No, no, no! The chimera is a monster. It takes everything from you and it won't go away! Money doesn't matter! I can’t buy you your freedom ever again!" His voice never rose, was this sharp, almost monotone growl, reflecting danger. “You’re stuck with me and I can’t ever compensate you for that. You did something no sane person should have. You gave me yourself… I want you safe, Peter. Please!"

"Wade," he tried again, but the mercenary didn't really hear him.

"It doesn't have to be here," Deadpool continued, voice sounding almost pleading now, the desperation rising. "I already make it work alternating between your cubby hole and my fortress of solitude. No copyright infringement intended! I just… your place isn't safe!"

"It's okay," he tried to argue.

"Fuck no! It's not! It's a nightmare! And I’m a nightmare! I know what I’m talking about!"

"I can take care of myself," Peter said, voice hardening. "I've been Spider-Man for eight years now. I'm not the submissive little bond mate you need to protect, Deadpool!"

Okay. Where had that come from? Peter needed to take a step back and examine his emotional overload on this. He kept lashing out whenever matters turned to moving in together. It wasn’t the moving part, or the living together part. It was where Deadpool wanted him; his place. The place he owned. The place where Peter would make no contribution to the monthly rent.

The other man stared at him, his body taut, all sharp lines and power. Peter felt the chimera like a second skin, rising behind the human façade, twisting and curling like a predator ready to strike.
"I know it's your nature," he went on. "I know it's part of you, the chimera. But I'm my own man. I make my own decisions. Moving in together isn't yours to make on your own! This is big! And handing me the keys to a new place that you own isn't the right way either!"

The snarl was frightening, absolutely animalistic, and Peter felt the stab of anger through the anchor line. It was such a powerful surge, he was briefly surprised Deadpool didn't shift into something with teeth and claws himself.

“For a smart boy, you are incredibly stupid!” came the hiss. "It… grates on me to know you're so exposed! It… it's uncomfortable. I tried not to give in. I didn't want this. I never wanted this! But you didn't give up and now?! Now it's like I can't fucking think straight when you're in that shabby hole in the wall!"

Wade's eyes were burning a bright silver behind those eye covers. Peter could see it. They were almost inhuman in their intensity, and it constricted something inside the younger man, had him swallow.

"Okay! I'll pay rent! Or utilities!" he finally snapped, at the end of his emotional rope. “I'll move when you promise to include me on paying for the costs, okay?!" Deadpool looked both sheepish and triumphant in one. Peter knew he was caving too soon, but something was off and he needed to think about it.

"It's not a rental," he replied.

"I don't care! Utilities costs are not included, right? I'm my own person, Deadpool! I've always been! I'm your partner, we're bonded, but I'm not…"

"Dependent. Submissive. The omega to my alpha." There was a sad smile coming through the expressive mask. "Spideyboy, you are so much more and don't know it, right? You have the absolute power. You are the leader of this two men pack."

"Hellhounds are not pack animals!" Peter snapped, but the heat was gone. “And the chimera is… I’m not sure what it is, but it's not my alpha! I've been self-sufficient for a long, long time, Deadpool. I'm not going to just roll over and play the role."

The merc came closer, almost hesitant in each step.

"You still don't understand," he stated, shaking his head. “Why don't you understand? Why don't you feel it? You're aware, right? You know it's there. You said so in not too many words. I trust you,” he whispered into Peter's ear, masked lips brushing against masked skin. “Absolutely. With every fiber of my being. I'd give you anything you ask for, follow you into every battle, fight by your side. Just one word, Peter. I can’t deny you.”

Spider-Man felt something inside of him shatter and reform at the avalanche of words.

“You’re not a slave," Peter argued automatically. "I'm not your handler, Deadpool. I don't want to be. We're not working for SHIELD and I, personally, never will. And I’m not your prisoner either. We’re independent individuals. We make our own decisions. You're not a mindless creature.”

“I’m your mate, baby boy. You and I… matching set.”

“And we’re equals!”

He was pulled in close to the hard form, against warm leather and hard armor. Deadpool nuzzled
against his neck and Peter shuddered.

"This is for me. Only for me. You could leave and take everything with you, Peter. You are my anchor and my life. You balance the yin and the yang, the black and the white. You make this less… chaotic. You're everything. I'm connected to you. Forever. This is what the bond means. Teeth and claws and all, buried in you, keeping you with me. The chimera is a night terror, a twisted freakish darkness, but it will always defer to you. I made my choice."

"Wade…” he tried to interrupt, hearing the still growing desperation in the other man’s voice.

"Please? I need you, Peter. You give me a sense of calm in a world that doesn't. I can’t let go, but I'd do just that if you ask me to."

“I’d never…” He drew in a sharp breath, understanding all of a sudden.

Deadpool was ruled by a primal instinct in this matter, and Peter was the one who wouldn’t suffer from ending the relationship. It would tear the other man to pieces, probably forever, and he wouldn’t die from it either. He had risked his sanity by mating to Peter Parker.

Peter shivered and finally surrendered. "Okay. Our place."

"The Spider Cave!" Deadpool exclaimed, demeanor changing abruptly. The intensity of before was gone, replaced by a bouncy happiness.

"No."

"Spideypool Castle?"

"Wade!"

"Tower? Fortress? How about Casa de…"

"Home," Peter interrupted.

Deadpool tilted his head. "Huh. Home." He stilled. “Sounds about right,” he said after a moment. “Not sure what it means, but it kinda sounds okay. With you in it, I’m okay with calling it that. A bit unimaginative, in my not so humble opinion, but hey. Who am I to judge?"

Peter smiled behind his mask, shaking his head at the explosion of words. Something curled in his stomach. Warm and longing and intense.

Damn, he was a sap.

They christened the new place even before the first piece of furniture had been moved.

Not that they needed furniture for that.

tbc...
Peter moved in his meager belongings a week later. He still had the apartment for another week, but he didn’t really want to stay longer than necessary.

The large space had been sectioned off to form a work space for him that was set aside from the living room and open-plan kitchen. Actually, a lot had been done in the past months and while the walls were still bare bricks, the whole look was amazing.

There were now two bedrooms upstairs. Both were connected and both had access to the terrace.

Downstairs were two more rooms that could be used for possible guests, though Peter doubted there would be sleepovers from anyone. Wade was too private for that in the first place and ever since they had anchored and balanced the bond, he was also fiercely territorial. Peter didn’t feel inclined to share this place with anyone but his bonded either.

This was only for them.

One of the guest rooms doubled as a TV room that held anything a gamer’s heart could wish for. Especially a giant flat screen and whatever gaming console was on the market.

He had no idea how Deadpool could have had all of this installed, but the man knew a whole lot of shady people. And not so shady. Some of them were truly regular guys, hard-working, not a criminal bone in their body. When had he arranged all of that?

Additionally there was a large office space for him and Deadpool’s weapons storage. Security was through the roof for that particular room. Deadpool was proud of his collection and he still kept adding to it. Peter suspected he had more than enough to arm a third world country and help them take over a whole continent in one night.

"You really think it's safe to have that much firepower in the building?" Peter asked, looking at the assorted guns and matching ammo.

"Sure."

"What about the other tenants?"

"What other tenants?"

Peter whipped around and stared at the other man, who was wearing his red and black get-up, just without the mask. Deadpool looked almost surprised by the question.

"Who else lives here?"

"Uh." Wade scratched his neck. "No one?"

"No… one…?"

"It's just empty rooms. Well, and us up here. Last two floors."

"Who owns the building?"

"Me?" he said meekly.
Peter stared at him. "Why buy a whole building?"

"Investment? Too much free time and money to spend? Security?" Deadpool listed hesitantly. "I mean, I can rent it out if you want, but that's too much hassle. Or we can do a welfare project, but if I want to shoot something, I usually go downstairs and do it. I also got this insane weights room! It's state-of-the-art and has the latest in machines! Not that you need that. Just.. in case? Have I mentioned the planned lab? If you want one. And moving in together is a big ass step. Really big. Like gigantonormous! Is that a word?"

He tilted his head a little, looking quizzical, then shrugged.

"Anyway. Big step. Right? And we've both been on our own for so long, used to our own space… We might not get along all the time, so there's room to, well, have room? Just ignore each other for a while, pretend we have our own places? Really, it's a blank canvass here and you can start painting it any way you want!"

"Wade," Peter sighed and hugged him, interrupting the waterfall of words.

Deadpool quieted down immediately. Like a switch had been flipped, the erratic words stopped and he relaxed into the embrace.

"It's crazy Sentinel and Guide when you do that," he murmured as strong arms curled around the more slender man.

"Who and what now?"

"Uh, just… alternate universe fusion stuff. Just ignore it. Eerie, though. You touching me and everything is calm again. Since the beginning. It never grew less. Do you hear the purrs?"

Peter buried his head against Deadpool's neck, muffling his chuckling. "Yeah, it purrs. And since the chimera is you…"

"Do I get a scratching post and catnip?"

"Not sure the chimera is really a cat."

"It's everything and nothing. Is this okay?" came the careful question.

"The gigantonormous place you own? Yes, it's okay. Utilities will be through the roof, but it's okay."

"Nah, it's not that expensive." He pressed a kiss against Peter's temple.

"According to your bank statements or regular people's?" he teased.

"I can sell it," came the soft offer. "Or donate it as a home for the wayward puppy. You choose the new place. The way you want it."

Peter looked into those dark eyes, saw the doubt and hesitancy, the need to prove to his mate that he could protect him. Underneath all the bluster and loudness was a very unstable person, who needed to reassure himself that Peter was okay with this; with him. Deadpool wasn’t that hesitant in the field, when it came to shooting people or blowing stuff up. The moment the mask was off and they were alone, Wade was different.

Peter smiled softly, face open, emotions for Wade to see.
“No. I don’t want you to ditch this. I’m just a little overwhelmed.”

“Too much?”

“A little.”

“Bad Deadpool?”

He chuckled and kissed him, a brief contact of closed lips against closed lips.

“No. Never. This is a great place, Wade. I love it. I’m just trying to adjust to the money involved.”

“Because of how I earned it?” There was a touch of steel in the voice now.

He squeezed one strong wrist. “No. Just how fucking much you have.”

“Oh.” He shrugged. “Is it a lot? I don’t know. A lot relative to what? Your student loans? Your temp job? Bill Gates? I just never spend a lot. And people keep offering me more. If I don’t take it for services rendered, they think I’m cheap and work sub-standard.”

Peter nodded. They had talked at length about their respective pasts and while Wade had a rather loose moral code when it came to shooting someone, he had standards. He didn’t kill children and he couldn’t take cruelty against them or animals. He would have no qualms to shoot a target, even if he was a family father, if that was what he was being paid for, though.

“I really don’t want to know how much there is.”

“I… might not even know?” Deadpool hedged.

Peter had to laugh at that. Only Deadpool!

“You’re an impossible man.”

“Oh, I’m quite possible. I’m here. So I’m possible.”

The next kiss was with tongues involved.

*

Wade had been right. It had been a big step for them to move into a new place together. The chimera wanted its mate safe and would do just about anything, even camp out on Peter's tiny apartment's floor if he had to, to be close. It had been a struggle for the preternaturally gifted man to leave sometimes, knowing the apartment was far from ideal.

Peter had always kind of lived alone. Having the occasional sleep-over from Gwen or MJ didn't really count. It had only ever been his place. Small, affordable, not meant to be a permanent solution, though it had been his home for longer than he had thought it would be.

Now… the new place.

They were both getting used to a lot of things, sharing their lives now, living space, beds.
Peter found out that Wade was actually a pretty decent cook, not just pancakes or tacos. He loved Mexican delivery, but he knew a few nifty little recipes. Peter himself was far from experienced when it came to anything outside 'pour hot water on it' and 'microwave for five minutes'. So he left the kitchen to Wade and only ever entered when it came to grabbing snacks or drinks.

* *

Peter paid back his Aunt from the saved rent. His new job helped pay off the student loans, though Wade offered again and again.

But he had his pride.

Wade might claim that Peter was the one in charge of their relationship if he wanted to, could order him to do anything he wanted, but Wade was the one loaded with endless funds. He had more money than Peter could ever hope to amass, or that Wade could hope to ever spend.

Even if he splurged on some new, fancy ammo now and then. Wade loved his weapons and he loved buying more from obscure sources.

Peter just didn’t want to depend on that money. Not because of how it had been earned; he had told the truth that regard. It didn’t sit well with him that Wade could pay for everything and he was the poor guy with student loans and an empty savings account.

They were equals, except when it came to funds.

There were arguments now and then, but never too harsh.

Acceptance came slow to Peter, who explored the building and found it was like a fortress and a home in one. He couldn't fathom how much money Wade had sunk into this to make it special, to make it theirs, and it touched something in him.

"You're okay with it," the merc stated as they lay together, both spent from a wild round of very intense sex.

"Yeah. Sorry I'm so slow in that matter."

Blunt fingers traced over his scars, mapping them gently, and Peter liked the little shivers running through him.

"You're not. Maybe a little overwhelmed. That's a normal reaction around me," Wade quipped.

Peter used his far superior strength to roll them, Wade on his back, and he folded his arms on the broad chest, chin resting on his hands. He gazed into the brown eyes.

"I'm okay with it," he repeated. "All of it. With you and whatever insane funds you have." Peter grinned brightly. "I'm getting laid by a gazillionaire. Tony Stark, eat your heart out."

He lightly straddled the other man and leaned down, proceeding to kiss the living daylights out of
his chimera. Wade more than approved, judging by the way his hands roamed over Peter's skin and he answered each kiss with the same ferocity.

*

Wade sat cross-legged on the bed, eyes on the sleeping form of his little Spideyboy. Peter was fast asleep, sadly all dressed up in pajama bottoms and an old t-shirt, but Wade liked to look at him either naked or all dressed up.

He liked looking. Period. He was a perv. He was a stalker.

Sue him.

Heh. At least try.

Looking at Peter was… nice. Pleasing. Not just aesthetically. It pleased him on a much deeper level. Whether Spider-Man was in motion or just sleeping, Deadpool kept looking.

He hadn't really been aware of how deeply rooted the bond was, how it didn't sway, didn't weaken, remained a strong beacon and an even stronger anchor for him. It was reassuring. Balancing.

And he didn't want to change a thing. He wanted the deeply rooted contentment, the calmness he felt with Peter, the ease of their relationship. Wade Wilson had never been this at peace with himself, the world, his life, everything, since the day he had died.

After watching Vanessa being killed.

For the very first time he thought of her as an old pain, a scar he would always carry with him, but one that had finally been buried under the ashes. It was no longer this dark, sucking hole of agony. He could handle it now, could start living.

He was no longer hollow inside, exhausted from life, chaos and insanity tearing his mind apart. For the first time in his life he felt absolutely content. There was a soul-deep quietness to him, so relaxed and easy. There was no rush, no pressure, no need to move. There was nothing but this feeling of being home.

He would always be crazy, would always run his mouth off, but that was Wade Wilson. It was him, the crazy guy, the slightly insane guy, the man who wouldn't shut up in front of a superior officer and drive his instructors up the wall in frustration.

Deadpool smiled a little. He was suddenly clinging to life with such fierceness, it had surprised him. Death would never be permanent, he knew that, but it wasn't a solution for him anymore.

He still couldn't believe his luck and sometimes he wondered if his brain might have knitted together wrong after the last bullet to the head. Or that knife someone had stuck in there once, too. Could be either way.

No, Deadpool mused, he might just be living in an alternate reality where Spider-Man was his partner, his sex kitten, his mate.

The chimera stretched leisurely, entwined with Peter in a way that made them inseparable. It
watched with a cold, calculating gaze, but the wickedly dark terror turned into a fluffy puppy when Peter was involved.

This was real, not a figment of his imagination. The chimera knew it, didn't doubt it. This wasn't a parallel world or an alternative timeline.

Spideyboy in his bed was real.

Wade reached out and ran gentle fingers through the messy bedhead.

Wow.

So nice. So soft.

Real.

And his.

His calm center in the chaos of everything around him, inside him.

Peter never submitted, but he also didn't dominate. He wasn’t that kind of person. He was just… Peter. His little spider.

It was what made them so perfect together. Spidey met the dominant predator head-on, without fear or hesitation, and put it back into its place without endangering its alpha status. He walked a fine line along a razor-sharp edge, and he did it without a safety net.

"You're special," he whispered. "What were the chances I would find you, that we would fit?"

Insane chances. He would rather win the lottery.

But it had happened.

Fuck.

His life.

This was his life now. Good things happened to bad, bad people, too. And to Deadpool, who was outside any kind of classification.

Peter’s aunt didn’t have a clue as to what her nephew had done. Peter didn’t want her involved in his life as Spider-Man and Deadpool was part of that life. Wade, too. Sure, both identities were also part of Peter’s life, but his partner was so intent on keeping his aunt safe, he wouldn’t even let her have that.

May knew, though. Wade had listened in to a few calls and it was clear she knew something was up, especially after Peter had told her he had moved out of his old place into a new one.

It would only be a matter of time.

Part of him balked at her knowing just what her nephew had bonded with. She would want to know, would want to meet Wade, and he couldn't have that.

Ever.

So the lies would just have to hold a little longer, become a little better, and maybe she couldn't
ever call Peter on them.

Here's to hoping.

tbc...
Chapter 18

It was a perfectly nice afternoon. Peter hunting for a job online, Wade taking apart and checking weapons while watching TV and running commentary.

For the past two nights they had been chasing after a guy called Crossbones, who apparently had a beef with the Avengers, particularly Captain America, but then again, what else was new? Wherever Cap and the rest of the gang were at the moment, it wasn't New York City. Maybe not even on Earth. Peter suspected Asgard or somewhere else in the universe.

So, Crossbones.

And no Captain America.

The man was insanely armed, very dangerous, and while Peter suspected he wasn't anything but human, he was highly skilled. Maybe he was a mutant, but that was always hard to tell, and if he was a preternatural, his only outstanding ability was to blow up half a city block, trying to draw out Captain America.

Spider-Man had decided to put a stop to that senseless destruction, and Deadpool had tagged along. Wade had been happy to let go and pitch his skills against Crossbones', which had been almost awesome to watch.

Both men were deadly fighters, had a mastery of a dozen weapons and easily adapted whatever they got their hands on as a new defensive or offensive weapon, and Crossbones showed a high tolerance for pain. He didn't heal like Deadpool, but he didn't back down after getting electrocuted or falling off a building onto a car. That had had to hurt in Peter's opinion, but it didn't show.

The chimera was truly having fun, Deadpool throwing out quips or singing 'Another One Bites the Dust', followed by 'Highway to Hell' as he lopped a grenade back at Crossbones.

Spider-Man would have gladly let them battle on, especially since his bonded seemed to truly enjoy himself, but the collateral damage had been high already. He had taken care of getting innocent bystanders out of the way, then he had chased the group of henchmen, webbing them up and handing them over to the police.

Deadpool had chased Crossbones through alleys and streets, but he had been stopped by a barrage of fire that had put a dozen new holes into his costume. Crossbones finally blasted him with whatever insane gauntlet it was that he was wearing on both hands, and he had escaped.

"Coward!" Deadpool yelled after him from where he was lying in his own puddle of blood, unfazed by the dislocated shoulder and nearly-separated leg, which had knitted back as he spoke.

Spider-Man got him off the streets and into an abandoned shop, waiting for the healing factor to hold his partner together, so they could be mobile enough to get back home.

"Ow and ouch," was Deadpool's only comment, pulling out a knife that had been stuck into his side, blood flowing freely from the wound. "Why do they always have to stick pointy knives into me? Okay, the blunt stuff isn't fun either, but hey! Give a man a break! Literally! Go for the ribs, but filling my suit with holes? I'll be sewing all night!" He poked at the bullet holes.

"Had fun?" Spider-Man teased.
"Oh! I had. Until that spoil-sport made like a rabbit." He sniffed disdainfully, still poking at his torn suit.

Peter shot webbing at the wounds, keeping more blood from flowing, then gotten them home.

By the time they arrived at their place, the wounds had closed and only the costume showed the holes, which had Wade grumble angrily about bad guys who weren't considerate enough to think of the dry cleaning costs and the repair materials needed as he stripped.

"Gonna bill this one to the Avengers. How come we start mopping up their bad guys now?" Wade asked as he tossed the suit and walked into the shower.

Peter, checking his own costume and finding too many tears for his liking, shrugged.

"I can't just ignore someone tearing through New York, even if he was looking for an Avenger. Innocent people got hurt, Wade."

The chimera stuck his head out of the shower, water running off his skin and pooling on the floor.

"I know you're a do-gooder, baby boy. Not an Avenger, but ready to jump into the fray and kick ass. Love that about you." He smiled at Peter, who chuckled. "Just sayin'. We're piling up dry cleaning bills. Not to mention all those bandages and band-aids. Well, for you. Me, I'm pristine. And what do we get? Not even a box of cookies! Their Yelp review will be scathing!"

Peter tossed a towel at his face.

Three hours after getting back from kicking villain ass, Peter finally snapped his laptop shut and joined Deadpool on the couch, pushing several weapons aside to put his feet up on the table.

"Rude," Wade muttered.

He just nudged him with an elbow and leaned against the merc, who was wearing a long-sleeve shirt that proclaimed 'My other shirt is clean'. Deadpool made a happy little noise.

"You have a really huge room for that stuff," Peter remarked. "Actually, a whole floor that has been reinforced and looks like SHIELD's training facility."

"New rule for the roommate agreement?"

"We don't have a roommate agreement. Just saying."

Wade poked his foot at the guns. "All secured. Not gonna shoot my little spider. Accidentally or otherwise."

"I know."

Peter's spider sense was absolutely quiet when around Deadpool, even when he was fiddling with his weapons, and it had been close to forever.

"No luck?" the mercenary wanted to know, eyes flicking to the laptop, voice a little quieter.

"Nope."
Job hunting was exhausting. Especially after crime-fighting.

“Might have to look into freelancing more now.”

Wade opened his mouth to say something, then snapped it shut again.

Silence fell between them. It was unusual for Deadpool to be silent for any amount of time, but he could be. Especially when plastered to Spider-Man. Peter had early on discovered that a simple touch could quiet him, and having Peter in full body contact resulted in a very relaxed and mellow chimera.

Sometimes he wondered just what it was the chimera reacted to. The scientist in him was curious. Was it the physical contact? Was it Peter himself? Was it something in his mutant DNA that touched the preternatural-mutant DNA of his partner? Would it have worked on the hellhound Wade had been? Or was it only possible since the mutation had taken place?

Peter didn't want to research it too deeply, because that meant experimentation. That again had Wade react negatively. He had an aversion to anything even close to a hospital or a medical facility, which was understandable, and just mentioning that he wanted to look into the genetic changes and the results of what Weapon X had done would probably end very, very badly for both of them.

No, this was good. It was perfectly okay. Absolutely fine. Peter could work with what he had, use touch to calm the chimera, use the bond to bring him down from any kind of emotional overreaction.

No science needed.

Instinct worked fine.

“Do you…” Wade broke the silence after a while, “want to go out?”

Peter, who had by now slid halfway into the cushions, glanced up into the dark eyes. “Patrol?”

“No. Dinner.” Wade sounded hesitant, fingers playing with the hem of his t-shirt.

“Dinner?”

“The main meal of the day, eaten in the evening, unless you’re in Britain, then it might just be in the middle of the day.”

“Wade.”

He blew out a breath. “Go out. Dinner in a restaurant. You and me. Would you want that?”

Peter sat up slowly, slightly overrun. He knew Wade was highly self-conscious concerning his looks. He also drew looks. People stared at his unmasked face, shocked, pitying, sometimes sickened. They saw the scars and made up their minds. They saw either a disabled person, a handicap, or a victim. And some whispered to themselves, a few very loudly.

There had been a more positive incident with a lady telling off a couple that had been openly gawking.

"Don't let them get to you," she had told Wade firmly. "Whatever happened to you, it doesn’t change who you are inside. Let them whisper and talk."
And then she had looked at Peter, giving him a warm smile. He had just nodded his thanks.

Peter had once or twice thrown murderous glares at those who were clearly talking one too secretly about Wade's scars.

Spider-Man and Deadpool in full costume drew less looks than Wade Wilson’s features.

So Wade didn't really want to show himself in public.

“Do you?” Peter finally asked.

“I asked first.”

He sensed the chimera twisting between them, agitated, unsure, fighting. He let himself relax, mentally reach for his bonded, and the creature surged forward, enveloping him in darkness.

The waves smoothed over.

Peter heard Wade exhale.

“Are you asking me out on a date?” he teased gently.

The other man stared, then evaded his eyes. “Kinda?”

Oh-kay…?

“Why?” Peter wanted to know, still baffled.

“I thought you might like it. Want to do… normal stuff. Couply stuff.”

He nearly burst out laughing, but contained himself. “Couply stuff?” Peter still echoed, unable to keep the disbelief out of his voice completely.

Wade ducked his head. He was clearly out of his depth. Way out of his depth. Absolutely drowning in the deep end of the pool that was an ocean. Give him a target to shoot, stab or blow up and he wouldn't hesitate to jump into the fray, against overwhelming odds and possibly dying at least once.

This… this was different.

“Bit late for that, I know,” he mumbled.

“Well, no, not really. We had dates. On roofs and in alleys. We still have them.”

“You make it sound as dirty as it is.”

“I like it.” Peter smiled. “And fancy dinner dates are vastly overvalued.” He scooted closer. “What we have is what I want, Wade.”

“Sure?”

“Very. You think I’d just shut up if something bothers me? I’m not the mousy little maiden.”

“You’d make a good maiden,” was the immediate reply, the teasing note clear to hear as Deadpool’s spirits picked up. “All righteous and valiant. Oh wait, that’s the knight. So am I the maiden? I think I could find a maid costume. Uh, no, right, not that… But I’d look amazing in drag.
Is it drag if I wear it over the costume? Do you want me in drag?"

Peter ran a feather-light caress over the sweater material, stilling the words. “I like you as you are, Wade,” he stated. “No drag. No dresses. The costume is hot enough.”

The bright grin was all he wanted to see. “Hot, huh?”

“Yep. Very. So are your civvies. We dated in both.”

Deadpool suddenly lowered his gaze, hands in his sleeves, twisting the cuffs.

"Who defines what a normal date is?” Peter asked reasonably. "I like to hang out with you. I like you as my partner when I kick bad guy ass. I like to wake up next to you, Wade."

That got him a small smile. “…so do I…” was the quiet echo.

“We’re bonded, right?” Peter added softly. “You know it. You know what it means. You wowed me with your charming persona and cheap take-out.”

“Cheap?!?” he exclaimed, head coming up, mood shifting into playfully outraged. “I’ll have you know that Peppi Margarita’s is one of the most exclusive and expensive tacos stands this side of the border! And this is the expert talking. I’m Canadian, born and raised!”

Peter grinned. “Noted. Greasy Mexican from the greasiest take-out stand in town. So, what brought that on? The dates.”

“No idea. Messed up brain. One bullet too many.”

“Did you get shot in the head?”

“Only about 428 times.”

“Lately?”

Wade tilted his head, thinking. “428 times? No? I think? Might have forgotten. Regrowing the brain can leave memory holes sometimes. Knives are better. Grenades are more of a complete solution.”

Peter squeezed his wrist, stopping the muttering. The chimera’s expression was suddenly sharper, more focused on him, and he felt it shift closer. It radiated an insane danger, teeth bared and bristling without being threatened.

“I don’t want walks in the park, dinner dates in fancy or not so fancy restaurants, movies and whatever. We have all that… our way. I want you. As you are. With all the weird and the crazy. Because in this life, my life, your weird and your crazy kinda… equalize my weird and crazy. It makes it... good.”

Wade’s presence was incredibly intense, the dark irises turning slightly silver at the edge. In one lithe, strong move he had Peter on his back on the couch. It would be easy to push back. He was a lot stronger than Deadpool. Right now he didn’t mind the position at all.

“How do I deserve you?” the merc breathed.

Peter wound his fingers into the loose sweater. “Fate,” he murmured and drew him closer, kissing Wade.
“Don’t believe in her. She’s a bitch. Like Death. We don’t talk any more. She’s pretty much declared me persona non grata and won’t even say hello for the brief time I’m visiting.”

“Hm, figures. You piss off everyone.”

“My specialty. No skills required.”

“I think it is a skill,” he replied between more kisses. “Your power.”

“Even you?”

He laughed, nipping at the scarred lips. “Sometimes.”

“Hm, haven’t lost it then.”

“Nope.”

Peter wormed his fingers underneath the sweater, over the uneven skin, and the effect was immediate. Wade groaned softly and buried closer.

“Don’t deserve you,” he repeated.

“You do. All of me. And you got me. Not going to give this… you… up.”

They spent a while like that, just snuggled together, breathing in sync, Peter drifting off in the warmth that surrounded him. The TV was still running, some kind of game show that Peter only followed with half an ear. Most of his attention was on the chimera in his arms, the dangerous claws curled around Peter’s very self, possessive, and growling at any intrusion.

Not that there was any.

tbc...
Chapter 19

It was just his luck, again, that the moment Peter Parker landed an interview at Stark Industries R&D in the biophysics department for an internship, Spider-Man was needed.

At SI.

Because some Super-Villain Wanna Be had it out for Stark and had chosen that exact day when Peter was there to make a big entrance. While the internship wouldn't pay him a single dime, it was a ticket into a possible job, since SI was looking to hire. The internship was to test the candidates and weed out the wrong ones.

The intruder had been among the hopeful group, revealing himself the moment they had walked out of the elevator and into the presentation room. He was armed to take down a small country and he didn’t hesitate to fire at everything that moved.

And there were a lot of people here. A lot of movement.

He wanted Tony Stark, proclaimed it loudly and repeatedly, and he got Iron Man.

Peter had been busy helping panicking people run out of the danger zone, trying not to get hit by falling debris, glass shards flying through the air, or projectiles fired from the weirdo’s gun. He relied on his spider sense to evade danger, used the web shooters to pull people quickly from danger, and generally tried to keep a low profile – because he wasn’t in costume. What he had was the Deadpool sweater jacket from his backpack and a matching red and black cowl. Not much, but it helped, especially with the dust, and to hide most of his lower face.

The Deadpool merchandise had been Wade’s idea. He had ordered a ton of the stuff, handing it out to whoever wasn’t fast enough to say no, and Peter had been the recipient of everything from pajamas to t-shirts and jackets.

“Even asked for Deadpool toilet paper,” the merc had told him, flourishing. “They said no. Spaceballs had their own toilet paper, but I couldn’t get it! Don't get me started on the flame thrower! Why does a movie get flame thrower merchandise and I get told off by some faceless sales rep?”

Peter had consented to the jacket. He drew a line at the underwear.

The hooded jacket now helped conceal his identity to a degree, and the cowl showed only his eyes after he had pulled it over his mouth and nose. It had to do.

He was also on the twentieth floor and one window front was already gone, nothing but empty frames, and the guy was still firing. He grabbed a terrified woman around the waist and flung her toward the staircase, right into the arms of a security guard. She barely had time to scream.

Peter hid behind a row of cabinets as more unfriendly fire hit his general area, but he caught a glimpse of the panicky woman being dragged to safety.

Good.

Then the desk next to him blew up, sending him scrambling for cover. Small fragments tore into his clothes, lodging into his hair or drawing tiny red trails over the exposed skin of his hands.
Iron Man had made an appearance about five minutes ago, trying to contain the threat without getting blasted himself, but it was hard in the confined space. Between him and Wanna Be it was hard to find a safe place, let alone get the rest of the people out, though Peter had managed the latter by now. The woman had been the last one.

Peter peeked around his meager cover.

Wanna Be was still blathering on about how he would kill Tony the moment he got his hands on him, his back to Peter, shooting at anything and everything that moved or looked wrong.

Okay. Here’s goes.

He aimed the web shooter, again glad he had packed them automatically. The one time he had forgotten them and landed in a situation where Spider-Man would have been able to help had been enough. Peter always carried them with him now.

He fired, lodging the strong web line on the man’s back, and pulled.

Wanna Be screamed out in surprise as he fell over, the guns still rattling on, and bullets tore into the ceiling plating. Something inside blew and showered everyone with sparks. More debris rained down everywhere and Peter coughed, running for new cover.

He miscalculated a little.

Just a little.

Wanna Be threw out an arm in his general direction. A blast went off, his spidey senses screaming, and Peter twisted, but the shockwave hit him in the side. It was a grazing hit, but it was a hit nevertheless. The full impact would probably have broken several ribs. The glancing blow would definitely leave him with a huge bruise and possibly cracked ribs.

Peter went flying and instinctively shot out a line as he went through one of the few still unbroken windows, high above the streets. His back took the brunt of the impact, rattling his teeth, and he just knew he would be black and blue all over.

The line took and he felt it pull at his arm, but he swung back toward the building, bumping harder than normal against the window panes. With a wheeze, Peter came to a rest, clinging to the windows with ease.

His ears were ringing. There was a bloody tear in his pants. A rather unsightly burn hole on the sleeve of his hoodie. His back hurt, his arms ached, his shoulder joint was on fire.

Above him was another explosion that rained more glass down on the already cordoned off streets. Emergency response teams were taking care of everything.

And here he was, literally hanging by a thread.

Time to get moving.

Iron Man would take care of Wanna Be.

He made it home unseen. Well, at least he hoped so.
Peter had quickly disappeared into an alley, removed the hoody and stuffed it into his backpack, then limped off, away from the gathering onlookers. His leg was screaming at him, the blood thankfully mostly invisible on the black material.

At home he peeled off the ruined pants, hissing softly. The cut was deep, would need a few stitches, which he hated applying but had to, and he disinfected it.

It hurt like hell.

His ribs felt like someone had used him as a punching ball, his muscles protested every move, and he just knew he would looked rather colorful by tomorrow.

So much for the internship.

Damnit!

He might try reapplying, after things had blown over.

This had been truly a bust.

So, the temp agency would get another call with him asking for work tomorrow. Or the day after. Right now he wanted to sleep for a week and forget about the whole fiasco.

He grabbed his cell, going through his messages, finding one from Deadpool, which was a selfie of him, full gear, holding some kind of half-eaten sandwich in one hand, in front of some ancient temple. Peter had to chuckle.

Wade had taken another job that took him somewhere in South America to an undisclosed location, swearing it wasn’t a hit. If someone died, it would be because he had shot first. Or thrown a knife. Or a grenade. Could have been self-inflicted death, too – which meant, the bad guy had shot first and Deadpool had retaliated. Whatever.

Peter understood Deadpool’s need to work off some of the tension that couldn’t be dealt with fighting petty crime in New York City. The chimera needed to just let go and hit something, preferably bigger and badder than Deadpool, thrilled by and thriving off the challenge. Sure, there had been a few villains hitting the streets, but nothing that really took the edge off.

He had noticed the chimera's restlessness, the way Wade had been on the laptop or listened to messages on his phone more often.

"Job offers?" Peter asked one night, voice casual.

Wade looked almost guilty, like a kid caught with his hands deep in the cookie box. "Uh… kinda?"

Peter tossed a bag of chips at him and Wade caught it easily. "Anything interesting?"

The brown eyes were wide, then Wade looked away. "Kinda? I mean, all of that stuff is interesting. Except for the freebie job someone's trying to wheedle out of me."

"Freebie?"

"Some kind of transporter thing. Not my style." Wade's fingers drummed on the laptop. "The rest is the usual. Not that I'm looking for work," he quickly added.

Peter sat down on the couch, cross-legged, looking at him. "You have free choice, Wade. I'm not asking for you to hang up your katanas."
"You said no killing," he reminded him softly.

"When you're working with me. I'd appreciate it if you didn't take hit jobs or the like, but I'm not your handler and never will be. You're a mercenary. I know what that entails."

The other man blew out a breath. "I don't…" he started, then stopped. "It's not a life I have to live," he finally said. "I want to change. Never lied about that, baby boy. This… is like… porn? You look at the pictures, but you don't want to do it? I mean, I do the sex. With you. Always. I'd never say no. But not the stuff they show sometimes."

Peter twitched a smile at the rambling words. "Gotcha," he only said.

Wade huffed a little laugh. "Only you would. Anyway… I got a reputation and people are looking for me. I weed out the no-go stuff. Like the unaliving. There's other things here, too. I'm good at retrieval, too. If someone ends up dead, and it isn't me, then it's not because I wanted to kill them."

Peter popped a few chips into his mouth, chewing as he mulled it over.

"Go then."


A shrug. "If you need a change in scenery, take a vacation…?"

"Not from you," came the quick reply.

"I hope so."

Deadpool pushed the laptop off and suddenly Peter found himself flat on his back with a lapful of Wade Wilson. The expression in those dark eyes was intense.

"I'm not leaving because of you, Peter. Never because of you. You're everything to me and always will be." A sheen of silver crept into the brown.

Peter cupped the scarred cheek. "I know. I can feel the restlessness, though. You need this. Maybe one day I'll tag along, but for now this is my home. My city to protect."

Wade's smile was soft and gentle, so knowing. "Ours. Still learning here. Takes a while to get it right. I'm not used to… being part of a team."

He smiled back, bright and loving. "We got a lot of time to get you used to it."

The kiss was promising and warm. "Looking forward to it."

Deadpool took the job after a longer phone call, all in Spanish, and Peter didn't ask for details.

It didn’t do anything to the bond. There was no strain due to the distance. There were no echoes from whatever Deadpool was or wasn’t doing, though they hadn’t experimented with what
happened should Deadpool die. Peter’s theoretical approach to it was that nothing would happen. The chimera's death wouldn’t break the bond, so there would be no ill effect for Peter.

At least someone was having fun, he thought darkly as he let the phone drop.

Oh well…

*

The Parker luck wouldn’t let him have a breather.

It had been almost a month since the incident at SI and his injuries had healed. There was hardly more than a thin red line left of the cut in his leg.

Peter hadn't reapplied for an internship at SI. He had called only once and been told that the program was currently on hold after the incident.

So he had taken the next best temp job that paid decently enough, and sold more pictures of Spider-Man or any other costumed hero or villain to the Bugle. James had ordered him to keep his eyes on whatever crazy mutant, preter or super hit New York's streets. He was running a separate page on the 'threats' now. The Bugle sold like crazy whenever the Avengers went on a mission, so Peter did his best to tag along.

Never as Spider-Man, just to be sure, but he always wore the costume underneath his clothes.

Just to be ready.

Tonight he was patrolling solo, which wasn’t as much fun as sharing those nights with Deadpool. The mission in South America had taken a sour turn and last he had heard of his partner was that he would be back as soon as he was done.

Done with whatever it was that needed doing, since the original mission had gone belly-up for whatever reason.

So he was alone.

No fun.

Running into none other than Iron Man as he watched the docks tonight wasn’t fun either. Spider-Man felt a sudden tension run through him, the spider sense buzzing gently, just before Iron Man came into view. He landed gracefully and Spider-Man immediately checked for a quick escape route.

“You are a hard man to track down, Mr. Parker.”

Shi-it! Abort, abort, leave, now!

He knew he had a snowball’s chance in hell to get out of here in one piece before that fancy suit tracked him down, but Peter was convinced he could disable enough of the armor to at least get a good head start, then go underground and start a full-on freak-out.

Leave New York. Leave the country. Hell, just leave!
“Huh?” was all he said out loud.

Iron Man’s helmet retracted completely, the latest design change Tony had made, apparently.

“If I had known Spider-Man was applying for an internship at my company, I wouldn’t have dodged the grand speech that had been set up. Welcome to SI, blabla, tomorrow in your hands, the future is yours, yadayaya.” He waved a hand. “You know the stuff already.”

“I didn’t…”

Tony held up the aforementioned hand. “Don’t. The cameras were shot, true. There is no witness to you doing what you did. Aside from Iron Man. I saw you, kid. It was easy to add one and one after that, but you were a hard man to find, even with facial recognition software. Took me just over a month, really, which is shoddy, I know, but I wanted to know who had been rescuing people, then was blown out of the window and never went splat. Actually, someone who swung away on web lines not unlike Spider-Man. Just not in a Spider-Man costume.”

Peter really, really wanted to run now.

But to what avail?

They knew who he was. They knew where he lived, most likely. Where he worked. And they now knew who the man behind the mask was, the man bonded to the chimera.

“What do you want?” he asked evenly.

“Well, for one I wanted to sate my curiosity about the mysterious assistant I had in taking down Mr. Fawn. That’s the guy with a grudge against me, a mile wide, because I cut back on his projects. Disgruntled employee.” Tony shrugged. “I’m not here to threaten you, Peter.”

"Then why?"

"Like I said, curiosity. The rest of the Avengers don't know about my little discovery and I will keep your secret to myself if you ask me to." Tony suddenly smirked. "But I could get in a good word for the internship. You've got an impressive resume. As Peter Parker, but also as Spider-Man. The only question is, why an internship?"

"You're not hiring," Peter replied neutrally. "I know. I tried. And you know my past employment history."

"Ah, yes. I saw you hopped from one of our sister labs to the next, always booted off after the trial period, which coincided with the end of the project you were hired for. Which is too bad, since you're quite talented." Stark looked thoughtful. "Actually, I'd bet Bruce would love to meet you. You have an impressive resume, kid."

"Never impressed anyone else," Peter commented flatly. "Or I would have been able to hold on to a job."

"Ever thought that you were overqualified? That they were scared that you might demand more money after the trial period?"

Peter blinked. Nope, he hadn't. He knew he had done a good job at each project, had made no mistakes and worked to get everything finished right at or just ahead of the deadline.

Tony nodded to himself. "Thought as much. For a genius, not so bright."
"Now you're quoting Black Widow. Who was talking about you."

He grinned. "Are you looking into a more permanent position?"

"Kinda. Just… I need to be kind of… flexible?" Peter hedged carefully. "Because my… other job really runs at the oddest hours."

Tony chuckled. "Yes, I can see that. Have you ever thought about freelancing for SI's R&D? Work with the teams on projects? Run proposals for your own stuff? Some of your papers have a lot of potential, Peter. Enough to get me interested in further researching into that direction."

"Uh…"

Peter didn't know whether to break in fanboyish glee or step back and examine the offer from all sides, because it was too good to be true.

"Might be an alternative to being constantly broke. Then again, you are bonded to a loaded guy."

Peter felt a flash of anger, eyes sparking. "I'm not depending on Wade's money, Stark!"

The other man chuckled and held up his hands. "Whoa, calm down, kid. Just sayin'. I'll shoot you an email with the freelance contract. Let me know if you're interested."

Peter gave him a wary look and a shrug. "Okay."

"Accepting it won't make you an Avenger, Peter. That's voluntary and still on the table, should you ever want to say yes. There are no strings attached to my job offer."

"Doubt it," Spider-Man answered automatically.

Tony looked rather contemplative. "I'll be in touch," he said after two long seconds.

The helmet formed around his head and he powered up his thrusters.

"See ya, kid."

And Iron Man took off.

Peter remained behind, confused, relieved, strangely numb.

He crouched on the roof, the docks silent and dark around him, mind whirling.

Iron Man… Tony Stark… knew who he was. He knew who Spider-Man was, who Peter Parker was.

And he had promised to keep his secret.

He breathed deeply.

The rest knew about his bond to Deadpool, but only Stark knew who Spider-Man was. It was a bigger reveal than showing his true identity to Wade. He had trusted Deadpool, knew he was safe with him, but now the Avengers knew.
He shivered.

Why was this such a big thing? he thought faintly.

Because it had been taken out of his hands, was the answer. It hadn't been him making it. He had been careless. He had tried to help and Iron Man had seen him, had added it all together.

Spider-Man finally got up and shot out a line, swinging off the docks.

He took the long way home, making sure he wasn't followed. Sure, Stark could get his address and probably already had, but it was instinct.

No one followed him. There was no tracker on him and when the doors shut behind him, Peter pulled off the mask.

He fell onto the couch and groaned, closing his eyes with a pained expression.

Shit!

tbc...
Dinner with his aunt was always a fun occasion and Peter talked about moving, the new temp job, thinking about maybe freelancing for SI, and he gave her his new address. May dutifully programmed it into her cellphone and also wrote it into her address book.

"It's good to hear you're doing fine, Peter. We rarely talked lately. You were always so busy."

"Sorry, Aunt May. The job market is bad and I keep trying to get something more permanent."

"The offer from SI sounds good."

He shrugged. "I'm thinking about it. It sounds good, but I don't have a steady income if I freelance. If I take the part-time job, too, I'm on the safe side."

But he would be dependent on Tony Stark's good graces. The man knew he was Spider-Man, and if Spider-Man stepped out of line in the Avengers' eyes, Peter Parker might find himself unemployed again.

Not that Peter thought Tony was that vindictive or unfair, but if Spider-Man and the Avengers went head to head, his civilian alter ego wouldn't be able to peacefully work for the man.

He really wished Wade was here to act as a sounding board. He wouldn't make the decision for Peter, but he did have some very good insights sometimes. And he usually managed to thwart off his existential crises.

"I only ever read about you," May suddenly said, scrubbing at an imaginary stain. "Like the fact that you have apparently partnered up with someone called Deadpool?"

Peter knew he was staring.

Wide-eyed, with a good goldfish impression going on.

His brain had stalled, then performed a spectacularly full crash, and was currently valiantly trying to reboot.

And failing.

May had... said... what?! He must have misheard. It hadn't sounded like she knew...

"Uh, what?" he stammered. "Who now?"

"I'm not stupid, Peter. I know you. I've seen you grow up since you were born. I baby-sat you. And then I raised you. You are like my own son. Did you really think you could hide something this massive in your life from me? When were you going to tell me about your secret life?"

"My, ah... huh?" he stuttered. "I don't have a... a secret life."

He was such a bad liar. Had always been. It was a small miracle he hadn't told everyone he was Spider-Man already.

May's expression was tinged with exasperation. "I might be growing old, but I'm not blind or can't add one and one."
"Aunt May…?"

"I know you are Spider-Man."

"I… what?! I mean I… no!"

She stood straight, eyes hard and unforgiving. "Don't try lying, Peter. I've known for a while now. I knew something was up right after Ben’s death, but I didn’t make the connection until later."

"You never said anything!" he blurted.

Okay, that was as good as a written confession, plus a photobook.

"And what would I have said? That I suspected you, my fifteen year old son, were Spider-Man? That you didn’t trust me enough to tell me? Not even after graduation? Or after college?"

"It was never about trust!"

"Then what?" she asked quietly.

"I wanted to keep you safe!" Peter exclaimed.

"From what?"

"Everyone who was coming after me!"

"Me knowing who you are would have endangered me how, Peter?" she asked reasonably. "You never came here with your costume on. If one of those villains had unmasked you, they could have found out about your family anyway. Me knowing wouldn’t have endangered me! I was worried one way or another."

She sounded so reasonable. So logical.

Now, in hindsight, it made no sense.

If his aunt had known about Spider-Man she wouldn't have been any more exposed than her not knowing. Peter had taken great care whenever he came home, before he had moved into his own place.

"I didn't want to worry you," he whispered.

"I always worried about you, Peter. School, college, the part-time jobs, trying to be the man in the house after your uncle died…"

Peter swallowed hard, that old pain rising again. It wasn't as cutting anymore, the scar no longer breaking open. But it hurt.

"Sorry?" he offered weakly. "Also, I really didn't know how to tell you. Maybe I was a little afraid."

May walked around the kitchen counter and drew him into a hug. Peter returned it almost desperately. His eyes stung a little.

"You should never be afraid to tell me anything, Peter. We are family. I'm so proud of the man you have become."
His eyes grew even more misty. "You did something right raising me."

May chuckled. "Just something? I think I did everything right. You grew up into a good man, Peter Parker. So, who is this Deadpool?" she asked abruptly.

Peter startled out of the hug, eyes wide. "Uh…"

His aunt gave him an amused, almost teasing smile. "Ah."

"It's not what you think!"

"Really, Peter?"

"Well, maybe it's what you think, but not like you think," he tried.

She gave her nephew a little push toward the couch. "Sit. Tell me everything."

Peter sighed and slumped into the cushions. Where to start? he thought.

"Peter?" May said calmly, voice soft. "Just start somewhere. Like where did you meet?"

He scrubbed a hand through his messy hair and laughed softly. "That's more complicated than you'd think."

But he started. From when Deadpool appeared in his life, to how they had become friends, to how he got to know the man behind the mask.

"He was injured, Aunt May," he added. "Very badly. In the past. He doesn't like to show his face, which is why he wears the mask. Not because of a secret identity."

She listened, nodding slowly. "Burns?" she hazarded a guess.

"Kinda."

Because Wade looked like a burn victim. Bad acid burns. Scars all over.

"He doesn't like to go out?"

He nodded. "Not without the mask, most of the time. And when he does, he hides his skin. There are a few places he openly shows his face, but those are rare. Actually, there’s just one." Peter chewed on his lower lip.

May smiled softly. "I'm not going to ask you to bring him over for dinner, but I wouldn’t mind having a guest."

"Not sure he would, even if I asked nicely."

She chuckled. "How nicely?"

Peter opened his mouth, then snapped it shut again, hot embarrassment fighting with denial. "It's… I mean…"

"I know what it is, Peter. Like I said, I might be old, but I'm not stupid. Do you love him?"

He knew he was turning into a tomato. His face felt hot.

"Uh, I… I do?"
Her smile expressed her amusement. “I think so, too.”

"Uh, there's another thing, Aunt May… Wade's a preternatural."

"Oh." She sounded intrigued.

"He… before the accident…” Peter exhaled sharply. "I'm Spider-Man because of that spider bite. Wade was a hellhound, then something happened to him and he… he became something else, May."

She was silent, waiting for him to either expand or not.

"I'm not sure it's my decision to make, to talk about his past, I mean,” Peter finally said. "What he went through killed the preternatural part, left him with something new, something that… no one really knows anything about. It made him Deadpool, but he's so much more."

She nodded. "I understand. Should he ever want to come here, I believe it's best to leave the story to him."

He gave his aunt a relieved smile. May squeezed his hand.

"Have the two of you bonded?” she asked instead, catching him completely off guard again.

Peter had known his aunt for most of his life, but she still managed to do that. He was probably staring at her like a lunatic.

May chuckled. "Oh, you have. Then I know it's a good relationship."

"Uh, you…do… I mean… really?"

She nodded. "Yes. Preternatural bonds are mutual, based on compatibility. Don't look at me like that, Peter. I went to college once, too. I'm also a nurse and sometimes we have a preter or super. New York City has an unusually high population of them, as well as mutants. I'm not unaware of the world outside my window."

"I never said…” He broke off, knowing he had lost.

"Should he want to come one day, he is always welcome. And if he wants to wear his mask, tell him I don't mind, Peter. I'd love to meet him, but I also respect that he doesn't want to show himself to everyone."

Peter hugged her then. "Thank you, May. Thank you so much. I love you."

"I love you, too, Peter. You're my boy. I want you happy. Deadpool makes you happy."

He did.

Peter left with a large bag of leftovers and ready-to-nuke meals Aunt May had insisted he take. She had apparently cooked for a small army.

She handed him a printed page with her cell and home number, as well as her email.
"Give it to Wade. I’d love to hear from him."

He gave her a kiss, thankful for her acceptance and open-mindedness.

"Can't promise you that he'll take you up on that offer."

"I don't have a problem with it. Have a safe trip home."

Peter was glad they had such a large freezer and fridge when he finally got home.

*

Peter had a lot of time to think about things, in between kicking bad guy ass into jail. Some encounters left him bruised and battered, others had him treat a cracked rib or a few cuts.

Deadpool dropped in the one night he wasn't patrolling. Peter had taken out his laptop and settled down cross-legged on a low, wide window sill that he had used for just that often before. The window gave him a nice view of New York at night, hiding him because of the depth, as well as the darkness. He hadn't switched on the lights.

"Honey, I'm home!"

Peter chuckled as Deadpool skipped into the apartment, looking chipper, and he closed the laptop. He had been going over Tony's proposition for a freelance contract and he had yet to come to a decision.

"Miss me, Spideybabe?" Deadpool sang. "Because I sure did miss you." He looked around. "I hope I got the right timeline this time. This is always so confusing. No idea how the X-chaps do it, with their variations and all those nifty little plotlines, but I’m not even sure I’m in the right universe."

The connection between them hummed with pleasure and warmth.

"Hey," Peter replied, ignoring the rush of words.

Deadpool inhaled sharply all of a sudden and the chimera’s presence was almost overwhelming now.

“Oh, right universe,” he whispered, sounding almost awed.

“I hope so. I wouldn’t want to think of more than one of you bonded to me.”

“Not going to share,” was the sharp growl. “Ever! Not even with myself. As fun as a Deadpool-Spidey sandwich sounds…. Spideypool sandwich! This week's special! But I'd rather shoot myself than share you with any kind of alternate me. Ever!”

Peter got up lithely, standing on the window sill, towering over the other man.

Deadpool wrapped his arms around the strong thighs and buried his face into Peter's crotch with a
happy croon. Peter burst out laughing.

"Wade!"

"Yeah, I missed this. So, so much! There was just me, a bunch of hard-ass ass-hats who had no clue about the business they were in, my hand, not enough lube, and long, lonely nights spent kicking even harder ass. And some not so hard ass. Maybe boobies, too. Those twins had some rad ninja skills! So how was your work day, baby?"

Peter knelt down, Deadpool's grip on his thighs loosening, and he wrapped his arms around the masked head, pressing his lips against the thick material.

"Missed you," he murmured.

Inside him, that place where he felt the bond flare, the chimera seemed to stretch toward him, all darkness and no light. It enveloped him, searching, touching, wanting, and Peter shuddered a little.

"Can feel it," he whispered.

Deadpool made an affirmative sound.

Peter's fingers worked on the mask and finally managed to remove it, looking into the scarred face, into those deep brown eyes, and he knew Wade was feeling it, too.

There was so much to them, both men had yet to understand. There was no book for them to look up the answers.

"Fuck, I want you," Wade breathed.

"How can I say no to a man of such romantic words."

"I'll bring you all the hearts you want, Petey, but right now I just want to tear your clothes off and make you scream."

That went right through, down south, and Peter kissed the other man hard and fast. Wade went with the program just as quickly.

They didn't even make it to the bed.

"No hearts," Peter mumbled, lying on the rug. "Knowing you, they'd be real."

Wade hummed, sounding extremely pleased and happy.

Peter slapped him, his aim crap, but he did hit flesh.

"Ow," was the laughed reply.

"No hearts. Nothing at all."
"Okiedokie." Wade leaned over the younger man, claiming a kiss. "I'll just give it to you, if you get my drift. All the time, everywhere. Twenty-fucking-four-and-seven."

Peter pushed up against the scarred stomach, his semi-hard dick brushing over the roughness, making it twitch.

Making Wade twitch.

The chimera's eyes flashed silver.

"Think we can make it to the bed?" Peter asked, lips moving against lips.

"Not a chance, baby boy. Not a chance."

It was like reaffirming their connection, their emotions. Everything. Wade looked into the hazel eyes, intense and deep and filled with such raw hunger for him, he wanted to sink his soul into Peter and stay there forever.

tbc...
They did get to talking after the shower. The chimera's possessive hunger was sated and the way Wade was looking at the prominent mark on Peter's shoulder, he was pleased with his handiwork.

They ordered pizza, which Peter paid for when it came, then settled down on the couch.

"Anything I should know about?" Peter asked as they sat together, still close, Wade's preternatural side rather tactile again.

"Nah. Boring all the way, from the unimaginative airline food to the really slummy backwater landing strip, and the cliché troop of not-so-helpful little helpers. Blew up some stuff, but didn't unalive anyone." Wade grinned around his pizza slide. "They tried unaliving me, though. Repeatedly. Persistent bunch, have to give it to them."

"Successfully?"

"Nope." He popped the 'p' a little. "Some blood loss, some broken bones. Had to pull a bunch of arrows out of my back once. Everyone had already scrambled and left me by my lonesome. Oh, and regrew a few inner organs. I think a foot, too. Otherwise, piece of cake, walk in the park, puppies and sunshine."

Peter scowled a little, but he said nothing.

Wade shot him a brief look. "You… did you get feedback? Feel anything? I mean, there wasn't any, right? Bonds don't work that way. You shouldn't feel anything from me!"

He squeezed the other man's knee reassuringly. "No. Nothing at all."

"Just checking. I'm not a normal preternatural, Petey. Things could get really freaky really suddenly. There might be backlash. Or something else. I don't want you to feel… that… ever!"

Another squeeze.

"Nothing happened on my side. You?"

Wade placed his scarred hand over Peter's, interlacing their fingers. "Nah. All good. No separation anxiety, though I did miss my little spider." He winked.

"You're a sap, Wade Wilson."

"And don't you know it, Peter Parker."

Peter told Deadpool about his visit with his aunt, about her long-time knowledge that Peter was actually Spider-Man, adding one and one and Deadpool. Coming up with the correct result.

"Smart woman," Deadpool commented.

"Yeah."
"And you are an idiot for thinking she wouldn't figure you out."

Peter shrugged. "I'm just glad she's okay with it."

"Why wouldn't she be? Or is this about the bond?" he added, sounding almost hesitant.

Peter curled slender fingers around Wade's wrist, tugging him close. He pressed their lips together, gentle and loving, tasting pepperoni and cheese.

"She's okay with the bond. With you. Why wouldn't she be?"

He opened his mouth, but Peter placed a hand over it.

"Bonds are not made by force. You didn't rape me, Wade. You didn't coerce, push or threaten. I might have been bad with bullies in school, but not as Spider-Man."

"Not a bully," Wade muttered.


Deadpool's eyes were wide. Peter took his hand off the chapped lips.

"You also have a standing invitation for dinner. When you're ready."

"Huh. She does know who I am, right?"

"She does. She brought it up."

"She does know the stuff I do?" he asked insistently. "I'm not just a sexy body in skin-tight leather and spandex. Bad boy Deadpool? Mercenary, killer, gun for hire, studly bodyguard with an amazing bod?"

Peter chuckled. "She is okay with it," he repeated. "I'm not just a sexy body in skin-tight leather and spandex. Bad boy Deadpool? Mercenary, killer, gun for hire, studly bodyguard with an amazing bod?"

Wade was speechless. "Happy," he echoed after a moment, rolling the word around in his mouth.

Peter leaned in close again, their lips brushing against each other as he murmured, "Happy. You're not getting rid of me. You're a keeper. I love you, Wade."

Now the eyes were incredibly wide, the disbelief shining through.

"Please don't play with me," he whimpered. "You can't just say that…"

"Unless I mean it. I mean it. I feel it."

The brown clouded over with silver, the switch abrupt, but not really startling Peter any more. The surge of the preternatural was powerful, racing through the connection, pulling him close on a level no one else could understand. The chimera rose, the size and strength amazing to feel, the darkness roiling forward and enveloping Peter.

He closed his eyes with a soft exhalation of air, head falling forward as the surge turned almost
He loved seeing it unrestrained, so beautiful and graceful, so amazing. It was unique and wonderful, sleek and deadly, and Peter could look at it all day and never tire.

"You can see it," Wade murmured.

"I always could."

Hands ran over Peter's body, stroking, caressing, petting.

"Thank you," the chimera murmured.

Peter kissed him let himself fall, entrusting himself completely. The chimera purred, pleased, far from triumphant, and snuggled next to him, its wings covering Peter's soul like a cool, silky blanket.

"I love you," Wade said softly. "And I want to keep you."

"I'm a good catch," Peter quipped.

"The best."

And seeing the smile, the absolutely happy smile… It gave Peter more than anything in the world. It was something special, something to be treasured, and he would never give it up. Never.

*

When Peter mentioned Stark and his offer the next day at breakfast, Deadpool froze, bagel halfway to his mouth. There was a dangerous glint in his eyes and Peter reached automatically along the anchor line, tugging a little.

"Wade."

Wade growled softly. The chimera snapped sharp teeth at the hold its mate had on it, but it didn’t even come close. It was agitated, but not enough to start lashing out.

"Wade," he repeated patiently. "I'm all grown up. Stop the bristling. Stark will keep my secret. I trust him. And I might just take him up on the job offer." He held up a hand. "Because I want to work. I'm not the trophy mutant in your bedroom."

"Or living room. Closet. Kitchen island. Roof," Deadpool listed cheerfully, the switch in his demeanor as always abrupt. "He's still a dick in a tin can."

Peter shrugged. "It was bound to happen one day," he murmured, leaning against Wade.

Breakfast on the couch had somehow seemed more appealing this morning than in the kitchen. Bagels, toast, coffee. Nothing fancy.

The other man rested his cheek against Peter's hair. There was a soft, content sigh. Wade suddenly
radiated ease. He was a relaxed presence at the other end of the anchor. The chimera was curled up and purring gently, all kitty, no monster. It could change at the drop of a hat, but right now it was just calmness. Where there had been growly posturing, it was now gone.

"The Avengers have resources. Stark has them. If they wanted to know who I am, they just had to invest time, money and covert ops. I bet Fury has known ever since I got my powers."

"One-eyed motherfucker knows too much." Deadpool grunted. "I'll up security. Twenty-four seven bodyguard at your service, Master Parker," he added with a fake British accent.

Peter chuckled. "Overkill. Not that I'd mind you hanging around, but you'd be bored out of your mind."

"Better than getting Avengernapped."

"They won't do anything, Wade. Ever. They don't gain anything from knowing who I am. I just didn't want to come out to them." He laughed a little at his own words. "Not like that. Everyone knows who the Avengers are, but Spider-Man is something else. I'm still going to assist if they ask nicely. You can tag along if you want."

"Tag along?" he echoed, sounding mock outraged.

"Yep."

"Okily-dokily," was the carefree reply. "They'll get the bill in the mail. I know a guy who can help us set up a water tight contract."

"No contract."

"Aw, shucks."

"You're a menace," Peter sighed.

Wade just beamed at him. "Thank you."

"You're more than welcome."

He had to get to work, earn money, and Deadpool, in his full gear with his mask on, was off to do whatever mercenaries did when not hanging out with their favorite spider person.

*

Peter did get to see Deadpool’s file.

It was Hawkeye who gave him a USB drive one day as they ran into each other. Accidentally, of course. Not that Peter believed it.

“Why?” Spider-Man asked, fingers closing around the drive.
Hawkeye shrugged.

There was a surge of annoyance that he bit back angrily. Why would the Avengers, or just Hawkeye, want him to get the whole file on his bonded? It would change nothing at all. Nothing! Peter wouldn’t want to leave Deadpool, Wade, whatever those files contained. They were connected on levels that surpassed mere personal pasts.

“Thought you might want to know one day.”

“It changes nothing,” Spider-Man stated coldly. “At all. You might as well just scrap that thing already.”

“I know, kid. You are bonded. Nothing anyone can say about that. Nothing anyone would have foreseen either. Just ask him if he wants to see it. Deadpool might not even know what’s floating around inside him.”

Peter felt his teeth clench, but he refrained from snarling.

It took him close to two weeks to finally address the file and his possession thereof.

Wade was on his laptop, browsing some very obscure Dark Net sites for ammo and weapons, or just amusing himself with reading out loud hit offers and calls for guns for hire.

“Geez. Fifty grand for a job in Brazil? You wouldn’t get me off my ass to New Jersey for that.”

Peter played with the drive. “All expenses paid?” he asked.

“To Jersey? Nah. To Brazil, I hope so, baby! I expect nothing but the best, twenty-four hour room service, sexual favors and at least two private jets.”

He chuckled.

“I’d have them spring for you, too, baby boy. Like I said, sexual favors.” Wade grinned widely.

“I have work I need to go to,” was the distracted reply.

Deadpool’s eyes fixed on the drive. “Work?” he asked, voice suddenly a little more intense, his demeanor switching.

“Yes and no.” He tossed the small device at his partner, who caught it easily. “This is you.”

“Hate to break it to you, Petey, but I’m a lot bigger and better endowed.”

He shot him a smile. “And don’t I know it. Hawkeye gave this to me. To us. Your file. All of it, not just their stuff on Deadpool. This is… all. Courtesy of the Avengers.”

Wade was suddenly completely still, those dark eyes on the drive like it was the singular most vile and interesting object in existence.

“You opened it?” he asked, voice absolutely level, but with a brittle feel.

“No.”
“Why?”

Peter rose and walked over to the couch, eyes never leaving the tense form.

“I admit I’m curious. The scientist in me wants to know what they did to you. The man bonded to you couldn’t care less.”

Wade met his eyes, his own a bottomless well of pain, indecision, fear and hatred.

“Nothing changes what we are, Wade,” Peter told him firmly.

“They gave it to you,” he whispered harshly.

It sounded painful. Like chewing broken glass.

“To us. You might want to know about what they shot into you.”

He smiled darkly and there was suddenly a sheen of silver overlaying the brown.

The expression in the scarred face should be frightening. The burning eyes should be terrifying. Actually, he should give this man a wide berth, but Peter wouldn’t. Ever.

“I’m like Frankenstein’s monster, baby boy. All those parts stuck together and human skin wrapped around the construct. Badly scarred human skin. Yeah, I’m movie material! Nothing can change that! Knowing what’s frolicking around inside me isn’t going to make it better!”

“Then toss the drive.”

Wade looked at the innocent device.

Peter sat down beside him.

“You want to know,” Deadpool murmured. “You’re so curious. Scientists always are. And you’re smart and sexy, with those hipster nerd glasses. All wrapped in one neat little package.”

“Wade.”

He haunted eyes nearly broke Peter’s heart.

“Look at it,” the chimera said, the rumble of the preternatural side low and almost threatening. “In my line of work, intel is important. Research your little heart out, write an essay, come up with a paper, then tell the class.”

“How about the class reads it with me?”

Deadpool dropped the hard drive into his lap. There was a smirk on his scarred lips all of a sudden, the light in his eyes playful and filled with something else, still dark and dangerous, but different.

“What if I get to blow the teacher to get better grades?”

He laughed and shook his head.

*
Peter looked into the file that day.

It was stomach turning and the need to hurt those responsible for the experiments. Repeatedly.

What he gleaned from the mass of data – he hadn’t dared look at the video files and might never – was that Deadpool’s DNA contained donor material from ten different species of preter- and supernaturals. How Weapon X had managed to fuse the supernatural to the preternatural was a mystery.

And so much of it!

“Holy shit,” he murmured.

Not all of it had apparently taken, or Wade might be a shifter on top of things, too. Enough had given him a new edge, though.

Quite enough.

tbc...
Chapter 22

When Tony Stark walked into his penthouse at Avengers Tower he stopped abruptly as he caught sight of his uninvited guest. A very unexpected and clearly unwanted guest.

"Deadpool," he said flatly.

"Hey there, Tin Can Man," was the cheerful reply.

Deadpool, in his full outfit, sat on the glass table, legs swinging, looking carelessly around. He was playing with a paper weight made of glass, a heavy globe that was mostly decorative, tossing it from hand to hand like it weighed nothing at all.

Tony wasn't fooled by the apparent ease. He knew Deadpool well enough to stay alert.

He covertly pushed a button on the wrist band he was wearing.

"I thought I had a security system," he said, raising his voice a little as he addressed Jarvis.

"I'm sorry, sir," the AI replied dutifully. "I didn't pick him up until he was up here."

Tony glowered. Deadpool gave him an innocent look. How the mask could transmit facial shifts was beyond Tony; he was always amazed.

"One of my best traits," he quipped. "The Invisible Deadpool! Now you see me, now you don't! I should get cards made. And more t-shirts! The man of many talents is back! Bigger, badder, all around stud muffin!"

"What do you want?"

"That's the question I'm here to ask you," Deadpool replied amiably, juggling the glass ball.

Alarm bells rang in his head.

"Your buddy Hawkeye played delivery boy a few days ago. We didn't order anything, but he handed it over anyway."

Okay, big alarm bells.

Steve had been against giving Spider-Man Deadpool's file just like that, but Tony had been convinced it would be the right thing to do. The young mutant needed to know just who he was bonded to, even if it wouldn't change what had already happened. Nothing could sever the bond between the chimera and Spider-Man, but at least he would now have all the intel.

In Tony's eyes it was the right thing to do. For both men. He doubted that even Wade Wilson knew everything about what Weapon X had done to him. Now bonded – something no one, least of all Deadpool himself, had believed possible – matters might change. If the chimera kept evolving, the scientist in Peter might want answers.

And maybe, just maybe, so did Deadpool.

"Can't say I was thrilled to open the little gift file," the merc added, voice suddenly lower, less amiable, almost dark.
He slid off the table.

The glass ball was carelessly dropped and it landed on the floor with a loud crack.

Tony tensed, a very base part of himself reacting to the chimera in a way he had never experienced before. It was a primal sensation, like his hind brain was warning him of danger, trying to get through the civilized, logical side, screaming at him to run.

He had to suppress a shiver and the instinctual need to recoil.

That was new.

He didn't even have it around the Hulk, and that guy was serious trouble. Deadpool was radiating something else and it promised a long, slow, agonizing death. Throughout the years, not just in mere hours.

Deadpool was a weapon. Reborn to kill. He was deadly in a fight. He had honed those skills and he had no second thoughts in a confrontation, taking out the target before they could get to him and do the same.

Tony felt like he had a very big, very bright bull's eye painted on his chest.

"It's your file," he said, voice steady, almost unimpressed, though his mouth felt dry. "Nothing more, nothing less."

"You never gave it to me. You didn't give it to me now either. You gave it to my bonded mate."

"You never asked."

"We didn't ask now, Stark."

The red and black clad figure approached, each step measured, the aura around the man suddenly changing.

The alarm bells were now a chorus of shrill screams.

He should be running. This was an apex predator on the hunt and Tony Stark was the chosen prey.

Tony heard the elevator behind him open and Steve's warning shout of 'Deadpool!' had him silently sigh in relief.

"Oh, the senior citizen brigade has arrived!"

Despite the humorous call, Deadpool didn't appear any less threatening, though. There was nothing comically insane or erratic any more. This was a fully focused Deadpool, the chimera out in the open and radiating danger. His expression didn't so much as twitch. His eyes simply bore into Stark's, even if they were masked and Tony couldn't read them.

But he knew what this was.

A warning.

A serious, dangerous warning.

"Keep out of our lives," the preternatural said, voice even, without true emotions. He sounded barely like himself. "You didn't give a damn about me before I ran into my bonded. You tried
everything to fuck this up when I teamed up with Spidey. And you didn't stop there. You just had
to throw in whatever sick stuff Weapon X has on me. For. No. Reason."

He never raised his voice and that made the words more real and threatening than any kind of
yelling would have done.

Steve stood next to Tony, tense, ready to fight should Deadpool attack. "We gave Spider-Man the
file because of the bond," he said, voice cool, wary. "For both of you."

"Why now?"

"Nothing can threaten an established bond, not even knowing of the horror of what happened to
you."

Deadpool's smile was clearly visible, but it was cold and calculating. His fingers flexed a little. For
an insane moment Tony imagine claws springing out of the fingers, slicing through the gloves, and
then burying into him.

"Sure. You didn't give it to my bonded to separate us. Of course not."

"We wouldn't do that!" Steve protested, looking truly outraged.

"You were simply hoping that Spidey might just ditch me?"

"No," Steve repeated. "From what Bruce figured out, your lives are now so much entwined, he will
be sharing yours. He has probably become immortal, Deadpool. He should know what Weapon X
did to you, and so should you. I agree that the way Tony did it wasn't the best," and he shot the
other man a look, "but it wasn't meant to hurt you or Spider-Man."

Deadpool stared at him, the white eyes so much brighter than Tony remembered them being
before. Then,

"Stay out of my business. All of you. My final warning. My only warning."

The chimera was thrumming with energy, but there was no twitch that warned of an imminent
explosion that would leave people bleeding and furniture in pieces. He simply resembled a granite
block of hostility, of Death out for anyone who came too close, who said the wrong word.

"Understood," Steve answered.

Which was apparently the right word.

"We respect your connection to Spider-Man," Tony echoed Steve's words. "I do apologize for the
way I handled it. And I never apologize. Ever. So… there?"

Deadpool stared at him; hard. And silently. Then he suddenly pulled his guns, turned 180 degrees
and fired at the window panes.

They shattered under the impact of whatever ammo the mercenary had loaded – which had to be
something special since those windows had been specially made. Before either Steve or Tony
could react he had taken a running leap out of the new opening and was gone.

"Fuck!" Tony cursed and stopped at the edge of the window.

Deadpool was nowhere to be seen.
He doubted the man could fly, but he was good at getting in and out of places. Very good.

"He's protective," Steve remarked, sounding almost calm.

"What gave it away," Tony muttered. "Now I need new windows! Again!" He threw up his hands. "Why can't they take the elevator like normal crazy guys?"

Steve twitched a smile. "We should have given the decision to hand over Deadpool's file to Spider-Man a second thought. This might have been avoided."

"Hindsight is twenty-twenty," was Stark's reply as he stalked over to the bar and poured himself a generous drink. "Deadpool's unpredictable. Like now. I would have bet on a lot more carnage, maybe some blood and broken bones. This… hell, he was scarier than when he tries to kill you."

"True. The chimera is growing."

"Dangerously."

"He is bonded, Tony. Spider-Man is his balance and we indirectly threatened him and it. It was a normal reaction for a preternatural of his birth origin. The hellhound is what the chimera grew out of. It's his instinct. To protect. His kind are the fiercest guardians, the best soldiers, and I met some throughout the war. I can see it in the chimera and it's so much stronger when related to Spider-Man."

Tony leaned against the bar and Steve joined him, standing shoulder to shoulder. He looked thoughtful, chewing on his lower lip, then he glanced at the taller man at his side.

"While I'm all for keeping an eye on those two, especially the chimera, we should give them some room," he finally agreed. "Back off. Let the dust settle."

"Bonds are a form of trust nothing else can achieve," Steve agreed. "What connects them is a kind of intimacy, an instinct both have. Deadpool had to surrender to that bond, accept Spider-Man, let him in. The decision to hand over the file wasn't to tear them apart. Nothing can do that. We went about it the wrong way."

Tony sighed. "Jarvis? Call in the repair guys. Get the windows repaired."

"Of course, sir."

"And I'm going to the workshop," Tony announced. "Want to join me?"

Steve chuckled and shook his head. "I have a date with Natasha in the gym."

"Oooh, sweaty man-fighting. I'd be all for watching that, but I have stuff to do." Tony grinned. "Well, have fun. You usually do. See you later, Cap."

And he was gone, heading to his workshop.

Thinking.

About Peter Parker. Spider-Man. About the young man he had offered a job to not so long ago, whose secret identity he knew.

And Deadpool.

Tony knew he had made a mistake and he was big enough to admit it. He was a scientist and he
was always curious, wanted to know things. He had wanted Peter to have the same advantage, to get the info he needed, to know the facts.

Well, he had slightly miscalculated.

Tony locked the work shop's door behind him and surveyed the place. Time to get some work done.

*

Deadpool wasn't really all that surprised to find Spider-Man close to the Avengers HQ building. He was clinging to the side of a high-rise building like it was the most natural thing in the world, and for Spider-Man it was.

It was also one of those moments Deadpool liked to appreciate his partner and mate, his abilities that were so much more than just being able to stick to stuff. It was the incredible strength, proportional to a spider his size, and how he controlled himself not to injure anyone by accident.

Because Spider-Man was freakishly strong.

"Hey there, Spideybabe!" he called cheerfully and waved as he parcoured over the buildings. "Fancy seeing you here. Missed me already?"

Spider-Man dropped lithely onto the roof and crouched on the old chimney stub that had been capped and showed it hadn't been used in ages.

"Did you have to threaten my possibly new boss?"

"Have to? Uh, kinda? Really, I did," he protested at Spider-Man's expression, which he could easily read through the mask.

"Why?"

Deadpool felt the former tension creep back into his frame, felt the anger rise, and the chimera snarled softly in its black nest. It showed gleaming teeth, glowing eyes, and the bad temper was a reflection of Deadpool's state of mind.

He had felt threatened.

Stark had had no right! Whatever Weapon X had done to him, he didn't want to know every little genetic twist and tweak! And he didn't want his mate to know the biology and genetic grafting involved. Or chemicals. Or whatever mumbo-jumbo they applied. The result was this: the chimera. Monster. Aberration. Apex predator.

Spider-Man dropped to his feet and closed the distance. For a moment they just looked at each other, then he reached out and cupped Deadpool's cheek.

"I appreciate the gesture. I know it was instinctual to a degree, but it doesn't threaten us, Wade," he said softly.

"It does," he contradicted, voice level. "You can read that stuff, unlike me. I'm not a scientist. I
don't speak formulas. You'll find out all my dark little secrets."

"I haven't looked into it that closely yet. Just skimmed over parts and that was... intense already. There is a lot there, Deadpool. A whole lot. Including detailed reports on every hour you were in their so-called care. I won't continue if you hate it so much. I'll destroy the drive and that's the end of it."

"No."

"Wade."

"No! I know it might be important, but I also hate you seeing... what happened. Because it's not pretty. It can never be pretty. The whole transformation... the way it was brought about... it's worse than the result!" Deadpool blurted. "So much worse!"

"Not going to watch the videos. I'll just look over what they threw together, what we might expect to evolve now that the chimera is free to develop its powers."

Deadpool expelled a sharp breath. "He had no right!" he whispered harshly.

The darkness inside him roiled around, spoiling for a fight, wanting to sink teeth into enemy flesh and tear out throats.

Spider-Man's thumb brushed over his covered cheek. "No, he didn't. But that's Tony Stark for you. He's rash, pretty forward, and sometimes acts before he thinks."

He leaned forward, pressing their lips together through the masks.

Deadpool relaxed a little more, the quiet calm seeping through the bond, and he wrapped his arms around the lithe figure, feeling muted strength and power.

"I wanted to gut him and strangle the bastard with his own innards."

"And I'm thankful you didn't."

"You want to take the job?"

"Maybe," Spider-Man murmured. "If I do, I need Tony alive and kicking."

"Maybe next time I'll just shoot him in the knee," Deadpool suggested happily.

"No shooting or stabbing. No maiming at all."

"You're no fun."

"You didn't say that last night."

"Cheeky little spider."

"You liked it."

"I always like it," Deadpool purred, his hand wandering over the small of Spider-Man's back to his ass.

"Deadpool."
"Yes, dear?"

"PDA. No go."

"Awww… You started it!"

Peter pushed up his mask a little, revealing his lips, and Wade was quick to follow, the kiss brief, soft, but meaningful.

"Want to work off some of that anger?"

Deadpool waggled his eyebrows.

"I meant kicking some thug ass."

"That's good foreplay, too." Wade patted his guns.

"No killing."

"Yes, Mom. I know."

"Good."

"Do I get a toy?"

Spider-Man stepped back and pulled down the mask, shaking his head with a chuckle.

"C'mon."

And he swung off.

Deadpool followed with a whoop.

tbc...
Next update will be later than usual since I won't have time tomorrow to do anything on the story. Real Life happening :) Hopefully my weekend will be clear enough to get some serious writing in.

“So, how freaky is the freak show?” Deadpool asked casually, though there was nothing casual about his whole posture.

Tense lines, fingers flexing just a little, weight shifting like he was drawn between an attack and a retreat. His eyes were hard, mouth drawn tight, and even if that wasn’t already a warning and a clear sign of his inner turmoil, he had pulled up the hood of the sweater jacket and his hands were covered by gloves.

Peter forced himself to ignore the disheartening sight.

It had been two days since the incident at Stark's and Peter had kept busy swinging through the streets of New York, Deadpool in tow, chasing burglars, robbers and vandals, thwarting a few car thefts and assisting the fire department when a gas line had ruptured.

Deadpool had ended up with some seriously burned hands that had healed without trouble when he had saved a family and their cats from the house.

Peter wouldn't be able to forget the stunned expression on his bonded's face when the mother had hugged him fiercely, thanking him over and over in broken English.

It had been a good day.

Deadpool had been on a high that he usually only ever had when he went out to unalive someone.

Now Peter felt the silky darkness of the chimera at the edge of his mind. It was more pronounced than before.

Peter had slowly learned to read the presence at the other end of the bond. It was a powerful predator, its presence as sharp and focused as a shapeshifter would be in his alternate form, but this was a preternatural without the ability to change his full shape. The teeth were just a minor change.

Sometimes there were surges along the bond, but nothing that disturbed his own thoughts or interrupted is concentration. The pressure would increase, alert him to Deadpool's emotional state of mind, and Peter had learned to smooth over the waves to a degree. It was almost like a touch, but no physical aspects were involved.

Like now.

Peter brushed over the vortex, treacherously silky and cool. From within the darkness the chimera watched, tense, ready.

“Your DNA is prettier than mine,” Peter just said. “Which means, so are you.”
Wade snorted, anger chasing embarrassment and pain. The tension wasn’t abating, though. He was thrumming with it.

Peter pushed gently closer, the darkness parting before him, enveloping him from behind, but it wasn't a smothering feeling. It was an embrace, clinging to him for balance. The anchor.

“Want to test that theory outside? Let’s go downstairs, no caps, no hoods, watch who’s changing the side of the street faster. Maybe they even pack up and leave, move to another fucking country!”

Peter closed the distance, his touch brief, just a brush of his fingers against Wade’s hip and side. It had an immediate effect, the other man slumping a little and leaning closer, seeking his mate’s nearness.

“No,” he murmured. “Not testing anything. And before we scare the natives, you owe May dinner.”

Wade blinked, then smiled a little. “Not giving up, hm?”

“Oh you? Never.”

“So what does pretty little DNA me look like? Any sexy parts?”

Peter grinned. “All sexy all the time.”

“Now you’re just fishing for compliments, baby boy. So here goes: you have the sexiest body I’ve ever had the honor of defiling more than once. You got the smarts to go with the nerd looks and that athlete’s body, and I have no fucking clue how you never landed anyone, because let me tell you, you are a sex kitten!” He waggled his eyebrows. “How’s that?”

Peter chuckled and shook his head. “I knew there was a reason I have it so bad for you, smooth talker.”

“And don’t you ever forget it.”

Oh, he wouldn’t. Nor would he be distracted from the real reason they were having this semi-conversation.

“So, sexy parts?” Wade poked. “Aside from the obvious hard-on I’ve got for you? Any succubus?”

He laughed again. “They don’t exist.”

“Could have fooled me,” his partner purred. “You’re so hard to take your eyes off, baby boy. Hard. Huh. Yeah, I’m hard for you all the time, my little succubus. Oh, wait, no. Me, that’s me. I should have that superpower!”

Peter gave him a little slap against the side for it.

“No succubus. They don’t exist. There are notes about supernatural DNA strands from werewolves and nuckelavee, but it looks shapeshifting never took. They were hoping for claws and maybe brief full shifts.”

“Claws puncture the gloves. Nope. Too cost intensive,” Deadpool commented. “But it would look cool. Wolverine’s claws are awesome! Oh, and did you ever see Black Panther’s? Those are out of this world! He can retract them and vibranium is simply bad ass. But his aren’t real. And Wolvie’s were suped up with adamantium.” He wriggled his fingers, then made clawing motions. “I might
just be able to climb up trees.”

“You’re already rescuing cats.”

Deadpool rocked back, shaking a finger at him. “You take that back! I don’t do boy scout! Were you a boy scout? Because I do you…”

Peter wondered how much of the distraction was instinctive and how much was planned. He just kissed Wade, silencing him effectively.

“Oh, works,” the other man mumbled. “Yeah, that works.”

Arms curled around his waist and hips, pulling him in closer. Peter didn’t protest. They were both still fully clothed. Neither felt the need to take this any further. It was simply the desire for physical closeness.

Right now, it was also reassurance.

Peter ran his hands over the solid warmth, projecting all that. He liked touching Wade, liked how it made him feel, how it made the other man react. He was so very much aware of the powerful creature inside the other man's soul, how it was connected to Peter on a primal level that should be scaring him, frightening in its intensity.

It had never been.

It was a good feeling, boosting his own confidence. Not just as Spider-Man. He had never been anything but confident behind the mask. This was balancing him as Peter Parker. Feeling the darkness at the other end of the unbreakable anchor line, knowing that this was his, that the chimera trusted the nerdy geek, the kid with the glasses, not just the super hero in spandex.

Peter captured the scarred lips, the kiss long, deep, relaying everything they never really said.

“I’ll destroy the drive,” he promised.

“There is more on it.”

“I don’t need it.”

“Watch it.”

“No.”

The expressive brown eyes held a hard to interpret look. “Watch it. I don’t mind.”

“I do. I don’t want to see them torture you, Wade. I don’t want to see you suffer. Or how they bonded you to a handler. Then killed you. Your past is your past. Knowing what they mixed together to create the chimera isn’t important.”

“It is,” he breathed. “Because it’s connected to you and it won’t let go,” he insisted. “Ever.”

"I know you. I know because of our bond. I can feel you in a way no one else can and that's perfect.”

Wade buried his face against Peter's neck, giving a wet, brief laugh. "I don't deserve you, Peter Parker."
He ran his hands over the bald head. "You chose me. Your preternatural side. Your instinct." He pressed his lips against the scars.

"The chimera won't ever let you go."

"I know. I'm totally okay with it. I'm not going to let go of it either. It's mine."

There was a sharp exhalation of air against his neck, but Wade didn't say anything.

"Keep… keep the drive," the man whispered harshly. "Just… keep it somewhere safe. It's important."

Peter was silent.

"I'm an artificially grafted… mutant. Preternatural mutant or something. Who knows when we might need something. I already have changed. Fangs, y'know."

Yes, Peter knew.

"Might start growing claws. Rawr. How about wings? People love a good wingfic!"

"Wade…" he sighed, letting exasperation bleed into his voice.

He raised his head out of Peter's neck, eyes intense, expression decisive. "Keep it. The drive. Just… somewhere safe."

"Okay," he agreed.

And that was that.

*

Peter wasn't stupid. He understood what Deadpool had been trying to tell him repeatedly, what he had been apologizing for at random hours in bed or while they were sharing couch space. He understood the connection, the life bond. The chimera wasn't understood by anyone, but he had a direct line to the terrifying creature that couldn't be classified.

Yes, he understood that Deadpool, that Wade Wilson, was immortal. He didn't just not age; he came back from every kind of death. Nothing could kill the man. Peter knew what it meant.

In case of such a bond… if the partner died, the hellhound died.

The hellhound had died.

The chimera had come in its stead, had been reborn.

It had been reborn with the ability to bond once again, and Peter had been its choice.

Sitting on a roof, looking over New York at night, Peter felt himself smile.

He was proud. He was possessive. He was insanely happy.

"Are you sure?"
He glanced over his shoulder. "Isn't that question a little too late?" he asked. "Coming here now, a year into the whole mess, isn't helping. It's actually nosey and prying. Not sure what you're trying to accomplish. Nothing will change. At all."

It got him a chuckle. "Yes, it is late. I've been watching Wade for a long time, have tried to talk to him, but he was never very approachable. He is a very powerful preternatural with an incredible potential. You bring out the best in him. You're good for him."

"Debatable. He's Deadpool and I'm not going to change what and who he is. He's also a chimera. You can't force Wade into anything. He wanted to change; I didn't push him into it. He worked hard to be better. I just gave him a chance. It has always been just him."

The silence behind him was filled with amusement. Spider-Man glanced at the seated figure. It wasn't even real. A projection. The massive, silver figure next to it wasn't, though. Colossus was very real and he didn't really look amused.

Then again, he never looked amused. Especially when it came to Deadpool. Peter had yet to meet anyone who didn't scowl, frown or get downright violent when Deadpool's name fell.

"We're not going to join the X-Men," he stated neutrally.

"I'm no longer asking."

"You didn't ask before. You had him," he gestured at Colossus, "try to abduct him."

There was a rueful chuckle. "I offer to teach a mutant about their powers, about control, about being accepted as they are. Deadpool was... out of control. He killed. He left mayhem in his path. I wanted to teach him that his difference doesn't mean he has to live in anger and pain. I no longer have to teach him that."

Peter frowned. "You never had to teach him any of those things. You're a telepath, Professor. You should have known."

"Like some others, very few others, Deadpool is resistant to telepathic intrusions. Cerebro could pick him up as a very powerful preternatural presence of unknown classification when Weapon X was done with him, but I could never talk to him directly, nor influence his mind. The chimera is a chaotic creature. The chaos blocks any such form of contact."

Ah.

"Deadpool has found his peace in you, Mr. Parker. He needs you."

"The feeling's mutual." Peter frowned behind the mask. "Why are you really here, Professor? You're not going to recruit us. Neither will the Avengers. I'm not going to keep Wade on a leash and tell him what he can and can't do. He's not killing anyone. But if he takes a job, I can't prevent that. And I won't. So what do you want?"

"I'm quite aware of all that. As aware as you are of the consequences of your bond. To an immortal being."

"Yes."

The professor leaned forward in his chair. "He cannot die, Spider-Man."

"Hence the whole immortal thing. I know all that. I'm not stupid."
“I didn’t say that. Hellhounds perish when the bonded partner dies. The chimera can’t die, naturally or unnaturally. I can feel the strength with which it holds onto you, Peter. It won’t let you go either.”

Peter looked at the telepath, the holographic rendition of him, eyes briefly going to Colossus. He was sure there were others around. His spider sense was buzzing at a low level.

“I don’t intend to let go of him either,” he stated flatly. “Everyone has been trying to tell me how bad this is, what an idiot I am, how blind to his true nature. Tell you what: I’m not and never were. I think I saw more than all of you put together. I made the first step, not Deadpool. I offered, he refused to spare me his so-called darkness. Guess what? I don’t mind. I can feel it all and it’s not a nightmare, it’s not about to tear me to pieces, and it’s not dominating me.”

Colossus shifted a little and Spider-Man shot him a dark look.

“I made this choice. Voluntarily. With all information at my disposal. Now please, leave us alone.”

"Did you have all information?" Xavier asked. "Did you know that the bond wouldn't change Deadpool? Make him human and mortal?"

"A bond can't change a genetic make-up," Peter scoffed. "I'm a scientist, Professor. Please give me some credit! There is no magic involved here and never will be. Weapon X set up the chimera and it's only ever going to evolve, not turn into something different than it is. I can't feel him die either. I don't physically share his pain or injuries. Another myth."

"But he changed you, Peter."

"I'm an artificially altered human," he stated neutrally. "A spider bite and whatever Oscorp did to the spider changed me. It changed my own genetic set-up and made it compatible to Wade's, who I didn't even know back then. It was a freakish stroke of luck that we met."

"And now?"

"We're facing life together. And I'd thank you for not interfering anymore."

And he shot out a web line. He had enough. Everyone was pointing out the consequences of the bond when there was nothing he hadn’t heard or thought of before. Why had he acquired so many nannies and parental units? Why did everyone think he was immature, innocent and blind to what the bond to the chimera meant?

Peter was on the other end of this and he felt it. Deeply. Absolutely.

No one stopped him.

No one came after him. There wasn’t even an attempt at telepathic communication, which he found odd, but maybe Xavier respected his wishes.

Yeah, right.
tbc...
Chapter 24

Chapter Notes

Real Life kept interrupting me lately, so the update's a little later than usual.

Deadpool climbed over the banister of the large terrace and gracefully dropped down. Peter shook his head in fond exasperation when his partner came in through the open glass doors.

“We have a perfectly good elevator. Or stair case.”

“I like the exercise. Keeps this breathtaking, stunning body in its mouthwatering shape.” He spread his arms and did a perfect pirouette on one foot.

Peter chuckled with amusement.

“Hey, you should know, Spideybabe. You do all that wall crawling and look how you turned out. Heart-stirringly impressive.”

“Did you get shot in the head again?” he asked with a sigh.

“Nope! Caught up to some old bud of mine in the Public Library. You might hear about it on the news.”

Peter groaned.

“Hey, I didn’t start it,” Deadpool immediately defended himself. “Scout’s honor.” He had a hand on his heart. “I was minding my own profitable business, stalking a target, non-lethal, as promised. He just dropped in and made things interesting.”

“How interesting?” Peter just wanted to know, trying not to roll his eyes.

His life!

“Uh…” Deadpool scratched his head. “The romance section might need a few new donations. And the self-help one. He also bled all over the newspapers.”

Peter sighed deeply. Really. His life.

He scanned over the red suit that was really quite good at hiding possible bleeds, but even his practiced eye found nothing.

“He’s more one for strangling,” Deadpool said unhelpfully, interpreting his look correctly.

“Well, if that’s all…”

“Yep. Like I said, nothing bad. I took care of him. He’ll enjoy the hospitality of the prison health system for a while.”

Wade removed the mask and started to strip off the weapons. Peter went back to reading over his project notes, adding or erasing some things here or there. He had a deadline to meet and a lab to
visit in two days.

“I also ran into my old pal Wolverine today. Before the Library Incident.”

“Tea and cookies?” he teased.

“Nah. He was there on business and had no time for frilly fun and games. Too bad. Was looking forward to it.” Deadpool’s voice was a little off. “Said the professor was meeting someone.”

Peter shrugged. “Me, for example.”

The silver flared in the dark eyes and the chimera bared long fangs, shadowy wings rising threateningly in the center of the void. Peter tugged gently at the bond and it huffed.

“Professor Xavier wasn’t really there. It was a projection. Not a telepathic one either, which I found weird. Colossus was there. He doesn’t say hello.”

“Yeah, well… we kinda don’t like each other.”

“Figured as much.”

The chimera stalked closer. “What did Wheels want from you?” he demanded.

“Nothing I haven’t heard a million times before.”

“Deadpool bad. Deadpool dangerous,” the man in question mimicked. “Deadpool wrong. Deadpool should be put down and locked up.”

“Well, he was more concerned about the long term effects of the anchor bond.”

Wade growled. It came from deep inside and Peter thought he heard it across the anchor line, too. It was primal and dark, a warning.

“I told them I’m quite aware of those effects.”

The silvery eyes blinked and grew less razor-sharp.

“Are you?” came the soft query. The chimera sounded suddenly doubtful, a little unsure.

“Very much.”

“Peter….”

“I know what this means, Wade. All of it. You got me. For life. Your life.” He shot his partner a reassuring smile. “Oh, and they won’t try to recruit you anymore.”

Wade huffed, hands still balled into fists, the leather creaking dangerously.

Peter watched him, laptop still on his lap, keeping his whole posture relaxed. He did feel calm and relaxed; it wasn’t just for show. He just curled himself more tightly around the anchor and reached for the chimera’s darkness, touching the void and caressing it.

Wade’s eyes widened, the silver bright and intense.

“We’re good, Wade,” he said.

“Yeah.”
“Whatever we run into.”
Deadpool exhaled sharply.

“They can’t break this.”

The chimera snarled viciously at the words, at the very thought of losing its anchor. It was an echo Spider-Man felt inside his very core, something like a shockwave that consisted of darkness and the absence of sound.

Peter pushed the laptop aside and rose, closing the distance. He touched the other man, fingers curling around one leather-gloved wrist.

“WELL be fine,” he promised. “Whatever happens.”

“Wait till you pull your first Highlander, baby boy. Then we talk.”

He started to hum ‘Who wants to live forever’ from Queen.

Peter gently squeezed his wrist. “You’ll be there for my freak-out.”

Deadpool’s expression was serious now, not a grain of humor within. “I’ll always be there. It’s the others that are going to change.”

“I’m quite aware of what being immortal means.”

A gloved hand cupped his cheek, then slid along his neck. “You haven’t lived it yet.”

“Neither have you. You’re not that old.”

"Why are you so calm about this, Peter?"

"Because I don't feel any panic, idiot. I feel good. I want this with you."

Peter smiled, brushing their lips together, feeling Wade shiver a little. The emotions between them were intense. He felt the pull, the sharp claws, the nightmarish darkness roiling all around him, and he was safe within the grasp. It was a blanket, protective, dangerous to others, bristling. It was his security.

“We’ve got all the time to see all the universes, all the timelines, meet all those freaky alternate versions,” Deadpool murmured. “Trust me, it’ll be fun.”

“I bet. Right now I want to enjoy this life, though.”

“Time travel is neat. Especially when you also cross your streams and things start to really bend. Uh, wait, wrong movie. But maybe we can try crossing streams, too. I know you're insanely bendy.”

“I’ll take your word for it.”

“Takes the edge off the whole immortality and forever thing,” Wade added carefully, humor ebbing away a little, almost like testing the waters.

Peter started to undo the fastenings on the suit, familiar with all the little details. Wade’s pupils widened and his lips suddenly curled into a smile.
“One-track mind. I like,” he purred, everything else forgotten.

“I know,” Peter murmured and slipped his hands underneath the spandex, feeling warm skin.

The scars were so wonderfully familiar, all of them. He knew their location, their shape, how smooth or rough they felt, even with his eyes closed. He could read them like Braille, loved to trace their winding paths, like 3-D tattoos that spoke of his partner’s past.

Wade no longer flinched away, no longer looked ashamed, embarrassed or like he wanted to hide. He actually pushed into the caresses, his eyes sometimes filled with silent wonder that was soon swallowed by the hunger of the chimera rising to the surface.

Peter surged into another kiss, biting gently at the chapped lips, feeling teeth sharpen as he pushed deeper, as he demanded and slid into the bond. The chimera growled, sounding deeply pleased, a dark, shadowy thing that pulled at Peter's soul without ever leaving an injury, despite the inhumanly sharp claws.

“I like it, too,” Peter murmured, wet lips against wet lips. "One track. No more thinking," he added, pulling at the clasps again.

He wanted to take another edge off for now. Everything else… later.

Deadpool was all for it.

*

The light of the sun was slanting through the window, creating warm patterns on the brick walls. The windows were partially open, the sound of the city filtering through.

Somewhere in the distance sirens howled. It was a common sound in this city and nothing that got either man out of bed in a hurry.

Wade looked at the man stretched out beside him on their shared bed. Peter was still asleep, completely nude, and lying on his stomach. The blanket was riding low on Peter’s narrow hips, revealing just enough to tease but not enough to call it indecent yet.

Wade smiled devilishly.

He liked indecent.

A lot.

As did his mate.

Peter was no submissive. He was strong-willed, he knew what he wanted, he was demanding, he could take charge, and Wade had found himself giving in now and then.

It was fun. He enjoyed it, as did Peter.

It had been a night of tenderness, mixed with a passion that had left them both breathless and shaken.
Like a reaffirmation of life, he mused. Sometimes they needed that.

Leaning down, Wade nipped at his partner’s skin, kissing the faintly visible marks he had left there last night. There was a little murmur from Peter and he turned, sleepy eyes blinking open, and a smile stretched his lips.

"Morning," he murmured.

"Good morning," Wade replied, caressing the smooth, warm back.

Months into their intimate relationship, years into their partnership, and he was always amazed how Peter didn't flinch away whenever he saw him naked. In all his horrifying glory. It was as if he didn't see the scars at all, as if he had another kind of sight, a second sight, maybe even a third. It was humbling and embarrassingly so.

"You awake long?" Peter wanted to know, smothering a yawn.

He looked delicious and warm and relaxed. So gorgeous. With the faint shadow of a stubble, hair all mussed.

"A teensie-weensie."

"What did you do all that time?" came the amused question.

"Watching you."

"Uh-huh. How interesting."

"Yes, it is." Wade looked into the clear eyes, saw the amusement and happiness reflected in them, and warmth curled through him.

Peter was filled with so much life, with such optimism and positive energy, it astounded others. He had gone through so many ups and downs, had lost people dear to him, had lost family and friends, even a love interest.

All of it had led this man here, to him, and maybe it had led Deadpool to Peter Parker, too.

He despised Fate, didn't trust her, the bitch. But maybe, by some strange luck and because she had been in a good mood, he had been granted what he had never known he needed.

"I love you," Wade whispered, surprising himself with the words.

Peter smiled. Happy, warm, completely open.

The chimera flourished under the gaze, spread its wings, flaring and presenting, proud and happy itself. It rose, displaying its might, all sharp edged lines and razor teeth. It twirled and danced, winding around Peter's soul.

A lover's caress, deadly for everyone else but Peter.

_I need you_, Wade thought. _And you’re mine. You belong to me alone._

He wouldn’t give him up; for anything.

He had never had this. A home, a calmness in his mind that anchored his thoughts, that tamed the killer instinct, that didn't try to control and cage him.
Peter had only ever asked one thing of him: no killing.

And Deadpool didn't. Not unless the enemy shot first. Not unless they threatened to unalive Spidey, or Deadpool, though he could shake that off in a heartbeat.

No, Peter had never tried to change him. Deadpool had been the one who had wanted to change, to be better, to be a hero. He wouldn't demand he give up the mercenary work, though Wade had truly cut back on it.

Even if he did take a job, there was no judgment.

There was acceptance.

"Love you, too," Peter answered.

The younger man let his fingers play over the chimera’s skin. It was soothing, a wonderful caress, and he felt himself relax even more. Wade nuzzled the soft skin at Peter’s neck and his mate hummed in pleasure. Peter turned his head and their lips bumped into each other.

He finally drew back, grinning at the breathless look in the hazel eyes.

It still took them another fifteen minutes of heavy making out to finally leave the bed.

"Got an appointment," Peter murmured, looking flushed.

Wade didn't really care, but a tiny part reminded him that this was about a job and Peter took that part of his life very seriously.

His little spider pushed him off with ease, the curbed strength a bigger turn on than Wade really wanted to think about.

Fuck.

As it was, they did make it out of the bathroom in a rather decent amount of time, though Peter had proven to be a tease all the way around. It had reached a point where Wade had been hard pressed not to just take the invitation and simply take.

Still, he congratulated himself on his self-control.

Damn tease, he thought, quite aware that Peter had done it on purpose.

"Payback's a bitch," he called after his departing bonded.

Peter just laughed.

He flipped him off and walked into his weapons room, smart phone in hand.

"Mr. Pool," came Dopinder's friendly greeting. "What can I do for you today?"
"Got any rides lined up?"

"Not any more," was the cheerful reply.

Deadpool smirked. "Good man, Dopinder. We're going on a little trip."

"I'll pack lunch."

Deadpool hung up and looked at his gear.

Yes, he had an appointment himself. One where the other party didn't know he was coming.

A slow smile crept over Wade's face as he put on the suit, checking each pouch and pocket, each strap and clasp. He finally snapped the guns into place. The swords were next. He stocked up on ammo and smaller explosive charges, just to be on the safe side. The mask was the last to be pulled on.

Then he was out the door.

tbc...
He had been debating this long and hard, with himself, running every scenario in his head, always coming up with him, Peter Parker, being stupid and probably a coward. Not Spider-Man; Peter Parker.

So here he was now, inside Avengers Tower. Deep inside, on a level where only a select few people had access to. Meeting with no other than Dr. Bruce Banner, the man who was a genius, and who happened to turn into a green rage monster. A mutant. Turned into one by his own experimentation, his research into gamma ray particles.

Peter had only ever met the Hulk throughout battles, and he had only ever listened to Banner giving a lecture over YouTube, or read some of his rare papers.

They had never met personally, because Spider-Man didn't tag along with the Avengers when they went home to their headquarters, and he had never dared approach Banner throughout a lecture.

The man was a genius, someone Peter respected and admired.

He was also an Avenger.

And he knew who Spider-Man was.

That was the part Peter had been fretting about all week; a week that had been leading up to this meeting, which he had wanted to cancel the moment he had stepped into the elevator up to Tony Stark’s personal penthouse on top of the impressive structure.

He had gone through several security checks, the last just before he had been allowed on the elevator, where he had been greeted by Jarvis.

"Dr. Banner and Mr. Stark are expecting you," the AI told him pleasantly.

"Thank you, Jarvis."

"You are very welcome, Mr. Parker."

He barely felt the elevator move.

They knew who he was, ran through his head over and over. They knew!

Peter still felt panicky when he thought about it too hard.

His secret identity had been just that: secret. For so long. It was an automatic reaction on his part to lash out or retreat to hide, figure out how to protect those he loved.

Something deep inside him unfurled, dark, warm and heavy, caressing his very self and calming him down. The chimera, while not physically present, was there, reacting to its mate, and Peter
drew a deep breath.

He was calm.

He could do this.

It was just talking.

They were Avengers, not bad guys out to expose him to the world.

He wasn’t going to sell his soul to anyone.

He almost laughed. His soul belonged to Deadpool, the chimera, and to Wade. Just like his heart, his body and his mind. All of him. And Peter was just as possessive in return.

“You have an impressive resume,” Banner said in his mild voice, looking truly interested in Peter’s past work, his grades, his field of work.

“Thank you,” he only said.

Tony cocked an eyebrow at the rather meek reply.

“You have a gift,” Bruce went on. “And the passion for research. I’ve looked at your college projects, which were impressive, as was the internship with Oscorp, though that didn’t last long.”

Peter refused to be baited into explaining Harry and the Green Goblin, which had cut anything and everything concerning Oscorp and working there one day extremely short. He had lost more than a possible future job, though.

He had lost friends.

It was a pain that would always be there, no matter what.

Gwen had been so much more than just a friend. He had told her he loved her.

Back then he had.

She was dead now.

Harry… Harry Osborn was gone and the Green Goblin was there in his stead. He had lost him just like Gwen, had killed him, though in a different way.

“You built all your own gear for Spider-Man, I presume?”

The questions drew him out of his thoughts and he nodded.

“Impressive.”

Tony’s eyes shot back and forth between Peter and Bruce, a frown marring his features as they finally came to rest on the rather meek Spider-Man. Peter was more than a little overwhelmed, even if he tried not to show it, but he was out of his league. He was Spider-Man; he fought small time crooks and super-villains, thwarted off the occasional interdimensional invasion, sure. He was
also a biophysicist who knew what he was talking about, who had an extensive resume, who was into chemistry, physics and biology, who dabbled in almost everything that caught his attention.

But he was also twenty-four years old, had never held a steady job, and he was in the presence of a renowned scientist who he admired. Yeah, he was a little star-struck.

This wasn't a team-up of Spider-Man and the Avengers. This was Peter Parker applying for a job at Stark Industries Labs, under the lead of Dr. Bruce Banner, and he would be getting paid for whatever he did here. Royally paid, too.

“You thought about my offer?” Tony asked, drawing him out of his thoughts.

“A lot, actually.”

“And…?” he prodded.

Peter wanted to run a hand through his hair, pace – jump out the window and swing away on a webline, never to be seen near this place again.

“I won’t be an Avenger.”

Bruce smiled, almost laughing. Tony did laugh.

“I’m not hiring,” he replied, amused. Tony grew more serious with the next words, though. “This isn’t about you being Spider-Man. This is about Peter Parker, who should be tagging a PhD to his name, who should be researching in a lab of the highest standard, who should be doing what he does best. Not deliver pizza, take selfies of his alter ego to peddle to newspapers, and do grunt work in labs too cheap to hire him for more than temp jobs.”

Peter glared at the man. He would have done all that already if not for the monetary problems. Tony knew that. He was clearly looking for an emotional reaction. Peter refused to give it to him.

“I could use a fresh set of eyes on some of the projects I’m running,” Bruce offered.

“Hey,” Tony protested. “I am fresh eyes.”

“You are my go-to tech guy,” Bruce replied easily. “I need a biologist. Like Peter. Who also has the necessary background in chemistry and physics.”

“Watch me share my organic blueberries again, Banner,” Stark grumbled, shaking a finger at him. “You’re so off the list of science bros for life.”

“What about… Spider-Man?” Peter asked carefully.

“This would be a part-time job,” Tony told him, switching from playfully grumbling to playfully serious. “You make your own hours, Mr. Parker. The rest is freelance. Bill me. SI gets sixty percent on any of your patents you register as of now. Just don’t try to slip an entertainment center shy of an IMAX past me as necessary expenses and we're good.”

“Uh, what?” Peter blurted.

Tony waved it off. “You read my offer on the freelance stuff. I stand by it. We need the manpower, we call you. You can accept or decline. Just like with Avengers stuff.”

Peter chewed on his lower lip. “You’re aware I come with a preternatural bond?”
“Oh, quite. Quite a lot, actually. You can’t ignore Deadpool. We all tried. Failed, actually. Spectacularly.” Tony waved a hand. "This isn't Bring Your Bond Mate to Work, so leave him at home and we're good."

"Uh, okay? Not that I would? I mean, we're not joined at the hip."

Tony waggled his eyebrows a little.

Peter rolled his eyes.

It got him a grin.

Bruce regarded him with that infinite calm, such a contrast to what he could shift into. His expression was open, non-threatening, but Peter knew it was a façade. Behind this unassuming exterior lay an incredible power.

“This is about you, Peter,” he said. “The scientist. Not your bond. I would be lying if I said I'm not interested in knowing more about this, but it’s very private and I, and the others, respect it. Some more, some less.”

He glanced at Tony, who just huffed.

"No conjugal visits either. If I find you making out with your bonded in the lab or any of the offices, you're fired. I don't want to see anything of the like. Especially with Deadpool."

Tony gave a mock shudder.

"You weren't as considerate when you were jumping Steve's bones." Bruce's expression was almost devious there for a second.

Stark glared. "It was one time!"

"In my lab."

"Our lab, Dr. Banner. Or actually: my lab. I'm funding the whole shindig."

"We still didn't want to see that, Tony," was the mild reply.

"Don't start with defiling a national icon on me again!" Stark warned, looking grumpy.

"Well…"

"Don't."

Peter wondered if this was normal for them.

Bruce turned toward him again, ignoring the still miffed looking genius in their midst.

“If you ever wanted to look at the anchor bond on a more scientific level, you are very welcome to use these facilities," he said calmly, flawlessly changing from berating Tony on his lab behavior to Peter's bond with a preternatural of the chimera's caliber. "It is rather unique and unheard of, so there might be questions or incidents you want to look at in a more scientific environment."

“I won’t,” Peter replied flatly.

There had been enough experiments, enough digging and pain. What he and Wade shared was
extremely private, just for them, and there would be no files.

Aside from the ones already in existence.

The bond was proof of the absolute trust Deadpool had given him and it was more intimate than any physical acts between them.

Tension had started to creep into his frame and Peter forced himself to relax. The chimera’s presence was unabatingly strong, protective and defensive, and Peter felt it as if Wade was right next to him. It was extremely reassuring.

Banner was watching him, a curious and thoughtful expression in his eyes, and Peter dared him to say something.

He didn’t.

“So!” Tony announced loudly, clapping his hands. “Can I call Pepper and have her mail you the final contract? Yes or yes?”

Peter knew he needed a job, a steady income, and this, right here, was the best that could happen to him under the circumstances. He could be Spider-Man, could make his own hours, had the necessary room to adjust his work to his other activities and vice versa.

Best of both worlds.

With Deadpool included.

There would never be a compromise without his bonded.

“Yes,” he heard himself say.

Tony beamed at him.

He signed the contract two hours later, with Tony and Pepper in attendance.

It didn't really feel like selling himself to the Avengers. It was just a job and Tony Stark was the CEO of the company Peter would be working for.

It had been his decision. No pressure from anyone.

Peter left the Tower and stopped outside, looking up the impressive building.

He had a job now.

A really well-paying job. One where he didn't have to beg Jameson for a bonus for the latest Spidey pics, where he didn't have to work temp jobs that sucked.

"Wow," he murmured.

The Bugle might just have to find another source for high quality shots of their favorite menace.

Peter grinned. He could just imagine Jameson's expression, that vein starting to swell and throb,
and his explosion that would hit the hapless reporters and journalists.

Right now he couldn't care less.

He might still take a few pictures now and then, especially when fights became interesting, and he might just offer them to the Bugle, but then again, maybe not. He wasn't gambling on higher prices for the shots. Peter was simply done with catering to every of Jameson's whims, to getting a dressing down, a cut in payment, the name calling and the threats.

He had started a new path in his life the moment he had bonded to Wade. Maybe even a little before that.

It was time to let other photographers handle the always foul-tempered man.

Peter took the subway to the stop closest to his favorite fast food stop and placed a large order. He splurged on dessert, though with his new living arrangements and a steady income it was no longer splurging. It was normal.

He left a tip in the jar when he paid, then headed home.

Time to celebrate.

Deadpool wasn't home when he got back. There was a note – on My Little Pony paper -- on the fridge and another one smack across the TV screen that both told Peter that his partner was currently on a mission – non-lethal – and not to wait up.

Toodles.

Yes, there was a toodles signed underneath.

Huh.

Peter removed the note from the TV, crumbled it into a ball and tossed it into the waste basket clear across the room.

Well, more food for him then.

Peter chose a channel, unwrapped his food, dug in and enjoyed a movie.

Halfway through he was distracted by an idea popping into his head concerning the web fluids that had been bouncing around in his head for a while.

So he got to work.

tbc...
Chapter 26

Chapter Notes

Hope this chapter was worth the wait :)

It was ridiculously easy to get onto the grounds of the X-Men HQ, the infamous Xavier Institute for the Wayward Children or something in Westchester, and Deadpool wondered if everyone had taken off for a holiday he hadn't been aware of. And if so: rude! They could have told him. Maybe left a note on the gates. He wouldn't have made a redundant trip.

He climbed over the fence, then made his way toward the impressive building. Well, if you liked castles.

Deadpool didn't.

Nothing personal. He just wasn't the medieval type.

No one stopped him and the groomed lawns and well-maintained gravel paths were empty of all life. No supers or preters frolicking around, testing their powers, doing homework or just fooling around.

"Geez," he muttered to himself. "Mind-numbingly photogenic. Like the next Homes and Gardens issue. So not gonna buying that one. Vomit inducing much?"

When the door to the mansion swung open and revealed none other than his favorite grouchy Wolverine, Deadpool smiled widely behind his mask.

Things were looking up already!

"Hey, mate!" he drawled in a faux Australian accent. "I expected my favorite emo X-Girl or Chrome Dome, but no worries! You're running hot second to her first place in my heart. How'sit hangin' down under? Smooth as always, I hope! Did you get a new haircut? Changed your stylist? Or did your better half finally intervene with all the weird hairdo you had going on?"

"Fuck off, Wilson."

"No can do. Actually, I came to talk to the man of the house, not the pet poodle."

Logan bared his teeth. Impressive white teeth. Broad-shouldered, muscular, with long sideburns, dark, messy hair, swift blue eyes and the stance of a bull fighter, Logan was an opponent to take very seriously.

Deadpool never took anyone all too seriously; and if he did, he wouldn't show it.

"And I said fuck off," Wolverine repeated.

"Since you already sent all the kids to bed early you could at least invite me in for a night cap."

The growl was a warning most people took very seriously.
Deadpool wasn't most people and warnings were kind of lost on him.

He feigned to the left, then dodged right, only to shoulder the shorter man out of his way as he walked straight ahead. It would have been easier with a gun or his katanas, but he was trying to be good.

Peter would have been so, so proud!

Logan's snarl was fearsome, but he wasn't really bothered. Since the claws hadn't come out yet, Deadpool was rather relaxed. Adamantium claws the length of a human's lower arm sticking out of one's chest were usually a good indicator when it came to Logan's temper.

"Growl all you want, my hairy friend. Not leaving. I was courteous and rang. Even brought a gift." Deadpool dropped the potted plant he had napped from the outside and it shattered on the hardwood floor. Soil and plant parts scattered everywhere. "Now, Professor, can we talk or do you need to call in your boyband first?" The last was called out.

Charles Xavier rolled out of the shadows, ageless as ever, bald as ever. Deadpool cocked his head. Blue eyes, infinitely calm and patient, met his gaze. The telepath didn't really seem rattled by his entry. Nothing about him told of fear apprehension or fear, and Deadpool was a rather good judge when it came to the human state of flight.

"You never change. What's your secret?" he asked lightly.

"Why did you come here, Wade?" Xavier asked, voice mild.

"Deadpool. The name is Deadpool. It's not so hard to remember. Just as many vowels as it has consonants."

The telepath's expression was patient, almost fatherly, and Deadpool wanted to kick it off him. It was one reason why he had never, actually ever, seriously considered the multiple invites to join the X-Men. He didn't want sympathy and understanding. He didn't need a guiding hand. He didn't want the fatherly advice over a game of chess. He didn't want to change his ways and do good.

Wait. Doing good. Back up there.

Wasn't that what he had done for Spideybabe?

But Peter was different. He hadn't pushed it at him. He hadn't tried to make him into the hero he wasn't. Peter wasn't Chuck on Wheels, trying to better the world one fucked up preter or super at the time.

And he really sucked at chess.

"You want to know why I'm here? Aside from the scenery and the expectation of lovely tea and biscuits?" He leaned forward. "Since no one picks up my calls and your Facebook page sucks, I had to come in person. To tell you to mind your own fucking business! Threaten my mate again and I'll end you."

The last was said in a sugary sweet tone.

Wolverine growled a warning and the claws snicked out.

"Puleaze," Deadpool sighed. "So yesterday. You're not going to kill me and you know it."
"A lot of pain is all I'm looking for! And your guts on the floor."

"I can deliver that, too. No problem-o! But who's the unlucky bastard who has to wipe up the mess?"

Wolverine advanced.

Deadpool easily unsheathed the katanas, twirling them. "Oh, I dare you to bring it on," he crooned. "I haven't had a good tussle in a long time. Being good has a few disadvantages. One being the no killing clause."

"Logan," the Professor's quiet voice stopped him.

Wolverine's nostrils blew wide, his teeth still bared, and the play of muscle would have been a nice distraction any other day, too.

"Uhhhh," Deadpool mocked "James, please, stop, be a good doggy!"

Wolverine lunged forward and Deadpool moved just far enough to evade the lethal claws. "Missed me," he sang.

"Logan!" Xavier snapped.

Wolverine snarled, but he backed down.

"You've got him trained well. Never managed that. He was such a mangy little thing when I met him," Deadpool mused. "Now look at him! All grown up and ready to adoption. Flea collar's included?"

"Will you ever shut the fuck up?"

"Nope. You know me. Merc with a Mouth. Gotta work hard for the nicknames, right, James?"

"I never intended to threaten Mr. Parker," Xavier interrupted them. "I was merely curious. There is little we know about the chimera."

"Whoa, stop right there, Wheels! You know shit! Less than shit! You know nothing at all, and that is putting it nicely!" Deadpool radiated danger and lethal intent. "And it will stay that way. I'm no one's guinea pig any more. Tried it once, found it lacking the experience. No stars on Yelp. Never got my money back. And don't get me started about the promised t-shirt that was never delivered!"

"I would never experiment on a mutant."

"Just test us? Poke us with needles? Do useless scans and find zilch? No, thanks. The only one who's going to stick anything into me is a little spider. And he can stick it into me anytime he wants."

"Do you know what your powers are?" Xavier asked calmly, ignoring the words. "Your full potential? Your abilities?"

Deadpool sheathed the katanas again. "Endless wit and never-ending charm?"

"More like annoying like shit and unable to shut up!" Logan snapped.

Deadpool flapped a hand. "Nyah… Okay… sure… That, too. I'm a well of mutant abilities. The All You Can Graft On Buffet. Let's not forget… really hard to kill. Actually, immortal!" He spread his
"You are also bonded to Spider-Man, a mutant, who is now your balance and anchor," the professor stated.

The tension came back into his frame and the chimera sat up, eyes narrowing dangerously on the wheelchair-bound preternatural. It didn't move, didn't try to break through the human shell that gave it a semblance of civility, but it was more than ready to.

"And who's a peeping tom now? Keep out of our lives! You've sent all your little hounds after me, blabbering on and on about how I'm 'better than this'! Newsflash, Prof! I am not! I never will be better than I am. I'm already perfect. Get that into you shiny bald head! And stay the fuck away from us!"

Xavier inclined his head. "I will. Just out of curiosity: have you noticed your increase in potential?"

Deadpool put his hands onto his hips, cocking them at a suggestive angle.

"I am pretty potent already, prof. You've got to give me a little help here."

The professor folded his hands. "You were born a preternatural and artificially enhanced. It put you on my radar. Your potential was immense. It hasn't diminished. While I was aware of Peter Parker as an altered, enhanced human through Cerebro ever since he became active, I am not anymore."

Deadpool stilled. The chimera rose out of the darkness, the massive head turning to look at the telepath with single-minded attention, eyes flaring. It bared dagger-like teeth, its focus completely on Xavier.

Like a super-predator watching its next meal, sizing it up, ready to strike. Swift, clean kill.

The professor frowned a little, but he didn't react otherwise, but Deadpool was convinced he felt the rise of the apex predator.

Wolverine did.

He could sense the other man's tension, the way he was prepared for a confrontation, even if he wouldn't be a match for what Deadpool could unleash.

He felt something primal inside of him claw its way out of the depth. The chimera turned and looked at him, silvery eyes narrowed, black lips lifting over gleaming white fangs. The insubstantial wings flared. The darkness rose, twisting and coiling closer. Alive and powerful, ready to strike out.

Logan's eyes narrowed, nostrils blowing wide. Neither of the two men could see it, but they sensed something. Logan more than Xavier, since he was more in tune with his primal instincts.

"You are immune to telepathy due to your preternatural nature, Mr. Wilson," Xavier said. "Mr. Parker has apparently inherited your ability."

"The name is Deadpool," he snarled. "And my so-called condition isn't infectious. My charm, yes. My sense of humor, perfectly infectious. Not this!" He gestured at himself. "I'm not spreading the disease!"

The chimera started to bristle, the infinite wings unfolding completely, unsheathing razor-like claws.
"Your mutation at the hands of Weapon X cannot be transferred," Xavier agreed. "Nor is any of you infectious. Preternatural abilities usually don't influence a potential or bonded partner either. I believe that against what scholars know, your preternatural nature has now become part of Peter as well. Cerebro cannot find him, like I can no longer find you. While I could never touch your mind, your thoughts, I could see you, Deadpool. Your presence was never a secret. Now the chimera has broken free and its power is enormous. It spans two lives, Deadpool."

"What."

The night terror inside him hissed a last warning. It stalked closer to the shell that contained it, just shy of breaking it.

"Your lives are entwined. The chimera is part of Mr. Parker now. I believe you already know that to a degree. You also protect him, Deadpool. Not just physically, but on a psychic level, too."

"Well, good," he said levelly. "Thanks for the news update. Now stay the fuck away from us, capiche? We don't need guidance or baby-sitting!"

Wolverine had the gall to snort and Deadpool pulled a gun on him, the bullet tearing through Logan's bicep. It was the least violent reaction to the threat level in here. Wolvie should be grateful he hadn't aimed for his thick head.

"Fucker!" the other man exclaimed.

"Last warning," Deadpool only said, his eyes never leaving Xavier's.

"You have achieved control," the older man said, almost like he was talking to himself. "I can sense the chimera. It is powerful. He gives all of that to you."

"Now that we caught up on the family feels, I'm gonna leave," the merc announced. "If I see any of your guys hanging around us, you won't be seeing them again. At least in one piece."

He turned and stalked out of the mansion.

Since he didn't get his spine severed by adamantium claws, Xavier had put a leash on his guard dog.

And he had so been looking forward to a good brawl.

"Don't mess it up, Wilson."

The low growl caught him just before he could cross the threshold. Deadpool felt something primal inside him surge forward, snarling furiously at the implications. He fought down the need that rose inside him.

**Protect. Mine. Protectminemine!**

He turned, eyes narrowed, expression deadly behind the mask. Deadpool had to fight down the urge to eradicate a perceived threat. He could almost taste the fury. He wanted to tear into something, hit something…

Wolverine looked almost impressed. He even smirked a little.

"That, hm?" he remarked, daring to laugh roughly. "Didn't think you'd ever find the one since they cut that out of you. Or shot it."
Deadpool felt the insane notion to sprout claws and fangs and tear the other man's throat out. He played it cool, though, forcing the tension out of his muscles, to relax, to let the words wash over him.

"Good things come to bad people, too," he quipped instead. "You should know. Where is the little firecracker anyway?"

Logan snarled, reflecting the very same emotions Deadpool had felt moments ago. He allowed himself a smirk of his own.

Wolverine caught himself, then chuckled with a rueful shake of his head. "Fucker." It sounded almost friendly.

"You need to get laid," the merc said cheerfully. "Get your rocks off. Xavier got him on a top secret mission that needs only brains not brawns?"

"None of your damn business, Wilson."

"Ditto," he shot back.

Wolverine grinned, showing more teeth than was really friendly. Deadpool hadn't found out whether the other man had truly bonded or not. Where the chimera shouldn't have been able to bond to anyone due to its artificial nature, Wolverine fell into an equally obscure category of meshed-up DNA. He was a supernatural, most likely a fenris wolf, the more primal version of the werewolf, if wolves could get more primal than they were already. He was old blood, unable to shift completely for some reason, but several times more ferocious than any werewolf Deadpool had ever unalived.

What Weapon X had done with him… Deadpool had never read a file. It had been just as bad as what they had done to Wade Wilson.

Wolves only ever bonded to other werewolves. They could happily spend their whole lives with a human or any kind of preter-or supernatural, but a life bond was reserved for their own kind. Hellhounds never bonded to another hellhound. And Deadpool didn't even want to think about how nuckelavee only ever fit to a hecate.

So… Logan. Fenris wolf. Bonded, yay or nay? He wouldn't place any bets. He only knew he was pretty possessive of a certain X-Man with an eye affliction.

Both men looked at each other, sizing the other up, then Wolverine nodded once. Two men who shared a similarly fucked-up past. One who had found what he needed to give himself at least a little more stability. And one who might one day.

Deadpool knew he was lucky in that regard.

"Don't mess it up," Logan repeated, softer this time.

"You know me."

It got him a dark laugh. "Yeah. Good thing your bond-mate has more sense."


And Deadpool was finally out the door.
He waved at some X-Kid, then came to a full stop before he skipped though the open gates.

"Brianna!" he called cheerfully. "Oh, wait. Wrong universe. Miss Warhead." He curtsied. "Getting crowded here today. You really worked on raising funds for adding more X-Men this time. Did the studio give you a good deal?"

"Douchepool."

Deadpool clutched his heart. "Ouch. Still with the pain."

She looked unimpressed, chewing her gum. "Heard you got hitched. Must have been really desperate to get some."

"I prefer 'determined'."

"Well, congrats."

He cocked his head. "Are you being serious? Is she serious?" he asked the world in general. "I can't tell due to the general air of teenage emo. Well, you are correct, my little fireball. Sorry, no invites to the party. And we already had the wedding night." He winked. "Steaming, NC-17 rated, explicit material, non-stop rabbit sex."

She rolled her eyes. "How come he hasn't shot you already?" she muttered. "In the balls and up the ass."

"Because he's a good guy. And we're not talking about what's going up my ass."

Negasonic smirked. "Good guy, huh? That's what they all say. Compared to you, anyone is anyway."

"Ouch, ouch and ouch. You're really killing me today."

"Too bad you never stay that way."

"Emo teen kill shot!" he proclaimed.

A cab pulled up and Deadpool waved at Dopinder, who gave him a bright smile in return.


He got into the cab, riding shotgun, and ignored Negasonic's one-fingered salute.

*

Charles Xavier watched the extraordinary preternatural go. His mind couldn't pick up anything from the chimera, the shields around it impenetrable and so multilayered and interlocked, it was like nothing the telepath had ever sensed before.

Even before the chimera had unfolded to its full strength, Wade Wilson had been immune to telepathy.
Now… it was like a vicious guard dog, looking at Xavier and challenging him to try it. Just once.

So the chimera was online now. Fully. Growing into its human shell, learning.

It was unique.

It was raw power and danger, a dark, ferocious, volatile power that ran untamed under this human guise.

Nothing like the chimera existed.

Just like no one like Deadpool had ever existed.

Now he was bonded to Peter Parker, a mutant with no psychic abilities, with not a single preternatural direct relative.

Xavier looked out the window, thoughtful.

Deadpool had surrendered to the other man, giving him everything, his trust, his body, mind and soul; his love.

Where others had called the mercenary soulless, Xavier had never truly believed it. A soul couldn't be destroyed completely. It had been twisted and mangled, beyond recognition, and now it was meshed with Peter's.

It would be interesting to see them grow together, to witness what the bond might bring forth in both men, and what the future had in store for them. The chimera's claim on Spider-Man soul was absolute and had already started to change him.

"This'll blow up in all our faces," Wolverine grumbled.

Charles smiled. "I don't think so, Logan. It's a mutual bond, grown out of affection, trust and love."

Logan gave him a dark look. "He's still a crazy son of a bitch and certifiable."

The professor chuckled, then moved the chair to his desk. "Let's give them the room to grow, Logan. No interference."

"Wilson's a crazy ass son-of-a-bitch and won't ever change, Chuck. He's a time bomb in the hands of a kid."

"I agree that he is dangerous and more so now than he ever was. His erratic behavior is one of his weapons and he always used it according to the situation to baffle his opponents and distract them from who and what he truly is," Xavier agreed. "There is far more to Wade Wilson than he shows us. Peter has become one of the few, maybe the only one, who has looked behind all those masks."

"You think he can really control the chimera?"

"Who says it is about control? Maybe taking away a leader or handler is exactly what the chimera needed. Spider-Man freed it."

"Pity the guy who thinks otherwise," Wolverine growled. "Deadpool's crazy, but he's crazy good."

With that he left.

Xavier smiled faintly.
Yes, it would be interesting to watch the chimera become all it could be.

Deadpool was an unstable, dangerous preternatural, but he had his bonded mate to rely upon to keep him from stepping over and off the edge. He had been hurt so badly, tortured and killed, his DNA mangled and spliced and then put together in a new order to create something never seen before, he would never be normal and stable again. No matter the bond.

But he fought every step of the way to be better, to keep his instincts in check. He was powerful and yet more vulnerable and in need of stability than he would ever let on. Peter was his anchor and the most important person in his life.

What bothered Xavier was the looming danger of what would happen should someone take Spider-Man from him or kill the younger man in front of Deadpool. An unchained, uncontrollable chimera would be a threat level never seen before. He would kill whoever dared to injure or kill his bonded mate.

Facing that… the telepath had no idea who would win this confrontation, if winning was even an option. Taking Peter away, trying to kidnap him, would result in carnage and death, many times over, and Deadpool wouldn't rest until he had his partner back.

As for death… Charles didn't think anything would ever permanently stick.

Hopefully it wouldn't happen any time soon.

Hopefully never at all.

And if it did, Xavier hoped fervently it would be in the far, far future when Wade Wilson had learned to balance and anchor himself enough to not lose all his humanity. Both men had a lot of work ahead of them, a future that was both infinite and uncertain, and the professor knew it would be an interesting one.

tbc...
Chapter Notes

Life and work keep interfering with my writing. Gah! But I got this done, though if you run into more typos than before, I know what to blame: Real Life! Sorry about that!

Deadpool was back come morning, paying Dopinder enough that the man wouldn’t have to drive a single fare for the rest of the year. As Deadpool’s Private Taxi Service he made a lot of dime, which he probably didn’t declare anywhere. Not that Deadpool cared. Dopinder was there when he called.

He found a note stuck over the one he had left there yesterday, pinned to the fridge, written on bright pink paper. Peter was off to meet with Stark again today. Another post-it told Deadpool that there was leftover food in the fridge. And Peter's contract with SI was on the kitchen island.

Deadpool had the sudden notion to swing by Stark Towers/Avengers-fucking-HQ and hover, but he bit down on that. The chimera was churning restlessly, but he kicked it back into the void.

Peter was a grown man. He was able to take care of himself. He wasn't in danger from Tony Stark or any of the Avengers.

And if he repeated that ten more times he might just believe it.

He grabbed the food, nuked it, then took the contract with him as he plopped down on the couch to read through it.

Peter found his partner on the couch, still in full gear, sans mask, feet dangling over the side. The TV was running some inane daytime soap.

And there were a bunch of fast food wrappers and empty chips bags dotting the ground.

"Party without me?"

The SI contract lay on the couch table.

"It's never a party without you, baby boy. Or some booze. I'm sadly booze-less. But now I got you back!"

He made grabby hands toward Peter, who chuckled and shook his head.

Peter dumped his bag on the floor and looked through the fridge for something cold to drink. He was still amazed that there was so much stuff in there, even if he did most of the grocery shopping. Wade brought home most of the fast food and stacked it next to everything else.
He found a bottle of water and went back to his bonded. Wade smiled widely, launching a myriad of emotions inside Peter.

He had no words for what this was, between them, was barely able to express what he felt, but Wade felt it, too.

Soul-deep, intense, intimate beyond belief, and just them. He let it happen, wash over him in gentle waves as they came together. Lazy movements, sloppy kisses, warm skin against warm skin. It didn’t always end in sex, both hovering at the fringes without the pressing need to reach completion.

It was nice.

Wonderful.

“How was the Frat Party at Avengers Tower?” Wade asked, his faux disinterest plain to hear. The tension was a blatant giveaway.

“Not a party. I got a job,” Peter replied, thumb gliding over the droplets of water on his bottle. He nodded at the contract.

“Huh. Never doubted you’d be smart enough to land something at SI. Two thumbs up. I'll buy a cake. And candles. Nice dinner, too, if you want.”

Peter nuzzled against him, pliable and warm. “I talked to Banner. And Stark. They gave me a good deal on juggling work as a regular human being and being Spider-Man.”

Wade sat up a little straighter, his expression a little sharper.

“Part-time with flexible hours, the rest freelance if they require it. I can turn them down.”

“I see.”

Peter met the brown eyes, saw the wariness in there.

“You probably read the whole thing, right? Including the fine print and the foot notes. I’m not an Avenger, Wade. Stark made it clear that I’m invited to tag along, to assist, but I’m not officially part of them.”

“Unofficially?”

“Nope. Still freelancing there. And I’m not doing this without you. Ever.”

It got him widening eyes and a burst of something across the bond. The chimera seemed to wrap itself around him, wings and claws, as substantial as he had ever felt it before. Still not a shape he could discern, but so very real now.

“Not doing this without me,” Wade vowed, echoing the words with a fervor that relayed his intent. “Ever.”

Warm eyes regarded Peter, the depths of the emotions taking his breath away. Possessive.

Peter felt a mirror response race through him.

Mine.
Won’t let you go.

Ever.

And he wouldn’t go. Ever.

"How much havoc did you and Dopinder wreak?"

"None at all. And shooting Wolverine can't be counted as bad. The guy heals as fast as I do. My role model, really. I think they shot some of him into me, but not in the fun way."

Peter blinked. "You shot Wolverine?"

"Only in the arm. Non-lethal. He was being a grumpy, growly ass."

"So you shot him."

"Yep. Also had a nice talk with the Professor, detailing to him my position on his threats against my mate."

"He didn't threaten me, Wade," Peter sighed. "It was a normal talk."

Wade sat up, his presence sharpening, the eyes suddenly ringed in silver. "Every fucking do-gooder is poking their big, bald head into our relationship to give us an unasked for piece of their mind! I don't care who they think they are, the holier than thou attitude is grating!"

"I know. It'll pass. We'll be old news. Right now they're just curious."

"They can curiously fuck off!"

Peter let himself sink back against his bonded, using the physical contact and the bond to anchor him again. The chimera was angry, but it deferred to its mate, grumbling softly to itself.

"We should make a list," Wade snarled, though it lacked the fury of before. "Gonna send all of them a poop plushie."

Peter laughed. "I'm sure Professor X will appreciate the gesture."

"Wolvie will get the biggest one."

He snorted, the amusement real.

Wade whipped out his phone, furiously typing. Peter glanced at the page, found his bonded had already called up a shopping site page, and he quickly plucked it out of his hands.

"Hey!"

"No plushies."

"Not even a Deadpool one?"

Of course he would have had those stored somewhere. Of course.

"Hallmark is fine, too."

"Bah."
Peter tossed the phone onto the armchair not far away as he leaned over and brought their lips together.

"Hallmark, huh?" Wade whispered when they parted, pupils blown a little wider than before.

"Hallmark."

"Okay."

Peter kissed him again, pushing experimentally and when Wade let himself fall back, he climbed onto his lap.

Never breaking the kiss.

The heavy make-out session that followed had both of them hard and wanting.

They didn't make it off the couch.

Peter knew Wade had a kink that involved him in full gear.

And yes, it was hot. Really hot. Especially to feel the spandex and leather against naked skin.

"Do I get to fuck you in my Spider-Man suit next time?" he breathed as he went down on the really invested merc.

"Oh hell, yes!" was the groaned answer. "You're such a filthy little spider!"

*

Patrol was a relaxing affair, with a few small time criminals that weren't too hard to take care of. Deadpool was almost holding back, letting his partner web the crooks and call the police.

"You okay?" Spider-Man asked when they walked into their home.

"Hm. Sure."

Peter pulled off the mask, a frown marring his features. "Pull the other one, Wade. Spill."

He shrugged, disarming and dropping the weapons on the kitchen counter, taking his time.

Stalling.

Peter scowled.

"What did Professor X tell you?"
Yep, he had hit the bull's eye. He could see it in the tensing of the broad shoulders, the way Deadpool froze for a second before dumping his katanas next to the guns.

"Wade."

Deadpool slammed his hands into the counter, rattling the guns and knives on it. He expelled a sharp breath that sounded almost like a hiss.

"The chimera has made up its home in you!"

Peter blinked at the flatly delivered words. "Uh, what? I mean, we knew that, right? You and I are bonded. I know it's in my soul…"

"I'm contaminating you!" the merc hissed, whirling around. "It's not just in your soul! It's everywhere! It's in your mind, too! And I don't even know how to stop it!"

"What are you talking about?"

Wade flexed his fingers, starting to pace. Peter knew it was his imagination, but it seemed that the chimera was a black shadow, insubstantial and not really there. Like an afterthought. And if he looked too hard, it would be gone.

But he felt it.

It was insanely there, a solid fact in their lives, and it was agitated.

"I'm immune to mind-readers. Xavier can't tap this." Deadpool pointed a finger at his temple. "Since the chimera became unchained, I've also disappeared off the topographical map of preters and supers he can see with his fancy gadget."

Peter nodded. He knew of Cerebro.

"Looks like you did, too. Disappeared. Bam! Gone!"

"Oh?"

Even still masked, the other man's face was easy to read for Peter. Wade's face was twisted in a grimace of emotional pain.

"The chimera isn't just clinging to you like its favorite toy, I'm also making you invisible."

"That… doesn't sound too bad."

"What else are you going to catch from me?!!" Deadpool exploded, flinging his arms out. "The scars? The insanity? The unstable moods? What?! Isn't it enough that you're already bound to my life? A life that won't ever end?!"

The overwhelming surge of darkness didn't really catch him unprepared. Peter didn't need a lot of warming up to handle the chimera, no matter how strongly it came upon him. Actually, there was no warming up required at all.

He did what came naturally to him.

The vortex yawned at the other end of the bond, alive with rage, anger, fear and emotional pain.

Peter instinctively held on, wrapping his very soul around it.
The chimera screeched in protest, twisting around the darkness, but Peter wouldn't let it go. Sharp claws glistened and the surreal wings flared. It was snapping at him, teeth clicking dangerous, but it didn't even get close.

He poked it hard.

The night terror huffed, then curled up into a tight ball of unhappiness.

"Wade," he said softly and approached him, unafraid of the still threatening air around him. "I'm with you all the way. I've told you so already. Several times. Being immune to a telepathic intrusion is an advantage. I wouldn't say it's bad."

"But where does it end?" he asked sharply. "We have no idea how much further this'll go!"

"I'm not going to catch something bad, Wade." Peter told him reasonably. "All that has happened so far insures my survival as your bonded. You're keeping me safe." He put a hand against the broad chest. "Which I very much appreciate. Protecting my mind is important."

"What if something else spills over?" Deadpool breathed after a moment. "Like the fucking ugly?"

"Your scars are a result of the DNA grafts and the mutation of your preternatural gift. I'm no preternatural. I'm human. I was just bitten by a mutated spider. Nothing else."

"It's not just the outside. The inside is worse."

"I'm not going to catch insanity from you. You're not insane, Deadpool."

"Objection, your honor."

He shook his head. "You're a little unhinged, maybe. Unstable. But you have me for that. That's my part in this partnership. I give you the stability, I freed the chimera to be what it always wanted to be. You're not going to go over the edge from giving in to your true nature. I'm not going to become a chimera in return."

"You make it sound so cuddly, fluffy and warm," the merc muttered.

"No. It's not. I know it's a lethal, cold-blooded creature that kills within a heart beat. But it's also something that guards and protects with a ferocity that would tear apart whoever dares to challenge it. I know it's not kittens and puppies. But it's mine, too, Wade. Not just your hell to bear. It was never hell," Peter insisted. "It was never a mindless beast. It was held down and caged, shackled inside you. Now it's free and yes, it's still extremely dangerous. But not to me."

Deadpool finally raised a hand and cupped Peter's face. He stroked a thumb over his skin.

Peter leaned in and pressed his lips against the masked ones.

"Partnership means I take part in this," he said softly. "And I appreciate the psychic protection."

"Pretty neat, huh?" was the weak quip.

"Really neat," he agreed with a quirky smile.

Deadpool finally undid the mask and pulled it off, revealing a pair of almost despairing brown eyes.

"You didn't sign up for this."
He dropped the mask onto the floor.

"I did. Fully informed. I knew I was getting into a life-bond, Wade. To an artificially created preternatural. An immortal one."

Peter stroked over his chest again, the contact quieting the chimera once more. It huffed softly, then snorted, one eye cracked open to watch its mate.

"You might want to take notes now. Look into the files. Do some tests." The last was said through gritted teeth.

"No."

"Might give you a better insight into what to expect."

"No."

"Petey…"

"No," he repeated, voice absolutely flat, eyes like granite.

Wade opened his mouth, but Peter placed his other hand over it.

"I'm not going to research the bond. There will be no files, no notes, no readings. Not even temporary ones. Nothing of what we are is going to be stored anywhere, electronically or any other way. Nothing, Wade."

"Okay," he mumbled against the fingers, then kissed them.

Peter grinned and dropped the hand. He stepped back and started to pull the upper part of his costume over his head.

"I need a shower. There's a CSI marathon on tonight. Haven't watched some of the old seasons in ages."

Wade ran an appreciative eye over the lean lines exposed. "I'll bring the popcorn?" he offered.

Peter grinned more. "You got a deal."

They were happily curled up on the couch no twenty minutes later, watching early CSI seasons, Peter commenting on the science involved.

Neither man brought up Xavier or anything linked to him again.

tbc...
Chapter 28

The afternoon was a gray, rainy affair. The clouds covered the whole sky, obscuring the sun, and it had been raining non-stop since the early morning hours.

"In another reality I'm married to a really hot chick."

At the off-hand comment, Peter looked up from checking his emails for the file Banner had wanted to send to him to have a look at. It had just started downloading.

"Uh, okay?"

"She's a succubus. Queen of the Undead. Did I mention hot?"

Wade was fiddling with one of his recently acquired guns. Peter had no idea where he had bought it, just that his partner had been ecstatic, like a kid around Christmas about to get presents.

Now he was taking it apart, inspecting each tiny piece of metal and whatever else it was made of. It hadn't taken him more than a few minutes to figure out how to disassemble it, then Wade had reassembled the whole puzzle of a million pieces in half the time.

He called it his 'knack'.

Peter called it talent.

"Hot chick?" he now asked.

"Very. In very revealing dresses. Actually, she's kinda purple, so the dresses look even better, and she looks like a goddess. Demon goddess." He sounded dreamy, expression slightly lecherous.

Peter shot out a web line and snatched the ammo clip from Wade's fingers.

"Hey!"

Peter raised an eyebrow. "In this reality you're bonded to me."

Wade cocked his head and a slow smile spread over his features. "Spideybabe is jealous," he sang.

"Of another reality or timeline or whatever? Where you sleep with hot succubi? Nope."

"Succubus. Just one. She doesn't share. Neither do I. But the two of us have an epic bromance going," he added. "In every timeline."

"Bromance." Peter rolled the word around in his mouth. "Nope. Not happening." He placed the ammo clip next to the laptop.

"Maybe we're at it like bunnies there, too, and hiding it?" Wade suggested, pulling a new ammo clip out of seemingly nowhere. "Or we will be? Could be I'm about to get a divorce."

"You are not."

"Getting a divorce? Where? There or here or in that wacky universe where I'm the old me, all the hot looks, all the hair, perfect skin, and no healing factor? I have to say, that's a sight to behold. Handsome Me."
"You're handsome."

"And you're myopic, hence the glasses, right, but I already know it. Don't love you any less."

"Handsome," Peter insisted, giving him a narrow-eyed look.

Wade studied him, then smirked. "So, no divorce then?" he teased. "Here or there?"

"Anywhere," Peter growled, feeling a surge of possessiveness that rarely broke through.

Yes, he was possessive, too. Very much. This was the man he was life-bonded to. It wasn't just a partnership of necessity. It was love for him, not mere 'like'. It meant something.

The brown eyes were filled with mischief. "Jealous," he whispered. "Soooo jealous. Don't be, baby boy. We're not getting a divorce."

"You better not."

"Bonded for life," Wade stated seriously. "No rings required. But I liked our exchange of vows."
He winked suggestively. "And I prefer your ass to hers."

"You better."

"Aw, you're so cute when you're possessive! Deadpool like!"

"Fuck off." Peter tossed the clip at him, which Wade caught deftly.

The merc reassembled the gun with sure moves and secured it.

"You I like, too," he told the weapon. "Daddy's gotta try you out soon."

He got up and sauntered over to Peter, who was looking at Bruce's numbers and his notes.

"Huh."

Peter glanced at the other man.

"You can really read this gibberish?"

"Yep."

"Smart boy." Wade rested his chin on Peter's head, humming. "My smart boy."

"And don't you ever forget it."

"Nope. If I have the choice? Succubus or you? Immortal hot chick who doesn't mind my looks? Or sexy arachnid who doesn't either? Oh, she also tried to suck the life out of me, which was when she fell for this unbelievable piece of ass."

Peter tilted his head back. "You're not giving up on this. Why?"

Wade shrugged. "It's just fascinating. Timelines are really confusing, but also so much fun. Alter something here and the rest turns out completely different from what you know. Hey, I'm a dad in another one."

"Wade."
"Hm?" he asked lazily.

"Shut up."

"Make me."

"Don't make me use my web shooters."

"Kinky," he breathed. "You're into bondage, too?"

"Not in the way you'd find sexy."

"I find everything you do sexy, babe."

Peter slid the laptop off his lap. He turned and kissed his partner. "You would. But not now. Gotta work."

"Awww."

"Just go. Don't kill anyone. Bring back lunch."

"Yes, honey."

Peter grinned and Wade pressed a kiss to his head.

"So, bring back what I killed?" Deadpool asked just before he left the apartment.

Peter's look was enough to have him laugh. The poke along the bond had the chimera wag its surreal tail.

"Lunch it is," Deadpool promised, then he was gone.

Peter went back to his work.

Lunch was real food; a diverse mix of Italian, Spanish and Mexican, all spread out over the table, rousing Peter out of work.

Time flies, he mused.

It was already way past two in the afternoon and he was hungry. Having a metabolism like his own wasn't always an advantage. He needed so much more food sometimes, it had put a serious dent into his already low savings.

That wasn't a problem anymore, but he still shopped on a student's budget. Wade kept teasing him about it, heaping stuff into the fridge, but Peter couldn't really argue.

He needed it sometimes.

Like now.

Damn, he had really lost count of time.

"You're having fun," Wade remarked, still in his full outfit, thought the mask had come off.
"Tons. Really. It's incredibly fascinating stuff."

"Good for you. Hope you bill them accordingly."

"Oh, this isn't freelance. This is my part-time job."

"Earning your own money. So proud of you, baby boy. All grown up and getting ready to play with the big stuff." There was a suggestive eyebrow wriggle.

"Go and play on your own."

"With myself?"

Peter groaned and hooked a finger in the suit's belt, pulling the other man closer with an ease that spoke of his strength. Wade's pupils widened a little.

"Damn, that's a turn-on," he murmured.

Peter smirked and kissed him. "I need to finish my work, Wade. We can see what else we can finish after that."

Another theatrical groan. "Petey, you drive me into an early grave!"

"Which you wouldn't stay in anyway."

"Truer fucking words and all."

Wade kissed him again, hands cupping a feel as they slid over Peter's lower back and down his ass.

"Wade." It was murmured against the scarred lips.

"Hm?"

"Two hours."

"I'll hold you to it."

Peter finished in close to two hours.

One hundred and thirteen minutes.

The two of them didn't finish the after-work party under an hour.

Actually, Wade enjoyed playing for a lot longer, thanks to both of them having a low refractory period and a healing ability, though Wade's was truly outstanding.
"Better than a succubus?" Peter teased, fingers tracing the scars.

"Hm."

"Hm?" he echoed.

"Still analyzing the facts, drawing up flow charts, extrapolating data, adding diagrams and creating a really cool Power Point presentation for class."

"A-plus student."

"The very best."

Peter ran a flat hand over the hard-muscled chest. Like before, he marveled at the build of his partner, not disturbed by the what Wade called 'fugly wrapping'. Even the missing nipples had only ever drawn a first curious look, then he had just enjoyed the whole package.

Wade grabbed the hand and pulled Peter into a kiss. "Better than a succubus," he finally agreed. "Though I never slept with one. Might have to for comparisons. I mean, statistics and all…"

"Nope," Peter replied mildly.

"You'll just take my word for it that you're better?"

"Yep."

"You're so easy."

Peter laughed. "Good for you, then."

"Hey! I charmed you into my arms!"

"Sure."

Wade tousled his already messy hair. "Fess up, Spideybabe. You couldn't take your eyes off this fuckable, lovelable piece of man-cake."

"Whatever makes you sleep at night."

Wade lifted his head and kissed him.

What followed was a lazy make-out session that had Peter sigh in appreciation of his mate's talent.

*

Working semi-regular hours at Stark Labs was… new. A completely different experience than any of the sister labs Peter had been as a temp.

He needed a little to adjust to the demanding and challenging work, but it was fun and he was learning a ton within a short amount of time.

Bruce wasn't always there, but when he was, they talked about not just work, but also private matters.
Like the bond to Deadpool.

"I don't judge," Bruce told him over a lunch break that consisted of sandwiches and incredibly good coffee. "Deadpool was lucky to find a partner in you, Peter. He relies on you in a way no one can measure. You are the anchor. You balance his energy. I understand that everyone is worried about it, but I find there is little to worry about, actually."

"Uh, really?"

Bruce smiled gently. "You and he make a great team. You were already keeping him balanced before the bond took. It seemed inevitable that you finalized it. It gives both of you an edge and it calms both of you in its own way."

Peter blinked, startled by the deep insight.

"Let them talk," Bruce added with a small smile. "You won't be able to stop the rumors or lies. I know how that is. Actually, a lot of Avengers do."

"Not an Avenger," he replied automatically.

Bruce chuckled. "You know what I mean."

"Yeah, I do. It's just that suddenly everyone is interested in what I do or don't. They keep warning me, but why does everyone assume I'm the weak link? Why do they believe Deadpool is this overpowering, evil monster?"

"Because no one understands him. No one can predict what he does or how he does it. They think he's insane. Crazy."

"But I'm not his little submissive."

Bruce laughed, eyes dancing. "No, you're definitely not. Prejudice is a powerful weapon and people wield it easily. As for Cap and Tony, they feel protective sometimes. Deadpool isn't exactly a good guy. He kills people for money and because he likes it."

"He changed," Peter growled.

"They noticed by now."

He chewed on the last bite of his sandwich, swallowing not just his food, but also his anger. He had known what he was getting himself into, but he had instinctively done the right thing. Peter hadn't thought about it all too much, had just acted, and it had turned out to be the best decision ever.

For both of them.

He wouldn't do it any other way of given a second chance to make the choice for or against Wade Wilson and the bond.

They didn't always talk about Peter and Wade. Sometimes it was about Bruce himself, about his life, his losses, what becoming the Hulk had changed in him.
Or what joining the Avengers meant.

He gained a better insight into the man, into the team, but it didn't change his resolution to stay solo.

Well, solo with Deadpool.

Peter enjoyed the talks, the work, the exchange of ideas on a scientific level. He was really getting somewhere, learning so much, and the idea to tag a PhD to his name was no longer just an idea.

Wow. Just wow.


Wade Wilson wasn't just a big mouth with inane conversations, all fun and games. Serious talk was part of his repertoire and Peter needed him as a sounding board. It helped order his thoughts, put things into a new perspective. The Deadpool perspective and also the Wade Wilson perspective.

"Wasn't just me. You were part of the equation and still are."

"Aw, Petey! You're making me blush!"

Peter pulled him into a short kiss. "As if."

Wade looked almost bashful. It wasn't an act. He sometimes still underestimated the impact he had had on Peter Parker's life; not just as Spider-Man, but also as the struggling student and temp worker.

It was something outsiders didn't see either.

They just saw Spider-Man's influence on Deadpool, how the mercenary tried not to kill, how Spider-Man kept him balanced and could calm him down. They didn't understand that it wasn't control either.

Peter knew it was a lot of willpower on Deadpool's behalf. He was doing the work. He was fighting his own nature and anchoring to Peter to stay on the straight and narrow.

Sure, there were deviations and Peter didn't try to change him. He supported his partner as much as he could. He was there for the good, the bad and the very ugly; sometimes weathering harsh storms. The chimera was a wild beast, untamed and off the leash. It wanted to lash out when threatened, it wanted its pound of flesh, fresh blood of a kill, and it wanted the carnage.

But it could be balanced.

And around Peter it was.

They celebrated his first paycheck in style: at Weasel's bar.
Including a bunch of regulars, all of them probably in a kind of business Peter didn't want to think too closely about. They were cheering when Wade announced the next round was on him.

Weasel was busy handing over the drinks and Wade just pushed a wad of money his way. "Tip included."

"Aw, shucks, man," Weasel replied sarcastically. "Might just cover the damage from the next brawl."

"Don't worry. I'll break their heads before they do some real damage."

"Blood stains are a bitch to wipe up."

"Shouldn't I be the one paying the rounds?" Peter asked after Weasel was off to refill beers, nursing a lemonade. "It's my party."

"Just enjoy your last day as a kept man." Wade winked. "As of tomorrow you stand on your own two feet."

"Kept man?" Peter quoted.

His partner gave him a bright smile and raised his glass, toasting him. "Cheers on being a PhD soon. That'll be the day you're throwing a big ass party in here that will rock the foundations."

Weasel plonked a bottle with a suspicious looking red liquid in it in front of Wade. "You rock the foundations, you pay the insurance premium for the next two decades."

"Deal."

Peter rolled his eyes and chewed on the chips Weasel had unearthed from behind the counter.

Wade had ordered pizzas for the whole bar, which arrived an hour later, and a loud cheer echoed through the room. The poor delivery guy looked around wide-eyed and a little bit scared.

Peter took pity on him. He helped unload the pizza boxes and kept the masses from overrunning them by using a little more strength than was humanly possible. He paid the bill and tipped generously. The delivery boy gave him a huge smile and quickly beat it from the rowdy bar.

"Hey, that was my treat." Wade muttered, pulling him close and kissing his temple.

No one gave them a second look.

Peter deposited the box he had saved for them on the bar and Wade grabbed a large slice of the Deluxe Meat Lovers pizza.

"Next time," Peter replied.

"You bet."

They stayed until Weasel threw everyone out, which was around four in the morning.

"See?" Wade called. "All still in one piece."
"Fuck off, Wilson."

Weasel closed the door in his face.

"He loves me."


"Light weight."

But Wade joined him as Peter collapsed into bed, out like a light not much later.

tbc...
Chapter 29

Chapter Notes

There have been questions about whether or not this story is wrapping up soon. Well, my best guess is that I'll probably, maybe, not really sure, but I think it'll be done within the next week (dozens of question marks here). I can definitely promise it'll be done before June 17th, because the day after that I'm off on vacation in a place with probably no internet connections :)

I have a few more things to wrap up. One is starting in this chapter. I'm hard at work with the other.

May got to meet Wade later.

A lot later.

It took Deadpool almost a year into the bond to get his courage up to a level where he felt comfortable just considering the idea of meeting Peter's surrogate mother.

Well, as comfortable as he could be with the idea of showing his face to someone so important to Peter.

His only living relative.

There had been a lot of inner debating going on just before Wade had agreed to a dinner date.

Dopinder was the cab on call for the visit to Queens. He was his usual cheerful self, chatting about anything and everything as he drove them. Deadpool was still wearing his mask and refused to take it off.

Peter humored him, let him handle the stress of this social visit his own way, though he kept a close eye on the fluctuations coming over the bond.

In the past year his grasp of what he could do with the connection to the other man had gotten better. He understood a lot more about the anchoring effect, the balance he provided, and that Deadpool provided for him I return, without ever needing scientific help.

Not that Bruce had ever offered again.

Sometimes the Avengers skirted the edge of that particular topic when he was assisting, but no one outright asked.

Well, except Hawkeye sometimes. Him and Black Widow. It wasn't like they were holding back with anything anyway.

Peter could handle it.

He knew they had all expected a major blow-up, some kind of catastrophe on the horizon, but matters were normal. As normal as they could be for someone like Spider-Man or Deadpool.
Spider-Man was still a menace according to the Daily Bugle and Deadpool still took on mercenary jobs, though his death toll was in the one-figure area. He still only ever killed when he got shot at first. Assassinations were off the table in general.

Wade had dressed nicely for the occasion, in a clean pair of black jeans and an equally clean, crisp white t-shirt, though he was wearing his combat boots. A black jacket with a hood hid his masked face, just like his hands were in black gloves.

“Wade.”

He fidgeted.

“She’ll be okay with it. She really wants to meet you.”

“No one is okay with this,” he murmured. "Ever."

Peter gave him a pointed look.

"She's gonna run, Pete. Run and hide and curse the day you bonded to this."

"Wade."

"Is she working the burn unit at the hospital? No. She's in general care. She sees the normal stuff. Not…” He made a gesture toward his face.

Peter remained silent, just looking at him. He tugged gently at the bond.

"She'll be okay with your face. With all of you. May isn't like that, Wade. She and I talked about it a lot, and she understands the extent of the injuries."

Wade scoffed.

"For her, these scars are injuries. For me, too. It's what has been done to you. It's not the mutation. It's the result of torture."

He wrapped more of himself around the bond in a non-physical hug. It was something Peter had discovered a while ago.

"Please?"

The mask finally came off, but the hood went up and the hands were now stuffed in the jacket’s pockets.

Peter decided not to comment, just unlocked the door with the key he still possessed.

“Aunt May!” he called out. “We’re here!”

“Welcome! Come on in, Peter!” was the reply. “And Wade, of course! Still in the kitchen!”

It smelled wonderful and Peter had to smile as he identified pot roast with the aroma of apple pie mixing in.

“C’mon,” he whispered. “Kitchen.”

Wade stiffened, then reluctantly moved, but he kept his head down, shoulders hunched a little. Peter gently poked at the bond and got a brief, humorless smile in return. The big, bad
mercenary… afraid to meet a harmless woman. The woman who had raised Peter Parker, his bonded.

“She’s not going to hate you, Wade,” Peter murmured, briefly brushing over the other man’s arm. “She knows how I feel about you. That I love you. That we’re bonded.”

“She’s going to see this,” he replied roughly and gestured at his face again, like in the cab. “That is what’s bonded to her son! That’s what counts. Nothing else!” The last was almost a hiss.

“Wade.”

His defiant look had Peter stop and lean in to briefly brush their lips together. “This… you… all of you… is what I love, idiot. It’s been months now. Accept it. I love you, as you are. No one can tell me otherwise. And May would never do it.”

“Listen to Peter.”

Deadpool snapped back like the kiss had burned him, actually stepping away from Peter as if he had just become jailbait, close to hunching his shoulders.

May Parker stood in the doorway to the kitchen, drying her hands on a dish towel, giving her two guests a friendly smile.

“Hello, Peter.”

“Hi, Aunt May,” he replied happy and hugged the slightly smaller woman. “It smells incredible in here!”

She hugged him back, then her eyes fell on Wade. She stepped out of the embrace and smiled at the taller man.

“Hello, Wade. I’m so glad to finally personally meet you. Welcome to the Parker home.”

May didn’t come any closer, didn’t hold out her hand for Wade to take it, just stood there, patiently.

”Thank you.” Deadpool shifted his weight a little, then expelled a breath. “I’m not really good at this,” he managed. ”Ma'am.”

Peter would have grinned at the stiffness if this wasn't so serious and important. He stayed close to his partner, keeping even closer to the bond, but the chimera wasn't even looking. The darkness was impenetrable, the preternatural curled up and hiding in a way no one would believe it capable of.

“No one is,” she said easily. "And please call me May. Ma'am makes me feel old."

Wade hesitantly pulled out his gloved hands, balling them into fists. Peter didn’t interfere. He knew that this was a huge hurdle he had to take on himself. Peter would always be there as a support and he touched the bond, caressing it reassuringly.

The chimera seemed to shiver, but it didn't make an appearance.

“Come on. Food’s getting cold,” May announced cheerfully. “You can tell me all about your latest adventures.”

“Adventures?” Wade whispered.
“She follows all news reports about Spider-Man. And Deadpool,” Peter told him in a low voice. "TV, internet, paper. Whatever."

It got him stunned silence. Then, “Fangirl.” There was some of the old teasing back in Wade's voice.

Peter smirked.

They walked into the kitchen and sat down at table. Peter could already spy the apple pie that had clearly been reserved for dessert. He was keeping his fingers crossed for whipped cream or ice cream.

Wade had his hands under the table, fiddling with the gloves. When the food was on the table, he took the cutlery, not even looking at May.

She ignored the covered hands.

He fidgeted with the knife, movements elegant and displaying his ability and finesse with the weapon in his hands.

Finally, with a close to decisive move he placed the knife back onto the table and stripped off the gloves, revealing the scarred hands. He reached for the hood, slowly pushing it back. Wade kept his eyes lowered, looking at the plate, waiting for a gasp or any kind of reaction.

There was none.

"So, Peter, tell me about your job at Stark Industries," May addressed her nephew as she filled a plate with food.

Wade suddenly had pot roast and potatoes in front of him, listening to Peter recap how Stark had offered him the job, how he freelanced on special projects, and everything in between. He threw in some Avengers stuff, but it was mostly the non-classified cases that had also been all over the news.

He poked at the food, then tried a bite and found it amazing.

He dared to glance at the woman sitting across from them and she was listening to Peter, smiling, a warm expression in her eyes. Wade swallowed as that warmth met his own gaze, never faltering.

"I'm so glad you're doing so well," she said, her eyes lingering a little longer on Wade. "You earned it, Peter. You worked so hard and I couldn't help you the way I wanted…"

Peter shook his head. "No, Aunt May. It's okay. I never asked for it. And like you said, it all worked out. In several ways."

She smiled, that warm expression embracing Wade as well. He wondered where the need to hug her suddenly came from.

Peter and his aunt continued to talk, somehow managing to include Wade into the conversation, even though he didn't say a single word, just nodded once or twice. He ate quietly, enjoying the home cooked meal, and his eyes lit up when May exchanged the pot roast for apple pie with
whipped cream and vanilla ice cream.

Heaven.

Absolute heaven.

Peter grinned a little as he watched him devour two slices of apple pie.

"You two share the same healthy appetite," May remarked, humor clear in her voice. "Advanced metabolism?" she asked, addressing Wade.

He shrugged around the mouthful of pie and gave an affirmative grunt.

"He's a bottomless well, but usually for Mexican," Peter elaborated.

Wade glowered, chewing.

"But he eats just about anything else, too."

The glower intensified.

"I'll see if I can find a recipe," May only remarked.

He froze.

That… was a clear invitation for another visit if there had ever been one.


His mind was a whirlpool of conflicting emotions and thoughts.

She packed them all the leftovers into a bag, which had Peter protest, but May wouldn't have it.

Wade just thanked her politely.

She still didn't seem to be bothered by his scars. The merc wondered if she had some kind of superpower that let her ignore the way her adopted son's mate looked, how hideous that person was, and what he truly did… and had done… as a job.

Because May Parker knew. She was following Deadpool and Spider-Man, and Peter had been quite open concerning Wade's occupational hazards and all.

She caught him on his own as Wade walked into the living room after a quick pit stop. For a second he almost panicked that Peter was gone, then May Parker had his complete attention, and something inside of him tensed, ready to fight.

"Wade."

Her voice was calm, soft, but also with a core of steel that spoke of a past filled with struggle and survival. The chimera reacted to it, tilting its head, intrigued.

"Peter has gone upstairs to pick something up from his room," she told him without Wade asking where his partner was. "He'll be back in a moment. Please sit."
And he did.

Like following an order.

"I know that coming here, to meet with me and have a family dinner, was a big step."

*Family… dinner…* echoed through his mind.

"I told Peter that I'd never pressure you into any kind of get-together. I'm very much aware of your past, though Peter hasn't been very talkative. I pieced it together from internet searches after I discovered your relationship."

"Huh," he murmured. "Not the best place to get some solid intel."

May smiled. "I'm versed enough to ignore the lies and propaganda. Believe me, since I realized Peter was Spider-Man, I've become a true pro at that."

Wade had to chuckle at that.

"He loves you."

The smile died on his lips and his eyes flew up to meet May's. She nodded, still smiling.

"Head over heels, I'd say. But not in a teenage way. It's a dedication I've never seen before, but I suspect he hasn't felt anything like he did for you either. The bond didn't come unexpectedly out of the blue. It formed slowly."

Wade felt a new kind of tension and bit back on the emotional surge.

"To find that special someone who you trust enough to bond with, that's something to treasure," she told him, voice wistful. "I read so many romance novels with bonding and mates, I might be a little skewed, but I know one thing: a bond cannot be faked. What you and Peter have is real. It's based on your complete trust in him and his acceptance of you, Wade. He loves you and you must love him to allow him to connect to you on such a deep and intimate level. That's all I need to know."

Wade wanted to make a rude comment on the intimate part, or the connecting, but he held back. He was being good today. He knew how to be polite and how to behave.

Especially around aunts.

"Thank you," he only said. "I mean it."

"I know."

She didn't try to take his hand or touch him otherwise. Wade was grateful for it. He had no idea what he would do if she touched him in a motherly or auntly fashion. Bawl like a little kid, bolt from the house, shoot out the cupboard or just kiss her soundly on the lips for being such a magnificent woman.

"I don't judge people on what the news spread about them. I make up my own mind. You're family now, Wade. That's what I want you to know."

Okay, bawling time soon. Very soon.

That lump in his throat was worse than getting said throat slashed.
"I… thanks," he managed, voice rough.

"Call some time." May's lips twitched a little. "Peter says you like to talk a lot. After today I would doubt him, but if you ever feel like it, my number is in Peter's phone."

"Uh, thank you, Ma'… May."

She smiled at him, expression soft and warm.

"Take care of Peter. I know you would without me asking it, but he's like my own son. I love him. Like you love him. Very much. What he does as Spider-Man is dangerous, but it is what he wants to do."

"I won't let anyone hurt him if I can help it," Wade promised, voice serious, level. "I'll be there for him. Always."

She looked into his eyes, her face reflecting no disgust. He could see that she believed him.

May held out a hand.

Wade hesitated, then stretched out his own and she took the scarred appendage in a firm grip.

"May I hug you?" she asked.

Wade was stunned, but he found himself nodding, and then then he had the smaller woman hug him firmly. It was a very brief hug, but it launched something inside him Wade Wilson hadn't felt in a very long time.

Aside from Peter, no one had ever been this intimate in their affections.

"Take care. Both of you," May said and stepped back, smiling softly.

Deadpool was uncharacteristically silent on the ride back home. Dopinder was listening to the radio, humming along to some songs, but he didn't try to engage his passengers in conversation.

Peter didn't either.

Wade had the mask on, the hoodie over his head, and he was gazing out the window.

Not talking.

"She told me I can call her whenever I need to talk."

It had been half an hour since they had arrived home. Peter had switched on the TV, finding an old rerun of his favorite crime show, and Wade had joined him on the couch. He lay with his head against Peter's upper arm, eyes far away, lips pursed like in deep thought.

"Aunt May?"
"Yeah."

"Okay."

It got him an incredulous look. "She offered that to me," he repeated. "I can call her. To talk, baby boy!"

"And?"

Wade opened his mouth, then closed it again.

"You're my bonded, my partner, my mate," Peter told him. "She likes you. You make me happy. She invited you to dinner. Why wouldn't she want to talk to you?"

"Because?"

"Doesn't work on Aunt May. She's immune to 'because'. You're family, Wade. Get used to it."

It got him a soft grunt.

"And thanks," Peter added softly after a minute.

"Huh?"

"For coming along. She was happy to finally meet you."

Wade was silent again.

"She… didn't ask. I thought she would. They either ask or judge, talk about it like they know everything about me. She didn't. Now I know where you go that from," came the quiet mumbling after a while.

"Not everyone's a judgmental, bigoted bastard."

"Just most of them."

Peter rested his cheek against the bald head. Wade made a happy little noise and he closed his eyes.

"I like her."

Peter chuckled. "The feeling's mutual. There are also no strings attached. May doesn't expect you to come every Sunday or spend Easter and Christmas. If you want to tell her who you are, that's up to you."

"She asked you," he stated.

"And I said it's your story to tell. To her, the scars are burns and they are your past. Part of you. If you never want to tell her, she won't prod."

Deadpool sat up and looked at him, expression unreadable. Finally he shook his head.

"Your aunt's just as much fluff and rainbows as you are, Peteybabe. Must be running in the family. You Parkers are way too good for this world. She'd be a great Alfred or Robin for your Spideyman."

Peter didn't even try to decipher that.
tbc...
Chapter 30

Peter woke to the smell of freshly brewed coffee, pancakes and bacon.

He just lay in bed, blinking, the sun already streaming through the windows, and one look on the clock on the nightstand told him he had overslept by several hours.

Well, damn.

Last night had been a flurry of fighting, running, chasing and generally beating the crap out of some overgrown rodents that had come out of the sewers and had started to chew up cars. People had been spared, though they had become collateral due to the fact that the sewer rats hadn't discriminated between cars and whoever sat in them.

Bruised, battered, costume shredded, bleeding from too many scratches and bites to count, Spider-Man had finally managed to snag the leader and when he had had it, the rest had followed.

Right into one huge containment area set up by SHIELD.

Thanks but no thanks battling the things, Peter thought, still miffed that they hadn't shown up until the last moment.

Hill hadn't even given him an explanation for their tardiness. Probably Avenger related, since they hadn't been around either.

Moving, Peter suppressed a wince as he got up. One look into the mirror told the whole story, and it wasn't a pretty one.

Yeah, he had looked better.

One side of his face was a massive bruise, there was more of that going on along his ribs, and he had had to wrap one knee and one wrist because he had either pulled something, torn it off, or maybe even fractured something. Last night, Peter had been too wasted to care.

The gurgle from a coffee machine had him rearrange his thoughts.

Coffee. Breakfast. Someone had made breakfast.

Wade. Deadpool.

He was back.

Peter smile to himself.

Deadpool had taken on a job in some obscure African country, which had been two days after dinner at May's. One didn't relate to the other. It only meant he had been gone for close to three weeks, sending Peter regular updates that sounded like a travel blog, including pictures of whatever caught his attention. That meant anything from touristy stuff to food to rocks on the side of the road that he had found fascinating. Both the rocks and the roads.

"Hey, baby boy!" Wade brightly greeted him in the kitchen, though it was clear to see that the cheerfulness was only a flimsy mask.

He was wearing an apron that proclaimed he was the World's Bestest. No explanation what he was
the bestest at. And yes, it said 'bestest'. It was a black and red color scheme that looked suspiciously like the Deadpool insignia.

"Hey. Welcome home. Didn't even hear you"

"Snuck in the wee hours of morning. Saw you out like a light. Didn't want to interrupt the beauty sleep you so badly needed. Rough night?"

Wade was struggling to keep the scowl off his face, but he did show worry.

"Kinda."

Peter slowly lowered himself onto a bar stool, resting his elbows on the kitchen island. He yawned then winced a little.

"You look like roadkill," Wade stated casually, plonking coffee in front of him with a flourish. His eyes ran over the visible bruises like scanning for more.

"Feels worse."

"Could be worse," was the serious addition. "You made the news. Looking pretty, I tell you. Missing only your fantastic side-kick Deadpool." He struck a pose with the spatula. "But blood and gore was a turn-off for first place."

"I know. Wasn't my bestest fight," he teased, nodding at the apron.

"I'll get you a t-shirt."

Peter sipped at the black brew. It was amazing and definitely not the usual stuff. He raised an eyebrow at his partner. And ouch, that hurt, too.

Wade grabbed a bag of coffee beans and plopped it next to Peter's mug. "Had some of it in a roadside gas station. Had to buy it. There's more where that came from."

"Dark Magic," Peter read, not even asking just how many coffee bags Wade had bought. "Huh. Hope it does the trick."

"Oh, it does. Keeps you going and going, though I'd say right now, you need to keep healing and healing."

"Hey, it's magic. It might do that, too. And weren't you in Africa? This says Vermont."

Wade smirked and heaped food onto a plate, then planted a candle atop the stack of pancakes.

"Uh?" Peter managed, looking kind of dumbly at the candle.

"Happy birthday?"

Oh. Right.

His birthday.

He hadn't celebrated it ever since Uncle Ben's death. Not his sixteenth. Not his eighteenth. Not the twenty-first or anyone after that. Deadpool hadn't given him anything last year, respecting Peter's wishes.
"I know it's not your thing and all, but it's not just that. I mean, it is. It's just.. Happy anniversary?"

Peter blinked, then a slow smile crept over his lips. That didn't hurt all too much.

Right.

Two years ago, a few hours before his twenty-third birthday, he had revealed his identity, his face, all of it, to Deadpool, giving him the ultimate in trust.

It was kind of an anniversary.

Not when they had met the first time. Not when they had accepted the bond. Not when they had slept together.

No, it was the day he had showed Deadpool his face.

"Happy anniversary," he replied softly. "I didn't get you anything."

Wade's expression was a million emotions mixed with a million thoughts. The dark eyes reflected them all, just like it reflected the night terror within.

"Got all I want," was the honest reply.

"You're a sap, Wade Wilson."

"You should know, Peter Parker."

Yeah, it was sappy. It gave him this warm, gooey feeling deep inside that nothing had ever managed before.

Even after two years.

"Missed work," Peter broke the silence.

"Oh, forgot. The Deadpool answering machine is broken." He shrugged. "Recording went missing. Screwed up in there." He gestured at his head. "Your boss called. Said to sleep it off and take sick days or whatever else it says in your freelance contract. Apparently the Avengers stumbled back into town last night and got an eyeful of the vermin problem."

"Huh. Okay. Still have work." He smiled.

"They would be idiots to fire you over being a hero," the other man muttered.

Breakfast was wonderful.

The kiss tasted of syrup and bacon. Wade didn't push forward, just slid a careful hand over his battered ribs and cheek, as if he was checking for worse damage.

"It's okay, Wade," Peter reassured him.
"It's not. I wasn't there."

"I'm a big boy. I can take care of myself. I have before you came into my life and I can still do it now."

Wade scowled.

Peter knew his healing would take care of it and he would be fine soon, but right now even the thought of anything more strenuous than being a couch potato had him cringe.

"I know you're a big boy. Everywhere it counts," he added with a grin.

"You just want to kick the ass of the rodent that bit me?"

Wade snorted. Peter felt a shiver along the bond. Up until now the chimera had been almost docile.

"I just want to kick some ass. That's all."

"Next time."

"Now would be nice."

"Down, boy."

Wade kept running his palms over the places where Spider-Man had taken the most damage. He rested one hand flat against Peter's ribcage, the warmth seeping through the thin layer of the sleep shirt. He leaned forward and kissed the bruised cheek.

"What do you want to do for our anniversary?" he finally asked. "Aside from the obvious, which is off the table unless you're into pain. Which you are not."

"Which I'm not," he confirmed. "Usually I go web-slinging on my birthday, which is off limits, too, unless there's an emergency. So... no idea?"

"Sit on the Brooklyn Bridge and watch people move far underneath us? Have a blast at IKEA? Take a few bus tours around the city just for the laughs and giggles?"

Peter raised his eyebrows again, chewing on the pancakes. Which were delicious and heavenly as always.

"You. Want to take a bus ride. Or weather IKEA," he stated.

It got him a careless shrug.

"Right." Peter shook his head. "No," he decided.

His partner looked almost relieved.

"How about we just stay here, watch TV, play video games, eat our body weight in food?" Peter suggested.

"You make it sound so romantic."

"You just got back from who-knows-where. I spent last night kicking hairy rodent ass. I want to have some personal time with my bonded."
The chimera seemed to surge forward over the bond, no longer held in check, and Peter smiled at the tiny little wave of emotional energy.

So that's what they did.

Noting special, but still special to them.

Peter gave his body time to recuperate and Wade told him about his trip without getting into too much detail about stuff Peter rather didn't want to know about.

*

May Parker was honestly surprised when she found Peter's bonded mate on her doorstep, looking nervous and slightly apprehensive. For a man who had been in Special Forces, who couldn't be killed, who was deadly with any kind of weapon, he appeared more like a little boy than any of that to her.

"Wade," she greeted him. "What a surprise."

It had been three months since she had first met the man and they had talked on the phone once or twice, but Wade hadn't come along when Peter visited her. She didn't hold it against him. May had given him an open invitation to come by whenever he felt he wanted, not when he had to because of a birthday or the holidays.

"Bad surprise?" Wade immediately asked, slightly apprehensive.

"No, not at all."

"If it's a bad time…?"

"Actually, I just tried out my friend Rose's new pie recipe. I could use a test eater."

He gave her a bright smile. "I'm good at eating. I like eating."

She laughed. "Then come in."

Wade followed her into the kitchen and made appreciative noises when she handed him a large slice of the mixed berry pie.

"Wow," he breathed, mouth full. "Tell your friend Rose it's amazing. Or is this your version of it? Then you are amazing, Aunt May! Scratch that. You're amazing with and without the pie."

She smiled. The enthusiasm was real, as was the appreciation. Just looking into those bright eyes, May knew Wade was happy with the pie and her invitation to try it. She had no idea why he had dropped by the neighborhood, without Peter on top of that, but there had to be a reason and she probably would find out soon enough.

And May was right.
Wade ate a second slice, then declined a third, patting his toned stomach.

"I can eat a lot, but I don't have Petey's metabolism. He can eat his body weight in tacos if he has to."

"Yes, I noticed his appetite when he was a teenager. It grew exponentially over night. I always thought it was because he was a growing boy. Now, knowing what I do, I think it was his mutation."

May refilled the coffee cup Wade had already emptied. She gave him a searching look. He played with the mug, then finally sighed.

"I appreciate… that you accepted me," Wade finally said, voice soft, eyes on the table. "It's not… something I expected. I never thought Peter would react the way he did, but he wanted this…” He gestured at himself. "He is one of few. And he knows what happened to make me look like this."

He looked at May, who kept her silence.

"You never asked about it."

"I believe that when you're ready, if you ever feel safe enough, you would tell me," she replied gently. "Peter said your injuries resemble burns. I'm a nurse. I can tell it's not just that, but it's not my place to pry."

"You're Peter's mother."

"I'm his aunt."

"You raised him. He's your son, May. You care for him, protect him, want what's best. I'm sure you didn't imagine this."

"I didn't imagine a lot of things Peter did and that have happened to him, Wade. And you're not a 'this'. You're a very caring, very nice person."

"Uh… you do know who I am?"

She twitched a smile. "Yes. You are Deadpool. I know your resume."

He blinked. "And you think I'm best for Peter?"

"He bonded to you. You two fit. You are compatible. That isn't something that happens lightly or by chance. It's a connection formed because you… match. Like kindred spirits. Nothing matters but the match."

He nodded mutely.

"And he loves you. I can see it. I've seen that boy fall for boys and girls both. He liked Gwen a lot and he was devastated when she died. You… he's different with you."

"Oh," Wade said quietly.

"I wouldn't be this calm and accepting if you were anyone else. You are older than Peter, you have a very dangerous occupation. You killed people for money," she stated matter-of-fact.

"Not any more?" he tried, sounding rather meek.
May knew this man was a cold-blooded killer, had taken countless lives and had been hired to do so much more. The media said he had no conscience. Looking at him now, taking in the tension and the out-of-his-depth look, she couldn't reconcile that with the man who had dropped by.

Wade Wilson was Deadpool, but he was also so much more. She understood he had been through a lot and had suffered terribly, but she had yet to hear the full story.

"Peter told me he tried to help you change, that you wanted the change. I appreciate the gesture." May nodded. "I also realize that your preternatural nature is both the protector and the killer."

"Yeah, well, it's been kinda... warped?" He shrugged. "You can see it on the outside already. Doesn't look any better inside. Since you follow all the fun reports about me and Spidey, you know they call me unstable and insane. Can't argue with the instability. Off kilter, really."

"You have a bonded mate for that now. Peter is your anchor and will keep you from going off too deeply."

Wade blinked. "Uh, yeah."

"And physical appearance is secondary, Wade. It's the soul that counts."

"Mine was destroyed," he murmured.

May tilted her head, intrigued. "A soul cannot be destroyed."

"Just... taken apart and spliced with all kinds of nasty stuff. I'm one big puzzle of bad and worse, not to mention ugly. Not pretty."

She looked into his eyes and Wade bit his lower lip, teeth scraping over scars. He was clearly running an intense inner debate. His hands were clenched into fists and the tension was almost palpable.

And then he started to talk. To explain. Open up about his past, his illness. The terminal cancer.

And his choice to undergo a treatment that had promised him a possible cure, but which had been torture, turning him into what he was today, and that had destroyed all that had been Wade Wilson.

It had destroyed the hellhound.

May curled the fingers of one hand around his as he told her about losing Vanessa Carlysle. She felt sick at the thought of bonding a preternatural of the hellhound's nature and then killing the handler in front of him.

Wade continued, told her about taking revenge, feeling soulless and empty, the darkness inside him growing more and more. How he would kind of phase out, just let go and kill an opponent with no regard to collateral damage. Those were the worst moments, coming back and finding bodies littering the ground, his suit covered in blood, and the chimera still raging inside and wanting more.

And then he met Spider-Man.

His eyes brightened and the smile was warm and gentle.

This was the man her adopted son loved. This was a preternatural bonded to her Peter, who would protect him with his immortal life. May didn't care about the age difference. Maybe he was older
than Peter, but it didn't matter in their lives.

“So he will share your life?” she asked when he winded up his explanation.

Wade understood what she was asking. She could see it in his shifting expression.

“We… think so?” he hedged softly.

May nodded. “Good.”

“Uh, what?”

“You won’t be alone. Ever again. Neither will Peter. I'm so glad.”

Wade wanted to cry. He really did. It wasn’t exactly the most manly, bad-ass thing to do, but this woman had him want to open the flood gates.

"No," he whispered. "I won't. Neither will he. I promise, on my life and my honor, I won't let anything happen to Peter. It's my oath."

She cupped his cheek in a motherly fashion and Wade felt his eyes mist a little. "I know. Thank you, Wade. So very much."

Then she hugged him.

And he hugged her back.

If there were tears, neither mentioned them.

tbc...
Some people shouldn't be allowed to play with alien artefacts. Especially those who found them in some obscure shop that usually only carried fake products.

The tiny shop was frequented by a lot of teenagers, mostly those who giggled and pointed at specific sculptures or bought mystical figurines. Some had a penchant for crystals, others for amulets, the next for rings or cups or books or cards.

One of the buyers was a man in his twenties, purchasing what looked like a broad blade made for cosplays or fantasy games, or just as a decorative item.

It was real, though.

Left over from one of the many incidents that seemed to be centered on New York only and brought on the Avengers to fight off alien things.

It took the buyer less than a month to make a reappearance.

This time clad in an armor that seemed to grow and move as he walked, the sword now part of his right hand. Fused together. Armor plates shifting like a living thing.

And he wreaked havoc.

*

It was a sight Tony Stark could have done without for the rest of his life.

Spider-Man, covered in more blood than a human body could possibly hold, the suit torn apart in so many places, it only stuck to him because of the blood. Deep slash marks covered the lean form, forming a net of lacerations.

Jarvis informed him of oh-so-many things that were absolutely wrong, from blood pressure to heartbeat and respiration, to the very fact that most of Spider-Man's blood was outside his body.

His broken body.

Hulk landed beside the fatally wounded man, eyes roaming over him, then he picked him up.

"Get him to the Tower!" Iron Man ordered sharply. "Jarvis, I want the medical team ready!"

"Already on it, sir."
It had been over two years since Peter Parker had bonded to Wade Wilson and nothing of the like had ever happened before. He had teamed with Iron Man, Captain America and the other Avengers from time to time, but he usually worked solo.

Where the Avengers protected the whole world, Spider-Man tried to stick to his home town of New York City, patrolling and helping out with everyday crime. Deadpool tagged along, though he did take on mercenary jobs all over the world when he felt like he needed a change of gear.

Both men were an amazing team, fascinating to watch in a fight, and Tony had to confess that they worked well together. There was a silent understanding between the bonded couple that surpassed everything he had ever thought possible. It wasn't telepathy, but an awareness of the other, where they were, what was happening, that spoke of their trust in each other and the closeness they shared.

Iron Man arrived the same moment the Hulk deposited the limp form on the readied stretcher, but it didn't take a medical scanner to realize that they were too late.

Tony breathed a curse as the helmet retracted.

"I'm sorry, sir," Jarvis said, sounding truly apologetic and close to empathetic. "Mr. Parker lost too much blood."

Hulk roared in fury, hands covered in Peter's blood. It was only because Bruce had been working so hard on controlling his alter ego that the green giant wasn't already tearing into the walls or throwing furniture around.

"Get him to the medical ward," Tony ordered, already shedding the armor. "Bruce, you're needed!"

There was a huff behind him, a mixture of anger and annoyance. When Tony looked over his shoulder he found Bruce, clutching the too wide pants, looking a little shell-shocked.

This had been the Avengers' biggest nightmare.

The death of Spider-Man.

Because no one could tell what the chimera would do.

No one still could.

Deadpool hadn't been there. The Avengers had been.

The guy with the alien armor that seemed to be alive and very much in control of the human inside had popped up without prior warning. He had blown up two businesses, a bank, then proceeded to invade the university campus.

Spider-Man had been the first on the scene, out on patrol and closest to the campus. Iron Man and Captain America had arrived maybe thirty minutes into the fight, the Hulk on their heels.

Spider-Man had already been injured by then, cornered and clearly outmatched by the alien armor and the superior firepower, when the final blow had been dealt.

Tony knew he had yelled Peter's name.
After that it had been an all-out battle to contain the threat and get the body of their ally and friend away to the Tower.

It had been the Hulk who had finally tipped the scales in their favor, and SHIELD had done the rest, but Tony couldn't care less.

Peter was their priority.

So now Spider-Man was in the medical ward at Avengers Tower, his wounds cleaned and closed. Bruce had done his best, even if it looked like he was treating a corpse, and he had roped Natasha into helping him. She hadn't looked too disgusted and her knowledge concerning injuries – whether she caused them or had to treat them on someone – had been helpful. Wires attached to Peter's head and chest to keep track of possible changes.

Right now there was a flat line.

He was wrapped in bandages, hiding the horrific cuts and gaping wounds. The costume had been a total loss and they had peeled it off the cooling skin, wiping away blood as they did it. His skin was ashen, his usually so vibrant eyes closed.

He was dead.

Truly dead.

Where Deadpool would still be conscious and complaining about missing limbs or holes in his body, Peter had truly died and he hadn't shown a single sign of healing.

"Jarvis?" Tony asked, voice emotionless. "Update."

"No change," the AI responded. "Mr. Parker isn't simply unconscious at the moment; he is, by all means, dead."

Tony expelled a breath. "It's been an hour," he murmured.

"Mr. Parker isn't the chimera, sir," Jarvis reminded him. "He is simply bonded to one, so jumpstarting his regenerative powers might take another course than Mr. Wilson's."

They all knew that and Tony prayed that Peter did heal this devastating injury. The man had lost most of his blood, had had major organ damage and the broken bones were almost secondary to that.

"Fingers crossed," he breathed.

"I don't have fingers, sir," Jarvis replied.

Tony twitched a little smile. "Keep monitoring."

"Of course. What else would I do?"
No one knew how Deadpool had made it into the Tower, past all security, and into the medical ward.

But here he was, ninety minutes after Peter had been brought in.

Sitting next to Peter's bed, hunched over, eyes on the unmoving body. And he was in full gear, katanas on his back, armed to the teeth. Jarvis had informed Tony of the amount of weaponry on the man and Tony had simply sighed, hoping any confrontation would be just a verbal one.

Working together in the past years had given all of the Avengers a better insight into who the mercenary was underneath the brash and rude exterior, the big mouth and the even bigger guns. It had been confusing, revealing and kind of surprising to get to know the man little by little, especially when he was around Peter, who seemed to be able to balance the wildly fluctuating personality with a touch or a soft word.

That was what the anchor was all about.

And it went both ways.

Now the man was here and Steve had shaken his head when Tony had wanted to waltz in.

"How does he get in here? Again and again!" the billionaire hissed. "I have the best security system in the world!"

"And he is a preternatural of unknown abilities whose bonded mate is currently dead in our medical ward," Steve stated evenly. "It's not the first time he has come in here and it won't be the last."

"He also hasn't killed anyone while getting here," Natasha added coolly, sounding almost impressed. "Not even missing limb, though we might find someone with a little bruise. At least a bruised ego that he made it past them."

Tony shot her a glare, then his eyes were on the unmoving figure. His expression softened a little.

"Yeah, at least he didn't leave a pile of bodies in his wake."

Steve twitched a smile. "Peter's good influence, I suppose."

"Probably," Tony amended.

"Definitely," Natasha agreed. "Deadpool isn't the most stable of people and going over the top is just his thing. Any scenario I ran in my head with Spider-Man's death as the starting point ended up in carnage and a lot of bloodshed. He has control over his emotions, Tony. This, in there," she nodded at the mercenary, "is a man in complete control. I wouldn't poke him with a long stick, because that might just break the façade, but whether we like it or not, he has come a long way."

Tony grunted. He had to agree to that. "And still no sign of life."

"You think he won't recover?" Steve wanted to know, sounding neutral.

"Oh please, don't say that!" he groaned. "If we are all absolutely wrong about this, Deadpool will flip. Completely. I doubt there is anyone anywhere who can stop whatever happens then. The man's a nightmare and indestructible."
Natasha crossed her arms in front of her chest, lips a thin line. No one wanted to think of what Deadpool might do, might even turn into, if Peter didn't come back. The chimera had had only one shot at bonding, and this man, Peter Parker, was it. His death might start a catastrophe.

Steve clapped a hand on his shoulder and squeezed it gently. "He'll pull through."

"I'd take a heartbeat and brain activity right now. Anything but a flat line."

Neither man wanted to speculate what a chimera with a broken bond would do. Bruce had told them over and over again that the bond couldn't break through death, that he was convinced the chimera would pull its mate back from the brink, but today was… no longer theory. It was reality; it had happened.

"Jarvis, keep an eye on them. Both of them. I want to know about every little change."

"Of course, sir."

Natasha just walked away after another look.

"Nothing we can do," Steve only said. "Let it happen naturally."

"We'll in all kinds of natural shit if nothing happens," Tony said evenly. "I'm not placing any bets."

"Peter will be fine."

Tony kept his fingers crossed.

tbc...
Deadpool was an unmoving rock at Spider-Man's side, radiating danger, creeping out everyone. He was absolutely silent, barely twitched a muscle, but his eyes seem to glow silver behind the mask.

It was a bright, unearthly light, unlike anything seen before.

A low but inaudible rumble seemed to surround him, like a distant thunder that couldn't be heard, only felt, and those close by cringed away from what they sensed radiating off the still figure.

Danger.

Absolute danger. Deadly, swift, merciless.

The primitive part of the brain was shouting at everyone to just run, not look back, and hide in a very deep hole. Instinct took over, raised the stress level, had the muscles tighten in response, and the heartbeat thundering.

No, no one wanted to be around the chimera right now.

And he was silent.

A silent Deadpool was a dangerous Deadpool. He was extremely bad news.

It was an unusual occurrence on a good day, but right now was as far from good as it could get.

No one walked into the room; at all.

The chimera sat right behind those glowing eyes, a thin, human barrier between the world and the nightmare it represented, all tense lines and sharp curves. It had come all out, insubstantial wings no longer just a figment behind it. They were flaring behind the nightmarish body, impossibly huge and razor sharp. Talons that could slice apart anything they touched clicked together.

And they held onto the soul of its mate with a gentleness that was the opposite of its true nature.

All its senses were trained on its partner.

Glacially white eyes regarded the other end of the bond, no barrier left between it and Peter, the night terror firmly anchored in both souls.

With the barriers completely gone, the energy roamed between the two men, unchecked, but
controlled and with a purpose. It was something that could destroy another soul with a flick of its surreal tongue, but it only caressed and enfolded its mate's core with infinite softness.

There wasn't a psychic preternatural close by, thankfully. They would have seen the full form of the seemingly malicious monster, would have felt the power, and it might just overwhelm an untrained preter of that ability.

But even humans could sense the energies, the razor-sharp presence, and the primal hindbrain was clamoring to run and hide from the apex predator.

Jarvis monitored them ceaselessly, untouched by the raging psychic waves.

Peter knew he had died, but then again, he wasn't dead.

Not that he knew what death felt like.

It was more of a certainty, an absolute fact in his mind that while he wasn't alive, he also wasn't dead. His mind was grappling with the paradox, but deep inside there was nothing but calmness, seeping into his very being.

He wasn't physical. Not really. He didn't have hands or feet, or even eyes to blink with, but he still felt like his old self.

Something whispered through the nothingness he seemed to float in.

Around him the world came into focus, taking on shape, growing darker, but still he could see like he would in normal light. This was just... the absence of light. He didn't need light to see.

He was inside the vortex.

And around him, something moved like a huge, lithe thing, whispering, sliding closer, the sound of skin-scale-fur-flesh. Surreal, never a true shape, but still so very much there. It was more than physical. It was so much more than anything a human mind could grasp.

Peter felt the touch, like a caress, then a grasp.

Holding him.

Keeping him anchored as he watched the inky blackness curiously.

The chimera was everywhere, wings infinite and never really there, the mass of its form endless. Silver eyes blinked out of the vortex, then a maw filled with razor-sharp teeth opened. It looked like a creature right out of the worst horror movie, and then some. Nothing could get the terror of the chimera on screen or paper. It was without a clear shape, but whoever met it without barrier could feel the horror.

Not Peter.
He felt no fear, just endless fascination. He felt it along the bond, strong and relentless, all death, destruction and blood hunger. He reached out, without real hands, and touched the presence, drawing a pleased rumble that ended in a crackling purr. He felt the coiled energies, hidden underneath a deceptively thin barrier, the very life it contained. It was a life born out of infinity; endless.

Talons slid over his form, caressing Peter, and he leaned into the touch, feeling the energy seep into him. The chimera came closer, the illusion of its shape falling like a silky veil, leaving him exposed to the true nature and yet it wasn't exposure at all.

Fierce protectiveness radiated from the preternatural as it enveloped him in an intimate embrace, hugging him, nuzzling against Peter's soul like an overgrown puppy.

He wrapped his arms around it, feeling safe, content and warm.

The chimera hummed, possessive and needy in one.

The predator almost purred. Like a kitten it seemed to curl up, wanted Peter close.

Peter was accepted. Peter belonged to it.

And it was Peter's.

*

In the private room, Deadpool felt the pulse of life, even if there was none for a machine to register.

Peter was alive, but the body needed a moment longer to jumpstart.

He could feel it.

The chimera knew it with an unshakable certainty.

A rumble passed through the vortex and it leaned forward, nosing at the silent anchor, then slid around the calm center of its mate, purring softly.

The claws dug deeper.

There was a twitch and it hummed, pleased.

Deadpool wanted to touch the lax hand, run explorative fingers over the sharp features. He wanted to feel the depth of the bruises on the ashen skin. He wanted to soothe the pain.

Something called out to him.

Something strong.

A million and one emotions crashed down on him and he fought through the wave, never showing a single twitch.

Then there was a tremor along the bond.
A whisper of a breath.

It writhed around him, enveloped him.

And the heart started to beat.

Deadpool breathed out a sigh of relief, fingers sliding over the soft skin of the pulse point, counting.

The apex predator in him growled softly, his fingers curling around the slender wrist in an almost possessive move.

His.

If someone had been there to see his smile, even visible through the mask, dark and possessive and feral, they would have backed away very slowly.

As it was, only cameras watched. And Jarvis.

*

All the way out in Westchester, Charles Xavier blinked, feeling a flare in psychic energy of a magnitude he had never sensed before. It was a powerful surge, barely a second, but it rushed across the mind planes and left scourge marks in its wake.

Xavier closed his eyes for a moment.

He felt the presence, solid, an absolute fact, a heavy vortex of psychic power that, while not drawing anyone toward it, could so easily hurt psychically talented preternaturals. But all that power was aimed only one way: its mate. The tightly coiled energy was flowing toward another soul, only meant for that one person, and Xavier could only marvel at it.

The chimera had nearly gone past its human shell. It had moved out of the darkness, into the light, the vortex barely holding it, and it had been a terrifying surge.

To pull its mate back from death.

So it had happened, he thought. Peter had died and the chimera hadn't let go.

It proved that their suspicions had been absolutely right.

And that the powerful preternatural was bordering to something else, to something terrible that, unleashed, couldn't be contained any more.

The professor exhaled slowly.

As much as he wanted to talk to both men about what had happened, he knew he wouldn't be welcome. Deadpool had made it abundantly clear that he didn't welcome anyone.

And Xavier honored his promise.

No matter how curious he was.
Peter came back to life with barely a gasp. From one moment to the next the machines attached to him started to register brain and heart activity.

Jarvis monitored him as organs formed and skin knit together, his heart beating strong and regularly, as bones straightened and clicked into place. There was no difference to how Deadpool healed, just with a time delay. Where Deadpool started to close gaping wounds right away and breaks disappeared quickly, Peter had taken a little to get the hang of it, it seemed.

Bruce was watching the medical read-outs with eagle eyes, shaking his head a little.


"You think it happened because Deadpool was close by?" Tony asked, eyes skimming over the medical data that was a little outside his field of expertise.

"I can't be sure, but I doubt it," Bruce answered, straightening. "Distance has no influence on the bond. Either Peter needs longer because he isn't the chimera, just sharing his soul with the preternatural mutation of the hellhound, or it's because this was the first time. I'd have to go through Wilson's file to compare his first regeneration to this one."

When Peter opened his eyes it was to the sight of Deadpool hovering over him. A wide smile reflected through the mask and the white eyes seemed to glow with an inner fire.

"Welcome, baby boy! You made it through your first death! Congrats are in order! How was the trip? Did you get to meet Lady Death? She's gonna be so pissed that you share my abilities to evade her lovely arms."

"Wade," he murmured, voice rough and dry. His mouth felt like a sandbox.

Gloved fingers brushed over his cheek. Peter smiled at the gesture, felt the bond twang with worry and fear, sensed the chimera hovering over him with a raw protectiveness it rarely displayed so openly.

Peter was hyper-aware of his partner and mate. It was like a conduit of energy was suddenly open between them, heat and fire and something even stronger coursing through him.

Deadpool seemed like a looming wall of darkness in the middle of this turmoil, ready to strike -- and still not dangerous.

To him. Not dangerous to him.

More like… intensely protective.
Deadpool's thumb kept up the gently slide over his cheek and the mercenary leaned closer.

"You took your time," he whispered, then rested his forehead briefly against Peter's. "Too long."

"Had no say in it," he replied just as softly.

His body felt like a live wire, energy coursing through him, thrumming through his mind, making him want, need, hunger. It wasn't the boiling mass of darkness that was the chimera, but it was equally powerful and it was what kept the preternatural so balanced.

"The first time is normally the quickest." The quip sounded almost forced.

His voice still sounded completely off. Too rough, like it should hurt with every syllable, like he was chewing glass and spitting nails.

Peter raised a hand, feeling no broken bones grating, no pain at all. He curled his fingers around Wade's wrist, felt the anchor take effect.

"All still attached?" he asked in a low voice.

"Yeah. All. I checked." Deadpool smiled a little. "You look just perfect, baby boy." The last was said in an almost-whisper. "Perfect."

"I'm at the Avengers'?"

"Yes."

"Have you killed anyone yet?"

"No, Deadpool has been a good boy."

Peter raised an eyebrow. He didn't feel like he had been gravely injured and died. Well, not just killed, eviscerated. Three quarters of his blood all over the ground. It was more like waking from a deep sleep after pulling forty-eight hours of studying with little sleep, too much coffee and some crime-fighting on the side.

Yes, Peter knew what that felt like. It had happened to him all too often in the past.

"Really," Deadpool insisted, sounding mock outraged. "My new motto in life: Be polite. Be courteous. Show professionalism. And have a plan to kill everyone in the room."

Peter had to laugh. "I'll remind you of the first two parts next time you're running your mouth off again."

"You do that," as the fond reply. "I might just get it printed. Make a motivational poster out of it. With a cat. Cats are the hype!"

"Can we leave?" the younger man changed the topic abruptly.

The chimera chuckled. "Let them try to stop us."

"Deadpool," came the warning.

Deadpool gave his mate the most innocent of looks.

Peter could feel the presence of the chimera, though muted, like it was under absolutely airtight
control, not in danger of losing itself in violence and rage, and it had him breathe a little easier.

"Mr. Parker. Mr. Wilson."

Jarvis' voice was a jarring intrusion into the intimacy between them and Deadpool growled softly, almost animalistic, and there was a flash of silver behind the masked eyes.

"Hello, Jarvis," Peter said calmly. The hand still around Deadpool's wrist never loosened its hold.

"Mr. Stark and Dr. Banner politely request you let me and Dr. Banner examine you to make sure everything has healed," the AI continued, sounding almost hesitantly careful.

The growl became darker.

Peter kept holding on, through the bond and physically.

"I'm fine, Jarvis."

"This was your first regeneration," Jarvis replied. "No one knows whether your abilities mirror those of Mr. Wilson. You took longer to jumpstart and there might be complications."

Peter looked at the man at his bedside, the tension in the room like a living, breathing thing. Actually, it wasn't just tension. It was a flare of energy that was currently coursing through him as well, tidying up its work, making sure he was as fine as he proclaimed to be.

The chimera.

It was ready to break the flimsy human shell and fight its way out of the Tower if necessary.

"Wade," he murmured softly. "Stand down."

"You're fine," Deadpool hissed, the voice barely human. "No one needs to poke and prod you."

Not even a quip to that. Just lethally cold words, delivered matter-of-fact.

"I want to be sure."

The whole body seemed to heave and shudder, fingers digging into the mattress of Peter's bed. Peter reached out along the bond with all he had and wrapped himself around the agitated preternatural, imitating what the chimera had done for him so many times before.

It finally rumbled, not happy, but it sat back.

The energy in the room dissipated like it had never been there.

"Jarvis? Give us a few more minutes, then I'm all game," Peter said.

"Understood."

Tony stared at the readouts, tension in his frame, cursing under his breath.

"Language," Steve remarked gently, but the same tension reflected in his stance.
"Did you see those spikes? Not sure what it is, but I have a good guess! And it wouldn't have been pretty! Can a preter turn into a super? Could he actually shift into that thing he harbors?"

"The chimera isn't a separate entity, Tony."

"It could very well be!"

"It's primal instinct and it's an endless being."

"I can see that, Steven!" Tony spat, whirling around to look at the blond. "I'm very much aware of what he is! And that primal instinct was about to blow up in our faces!"

"If not for Peter."

Tony expelled a sharp breath, making it almost a laugh. "Yeah. No idea how he can weather that thing. The energy outpour alone was enough to warrant a bunker and a whole lot of luck. This is what we'd be dealing with in case Spider-Man dies."

"Right now he's alive." Steve clapped a heavy hand on his shoulder. "That's what I'm looking at. Not the what ifs."

"Yeah." Tony glanced at the readouts and shook his head. "Damn. Jarvis?" he addressed the AI.

"Yes, sir?"

"We'll be needing some privacy for the examination. Make sure the floor's secured. Just in case Deadpool decides to flip."

"Understood."

"Well, let's get this over with. You think we need to gear up?"

Steve squeezed his shoulder again. "No," he answered calmly. "They are our guests. Deadpool won't be a problem as long as we don't threaten Peter."

And no one had any intention to do that.

tbc...
Chapter 33

Chapter Notes

Life interrupted again, so this chapter is a day late.

Peter was in peak health. There was nothing wrong with him. The terrible injuries were gone. His EKG and EEG were absolutely perfect. His strength as up to par, his coordination excellent. His spider abilities were unchanged. Peter could stick to all kinds of surfaces with the same ease as before, and he demonstrated it repeatedly.

His sight, hearing and sense of touch were as he was used to as Spider-Man, and he had no cognitive disabilities. His memories were all there, too.

Peter had no memory of his death, though. It was the only gap in his brain, but not one he was actually worried about.

"You were unconscious when you died," Bruce said thoughtfully. "Theoretically you don't feel yourself dying when unconscious, so that might be an explanation. What's far more likely, given your bond, your mutation, sharing the chimera's abilities, is that your brain protected itself from possibly negative feedback. You aren't a preternatural, Peter."

"Uh, yeah? I know?"

Peter was only wearing scrub pants, his upper body was naked, and there were electrodes sticking to his skin. He felt a little exposed, but then again, it wasn't the first time he was treated for injuries, not wearing much, not even part of the Spider-Man suit. This time was a little different, though.

"Deadpool's mindset has made an adjustment to dying." Banner glanced at their watcher. "It's his nature, so he can handle it. Well, in his own way."

Peter twitched a little smile.

Deadpool was standing in one corner, eyes on the proceedings. He had been silent the whole time, not even twitching a muscle.

Like a statue.

A deadly statue who wouldn't stop at taking on the Hulk if he had to. Armed with more weapons than a small army, katanas strapped to his back, hands resting lightly close to the two massive guns.

Bruce had been very much aware of his watcher, but his heartrate and pulse had remained within limits. While Deadpool was a very dangerous, unpredictable opponent who wasn't to be trifled with, having Peter in the room lessened the threat level in a way. It didn't make Deadpool any less unpredictable, unstable and dangerous, but it shifted the man's focus on his mate.

Peter kept him anchored.
The energy levels were well within reason. Jarvis would alert him the moment something spiked.

"For you, it was a change that came along with the life-bond. So it stands to reason that you need to adjust. Your brain does it for you: you have no memory of the actual moment."

He nodded. "It feels like I just fell asleep and woke up. I mean, I remember the fight and all. Just nothing after the black-out. I'm a little sore, like always after a fight. Nothing else."

Bruce nodded as Jarvis presented him the last scan.

"You're perfectly healed. Nothing out of the ordinary," he told the half-naked man sitting on the examination table. "Well, ordinary for you."

It got Peter another little smile. His mutated cells were ordinary.

"Told you," he quipped.

"We had to make sure."

"I know," was the calm reply as Peter peeled off the stickers. "And I'm thankful. No one knew whether or not the whole thing would really take and how far I'd adopt the chimera's abilities."

"Looks like, aside from the time delay, you have them completely. I'd advise against testing it, though." The last was said with a twinkle of amusement.

Peter chuckled. "Believe me, I'm not going to."

He felt immensely energetic. Bruce had shown him recordings of when he had come back to life and it had been amazing to watch the outpour.

Maybe the chimera had overshot the whole thing a little. Who knew? No one had any idea how it all worked and aside from killing Peter again and again, recording his resurrection, there was no way of testing it.

From the way Peter looked at him, he was thinking the same.

"I'm erasing the tests and the results as we speak," Banner said seriously. "Jarvis won't have a single recording anywhere."

"Already on it," the AI piped up.

"Thank you," Peter addressed them both, looking at the ceiling, even though Jarvis wasn't installed there.

Deadpool was suddenly right there, moving silently, almost soundlessly, and with a determination that had Bruce back off a few steps to give the two men room. The merc was flexing his hands and the tension was hard to stomach. The whole aura was driving him into defense and he calmed himself to stop the Other Guy from accidentally making an appearance.

His pulse monitor stayed green, though his primitive hind brain was pulling all the stops and wanted him to leave. Right. Now.

Peter shot him an apologetic look, which Bruce waved off. He turned to his computer, which was free of any and all results.

Deadpool's gloved fingers deftly removed the last electrode, flicking it with unerring accuracy.
toward the trash can. The white eyes scanned over the half naked man and Peter gave his partner a
smile.

"Ready to go?" he asked lightly, like it was just a movie date with a dinner after that.

Deadpool nodded wordlessly.

Like talking was no longer an option.

Maybe it wasn't.

That was troubling in a way. Deadpool was the Merc with a Mouth, talking all the time. Nothing
had ever stopped him, short of blowing him to pieces too small to articulate any longer.

This…

Serious, serious problem.

Bruce watched as Peter dressed. He briefly touched his bonded mate, drawing the tightly coiled
energies toward him with an ease that spoke of familiarity and acceptance. Bruce marveled at fate,
at the fact that these two men matched so perfectly, for all their apparent imperfections.

Peter gave him an easy, bright smile as they left the room, the chimera hovering behind him like a
vengeful nightmare.

Bruce felt himself breathing so much easier when Deadpool left the room.

No one stopped them.

Tony just told him to take a few days off work and not to show his face before next Monday. He
was on sick leave.

"I'm okay!" Peter argued.

"You died, Parker. You understand what that means? Good! You only came back a few hours ago.
No matter what Bruce says, you're on sick leave. I don't want to see your face around here till
Monday. Understood?"


He knew he had died, but he didn't feel any kind of trauma.

It had happened.

He had survived; and come back.

No need to treat him like a fragile doll. Or coddle him.

Deadpool was at his side the whole time, his bodyguard, protecting, guarding, and still radiating
the need to be this close for absolutely different reasons along the bond. He wanted to be out of this
place, away from an AI aware of their every step, their very heartbeats, and the Avengers.
While Peter had only ever seen Bruce and Tony, he knew they were being watched. He would bet a month's salary on Hawkeye and-or Black Widow shadowing them.

It was one of Tony's limos that took them home, though Deadpool had the guy stop a few blocks away from the building, then took the long way through a maze of alleys to the back entrance.

Peter didn't comment. He understood the necessity of being careful, though he suspected the Avengers probably knew where they lived, even if they didn't say it outright.

The moment they were inside their highly secured four walls, Deadpool took off the mask and crowded close, backing Peter against the wall. There was a second where time seemed to stand still, where the chimera looked out of the human shell, regarding its mate.

With human eyes, all dark brown and without a trace of the normally tell-tale silver. Human eyes that still reflected the preternatural, that expressed everything that words couldn't.

Peter raised a hand, cupping the scarred cheek, then leaned in and let their lips touch in a gentle kiss.

Wade kissed back, slow at first, like it was their first time, then with more hunger and almost something close to desperation.

They separated slowly, teeth catching at his lower lip. The bite was so soft, it was barely felt. Still, the chimera reacted with a tremor deep in its nightmarish core.

"You scared me," he whispered, sounding raw and vulnerable. "You died. Didn't come back."

There was nothing Peter could say. He just held his partner as Wade buried his face against the younger man's neck, hands clenching into the fabric of his sweater, holding on tightly.

He pressed his lips against Wade's temple.

"I'm not going to leave you," he murmured after a moment. "Ever."

"I love you," Wade blurted, raising his head and the dark eyes were brimming with emotions.

The next kiss was warmer, less needy, and Peter savored it. He let himself fall into the embrace, the kiss, and he felt the chimera's wings brush over his whole being. It wrapped itself around Peter like a wispy blanket.

"I love you," he replied.

Wade leaned forward, resting his forehead against Peter's, the contact so much more intimate than anything else. His other hand slid over Peter's hip and around his back. Strong fingers traced the small portion of the younger man’s spine. Dangerous, deadly hands on his body, so soft and gentle in their caress, so intimate.

The fingers wormed underneath the sweater, sliding over warm skin, and Peter pulled the piece of clothing over his head. The fingers were back, the palms brushing over Peter's chest and abdomen, finding no traces of the terrible injuries.
There wasn't even a faint scar. It was as if it had never happened.

"You didn't heal," he repeated, sounding almost desperate. "Not right away."

"I'm not you, Wade. Or anyone else with a healing ability like yours."

Wade closed his eyes, still looking shaky. "Yeah. Weapon X didn't splice you apart and glued you back together again. Thanks for that."

"I'm still me. Human. With a mutation." Peter undid a few clasps of the suit. "This was you, Wade. The chimera. You brought me back."

"It won't let go. I can't. You couldn't make me," he promised, low and dark.

"Thank you," Peter murmured, pushing back a little. "I'd like a shower now. I smell like a hospital."

The brown eyes lit up. "I think that can be arranged."

Peter smiled, then walked toward the bathroom.

Wade followed close on his heels.

There was no shower sex.

Peter used a liberal amount of shower gel to wash off the unfamiliar scent, then toweled off. From the way Wade watched him as he walked out of the bathroom, his partner wanted to touch, to caress, but he held back.

"I'm not going to break," Peter commented, towel slung around his hips.

And he felt the hunger, too. His whole body seemed to thrum with energy, left over from the resurrection, he supposed.

"Hope not," Wade commented and swallowed the reply in a kiss.

*

He woke in bed, wrapped in a familiar embrace, feeling warmth along his back and side, ensconced in the arms of his bonded. The warmth wasn’t just physical but also in his mind, and memories lapped at his consciousness.

He felt the heat rise in his face and fought down a very physical reaction to what he recalled from last night.

Very passionate, intense and hot memories.

Well, fuck, Wade thought.
In every sense of the word.

Peter was still as flexible as before, still as hot and gorgeous, and still as sexy. Also demanding. And powerful. Switching had become normal, though Peter seemed to prefer to bottom.

Wade didn't mind.

There was little he would mind when it came to sexy shenanigans with his mate.

Something bloomed inside him, something powerful and warm and overwhelming. He buried his face against the warm neck, inhaled Peter's scent, felt a calmness spread through him.

Mine, he thought.

Peter was his.

The chimera had pulled him back and he had recovered. Completely.

The pleasantly hard, warm body next to him moved a little.

“Petey,” he murmured.

“Here,” was sleepy reply.

Wade smiled more and nuzzled against the warmth. He felt incredibly relaxed. The connection between them was close to alive, an almost physical sensation.

Peter trailed his fingers over the naked, bumpy skin within his reach, all comfortable heat and well-known scent.

The merc felt something else shiver through him. It was powerful and pushy and hungry.

He ignored it.

This was nice. Not just hard and heavy sex. Just this.

"You're purring," Peter laughed softly.

"Am not."

"Are, too."

"Not," was the petulant answer.

Peter snorted and trailed kisses over his bare head. Wade raised his head, catching the lips and kissing back, tongues involved and pretty much getting dirtier by the minute. Peter pulled back with a groan.

"I hope this is just a side-effect of the regeneration, but I really want to blow you."

Wade felt something inside him sit up and take immediate notice, its tail wagging with enthusiasm. He really didn't need the input of his preternatural side to get with that particular program.

"Fuck, yeah," he breathed.
"I don't care what brought that on, it was fucking fantastic," Wade groaned, feeling spent and like even his refractory period might be taking a short vacation.

Resting his head against Peter’s shoulder, panting softly, he enjoyed a rush that shouldn’t end. Like taking a rollercoaster ride and plunging deep, only to stop and realize it was over. Adrenaline high. Sugar rush. Whatever it was called, it had been damn good.

Peter grinned, hovering over him, looking pretty pleased with his handiwork.

And he could be.

It had blown more than Wade's balls; his whole mind was a goner. Not to mention the nightmare inside him was flat on its back, paws in the air, whining with pleasure.

And Peter was still hard.

Oh, the fun wasn't over yet. Wade grinned back and wrapped a hand around his mate's neck, pulling him into a sloppy kiss.

"Want to get rid of that?" he murmured, sneaky fingers playing over the hard dick.

Peter closed his eyes and bit his lower lip. "Wade…"

He lazily fist the length, scars adding friction.

Peter groaned, pushing into the grip.

"Think you can keep it up for a longer ride?"

The hazel eyes shot him a challenging look and the primal side of the chimera reacted. Wade wanted to feel his mate. He wanted to taste him, touch him, listen to his every sound, and he wanted to claim the very soul of this man.

And he wanted him inside him.

Peter was only too happy to comply.

Yep, it had been a side-effect of the resurrection.

Lasting a while and both men were very happy to work off the excess energy.

He watched as Wade made his famous blueberry pancakes, nursing a cup of coffee. The scientist inside him was wondering about the physics behind it all. If the chimera had pushed that much energy into him, had it overshot its mark? Would the next time be under more controlled circumstances?

Not that he wanted a next time.

It would mean dying again. No, thanks.
But if it had been an overflow, could they regulate it? It didn't hurt Wade in any way, but what good would pouring more into Peter than was required do?

Well, fantastic sex was one result, aside from bringing Peter back to life, which had been the main goal.

"Wade?"

"Hm?"

"When it happened… did you feel anything?"

Wade stilled, spatula in hand. He finally, slowly, turned off the stove and turned to look at the seated man.

"Feel?"

Peter met the hard, almost cold brown eyes without fear. "When I died. Did you feel it? I know I don't feel any side-effects from when you get injured or possibly killed. What about you?"

He knew he was blunt. Absolutely straight-forward and like a sledge hammer.

"Aside from the need to tear the man who did this to pieces? Nope, not a thing, baby boy," was the suddenly-chipper reply. "Limb by limb, by tooth and nail."

Peter refused to be baited or deterred.

"The energy that got pulled into me… it came all from you. It's your core energy."

"You make it sound so romantic."

"Wade."

He stilled again, the spatula no longer flailing. Hairless brows lowered into a defiant scowl.

"No," he finally answered, the voice more Deadpool than Wade, "no side-effects. I didn't go all weak-kneed and starry-eyed. There was only rage and the abyss. But even if I step over the edge, it won't take me. I can't feel you die. If I could, I'd kill myself every single time. Every fucking single time!" Deadpool spat, voice almost breaking. "Because I wouldn't be able to take it!"

Peter slid off the chair and was around the kitchen island in a second. He wrapped himself around the other man, felt him bury his face against Peter's neck, felt the tremors, and he just held on.

Peter closed his eyes, feeling similar tremors course through him.

"I'm here," he whispered. "Not going anywhere. Neither are you."

Wade's fingers dug into the thin material of his t-shirt, bunching it tightly.

"Not sure I can do this without you, Peter. Ever. I'd find a way to end me, or let them end me. Something out there, in all the timelines and all the universes, can unalive me, too. I'd find it."

Peter shivered. "Not happening," he promised, voice low and rough. "Not ever happening, you hear me?!!"

Wade nodded against the soft skin of his neck.
Peter had no idea how long they just stood there, but Wade suddenly let go of him, stepping back, face reflecting a myriad of emotions. He leaned in and kissed him, Peter responding openly, not holding anything back.

The chimera was coiled tightly around his soul, nose buried in the very energy it had given its mate to pull him back.

"Food now?" he finally asked when they separated.

Wade cracked a smile. "Gotta feed my little spider. Keep his strength up."

"Hm, you do that."

And the vulnerable moment was gone, but not like it had never happened, because it had.

The pancakes were cold, but good. They reheated some in the microwave. The rest was eaten as they were.

Neither man felt like doing much, but Peter wanted to stretch his legs, swing around a little, enjoy the freedom web-slinging gave him.

Deadpool was all for it.

tbc...
Chapter 34

They chose a high-rise, eating subs and muffins in the evening.

The energy inside him had settled after some crime-fighting, but he felt incredibly hungry despite the fact that he had devoured a stack of pancakes for a very late breakfast, enough for a family of four.

Deadpool smirked as the four muffins and a dozen donuts were shared between them after the footlongs with chips. His bonded ate more than half.

"Please tell me that's normal," Spider-Man sighed.

"Knowing you? Yeah, it is."

He wadded up the wrapping and tossed it at the merc, who easily caught it.

"You don't regenerate and eat a week's worth of food within twenty-four hours," Spider-Man grumbled.

"Yeah, well, I can always go for tacos, which we sadly didn't get today. And why? Mexican is good for you, baby boy." He shrugged. "And no, I don't have the cravings you have after pulling a fast one on the Lady."

The food was gone and Spider-Man stuffed everything into the bag to drop it into the trash later on.

"At least it won't stick," Deadpool added cheekily. "You metabolize like a freaking reactor. There's nothing on you." He poked him in the ribs.

"I'm not thin," came the grumble.

"Nope. Lean, mean Spidey-machine. Sexiest man alive."

"Enough with the compliments. You'll get laid."

"Ohhhh, it's not just for the getting laid part. You are the sexiest man alive, Spideybabe. For this merc anyway."

He leaned a little more against Spider-Man, who easily adjusted to the weight as he scanned the cityscape. It was already perceptibly colder, the weather heading for late autumn chills and a hint of rain to come. "So, Mr. Compliments. Want to hit a theater? Watch a movie?"

"Eat nachos and popcorn?"

He grimaced. "No?"


"Let's see what we can find."
They ended up in a tiny theater, crammed between high buildings, surrounded by shops and store fronts. Both had dressed in their civvies and Wade had his hood up, the basecap pulled low.

Peter got a tub of popcorn.

Wade carried the sodas and a family sized nacho serving.

With only them in the theater, it felt like a private showing of an ancient movie that was still black-and-white. No one paid much attention to the couple in the far back corner, making out like lovesick teenagers.

Peter had never been one for public sex, but when Wade was between his legs and sucked him off, he couldn't care less. He had to bite down hard and clench his teeth not to make any noise, especially when he came.

Wade looked immensely pleased.

"Fucker," Peter whispered.

"At your service, baby boy. And it's been one of my fantasies. Well, the fantasy goes way past this, but hey…"

Movie forgotten, Peter blinked in the semi-dark.

"How far?" he heard himself ask roughly.

Wade looked suddenly caught. "Uhm… way past your comfort zone? Kinda, with more people?"

He almost face-palmed.

"And it was before we bonded!" the merc quickly added, words hurried. "I was always imagining that ass naked, and the porn collection had some pretty interesting stuff…"

Peter groaned. "Okay, got it. And yes, outside any kind of comfort zone."

"Not gonna share you," Wade promised, voice intense. "Fantasy or not. No one but me touches you."

"Speaking of which…" Peter slowly stroked his semi-hard dick. "We've got another hour before this movie lets out. I think I can squeeze you in…"

Wade's mouth hung open and he was gaping like a beached fish. "Petey!" he whispered breathlessly. "Did you just… really? Here?!"

"We're in the back corner, no one but us."

"Someone pinch me," the other man groaned desperately. "Or not. Please not. It's my wet dream come true!"

"Don't really want to know how many you still have," he replied with a light laugh.
Since the seats were old and narrow, they ended up with Wade fucking him against the wall, short staccato bursts that had Peter see stars and come faster than he would have expected after the first blow. Wade relentlessly plowed into him, harsh breaths against his ear, arms around his middle and holding him tightly.

"You are so adorable," he murmured breathlessly, coming down from his high, still seated deep inside.

"And you're a menace," Peter replied, feeling muscles shiver with exhaustion.

"We should do this more often."

"No."

"Special occasions then?"

"Very special ones."

It got him a light bite against the neck and Wade moved his hips a little. His cock was still half hard.

"You can't be serious."

"Energizer bunny, baby. You know me."

"Movie will be out in twenty."

"Is that a challenge?"

"No!"

It got him a throaty laugh and Wade finally pulled out.

Peter knew he was a mess, and so was his bonded. They were hardly presentable, but at this time of night there was hardly anyone looking too closely. Both hurried out of the theater, back to where they had hidden their stuff, and they took the rooftop route home.

*

Nick Fury should have expected their visitor…

…uninvited guest…

…intruder.

The asshole with an attitude problem in the red and black suit.

Take a pick.

He would go for 'bat-shit crazy moron', but that was only him. Fury was also under no illusion that Deadpool was truly as brain-damaged, unplugged and randomly insane as he let others think. There
was a keen intelligence behind the façade. You didn't get to be a renowned mercenary with an almost-perfect kill-score with only one functioning brain cell and a bunch of goo for a brain.

No, Fury had never underestimated the man, but he couldn't stand him either.

Not that they needed to be friends.

Deadpool had made it onto the helicarrier by hitching a ride. Actually, he had kidnapped a pilot and asked him quite nicely to land on the floating fortress. There had been a little gun-waving involved, but the pilot didn't even have a scratch on him. He was more annoyed that he hadn't been aware of his stowaway until it was too late.

Now the mercenary was here.

To get to Martin Tigh, the young man who had bought an alien weapon and gone on a rampage. Tigh was currently in a high security ward, one that had held Asgardian gods and would hold the Hulk if push came to shove. They had managed to get the alien armor off, though it had nearly killed him.

The thing seemed to be alive to a degree, binding to the host whom it had controlled, and connecting to the human nervous system.

Whether Tigh would ever be himself again or had suffered irreparable brain damage had yet to be determined. So far he was unresponsive, staring at nothing, drooling or murmuring something that hadn't been recognized as any kind of known language.

Deadpool stood outside the prison cell that resembled a gigantic fish tank, a place that gave the inmate no room to hide from cameras and other prying eyes. Even the sanitary facilities were in plain view.

Not that Tigh was actively trying to hide; or move at all.

"He was a victim," Fury said, voice echoing in the otherwise empty room.

Deadpool didn't react, the white-masked eyes on the man who had left a path of pain and destruction in New York. His hands hung loosely at his side.

"The alien artefact connected to his brain and took over his body and mind."

Deadpool's stance didn't shift, he didn't show any kind of awareness that he wasn't alone with the prisoner. His whole attention was focused on Martin Tigh.

In a dangerous, alarm bells wailing loudly kind of way.

Fury knew all there was to know about the chimera and the man bonded to the artificially created preternatural mutation. The moment Wade Wilson had appeared on the scene, SHIELD had become aware of the mercenary, the hellhound, who had an incredibly high success rate and who rarely ever missed a target.

When Wilson had suddenly disappeared, only to reappear as Deadpool, Fury had taken even more notice, a much closer one, and the intel on the former hellhound-now-chimera had been terrifying. He was a powerful, extremely lethal force and absolutely unpredictable new player.

Deadpool was a weapon, someone to hire when SHIELD didn't want to stick their own noses in too deeply or kick too hard at something that might blow up in their faces. That's what the hired help
was for.

So they had made use of his talents on dark missions, operations that would never be linked to them, and he was hellishly good and absolutely impossible to work with in a team.

SHIELD would have wanted him as an operative if he could a) follow orders and b) accept a handler. Since neither was an option, Deadpool was someone to be handled with care when applied to a situation.

Even Coulson had nearly lost his cool when working with him, which was just tell-tale. The man was hard to rattle on a bad day, but Deadpool had managed the impossible.

Fury saw the merc as a nuisance and an asset in one, like most, well all, of the Avengers, but where the Avengers could get their shit together, Deadpool had always ever looked out for himself.

Until Spider-Man had changed that, but not in a way that had the Director of SHIELD consider them as a team to recruit.

"Killing him would be killing the host," Fury spoke up.

No reply.

There were agents surrounding the room, weapons trained on the intruder, but Fury doubted they could really stop him. Nothing could kill him and simple bullets couldn't stop him.

"Deadpool. Stand down."

"He killed my bonded mate," the preternatural said, voice flat and absolutely inflectionless.

"Spider-Man healed."

"He killed him."

Fury's eye narrowed. "Killing the host won't undo it."

Deadpool finally turned away from watching Tigh, his gaze fixing on the head of SHIELD. Fury had met a lot of dangerous men in the past, alien and human, and he knew he was facing such a danger. There was nothing crazy about Deadpool right now.

This was the focused intensity of the chimera and Fury could feel the thing that no one could define, the energy inside the immortal mercenary that rose and seemed to spread invisible wings. It hovered around him, the apex predator of unknown and never before registered power.

A dark, dark creature of violent nature. Ferocious, untamed, and now without chains.

The bond had let it evolve, had set it free, with no chains and no barriers to hold it back should Deadpool decide to let go, to take what he wanted.

"Tigh has been punished enough already," Fury said calmly. "As for the parasitic artefact, we're studying it."

"To what end?" was the cold question. "To use its power? To develop newer, better weapons?"

Fury just met the masked gaze, keeping a neutral expression. Inside, his very human inside, he wanted to draw a gun and shoot the bastard until he dropped dead. Or to run. Very fast, very far.
Deadpool snorted. "Of course."

He turned his head, looking at Tigh again. The man hadn't moved, was just staring straight ahead, drool dribbling off his chin.

Brain damage.

The merc finally walked away, past Fury, ignoring the gun sights following him.

"Cute," he commented as he passed one of the men. "You keep on training that, kid."

Fury twitched a little smile as he followed, gesturing at the men to stand down.

Deadpool scanned the corridor as he walked through it, no soul in sight, and Fury knew that he was taking in every little detail, like ping for a threat, for the alien weapon. It wasn't on the helicarrier anymore. The moment they had removed the last part from the unlucky, the boxed-up artefact had been flown to an off-site lab at an undisclosed location. If Deadpool tried to find it, he would have to dig deep.

Fury suspected the man would be able to dig as deep as he had to, maybe even get some details, and if he was truly going after the artefact, he might one day find it.

If Spider-Man had truly died for good, if the suspicions as to what the bond enabled the non-preternatural side of the mated pair to do had been contradicted, nothing would have stopped Deadpool.

Martin Tigh would already be a dead man.

And Deadpool would be hunting for the artefact.

SHIELD had an emergency response plan for that situation, though Fury doubted they would be able to put down Deadpool for good. Restraining him, yes. Maybe take him down in a way that would give them a chance to lock him up, even if it meant blowing him up.

But he wouldn't die.

And the outlook on what could happen if the chimera lost its anchor, if it truly came out and stayed out, the human shell no longer its last barrier to the world, were frightening.

Fury pushed those thoughts away as he followed the mercenary to the flight deck where the kidnapped pilot was next to his flight. Jonasson had been in a rather good mood and volunteered to be the taxi driver back down to wherever Deadpool wanted to go.

"Your partner is alive, Wilson. Think of that," Fury advised.

It got him that flat look, no animation in the masked features, and the whites seemed to glow.

"Fuck off," was the only reply he got, then Deadpool sauntered over to his ride.

He clapped the pilot he had forced to get him up to the helicarrier on the shoulder, leaning over to say something that had Jonasson twitch a grin.

Fury watched the quinjet take off, daring to sigh a breath of relief.

"Do you think he will go after the artefact?"
He turned to Maria Hill. The woman had been absolutely silent in approaching him.

"Not today."

"But he will."

"It killed his bonded mate."

She inclined her head. Like Fury, Maria was human, not a super- or preternatural trace in her genes. SHIELD had always worked with preters and supers, but not every agent was one.

"Want us to tail him for a while?"

"Not that it would really work," Fury remarked with a humorless smirk. "He has shaken any tail we put on him in the past, more so lately ever since he started to get more in tune with his preternatural side. The chimera is a terrifying, highly dangerous creature, a night terror you wouldn't want after you. I'm quite aware that we wouldn't be able to stop him from doing what he came here to do today. It was his decision to leave, not my words."

Hill looked slightly pensive, but she didn't argue. She followed Fury back inside and to the bridge.

Jonasson reported he had deposited Deadpool back on the ground, on a roof of a New York skyscraper, and the merc had disappeared right away.

Fury just told him to get back.

tbc...
Chapter 35

Deadpool had worked off his anger -- that was closer to fury than he would have liked – and his frustration by stopping a bunch of guys from beating up and possibly raping a young woman. He trussed them all up, gift wrapping them for the police. A few were bleeding, though none were in danger of bleeding out, and all of them would forever remember the day. Broken bones healed, but they would feel the multiple fractures with age when the pain set in. Some might not even be able to get their full mobility back.

The woman had thanked him, crying so hard she had barely been able to get real words out, and Deadpool had felt a little better.

He still wanted to kill something, but those deadbeats hadn't been high up on anyone's list to be unalived.

Peter was home when Deadpool walked in. He was in his lab/office/whatever space, working on upgrading his web shooters. He was hunched over his desk, glasses perched on his nose, and Deadpool curiously peered over his shoulder, still in full gear.

"Fury kick you off the helicarrier?" Peter asked as he snapped a tiny lid closed on the web shooters.

"Nah. Took myself home. The exhibition was boring and the company even more so. I decided to come home to my Spideyboy and see if he's up for some serious patrolling."

Peter looked up, peering over the rims of his glasses, and Deadpool pushed them back up his nose with his index finger.

"Killed anyone?"

"Nope." He smirked. "Scout's honor."

"You're not a Scout."

"Deadpool's honor," he corrected himself.

"That I believe. So the guy in the alien armor is still alive?"

"Well, his body is. I think his mind said bye-bye."

Peter frowned, his full attention on Deadpool now. "What?"

"The guy is a goner. Elvis has left the building. The human vegetable. Now that's a stupid hero name. And a hilarious villain one!"

"What happened to him?"

"Fury said they had a hell of a time removing the armor. Seems like it was attached to his nervous system and wasn't happy to lose a host. Took his mind with it."
"Damn," Peter breathed, closing his eyes and shaking his head.

"Can't say I share that notion."

"He was innocent, Wade!" the other man snapped. "He got his hands on something he didn't understand and it took over. He was no longer in control. It used him."

Deadpool snorted. He finally removed the mask and tossed it onto the desk. The brown eyes were ringed with silver.

"I don't care," he growled.

Peter rose immediately and wrapped strong fingers around his wrist, the chimera's sudden fury calmed by its mate's touch.

"No," Peter murmured. "Don't do that, Wade. We're okay. I came back. I'm fine. You can't go around killing those who injure or kill me."

"I have every right!"

Peter squeezed the wrist with a little more strength, though it was just a fraction of what he was capable of. Wade felt a new surge of fury, but the darkness only rippled, the anger more human than preternatural. The chimera whispered moodily, but it slithered around the bond and caressed Peter's soul.

"I don't want you to go on revenge trips. He was already punished from what you told me. He lost everything because of a stupid mistake. I'm still here."

Wade closed his eyes, felt the vortex, quiet and calm, felt the darkness that was pulsing softly in the presence of Peter.

"You think we can go on patrol without you cutting off anyone's limbs?"

Wade had to grin at the question. He leaned forward, stealing a kiss. "No promises," he murmured.

"Just do your best. Leave the katanas sheathed."

"Oh, I love your dirty talk, Spideybabe. So very, very much."

"Dinner's on me."

"And it gets even more suggestive," the merc moaned, grabbing his mask. "Can't promise I can hold back from fucking you against a wall tonight if you keep on doing that."

Peter laughed softly and took his web shooters off the work desk. "Patrol first. Kinky thoughts later."

"My kinky thoughts leave no room for anything else," he sighed, pulling on the mask.

They went out for patrol, Chinese dinner on a rooftop, and no wall sex a little later.

Deadpool mourned the latter.
"So… you died."

Peter turned his head to look at the man laying on the roof with him, watching the night sky. There was hardly anything to see, thanks to light pollution, but it was a rather relaxing night anyway.

"Still no… after effects?" Deadpool asked cautiously.

"Like?"

"Uh, no idea. I mean, not a good role model here. I just pop back up like a jack-in-the-box. Death doesn't become me, and she hates losing again and again. She's kinda pissed off all the freaking time. Did you meet the Lady?"

"No. Like I said, can't really remember anything after the black-out."

"Huh."

"And no nightmares or anything," Peter added. "I'm good."

"You're… taking it well."

"Shouldn't I?"

"You died, Petey. Even if you don't remember it, you were killed, were absolutely dead, and you came back. Kinda takes balls of steel to just sit there and talk about it."

"Technically I'm not sitting. As for my balls…"

Deadpool snorted a little laugh. "Got those."

Peter finally did sit up and looked at his bonded. "You want me to freak out?"

"No. Not at all. Just… you need someone to talk to? Ask… okay?"

"Okay. And I'm good, Wade. Really. I don't have a problem with what happened. Apparently the rest of the world does, but I hardly remember dying. I was knocked out and then I woke up to your face."

"Worse things in life," Deadpool quipped.

"I'll say."

"Stark's been giving me the same speech, actually. Bruce offered to listen should I want to talk. They also have some kind of counsellor in Asgard who deals with near-death stuff, according to Thor. He volunteered to take me there or bring her here." Peter sighed and ran a hand through his hair, messing it up more than it already was. "People have died and been brought back before. Normal people, not bonded to an immortal nightmare. There were no bright lights. There was nothing at all. I'm okay and I'm not faking it to be strong."

He felt the chimera move closer, sliding into his soul, caressing it, and Peter smiled at his mate.
"You help a lot," he said quietly.

"Uh?"

"You instinctively do the right thing, Wade."

"Okay…"

"And you'll be there should I wake up screaming. As it is, I'm not as traumatized as people want to make me. I think Bruce is right. My brain isn't equipped to deal with what I can do. Maybe not just yet, maybe ever. I can't remember because… it was deleted? Maybe next time it stays?"

Deadpool shuddered. "No next time."

"There might just be. Eternity is long."

"Yeah."

Peter knew that should someone kill him again, he might not be so lucky to be unconscious when he passed from one side to the other, but he had been now. And he was good. Truly good.

“You should be freaking out,” Wade stated softly, fingers tracing over Peter’s slender digits.

“I had some time to get used to the idea. I mean, everyone’s been pushing it at me, whether I had asked them or not.” Peter didn’t sound like he was about to slide into madness.

He interlaced their fingers.

Wade looked at him, the dark eyes ringed in silver. The chimera was roiling inside him, unsure, angry, hesitant, furious, all those emotions thrown together and creating a cacophony of sound inside him head. Peter squeezed his hand, stalling the panic that was on the verge of breaking through.

Looking into the warm eyes, the handsome face, he felt some of the turmoil drain away again. Balance.

A mate meant balance and he felt it again and again when he was together with Peter. The bond had done wonders for him and he knew he wouldn’t give this up for the world at his feet.

“I’ll always be there for you, Wade,” Peter said softly. “Always.”

“Unless someone can undo what’s been done.”

“You mean splice you again. Recreate what? The hellhound? I’d still be bonded to you. And the bond’s unbreakable.”

“Who knows? The future is that obscure, gray thing no one knows about, unless you did some time-sliding.” Deadpool grinned. “Sounds fun.”

“Probably. And I like you as you are, Wade Wilson. I don’t want you any other way, whatever they might offer us in the future.”
Wade closed his eyes and exhaled softly. “Do you know how much I love you, Peter Parker?”

Peter pulled him close and kissed him, softly, reassuring and warm, one hand cupping his cheek, the other still holding Wade’s hand. “As do I. I love you, Wade. We’ll be okay, whatever happens. We have forever. Or as long as it takes for someone to find a way to kill you off for good,” he said pragmatically. “I’ll be there every step of the way. I’ll always be there.”

Wade stared at him, clearly overrun, but part of that expression was also mixed in with something else.

Peter smiled a little.

He had meant it. Everything. He would be there.

*

Going back to work was a little like starting all over again, his first day in a new job, apprehensive and slightly overwhelmed.

Wade had hugged him just before Peter had left their home. Then he had pushed a lunch box at him. A Power Puff Girls lunch box.

Peter had laughed and shaken his head, feeling a lot lighter already. The lunch box was now in his back pack and he was already looking forward to Bruce's expression when he got it out.

Tony gave him a once-over, the frown on his features not really letting up.

"I'm okay," Peter just said.

It was something he had kept repeating for a while now.

"You were dead."

"I know. Thanks for reminding me again and again. And all of you knew it wouldn't be permanent."

"We had no proof," Bruce commented. "It was all in theory."

"Well, now it isn't anymore," Peter replied, voice firm. "So stop staring at me like that!"

"How is Deadpool?" Bruce asked instead, true curiosity in his voice.

"Uh, okay? Why?"

"You pulled your energy from him. It stands to reason that he might be affected."

"He isn't."

And Peter wouldn't mention the excess energy and how they had worked it off until he wasn't thrumming with it anymore. That was very much private.

No one had asked if they could examine what effect the whole resurrection had had on the chimera,
and Peter was pretty thankful for it. Wade's reaction to anything coming close to what had been done to him by Weapon X drew very hostile, very destructive reactions.

Maybe Jarvis had monitored him, but there had been no intrusive tests, and all data had been erased.

Tony scowled, then his features smoothed over. "Alright. You're back. Got work to do. Chop-chop!"

Bruce rolled his eyes.

Peter just grabbed his laptop and settled down in his usual spot in the lab. Stark disappeared after a minute and Bruce went back to work.

Business as usual, though Peter was sure he would be watched more closely for a while until the newness of his 'back from the dead' status blew over.

Bruce just raised an eyebrow at the lunch box. He suppressed a chuckle when Peter got out his sandwich, lovingly wrapped with a bright pink bow on top, and a green apple. There were some candies and a note that read 'Be good. Learn stuff.'

Peter had to smile. He put the note into his wallet.

Yeah, he was a sap.

*

"Do you think we're in danger of becoming immortal villains?"

Deadpool's head whipped around so fast, Spider-Man thought he could hear vertebrae crack dangerously. "Villain? You? The little arachnid with a heart of pure gold? The one person who can do no evil, speak no evil, but sees all evil and kicks it in the butt?"

Peter tilted his head, keeping the quizzical air. He refused to be distracted by the words.

"Nah," Deadpool answered. "The world would end in a flash if you did. Or in a bang, not a whimper, alas, my dear friend."

"Deadpool. Seriously."

"I am. Totes seriously."

Spider-Man just waited. The other man finally slumped back against the wall, katanas scraping against bricks. His legs kicked against the wall they were sitting on.

"You're never going to be evil, Spidey," he finally said, voice calm and even. "You might get possessed, sure. If that's possible. I mean, I can't. Tried it before. Something in that noggin's keeping people from setting up home. You could have your brain chemistry altered, maybe. You
could even have a bad day. But you'd never be a villain. And who wants to rule the world anyway?" He spread his arms. "It'll be boring soon. People are always out to get you. Stressful. Knives in your back, bombs under your pillow, poison in your favorite ice cream. Nah."

Peter nodded, still crouched in his usual stance, eyes tracking the world around them from his vantage point. It was rather peaceful tonight.

"You're not listening to those gits, right?" Deadpool's white eyes were narrowed. "I thought Iron Dick and his Merry Men finally gave up on spreading Da Word."

"No, that's just me now. Thinking."

"Big brain, big thoughts."

"Sometimes it's not as much fun as it sounds."

Deadpool smirked under the mask. He unsheathed a knife and started to play with it. "They're fucking scared of us, Spidey. That's what they are. All of them. Of me. The chimera is their night terror."

He sounded oddly pleased as he balanced the knife on its tip.

"They see the monster and always will, no matter what you tell them and what I do. Haven't unalive anyone in ages. At least not for money. Not charity either. They're fucking scared," he repeated.

"Some maybe," Spider-Man agreed. "Not those who know us by now. I mean, I've been working with the Avengers from time to time on official business. And I'm working for SI and with Dr. Banner, too. The more time we spend together, the more understanding there is."

Deadpool tossed the knife from hand to hand until Spider-Man snagged it with a web and stuck it to the wall. It got him a noise of protest.

"That stuff won't ever come off!" the chimera complained in a huff. "As for the scaredy cats, there will always be some. Ignore them. I do all the time. Can't unalive it? Ignore the fucker."

"Wise words," Peter replied sagely.

Deadpool shot him a smug look. "Live and learn, grasshopper."

"Spider."

"Same difference."

"You really need to brush up on your fauna."

"Nah. I know my little spider. All I need. So, what's the plan?"

"It's rather quiet tonight. I was thinking personal time."

"Oooohh, sounds nice. Can I come, too? Watch?"

Spider-Man chuckled. "Dinner," he explained. "We could hop over to Aunt May's? We bring the food, I'll call up ahead, see if she wants us over?"

Deadpool hesitate, then a slow smile creased the mask. "Yeah. Sounds good."
"But we can make it a dinner reservation for two at Weasel's," Peter left him the choice. "We probably have to bring the food, unless he upped the menu from snacks to actually edible food stuff."

"Your aunt's fine, if she's not too busy doing what senior citizens do."

"She's not a senior citizen," he grumbled.

Deadpool elbowed him gently.

Spider-Man leaned a little closer, just for a moment, then he pulled out his cell phone.

"May?" he asked, thumb hovering over the call button.

"May," his mate confirmed.

She had the table set when the two men arrived an hour later, bearing food.

She didn't know about what had happened to Peter, that Spider-Man had been killed and he had come back from the dead, but Peter planned on telling her one day.

Just not now.

tbc...
Well, that's it now. The last chapter for this monster of a story (which I hadn't planned on... again. And which happened... again!).
I'll be off on my vacation in a few days and like I promised, it's done before I leave. Currently my brain needs a vacation, but weird things can happen when I go into energy saving mode. I might just end up writing something else.

I want to say THANK YOU to all of you for reading and commenting and being such awesome reviewers! I wouldn't have thought it possible to get such an amazing reception in a fandom I hadn't even touched before. I loved writing this and reading your comments! Thank you so much!!!

I make no promises on a sequel. That depends on my little braincell.

Anyway, on to the last chapter! Have fun!

It was seven months after the incident in New York that had killed Spider-Man when a secret facility that was completely off anyone's radar was broken into.

And blown to pieces.

Very small pieces.

No human lives were lost.

The artefacts stored in the facility were incinerated.

The fires burned so hot and bright, it took SHIELD almost a whole day to put them out, despite advanced equipment at their disposal.

Fury stood in the conference room aboard the helicarrier, watching the proceedings, studying the blackened ground.

Nothing but ash was left.

Absolutely nothing.

The science guys would probably go over it all with a fine toothed comb, but he knew there would be nothing to find, least of all the instigator. As for the incendiary device used, they had yet to find a clue. One scientist was already muttering about otherworldly.

Not something anyone wanted to consider, especially since no one had a clue as to who had destroyed it.

Fury had a suspicion as to what had happened, he just couldn't prove it.

"Do you really think it was him?"
"This was the place where we stored the artefact that killed his mate. I think it's the obvious conclusion."

"Want us to bring him in?"

He glanced at Maria. She looked absolutely serious. "You want him to bring down the helicarrier, too?"

She grimaced.

"There is no proof. Suspicions are not enough to act upon when it comes to this guy. The chimera would wreak havoc. How's Tigh?"

"Still a vegetable, still under special care. There's hardly any brain activity. Some say jelly fish have more than him."

"Hm." Fury stared at the screen.

He doubted Deadpool would go after the poor guy, but one never knew. Before he had bonded to Peter, Deadpool had been as erratic as they came, but with a plan, with an intent, and always with a deadly air to him. Now, after the bond, it was all there, but more focused. He still mouthed off, he still was more than a handful on a mission, but Fury held a hell lot more respect for the chimera.

And a vengeful chimera was a danger to be taken seriously. He wouldn't lift protection on Tigh.

*

Far, far away, in New York, Deadpool was cheerfully eating cotton candy and watching the police round up a group of thugs that had been terrorizing the neighborhood.

The chimera was an evened-out presence, pleased with itself and the world, feeling almost joyful with the memories of blowing up SHIELDs no longer so super-secret lab.

It had been hard intel work on his part to find where they had hidden the fucking alien sword that had killed his mate. Deadpool had greased a lot of hands and paid more than ever before for information, going as far as nearly killing a guy who had thought he could pull one over the mercenary.

He was missing a few fingers and he might never walk straight again, but he had learned his lesson.

The rest had been easy.

Deadpool smirked and stuffed the last of the cotton candy into his mouth. He pulled down the mask and hopped off the roof. A ride was waiting for him, a sleek machine he had borrowed for the day. The owner wouldn't really miss it, since he was currently in the ER and might not get out for a while. If the police caught up to him there, Deadpool might just have two very fast wheels for a little longer.

*
Hawkeye found them on a rooftop, sitting under an overhang and waiting out the downpour. Deadpool was playing a game on his smartphone, muttering to himself as he killed whatever monster was coming for his character. Spider-Man was going through the pictures he had taken a day before. He might just dangle them in front of Jameson's nose.

Or not.

Hawkeye dropped down from the neighboring roof and found himself staring into a gun barrel while Deadpool quickly annihilated the digital enemy with a quick thumb stroke.

"Hey, Barton," Spider-Man greeted him, smiling underneath the mask.

He ignored the gun the other man was pointing at the visitor as if it didn't even exist. Deadpool's attention was on the Avenger. He had risen to a standing position, radiating tension.

"Hey, kiddo. Deadpool. Friendly visit." He raised his hands.

"Depends on your definition of friendly," Deadpool replied evenly.

"What's the occasion?" Spider-Man asked.

"Checking to see if Fury is already out for blood."

The younger man tilted his head, then glanced at his partner. "What did you do this time?" he asked evenly.

"Nothing!" Deadpool protested, shaking his head while he still kept the gun pointed at Hawkeye. "I've been a good boy lately."

"Except for your visit to Australia?" Hawkeye added, making it a semi-question.

"Where now?"

"Big ass continent and largest island of this planet? Home of the kangaroo and the Wolverine?"

"Never heard of it," the merc quipped. "Now scram. This is private time."

"Playing video games?"

"The very same."

Hawkeye chuckled. "Word of advice: Fury might just let this one slide because of what happened to Spider-Man."

The man in question suddenly tensed and listened up.

"But," Clint went on, "you only get one freebie. This was yours. The next time he'll probably lock you up and throw away the key."

"Pft," was the answer. Deadpool waved the hand not holding the gun. "No prison cell can hold me. Not even SHIELD's."

"He might just shoot you several times over," Barton shrugged. "Depends on his mood. Just... don't do it again."
"Go fuck yourself."


With that he was off and Deadpool finally lowered the gun.

"Deadpool," Peter sighed, shaking his head with a resigned air to it.

"What? It was nothing! I didn't do anything wrong!"

"But you were in Australia?"

"Uh." He scratched the back of his head. "Maybe? I mean, geography and me... not friends. With all the dimensions and parallel worlds and whatnot, a little geography shouldn't be so hard, but hey... scrambled egg in here sometimes." He gestured at his head.

"That's a yes, then," Peter translated. "You... did what in Australia? Killed someone? No, wait. You didn't. Or Fury would have already gone after you." He tilted his head a little. "You stole something? Hm. No," was the immediate answer. "Did you blow something up?"

Deadpool tried not to cringe, but Peter saw it. He also felt a shiver along the bond. The chimera was moving around, radiating pride at something it had done, without shedding blood. It was immensely pleased with itself.

"What?"

"Just a storage unit?"

"Why is everything a question?"

"Uh, no idea?"

Spider-Man stared into the white eyes, not letting up. "Spill," he finally demanded.

"It was just storage!" Deadpool whined. "Really! No lives were lost, no animals harmed in the making of this magnificent special effects-worthy explosion!"

"But something was turned into tiny little pieces." Peter suddenly had a light bulb moment. "The armor."

Deadpool fiddled with the gun he hadn't put away yet. "..uhm..."

"You destroyed the alien artefact," Spider-Man murmured. "Inside a super secret SHIELD facility."

"Wasn't that secret," came the defiant mutter. "I found it."

"It isn't an Easter egg hunt!"

"Well, they shouldn't leave such sensitive data where any determined merc on a revenge trip for his dead bonded can find it!" he shot back, temper flaring.

Peter rolled his eyes. "Probably not. And I'm not dead any more, Deadpool."

"You were! No one kills my bonded mate and just hides in a box in a hole in the ground!" Deadpool snarled furiously.
"The armor was sentient?"

"I don't fucking care!"

"So it's ash now?"

"Yep." Deadpool looked pleased again, securing the gun in its holster. "All gone."

He closed the distance and looked into the masked face. Finally he pulled Deadpool's head down to rest forehead against forehead.

"You're insane," Peter whispered. "Absolutely insane. And I love you. Don't do it again."

"Can't promise you that," Deadpool replied, voice shaking just a tiny little bit.

Inside the vortex, the chimera flared its wings, showing off against imaginary threats. It would hunt down those who dared to take its mate from it again and again.

"Have to work on that," Peter said softly, stroking the agitated core of prickly energy, pulling it closer to his own soul.

Deadpool gave a soft moan and leaned more into the touch.

"Don't kill Martin Tigh," Spider-Man said after a moment longer. "Please."

"I won't. Unless he goes off the deep end and onto a killing spree again."

Which was highly unlikely. The alien artefact had burned his mind to a crisp.

"I don't want to spend my time visiting you on the helicarrier or in some super-secret SHIELD prison facility. The commute would be murder."

Deadpool snorted. "Like they could hold me."

"Well, they could freeze you."

"So very eighties Star Wars."

Both men were still standing very close, though no longer touching foreheads, and Peter placed a hand flat against Deadpool's chest.

"Just don't."

"Okies."

"Thank you," Peter said earnestly.

"Good Deadpool?" he asked playfully.

"Very good," was the amused reply.

"Would you break me out if they locked me up?"

"Always."

Deadpool grinned brightly. "Baby boy!"
"And I never said that," Peter added quickly.

*

Deadpool wouldn't say he was imprinted on Spider-Man, on Peter Parker, but in a way he was. It wasn't like a duckling following its parental figure. It wasn't any kind of dependency. It wasn't interdependence.

Both were fully functional away from the other. No one pined after the other, the bond didn't make them less.

Still, he felt the easiest, the most relaxed, and the most balanced when Peter was around, whether in a fight or just hanging out together. Peter was his rock in the stormy sea that was his preternatural nature.

They weren't telepathic. Neither could read the other's mind, not even emotions, though sometimes he could tell what was going on behind the mask, or even behind the hazel eyes.

Wade knew Peter instinctively.

Sure, wolves did the same, but it wasn't smell or sound. It was… it just was.

He knew him.

A curl of longing whispered through him.

The chimera hummed at the thought of its mate, the importance Peter held for it. Peter was all he had ever needed and would ever need.

Sometimes he thought of Vanessa.

Did he miss her?

In a way. Like someone he had once known, who had gone away, of whom he knew nothing more than that they had been in his life.

The pain that usually came with the memory of his handler and formerly bonded was gone. It was an echo, from another life, no longer impacting on this one. It was the past and sometimes it didn't even seem to be his own.

The hellhound was truly dead. Gone. Never forgotten, just reborn into the shape and form of the chimera.

Wade smiled thinly.

His own night terror had become his new life.

Because of Peter.

Infatuation had become so much more. It was this, between them a kind of connection no one else in the world shared or would ever share. They weren't attached by the hip. Peter had his job, which involved him a lot sometimes, and Deadpool had his own.
Sometimes they didn't see each other for weeks because of a job.

Sometimes they had long weeks together, waking up together and patrolling at night, sharing food and company.

It never impacted on what they had. The bond didn't worsen. Deadpool didn't go off the deep end.

It was still amazing for him, to be in this much control, still be his own person, but it was almost like his old life from before Weapon X had finally meshed and seamlessly interwoven with the new one as Deadpool.

"Deep thoughts."

Peter settled down next to him on the stone banister of their terrace. Feet swinging several storeys in the air, not a care in the world.

Wade shrugged.

"Happens to the best of us," Peter teased.

He chuckled. "Yeah. Brain won't shut up."

"Is that your way of hinting at wanting sex?"

Wade snorted. "No. But you know I never say no to your ass, Peteybabe."

"Anything you want to share then?"

"Not really. Kind of watching a movie of my life. The good and bad. And the fantastic when it comes to you, my flexible arachnid." He waggled his eyebrows suggestively. "Not just for the sex," Wade added, more serious again. "The sex is the whipped cream on this amazing cake with chocolatey gooey filling. Or the ice cream on the side. Everything else... it's been two years and it feels like... so much more?"

Peter placed a hand on his knee, squeezing it gently. "I know. Same for me. It was a big step and it was so worth it."

"Yeah. It's my life. You gave it to me."

"Ditto. Thank you for being... you, Wade."

Wade laughed dryly. "You're the only one who wants me to be myself."

"And you're the one who really gets me. Who gets to me, too. I love you, Wade Wilson. Always will. Crazy and all."

Wade's hand squeezed again. Wade caught it, interlacing their fingers.

"I think I should be glad that they killed Vanessa. That they chose her for the hellhound and took her life instead of maybe yours. We might not have matched otherwise. If I had met you before everything. And if we had, you would have been the one I lost. Bullet to the brain," he murmured, eyes on the buildings around them. "I might just be on speaking terms with Fate again should she come calling, but she can fuck off for all I care."

Two years in a stable relationship that had been so much more right from the start, overwhelming him.
Peter was part of his life.

He had a life.

It was like a revelation.

Wade drew a deep breath, Peter was silent, letting him ride out the emotional tidal wave. He closed his eyes and finally his whole body relaxed.

"C'mon."

Both slid off the banister, but Wade stopped his bonded before they could continue. He drew him close.

There was no fever, no hunger, in the kiss. Just the languidness and deeper emotions. Wade enjoyed the gentle caress over his bald head, feeling pleasantly mellow and warm.

The growl of Peter's stomach had him laugh and bury his head against Peter's neck.

"Hungry?" he asked.

"What gave it away?"

"You are a bottomless pit, Petey. It's a miracle you survived on your meager income until today."

Peter grinned. "It kinda is, isn't it?"

Wade kissed him again. "Delivery or fridge raid?"

"Fridge raid!" He pumped his fist in the air.

"Team Spideypool for the win! Roll the dice!" Deadpool called cheerfully. "We're coming in hot and the gates won't stand a chance against this team of raiders!"

"You've been playing too many games again."

"There can never be too many."

They walked inside, Peter elbowing him gently.

It was their home. His safe place. Home. A place he hadn't had since… forever. Now it was here, with Peter, or wherever they would go from here on. Always with Peter.

In a way, nothing had changed, but still so much was different. So many little things, which made everything else so much better.

That was what counted.

And nothing else mattered.

And he was looking forward to this future, their future.