Out of Breath

by Greychu

Summary

Wherein Steve Rogers tries to learn how to be an Omega in the twenty-first century.

Updates sometimes on Sunday.

Notes

Hello there. This is my first foray into this pairing and this genre (a/o pairings) however, this is not my first fic. This work is NOT beta read, as such, I read and re-read everything by myself (welp).

This fic has been stuck in my head for the past month, and I've really only gotten the time to write it down now.

Tags will be added as the fic progresses.
I do appreciate comments and suggestions, feel free to leave some even if it's to say I suk.
In S.H.I.E.L.D. custody

Truth be told, he hadn’t expected to survive the crash.

Steve Rogers keeps that to himself throughout all the questioning that bombard him within the first few weeks of waking up from the ice. Later, someone tells him that these men are psychiatrists, tasked to examine his mental state, to check whether or not he would be able to cope in the Twenty-first century but right now they all just sound awfully nosy about his business, even if it’s just an hour a day.

"Your name is Steven Grant Rogers, correct?" Said the first psychiatrist that he had met, a clipboard on her lap.

"Yes."

"Born July 4th, 1918."

"Yes."

"Grew up in Brooklyn."

"Yes."

"Orphaned at the age of six and taken in by Magdalene's Home for lost boy."

Steve wonders if everything in that clipboard is right about him, and whether or not he should even bother to respond.

"That's right."

"Registered Omega at the age of thirteen."

Steve fidgets in his seat but nods. He had vaguely wondered how this century handled the secondary sex, but no one had seemed to pay him much mind. He had caught a few Alphas staring at him from time to time, but then Betas and other Omegas did that too. He didn’t think it was so much him being an Omega than it was him being Captain America.

She doesn’t seem all that perturbed by his lack of further answer and continues on.

"Joined the Army at the age of twenty-one, was recruited by one Abraham Erksine for Project Rebirth. And with the help of Howard Stark, became the only known survivor of that strain of super-soldier serum."

His jaw tightens and sighs, feeling a little put off by the mention of classified information. It was one thing to mention things about his childhood and another altogether to mention Erksine's work. A man who-

He stays quiet for a while but she looks at him expectantly.

"Received 4F three times." He offers.

"Excuse me?"

"Do you have that on your clipboard too? That I was rejected by the army three times before I was
allowed to enlist?"

She gives him a look and then smiles gently.

"Yes Captain, your perseverance was a well-documented trait."

He doesn't really know what to make of that. Well-documented? The future was so strange. He'd have to make a list of things to ask about.

Most of his time is spent going through medical exams. It's one thing or another, they test for anything imaginable. He is asked to do a multitude of things, most of them physical. A doctor tells him that they want to test how much the serum had changed him and they wanted base parameters of his strength and speed. He doesn't tell them that he used to be sick a lot, barely able to get out of bed if the weather so much as looked south, and everything he does now would have been unimaginable growing up. Instead, he smiles tightly and lets them stick little electrodes on his body as they put him to work.

The rest of his time is preoccupied with 'cohabitation' as one of the psychiatrists had so plainly said when asked with what he has been up to. To Steve, it simply means leaving his S.H.I.E.L.D. assigned room whenever he is allowed, keeping to himself during meal time, and punching bags at the gym level of S.H.I.E.L.D..

Everyone gives him a wide berth, though there a few people who are friendly enough. When Nick Fury (Director of S.H.I.E.L.D.) drops in and asks how he finds the agents, he tells him that they are all nice to him and he's glad that they can accommodate him while they are all so busy with their work. Which is the truth but all Nick does is stare at him that he wonders whether or not it was the right answer.

He’s still unsure when Nick Fury brings along two agent in tow the very next day. Natasha Romanoff, codenamed Black Widow, and Clint Barton, codenamed Hawkeye.

Natasha Romanoff eyes him speculatively, Clint Barton seems to prefer pretending he doesn’t exist at all, while Nick Fury tells him that the two are now assigned to get him up to speed on how things run on S.H.I.E.L.D.

He’d already had some help with the technology of the twenty-first century, mostly with cellphones and wifi. Some poor low-ranking S.H.I.E.L.D. agent spent the better part of his hour explaining to Steve about how he could ‘connect’ to the internet, and assess a database of information to read for his perusal.

His tablet was still being monitored by S.H.I.E.L.D. (He didn't bother asking for an explanation, afraid it would take up another hour) but it was for his own good, he was promised.

“Black Widow will assess your hand to hand combat skills, and teach you basic skills in espionage. Something I think you lacked in the army. You best listen to her.”

“Ma’am” Steve nods solemnly at the Alpha female, who smiles politely all the same, though he can't shake off the feeling that she's watching him for something.

“While Hawkeye will familiarize you with some weapons.”

Hawkeye finally acknowledges him with a tight-lipped nod, obviously not excited about the idea, but has the bearings of a man who knows better than the disobey direct orders.
“They’ve both been grounded from active duty until Black Widow deems you mission ready. Until then, they have got nothing better to do than to look after you. Are we clear?”

Promptly, Black Widow raises her hand.

“Sir, with all due respect, we aren’t exactly babysitters.”

Steve flushes at that, but Black Widow continues.

“Maybe it would be better if you let Agent Coulson handle this. I’m sure he wouldn’t object.” She finishes coolly.

Fury looks at her with his one good eye.

“You are correct. Coulson would love to take this job, in fact, it might even be better if he did.”

There’s a momentary look of triumph on Black Widow’s face.

“But I plan to put both of you under the Captain’s command.”

Fury’s staring directly at Steve. And now so are Black Widow and Hawkeye, though they hide their surprise well under stoic gazes. It’s as if they are expecting him to suddenly take charge, say his part and be honored by the information.

But all Steve feels is the twinge of nervousness that lodges itself in his belly. He can barely navigate his way through the internet for the most basic information, let alone a high pressure area like a battlefield. He often felt so lost as it was, trying to understand how things worked now. How he should act. He had no clue of what everyone expected of him. Leadership? He barely qualified for that amount of responsibility.

When he doesn’t give so much as a sign of agreement, Fury relents.

“Eventually. When he’s ready.”

Black Widow is brutal with her attacks, it takes about fifteen seconds for Steve to realize that as he blocks one jab after the next, looking for an opening to push back and regain his ground but she overwhelms him with her speed. He manages to put some distance between them when he rolls to the side as she comes jumping back at him. He can smell her surprise, a sharp tang in the air that makes him feel proud of the achievement at some base level but then she’s in his space all over again and he has to concentrate.

She’s all grace and poise, deadly in her attacks, very few movements wasted that it makes him feel all the more conscious of his own stances.

Ever since the serum, he’d felt more in tune with his body than ever before. He could feel the precision that came with his movements, something his ill-stricken body couldn’t before. It was like coming out of a haze, sudden clarity about what his body could do.

By the end of it, she managed to land five hits (according to Hawkeye) on him and incapacitated him once while he only hit her three times (Four, but he was not going to count when she pretend to be unconscious just so that she could wrap her legs around his neck into another submission hold). There had been little hope to pin her down, not with the way she maneuvered herself. It was humbling in a way, and frustrating in others.
“You weren’t suppose to do that well, considering this is the first time you’ve seen me fight. who taught you to move like that?” Her face doesn’t give her away, but he can smell the adrenaline and tightly controlled disappointment from her.

Steve scratches the back of his neck, offering a shy smile.

“Uhm, well from here and there. It was the war time, we didn’t have much time. They threw me into basic, taught me how to fire a gun, and then I just went with what I saw.”

He flinches when she curses, and then she curses in a different language. In the background he can see Hawkeye smirking.

“I didn’t mean to make your job harder Black Widow, but I’m a quick study and-” He wants to say that he’ll do his best but she cuts him off with an intrigued smile.

“You mean to tell me that you have no formal training of any kind?”

“Not really?”

“We’ll fix that.” She says with a huff, a new gleam in her eye that Steve doesn’t know what to make off.

“And call me Natasha.”

He can’t help but feel like he’s won her over.

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“How about we try moving targets today, unless an old man like you thinks he can't hit his targets?”

He decided that he likes Hawkeye.

He doesn’t treat him like he’s going to break with a few jokes, or the reminder that he’s not from this century. It was the truth, and while everyone was content to ignore that fact, at least Hawkeye could make light of it.

Plus the man is nonplussed about handing him different weaponry to try.

Today it’s sniper rifles.

They’re at the S.H.I.E.L.D. firing range. Suspiciously empty but no complaints from Steve. He doesn’t feel like being gawked at today, not after another grueling round of questions from the psychiatrist.

Because a question of ‘on a scale of one to ten, how much did he want to be fucked by Natasha’ was not normal, no matter what anyone said. He spluttered his way into an answer, about how she hadn’t shown any interest, but she hadn't looked entirely convinced. Now he was even more confused about secondary gender etiquette.

Was he *suppose* to bend over for every Alpha?

Maybe that kind of thinking didn't change, even after all these years.

“Miss.” Hawkeye says as Steve takes his eye off the scope of the sniper rifle, squints and then takes aim again.
After the fourth miss, Hawkeye calling out each shot, Steve feels a tap on his shoulder, signalling him to stop.

When he takes off his mufflers, he meets Hawkeye’s disapproving stare.

“You’re off your game, after I was so impressed with how you handled handguns, even if you did hold it one-handed like a gangster for the first ten minutes. Something on your mind, Rogers? Or are snipers Captain America’s great weakness?”

Steve chuckles and shakes his head.

“No I- Yeah, it’s just—”

“Can’t be all that perfect?”

He frowns at that. He’d never claimed to be perfect.

“No. I can’t be.” He says firmly. And then thinks to hell with it. “Hawkeye, you’re an Omega, right?”

The archer raises a brow, expression carefully guarded.

“Yeah? Dunno how you’d know that. Unless they’ve given you my file.”

“I can smell it, your orientation.”

He finally shows his surprise.

“That should be kind of impossible.”

When Steve looks confused, he continues.

“We use scent blockers now, which makes it impossible for someone to know your orientation by smell alone.” He explains. “For a normal person anyway. I guess you’re far from normal.”

Right, as if he needed another reminder.

“I was just wondering if there was anything about Omega etiquette I should know.” Like if I’m suppose to drop to my knees if I’m commanded to.

Hawkeye only shakes his head but looks back at him thoughtfully.

“You haven’t done anything wrong, at least not according to your psychiatrists. Unless you feel like going into a murdering rampage on all the Alphas in base.” Steve barks a laugh at that, which has Hawkeye grinning. “Hey man, I’m not gonna tell you not to. Just give a guy a warning, let him be ready with some plausible deniability.”

Steve gives him a look.

“I’m not going to do anything to the Alphas, Hawkeye.” He feels the need to say, because the Agent smells nervous and it wouldn't hurt to say so.

He has no problem with Alphas, mostly, so long as they weren’t bullies.

“Off the field, it’s Clint, okay? Feels like I’m suppose to be looking for targets whenever you call me by my codename. And anyway, I’m not the best guy to explain Alpha-Omega etiquette to you anyway. You’re better off googling it off the internet. Safe search ON though, if you know what’s
good for you.”

“Aces.” Steve mutters letting out a breath as he settles into that thought. Yet another thing to add to his list.

“Woah, something really must have set you off today. Even I can smell all that repressed anger, and I’m used to Natasha.”

He blushes at that, a sharp reminder, a sharp, embarrassing reminder of how stupid he was about this century.

Hawkeye (Clint) pauses at that, scent going weary.

“You have… A problem with Nat?”

It’s just a guess, one that Steve can easily deny, then they can go back to shooting things, hopefully move away from this topic until he can read up on Google.

But Clint’s the only Omega in the base he trusts enough to actually give him a straight answer, rather the carefully padded and diluted explanations he gets from his psychiatrist.

He chews his bottom lip until he tastes blood, a nervous tick.

“No, it’s not exactly that. My psychiatrist, she asked if I wanted to have sexual relations with Natasha. Is that… Am I supposed to?”

They stare at each other.

“Wow, okay, no wonder you’re pissed.” Clint finally says. “First of all. No. Definitely no. Wait, backup. I mean, sure you could, if y’know, you wanted to?” He pauses to look at Steve for any sign.

Steve grimaces.

“There. See? You don’t want to, they can’t force you to fuck an Alpha you don’t like. Was it like that in the forties?”

“Sometimes.”

Clint makes a disgusted sound, scent going bitter that Steve flinches from it.

“We don’t do that here.” It’s firm, no hint of doubt in his voice, and makes Steve feel relieved. That was one thing off his chest.

“And… Mating blocks and contracts?”

“Still exist. Existing. Probably not what you remember. Look, I’m shit at explaining, I wasn’t lying about that. You can check the internet for a better explanation.”

Steve nods, at least a few things were cleared up. He didn’t have to worry that he was disrespecting every Alpha on base, or if they were out to get him through some power display he wasn’t aware of.

“Thanks Clint.”

“No problem.” The other blonde grunts, his scent still bitter. “We Omegas gotta stick together. If they tried to pull their Alpha-Omega traditionalist bullshit on me, I’d have a knife to her throat. I mean, Nat’s hot and all, but I’m no one’s fuck toy.”
He knew he liked Clint for a reason. Even if he did swear a lot.
Wow, I didn't think I'd get that many kudos. Thanks a lot, helps bolster my esteem.

I'll try to keep to a regular update schedule, as of now I'll stick to (my) sunday, within the day at the very least but I write whenever the mood strikes me or when I'm doing nothing.

His life soon follows a specific schedule.

He wakes and goes for an hour run. S.H.I.E.L.D. doesn’t let him out of the compound, but the treadmill does it’s job.

Natasha showed him how to set it to the speed he wants, incline of the track, things he never really thought about, and he had to hide his disappointment that now he even has to tell the machine about what he specifically wants, rather than just letting himself go loose and see how far his feet can take him.

Instead, he runs in place, a television in front of him so that he has something else to focus on. It’s normally set to the news (but Clint changed it once on some morning cartoons that he enjoyed), while he listens to with curiosity. He doesn’t understand half of the things they talk about, but he adds them to the list.

Even if it’s mostly the weather, and experts saying how the economy is ’stable’, he gets a few tidbits about the different things that make him feel at least slightly connected to the outside world.

After his run, he’d go for a shower, and spend the morning reading either books or web pages (approved by S.H.I.E.L.D.) until lunch time.

He’d taken Clint’s advice and googled Alpha-Omega etiquette with safe search firmly on.

A few articles were helpful, like how it was now alright for Omegas to take on work that had been deemed too rough back in his day.

Back then Omegas were the ‘last hired, first fired’ group, which made it difficult for even bonded Omegas to find decent work. Factories wanted either a stable Alpha or Beta than a hormonal Omega, because Omegas were seen as these fragile things who wouldn’t be able to keep up if the work got too tiresome.

Steve had been lucky to have he received a high school education with the encouragement of his mother, and had gotten into college. Most Omegas, especially those from poor families, could only ever afford to go to government-mandated Omega schools for their education, which focused more on how Omegas were suppose to act rather than how they could.

He had been a stubborn one, earned him a whack on the head whenever he spoke out. His mom was an Omega, and his father had died fighting in the war, by all accounts, according to their
instructor, his mom shouldn’t have made it past five years without an Alpha or Beta husband to protect her.

And yet his Ma was doing fine for the both of them, working in the hospital as a nurse, helping where she could and being treated nicely for her hard work.

It put his mind to ease that there were things that changed for the better.

And while mating blocks still existed, they were no longer the Alpha-centric environment he had known, but a more mutual place where Alphas in rut and Omegas in heat could help one another out to their benefit, or at least most of them were.

He had heard nasty rumors about the mating block in Brooklyn, had been scared out of his wits when he’d first gone in. But heats were unbearable unless you could afford the drugs that helped you maintain some dignity during the one week period, and he’d been too unhealthy to try to hold out on his own.

Bucky and Frank had already gone off to basic training when his heat settled in, so he had to take his chances with a stranger. Wasn’t the first time and the little bit of money he got after was some consolation at least.

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After a big lunch (it was embarrassing to see how much he had to eat now but if there was anything he learned during the first few weeks of waking, it was that America had a lot of food now), he’d mentally ready himself for his psychiatrist.

His schedule had mysteriously shifted from being once everyday to once every three days, which is a lot more tolerable and a lot less weary on him.

He feels like he should have Clint to thank for the adjustment, but the archer doesn’t mention it so he doesn’t either. Still, it’s a pleasant thought that there’s someone looking out for him.

In which case, he spends the extra time back in his room, either continuing where he had left off from before lunch, or starting on a new topic altogether.

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His afternoon is then occupied by either Natasha or Clint. They’d reached an agreement between themselves without Steve knowing, as they took turns calling him out of his room for training.

Natasha switches between practicing on the mats and taking him out of headquarters.

She takes him to places nearby, a cafe, a mall, a park, anywhere with people and then they start dissecting them, as she puts it.

“Find out their secret, and then they’re harmless to you.” She tells him.

She teaches him how to read their bodies, too far away to scent them for anything, it was better to gather information from afar and assess the situation first before closing in.

He doesn’t like it, feels too much like prying into lives of innocent people, but he does the best he can.

She tells him the signs of aggression as they watch a fight start to simmer. Two Alphas ready to fight.
He’d been ready to jump right in, toss the two Alphas aside, but Natasha read that too.

“And what will you do when you have two Alphas initiate a fight?” She asks, eyebrow cocked when he tells her what he wants to do. “Push them aside with that super strength, have them suddenly cautious about this outsider?”

She shakes her head.

“You either disperse the situation or distract them. Go on pretty boy, show me what you can do.”

He had gone over with Natasha’s words in mind, pretended to trip over one of the Alphas and then used his ‘Oh gosh’ tone (Natasha’s assessment, not his) and Omega antics (Also Natasha’s assessment) to bring attention to himself instead.

It had worked, better than he had hoped, because the two were now so curious about this clumsy Omega that they’d forgotten about their previous issue and instead worried over him.

He’d shaken them off and doubled back to Natasha.

“Not bad, we’ll make a spy of you yet.”

She treated him to some hotdogs and promised that they’d take a few more trips outside, as many as necessary.

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Clint kept them normally on the range, but surprised him once by taking him to the mats and handing him a knife.

“Don’t ever underestimate a weapon, Rogers. Especially one you can conceal.” Clint had said when Steve had looked skeptically at the blade.

It looked handmade, a chipped blade wrapped in worn but sturdy cloth and kept in place with string. Shiv sounded like the more appropriate term for it than knife. It seemed so out of place as compared to the guns he’d been handed.

They got through the afternoon with little incident, with a few new scratches from close calls. And while Steve’s cuts were gone by the end of training, Clint sported two new cuts on his leg.

“I’m real sorry Clint.” He had tried to apologize, feeling horrible for going too aggressive and causing the man some pain.

“Nah, it’s alright. ‘Sides, I got you way more times, you just heal too damn quick.” Clint tosses back jovially, throwing the knife into the air and then catching it between his fingers, and then shakes his head when Steve motions to give him back the shiv.

“Keep it.”

Steve only looks at him, worry etched into his face.

“You can practice hiding it. Find out where it’s easiest to bring out, it’ll be good practice for when you need it on the field.”

That makes some sense, Steve relents and pockets the blade.

“Plus, if your psychiatrist ever starts asking stupid questions again.” Clint makes a slicing
movement below his neck and then winks.

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He then normally winds down with another trip to the gym, this time with weights and a couple of bags. They gave him a regimen for his training, something about researched efficiency. And while he nodded, and thanked them for their suggestion, he preferred to go through this at his own pace in secret.

This wasn’t something he did in the war, not when every waking minute was spent tracking down information and then acting upon that information decisively, which meant destroying camps and bases in most cases. Any time they weren’t actively hunting down Nazis was spent sleeping, whatever precious few moments he could get before either Colonel Philips or Agent Carter could yell at him for another mission.

(The other Commandos would goad him for a drink when they could spare the time, severely disappointed that he couldn’t get drunk but then later rejoiced when it meant he could carry anyone who had passed out back to their camp with ease.)

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After a shower, he’d go right back to reading, and then sleep to do the entire day again.

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Except tonight, it was different.

Steve gets out of the shower, feeling warm and cozy from the warm shower. That was something he’d forever be grateful for, at least unless the summer weather came. He puts on a new set of clothes, a bit tighter and fit too close to his skin than what he was used to but someone had reassured him that this was what everyone wore nowadays.

He’s entertaining the idea of going to bed early tonight when there’s a knock on the door.

And it’s to no surprise that he meets face to face with an agent, albeit someone he’s never met before.

Except, behind the agent is Clint, which is strange.

The Beta Agent smiles.

“Good evening, Captain Rogers. I hope I’m not interrupting anything.”

“Nothing at all, sir. What can I do you for?”

At this point, Clint interjects, clearly thinking he’s been here longer than he should be.

“OKAY! Steve Rogers, Phil Coulson.” He points from Steve to the Agent. “Super Agent, Captain America. I’ve done my duty, bye.” And with that he marches away in a brisk pace.

The Agent (Phil) doesn’t exactly chase after him, a tight frown as he watches Clint take off, but Steve notices the little twitch in his body that might have meant he would have gone on after Clint if something weren’t keeping him here. So instead, he’s met with a steel-gray eyes of the Beta, looking as though he can barely contain his excitement.

“May I come in?”
“Uh, sure.”

Nothing in his room is out of place, he keeps it relatively tidy, if only to give S.H.I.E.L.D. less things to worry about.

Phil is apparently an expert at being in charge, takes a seat by the table, and then motions for Steve to take the seat across himself. There’s nothing aggressive about the behavior, and Steve feels compelled to obey, a crisp professionalism emanating from the Beta.

“First of all, I’d like to say that it is an honor, to be speaking with you. I’ve been a fan of your work for as long as I can remember.”

Steve only smiles at that, feeling the hints of a blush coming, unsure of what to say. He hadn’t known how to react to that yet, when people came up and thanked him for simply being him, and he still doesn’t.

“That’s sweet of you, but really I was doing my job.”

Phil seems to understand that, nodding agreeably, but then his face turns serious.

“Of course, Captain.” He clears his throat. “Agent Barton was suppose to be with us this evening, to help ease this situation but as you can see we are one Agent Barton short.”

“Then this must be important.”

“It’s a sensitive case, again, Agent Barton was suppose to be of assistance.” Phil shakes his head, looking suddenly fatigue. Steve can emphasize, it was the look he got when Bucky would mysteriously disappear from a mission.

“Let me reintroduce myself. My name is Phil Coulson, I am your official S.H.I.E.L.D. handler for the time being. It’s little more than title, I am also Agent Barton’s and Agent Romanoff’s handler, if that eases your mind.”

Steve nods slowly. He doesn’t understand the implications of it.

“It means that I am personally responsible for your person, for mission status, in base relationships, and your overall health.”

Oh. Oh.

“Then this must be about my Heat.”

Phil smiles at him sympathetically.

“You see why Agent Barton would have been of some help.”

“I don’t think there’s much helping it, Sir.”

It made sense that they’d be concerned since Steve hasn’t really had the time to find an Alpha. He’s trying to remain optimistic, and believe that S.H.I.E.L.D. wouldn’t just pair him off with an Alpha of their choosing. Steve sighs and rubs his eyes wearily, taking to staring at the floor.

“I know it’s a sensitive situation, a familiar face would have helped.” He can smells the concern from the Beta, Steve too downcast to look him properly in the eyes.

His heat isn’t due for another couple of month, but even that timeline hedge of uncertainty. They
weren’t sure yet if being frozen had affected his cycle, as they’d based this current timeline from when he was still in war, when his body would have shut down on any imperative to breed unless he was suitably comfortable, which had only happened twice post-serum.

“As you know, your body metabolises modern drugs too quickly, so we can’t give you full suppressives for your heat.”

That had been a doozy too, even now when someone could pay for his comfort, he couldn’t actually take it because of this body.

“We’ve already compiled a short list of Alphas we think would be compatible for you, and if you think you’re up to it, we could go over the list.”

A list? That at least better than an ultimatum.

He peers at Phil, a frown still on his lips at this revelation.

“Do I get to choose the Alpha from your uh-list?”

Phil looks at least relieved from his reaction.

“Yes, of course. We wouldn’t dream of pushing anything forward without your explicit consent. The list already contains Alphas whom will help integrate you into society, we can go over the list when you think you’re ready and conduct a Scenting to see if you’re compatible.”

“Scenting?”

“Oh, I’m sorry. It’s a slight detail in contracts these days. You and your selected Alpha will meet before your Heat for a short period of time, just the two of you, and see if your scents are compatible. If neither of you react, then you may select another Alpha.”

Maybe he had more choice here than he thought. Steve could simply decline every Alpha that came in line, that would teach them.

“Okay, and the contract…?” They’d asked some… peculiar details already, he just didn't know how much more preference they needed.

Phil seems to take his lack of complaint as a good sign. “Being taken care of. It’s a short-term renewable contract, with your permission. You have nothing to worry about, I will personally oversee it.”

“Um, aces. Are you… Going to go over the list with me?” He’s making his discomfort known.

At least Phil is very sensitive to that, as he frowns and looks thoughtful.

“Well, all I would do is provide you with more personal information about the Alphas.” So he could pick more than a pretty face and a knot, good. “But, if you would prefer to do it alone, I could give you slides with appropriate information and you may ask questions later on.”

“Can I have Agent Barton accompany me?”

No way was he facing this miserable onslaught alone.

“Of course, Director Fury has made him infinitely available to you.”

“And… Agent Romanoff too?”
That gets him a face.

“I would have thought that you wouldn’t want an Alpha around.”

“She makes me feel safe.”

He’s playing it up, and by Phil’s scent he can tell that the agent isn’t exactly buying it. Truth is, he knows that Natasha probably had the dirt on the Alphas and that was what he was trying to get. He tries to feel as miserable as he does, hoping to win Phil over.

(Omega antics, he can almost hear Natasha say.)

It works, Phil sighs in defeat. Steve has to carefully maintain feeling miserable to make sure that Phil doesn’t catch on to his glee.

“I’ll hand over the slide to Agent Romanoff once I’ve compiled them.”

“Thank you, Sir, it means a lot to have them with me.”

Surprisingly, he finds that he means that.
A little bit late, but it's still Sunday so I made it. Stuff came up, emotional stuff, so that's whatever. Also I went to see TMNT and Warcraft, had some ideas for maybe one-shots or shorts. Maybe you guys want me to fill a few prompts? Idk, comment below.

Anyway, here is this weeks chapter. A little longer than usual. Enter Tony.

He keeps busy with his pre-determined schedule. He works harder with his *studies*, determined to catch up with this current century before it inevitably came crashing down on him. He wasn’t optimistic, not when he knew that S.H.I.E.L.D. was determinedly sanitizing every piece of information he got, not when he knew that the psychiatrists and medical team treated him with kid gloves.

They’d frozen when he mentioned wanting a cellphone, incredulous when everyone seemed to have one except him, but they eventually relented and given him one that he could use to call or text anyone he wanted. Which in all reality was just Clint and Natasha, on occasion Commander Fury and Agent Coulson, that was about the extent of his contact list.

It still felt like a victory, some tiny invisible step into reclaiming some semblance of control over his life.

So he lets the week pass by, trying to bat away at the nervousness he feels growing everyday.

“Files loaded and ready to go, Steve.”

Natasha settled back onto his bed, helping herself to some popcorn Clint brought along.

Natasha’s contribution is vodka. While Steve isn’t sure he can get drunk on it, and even though Steve tells Natasha as much, she gets a gleam in her eyes that he isn’t sure how to read.

“Still can’t believe you’re invited to this roast. Still *can’t* believe I have to sit through this roast. Feels like I’m in highschool all over again.” Clint glares (pouts) at Natasha as she takes a fistful of popcorn from his bowl.

“Roast?” Steve inquires, settling into the nest of pillows they’d decided to set up. Pillow fort, Clint had argued.

“A gathering wherein we insult a group or single individual for our entertainment.” Natasha provides, as she throws an unpopped kernel at Clint. “Also, I’ve read your file. You’ve never been anywhere remotely close to a high school.”

“An Omega can dream.”

Steve knows that Clint’s joking, at this point he hopes that half the things that Clint says are jokes,
but it still gets him upset from time to time. Steve admires him, truthfully, that he can turn his situation into a joke for other people, at the expense of himself. That’s what gets to Steve though. Clint didn’t have to do that, not for him anyway.

“Oh, it’s alright. We’re used to your brand of dumb.”

“Hey!”

Steve chuckles at the two as they commence some kind of secret message in glares. They remind him of himself and Bucky when they were kids, telling each other how it was, having each other’s backs, except deadlier.

Natasha wins the glaring contest by default, Clint eating huffily into his bowl. “We can start as soon as you’re ready, Steve.”

“I don’t think I’ll ever really be ready, but roll it anyway.”

As it turns out, the ‘short list’ of Alphas expand to be twenty five Alphas, with varying degrees of groans from Clint and Natasha. They aren’t listed in any particular order, as the first Alpha was quickly yelled at.

“Why is he on the list, didn’t I personally end his report with ‘never again in a million years’?” Clint said, disgruntled that a former Alpha of his made it to the list.

“Does he have a huge knot?”

Steve chokes on his drink.

Natasha looks extremely serious about her question.

“It was okay I guess, but he was shit at aftercare plus it was almost like he was praising himself for my orgasms. As if nature didn’t do a helluva job already.”

“But look, it says ‘patient and malleable’.” Natasha points out.

“Just means he’ll listen to your kinks and do them if he likes them.”

The information is stripped down as is. Name, age, gender, height (as if that mattered to Steve), weight, occupation, and then bullet points of either personality traits or other information. Steve wasn’t sure how he was suppose to have scrutinized any of them alone, but then remembered that Phil Coulson was suppose to go over them with him.

He has to admire a man who would willingly sit himself down to this tedious and no doubt boring task for him. Steve has to remember to thank him for the slides when he meets him next.

It turns out to be difficult, choosing an Alpha under these circumstances. Natasha assures him that all the Alphas have been background checked and cleared to meet him if he so chooses but it still feels like choosing his own firing squad. No different from going to the mating blocks and hoping to hell that the Alpha who chooses him would know his limit.

Even with the pictures and insightful commentary from Clint and Natasha, they all stare at him with unseeing eyes. Steve would have preferred to meet any candidates face-to-face. He could appreciate that, a very human gesture, he liked to think that he was a good judge of character and could tell if he liked someone within the first five minutes or so, like he used to do.
But then he was also Captain America. He’d picked up early on that he was a secret (used to it, at this point), and not even everyone in S.H.I.E.L.D. knew of his actual identity. He didn’t think S.H.I.E.L.D. would suddenly have a change of heart because of his heat.

He was picking out an Alpha from a list instead of meeting them because of who he was. Because S.H.I.E.L.D. wasn’t going to reveal him as he was now.

Clint is right next to him, touches him on his arm, shoulder, skin, tiny moments of inquiry, a language Omegas know by instinct. And Natasha too, a solid presence in the room, not as close as Clint was but just enough to make Steve feel safe, none at all commandeering, as if saying thank you for your trust.

It was going to be okay, Steve tells himself.

Six bottles of vodka later.

“Not him! He’s like fifty!” Clint yells at fifteenth Alpha to show up on the screen.

“Well, he is half my age.” Steve provides, bemused. The nervousness had dwindled down somewhat, replaced instead by dread of what was to come next. Clint and Natasha do an awful good job of keeping his spirits high, clearly taking this roast very seriously. He was almost enjoying it.

To be fair, he’s had four of the six bottles of vodka all by himself (This does not make him alcoholic, Natasha insists).

“Hmm.”

“Next, NEXT!”

Steve groans when he reads the occupation list.

“Please not military.”

Clint stares at him, almost looking affronted.

“Had enough of them during service.” He mumbles, letting his words slur together.

He wasn’t really all that drunk, he could remember what that felt like when he was tiny, and he was nowhere near his limit. He did feel warmer than usual, a little sluggish, but that was it.

“Coulson probably thought you’d be comfortable with someone of some shared experience.” Natasha provides insightfully.

“Military. It’s—” Steve shakes his head, wanting some excuse to not talk about it. “I know the type, military Alphas establish the pecking order, set things straight in a unit. I’m not saying they’re awful at their job or anything but sometimes they just—” He rubs his eyes wearily.

“Hey man, you don’t have to explain, you don’t like him, you don’t pick him.”

Steve nods, going quiet.

He remembers reports, during his short rests in the SSR base when he could have them. It wasn’t the Alphas faults, not entirely. A fresh squadron handed off to a rookie Alpha officer, all the
pressure piled up one way or another, placed into a life threatening situation.

Fight or flight, that was what it came down to, and most of the Alphas stood their ground and fought, ‘til their pride became the death of them, along with their squad.

Steve just couldn’t condone that, thousands of lives lost, just because an Alpha couldn’t admit that retreat was an option.

He sighs as Natasha continues with the slides, quickly skipping past the rest of the military Alphas without so much as a word.

"Isn’t he an agent?” Steve says, looking at the current Alpha on the screen.

‘BROCK RUMLOW. Occupation, S.H.I.E.L.D. Agent.’ He reads, finally putting a name to the face. He’d seen him around the base a few times, though the man had never really talked to him. In the picture, he looked younger (or was it the lack of facial hair?), a little less haggard.

“Yes, Agent Rumlow. Very formidable on the field, commander of STRIKE.” Natasha adds, giving file a quick lookover as if she could find some discrepancies just by that.

“He’s also kind of a douche.”

“STRIKE?”

“A small elite group for international incidents.”

He’s not sure if Natasha is giving him just scraps because he didn’t have the clearance to know (there was an agent level system he still couldn’t grasp the exact details of, except that Clint and Natasha had exceptionally high clearance, or else they wouldn’t have even been allowed near him), or if she she was generally not interested in that sub-group of S.H.I.E.L.D.

Steve files that away for future reference.

"Last one."

That was good news, wasn’t it? It was going to be over soon, he could go back to barely existing within S.H.I.E.L.D. barracks and no one could say that he didn’t try. It also meant that he would have to suffer through a heat alone but that was a price he was willing to pay.

“Wow, I didn’t think he’d be on this list.”

In bold letters he’s met with the name ‘TONY STARK’

“Stark. As in?”

“Of Stark Industries. Founded by Howard Stark, now owned by Anthony Stark, his son. They started as a weapons and defense company. For a long time, they were the leading manufacturer of guns, bombs, ammunition and weapons of mass destruction.”

That sounded just like Howard. To build something from ground up and make it huge. He’d already went through the records (internet), and found that the man had died in a car crash.
“And then?” He could sense there was more to the story.

“But then Stark was kidnapped. He came out of it with a suit of armor and a new collection of sensibilities. Later, he announced to the world that he was Iron Man.”

“Iron Man?”

“A full body armor that can fly, with an onboard weapon system that would put a tank to shame.” Clint says, almost dreamily. “Wish I had one, but then Stark’s not good with sharing.”

“So it’s a weapon.”

“Tony Stark is very adamant about not calling it a weapon, especially after Stark Industries stopped production on all of their weapons. This was after Tony Stark was kidnapped.”

Steve mulls that over. Tony Stark, possibly the last connection to the past he had. It almost felt like a trap. After a two months of sitting around, why had no one told him that Tony Stark existed? And then seeing him on this list? It all sounded too suspicious.

“I’d like to meet him.”

“So you’re choosing him as your Alpha?”

Clint laughs, apparently unable to hold it in anymore.

Steve stares at him until he gives.

“He’s sort of a celebrity. Nat did his evaluation.” As if that was answer enough.

“What does that mean?”

“It means,” Natasha butts in, elbowing Clint hard on the side. “that I was sent in to see if he’s of any use for S.H.I.E.L.D.. I reported what I saw, someone else does an evaluation alongside mine, and a decision is made.” She casts a furtive look at the screen.

Steve guesses that Tony Stark was seen as useful, at least, enough of a use to be included on his list. It might just be the curiosity of it, but he wants to meet the man that was raised by Howard, maybe get some insight on how he’d lived.

“Okay, sure, I’ll do a Scenting with him.”

“What?! Really?”

Steve shrugs. “Sure, I mean, I want to meet him. I know the circumstances aren’t the most pleasant. If we’re not compatible, then I don’t have to do anything with him, right?” The details were vague at best, someone still had to explain what Scenting was.

Clint looks like he’s about to protest (say something nasty) but then Natasha hit him on the shoulder and that gets him quiet.

“I’ll get the paperwork done, Steve.”

#########

Scenting was a small ceremony, performed by the Alpha and Omega if a contract constitutes it. Optional at best, as there were no definite findings that a successful Scenting meant that the Alpha or Omega got along, though research has shown that it had a high percentile of success if done
Simply put, an Alpha and Omega react to each other in a very specific way, because their bodies emit hormones that trigger one another in close proximity. A common way for these hormones to travel was by scent. Each scent was unique to the individual and triggers different reaction to the body, but inherently they all had similar properties. The mere presence of an Omega would be enough to call up a reaction of some kind. It was why, even though Alpha and Beta pairs could consummate, a knot would not form without the specific hormone from the Omega.

Scenting was not an exact science. Even if an Alpha and Omega smelled good to one another, it did mean that they would get along, but at least their instincts knew that they were compatible in some way.

So the day that Steve is to meet Tony Stark, it weighs heavily on his mind. He wasn’t sure if Scenting was done back in his day, though they probably didn’t call it that even if it did. It was as easy as getting close to an Alpha and feeling a little *something*, chat them up, get to know them, and really that was all it took. Today, it’s all about *equation* and *chemical stimuli*.

Commander Fury took him aside and explained that Tony Stark was already on base, but he needed to have a conversation with him first, before the Scenting. Steve nodded. He probably couldn’t have stopped it even if he wanted to.

Eventually Commander Fury steps out of the room. Steve stands to greet him, stopping the knee-jerk reaction to salute. Instead he nods.

“Sir.” He says as respectfully as he can, meeting Fury in the eyes.

“Just needed a small word with Stark, nothing to be concerned about.” Fury says, as if he read Steve’s mind. “He’s expecting you inside.” With that, Fury claps him on the shoulder and takes his leave.

It takes Steve a second to wrestle down the squirm in his chest, before he takes a breath and enters the room.

The man isn’t immaculate as he was in the picture, which bring some comfort to Steve. A hair out of place, clothes slightly crumpled, it somehow humanizes the man he’d seen on Time Magazine (He did a google search).

The Alpha lounges on the chair like he owns the place (does he?), eyes quickly flickering up to meet his when he entered. Steve keeps his face neutral, or as neutral as can be. For all the research and insight that Natasha may have given him, he still couldn’t get an exact foothold on the Alpha in front of him. There were too many insults from the internet, and it seemed even Natasha had some mixed reviews on him. (Iron Man, yes. Tony Stark, no.)

“Nice to meet you, Mr. Stark.”

Tony raises a brow but adjusts in his seat and holds up his hand regardless. They quickly shake hands and Steve takes the chair directly in front of Tony, with a table separating them. He tries to smile at him once he’s found his seat but Tony doesn’t even bother smiling back.

“So. Captain America, I presume?”

“Steve Rogers.”

“You’re a convincing looking imposter, if I do say so myself. And I’ve met a lot of imposters.”
That takes Steve unawares. No one had ever called him an *imposter* before, they’d all believed his story of going down with the plane, and then waking up to this place. No one had bothered to ask about authenticity. He opens his mouth to protest but Tony cuts him off.

“Fine specimen, don’t get me wrong. You probably have the closest *bone structure* I’ve seen yet. Dunno where Fury could have dug you up either, but if he’s privy to that secret then maybe we would have something to talk about.” Tony levels him with a gaze, reading the confusion on his face. “You can’t *seriously* be Captain America, he died over seventy years ago.”


“I’d say prove it, but then you probably know everything there is to know about Captain America.”

“I knew your father.”

“Well. I’ve never really *liked* anyone who opened with that statement, but go ahead, get this train wreck moving.” He can see the curiosity in Tony’s eyes, scents the carefully controlled dissatisfaction. “A lot of people knew my father, I’m not particularly impressed when people mention it.”

Steve wonders how quickly this went downhill.

“I don’t know how to prove who I am.”

Tony’s narrows a glare at him, studying him for *something*. “Most people would try to tell me something that my father would have told me about Captain America.”

“I couldn’t possibly know that. The Howard I knew wouldn’t have been the same as your father. He would have been a horrible father.”

“That, we can agree on.”

Steve squirms in his seat, looking pointedly uncomfortable. Tony wasn’t fitting into any earlier presumptions he had made, and he was proving to be difficult to read. He must look as dejected as he feels because Tony eventually sighs.

“Look, Fury called me up to help an Omega through their heat. And then he tells me, *minutes* before meeting said Omega, that it’s Captain America. Please understand *why* I feel wholly unprepared because of that *tidbit.*” Tony motions with his hands, just coming off short from slamming his hand on the table.

“I understand entirely Mr. Stark.” Steve smiles sadly. That was what everyone been doing to him. Throwing him into a situation and expecting him to be alright with it, meet it head on.

“Then let’s get this Scenting over with.”

Steve swallows, stays rooted to his chair as Tony approaches him. He keeps still as the Alpha rearranges their seats so that they are face to face.

“Hey Cap, eyes up.”

Jaw set tight as Tony gets into his space, he inclines his head just the slightest to meet the Alpha’s gaze. There’s mockery in those eyes, as well as attentive stare that makes Steve wonder if Tony still thinks he’s an imposter.
There’s an awkward pause between them, a moment where they just stare at one another. Then Tony rolls his eyes and leans closer.

“May I?” He motions with his head, indicating towards his scent glands, located on either sides of his neck.

Steve nods, closing his eyes as he leans towards Tony’s scent glands too.

He already had a whiff of him, difficult when his own senses were stronger than others thanks to the serum but this is different. He’s suddenly overwhelmed by Tony’s scent.

He smells of warmth and sunshine, some earthy smell that he can’t name, only that he knew it meant safety and care. It feels strangely intimate, despite barely knowing the man, to know this much about him without saying a word. His body sags where he sits, and it feels very much like, if he were not sitting in the first place, he’d be on leaning on Tony for support.

Wow.

“Yeah. Wow.”

He must have said it aloud, feels his cheeks heat up at Tony’s comment. There’s something with Tony’s voice too, softer, less barbed with distrust (or was it because of the scent in his head?)

“Is it suppose to be this way?” Steve breathes, taking in as much of the scent as he can. Now that the initial rush is over, he can detect other smells too. The slight tang of metal, the heady odor of gasoline, perfume (cologne?) that Tony must use. He feels lighter somehow, his brain has given up on any other thought other than ‘Alpha smells good. More. More. More.’ that he can’t be bothered to wonder why he didn’t want to do a Scenting in the first place.

“Not sure, I haven’t really been with an Omega since that time with the thing.” Tony remains purposefully vague. Somehow Steve can’t find as annoying as he normally would. It at least sounded like Tony wasn’t as affected by the scent as Steve was. So far Tony could still give out full sentences while Steve’s thoughts remained muddled. “No complaints from my end. I like your scent, I can admit that.”

“I like your scent too.”

Eventually, after who knows how long, they pull apart.

A whine escapes Steve throat, Tony smirks at him for it and then chuckles.

“Oh, you’re blushing. Didn’t think I’d find it so cute.”

He then proceeds to frown, like he didn’t expect himself to say that.

Which only makes Steve blush more. “S-So. That’s that?” He’s torn between the thought of retreating (hiding) back to his room, and pulling Tony close again.

Tony nods, frown still in place, but he didn’t look unhappy. “I’ll talk to Fury about the contract. He is your negotiator, right?”

“Uhm, yes?”

Tony’s frown deepens, and Steve ducks his head for it.

“It’s fine, it’s fine. Fury the spy of all spies.” Tony says, like that’s the explanation for it.
“Okay, Tony.”

“This doesn’t mean I believe you’re Captain America.”

“Then I guess I’m just plain ’ol Steve Rogers.”

“Nothing wrong with that sugarplum. Now excuse me, I have a pirate to talk to.”

##########

Later, when Steve returns to his room, he scrounges around for whatever other scraps he might find of Tony Stark. The enigma of the man, the distrust and closed eyes that no regular civilian should know.

He wants that scent again, and he wants to learn about the man behind it.
As it turns out Phil Coulson is his negotiator.

There are forms to fill, but most of them merely need his signature for authentication sake. He has no doubt that no one will ever really see the contents of the contract, not while S.H.I.E.L.D. could help it. A thing to be grateful for.

Phil isn’t daunted by the task, if anything he looks happy to be of assistance. Steve is secretly happy that the psychiatrists were nosey as they were, at least he only had to go through sexual preference questioning once. (What is your preferred position? Do you have any aversion to nipple clamps? How long can you sustain an erection?) Phil only asks a few more extra question, but most of them are for his living conditions.

“Tony Stark will be providing anything and everything you need, Captain. He is legally obligated to do so.” Phil says, eyeing the piece of paper (Third revision since Phil got a hold of it), shuffling through the pages that held Steve’s entire life until his heat was over. Evidently he finds nothing wrong with it because he sets it down again, looking content.

“Oh, well, can’t think of much. A good bed and proper food s’all I need.”

“Nonsense, he will give you whatever you need.” Phil says, just a hint deadlier, like it’s a personal grudge.

##########

“I think this should be our last training session.” Natasha says while they’re doing their post-workout stretches.

Steve looks at Natasha, surprised to say the least. She smirks at him, patting him on the arm.

“You did good work today.” She starts, letting her appreciation be known, an encouraging smile on her face. “I think you’re ready.”

“And that means?”

They didn’t do anything too different today, another hand-to-hand combat simulation with a few other agents so that Natasha could step back to critique his form. He felt good today, looser, a warm ache in his bones that made him feel more intune with his body than he has felt in a while.
“It means I’m going to pass a report to Fury and make you an actual SHIELD agent.”

Stunned, he swallows and looks around to where the other Agents lay. Most were flat on their back, a quiet groan from one who was stretching out. Steve was glad at least that he remembered how much was just enough to knock a man unconscious, and what would cause just enough pain for them to remain coherent. He liked to know his limits.

“Do you think I’m ready?”

“It was all about making you believe you were ready, Steve.”

################################################

He is picked up in non-descript looking black car, carrying what little personal items he had in a duffel bag. He takes hold of his nerves, and nods to Clint and Phil who have come to see him off. Natasha is absent, but only because she’d left for an operation (infiltration op?) the day prior. She had shook his hand and wished him luck. He had appreciated it.

“This isn’t goodbye.” Phil reminds him, perhaps reading into the situation all too well. It makes Steve wonder how many wayward Omegas Phil has had to care for to perceive so much with so little but then he reminds himself that Phil is also Clint’s handler, which makes some sense.

“Call if you run into any problem.”

“Sure will.”

Clint pulls him into a surprise hug, running an inquiring hand over his back before whispering in his ear.

“You still have that knife?”

“Yes.”

“Good.”

They pull apart with matching smiles. Steve turns to Phil and shakes his hand, the agent wearing a conservative smile.

Hitching up his bag, he nods to the driver that Tony sent. The man introduces himself as Happy Hogan, a nice enough Beta, they shake hands, Happy takes his bag and he is ushered into the car. With that, he leaves S.H.I.E.L.D., the building a distant view from the backseat.

He keeps his gaze out the window, Happy astute enough to know to keep quiet the whole trip over. They stop over at an airport where they leave the car (It’s a rental, Happy informs him.) and get into a plane with the name STARK on it.

Steve hasn’t been on a plane since-

Happy squeezes past him, looks used to it, settling into one of the seats with Steve’s bag still in hand, leaving him with a litany of choices and unsure of where he should place himself.

“The flight’s about-” Happy checks his watch. “Five hours if we’re lucky. Just in time for dinner. As soon as the crew is down with pre-flight, then we’re out of here.” Sensing Steve’s discomfort, but plainly not knowing what to do with it, motions towards the back of the plane.

“There’s a bed at the back, if you prefer-”
“No. It’s alright.” Steve quickly interjects, feeling foolish for being treated like a child who was lost. A small voice tell him that that was what he had become, ever since waking up but he hushes that with a practiced smile.

“Mr. Stark gave instructions to make sure that you are as comfortable as possible.” Happy insists with scrunched eyebrows. With examining eyes, Steve realizes.

“Tell you what Happy, if you can get me some paper and a pencil, I’ll be right as rain.”

#################

Three hours into the flight, Steve feels the first vestiges of restlessness and walks around to inspect the plane.

Happy got him a sketchbook (watercolor paper, 300gsm, much too good for him) and a small assortment of pencil. Now he’s reclined in his seat, snoring quietly with a sleeping mask on, leaving Steve with privacy with his new tools.

He hasn’t drawn in a while, there hadn’t been much time in S.H.I.E.L.D., and frankly he had been a little frightened with the idea of asking for more than what was given to him. Now, he realizes that he’d been silly to presume that. If anything S.H.I.E.L.D. had done everything they could to make him as comfortable as possible. Funny how it took him leaving to realize that.

#################

A car is already there to pick them up (S.H.I.E.L.D. or Tony’s doing?) and they’re on the road again with no delay.

Happy is Tony’s personal driver, he learns on the way to Malibu, when he’s not flying the Iron Man suit anyway. Steve senses the fondness in his voice, just the tiniest scent of protectiveness on the Beta. The man is amicable, providing the brunt of small talk that fills the car for the rest of the trip. Happy likes burgers (and so does Tony apparently) and points out good places to eat as they pass them by.

Steve’s mind rises to attention when they reach the gated premises of the Stark Premises. Happy gets out of the car first to get his bag from the trunk, Steve standing and surveying the premises. The house is nothing like he’d seen before (Modern?), but the outside is a garden no matter how he looked at it. Setting sun against it, the house is almost ethereal.

Happy hands him his bag and shakes his hand.

“It was real nice to meet you, Happy.” Surprised by the genuinity of it, despite only knowing the driver for less than a day.

“You too Steve. Mr. Stark’s a little rough around the edges, but you’ll get used to him.” It was the only sort-of bad thing he’s said about Tony all day.

He enters the house, bag in hand, to be met with a Tony Stark in a suit, just like before, looking impeccable but worn.

They stare at each other for a moment.

“Happy getting the rest of your things?” Tony breaks the silence, gesturing at the bag that Steve grips so tightly.

“This is everything I have.”
He grits his teeth as he realizes how that sounds. So sad, so lonely, so desperate for things to cling to, but never finding them. So utterly lost that there was barely anything that could hold him together.

“Less things to move in, perfect.”

Steve looks back up to Tony (Did he really drop his gaze?), the Alpha looking at him like nothing was wrong at all. He was thankful that Tony had missed his minor panic attack.

“A tour, perhaps?”

“Sure Tony.”

He doesn’t expect to recognize anything, which makes him mentally prepared to not show his surprise. Tony breezes past explanations, pointing out the kitchen and living room (There was a huge picture box!) without much preamble. The place whispers of money and influence, even Steve can see that.

“Let me show you your room.”

Steve gulps. There was no underlying tone, no hint of aggression, but he’s still wary. Living with an Alpha was- Back in his day, it would have meant something different, and people would look at you different too.

Different now too, he reminds himself. A little bit more normal. His psychiatrist had tried to explain, that sometimes even a contracted Alpha would stay in an Omega’s home instead. A show of trust and respect, wherever the Omega would feel most safe. Except in his case, Tony had argued that Steve would feel better if he could have free reign rather than being cooped up in his quarters, or so Phil had explained.

The room is larger than his room in S.H.I.E.L.D., with little to no decoration.

“I thought you’d like to decorate yourself.” Tony says, as if reading his mind. “Feel free to buy anything that you like and bring it around. Or have JARVIS buy it online and have it delivered.”

“Jarvis?”

“I’ll introduce the two of you in the lab along with the rest of the family.”

#########

The lab is a marvel, nothing like what Howard had had back in the day. It had been more like a garage, a mess of parts they’d pilfered from the enemy and new or abandoned projects lay cluttered where they could be. This was a place of creation, each item had it’s place (though he could see a small pile in the corner), with names Steve couldn’t possible know and carefully welded metal and gadget and gizmos that worked without inspection.

“I’ll mostly be down here, working. You don’t have clearance for this place, but if you tell JARVIS, I can come right up.”

JARVIS is apparently an AI (A really smart computer person?) and is in charge of the house and overall security. He had a feeling that there was more to it, but didn’t press, still amazed with everything around him.

“Nice to meet you, JARVIS.”
“Likewise, Captain Rogers.”

“Which reminds me, I think I owe you an apology.”

Steve raises a brow,

“I sort of called you a fake to your face.”

“I remember.” Steve says smiling.

“Well, I kind of hacked into SHIELD’s servers and found out everything they have about you. So yeah, okay, I made a mistake. You might actually be Captain America after all. If the staggering amount of backlog data is anything to go by then S.H.I.E.L.D. might actually ninety-nine percent believe you are the Captain America.”

“You can hack into SHIELD?”

“Actually I had JARVIS do it, but I made him so.” Tony looks smug.

“As humble as ever, sir.”

He chuckles despite himself. Somehow, the thought that Tony knows just about everything about him scares him, much like when the psychiatrists had poked and prodded him within weeks of recovery. He’s tricking himself right now, trusting that Tony won’t take advantage of what he knows, and it feels dangerous. And exciting.

“Dinner?”

“Uhm, sorry?”

“I was asking if you wanted anything in particular for dinner.”

“Golly Tony, I’d eat anything. I guess nothing too expensive on the account of my-”

“Heightened metabolism. Yes, I’ve been informed but Coulson would skin me alive if he hears that I’ve been feeding his idol scraps.” Tony looks amused at that. “Wait… He didn’t tell you he was a fanboy?”

Idol? Oh. Steve blushes. No wonder Phil had been so nice to him. “Never came up.”

“He brought this along, once. I used it for stuff. Hold on. Don’t mind the garbage, I’ve been… Remodelling.”

Tony scrounges around the scrap pile, setting aside piles of metal until he lets off a satisfied sound and brings an oddly familiar shape to Steve.

“It’s my-”

“Prototype. Coulson was working on it. Speaking of which, do you have the original?”

Tony hands it to Steve to hold. It’s nothing like his actual shield, except for the color and diameter, and it’s in scraps. The weight is all wrong, and he’s certain that it is of another material as well. It’s also the closest thing he’s been given that remotely resembles his shield, and it sends a clench to his gut.

“No, I don’t.”
“Shame. Would have loved to run a test on it.”

Just like that, Tony shrugs it off and heads for exit. Hesitantly, Steve places the copy of his shield onto a bare space and follows suit.

“So. Dinner?”

After a thought.

“Happy mentioned burgers?”

Tony has the power to be both charming and annoying. It’s easy for Steve to trust him, because he treats him pointed frankness that beats even Clint’s. The cold-hearted weapon maker that the internet so warns him against just isn’t there, instead he sees the very human figure that Tony is. He can almost forget that Tony’s an Alpha, were it not for himself The one who laughs at Steve when he eyes go wide at every new thing he’s handed. That’s one more thing, Tony likes handing him thing, anything he wants Steve to try.

His cellphone for example, when Tony first laid eyes on it.

“Is that a Nokia? Oh my god, they actually gave you the indestructible phone.” He could hear the horror in Tony’s voice from across the room.

“Yes? Is there something wrong with it?” He liked his phone, thank you very much.

“Figures that SHIELD would give you something as outdated as you.”

“Hey!” After a day or two, He realized that Tony’s insults were his way of affection (Steve noticed that Tony threatened JARVIS on a daily basis), and the best way to deal with them was to play along (He learned that from JARVIS).

“Nevermind. Of all the- Give me that.”

He finds himself with a new phone (Stark Phone 2). Steve is upset (pouts) for a total of five minutes before Tony takes pity on him and explains the features. Apparently he can write emails and use the internet on his phone instead of his laptop, everyone else does it that way, Tony insists.

“If you have any complaints about the phone, tell them to JARVIS.”

“Oh I couldn’t possibly. It’s a swell phone, tons better than my other one.”

“Of course you say ‘swell’.” Tony rolls his eyes, but looks proud of the compliment regardless. “And complain all you want. JARVIS designed that phone, he could use some feedback from fresh eyes.”

Steve salvages what little of his schedule he can. He still runs on the treadmill when he first wakes up, and JARVIS taught him how to switch channels for the television so that he can watch anything he wants.

He cooks breakfast right after, taking liberty of the refrigerator and it’s contents. He has to cook enough for himself, which is an embarrassing amount already. Sometimes, if he’s lucky, Tony
joins him before he leaves for work. They would make some small talk, Steve knows he can’t pry about Stark Industries so he never bothers, but they find other things to talk about. Mostly it’s about what Steve reads up on, and he asks Tony about it for clarification.

As soon as Tony leaves, or if he never showed up in the first place, Steve does some reading in his room. After lunch, he keeps busy with another workout session, and practices what Natasha taught him. There’s no firing range in the mansion (It would have been strange if there was), so instead he takes that time to draw on the sketchbook Happy got him.

He still hasn’t gotten back into the groove of it, but it makes him feel better.

By dinner time, he checks to see if Tony is in his lab and brings him some food if the man refuses to surface from his work. Then it was back to reading and lounging until it was time to sleep.

He maintains the schedule for about a week.

Tonight though, he feels the first vestiges of an ache, knows what that means and promptly asks JARVIS if he could bother Tony in the lab. This was why he was here in the first place. He’d rather tell Tony himself.

When he makes it down the lab, Tony has his welding gear on, still working on piece of metal that resembles a hand.

“What’s up Capsicle? J said you wanted to talk to me.” Tony says, not looking up from his work.

“I- My Heat is in three days. By my estimate.”

Tony kills the blow torch, shoves up his welding mask and give Steve a levelled look.

“Are your estimates ever wrong?”

Steve shakes his head. “Not since the serum.”

“Alright. Nervous?” Tony rolls his shoulders and sets aside his gear. He’s in full engineering mode in the lab. There was none of the pristine businessman that made it so often in magazine covers. This Tony Stark was a creator, covered head to toe with sweat and grease because he wasn’t afraid of getting dirty. This Tony Stark was a visionary, who hammered away at something until he could build or break it. It makes Steve’s heart flutter when he sees him like this.

“A little.” He admits, looking away.

“Eyes up, Cap.”

He brings up his gaze to look at Tony, so close, with his scent right there, warm brown eyes anchoring him on the spot.

Steve wonders if he’s been doomed from the beginning.
Hey look, it's sunday! Wrote half of this chapter on the train, and the other half while on beach vacation!

I feel the need to tell you all that this story is canon compliant, as I might have missed saying so. I wrote a particularly long comment on my view of Stony (at least in this fic) on chapter 4 if anyone else might be curious about it.

Also, again, I feel like I need to say this just in case some people missed it, but the fic is entirely based on Steve's point of view.

As always, thanks for the kudos, comments and bookmarks.

For the next couple of days he buries himself in his drawings, unable to throw off the jitters that came with the hormones. His Heat is coming up in bursts, and he finds himself eating all the time, hungrier than usual.

His body was going through pre-Heat preparation, having him pack in enough food to burn for when his Heat really starts. So that when an Alpha actually did come around, he would have enough energy and stamina to keep the Alpha interested. It also meant that, based on the amount of food he could consume, his heat would prolong, taking the sign of bountiful food as a perfect place to settle down.

So drawing. It keeps his mind occupied as he focuses his thoughts to the details. On paper is a quick sketch of Clint, a gesture of a man at best, that he had hopes to fill with as much detail as possible.

He’d done it the day prior, feeling guilty that while he could practice what Natasha had disciplined him with, he couldn’t do the same for Clint. The image had come so clearly to his mind that he just had to had some paper and pencil in his mind before the motivation disappeared on him.

It was a rare moment where he’d caught Clint napping, head pushed up to curl towards his torso, hands crossed over his chest, hanging precariously on the rafters.

Steve first reaction was to panic and get him down from there but at second glance he figures that that would have been the wrong thing to do. Clint looked relaxed where he lay, a hint of a smile on his lips despite his position.

So Steve drew him now as he remembered, from a worm’s eye, slumped against the metal like he was used to it, lax in a way that Steve hadn’t seen Clint be before. His arms lined with bunched muscle that would have made his younger self jealous, at the same time he would have been unable to tear his gaze from them. The artist in him loved the human form, every contour and dip of muscle, fat and wrinkle was like texture and personality on the page.

He takes his time shading in the muscle, the hint of power in the relaxed muscle, promising strength yet choosing not to use it. He lets his pencil glide over the page, unhurried. Each fold in clothing is given the same attention, alternating between light and hard strokes to compensate for
the lack of color. (Lead is good enough.)

All that is left is Clint’s face, a feature Steve purposefully left for last. He has a plethora of memories of Clint from the times they’ve been together and uses it as reference for the way his hair droops and rises. He let the shadows do most of the work, with just enough highlights to simulate strands of hair. But the face…

He’d always been most finicky with faces. The way a person smiles, the droop of their frown, crinkle in their eye. Steve liked to play with the emotion, an insight to a person’s thoughts.

The Clint in his sketch remains asleep, content to ignoring the the world for a few short moments. Steve draws him with just a hint of a smile, like he knows a secret nobody else know and would like to keep it that way.

It takes time, but eventually he gets the details just right.

#################

Steve rouses from sleep, feeling warm and uncomfortable. It's barely noon.

“JARVIS?”

“Yes Captain Rogers?”

“Could you please tell Tony that I’ll need him in a couple of hours?”

There’s a silence, where Steve assumes JARVIS relays the message.

“Mr. Stark would like you to know that he will join you within the hour, and asks if there is anything you might need him to bring.”

“No, I’m okay. Tell him-” He shudders at the thought of Alpha. “Tell him I’ll wait for him.”

“Very well Captain Rogers.”

Steve rolls onto his back, taking in a deep breath and tries to relax. He’d never been one of those Omegas who could just drop right into Heat. It would have been easier and quicker if that were the case. No, he was the kind who fell into it slowly, his body easing him into the primitive state that made Omegas lose their minds.

It was a close thing, where all thoughts blurred into actions and gestures, and the directive to mate and couple were driven into an Omegas mind. An Omega in Heat cared for only for one thing; to have the strongest mate around. Which was why it was considered dangerous for more than one Alpha to service an Omega. Chances were that the two Alphas would be driven mad by the Heat, and fight over the Omega in question.

The right to take and mate.

Omegas were more likely to provide healthy children than Betas, their systems much better suited for carrying children to full term. Which was why Alphas would have an Omega if they could, to ensure a healthy and strong pups to carry on their lineage. The Heat in itself wasn’t meant to get the Omega pregnant, in fact, Omegas were least likely to get pregnant during Heats because of the amount of stress their own bodies would be causing them. Instead, a Heat was a way to find the strongest Alpha possible. The one who would fight and protect them. The one who deserved them the most.
But for now, it meant that Steve would feel like his body was on fire as hormones flooded his system.

Steve smells him before he even enters the room.

“How?”

It’s polite, he thinks, the way Tony hovers between his doorframe, like he’s not sure if he’s allowed.

“Get in here Tony, before I maul you.” He breathes, shifting on his back to have a better look at him.

Tony had obviously taken a shower, hair looking damp and the smell of soap were dead giveaways, not to mention he lacked the sweat and grease.

Permission granted, Tony approaches the bed, staring at him.

Oh right, some time during the hour, he’d decided he didn’t really like wearing a shirt anymore, not with it being so hot. So he’d shucked it. Somewhere. (Floor maybe?)

He knows what he looks like. Before the serum, he wouldn’t have minded an Alpha oggling like Tony was doing, because his body was his body, and it was as simple as that. This body was his as well, just bigger, more like an Alpha’s, except for the slight swell in his hip that would hint of his secondary sex.

There’s a hand on his cheek that brings back his thoughts, he smiles into it, seeking the small offered comfort.

“How far off are you?” Very polite.

“Close.” Steve admits, shifting his body as the urges demand he do so.

“Oh, don’t fall just yet.”

And then the hand withdraws, Steve frowning as he looks up at Tony with reproach. Tony chuckles, brown eyes twinkling.

“I wanted to give you something while you were coherent. Thought you would appreciate it more.”

Tony holds out a thin gold chain, the alloy woven intricately in uncertain pattern, like wires twisted together and then unravelled.

“I thought-” Steve starts, eyes going wide.

It was a traditional statement, when an Alpha was to take an Omega, the Alpha would present a piece of jewelry that would signify the Omega’s worth to them. It was meant as a gift, an offering, as if to say that the Omega was precious and deserved it.

Steve had gotten a few when he was younger, a bracelet or a ring was common enough, something not too expensive yet the symbolic nature of the gift was there.

He’d read that the practice had died out, because Alphas started to protest that, if Omegas were vying for their equal rights, then why did Alphas have to play along with the stereotype of
provider and present the token at all.

“I thought you’d like it if we started your Heat with something old-fashioned.” For the first time, Steve detects nervousness in the Alpha’s voice. “If you’re not comfortable then-”

“No no no, I was just caught off guard.” He interjects quickly. “It’s beautiful, Tony.”

Tony beams, a soft smile that makes Steve’s heart flutter in his chest.

“May I put it on you?”

Instead of answering, Steve moves to his knees, bowing his head. By the hitch in Tony’s breath, Steve knows he did the right thing and he stays as still as he can while Tony loops the chain around his neck, fumbling with the clasp.

It feels both light and heavy, cool against his heated skin. Once Tony steps back, he tips his head to look up at him, hoping that Tony can see how grateful he is for the necklace.

There’s desire in Tony’s eyes, one that sends electricity racing through Steve’s spine and he knows he’d made the right choice. He half-expects Tony to take him right there, on bended knees. Steve would have gone willingly, his body would have reacted to the Alpha’s touches and followed suit.

But Tony’s next touch is to bring him back to his feet, lingering touches on his chest and arms, like physical check to see if he was all there. Steve breath catches when Tony runs his fingers along his sides, and then rests them on his collar bone, just above where the necklace frames his neck.

“Never would have thought that I could have something so beautiful as you. Thank you for choosing me as your Alpha.”

It’s said in such a whisper that Steve’s heart nearly breaks with the fragility of it. His mind is a mess, barely able to make comprehensible thoughts with Tony so close and available, but he knows one thing for sure. That he could trust Tony to see him through this, with nothing but his best interests at heart.

Impatient fingers find their way to the hem of Tony’s shirt as Steve leans forward, burying his nose to the crook of Tony’s neck where his scent is strongest. A burst of fresh dirt, roses and steel, underlain beneath the smell of soap and shampoo, underlain beneath the smell of soap and shampoo. He groans as he is surrounded by it, something deep inside him flaring to life, demanding to be set free. He presses his lips to Tony’s neck, noting the groans from the Alpha as he sucks and kisses along skin.

Steve pulls away, his hands tugging at Tony’s shirt in a half-attempt to tug him forward, half for seduction. He smiles wickedly, sinking back onto his bed, legs spread in an obscene position to show off his half-hard cock through the thin cloth of his boxers.

Tony looks wrecked, a twitch in his mouth as he falls forward to drape his body over Steve’s, running his hands over Steve’s abs and pecs, the cool touch almost surprising to the Omega, like he was still trying to determine whether he was real. “Captain America is a fucking tease.” He mutters under his breath, like a realization, amusement in his voice as his face goes through a multitude of emotions, that Steve barely catches, until he settles to fondness.

Steve moans with the thorough inspection, shuddering when Tony takes a nipple in his mouth and sucks hard.
“Just Steve Rogers right now.” He breathes, finding it hard to concentrate with the way Tony is curiously touching his body, exploring the canvass presented to him.

“Nothing wrong with that.” And it’s said with such sincerity that Steve can’t help but believe it. Tony rises up to meet his gaze, eyes so clouded with lust but Steve knows his own would reflect the same. He slowly descends to meet his lips, giving Steve ample time to turn away to, but Steve lets Tony mould their lips together, quiet groans escaping them both at the first sign of tongue.

It starts out slow, a careful almost curious dance as they take in each other's taste. Steve, already half-gone from Tony’s scent alone, feels himself falling further as he samples the man. He tastes of dark promise and night skies, cool, clean, and it makes him well aware of the dampness between his legs.

When they break away they’re both panting, staring into each other’s eye as they catch their breath.

Steve’s fingers find purchase on Tony’s shirt again. “Off, take it off, please. Wanna see you. Wanna touch you.” Desperation so heavily laced in Steve’s voice that Tony rushes to comply, his shirt tossed somewhere across the room.

Wasting no time as skin is finally bared for him, Steve pounces on him and trails kisses on Tony’s chest, tracing his tongue to every contour he comes across.

He’d seen the arc reactor before, though never without clothing. Before Tony can take notice of his hesitation Steve lavishes the power source with licks, taking careful attention to where the body met metal. The saltiness of Tony’s sweat-drenched skin and the clean taste of alloy making Steve’s head spin. By the sound of Tony’s moans, he is enjoying the attention.

Steve travels lower, digging his feet into the bed as he makes his way down, stopping just where Tony’s cock lay. He grins up mischievously, delighted as he find Tony already hard and leaking for him.

It’s an Alpha’s cock for sure, large and thick, knot half-formed at the base already. Steve kisses around it, taking extra care on Tony’s inner thighs, inhaling the musky scent of him.

It is only when Tony protests (“God damnit Steve! You’re killing me here!”) that he takes it into his mouth. The heady taste of pre-cum is enough to have him moan in delight, swirling his tongue along the head, tracing a vein along the underside as he balances himself on one hand to stroke the base of the cock in the other. His fingers pump and squeeze at the swollen knot, eliciting a wave of curses and angry mutters from Tony that Steve decidedly blocks out.

He’s on the cusp of his Heat, a hair breadth away from losing himself to the deep need in his body, he can at least do this much out of his own volition.

Tony places his hands on Steve’s shoulders, grasping and clawing, and yet holding back on the imperative to thrust into that delicious heat. So instead, Steve takes in his deeper, Tony’s cock pushing against the roof of his mouth in one fell swoops, slipping past his throat and gags on it.

Steve couldn’t hope to take in all of the Alpha’s cock, stopping just short of his knot, but he could damn well try.

“Shh, Steve, hey hey, relax. It’s okay.”

Tony’s bring him back (from where?), making him aware of the tears that stream from his eyes, and the strangled whines he’d been tuning out had been coming from him. Tony’s running his hands on his face, wiping away the streaks of tears as he pants for breath.
“I just- I was-!” He struggles to explain but Tony silences him with a kiss to his mouth. He complies, taking in the sweet taste of the man in front of him. He calms down with reaffirmation of the gesture. Tony was here for him, wasn’t going to leave him and would take care of his Heat with him. He didn’t have to fight tooth and nail to keep the Alpha interested.

Steve chases at the taste when Tony’s pulls away, calmer than he was a moment ago but breathing just as hard.

“We have all week to figure out what we both like.”

Tony takes him through the motions, finally gets his boxers off of him as settles them back on the bed. There is no moment where they aren’t touching, aren’t connected in some way, reluctant to break apart for even a moment.

The chain on his neck feels almost weightless in his daze, remarkably cool on Steve’s heated skin. Steve feels hot, too hot, like his insides were set on fire and a deep seated hunger that comes with his Heat. He whines and bucks under Tony’s hand, impatient as his body demands more of what was happening. He wanted a cock in him (Tony’s cock preferably) and he wasn’t getting any. Tony chuckles at him, a flare of irritation alongside the lust he felt as he shot Tony a glare.

(Taking too long!)

“Sassy little bitch, aren’t you.” Tony slurs, eyes blown wide that Steve is both irritated and awed by the man’s self-control.

Steve wrinkles his nose in reprimand, wrenching himself from Tony’s grasp. The lack of skin is almost maddening, but the need that building in his body was even more so. Tony seemed to have some misconceptions about how this would proceed, perhaps a nudge in the right direction…

There’s a flare of pride when he hears Tony’s growl, low and delicious, at his rebellious actions, a smirk as he works the muscles in his body to a new position. Steve lifts his ass, presses his cheek to a pillow as he watches Tony from the corner of his eye.

He’s aware of the scene he’s making, his entrance slick with fluids that run down to his thighs, his fingers pressed into his hole to entice the Alpha, submissive and pliant. His cock hard and aching, balls pulled low by gravity.

“What are you waiting for? Take this bitch. I am not some virgin pup.”

Almost immediately he’s assaulted with Tony’s succulent scent, dizzying him as Tony covers him with body, lathing kisses at the back of his neck that has him keening. Tony’s humping against him, rubbing his large cock against the cleft of his ass, growling in his ear.


“And if I don’t want it slow? If I want it fast and hard?” Steve challenges, brutally kissing Tony’s lips until they both taste blood.

With a growl, Tony mounts him in one thrust, cock pushing into his ring of muscles, forcing his way through the slick, wet passage that so craved the attention. Steve feels like he’s been punched in the gut, unable to breath, unable to think as he focuses on the feeling of Tony’s cock buried deep inside him, trying to process the pleasure that washed over his body of finally being filled.

Tony’s cock presses into all the right places, somewhere deep and hungry where his own fingers
could never reach. When Tony starts thrusting into him, he can hear the slurp of slick from his hole as Tony gyrates his hips.

“Is this what you want Omega?” Tony grunts with a particularly hard thrust.

Steve can’t get enough, fist clenched in the sheets as he scrambles for purchase, eyes closed shut as he moans, erotic and sublime.

“Yes. Please, more. Alpha, more.” He begs, lost in the depths of Heat.

And Tony gives it to him, pounding into his hole, slick and cum mixing together as he rubs into Steve’s most sensual place, fucking him with all the brutality that Steve could ask for and more.

Steve’s already on the edge of his first orgasm, pressing his ass insistently on Tony’s cock, letting the large dick push him further and further until-

He comes with a yell, body shuddering with the force of his orgasm. His cock jumps and sputters semen all over the bed. His hole spasms around the cock inside of him, sending an aftershock of pleasure as Tony continues to thrust inside of him despite already achieving orgasm.

It doesn’t take long before Tony is tumbling after him, grunting as he presses the full swell of his knot in Steve’s hole, locking them together as the Omega feels the hot rush of semen flooding into his body.

But Tony isn’t done with him yet.

He has his arms around Steve, and takes them down to lie on their side, he pushes Steve’s leg up for better access and adjusts. Already locked by the swollen gland, he continues to thrust into Steve’s sensitive hole, milking all the pleasure from his bitch as he could, cock continuously pulsing and pushing cum into Steve’s body.

Full, over-sensitive and pressed to the Alpha’s body, Steve comes again, hole fluttering and cock spurting.

Out of breath, they both lapse into silence, panting as the first wave of Heat is over and they settle into the small window of rest. Steve expects his second heat to arrive with the hour, but can’t find the energy to care.

“I wanted to take it slow.”

Hoarse from yelling, Tony’s voice sounds scratchy at best. Steve can almost imagine the pout the Alpha was sporting, shame he couldn’t see it since Tony was locked to him from behind.

“They’ve had me take it slow ever since I woke up. I thought I could have something at my pace for a change.”

There’s silence again, and Steve’s worried he’s upset Tony until an arm curls around his chest, and there’s a breath of hot air on his shoulder.

“We’ll talk about it later. Right now, nap.”

So they sleep.
They move and flow with Steve’s Heat, Tony fucking into Steve as his Heat peaks, sweaty and horny, and rest when it turns low. What precious moments they had was used for sleep, Steve would wake them both up, moaning and grinding against Tony, and the Alpha would respond in kind.

It quickly becomes a pattern.

Steve’s first few days were always the worst, where his body demanded more and more sex. Tony’d barely been away from his side for the past couple of days, indulging the Omega’s need, and getting him rehydrated when there was time to spare.

As the week would go on, the urges of Heat would taper off towards his last wave, where he would be most desperate. It was still days away. Surprisingly, Steve didn’t feel particularly worried, trusting that Tony would see him through. The Alpha had been nothing but receptive to his urges, eagerly thrusting into his greedy hole, growling appreciatively when Steve can’t help but clench around his girth as he came in spurts.

They fell into each other, slotting neatly despite their awkward first meeting. Even that felt so far away to Steve now, huddled so deeply in Tony’s scent that he cannot even remember how he manages to feel happy without.

Of course, it could be the Heat talking (meddling), his hormones pushing the thoughts to bind because this Alpha was treating him so kindly.

##########

“May I?” Tony asks in the middle of the week, gesturing the sketchbook on Steve’s table.

It’s been an hour since his last orgasm, the time between waves lengthening as the Heat went on. Steve blinks owlishly at Tony, a quick glance and then a nod as he buries himself back in the blankets.

The bed dips as Tony nestles back into the sheets, Steve automatically throwing an arm around his body, pressing his nose to his chest, seeking the scent and warmth of him. He’s careful not to lean
on the arc reactor, noticed early on that Tony wasn’t comfortable with it even when the Alpha didn’t say so.

He’s warm and lazy, listens to the quiet *flick* of pages. The sketchbook is filled with, well, sketches. Some drawn from memory, others from sight. It feels oddly intimate to share them.

Tony doesn’t say much about the first few pages, filled with dreary half-finished drawings of a Brooklyn he once knew. It had been the first on his mind when Happy handed him the sketchbook, the urge to draw had never felt so desperate.

Part of him wanted to prove to himself that he could remember, from the orphanage, his old school, his art college, the skyline he so loved, Mrs. Monroe’s scrappy dog. He drew them as they came to him, there on the jet, *flying* from one memory to the next, often leaving one drawing unfinished as the next demanded attention.

The flight had been over before he knew it, and he’d tucked the sketchbook under his arm, determined not to lose it.

The pencil Happy got him (2B Faber Castell) along with the sketchbook had quickly turned into one of his most prized possessions. And for a while, he worried of what would happen once he’d scraped the pencil down.

But it never did happen. On inspection of his room on his first day, there was a set of pencils on the desk, a straight line of blue and black, from 7H to 7B, and a stack of sketchbooks, neatly laid out for him. Steve never did quite know how to thank Tony for the gift, because the Alpha had never mentioned it.

Maybe it was why he didn’t feel all too disarmed with showing Tony his works, unfinished and most of them hurried because he would never had had the chance to do them otherwise (Alpha’s gifts). And it only seemed fair, Tony had shown him his lab, it was the least he could do.

Tony chuckles and Steve cranes his neck and smiles along with him. It’s a sketch of Dummy in his charging station, the only time he’d keep still, drawn in strong bold lines and thoughtful detail.

He reaches the latest page, the one of Clint, and Tony tilts the page to give him a better look.

“Should I be worried?” He asks, a playful lilt to his voice as he arches a brow at Steve.

“Sure, I am deeply *madly* in love.” Steve says with the straightest face he can muster.

“Is it my age? It can’t be my devilishly good looks, or my exquisite charm that’s been putting you off.”

Steve snorts, nibbling on Tony’s nipple just to teach him a lesson. Tony only fidgets somewhat, scrubbing a hand on Steve's hair as if he’s a unruly pup.

“Humble as ever, Mr. Stark.” He does an impression of JARVIS, accent and all. “He’s an Omega, Tony, I’m sure he isn’t interested in me either.”

“Being gay is totally fine Steve. I mean, I’d hit that no matter my presentation.” Tony offers in counter argument.

He’d read about homosexuality. Where it was fine these days when an Alpha-Alpha pair were married, or an Omega-Omega pair for that matter. Steve had never really thought them any ill, there were secretive pairings back in his neighborhood, and he’d wished them the best like any other couple.
“I don’t think I’m gay. I’ve always only ever been sexually attracted to Alphas.”

“Now that you mention it, you did say something about not being a virgin.” Tony says thoughtfully. He dips his hand onto Steve’s back, massaging the little spot between his shoulder blades with nimble fingers, the spot he knows would have Steve moaning within seconds.

Steve arches into the touch, letting a contented sigh. “I was an Omega. The Heats alone would have made it impossible.”

“And did you Heat regularly?” There was a pleasurable dig into his spine, forcing Steve to swallow a moan before he could answer.

“No really.” He answered. He was sick most of the time, unable to leave the confines of his bed at worst, his Heats came sparingly, sometimes only once a year as compared to the regular three times that a normal healthy Omega was suppose to go through. And then he was off touring the country and selling war bonds, shortly after sent (escaped) into the field. “There was a war, Tony. I couldn’t just—”

His new body was decidedly sturdier, could take the stress of Heat but even then, four years in the war, he had only ever gone into Heat five times, still a far cry from the norm but it was more than he could hope for. Plus, with the constant threat of being killed, his body at least knew enough to stop the instinct to roll over and spread his legs.

Didn’t stop the Alphas in the military from thinking about it though. Or letting him know about it too.

“You couldn’t just take a sick leave and let other soldiers fight for justice, peace and patriotism?” Tony wheedled, keeping up the gentle pressure, pressing into all the right places that makes Steve’s brain stutter to a halt.

He doesn’t want to talk about this, not now, not when Tony is such a delicious presence that he needs to physically stop himself from humping Tony’s leg. “When I joined up with the Army, I didn’t think about Heat leaves. Especially when I was applying as a Beta. They weren’t going to let an Omega into the Army, they were very clear about that.”

If it weren’t for Erksine, who insisted on letting a ninety-pound, asthmatic, Omega into the program, Steve doubted he would have gotten anywhere in the Army at all.

Tony chuckles, now trailing his fingers to the cartilages of Steve’s spine, following the path lower. “Funny how that led to the greatest revolution for Pro-Omega rights.”

“Huh?”

“They made you out to be a real hero for Omegas, Steve, didn’t anyone tell you?” Tony looks surprised, a hint of annoyance in his brow. “For a group that deals with intelligence, SHIELD is clearly lacking. Anyway, your death spurred millions into rethinking the Omega archetype.” Tony waves his hand enthusiastically, motioning in circles. “For so long, Omegas were seen as these frail things that had to be protected and cared for, bearers for the next generation, blah blah, but overall didn’t have much impact for the country or economy.”

“But then we get this gorgeous Omega.” Tony winks at him and Steve rolls his eyes. He’s used to it at this point but it doesn’t stop the blush. “This little petite Omega who volunteers for a dangerous program without knowing if he would come out alive or not, and then gives his life for his country, to save thousands from death. Do you see how amazing that is? All of a sudden the world is forced to accept that Omegas aren’t these shy creatures. They can be as brave and noble
as any other sex. You were a catalyst, Steve. You changed the world.”

Steve curls further into Tony’s chest, mulling over the words, feeling a warmth blossom in his chest that has nothing to do with his Heat. For the first time, he understood why Tony looked at him a certain way, he could finally put a name to that look.

It was awe, some boyish emotion that made Tony smile at him like he’d personally hung the moon. Steve smiles sadly, finding the sentiment too overwhelming to accept, pulling himself away from Tony’s arms.

“That’s stupid. I didn’t do it because I was an Omega. I volunteered because I wanted to save lives. I went through the experiment because the Doctor believed it would worked. I-I crashed the plane because I didn’t see any other way. I didn’t think I’d get to live through it.” He admits. He feels guilty, he doesn’t deserves that look, not when he’s been such a coward.

“Oh sweetie, I didn’t-” Tony bundles him up and pressed himself to Steve this time, the scent of distressed Omega bittering the air, offering his neck, a gesture that was too Omega, too submissive for an Alpha to lower himself into. But clearly Tony was no ordinary Alpha. “I didn’t mean to upset you.”

After a few short moments, Steve shyly embraces Tony, enjoys the way Tony sidles up to him, pressing his nose to Steve’s palm, and kisses his fingers. It sends a tingle all the way down to his groin, an Alpha acting submissively for him.

“Oh, you enjoy that do you?” Tony purrs, a wicked smile on his lips.

##########

Tony sucks him off, slow and languid, his mouth a furnace around his cock.

Steve’s never had a blowjob before, but now he could see the merits to one. His brain promptly shut off when Tony takes his entire length in his mouth, licking the underside of his cock with his tongue, delicious wet heat and pressure the only thing he can focus on.

He jerks as he comes, the tender weight of Tony’s hand the only thing anchoring him to the bed.

##########

Tony hand feeds him some fruit while they rest. It’s some sort of Alpha thing, Steve presumes, the need to provide, so he lets him, accepting the bits of fruit that Tony brings to his lips. Tiny apple and orange slices, some grapes and cubes of mango. He particularly likes the mango, the smooth sticky sweetness that is unlike anything he’s tasted before. He licks at Tony’s fingers as he feeds him, enjoying the taste and smell of ‘happy Alpha’ at his small gesture.

When the tray of fruit is finished, he stretches out on the bed and watches as Tony takes the tray to the door. Steve can’t remember when he’s felt so relaxed within the past month, and blushes at what did take to get him to loosen up.

Tony falls back to bed with a tablet (“It’s not just a tablet, Steve! It’s Starktech!”) and they resume a half-cuddling position as Tony continues to work.

Steve understands enough that Tony doesn’t always spend all his time for work down at the lab. There’s a reason for the towering screens in the basement, projected into the air for Tony. Schematics for things, projects for both the company and Ironman. (“If I tell you, I’d have to kill you sort of deal, but not really because how could I possibly kill Captain America.”)
“Shit, I have a meeting tomorrow morning.” Tony curses, tapping furiously into his tablet, eyebrows knitted together.

Steve sighed, placing a hand just below the arc reactor, feeling the man’s heartbeat again the soft *whir* of the arc reactor.

He also understands that Tony is busy, much busier than he lets Steve know. And yet he agreed to seeing Steve through his Heat. There were just too many things that he didn’t know about Tony Stark.

The necklace around his neck feels both light and heavy at the same time.

“Go to the meeting, Tony, it’s just for the morning, right?”

“I can reschedule it. Well, *Pepper* can reschedule it and I can get yelled at and it can be done.” Tony says, eyes not leaving the tablet, and now Steve can see he’s sending an email.

“What’s the meeting for anyway?” He hoped it wasn’t too important.

“Board meeting, I need to present my new arc reactor specs, and if it’s approved, I can start manufacturing it for mass production.”

Sounded important.

“I’ll be fine, go.”

“No, I’m not leaving you in the mansion alone.” Tony growls, finally staring at him, tablet laid on the table.

“You can’t just blow off a meeting for me.” Steve mutters, frowning.

“It’s fine, I can schedule a meeting for next month, recheck my blueprints see if there’s anything I missed.”

“But you know they’re perfect.”

“Of course they’re perfect.” Tony snorts. “My engineering is always perfect, and my math is never wrong.”

(“It’s not bragging if it’s true, Cap.”)

“Then you don’t need the extra time.”

“I’m *not* leaving you in the mansion, *all alone*, during you Heat.” Tony all but growls.

Steve’s jaw tightens at the Alphaic display. Tony with his (gorgeous) puffed up chest, shoulders hunched forward to look intimidating, arms flexing like he’s ready to hold Steve down if he protested any further. Right, Alphas weren’t very keen on letting their Omega alone unless it was truly needed during Heat, instinct compelling them to stay close to a potential mate.

He’d be lying if he said that it wasn’t stupidly arousing. But-

He hunches lower, looking up at Tony through fluttering lashes, a pout on his lips as he tries to look as small as possible. (Omega whiles, he can almost hear Natasha whisper) It’s difficult after the serum, but some things he can never unlearn. He never liked attention, preferring the solidarity of a book than a person, so he’d learned how to stay quiet and go unnoticed.
Steve does this now, curling in on himself, ducking his head as he places a tentative hand on Tony’s wrist. It’s a small gesture, something taught in school to kids during his time, that meant ‘please, listen?’ but emphasized on permission and place, the do-er casting themselves to the lowest position and humbly asking. It was a child’s gesture, because children didn’t present yet, didn’t quite know what was allowed or not, so if they wanted to ask nicely for something, they’d have to do the gesture. As the child matures, they’d understand what was allowed and base their decisions from there, and thus abandon the innocent gesture.

Even Steve has only ever seen the gesture done by an adult once.

So he waits for Tony to simmer down, taps inquirely at his wrists and wait for permission. They lock eyes, Tony’s an ever deep brown that reminds him of the earth.

Tony grunts tipping his head to a nod, but breaking eye contact. Permission granted.

Grateful, Steve places a hand on Tony’s torso, a quiet thank you, tracing the smooth planes of scars and muscle before speaking.

“You don’t have to leave the mansion.” He mumbles into Tony’s skin. “There’s always video chat, talk to them down at the lab. I’ll be right here waiting for you.”

Tony gives him a considering look, and for a while there’s just silence between them where Steve wonders if he suggested the wrong thing. And then Tony growls, but places a hand on Steve back in defeat.

“You’ve been talking to JARVIS too much. You’re remarkably adaptive for someone from the forties.”

“It’s what I do. Adapt.” And wasn’t that the bitter truth of it all.

Tony starts petting his hair and Steve eyes droop low, settling himself onto Tony’s chest, letting the man pet him. His fingers feel wonderful on his scalp and he just knows he can fall asleep like this.

“Do you want talk about it?” Tony asks quietly.

Steve sighs and blinks lazily. “It’s nothing.”

“Whatsoever, I’m a shitty listener anyway. You’re better off talking to JARVIS than me for emotional output.”

“You’re not bad at listening. Just… Better at talking.”

“So I’m talkative now? Way to make a guy feel better about himself.”

“I like listening to you talk.” Steve smiles sheepishly. “I like it when you explain things, even when I don’t understand half of it, but it feels easy because it’s you.”

“Honestly Steve, you’re smarter than you think you are.” Tony gives him a look. He doesn’t know what it means yet except it’s soft eyes and warm smiles. Generally good signs.

“Explain that to the agent who had to teach me how to use the internet for an hour.”

“I’m sure it wasn’t an hour.”

“One hour and seventeen minutes.” Steve grumbles.
“Yikes.” Tony laughs, the sound melodic and carefree to Steve’s ears. He smiles and feels his chest warm, the fingers on his scalp sending him to another heaven.

Tony pulls him up to nuzzle his neck, Steve does the same, getting a full hit of Tony’s earthy smell, of fresh clean air and what he imagines safety smells. The metallic tang, he realizes, must be from the arc reactor, an extra zest that mingles with Tony’s natural scent almost perfectly. From deep within the earth was metal, and deep within Tony Stark was Iron Man.

“God you smell so good.” Tony moans against his neck. “I swear, if I could find a way to recreate this scent, I’d be a, well I’m already a billionaire. A wealthier billionaire.”

They kiss and touch each other, heady with each other’s scent, Steve’s next wave of Heat not quite there yet but it didn’t matter to them.

It’s quiet exploration, lacking of the desperation that came with Heat induced sex. Every curve, every muscle, mapped out by inquisitive fingers.

For a moment, they move with want, not need.
Steve awakes to an empty bed and warm sheets, still smelling of Tony but he doubts anything less than burning the sheets would get rid of their scents now, and he finds some animalistic pleasure in that, marking this place as his. He can feel his Heat deep in belly, gathering for another wave but not quite there yet, simmering just below the surface.

He rolls towards Tony’s side (the left) and lays his head on the pillow. Sweat and lingering scent, Tony can’t have been gone long, his body relaxes as reassurances of Alpha are given. He hasn’t been left behind. No. He told the Alpha to go, so that he wouldn’t be a hindrance to the Alpha’s work, so that Alpha’s life would be disrupted. He quells the bursts of longing and turns over.

Steve blinks when he notices what’s on the table and then promptly turns red. The item is unmistakably a dildo, bright pink and huge, anything but innocent on his desk. No doubt Tony’s doing, he pushes himself up to his elbows, eyes huge as he takes the dildo in hand.

The base feels heavy (batteries?) and the dildo itself seems to be made of some jelly-like material that flops when he holds it upright. There’s also a note next to the dildo.

Placing the dildo back on the desk, Steve reads the note.

Meeting will take one hour tops. Left you a little something in case you get bored.

Instructions on the back.

Steve feels his face heat up even more when he flips the page.

There’s a sketch of the dildo in Tony’s tidy lines, detailing the appropriate buttons to be pressed to turn it on. There are three buttons on the dildo, two of them controlled the speed of which it vibrates and the last button inflates the dildo at its base, simulating a knot(wh-what?).

Steve all but throws the note back on the desk and curls up in the sheets, embarrassed. It was one thing to rely on Tony for his Heat, and another altogether to be given a sex tool.

But his (traitorous) body was already reacting to the sight of the phallic object, not to mention the very informative graphic that Tony had drawn on. He finds himself already starting to slick, the desperate slow burn in his body making him consider the-

Steve takes a hold of his hardening cock, smooth and knotless, rocking into his fist as it fills.
Every stroke is damn near pleasurable friction, pumping himself as pre-cum dribbles out of his tip. A sweep over the head has him mewling, the cool wetness slicking up his cock as it jumps in response.

With his other hand he reaches past his balls, into the wet trails of his hole, biting back a moan as he plays with the wet rim, bringing up his hand to further lube his cock with his own slick. His balls are heavy and wet, caught between his hard cock and sopping ass.

He continues jerking himself off, eyes falling closed as he tries to bring up some type of memory to hurry himself along. Almost immediately he recalls Tony’s mouth, hot and wet around his cock and has to suppress a shudder.

Steve latches onto that memory, the way Tony’s mouth swallowed him, the sight of his cock disappearing into the Alpha’s mouth has him fully hard in an instant. He spreads his legs and fucks into his fist in earnest, all the while imagining Tony take his cock, remembering that delicious warm heat and the flick of tongue, vicious sucking that had Steve on the verge of whiting out.

Savagely, his plunges two fingers in his hole, scissoring himself open as he slows his own hand, groaning as his cock pulses in response. His brain has all but turned off, the fog of Heat upon him, the desperation to be fucked so overwhelming it’s all he can think of. He growls in desperation, adding another finger to his hole, furiously massaging and stretching himself open for something, anything.

He can feel his ass give away, pried open by his own fingers, dripping with slick. A fourth finger is added but it still isn’t enough, the hunger in his body barely quenched as he stuffs himself with his fingers over and over again. His body won’t be so easily tricked, the lack of an Alpha has his mind even more desperate.

Should he leave his nest to find- No. No. The Alpha will be back, some glazed voice reminds him, too lost in the tide of Heat to argue much further. Instead, he curls up on the Alpha’s side of the bed, and fumbles for the dildo.

He presses it in, gasping as the lack of lubrication makes the entry tantalizingly slow, the burn of rubber against his walls feel alien, feels almost like it’s too much. Steve grits his teeth as he works it in himself, pulling and pushing the rod into his hole, a pleasurable buzz as his body concedes and makes way for the intrusion.

It’s not hot like an Alpha’s knot, but it gets warm enough to get comfortable, the initial burn making way for a pleasure so deeply seated in his groan. He moans as he pushes it all the way inside himself, his hand shuddering at base of the dildo as the entire thing fills him up. There’s an awkward moment where he searches for the button, slippery fingers finally finding the grooves of plastic and presses one.

His entire body shudders in surprise, the dildo suddenly buzzing right up against his prostate, against his everything. It feels deeper than it was a moment ago, touching him in all his intimate spaces.

Cock spitting out pre-cum, he leaves the dildo to it’s work and takes himself in hand, stroking his hard cock with a shaky hand. He rubs the head viciously, slathering slick and cum all over his hand as he arches into his own grasp.

He loses himself to the pleasure, panting as his senses both dull and heighten at the same time.

Suddenly, there’s a body on his. Warm and strong and unmistakable Alpha, pressing against him.
“I see you liked my little present. I’m going to have to build a better one for next time.” the whisper of a voice he knows on his ear, warm breath tickling his neck.

Steve moans in response, nosing against the Alpha’s scent, pushing his entire body to the Alpha’s for attention. He whines when the Alpha pulls away, blinking teary blue eyes for the lost contact.

There’s a hitch of breath and rustle of clothes before the Alpha is back on him, kissing him fiercely, cupping his face with tenderness that melts his insides. Steve breaks the kiss with a gasp, the dildo inside of him being slowly removed and the feeling wasn’t pleasant at all.

He feels hollow without it, suddenly aware of the need and desperation he has managed to stave of with it. Steve moves in protest, chasing the withdrawing dildo and clenching his ass on the rubber.

There’s a moan and the Alpha is kissing him again. But he realizes it a trick as the dildo slips right out. With a growl, he bites the offender’s lip, tasting blood as the Alpha retreats, and glares at him for denying him his pleasure.

“Oh my god, you’ve gone feral, haven’t you?” It’s a question, one he ignores as he grumbles in disappointment. But not for long as rough fingers plunge into his hole, massaging his insides with almost tactical precision.

“I know what you need.” His Alpha says, voice dropping a timbre that has Steve nodding for anything.

His body is maneuvered and then there’s a cock shoved in his face so he takes it into his mouth, lathering it with saliva and tongue, swallowing as much as he can as he listens into the delightful sounds his Alpha is making. There’s a hand on his head that pets him, massaging his scalp as he sucks dutifully.

Steve snarls when the man tries to pull him off his cock, sucking so hard that he can feel the Alpha’s moan through his cock. There’s a sharp tug to his hair and he stops, pulls off the Alpha’s cock with no doubt swollen lips, panting for air and looking absolutely ravished.

“God, turn around Steve, I know what you need.”

Steve glares.

The Alpha narrows his eyes, his next words are more forceful, the sharp bite of command has Steve’s senses singing.

“Turn around, Omega.”

Steve complies, raising his ass for the Alpha, his cock swaying between his legs.

The Alpha wastes no more time, his cock sliding easily into his pliant body, grinding his hips as he bottoms out, his balls pressed up against Steve’s cheeks. The Alpha’s cock is larger than the dildo, and feels like a furnace inside of him, burning away the desperation.

“Still so tight, even though you must have fucked yourself silly on that dildo.” His Alpha whispers into his ear, thrusting with practiced movements that have them both moaning.

His Alpha is brutal, a bruising grip on his hips keeps him where he is, accepting the man’s dick as he is penetrated over and over again. There’s slick and cum everywhere, on the bed, on his ass, on his balls, on his shaft, but Steve doesn’t care. Not when the Alpha snarls and mounts him properly, forces him to comply to the position, has him bare his throat so the Alpha can kiss and
suck bruises on his neck as the man continues to make use of his hole.

Steve cums with a jolt, splattering semen all over the sheets and clamping down hard on the Alpha’s cock.

The Alpha keens, entire body shuddering as he presses in one last time, dick pulsing and splashing cum inside Steve, his knot ensuring that that semen would stay inside the Omega’s body. Even so, the Alpha continues to thrust, pressing in deep and hard until Steve feels another gush of liquid inside him, the knot is bigger than before, stretching him out as the final aftershocks take hold.

#############
Made it with time to spare. As promised, some plot progression with smut. I’ve been busy collecting some funko pops and marvel collector stuff so I might have gotten sidetracked but I got a bunch of new keychains, some Iron Man pops and a Captain America pin from it so it’s all good.

As always, thanks for all the kudos and comments. I’m still trying on my one shot but I just can’t find the time for it. Oh well. Enjoy this chapter instead.

“You are stupidly high-level.”

Steve doesn’t move from his spot, half-buried in blankets that Tony insists on covering him with, and a tanned arm draped over his body possessively. He doesn’t answer, or question the statement, his tongue feels heavy and unwillingly to comply, and he finds that he doesn’t have the energy to really care.

“Still a little feral? Do you understand what I’m saying?” Tony’s voice turns tender as he brushes his hand over Steve bangs, looking down at him with a softness that Steve has come to know these past few days. Steve nods, embarrassed that Tony has to see him like this.

He’d only ever gone feral once before, also during his Heat when it hit him the hardest. It was momentary lapse of mind, forcing its victim into the most basic of senses, affecting both Alpha and Omega alike, usually triggered by some chemical reaction in the body of varying degree. Betas were saved from it, but only because they weren’t so affected by hormones.

Steve has most of his mind now, the fog lifted along with the Heat, but things still feel slower than normal. He’s alert, but lazy, covered in silk sheets that smell like him and Tony in their little nest. So unlike from earlier when he’d been desperate and nearly animalistic, uncaring of his surroundings unless it had something to do with his Alpha.

*His Alpha.*

He growls, low and deep, finding pleasure in that thought. Steve knows he shouldn’t, not right now, though his instincts told him that Tony was *right* in all the ways that mattered. He doesn’t know how to explain it, just a gut feeling in his stomach.

Thankfully, Tony takes the growl as normal response.

“Wait. Do you even know what high-level means? It was in your file but.”

Steve shakes his head, frowning at the subject.

Tony grimaces. “Didn’t think so.” He then pauses, and looked just about ready to explain but then takes a good look at Steve. (Perfect brown eyes.) “Are you sure you can understand?”
Steve huffs and takes a bite at Tony’s palm, throwing a challenging look at the Alpha.

Laughing, Tony concedes to the gesture.

“Where do I begin… Well! There are three tiers, high-level, mid-level and low-level, applicable to each gender.” Tony starts, frowning like he’s missing something but then shakes his head. He presses a firm hand to his neck, eliciting a sigh from Steve before continuing. “It’s easier to derive levels by scent, but also a lot more personal. There are more precise methods, like blood tests and salivary testing, but generally there are nuances in scent. I’m not surprised that you didn’t know, SHIELD notwithstanding, since studies about the three tiers only started in the eighties, when Omega populations started declining.”

Steve brows furrow, growling at that.

“Yep, no one was happy about that either, Omegas were the best baby makers around.” Tony nods, like consoling a child. “The three tiers basically mean potency, how much hormones and pheromones are being produced by their bodies.”

“High-level Omegas are generally top bitches, has the better gene pool, they know their place in a pack, produce the most pheromones which means they smell way way better to Alphas and Betas alike, and can have Heats for five to seven days, as compared to low-level Omegas who only Heat for one to two.”

Whining, Steve pouts on Tony’s chest. That seemed stupidly unfair, though his inner Omega flared at the thought of being a better Omega than others.

“There, there, I know. But it’s biology. High-level Omegas are rare, rarer than high-level Alphas. A longer Heat means there are more choices for the Omega for a potential mate, the Alphas would weed themselves out, figure out which of them would be the best and strongest for the Omega. Worst case scenario, a couple of high-levels Fight it out, and the winner gets to stay.”

For once, Tony speaks like it’s just a fact, no jokes about him being a better that Steve would have come to expect. Alphas fighting each other, danger and adrenaline, a potent combination that could end disastrously if not contained. It was something that they’d been warned against in his Omega studies. Normally, before a fight could even get started, Betas would step in to disperse the situation, ease the Alphas away, hopefully dissuade a full out Fight. But once in the Fight state, Alphas were aggressive, hard-wired instinct triggered to battle it out with the biggest threat possible.

Alphas in Fight weren’t given much leeway, in fact punished more severely if it was a crime of instinct, sometimes with a sentence of life-time imprisonment, or at worst, Death.

It was universally agreed on that only an Omega could calm down Alphas in Fight. And that was before there were such things as levels.

Steve paws at Tony’s neck, motioning towards his scent glands.

“My level?”

Steve nods.

“High-level Alpha.”

Steve had expected a little more. Obviously, Tony was only giving him the gist of it, no doubt worried that he wouldn’t understand most of the science malarkey while still a bit feral. But the way Tony says it, downcast and-
“Good.” Steve grinds out, throat working to growl out the words. Tony looks surprised by the word, looking at him with wide-eyes.

Steve gulps, trying to find more words but fails to clutch them in his mind. So instead he bares his neck, a general sign of submission, and acceptance. “Good. Alpha.” He breathes, watching for Tony’s response.

Stillness, the most motionless he’s ever seen Tony. Tony who’s normally buzzing with energy and fraught with thought- Looks speechless.

When Tony doesn’t react, not even a peep, Steve grumbles and nuzzles his head to Tony’s bicep, sniffing wildly at the man’s scent. There was no sharp tang, no anger or irritation, nor was there any bitterness that might have hinted dissatisfaction. Just Tony’s grounding scent, full of life, and calm.

“My Dad always wanted me to be high-level.” Tony abruptly says, which brings Steve attention back to his voice, though he doesn’t withdraw from Tony’s skin, only turns his head to look at him, cheek firmly pressed to Tony’s arm.

Tony looks at him, but his gaze is hard, seeing something Steve can’t. “My Mom was a low-level Omega, Dad was a mid-level Alpha. He’d always told me, ever since I was a kid, that I would be high-level Alpha. I had to be.” Tony clarifies, tone growing harder. Steve whimpers and Tony places a soothing hand on his hair.

“It was fine. I turned out an Alpha, high-level, like he wanted. Heaven forbid I present otherwise. Alpha, leader of the pack, heir to the Stark throne. It was perfect, wasn’t it?” (Steve hates that word. Perfect.) “High-level. At the end of the day, it means hormones, charts and numbers, along with a subset of standards that people can place you in. Aggressive, over-protective, rut-triggered, Fight-driven, to name a few. No one tells you that to your face, no, they nod and agree, they stay quiet, but all of them are just waiting for you to fail, just one misstep to blame it all on biology. Because why not, an aggressive Alpha running a weapons company? Not unheard of. Very in the norm. But a shift in direction, and they’re all ready to declare you insane.”

Tony speaks low, maybe not to frighten Steve, but his scent has definitely picked up, a bit more electrifying, a crackle in the wind that carries a daunting topic. Steve has a feeling that this was way more than just Howard, like Tony’s been trying to fight for this his entire life. The words aren’t lost to him, he understand that Tony’s under a lot of stress, but he just doesn’t know how to console him for something that seems to hound his every step.

So instead, he does what he can for the moment, and presses his entire body to Tony’s. Tony makes room for him, like he always does, and they cuddle in silence, broken only by Steve with two words.

“Good Alpha.”

#################################################################

It’s the last wave of Heat. It’s nothing out of the ordinary, feels just like all the rest, the desperation seeps out of him in volume, and his skins is on fire despite Tony’s touches.

Tony thrusts inside of him, his ass giving way to the huge blunt cock that penetrates him. Steve shudders at the force of it, the rapid pace that Tony keeps up as his thigh slap against his ass. It’s the last day, and they both know it, instincts and pheromones running high as Steve reaches the end of his cycle. Slow is on neither of their minds, as the force of Tony’s thrusts send Steve into another field of want.
“God, Tony, yes.” He slurs, holding onto the sheets and biting into the pillow as Tony delivers a particularly hard shove, too drunk on lust to form any better words. “More, more, ah!”

Tony (Alpha) enthralled by the Steve’s reaction, grabs a fistful of ass and presses in deep, plunging himself into Steve, inhibitions lost as the need thrives for the both of them. He only slows to change their position, forcing Steve onto his belly and moving his legs out of the way.

With minute thrusts, he’s fucking himself deeper into Steve, the base of his cock stretching out Steve’s hole relentlessly, slow and steady so that Steve would feel his hole giving way to Tony’s dick.

“You love that don’t you.” Tony croons. The drag of the heavy girth around his walls is more than what Steve can take, he whimpers, mutters incoherent approval, muscles bunching together in the effort to take what Tony is giving, his legs so spread out that Tony can sit between his thighs with comfort, all the while pressing deep inside of him.

“Tony, I thought you said- Oh! Sorry!”

Steve snarls as the scent of another Omega wafts into the room, the soft click of the closing door sounds like a thunderous clap but that doesn’t stop him from baring his teeth to the door, fingers curled into claws.

Another Omega within a Heating Omegas vicinity wasn’t a good practice. Normally, a Heating Omega was docile enough to a group of Alphas, but with another Omega it was different altogether. The intruding Omega could be seen as a threat to the Heating Omega, an encroaching presence trying to steal good mates from them.

There’s a temperamental growl in the room that comes from Tony, who hasn’t stopped thrusting his cock into Steve but doesn’t sound happy with the intrusion either.

Tony slaps Steve’s ass, hard, wringing a surprised yelp from Steve. “Attention on me.” He hisses right into Steve’s ear, his Omega instincts quickly unfurling as groans in response and scents the heavy shift of Alpha pheromones in the room.

On top of him, pinning him to the bed with his entire body, Tony sucks a heavy bruise on his shoulder, slows his thrust to a grind. It’s not the first mark that Tony has tried to instill, but the serum prevents any lasting damage, to the Alphas obvious dismay, but it doesn’t stop him from trying.

Happy with the fresh hickey on Steve’s neck, Tony repositions himself, his legs on either sides of Steve’s body. He rams his cock into Steve’s loosened hole, wrenching a torn howl as all Steve can do is hang on for the ride.

Steve’s barely aware of the way he rips the sheets in place, his toes curling in pleasure as Tony plunges his thick cock over and over again, blunt head hitting that spot over and over again. Steve can feel the half-formed knot pressing up against his rim, and hears the hitch in Tony’s pants that means he’s nearing completion.

“That’s right, come on my cock.”

The heat in his belly is intolerable, and before Steve knows it, he’s coming all over the sheets, clenching on Tony’s dick like he was made for it. He hears the tell-tale grunt, the gush of hot liquid inside of him as he feels Tony’s knot lock them together, inflating to the point of burn, pressed inside him ball deep as Tony empties himself into the Omega’s hole.
Steve comes again when Tony pushes in another time, adding to the slush of come that has no doubt gathered in his ass. It would be a few minutes before they separate, the pair panting on spoiled sheets.

Strength sapped, Steve can do nothing else but lay there, note the fullness of semen and cock in his ass and the occasional shift of Tony on his back. His mind veers at the thought of the other Omega just outside the door, ready to take Tony away from him-

“Hush now, it’s alright, there’s nothing to worry about.” Tony soothes, gently running his hands all over Steve’s sweat-drenched body, and it takes a while for Steve to connect the growling in the room to the sounds coming from his own throat.

He swallows and quiets down, closes his eyes and trusts the Alpha.

When Tony’s knot deflates, Steve moans at the spill of slick and cum from his ass. Without the knot to plug him, it trickles out, running out to soak the bed, a dirty combination of their mess.

He laughs when Tony slaps his ass appreciatively, a shudder running through his body as the high of orgasm ebbs away from his body. His Heat would end soon, the hormones would remain for a few more hours but he was free from the thick of things at least.

There's a silence where all Tony’s doing is massaging Steve thighs until he stops to the look at the door.

“I should probably, you know, talk to Pepper at some point.”

Steve watches as Tony’s expression turns almost blank, save for the slight twitch in his brow. Being left alone so soon was bad. His brain supplies, growling and snarling at the Omega just outside the door. But that’s all instinct, instinct that would subside in the coming days.

“Not right now though. I’ve got a needy little Omega in bed, desperate for a big strong Alpha to take care of him.” Tony coddles, chasing away the snarling Omega instincts with a few words and warm hand on his back.

“Am not little.” Is all Steve deems worthy to reply too, chuckling as Tony falls back to bed next to him.

“Bigger than any Omega I know.” Steve can feel the wink being thrown at him without even looking. He shoves his shoulder into Tony’s ribs and feels satisfaction at the choke.

“Which reminds me. I’ve got this gala-charity thing on Saturday, wanna make it a little less boring and be my plus one? I can promise good food.”

“Dunno, I’d have to check in with SHIELD if I can go.” He’s surprised by the bitterness in his tone.

“I mean, yeah sure, you could ask permission from papa Fury but where’s the fun in that?”

“Tony.”

“Alright, alright. You are the paragon of truth, justice and virtue. Surely you know what’s good for you and all things America. I’m just saying, a little time to yourself wouldn’t be so bad.”

“Mhmm. I’ll think about it.”

“That’s all I’m asking.” After a beat. “But please tell me you’re going to the gala with me. Pepper
might set me up with another date, and having your Ex pick your dates is, in itself, a new bar for pathetic.”

Steve chuckles, finally grinning at Tony’s mock expression of horror. “Maybe if you grovel a little more, I’ll consider it.”

Tony takes that as a challenge. “Do you think I’m above grovelling? Oh you don’t know half of it. I’ll grovel so hard. How do you want me? On my knees? Kissing your feet? Please, Steve, I don’t care about power dynamics. Please, please, Steve, would you be my date? I’ll treat you good and kiss you at the door when it’s all over.”

The image of Tony on his knees is enough to make his cheeks blush. Shoving a hand at Tony’s face as he does kissing sounds at him, Steve relents, still finding hard to believe how impossible Tony was after seven days.

“Alright, Valentino. Ain’t never seen a fella so convincing.” He says, a bit Brooklyn drawl mixing into his tone. “I still need to check in with Phil, at least let him know I’m not heading back to SHIELD just yet.” It would have been rude not to at least tell someone.

Tony’s victory smile is smug.

“Do you have plans for after?”

“Tony, I just agreed to being your date.”

“Yeah, yeah, I know that. What I meant to say was that J told me you were asking if it was possible for you to have your own house. So, were you planning to move somewhere?”

Steve remembers that, one of the first thing he’d asked JARVIS. The answer had been sketchy at best, since Steve technically didn’t exist, had nothing to verify that he was an American citizen, no identifying numbers, no mailing address, not even a P.O. Box to his name.

“I was, uh, just. Playing with that idea. It’d be swell if I could have a home to myself back in Brooklyn, get to see my old neighborhood again. It’s a pipe dream though, dunno how I could possibly own a room to myself when I probably can’t even buy my own clothes.”

“Oh, but you do have money.”

“I’m not taking your money, Tony.” He doesn’t like that idea, not one bit.

“Dear ‘ol dad had a trust fund set up for you. Was convinced that you’d reappear with a hundred hungry mouths to feed. Right now, that trust fund is still stable, a little bit of it goes to charity every year for recovering veterans. I wouldn’t know the exact numbers, not without consulting some accounting, but it probably still has a solid five mil in it.”

Steve’s mouth goes dry at the thought of that much money. Money he couldn’t have possibly dreamed about back in the forties. It sounds like an awful lot for one person to have, but then he remember that Tony is a billionaire and it probably sounds like chump change to him.

“It’s not- I can’t-”

“Believe me, that money is all yours, Howard made sure of it. You can do whatever you want with the money.”

He gulps and nods.
“Good. Now. Can we stop talking about my dad while we’re naked? It’s kind of weird.”

Steve officially meets Pepper Potts two days later. He’d just finished his run on the treadmill when he catches her chastising Tony in the kitchen. He’s sweaty and panting, but he’s also hungry. It also looks like he’d just cut them off from something important.

Her eyes dart to him, recognition, before flicking back to stare Tony down, who is munching on an apple.

“Oh Pep! Meet Steve, he’s my date for Saturday!” Tony says enthusiastically.

Her face turns pleasant, eyes brightening up, and Steve has a feeling she’s been doing this her entire life. She’s remarkably put together in ways that can speak from experience, a soft undertone of Omega beneath a floral perfume. He takes the extended hand and shakes it, smiling shyly.

“Steve, and I guess I’m Tony’s date.” There were only so many words he could say to a pretty gal.

“Pepper. I wouldn’t know where he could possibly find dates, not with his busy schedules.” She answers in return, and Steve nearly flinches at the biting tone that Tony so easily ignores. She did see them together, to which Steve is eternally embarrassed for.

“As I was saying. The board has finally agreed to see your final specs before we push through with manufacturing. We need to leave right now if you want to catch the General for-”

“And that’s exactly why I’m not moving. I don’t want them to ask about military applications. We are done with weapons manufacturing, but it’s something those bastards don’t understand. We are not giving into them, even if they threaten to take the Iron Man again.”

Pepper sighs, and Steve busies himself with making breakfast instead of getting into the thick of things, pouring out pre-mixed pancake batter into the pan.

“Yes, Tony. I understand, but the board won’t approve it unless there’s some approval from the military. You know as well as I do that the arc reactor program is a risk, and millions into production.”

“And it will pay off, I know it.” Tony throws back, biting viciously into his apple. “But I’m not making any more weapons for them, Pep, I just won’t.”

“Uhm.” Steve interjects, right in the middle of frying his bacon.

The pair look at him.

“You told me that the arc reactor was a power source, right?” Tony has shown him a previous model of the arc reactor, smooth and clean lines, glowing blue just like the one he had in his chest. It had been mesmerizing, almost like a work of art, sculpted precisely for its user.

“The most sophisticated power source on the planet!”

He flips the bacon on the pan, thoughtful. “The military could use that too. Setting up a base requires a generator for starters, a good power source for surveillance, computers and lights for our boys out there. You don’t have to modify it as weapon, it’d still be useful out in the field. The military gets its technology and you don’t have to give them a gun.”
“That is actually… a good compromise.” Pepper admits, looking pointedly at Tony.

Tony’s staring at him, as if to say ‘Whose side are you on?’ But eventually finishes up his apple in silence and throws the core into the trash.

“Fine, I’ll meet the General.”

“Then we need to go. Now.”

Tony is still muttering as they leave the door, (about betrayal and treachery, if his super-hearing is to be believed) and Pepper mouths a quick ‘Thank you’ to him. He returns it with a two fingered salute.

And now to enjoy his bacon pancakes.
I suppose I owe some sort of explanation.

Really it's been a bad month for me. First of all, the Google Docs app, the app I usually use for writing, suddenly kept crashing on my phone. I tried to use the Microsoft Word app for a couple of weeks, but it was just too slow and clunky for my taste, and it getting bugging out on me. When the Google Doc app finally stopped crashing, I was able to get about half of the chapter written, and it was suppose to be smooth sailing from there.

Then my phone got stolen. Some ass plucked it right out of my hand and ran off with it. So I am currently stuck with a phone that lags all the time. As I might have already said at a previous chapter, I usually write on my phone, I even got a bluetooth keyboard just for the sake of writing for longer periods of time. Until I can get a decent phone, I'm afraid I just can't promise any chapters on time anymore. I hope to get one within the month, but chances are slim.

Anyway, I am incredibly sorry for not getting this out sooner. I tried to get it out last week, but I've been swamped with a lot of other things that I have to do on the computer. Half of this chapter was written three weeks ago, then the other half just whenever I would have the time, so it might feel odd as compared to other chapters sorry.

As always, thank you so much for all the comments and kudos. I was kind of surprised that people were still giving the fic kudos even while I hadn't gotten anything out. Your support means a lot, and while I may delay on chapter releases, I have the skeleton for this fic all the way to Age of Ultron, canonically, and I won't abandon it before then. I don't know if I want to push it all the way to Civil War, or just make those one-shots and such, but we'll see.

Enjoy the chapter.

Steve sends a message to Phil in the afternoon to tell him about the gala, apologizing for the suddenness of the event but hopes that it won’t be a problem for SHIELD if he stays a week longer.

The reply comes quickly, in form of an email that pings on his cell phone. It’s a yes, to Steve relief, along with an attached file that Phil insists Tony sign and emailed right back to him. There’s also a carefully worded message that, should Tony be pressuring him into anything, he ought to tell Phil immediately and he can pick Steve up, no questions asks.

It’s kind of sweet, in a weird overbearing way, but he types back that everything is fine, his heat went about as well as he could hope for, and Tony wasn’t forcing him to do anything that he didn’t want to.

He has JARVIS forward the file named 'RELEASE FORMS - STARK' to Tony as Phil requested, with his own small note. ‘*Dad said yes.*’
Tony, surprisingly, does bring home some pies for them to share. Five boxes, because Tony’s learned his lesson when it came to sharing food with Steve.

Pepper joins them for a while, and it’s nice to see Tony interact with people for a change that didn’t involve half-snide remarks and cursing (like on the internet videos). Something is slack in Tony’s body with Pepper around, and Steve doesn’t object to that.

She’s also very pretty, impeccable, the kind of dame that he would have assumed was with someone like Tony Stark from the magazines. It also doesn’t help his nerves that she’d seen both him and Tony naked together. He’s still a bit embarrassed, there’s no helping it all.

They discuss (argue) several things about Stark Industries that Steve supposes shouldn’t really be his business. He’s tried to get up and leave, a half-formed excuse on his lips, give them a bit more privacy, but Tony just yanks him back down and pushes a beer into his hands.

“Well, it’s been a very eventful day, but I’m afraid I’m going to have to leave you boys for the night.” Pepper says with a sweep of her skirt. It’s nearly past ten, by Steve’s count, and she looks like an early riser.

Tony nods solemnly, like he’s used to it.

“About those patent forms?”

“Oh right! Of course. Down at the lab. I’ll go get them.” Tony scurries off.

Which leaves Steve with Pepper.

She looks at him, with suspicion almost. There’s a silence between them that grows, and Steve decides to break it with a fumbled apology.

“I’m real sorry ma’am for growling at you yesterday.” There’s no excuse for that kind of behavior, heat or no heat.

Pepper regards his apology, red lips pursed together. “It’s alright, I understand, it’s instinct.” She smiles, which lets him relax. “I should have asked JARVIS what Tony was doing in the guest room but I assumed, when he told me he wasn’t available for the week—” She bites her lip, cutting herself off.

“I was worried for him, it was rude of me to just barge in like that.”

Steve can tell that she has a problem with him. Her expression gives her away. Underneath the makeup, he can still read the lines of hidden anxiety. Not to mention the smell of caution. “Tony’s very lucky to have someone like you worry for him.”

Pepper’s eyes flash, and this time he can see the twitch of her palm.

“You’re very sweet. Too sweet. I can’t imagine where he might have picked you up. Tony’s not very good at separating business from pleasure.” There’s biting realization when it clicks into place, the implications Pepper was pushing forth. It wasn’t odd, he should have expected something like this to happen, the stranger that he was. A week of heat wasn’t going to change that.
He bites his lip and touches the gold necklace around his neck. “It’s a story Tony should tell instead.” Steve sighs, looking miserably at his empty beer bottle. The look she gives him says that she means ask Tony exactly that.

The silence between them is chilling, and it takes Tony rushing back in with the papers (“I didn’t lose them, they were just misplaced.”) for her to divert her eyes elsewhere.

Steve can still feel the scrutiny on him even after she leaves.

Steve gets his room all to himself again. The mattress hasn’t been replaced yet, but he’d changed the sheets before Tony and Pepper had come back. Every piece of his meager belongings tucked away into their place. Even the dildo has been stowed away into a drawer.

Tony doesn’t follow him back to his room, Steve hadn’t thought he would. This was still a contract arrangement, even if emotions did run high during heat, there was a very obvious line when it came to heat-induced sex. Steve still believed that Tony genuinely cared for him, but he wasn’t going to hold anything Tony’s had said or done during the heat over his head. Not to mention Tony had already done so much for him.

He sweeps through his room, a last check before he tucks himself in for the night. Lingering hands on his sketchbook, he flips through the pages idly until he finds the sketch of Clint.

“JARVIS, is there any way for me to take a picture of the sketch and show it to Clint?” He asks.

JARVIS had been deactivated in his room during heat, a matter of privacy, but now that it was over, Tony had reactivated him. It was still a better convenience to have the AI help him without bothering Tony.

“Certainly Captain Rogers.” Comes the crisp voice from hidden speakers. “You can find a camera button on your phone, or alternatively I can scan the drawing if you were to place it properly in front of my cameras.

He considers the options. “Which one will be, uh, clearer?”

“My cameras, Captain.”

“Okay then, where should I place it?”

“If you could hold it up towards the northwest corner of the room, on your left, that would be optimal, Captain.”

Steve takes the drawing in hand and faces the direction indicated. Not even five seconds later, there’s a ding on his phone.

“I’ve sent the photo to your phone, Captain Rogers.”

Steve checks it, and sees the photograph. It’s him, looking confused, with the drawing, sitting on the bed. Almost perfect. If only he wasn’t in it.

“Could you take another one without me?”

“Of course, Captain Rogers.”

He picks out an appropriate picture once JARVIS sends them, attaches it to an email and then
sends it to Clint. 'For a marksman, you have lousy posture.' He adds in.

He's on the plane again, fingers frozen to the controls. No matter how much he hard he pulls, his hands are stuck, he can't even pick up the radio to tell Peggy goodbye.

The water is getting closer and closer as the plane rattles in its descent, pitch black on the surface. When the nose of the plane finally hits the water's surface, he finds himself flung back by the impact, hands coming miraculously free. He's on his feet in seconds but the metal plane is sinking fast, water swirling around him.

He tries the door but it's locked. Still, he doesn't lose hope. With new found determination, he climbs over the pilot controls, light flickering as the engine dies to malfunction.

With gloved fists, he punches the glass. The first form of cracks spur him on, thin spider webs against the darkness of water.

The glass gives way, but then water comes pouring forth, icy cold and unforgiving, forcing it's way into his mouth, blurring his sight. He tries to fight against it, tries to push back but his limbs feel like lead, against the roaring tide.

Water gets everywhere, enters his lungs, breaking past skin and clings to his bones. With each breath he takes the pain spikes, piercing his throat even as he remains unmoving. It feels like a moment, it feels like an eternity, before the water stops, its deafening slosh quieting down.

His surrounding turns cold, shards prickling against his skin as liquid turns solid in mere seconds. Suddenly there's ice all around him, pressing hard against his body, the water in his veins turns sharp. He's being torn, the ice trying to get in, and the ice inside him trying to get out, uncaring of the barrier of skin and muscle.

It is pain like he has never felt before, always there, a constant jab at every moment. He tries to struggle, but he's helpless against it, the cold grasping at every limb until he can't feel the rest of his body anymore. Even his heart doesn't feel as if it's attached to his body anymore, it steady thrum replaced by the creeping cold, replaced with a pain that-

Steve awakes with a jolt, mouth dry from panting, his skin still feels cold like it's been pressed against ic. Even his limbs feel too heavy to move. But he can feel his heart, beating against his chest, loud and strong and alive.

"It's alright, Cap. It's just a nightmare."

For a split second, his mind goes to the knife wedged between his mattress and headboard, his muscles go tight with anticipation, battling against the nonexistent cold. Steve blinks dry eyes rapidly, the blurry figure next to his bed turns to sharp focus in the dark.

"Breath with me, come on. In and out, in and out. Deep long breaths."

It's Tony. Of course it, God, who else would it be, his mind supplies uselessly. By his messy hair and greasy clothes, it's easy to guess where Tony had just rushed from.

"Where- I wasn't-" He sputters, still caught between the throes of the cold and harsh reality as everything comes crashing back to him. He was in the future, where there were LED television, computers and robots and-

"JARVIS pinged me that your heart rate escalated, and you weren't responding to any of his
attempts to wake you.” Tony says slowly, the way one would talk to a frightened animal. “Coupled by your REM reading and frantic brain activity, I deduced nightmare.” After a beat. “You're safe, you’re in my mansion in Malibu. Do you know who I am?”

It's a simple question, it also screams that Tony thinks that Steve's lost his mind.

“No, yes, Anthony Stark, Alpha.” Steve supplies with shuddery breath. He's still cold, clammy despite the sheets. Panic still fills his brain, an urgency to get warm and away taking utmost precedence. “I'm fine. Fine. I want-” Steve starts, forcing his limbs to move, wrestling against the sheets. “I need to-” Do something, anything.

“You are not going anywhere.” Tony commands, placing an insistent hand on Steve's chest. For a sickening second, Steve plays with the idea of pushing Tony aside, it would have easy to push past the Alpha and head for the door. Break away from this pretend safety that Tony says he has. Steve's not safe, he's never safe, not when there are people who can easily lock him up, keep him contained.

Shame catches up quickly, just the thought of disrespecting Tony makes his stomach clench, he swallows and hesitantly sinks back to bed. Tony's hand is warm on his chest, a small comfort against the sharp attention of his gaze.

“Would you like to talk about it?”

Two weeks ago he would have smiled at anyone who would have asked that, tell them it wasn't really anything, just his confusion of the general prospect of the feature. The Psychiatrists had asked as much, and some things he had told them and some things he hadn't. He could tell almost immediately when they only did so to be polite, their eyes would glaze over or shift somewhere else in the room.

But Tony isn't just anyone, and he cared more than he let on.

There's a distance between them, giving Steve the chance to settle in his own space, even now with Tony hand firmly on his chest, grounding in it's warmth, like he's afraid Steve would bolt the next chance he got. It wasn't untrue. There was restless energy in Steve's body, the need to assure himself that he was alive and well sat on the edge of his mind. The only reason he hasn't acted on it was because of Tony.

Steve knows that, if he were to try to break free from Tony's hold, he would be let go without another word. In the dim light of his room, there's a sorrow he can see in Tony's eyes, a mixture of sad understanding and concern. The hand on his chest isn't so much a warning, as it was there to remind Steve that he wasn't alone.

“It was a nightmare.” Steve admits. There's no point alluding to it, he knows it's there. He still remembers the first night he woke up like this, drenched in sweat, confused and too cold to move. As far as he knew, he didn't normally have them for too long, or at least S.H.I.E.L.D. hadn't noticed or thought much of it.

Tony nods but doesn't press for more, looking satisfied by the answer and maybe that what presses Steve to go on.

“The ice,” Steve continues, swallowing as he feels the shards pierce his skin. “the plane crashed, then there was water and I was drowning.” He hadn't expected to survive. Frankly, he doesn't know how to talk about it. His dreams are vivid but they aren't what had happened.

He crashed the plane, the last thing he had said to Peggy had been an outright lie and they both
knew it. There was no date, no tomorrow, and he had known that the moment he picked up the radio. He’d let the plane submerge before he even tried to get out, at that point, even he hadn’t been very optimistic about his chances.

“And then the ice just… Was everywhere at once.” God, in the nightmares the ice was almost always instant, frost creeping all the way to his heart. As soon as he tried to catch his breath there would be jolt of pain to his chest, pierced worse than shrapnel, cold and unyielding. Every part of his body would feel frozen under its grasp, struggling didn’t matter, and any attempt was met with a sharp reminder of agony.

Steve closes his eyes and grits his teeth, muscles clenching as he refuses to let the shudder run through his body.

“Please don’t tell SHIELD.” It comes out as a near whimper. Steve had been dreading that the most, he’d kept it to himself for a reason. What would happen if they were to know? More Psychiatrists? Would they lock him up? He’d just gotten Natasha’s approval. If they knew that he woke up to nightmares at least once a week, what would they think? Would they even allow him to go on missions? Would they even let him outside?

There’s a soothing hand in his hair, light touches as compared to the heavy weight on his chest. “Hey, didn’t I say you were safe here?” There’s a demanding tone, a touch of annoyance. “If you think for one moment that SHIELD can do anything to you, then you are seriously wrong Mister. Don’t worry about them, I’ll handle it.”

Somehow Steve believes him, no matter how weakly he might cling to that tendril. He allows the sense of comfort, the lie he tells himself, to trust Tony enough to catch him when he falls. New desperation flows freely, a feeling he hasn’t let through ever since he’d woken up in this new world, overwhelming as it run through him. A new found need to believe.

He nods even as he holds his breath. It’s strangely not humiliating to be seen like this. Steve had never played off his weaknesses, didn’t like being thought little off by bullies. Somehow there’s dignity in admitting his dreams, of his fears, the quiet torment that only he knew, shared out in the open for once.

Or maybe it was just Tony, who looked at him with such open concern, that Steve can’t help but wonder how he could deserve such attention. He knows where it comes from. Hero worship, he’s had that much when little kids came up to him, looking up to him, asking for his autograph. The men were a little more skeptical, but he’d had a couple of fellas who bought him a drink and they’d talk through the night whenever he was in town, off from a mission, trying to shake away the smell of blood and gunpowder. The war was upon them, there wasn’t much for celebration, except for small victories, and they took that sense of triumph as much as they could.

Steve wasn’t built for that kind of thing, he’d never known how to handle that kind of attention.

There’s a rumble next to him, a hand dipping towards his neck, soft, almost fluttering as it yanks him away from his thoughts nonetheless. “Steve? You still with me?” A firm press to his neck, Steve stifles a groan as his eyes flutter in response, a pleasing shiver running through his spine.

“Yeah.” Steve says, near breathless, he struggles to focus on Tony. Piercing, inquisitive eyes looking over him, Tony’s scent sharp, Alpha instinct no doubt taking over, fretting over the Omega that was so clearly in distress.

“You said you need to do something?”

“Huh?”
“Earlier. You were trying to leave the bed, you said you needed something.” Tony clarifies.
“What is it you need, Steve?”

It takes Steve a moment to remember the rush of panic, instinct to get away and make sense of it all. “I wanted to get up. Leave. Prove I was—” Alive “Safe.” He shakes his head, grits his teeth as a fresh wave of shivers wrack his body. “It’s stupid. I don’t even know what I wanted.” It was better that Tony had grounded him, kept him in place. Who knows what he might have done if he’d actually been left on his own.

“And do I make you feel safe?”

Steve looks up, watches the carefully blank face of Tony Stark. He’d never liked it when people looked down on him. When he was smaller, all he wanted to do was prove to everyone else that he was just as good as the rest of them. A joke to a lot of Alphas, as if a sickly Omega was ever their equal. He didn’t want pity either, he wanted to stand tall on his own terms, not because everyone else was willing to take a step down for him.

He watches Tony’s face, waiting for the pity in his eyes, the judgement that is sure to come, readies himself to square his shoulders, tighten his jaw. Ready to prove that he doesn’t need that expression, or the pity. He can take care of himself. Steve’s been fighting prejudice his entire life, in different forms and shapes. How is this any different?

It doesn’t come, it isn’t there.

Tony sits there with the same concerned, patient expression. Just waiting (on him?) for any indication from Steve.

“You do.” He finally answers. It feels like a confession but it also feel like a lie. His insides boil at the implication of his own words (“I don’t need your protection, Bucky. I’m fine on my own.”), an admittance that he has to shockingly acknowledge even when he doubts them. He’s not sure if he said it for himself or for Tony.

Sensing his torment, Tony prods him on the shoulder. “Would you like to see the Ironman?”

Clint’s description of the Ironman doesn’t quite capture what would first come to Steve’s mind. He’s seen picture of it on the internet, stolen photographs from running passersby, always at an angle that suggest that the Ironman was never paying attention.

Except now, in the confines of Tony’s lab.

The Ironman suit is larger than he thought it would be. It has to fit around Tony somehow so he doesn’t know where that misconception might have from and Tony is in no sense a small man. It’s all sleek curves and lines, deceptively lean design that hides its strength among other things. Compared to a tank, the suit looks incredibly lightweight and agile, which Steve doesn’t doubt, nor does he doubt the amount of firepower it actually conceals.

Tony is rattling off the Ironman’s capabilities. Flight, repulsor technology (Patent pending), core reserves, retractable weapons, and more than what Steve wants to know about every slip and catch than he thinks he needs to.

Focusing on the suit is a welcomed act, something to keep his mind pre-occupied with. Already Tony’s voice (rambling) has calmed him down enough that his skin doesn’t feel like it’s about to peel off, from inside out.
“It’s beautiful.” Steve has to say, because it is. As close as man and machine will ever be, form only ever to service its user, not a plate out of place.

Tony smirks. “Well, of course it is. I built it.” There’s that proud undertone. “And this is just Mark 4, wait until I’ve finished Mark 6.”

“And this one?” Steve looks at the first armor among the display. It lacks the sophistication that the rest have, crude and battered. Color is also absent, while the three others are painted in shifts of red and gold, this one remains chrome. Oddly enough, Steve finds it the most telling. While the rest are in near perfect condition, this one wears all its gashes with pride. Scratches, indents (bullets?) and soot mar its exterior.

Quiet steps, Tony stares at his own creation. “Mark 1. Where it all started.” There’s defeat in his voice, the kind that Steve has heard from men with regret in their hearts. “Abysmal efficiency, drained my one good battery within twenty minutes. The casing is mostly steel, iron for bolts, too heavy for controlled flight, eventually it will rust with the condensation from higher altitudes. Weapons are… Well there’s a machine gun and not much else. Not to mention it’s a pain to put on, every latch has to be clipped manually and sometimes it doesn’t even lock.”

“Then why keep it?”

Steve knows it’s a stupid question, a rude one, morbid curiosity has him hooked on the suit that seems darker and darker with the passing moment. Tony looks at him, really looks at him. For the first time, Steve sees the demons that swirl behind those brown eyes, tragic admission to a past he can’t place behind him.

“I keep it there to remind me. Of why I’m still here. And why I became the Ironman.” Like a man admitting his sins, like a man saying his prayers. “A good man died because of me.”

Tony doesn’t say much after that, Steve doesn’t really expects him to, but he doesn’t speak to Steve after either. They stare at each other, mere feet apart but separated by the nightmares of their past, until Steve moves forward.

Carefully, he takes Tony into his arms, a gentle pull towards his body as he nestles himself within Tony’s space, takes the simmer of scent beneath Tony’s skins and enfoldes himself in it. Touch is a language Omega’s instinctively know. A tap, a brush, a sweep, it could be as simple as that, and yet could mean something more than words could ever tell.

Steve does this now and seizes the hitch in Tony’s breath and turns it into his own, lets the slow shock of emotion settle in as he rubs a soothing hand over Tony’s arms. ‘I’m here for you.’ His actions whisper.
Wow, it's sunday and there's a chapter? Wowowow. Anyway. Finally got a new phone, still got to pay it off, but it's all mine. :) I'm trying to get back into the groove of writing again, so there's that.

This might as well be considered a side chapter. It's a little on the short side but I thought it'd be interesting to put out.

As always, thank you for all your comments and kudos. It makes me feel kinda guilty whenever you guys leave kudos when I don't post chapters, but keep leaving them because it keep reminding me that I have to write, lol. Enjoy.

When Steve was little, he hadn’t understood why he couldn’t stay with his mom.

“B-But, why? Ma, p-please. I’ll be g-good, I p-promise. Please d-don’t let them t-t-take m-me away.” He stammers, fighting back the hiccups and tears that stream down his face, clutching at his Ma’s dress as insistent hands grip his shoulders, trying to pull him away.

“Oh sweetie, please don’t cry.” His mom hushes, cupping his cheeks. Steve breaks free from the hands and he buries his face in his Ma’s blouse.

“Please, p-please, please. I-I-I’ll be really r-r-really good. I-I won’t get s-s-sick a-any-m-more, I p-pr-pr-pr-pr-promise.” He wails.

His Ma justs holds him tighter. “Can we please have a minute?” She tells the men. “Just a minute, we won’t take too long.” They look at each other and nod in understanding.

“We’ll give you a minute, Mrs. Rogers.” Says one of the men, and they close the door behind him.

Steve gasps for breath, his heart thudding painfully in his chest as he sniffles and tries to draw in breath from his mouth, his nose too stuffed with snot.

“That’s right, honey, just calm down and breath. In and out, in and out, just like the nurse taught us to.” His Ma coaxes gently, breathing with him until Steve doesn’t feel so dizzy.

She smiles at him, straightens out his hair and wipes away his tears. “Steven, we’ve talked about this, baby. You said you wouldn’t make a fuss.”


“Oh honey. It’s all very complicated. Things that only adults should be worrying about, okay? I’ll explain when you’re older, but right now you need to go with those men, like we talked about last night, remember? While I was packing all your things?”

“I-Is it why D-Dad left? D-Does he not want m-me? D-Don’t y-y-y-ou w-want m-m-m-me any-m-more, M-Mama?”
His mom scrambles him back in her arms, hugging him until his ribs hurt. “Don’t ever say that, Steven. Of course, I want you. I love you. I love you more than anything in the entire world, baby.” His mom sounds like she’s about to cry too. She sniffles, holds his shoulders and stares him in the eye.

Steve takes a shuddering breath. He knows that look. It’s the look his Ma gets when she’s made up her mind and there’s no arguing with her.

“I’ll come visit you, every Sunday, just like I promised.” She hesitates. “I love you so much, baby boy, and you might not understand it right now but I’m doing this for your own good. Can you be a sweetie for Mama and go with the men? Until she can explain everything?”

He swallows and his gaze fall to the floor, trying so hard not to cry that it make his body shiver.

His Ma places a finger under his chin, and slowly brings them up, her usual bright blue eyes watered down with tears.

“Steven?”

“E-Every S-S-Sunday?”

She smiles, strong.

“Yes. Every Sunday. We’ll go to church like we always do and visit Father Louis.”

He nods, because if he talks now he knows that he will burst into tears.

“That’s my sweet boy, that’s my little baby boy. Always so good.” She whispers as she takes him into another embrace. He latches on, feels the warmth radiate from her body, wishes that this moment could last forever.

“I love you, baby boy.”

##########

Sister Catherine is a nice beta who gives him a hug when the men drop him off at the orphanage. She smiles and asks him his name, to which he replies shyly with ‘Steven’.

“There now Steven, you’re going to fit fine here, the other boys will be happy to have a new friend.” She says, taking his hand as she leads him to the third floor. He drags his bag of things along with him.

It’s noisy, kids running around the corridor, laughing and yelling, Steve’s never been around this many other children before. A few of the boys stop and stare, nudging one another and pointing at him. Nervous tension creeps up and he holds Sister Catherine’s a little tighter as they walk past.

“George?” Sister Catherine peeks her head into one of the rooms before entering, Steve in tow.

The boy, George, is a good amount taller than Steve, has black hair and a pudgy face, and quickly shoves whatever he had in his hand under his pillow.

He looks at them expectantly, glancing curiously at Steve.

“This is Steven, he will be your new roommate from now on. I’m sure the both of you will get along well.” She nudges Steve forward. “Go on, dear, no need to be shy.”
“Hello.” Steve says in a small voice, staring at the piece of blanket on George’s bed.  

“Hi.”  

“I’ll leave you two to get to know each other. Be nice to Steven, please George? Show him around tomorrow after breakfast, and introduce him to the other boys.”  

“Yes, Sister Catherine.”  

Steve pushes his bag under the bed, and clambers onto the sheets. It’s different, a little stiffer than he’s used to.  

He supposes he has to get used to different now.  

##########  

It’s a week before he can really sleep. Everything is new and scary in the orphanage. His Ma tells him that he’s not really an orphan. She loves him very much and she isn’t going to let him be taken away. He just has to stay there for a while because she needs to take care of some adult things first.  

It doesn’t explain why he just can’t come home with her, no matter how many times he promises that he won’t be any trouble.  

(He doesn’t know it’s because his Ma had to sell their house to pay for the debt that his Dad owed.)  

##########  

Words become hard for him. He isn’t really good at speaking to begin with, but it worsens in the orphanage.  

“You talk funny, Rogers.” One of the older kids tell him.  

(There’s another kid in the orphanage who’s also named Steve, so the others call him by his last name instead.)  

Steve fiddles with the hem of his shirt. “I-I don’t talk f-funny.” He mumbles back.  

“Yeah, you do.” Another boy pipes up. “Y-y-ya t-talk l-like th-this a lot.” Close to a snigger.  

He’s the new kid, most of the others just ignore him for now. He would prefer that over this though. It’s already hard enough making friends without them picking on him.  

“I-I don’t.” He sniffs, feels the pinpricks in his eyes, the gasp in his breath.  

“Aww, baby Rogers gonna c-c-cry too?” The first kid mocks, quivers a lip right in front of him. They laugh and goad him, making faces as they surround him.  

At this point, Steve grits his teeth, fights the imperative to cry, but his eyes are already blurry and his face heating up.  

He hates it here, and he hates bullies.  

##########  

Steve learns that there are a lot of kids here who don’t even know their parents. Some of them say
they’ve been here for as long they can remember, and they’re just waiting to be adopted like the rest of the kids who get to leave.

He thinks they’re brave to want to go with strangers, whereas he gets out of the way when a couple come by to adopt. He doesn’t like the idea of people staring at him.

“You wanna get adopted?” George asks him one day. They’re kinda friends now, George lets him borrow his toy wooden car so he thinks they are. Steve shakes his head. “M-My mo-om’ll a-adopt me b-back.” He’s not sure how it works, but his mom is much smarter than him, so he’s not worried. “Y-You?”

George shrugs. “My Nana said that this was better for me. Maybe she meant I should get adopted so that I can have a new mommy and daddy who will take care of me.”

Alpha-Omega couples are the best, or at least that’s what George says. They smell the best, like sweet, gooey and some place safe.

Steve hasn’t got the heart to tell him that his Ma and Dad were an Alpha-Omega couple and his life didn’t work out so well. He just hopes that nice people adopt George so that he can have more toy cars.

#################

“Q-Quit it, J-James. Leave m-me alone.”

“Or what, Rogers?”

It’s been a year now. Children come and go, but Steve’s still here, his Ma still comes every Sunday and some kids take notice. He won’t get adopted, that’s for sure, but he still lives in the orphanage like everyone else. Steve doesn’t think it’s a problem.

James thinks it is.

James is an older kid, with dark hair and mean eyes. Eleven years old, already starting to show what orientation he falls under. The nuns say he’ll be an Alpha, on the count that he’s already five-two and still growing. James thinks it means that he gets to boss the other kids around. Steve thinks he’s just a big jerk.

There’s another prod to his side, and it’s all Steve can do to not just flinch away. James thinks it’s a laugh to pick on the smaller kids, thinks it’s especially funny when he picks on Steve.

“I s-said s-stop it.” He says, tries to swat away James’s hand but ends up waving through air.

A nasty grin on his face, James shoves him particularly hard, enough to make him stumble. “Yer mama ain’t here to help you, baby Rogers.” He sneers, looming over Steve as he corals him to a corner.

Steve doesn’t know why James hates him so much, just that he does and he likes to make Steve’s life hell. Any attempt to try to talk to the older boy is met with a blatant remark of how he must be a dumb kid, along with a bunch of insults to get him mad. He’d tried to apologize, if he insulted James somehow, or did something wrong to him, but he still gets shoved around.

“P-Please j-j-just leave m-me a-alone.” Steve tries again, curling up around himself.
“Hey, the kid said to leave him alone.”

Steve looks up to see a dark-haired boy, just a little taller than him, staring at them. Must be new. Steve thinks, because he’s certainly never seen him, and nobody picks a fight with James.

“And what? Mind your own business, pipsqueak. You his babysitter or something?”

“Nah. Thought you were deaf, maybe had to hear it from the other ear for the words to make sense.”

James snarls at some attempt at intimidation, but quiets down when Sister Margaret passes by. “Looks like it’s your lucky day, Rogers.” He gives Steve and the other kid the stinkeye before moving away.

“Hey, kid, you okay?”

Steve blinks. Because yeah, a lot of people thinks he's younger than he is since he's on the short side. He hopes that he gets taller someday. “M’not a kid. I-I just turned e-eight last July.” Steve mumbles. He’s not used to someone helping him, even George just stays away when James decides to make his day a bad one.

“If you say so.” The dark-haired boy replies with a shrug. “You got a name or what?” He suddenly demands, eyeing him.

“S-Steve. ’Cept th-there’s already a-another Steve s-so e-everyone justs-s calls me Ro-Rogers.”

“Well, my name is James.” Comes the introduction, Steve doesn’t even hide the frown. “The o-older boy from earlier is James.”

“Oh.” Goes Other James. “So what should I be called?” Other James looks at him expectantly.

“I d-don’t know.” The older kids probably decide that somehow, maybe the big kids get together and talk about it. Steve wouldn’t know. There’s a moment of silence between them where Other James keeps glancing at Steve, waiting for him to suddenly have all the answers. Which is weird. Nobody really looked to Steve for answers before.

“Y-You gots a-another name?”

“Oh. You means like Buchanan or Barnes? Huh. My mom calls me Bucky, would that work?”

“I g-guess?”

“Oh, you get to call me Bucky. And I get to call you Stevie.” Bucky announces, very official like with his hands over his chest. Steve has to wonder at his confidence, if anything.

So that was that.

##########

He still gets sick a lot, enough that the Sisters decide to let him have a room all to himself, in case that his sickness spreads to the others. George visits him in his room sometimes to play.

Sometimes he feels too hot and dizzy to leave his bed, and sometimes he feels too cold to do anything else but shiver under his blanket. Most of the time, he has a hard time breathing. His breath getting caught somewhere between his throat and lungs. His Ma says it’s called Asthma,
and it means he can’t really run around too much like everyone else, so he has to be careful.

He grows jealous of the other kids, who scamper up and down the stairs, through the halls, screaming and yelling without a care in the world, while he lays in his bed, his body aching from fever, wondering why life is unfair.

Bucky is very adamant about sitting with Steve while he’s sick. Sometimes, he spends the night with Steve, sneaking out of his own room to take the spare bed in Steve’s room instead.

He claims that his roommates are boring, and Steve is so much more entertaining. Bucky is also insistent that Steve reads to him from their story books whenever he does sleep over, claiming that he’s not a good reader himself, and that Steve does the voices from the stories really well.

Steve knows they’ll both get in trouble if the nuns catch them, but it makes him feel better when Bucky’s around so he just keeps quiet about it.
Chapter Notes

I missed a week, again. :(Just busy at work, so I put in some extra time on this particular chapter instead.

Twenty-Five percent of this chapter wasn't suppose to be here, namely the beginning and end of this chapter, but I thought it'd be a nice addition to it anyway.

Is anyone else missing the smut yet? Because I am.

Again, thanks for everyone who left kudos, tho the last chapter didn't get any comments, I wanted to build a bit on kid!Steve anyway. But woah, 800 kudos!!!!

Enjoy.

[r u goin2 dress up nc for stark? ;)]

Texting with Clint is a little confusing. He uses shortcuts and symbols that Steve has to ask JARVIS about.

Steve might have gone into a panic and asked Clint about protocol for attending an event. So far he has been both helpful and distracting.

[Yes. He got me a suit.] Steve wrestles down the impulse to put his name on the end, and to keep his 'texts' short and concise. It’s nothing like writing an actual letter after all.
[ Oooo fancy~ b careful u crzy kids remember to use lubes and condoms]

[It’s not that kind of date.]

[ if u say so. man i wish i could go wid u. security duty is so booooring :’(()]

##########

The flashes are familiar, the vague shapes of cameras pushed from every direction into their faces, yells of questions and statements coming from this way and that. Steve tries to smile, but he doesn’t exactly know where to look.

“Alright. You’re not expected to talk to anybody. If someone comes up to you and starts asking questions, it’s better to act like you don’t know a thing and call for me instead. Call my attention, tap my arm, do a signal and I can handle the rest.” Tony says for the upteenth time tonight, as they escape the blinding flashes and enter the hall.

Steve has to wonder which one of them is more nervous. “And what would be the signal?” He asks in mock whisper, leaning towards Tony as they register their names for the night.

“Oh, I don’t know.” Tony says. “A kiss on the cheek? Flutter those pretty blues for me? One flutter for ‘Get this creep off me’, two flutters for ‘Let’s got out of here’?”

Steve pretends to think it over. “What would count as a flutter?”
“Hmm. Two—No, three blinks per flutter?”

“People will think there’s something wrong with my eyes, Tony.”

“Not if you do it seductively!”

Tony looks stunning in a black suit, perfectly form-fitting, bowtie and all, perfectly shined leather shoes, not a line out of place. Steve unabashedly stares for the first five minutes because, wow, Tony is his date.

Steve himself is in a dark blue suit himself. A traditional Omega cut, with the buttons closing around his midriff, and borrowed cufflinks from Tony that were probably expensive enough to make Steve’s head spin. The suit is a rental, adjusted for his size, or more like salvaged according to their tailor.

People greet them halfway into the hall, or rather, greet Tony and then take notice of him. Their eyes looks him up and down, judging him where he stands, before a sidewards glance at Tony, like they're trying to measure them. He doesn’t think Tony notices (used to it, most likely), just looks delighted by their attention, starts and ends quick conversations.

“Oh, William, how’s your new manufacturing plant in China? Planning to boost your points by fourth quarter, huh?”

“Julia, you must tell me where you picked up those lovely hydrangeas featured in your resort villa!”

There’s always a quip, a sense of familiarity, that Tony do know these people, for however long that might be. Enough to garner found memories and smiles.

They take him in as a second thought, always referring first to Tony before they even look at him. Which Steve understands. Tony is the Alpha, and right now he’s an extension of Tony’s persona. As a sign of respect, they acknowledge the Alpha first before his Omega. It doesn’t exactly bother Steve, in fact, he’s more than ready to cede attention to Tony than take it from him. As it is, he’s not exactly expected to participate in the conversation, which suits him just fine.

The night turns into a blur of faces, greetings left and right, little snacks every so often. Tony seems happy to introduce Steve, let’s the other Alphas get a good look at him, and quickly redirects the conversation when they start asking more. Steve’s never really had a secret identity before but he imagines this is what it feels like.

“Oh, Tony, we've been wondering when you’d show up to these parties again. They’ve been droll without you.” One of the women quips, after a chuckle at Tony’s comment about her fourth Omega within the month.

“You know, re-organizing Stark Industries from bottom up. Keeps a man busy, along with my superhero gig. I haven't had the time to fix my schedule, Cara.”

“But you had the time to snag this beautiful Omega. What was your name again, dearie?” She says with a flutter (four blinks, he counts) in Steve’s direction.

“Steve. Lovely to meet you, ma’am.” He answers dutifully, smiling at her. She’s an Alpha, and the tall man hanging off her arm is a Beta judging by his scent, though profusely covered with cologne that gave off an Omega tinge to it. He has to wonder about that.

“Oh, what a polite one.” Cara purrs, her fingers roaming the arm of her date, eyes drinking in
Steve. “Would you be persuaded to share him, Tony? Let me take him home for the night. I’ll be sure return him in one piece.”

Steve widen just the slightest, ears turning a shade of red. He casts a nervous glance at Tony, who simply laughs, not looking bothered at all. If anything he looks amused.

“Afraid this one isn’t for sharing, sorry.” Tony answers easily, looping an arm around Steve’s hip, pulling him in just a fraction closer. A gesture all too possessive, but was a clear a sign as any. Playing the part, Steve rests his own arm around Tony’s middle, lax on his waist, smiling apologetically at Cara.

Cara pouts. “You used to be a lot more fun.” She sniffs. “We shared Omegas all the time. Why is this one any different?”

“That was when we were young and stupid, Cara.”

She rolls her eyes. “And now you’re all mature and grown-up? I thought I’d never see the day.” She says with such haughtiness that Steve wonders how close she and Tony were. Her eyes rake over him one more time, a newfound curiosity in her gaze before she settles with an exaggerated sigh. “Well, I can see when you’re mind has been made up. I must have a word with Oliver and his dashing husband about their new line of water-resistant cosmetics before the night drags on, let’s catch up some other time then?”

“Of course, schedule something with my secretary, we can pen it in by next month.”

“Oh Tony, you and your jokes.” She says, already walking past them.

The Beta pauses, halfway through following Cara, nodding to them both. “It was nice to see you again, Tony. Cara has been looking forward to seeing you tonight, despite how she might act, I’ll set something up with your secretary, at the soonest possible convenience.” He adds formally, a lot more soft-spoken than Steve would have guessed a man of his size to be. “And I hope to see you again as well, Steve.”

Bright, very intelligent, brown eyes look at him with odd delight, his lips crooked in a small smile. Unlike the haughty inspection from Cara, this one makes him feel a little bit accepted, accommodated into an unknown circle.

Steve returns the smile.

“Maybe.” Is all he can say, because who knows when he’ll be accompanying Tony anytime in the near future. He doesn’t even know what’s going to happen to him when he returns to S.H.I.E.L.D. Will he revert back into his old schedule? Running on the treadmill and resuming training from the two spies? His jaw tightens at the thought of that. It would be like pretending he’d never been out.

“Oh of course, we’ll talk soon, Marlow.” Tony eases in, taking the attention away from Steve. Marlow, the Beta, looking honestly concerned when Steve’s jaw tightens. “You better catch up with Cara before she realizes you’re gone.”

Marlow excuses himself, presumably to look for Cara.

Steve is vaguely aware that Tony’s arm is still around his hip, as is his own arm around Tony. With that leverage, Tony steers them into some seats by the far end of the room, quieter than the rest of the place.

“Are you okay?” Tony manhandles him into a seat.
“I’m fine.” Steve insists. Quickly changing the topic, he gives Tony a playful smile. “So, I’m not for sharing?”

“Not unless you want to be.” Tony answers quickly. “Otherwise, I will defend your honor and stave away these dastardly fiends.”

He knows that Tony’s joking, but it’s a sweet thought. Even if he can handle himself just fine.

“But I am curious about...” He gestures, hoping Tony would understand.

“Cara and Marlow?” He does, of course.

Steve nods.

“Cara’s a Mid-level Alpha. Marlow is a Low-level Beta, which means, in ten words or less, that he is hormonally closer to being an Omega. As a point of reference, High-level Betas have hormone levels closer to Alpha readings.”

Steve blinks, because Cara had smelled a little less an Alpha than Tony did, he could still pick up the scent that told him that she was. And while Marlow was definitely a Beta, he wasn’t sure if the cologne had been to try to smell more like an Omega, or simply to enhance his Omega scent.

“They’re perfect for each other, together for at least seven years now, I think. Except Cara has a strong preference for Omegas in bed but they claim that they haven’t found the perfect Omega yet. So, instead of forming a permanent triad of Alpha, Beta and Omega, they look for Omegas who can satisfy Cara’s desires.”

“And that’s... Normal?” God, he was so confused with this century.

Tony chuckles. “Not exactly. Cara and Marlow’s case is special, not every Alpha desires an Omega, some of us pair off with Betas just fine, fully content. Triads are rare, and they’re not always an Alpha, Beta and Omega, there are hardly any, but they do exist. It’s still a matter of preference. In this day and age, you get to choose what you like. For people like Cara and Marlow, it means they can take their pick of the litter.”

Steve’s tempted to ask what was in it for Marlow. It almost sounds like cheating to him, the quick change of Omegas. But then he recalls the fond smile on Marlow’s face, the open adoration for Cara, even while she considered Steve as her next conquest. A love so plain that even he, a stranger, noticed.

“They’re lucky to have each other.” Steve finds himself saying. Back when- Before the serum, he had hoped that somehow, some Alpha would look at him, really see him, and think that he was alright. It was a hazy dream, fed by the idle thoughts when the fever blurred his eyes and shook his brain. A silent prayer that someday, there was an Alpha kind enough to look past his physical weaknesses. With each passing year, his hopes had dwindled.

Why would any Alpha or Beta want a sickly Omega? A burden. He’d be no good for raising children, not when the housework would pile up while he lay sick in bed.

But with Tony... It’s like finding a piece of coal after being so cold for so long. The burst of heat to start the flame, a simmering ember to keep warm with. Steve’s not sure how long he can have that warmth, but he wants to make the best of it, so badly that it aches. Even if he burns himself while trying to hold on.

“Steve?”
Steve blinks up at Tony, the look of concern surprising. (How long was he quiet for?)

“Lost you again, Cap. Was it the triad? Everyone crowding around us? Want something to drink? Maybe we should leave-”

Panicked, Steve latches onto Tony. “No, I’m fine. Really.” He adds at Tony’s disbelief. He was making a mess of the night, after Tony had been so nice to ask him to accompany him and get him a suit. “I-I think a drink. A drink would be good.” He just needs time to calm down, get his thoughts in order.

“Okay. If you’re sure.” Tony says pointedly, and looks at him for a moment, waiting for Steve to change his mind.

When it becomes apparent that Steve isn’t budging, he heads off for some drinks.

Steve lets out a breath when Tony’s far enough, tugging the collar of his dress shirt that is suddenly too tight. He can feel the gold necklace digging into his clammy skin, and readjusts it.

“Excuse me? Is this seat taken?”

Steve nearly jumps in surprise. “No. It’s alright.” There’s still another seat for Tony, and he’d feel awful if they’d hogged all the seats.

“Oh, thank god, my feet are killing me.” The man laughs, taking the seat. He has thick-rimmed glasses, sandy-blonde hair, and a smile that makes Steve be on guard. He’s also an Alpha.

“I don’t think we’ve been introduced. Hammer. Justin Hammer.” He holds out a hand, which Steve shakes. “Ooh, good grip.” For an Omega, goes unsaid.

“Steve.” He answers back, because it’s what he’s been saying the entire time.

“Steve.” Justin repeats. “Well Steve. I couldn’t but notice that you were with Tony Stark tonight. You wouldn’t happen to be his Omega, would you?” He asks with a smile that Steve feels would be more appropriate on a Hyena. It’s the most direct question he’s had all night.

“I guess that would be the easy conclusion.” He’s not sure where this is going.

“Oh, don’t be like that!” Justin chuckles. “Tony’s an old friend, we don’t always see eye to eye but that’s a minor detail.” He regards Steve, a weird look in his eye. “But you’re new, nobody even knows where you came from, fresh on the scene. Either that or Tony has you squirrelled away somewhere secret.” Justin waves his hand but then it lands on Steve’s knee, clanging warning bells in his brain.

Justin leans over, just the slightest, enough that Steve can smell his thick perfume. Steve stiffens, jaw tightening. “Between you and me, how much is Tony paying you to play his sweet Omega? Trying schmooze his way back after that disaster of a convention of his? I’ll double it if you talk.”

Justin’s grip tightens on his knee, his smile turning dark. “A guy like Tony isn’t meant to have an Omega. I mean, look what happened to Potts! Thrown out for the newer model, by the looks of it. Can’t say I blame the guy, you’re gorgeous.”

Steve’s blood runs cold. Indignation, first and foremost, at what Justin had just said. Did they all think that? He was reduced to be an Omega for hire? To tote around and show off for the crowd?

And then white hot rage that they would even think of Tony that way. Tony, who has been nothing but nice and pleasant to everyone, even when Steve can tell he isn’t exactly happy with a person. The slight tang in the air, the momentary frown on Tony’s lips before he turns it into a
smile, the tired look in his eyes when they leave them be. The way he moves just the slightest bit towards Steve whenever they’re approached, whether to be a comforting presence or just make sure that no Alpha would get the wrong idea, Steve’s not sure but he appreciates it very much.

“Unfortunately, Justin, I have no idea what you’re talking about.” Steve says, let’s the icy anger seep into his tone, a frown of disapproval at Justin.

Who, by the looks of it, ignores all warnings. Only seems to move even closer. “C’mon, Sugar. You’re not cheap by the looks of you, but I’m good for it. I just need you to squeal a bit, something for the papers, just a little dirt on Tony, and then, maybe after, I’ll show you what it’s like to be with a real Alpha. A pretty thing like you ought be tied up-”

Steve punches him square in the jaw, vaguely remembering to pull back as his body shakes in controlled rage. He stares numbly, Justin curled around his feet, cradling his jaw and spewing curses.

“What the fuck?! You little bitch, my fucking jaw, holy fuck did I lose a tooth?! Fuck, fuck, fuck, it hurts.” Justin wails, which sets about a commotion.

“Jesus, what happened?”

Horror washes over Steve as Tony returns with the drinks, looking surprised, switching back and forth from Steve and then to Justin on the floor. How was he going to explain this? God, he’d ruined the night.

“Stark! You’re fucking bitch punched me in the face! Keep that crazy bitch from me!” Justin screams, even while Steve slowly backs away. He can feel everyone’s eyes on him, quiet murmurs about what had happened.

“Don’t talk about him like that.” Tony snaps, suddenly flaring. “You’re barely hurt, have some painkillers and sleep it off.”

“Sleep it off?! My jaw feels like it’s going to fall off any minute and you tell me to sleep it off?!” He’s livid, glasses askew which makes him look even crazier than he already was. Thankfully, a couple of waiters start escorting Justin elsewhere with promises of medical attention.

“You’ll pay for this, Stark.” Justin spits. “You and you’re Omega!”

“Call my people.” Tony says, already uninterested. He’s looking back at Steve, a stern expression and pursed lips.

Steve swallows, his gut feels like it’s sinking into the depths of the earth. How should he even explain? Should he bother with an explanation? No matter where he looked at it, punching Justin had been wrong, even if he did make outrageous claims on him. And he’d done it while being Tony’s date, which would no doubt ruin his reputation. Oh God, what if it went on the news? Commander Fury would never let him out again.

“Hey, Steve. Eyes up.” There’s a hand on his shoulder, the familiar scent of safety and earth enveloping him. Steve chances a peek, and is met with concerned brown. Eyes that tell him it’s going to be alright. “You okay?”

Steve lets out a shaky breath and flutters his lashes, twice.

##########

The car ride is quiet, Tony’s staring out the window, his posture stiff and scent neutral.
Steve snatches glances of him when he can, but embarrassment prevents him from speaking. He should apologize, he knows that, but he doesn’t know where to start. From the start, for being his date to begin with? Justin’s words echo dully in his mind, the whispers and yells, the pressure on his knee.

“You think very loudly, you know that? You’re practically stomping through the car floor.”

“Sorry.”

“It’s a small detail, no really, I’ve been thinking about changing the floor anyway, this one isn’t even reinforced to take the Ironman suit. Actually, in hindsight, I could have at least brought one that would be a match for you.” Tony goes off. “Clearly something has upset you enough to belay your usual good manners and decide to make me rethink about my poor choice of cars.”

The car is, of course, lovely and comfortable (some brand he doesn’t know???).

“No, it’s uh- Sorry.” Steve abruptly stops the nervous thumping of his foot, and rubs his sweaty palms over his expensive pants.

(Everywhere he looks, it’s a reminder of Tony’s generosity.)

“It’s fine, seriously Cap, don’t sweat it.” Tony waves it off, keeps his eyes on him regardless. “Now, what’s got your panties in a bunch? Hammer? What the hell did that asshole say? And don’t tell me he’s not an asshole, because he is.”

Straight at it then.

“It was nothing, he said a few things and I lost my temper. I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to punch him.” Steve mutters.

“Steve, I couldn’t give less of a damn even if you broke his jaw, whatever that asshole did, he deserved it if it was coming from you.”

“He just talked and. I wasn’t-”

“What did he say?” Tony all but snarls, one hand gripping warningly at Steve’s arm.

Steve’s jaws tighten, hyper aware of the fact that Tony was halfway off his seat, trying to tower over him. Steve’s eyes go half-lidded, a frown on his lips as he sinks in his seat.

“Is that an order?” He asks, tone clipped.

Tony at least seems to understand, and shifts uncomfortably away, letting go of Steve’s arm in a desperate gesture. “You know that’s not what I meant.” He says, voice too low and too calm.

“I know. I just thought I should remind you that I can take care of myself, even from jerks like Hammer.”

“You shouldn’t have to. You shouldn’t have to deal with scum like him.”

Steve blinks. Slowly, he moves just the slightest towards Tony, who maintains a stoic gaze on the door handle.

“Talk me through this, Tony, help me understand.” He says, nice and quiet, watches for the tell-tale signs of distress.
“He shouldn’t have touched you, he shouldn’t have even looked at you. You put your trust in me and I let you down. Left you by yourself and that’s inexcusable, no decent Alpha would have left you.” Tony’s eyes are wild as he rambles, dangerous, even in the dim light of the car, Steve can see the manic energy in them.

Slowly, he maneuvers himself, hushing Tony when he makes aborted movements to argue. A careful leg over the other, he nestles himself over Tony’s lap. He lets his weight rest on Tony’s thighs, knows that Tony can take it, and places his hands on Tony’s shoulders.

The Alpha goes very still, surprised first and foremost, but the energy seems to hum with more curiosity than anger.

There’s a small movement in the corner of his eye which Steve realizes is Tony’s hand, twitching for purchase. He smiles at Tony, nods, and then there’s hands on his body, fingers crumpling his suit.

“I wanted to do this all night.” Tony groans, burying his head in Steve’s chest, nuzzling into his pecs.

“Just this?” Steve jokes, which earns him a playful slap on the thigh.

“You, Steve Rogers, are as devious as they come.”

“Who me? I’m just a kid from Brooklyn, ain’t nothing devious ‘bout me.”

Tony chuckles, a bubble of laughter into Steve’s chest. It turns Steve’s insides into jelly.

When Tony quiets down, he looks up at Steve, realization in his eyes. “Thanks. For you, y’know, this?”

Steve smiles, runs his hands over Tony’s collar, enjoy the little hitch in his breath and quickening heartbeat. “You were going into Fight, it was the least I could do.”

Tony groans. “Over an asshole Low-level like Hammer, normally I’ve got more poise than tah. Don’t ever remind me. We shall never speak of this again. Forbidden territory, forever.” Like it’s final.

There’s a frazzle in the air, like an annoying buzz. “Okay Tony, if you say so.”

They stay like this for a while, Steve just on Tony’s lap, until Happy raps on the partition and calls out. “Boss? Should we make another loop around the park or?”

Steve snorts, and Tony squeezes his thigh. “Sure Hap, take us home.”
Steve leaves tomorrow. He knows that, he dreads it, and somehow coming back home (home?) brings that realization to the front of his mind.

He’s going to miss this, whatever this was. No, he retracts that, pulling himself away from the misery in his mind. He wouldn’t belittle the memory of this place with laziness, where he had felt more free than he dare admit. The fear of the future had been burned here, replaced with a smoldering pile that warmed him to his core, enough that he even felt hopeful of what tomorrow could bring. Curious of what the future could teach him.

Steve finds himself at his door, Tony trailing behind him.

For a man who Steve has seen parade around the gala for most of the night, acting like he owned the place, he looks oddly subdued in his own home.

Tony clears his throat, and tries to act casual. “I guess this is good night?”

“It is, I think.” Steve replies, finding himself wondering what Tony is thinking. He has a good idea, but he would prefer not to assume. A Fight state takes a lot out of an Alpha, mentally tiring, like a headache, he’s been told.

“And your flight is…?”

“Nine hundred sharp.”

“My private jet is at your beck and call, it’s comfier than whatever SHIELD has, and it has a steady internet connection while crossing states.”

“That’s real nice of you to offer.” Steve says softly, touched by the open generosity. “But I really couldn’t impose, you’ve already been-”

Tony waves him off in the middle of his sentence. “Zero imposition. I insist. What good is a private jet if you can’t fly it out whenever you want? Exactly. I’m texting Coulson that you’re taking the jet.”

Steve smiles. “If you insist.”

Tony clears his throat, a step towards Steve with indecision. “Well. Now that that is taken care of.
I did promise a kiss at your door.”

Steve refuses to admit that his heart flutters. “For my benefit or yours? I ain’t an easy fella, people might get the wrong idea.”

“Mutual, I hope?” Tony chuckles, runs a hand over his chest, fingers trailing across his undershirt, teasing and light.

God, Steve doesn’t know if he should be allowed. His heat is over, for all intents and purposes, Tony doesn’t have to put up with him anymore. A small part of him squirms in shame of his initial assumption of the man.

At the beginning, he had classified Tony as just another Alpha, one to get him through his heat, who’d just let him be when it was all over. Some Alphas were addicted to the high of an Omega below them, the natural domination that would come from heat sex. It was easy to take when the Omega was so willing to give, desperation running high during the period.

But even now, Tony stands there, waiting for him, not taking anything at all. Just waits for his decision, non-imposing.

Steve moves, tips his head down to capture Tony’s lips, who responds in kind. His arm’s fall awkwardly to his side, while Tony’s hands slide to his hips, keeping him there. Steve has a good three inches on Tony, so he towers over him quite a bit, but that’s not much of a factor when Tony kisses back.

Warmth spreads through him, a pleasurable shudder with every flick of tongue that sparks Steve’s nerves.

When they break apart, Tony’s staring up at him, body pressed close, warm and lazy.

“May I spend the night?” The uncertainty was endearing.

Steve has a choice.

He doesn’t know why it hits him just now, because he should have known ever since he’d step foot in the Stark premises, but it does. He knows, really knows, that if he were to refuses, Tony would just back away and wish him goodnight.

This was sex, not heat. He had a choice in this.

Steve doesn’t answer at first, just enjoys the presence that is Tony, who smells like earth, fresh air, metal and freedom. He smiles. “Yes.”

They stumble onto the bed, kissing and groping each other. There’s desperation, not quite like when Steve was in heat but he can feel it, coursing through his veins nonetheless.

Clothes are discarded and Tony mauls his chest with vigor, twirling a tongue on his nipple that has him chortling with laughter.

He doesn’t miss the way Tony smiles when he notices that Steve is wearing the necklace.

Steve’s wet when Tony’s fingers make way to his entrance, teasing the rim with his thumb, pushing in a finger that easily slips in. Gasping, Steve responds in kind by kneading his hands on Tony’s ass, pulling him closer.

His own cock is hot and heavy on his stomach, already hard, the heat in his belly brought to a simmer when Tony adds in another finger and twists.
“Condoms?”

“Wh-what?” Steve answers back, delirious from the pleasure, only brought back to his own mind when Tony’s fingers stop their torture.

“Unless you’re on birth control?”

“No, uh, they don’t work. On me.” He blushes.

Tony blinks. “Oh. Stay put.” And just like that, Tony darts out of the room, leaving the door ajar.

Steve tries very hard not to think about Tony streaking in his own home, really it’s a terrible image. He’d forgotten about condoms, kind of. It hadn’t really occurred to him that pregnancy was an actual issue. An Omegas best chances of pregnancy was a week after heat after all, it was foolish of him to forget, when the hubbub about Alpha dominance settled in and a mate was chosen.

He blushes at that too. *Mate.*

There’s not much chance to think on in too much, not when Tony is back in the room, covering his body with his, as if to make up for lost time. He finds himself happy to think that way.

He shifts to his knees when Tony becomes impatient, rubbing his cock against Steve’s thigh in aborted movements.

Condom on, Tony presses inside of him, Steve exhaling as he is filled, hyper aware of the way Tony stretches him out, the blunt head of his cock pressed pleasurably inside of him.

“Good?” Tony checks, wriggling just the slightest to adjust his position on the bed, his knees on either side of Steve’s thighs. Steve feels his cock shift inside of him, gasps when he presses in just right.

“Yes.” He breathes, barely a whisper.

The pride that emanates from Tony could be tasted in the air, as sure as the sweetness of honey.

They move with understanding of one another’s bodies, tentative and appreciative. Steve knows to shift back, nudges Tony forward to drive him crazy when he’s buried deep, and Tony knows to press his chin just below Steve neck, lets his beard bristle against the tender spot that sends Steve shuddering.

It’s slow, painfully slow, both making use of what borrowed time they had to say what was difficult to put into words. Instead, they let their bodies talk, in a language more suited to Alpha and Omega.

In the end, Steve comes first, and then sucks Tony off in what he hopes to be a good effort. He thinks he did well, if Tony’s swearing is to be any indication.

He curls up next to the Alpha after cleanup, breathing in his warm scent, the sudden weariness that comes after sex demanding to be sated with sleep. The buzzing in his mind quiets to a murmur, worry and anxiety melted away from his bones.

“Steve?”

He blinks, peering at Tony with half-open eyes. “Hmm? Yes?” He hums.
Tony shakes his head, his expression fond. “Nothing. Making sure you didn’t go feral on me again.” He says with such kindness that makes Steve feel warm.

He can’t help the smile on his face. “M’good. Just tired.” He admits. He doesn’t mean physically, merely all the worrying had taken a lot more from him than he thought it would.

Truth was, he’d been reluctant to be around so many people at once. As much as the future now excited him, everything was new and seen with curiosity, he realized that the people in it would have changed as well.

But Steve also knows that certain people don’t change, and there will always be bullies like Hammer who will get their way.

It brings to mind what SHIELD might have in store for him. He can only believe that Director Fury is doing it from the kindness of his heart for so long, and eventually, he does have to ask what he might have in store for him. He knows the way the Director looks at him, calculating and patient. Knows it from his time in war and when Alphas when they’re trying to decide if he’s worth the trouble or not.

More times than none, Steve shows that he has teeth when they don’t expect it.

“What?”

“What?” He snaps, then quickly feels bad for it. His frayed scent must have tipped Tony off.

“You were lost again.”

“Lost where?”

Tony rubs an arm over his bicep. “Wherever it is you go when you start to think about bad things.” He dismisses it before Steve can ask further. “Whatever. Was it that thing with Hammer again? Because say the word and I can have my lawyers put his ass back in jail where it belongs.”

“It really was nothing. He said some very mean things about you and I didn’t appreciate them.” He grumbles, the memory of Hammer’s words still sending a irritant flash in his mind.

Tony laughs, plainly laughs at him. “Oh my god, you are precious. News flash, Cap, over half the country has mean things to say to me, but I don’t mind Hammer taking the brunt of that force.” He snickers.

“Well, he shouldn’t.” Steve says, brows knitted together. “And neither should anyone else. You are more than what people think of you.”

“It doesn’t matter what they think, not to me.” Tony explains. “And that shouldn’t be your concern. People will say what they have to say, and they’ll quiet down until the next big thing. It’s not all that bad, makes for a good laugh every once in a while.”

Steve doesn’t like it, not one bit, but he realizes that Tony speak with experience. It doesn’t mean he won’t argue with the next person to think badly of Tony, however.

Tony thumbs the gold necklace, something akin to an appreciative hum. Which in turn causes Steve to huddle closer, count the heartbeats beneath the insistent whirr of the arc reactor.

He falls asleep that way, with Tony’s arm curled over him, listening to the steady beat that lulls him into slumber.
Tony hands him a thick manila envelope in the car. He’d driven him in some ridiculously expensive car, insisting that Happy was out on an errand for Pepper so there really was no one to drive him. Tony had stopped short of the jet, parked just a few feet from them.

Steve accepts the envelope, lifting a brow at Tony.

“They’re papers. Y’know, like, I.D.s and stuff. Congratulations, you are officially alive and a U.S. citizen again.” Tony says, enthusiasm almost contained. “I tried to get them as close to the truth as I could get, or, okay maybe JARVIS had a hand for authenticity but I made a lot of suggestions.”

Dumbfounded, he flips the envelope open, thumbing through the papers. He takes out the driver’s licence and examines it.

Steven G. Rogers
July 4, 1985

“Is it okay? Oh god, did I overstep? You mentioned wanting a house, but you can’t exactly own a house if you don’t have proper identification, so y’know, I remedied that. SHIELD probably has a similar setup for you, but this is guaranteed clean work, JARVIS double-checked everything, even if you get a ticket for speeding, it wouldn’t be so much as a blip on the system. Not that I doubt your driving skills, but the last thing you probably drove was a tank in the forties. So y’know, a bit touch and go, you might want to take driving lessons. There’s also a credit card, linked up to a legit bank account that can siphon money from your trust fund. Do you even know how to use a credit card? Okay so they’re plastic card that have magnetic strips on them with data on them, you can use it like money so long as the store has a terminal—”

Steve kisses Tony just to shut him up, grabs him by his shirt and drags him in.

When they break apart they’re both breathless.

“Wow. Okay. I should probably forge papers more often if that’s what I’d get in return.”

“Please. Don’t.” And then Steve is laughing. Laughing harder than he can remember and it’s not even really that funny.

“Oh my god, I broke Captain America. Fury is going to kill me.”

“No.” Steve breathes, the laughter taking away the breath in his lungs. “You broke Steve Rogers, U.S. citizen.”

“You like it then?”

“Thank you so much. I don’t know how to repay you.” For everything.

“Oh it’s nothing.” Tony dismissed, like he’d do it for anyone.

“It’s not nothing. Its. Its. It’s everything. You don’t know- I’ve been so worried about- And then.” And then he starts crying, sobbing all over his new driver’s licence.

Tony shuffles him into his arms, as much as the space would allow. “Oh baby no, hush now, it’s okay. You’re a big boy now, you can go driving and shopping by yourself.”

Steve laughs and snifflies, circles his arms over Tony’s body, rubbing his wet cheek on Tony’s shoulder, muttering thank you until it turns unintelligible over his stammering.
So I missed a couple of weeks. No excuses from me, I suck, stuff going on in my life I'd rather not get too deep into right now.

But, important question for everyone currently reading. Should Clint and Steve do the sex or not? :) Of course, the main pairing for this fic is Tony/Steve, but I don't see why they can't have some fun. Still, I'm a bit torn.

Comment below about your opinion of the matter, and I'll take it to consideration.

Steve knows he shouldn’t expect anything. He doesn’t want to bother Tony, not after he finds about his big project for the arc reactor, and he doesn’t bother with texts, not after the first few days, lets the chatter whittle away until the silence feels comfortable enough.

It’s still a friendship born from a contract, one that Steve isn’t going to naively believe would change everything all at once. He can count on Tony as a friend, and he’s pretty swell, but Steve isn’t going to drag him into anything that he didn’t agree to.

It doesn’t stop the bit of sadness that comes from with it, as he sinks back into SHIELD in newly formed determination. He focuses on that instead, on being useful, as he goes through bags on a daily basis, punching away at them as much as his frustration with allow. Learning as much as he can from the people around him.

Clint and Natasha are away, official SHIELD business, is all he is deemed fit to be informed with. Though he may receive the occasional heads up from either of them, he knows that they can’t exactly tell him anything they aren’t allowed to.

He’s not sure when, but he stops pretending that everything is fine.

The frustration and nervousness ramps up, until one day, he’s yelling at his psychiatrist, his chest shaking as words spew from his mouth, his fears, his confessions. Even he isn’t sure what had caused the outburst, but when it bubbles out, he can’t stop.

Steve tells her about his nightmares, the way he jolts awake almost every night, feeling cold and clammy, gasping for breath like it’s his last.

When he’s said all he has to say, he feels more tired than ever, more exhausted than he thinks he has been in a long long time. But it feels like a step in the right direction, as daunting as it sounds, towards a direction. He hates being lost, and now he wants to find his way again. He wants to be better.

Sometimes though, he still gets trapped in his mind, where all he can smell is the blood in the air, taste the mud on his tongue, the grit of earth where he dives, the sound of bullets whizzing past. The clang of his shield when he hits someones, kills someone, the sure crunch of bone underneath his boots.

Steve doesn’t regret it, they’d been at war, the men he’d killed had chosen their side, ideals that he
couldn’t take sitting down. He’d pitied them, in a way, because they’d been lost and blind.

It irks him, he feels like that sometimes too.

The heaviness in his chest overthrown only by the need to get out of his skin, so desperate an emotion to claw out. The anger that demands attention.

Mostly it’s punching bags that take the brunt of his fists, but there’s more than one hole in his wall that can attest to his roughhousing.

His blood turns hot when he sees the report on the cube, but he keeps his mouth shut and doesn’t ask. Because if there’s one thing he’s learned about Fury during the months he’s been awake, it’s that the man does not divulge his secrets willingly.

##########

He meets Tony again in Germany, in front of a man who demands the crowd to bow.

It’s remarkably easy to bring him, but turns a lot more difficult when a muscular blonde with a red cape takes him.

He curses Tony for his brashness, the Ironman flying ahead, as he himself fastens a parachute and goes after them.

##########

It’s a mess, SHIELD is in near chaos, Steve can smell the panic that wafts across the hallways of the helicarrier. Disarray in the Agents like he’s never seen before. Director Fury had briefed him about the situation on the cube, but not much else.

The team, his team were here. And they were a mess too.

Tony is quick to sidle up to Bruce Banner, an Omega by his scent, mid-level if he were to choose, who looks overwhelmed to be onboard, only giving Steve a glance when he enters the room. Natasha takes a seat for herself, and proceeds to sit there like a statue. Thor is loud and demands attention to his questions.

It’s no surprise that they break apart into their own spaces, the friction amongst them almost palpable.

Steve finds himself by Natasha’s side, she looks at him stoically.

“Clint?” He asks.

She shakes her head, he can almost sense the tightly-controlled anger. “Compromised.” She answers.

It’s a slow realization for Steve. “Security detail?”

“For the Tesseract.” She provides. “He’s alive. Spotted in Germany, but his team got away during your tussle with Thor. Loki was the priority target, and Barton slipped away before the Agents could find them.”

Steve can sympathize, he knows what it’s like to lose a friend. “We’ll find them, Clint’s too stubborn to die.”

“Too stupid too.” But he can sense her bitterness. “I need to have a chat with Loki, see you later,
“Too stupid too.” But he can sense her bitterness. “I need to have a chat with Loki, see you later, Captain.”

“Be careful.” God of mischief, even if he did only believe in one God, he can’t deny that both Loki and Thor aren’t from their world.

Natasha smirks at him.

Steve visits the two scientists, only to be shoved back out because he doesn’t know he’s doing, Tony and Bruce Banner are certainly bounds more capable than him. The words sting, useless, which Tony is correct about, of course. The implication about Director Fury is something to think about, so he put his mind to that instead.

The old fashioned way proves to be effective. The guns he finds are eerily familiar, not replicas, if his memory stands correct.

By the time he returns to the lab, Fury is already lecturing Tony about the security breach. They all find their way back, and Steve feels the first prickle of irritation and dissonance in the group. Until it swells and blows, and tension creeps up on them in waves. Thor makes it known that he doesn’t think much of Fury’s reasoning. It doesn’t help that Tony is goading Bruce Banner, nor the implication that Fury lays on the table. Tony turns his barbs to Steve, pushes and presses for his way until even Steve’s patience snaps.

And then everything explodes and the team is tested for the first time.

The last few hours have been exhausting, he feels like he’s been fighting for days, as compared to the actual hours. Steve’s stopped bleeding while they had eaten shawarma, but he knows that Natasha took a bad stab from the Chitauri, Clint still has been of glass embedded in his bicep, and Tony has a concussion at the very least.

SHIELD manages to find them in that little shawarma shop, and agents file in to assess them.

Natasha and Clint are easy enough to wrangle up, SHIELD medics already loading them into a truck for transport back to SHIELD. Bruce Banner is nonplussed, and allows himself to be put in a car, with fair warnings to everyone to not touch him.

Thor, who has a good grip on Loki, narrows his eyes at the nearest agent, who stutters that Fury wants to talk to him first.

“I shall talk with your leader, but Loki stays by my side.” He grunts, twirls his hammer, and shoots up towards the sky, with Loki under his arm.

Which leaves Tony.

“Need a ride?” Steve offers.

Tony nearly flinches at his voice, looking very much like a kid who got caught with hand in the cookie jar.

“I can fly?”

“Not with those injuries.”
Tony frowns. “You’re doing the Captain America voice.”

“The what?” Huh?

“Like, the voice that makes even Thor listen? Did you see that guy? God of Thunder, makes sense, doesn’t it?”

“That there’s a god of Thunder?”

“That we’re not alone in the universe. Aliens actually do exist. That other life forms can be one portal away from visiting. Or destruction? Take your pick.”

“We’ll handle them when they come. You’re still not flying out.

“Damn, and here I thought I was being evasive.” Tony fidgets. “Can’t. Won’t. I have this thing about people touching me in weird places, dunno if you knew but doctors do bad touches all the time. Won’t subject myself to that, just won’t.”

Steve grits his teeth. He can smell the blood on the man, bleeding somewhere in that suit of armor, yet demands for a quick snack and pretends to be fine.

“Please, Tony. Just let someone check you.” He tries, hears his voice break on the man’s name because he’s tired and worn out, because he’s worried but he can’t show it.

Steve can see the tired lines of Tony’s body, the way the armor sags just slightly to the left, which meant that his injuries were on his right. It doesn’t help that the arc reactor is flickering.

He can see staring off, the way he does when he’s considering a problem in his mind, and then blinks back.

“Okay.”

“Okay?”

“Yeah, what I said.”

“Okay. Well, I’ll find a car ready for you and-”

Tony almost flinches. “What? No, I’m not going to SHIELD.”

It’s Steve’s turn to look confused.

“But, you just said?”

“I meant, yeah, I agree that someone should probably check up on me, the armor’s getting really heavy, but like hell-”

“Tony…”

“-am I going to let SHIELD poke me, and probably take apart my suit while I am otherwise indisposed. Therefore! I nominate you to check up on me than those iffy doctors who’ll probably stick something cold and impersonal up my ass for whatever reason. Since you suggested it, I expect you to take full responsibility, and make sure I am in one hundred percent working order.”

Tony looks at him all smug, as if trying to dare him to fault his logic. Which Steve already doubted. He isn’t exactly medically trained, which is an issue he wants to rectify, what he knows is born from experience, from patching himself up or his fellow soldiers.
But there were still remarkable differences between tending a bullet wound, and injuries caused by going into a space worm’s mouth and blasting it from inside out.

Steve sighs, shakes his head. “It’s probably best if you would let a professional look over you instead.” He tries, even though he knows Tony is too stubborn to listen to reason.

Which he is, as he crosses his arms over his chest. “Nope. Take it or leave it.” As if Steve’s the one who has something to lose.

“Okay. Just let me—” Steve pulls out his phone, to text Phil- He grits his teeth, sees the stain of blood on the wall of the helicarrier and quickly backtracks those thoughts into something more productive. He texts Clint instead.

[ Taking Tony to his tower for medical. Will find my way back to SHIELD when I’m done. ]

[ furys gonna blow a gasket ]

[ im so proud of u ]

[ breking the ruls for ur boo ]

[ Boo? ] He inquires. Which he is ignored.

[ natasha luks really smug she knew dis wud happen ]

[ she hit me for telling u btw ’)((( halp ]

[ she also says dnt do anything dumb HA! ]

[ You’ll be fine. I’ll text any updates. Please stay safe, both of you. ]

[ ok mom, luv u, see u after skool ]

“You’re smiling.”

Steve blinks, and then realizes that he’s been grinning for the past couple of minutes.

##########

They make their way to Stark Tower, and Tony is dismantled from his suit. And just as Steve had predicted, his side is caked with blood, dark over his undersuit. Steve doesn’t miss the wince Tony peels it off his body.

Steve manhandles Tony into the master bedroom and lays down towels over the sheets. They aren’t effective, but it’s better than bleeding all over the bed.

Abashed perhaps, Tony doesn’t say a word as Steve cleans him up, apart from the occasional gasp when Steve slides the cotton over his wound. The rest of his body has seen better days (Focus, Steve.), but isn’t as bad as Steve would think. His bruises are already yellowing, no doubt tomorrow they’ll be black and blue, sore with movement. Tony hisses when Steve runs a finger against a particularly bad bruise on his back.

“Barely touched it.” He mutters but he grins when Tony sulks at him.

“Yeah well, we can’t all be super soldiers. Some of us do bleed.” He catches the way Tony’s eyes roam, settling on the cut on his side where a Chitauri had stabbed him with its spear.
He’d stopped bleeding, but the dried blood irritated the healing scar, pushing and pulling against the scab. Steve itched to wash off, all the dirt, grime and sweat made him feel sticky and disgusting.

“I didn’t mean what I said, you know. Back in the lab.” Tony murmurs suddenly, eyes closed as Steve continues to run antiseptic on his side.

Steve pauses, and then continues, trying to brush it off. “It was nothing, the spear was influencing us, just as Loki had planned right from the beginning. He’s a real trickster.” God of Mischief. “I’m sorry too, for what I said.” He adds, hoping that Tony will just let it drop.

“Still, I wanted to… Let you know I didn’t mean it. Nothing by it. God, I wanted to hurt you, and I knew just the words to say.”

“I know you didn’t, Tony, it’s okay, you don’t have to apologize.” Steve tries to placate. He does know it, the Tony Stark he met in that lab wasn’t the Tony he knew from a few months ago.

The sceptre had done a number on him too, the shame that he felt after uttering those words, but anger propelling him to challenge the Alpha who was belittling him. And maybe that did make him squirm. A part of him knew, that without the serum, he would have been just some scrawny kid from Brooklyn, doomed to lose fights and get his ass kicked in alleyways by men twice his size.

Without the serum, he would never have gotten here, to the future (present, he reminds himself), and he would never have gotten to seen all its wonders. Or meet Clint and Natasha. Or Tony.

“You are so much more than the serum.”

Steve blinks and looks at Tony’s frown. He’s a bit pale from the blood loss and pain, but looks determined.

“I know. And that stunt you pulled proved me wrong. Always gotta do things big. Huh, Tony?”

Tony snorts, even that seems to cause him pain. “Yep, of course. My name in papers, big flashing light? It’s what I live for. Ironman saved the day agai- ow.” Tony flinches as he tries to push himself up, only to have Steve press him down before he starts bleeding again.

“You really should get yourself checked by a doctor, a professional one.” Steve chides, an insistent finger on Tony’s chest.

“Told you already. I don’t like doctor.” And Tony says little else about that matter.

Steve ends up staying with him until Pepper arrives, and then it’s a tearful reunion that he thinks he really shouldn’t be around for.

Of course, Tony is covered from head to toe in bruises, his wound bandaged by Steve as best he could. Steve wasn’t entirely convinced that Tony wasn’t concussed but he’d been adamant about being checked.

He watches Pepper fuss all over Tony, gentle touches that Steve knew were intimate and looks away.

Steve did a few searches on them, and lately, it looked like they’d been slowly ‘getting back together’, or so the media placed it. With the construction of Stark Tower, they seemed to be spending more and more time with one another. And Steve couldn’t deny that they just looked
perfect for one another.

“Captain?”

Pepper’s voice carries across the room, to where Steve awkwardly stands, so detached from the scene.

She wipes the tears from her eyes, and places her hands right back into Tony’s.

“Thank you for bringing him home.”

Guilt sways in his chest. He had ordered Natasha to close the portal before the Ironman was clear, the aftershock of the blast had been impeding through the portal and any longer would have come falling back into Earth.

It had too damn lucky that Tony had survived at all, and he think that might haunt him for the rest of his life.

But for now he smiles, and salutes, like a good soldier. Because whether or not Tony believes it, he is one of Steve’s men.

“It was my honor, ma’am.”

Then he turns around and leaves.

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Fury, surprisingly, grants him permission to leave base.

“How long do you think you’ll need?” Is all Fury asks.

Steve shrugs. “I don’t know what’s there to see, but I’d like to be out there on my own for a change.”

Fury nods, like he understand the want that Steve feels.

“We’ll be tracking you, of course.”

“Of course.” He would expect no less.

“Very well. Dismissed. And you better cause any incidents or else I’ll have your ass dragged back to base.”

“Noted.”

################

“Hey.”

Steve startles as he’s loading up his bike.

Clint stands there in a oversized hoodie, deep bags under his eyes and it looks like he hasn’t gotten a wink of sleep since he’d gotten out of medical.

“ Heard you were packing up.”

“Yeah. I thought I’d go sightseeing. Hit the dirt and see what I’ve been missing.”
“Want some company?”

Steve sucks in a breath. “Did Fury-?”

“What? No.” Clint looks frustrated, and he smells like it too, like an electric zing running across the space between them. “Heard it from Maria, and I thought I’d-” He lets out a frustrated snarl and makes averted movements. “I need to get out of here. From SHIELD. But I’m not-”

It looks like it takes him a lot to even form the words.

“I’m not safe, okay? Fuck. I can’t be here. Not when everyone looks at me like they think I’ll explode or something.”

And Steve understands that perfectly fine. People staring, waiting for him to breakdown, walking on needles in front of him like he was a ticking time bomb and they were all incredibly interested to see what color he would explode into.

“You don’t have to come with me. It would probably be boring to you anyway. Have your own time off, spend time with your friends. Natasha?”

Clint shakes his head.

“They ran the tests, man. They say that there’s no trace of whatever it was Loki did to me, did to my brain, but how the fuck do they know that? It’s like magic shit, what if it’s undetectable?” This time the other Omega is shaking. “Nat is.” Clint paused, searching for the words that could approximate the Black Widow. “It hits too close to home. I don’t wanna drag her into this. Besides. She’s cleared for duty and I’m… Not.” He clenches his fists, but stares Steve straight in the eyes. “I’m not safe. I can’t be with normal people.”

And it’s with cold realization, that Steve understands why Clint chose him. Because Captain America can keep a man like Hawkeye in check, can hold him down and get him subdued. Because Captain America has seen the way that Hawkeye fights, and knows he can overpower him if needs be. Because Hawkeye knows that Captain America can kill him, if he thinks he’s falling back into Loki’s control.

That might be all Captain America is good for, but Steve…

“Alright. You can come. Pack anything you need. We leave tomorrow after we send off Thor and Loki.”

He knows a thing or two about feeling trapped, mentally and physically, and Clint looked like he was ready to jump off buildings if it meant he could get the peace he was looking for. And wasn’t it a bit ironic that Clint would go to him of all people?

Clint lets go of a breath and looks relieved, even manages to look happy despite the tiredness in his frame.

“Thanks.”

##########

Steve doesn’t miss the fact that, among the clothes and things that Clint packed, there was still that dark box that held his bow and arrow. Made sense though, he’d brought his shield along too, in a large square pack that seemed like half a disguise. Of course, it was blaringly obvious what it was to those who knew, but looked innocent enough.
As soon as Thor disappears with Loki, Steve double checks everything on his bike. He averts his attention from Clint and Natasha, as it looks like Natasha is giving Clint an earful for the lack of notice.

Thankfully Tony is a good enough distraction, as he walks up to Steve in his swanky outfit, but he keeps an eye on Clint, just in case.

“Are you sure I can’t persuade you come with me and Banner to the tower? You’d be free from SHIELD surveillance.”

“It’s a good deal, just not the one for me, right now.” Steve sighs.

“And that dream about your own place? Is that the one you’re chasing after?” Tony prods. It’s almost weird that he still remembers, but Steve doesn’t let it deter him.

“Don’t know. I guess I realized that I need to let go of the past and look for my own future.”

“By taking a roadtrip with Legolas?”

“Legolas?”

He watches as Natasha punches Clint on the shoulder as Tony struggles not to look annoyed at him.

“You know what, nevermind. What you do with your life is totally none of business unless you go into heat.” Tony grumbles, and that stings.

“Tony…”

“No, I understand. Contract. Nothing more, right?”

Steve takes in a breath. He doesn’t know how to explain to Tony that he can’t just fit himself into his world, that he barely felt like he fit in his own rendition of the world right now. He can’t just let himself be swept away by what Tony wanted for him, as good as his intentions were, that just wasn’t how Steve was.

He wants to stand on his own feet.

“You knew that when you signed.”

He’s never felt so much guilt as he did when Tony casts his disappointed stare at him, the curl of his lips, the sadness that seeps from him.

“I guess I did.” Tony shakes his head. “Call whenever it is you need me. We are the Avengers after all, gotta keep in touch somehow.” He says, turning his back on him and throws up a peace sign.

“Yeah, I’m real sorry, Tony.” He mutters, too low for him to hear, gut clenching as his eyes drop to the floor.
It's still Sunday in most places, right?

With everyone's opinions from last chapter, here's what I've decided on. There might not be a chapter next week, fair warning.

Enjoy, and thank you everyone for your comments and kudos.

The first couple of weeks are rough to say the least. For the first time since the serum, Steve finds himself free.

During the campaign, he’d travelled from state to state for brief stays with the USO gals in an attempt to rack up funds for the army. Someone had drawn up that schedule, cobbled together details on where they’d stay and what time they’d perform. There was a very set track he had to play to. And of course, all that careful planning had gone to the dogs when he’d rescued the hundred and seventh from Hydra’s prison.

From there, he’d gone where he was needed, capturing bases and intel from Nazi stations and halting their progress on their men, destroying and delaying as best they could. The sense of purpose drove him to wake up, grit his teeth, and do what needed to be done even if it meant killing other men.

But now, he has all the choice in the world to go where he wants, do whatever he might like and maybe that scares him a little.

Clint is a good enough travel buddy, seems to have a good sense of direction and a good eye for places to eat. Which is what mostly fills their itinerary. They eat burgers from roadside grills, hotdogs from corner stands, churros, fries, peanuts, shawarma, halal, ice cream basically anything off the streets that looks appetizing.

As they munch on food, they hit a few museums, sightsee for all it’s worth, listen to sidewalk musicians and walk through parks.

“C’mon c’mon, I gotta pet half of them at least.” Clint said excitedly on a particular occasion where there was a small event for a dog adoption campaign, almost like a kid as he bounced on the balls of his feet, impatiently waiting for Steve to grab some cash.

“Go on ahead, I’ll catch up.” Distracted, he counts out the rest of their money.

Clint taught him how to use the ATM machine (his pin had been one-two-three-four which Clint made fun of him about), and he’d been withdrawing money from the machine since. Food and lodgings were the prime expenses of their trip, but Clint had assured him that there was no way he’d use up all the money Tony had lent him even if they did eat at five-star restaurants (???) and stay at swanky hotels.
Still, he was careful not to take too much, the guilt was already eating him that he was spending the Alpha’s money.

Steve catches Clint petting a very old looking Golden Retriever, making faces at the dog as he scratched him behind the ears, a young lady standing over him.

“He’s very well-tempered, it comes with age, he’d make a very good companion for children and seniors.” Steve overhears her as he walks closer.

“Making a friend?” He pipes up, raising a brow at Clint.

Steve’s never been too fond of dogs, on the count of their fur irritating his nose and triggering a bout of asthma since he was a kid. With the serum, he’d just never bothered, there were more things to think about than owning a pet.

“His name is Lucius and he’s very fluffy.” Clint comments, rubbing Lucius under his chin.

“He’d also make a good companion for a new couple, someone to brighten the home.” The lady chimes in, all smiles.

Steve blushes and shakes his head. “We’re just friends.” He decides to say, because that was a bit strange, if not forward. The openness of the question caught him off-guard.

The lady, at least, has the manners to realize her mistake. “Oh, I’m sorry. I just assumed. We get a lot of couples who decide to adopt a pet together, it was totally my mistake.”

“No, it’s alright. No harm done, right?” Steve shakes it off. “We can’t exactly adopt right now, but we’d like to make a donation to your cause instead. I understand your organization provides free vaccination and operation services too?”

From there Steve listens attentively to all the work they do for the dogs, making sure they’re fit and healthy before they’re even ever put up for adoption. He does end up making a donation, and spends the rest of the day in the companion of the strays, smiling in particular when a timid half-breed Labrador sniffs his hand and allows him to pet her.

At the end of the day, Steve’s phone is filled with pictures of the different dogs, Clint posing with a few of them in wacky positions, and a few of himself with a couple of puppies too. They both smell like sweat, wet dog and drool.

##########

Sometimes he wakes up with Clint sitting up on his bed, his eyes dark and unseeing, then Steve knows it’s going to be a quiet day from Clint.

Steve runs on his instincts, and bundles Clint up in his arms takes him to bed when he’s like this. In hushed tones, he coaxes Clint to moving, murmurs encouragement as they slowly move to the bed where Steve can tuck them in and wait it out ‘til morning.

It doesn’t always work. Clint puts up a fight, kicks, punches, screams and scratches at Steve when he tries to touch him, too lost in his thoughts to comprehend what’s happening.

He’s always guilty right afterwards, even though Steve tells him that he doesn’t mind it, that he’s here to help him. Steve isn’t even really sure if Clint believes him, but he’d stopped apologizing, and has instead developed a sad look that is no better.

“Sometimes, I don’t know if I’m still me.” Clint confesses on one quiet night. He’d allowed Steve
to maneuver them on the bed and cover them in blankets. Steve positioned himself behind Clint, an arm on his chest to hold him close, protective.

Not for the first time, Steve wishes that he could punch Loki in the face one more time.

Instead, he takes a breath, let the anger and frustration die down before he opens his mouth.

“Of course you’re still you. Never seen someone juggle seven hot dogs before. It sure was a feat.”

“You are easily entertained. And I could have made it ten if you didn’t worry so much.” Clint chuckles, even though Steve can tell he’s fighting shivers.

“Hate to see good food go to waste.”

They fall silent again, the unasked question hanging in the air. He figured that if Clint didn’t want to talk about it, then Steve wasn’t going to push him.

“If you’re going to ask, just get it over with.” Clint grumps, wriggling in Steve’s arms in some discomfort.

He waits until Clint settles down again, when his scent dampens down from the crackle of emotion he must be going through before he pops the question.

“Are you okay?”

It’s innocuous enough. Because Steve could ask what had happened, or what Clint was going through, or even what Loki had done to him that shook him so much. He could ask a plethora of things, treat Clint like a soldier and bark at him to shake it off for one.

But sometimes he thinks that Tony is right. They aren’t soldiers, not after what they’d gone through. This isn’t a mission, this is a man’s soul shaken to the core because an alien god had found it suitable to play with his mind.

Clint lets out a low laugh, which quickly turns into a scoff.

“Sure, I guess.”

“Okay.”

“That’s it?” Clint protests, deflates in his arms.

“That’s all I care about.”

“Is that your best effort?”

“What would you want me to do?”

“You need to act all concerned, needle me into talking, until I break down and admit how shitty and broken I am, that I’m not fucking fine and I haven’t been sleeping well, then we both burst into tears, do manly hugs, make vows of bestfriendship and then stuff our faces in the morning with pancakes! God, Rogers, get with the program.”

“Uhm?” Because Clint is actually glaring at him and there are tears in his eyes.

“Okay, fuck, sorry. I got a little carried away there.” Clint rubs his eyes with the back of his hand, very quickly turning away from Steve and falling back in bed.
And now, Steve’s not even sure if he should be touching Clint at this point. Contact has always been an Omega’s language, and the small space between them is Steve’s way of saying that it would be left for Clint to decide.

“Would you like to do all those things?” He asks quietly.

Clint sighs, and shuffles back just enough so that his back is touching Steve’s chest. Of course, Omegas seek contact whenever they’re hurt, which Steve takes as a good sign and wraps his arm around Clint’s body again.

“I really gotta talk about it, don’t I?” Clint say, all glum.

“I’ve been told it’s good to let things out.”

Clint snorts. “Yeah, right. I heard about your little outburst, scared that Agent shitless. Proud of you, kid.”

“Got to hand it to her though, didn’t budge from her seat.”

“Probably frozen scared.”

“I should probably apologize when we get back.” Steve sighs.

“Did you mean what you said back then?”

“Which part?” Because of course Clint would have the report to his screaming.

“That you think you don’t belong here.”

That hits a little harder in chest than he expects it to, Clint just summed up fifteen minutes of yelling into a very concise statement.

“Sometimes.” He pauses, wonders if it’s safe to say. He trusts Clint, and keeps going. “Sometimes, I dream about the past. Not nightmares, not really, just little things, about my neighbors when I was a kid, when I was taking classes in our local college, or when I went to the meat shop when we had enough money scraped together for some pork. Really mundane stuff that I took for granted. And then I wake up… wish I didn’t.”

Steve would wake up with that sense of dread, that that world was gone now, and all that was left were his memories of them.

“I dreamed about Peggy once. Peggy, she, uh, she was a good Alpha, real forward thinker, didn’t beat around the bush if she could help it, I think the two of you woulda gotten along swell.” He explains. When Clint doesn’t make a sound he goes on. “We had a house in Brooklyn, dunno how we could have afforded it but we did. It was after the war, cos I had a medal of honor framed on the wall, and she had one too. We had two kids, a girl and a boy. Rachel and James.” He stops before his voice cracks.

The vision had come so vividly to him, and it had hurt more than the water forcing itself in his lungs and freezing over, the dread in those nightmares was nothing compared to the realization that he was dreaming, and that he had to wake up soon.

“It was… More difficult to get out of bed that day.” He’d never wanted to curl in bed and never leave than he did in that moment. Steve takes a shuddery breath to calm himself.

“Don’t be so hard on yourself.”
“I could say the same thing to you.” Steve says sternly, making a point to squeeze Clint for a hug. He’s done feeling sorry for himself, and he wants to help Clint.

“It’s not… The same as that.” Steve can smell his discomfort, sharp and acrid.

“You don’t have to-”

“I probably do. And who better to confess my sins to than to Captain America.” Clint turns around, but doesn’t break their contact, stares at Steve with his fingers bunched around his shirt.

“A priest, for one thing.” Steve offers dryly.

Clint stays quiet for a bit, curls into Steve’s chest a little more, or as much as he can. Back in the day, a man like Clint could have easily passed as a Beta, or even an Alpha, there was a different standard of beauty, Omegas didn’t build muscle, they were lean, almost fragile little creatures that Alphas could love and protect.

Obviously that’s changed, which Steve is grateful for. He’d been called intimidating by an Alpha more than once after the serum, especially after heats. Which meant, in kinder and fewer words, that they weren’t interested in him.

The realization stung him, that no matter what body he might possess, or how many changes he might go through, there would be people who simply couldn’t accept him, no matter what he did.

And that was fine. He had Peggy after a while, which was worth it, to have someone who finally looked past his body and understand his soul. And she was good, and strong, and special. She was-

“You ever do something you really don’t like, but you gotta cos you have to?” Clint asks, breaking the silence.

Steve thinks about it, remembers the unfortunate men on the other side and how every thought out in the field had been to stay alive, no matter what it took.

“Yes.” Duty? Responsibility? Whatever flowery word it is that he has to tell himself.

“It was… Kind of like that. I had orders, except the orders were in my brain. Couldn’t get em out, it was like watching everything through my own eyes, I couldn’t stop myself, the thought didn’t even come up.” Clint worries the hem of his shirt.

“Every damn thought was how to carry out orders. I knew exactly how to do it too, because I wanted to do it myself. Grab some shit. Done. Get some info. Done. Disable the helicarrier. Knew exactly how to do it.”

“It was all Loki-”

“It might have been Loki messing with my head, but those were my thoughts, my fucking plans. Loki’s smart, but he isn’t a genius about some other planet’s technology.” Clint snarls, angrier than Steve has ever seen him. “Twenty people died directly because of me, by my bow, by my hands. People can try to tell me it isn’t my fault, like shit, Nat tried to tell me that. But I c-can’t believe ’em.” His voice breaks.

“If I believe them, how the fuck do I punish myself.”

Clint hugs himself, forehead pressed to Steve’s front, nails digging into his biceps until Steve can smell the first tang of blood.
Instinctively, he runs a hand over the man’s hair, placating, comforting, the stink of Clint’s distress like a haze over them. Clint doesn’t utter another sound, but Steve can feel the wetness on his chest, where Clint hides, seeping onto his shirt.

“Maybe…” Steve ventures, curling his body protectively over Clint, a soothing hand over his to ease away his fingers from making him bleed any more than he has to. “Maybe living is our punishment. We know now to be better than we were, even if it means forcing ourselves to live with that guilt, we owe it to the world to be better.”

He’s thought about it, for a while, why it was he was still here (alive). Why did people insist on helping him.

New York was a wake up call.

Clint doesn’t say anything after that, and they stay embraced until morning, neither getting any sleep, but somehow feeling better for it.

The tiredness feels deserved, like a worthy trade.

They leave only for pancakes, which Steve insists on if they were going to follow Clint’s guidelines, stuff their faces with stacks and an alarming amount of syrup.

##########

Sometimes, they don’t spend the day together, and Steve wanders on his own, while Clint does whatever it is Clint does by himself.

It’s almost ironic that he enjoys getting lost in the street, going for whatever catches his eyes, picking through alleyways and sidestreets.
He imagines this is what a vacation feels like, the sense of adventure and intrigue, enjoying the local scene as much a tourist would.

Eventually, when the day has burned down, and the night has crept on him, he finds his way back to whichever motel they’re staying at.

##########

Tonight, they’re getting smashed in a bar, or rather, Clint’s getting incredibly drunk while Steve feels like he’s overheating.

But it’s nice, he thinks, as he keeps an eye on Clint while he plays darts to impress people. It’s nice to just hang around with others, make small conversations and get to know them.

Like Seth who did construction work, and went home to his gal right after, except it was bar night and he and his boys would get borderline drunk before they dragged their sorry asses back home. He had a kid who just started talking, and wouldn’t stop saying ‘baf!’ when he was excited.

Or Michael, who bought him a drink and then started to try and flirt with him, only later he admitted that his friends had dared him because they thought that Steve wouldn’t give him the time. Steve blushes at that, flattered that Michael, a tall dark-haired Alpha, even thought about him like that.

He might have flirted back a little, and genuinely found Michael fun to talk to. By the end of it, Michael asks for his number and he gives it, typing it out on the Alpha’s phone before handing over his own.
Michael’s eyes bulge.

“Wow! Is this the new Starkphone? This isn’t even out in the market yet! Holy shit, it is!” Michael exclaims, turning the phone, the little STARK logo gleaming in the low light. “Oh my god, is it as good as the reviews say they are? It’s like, the top of the line phone for devs and techs. They say Tony Stark personally oversaw all the parts and codes for the OS before it was approved, and!!! Oh god. I’m geeking out. Sorry. Tech is like, my passion.” Michael turns an impressive shade of pink, returning the phone to Steve as he keeps his hands to himself.

“No. It’s very okay to ‘geek’ out.” Steve laughs, though the reminder of Tony brings about mixed emotions. “It’s a fantastic phone.”

“Err. If you don’t mind me asking. How’d you even get one?”

“A friend gave it to me.” Is all he answers. It’s a sharp reminder of Tony, a man he’s been trying to get out of his mind every since they’d parted ways a couple of months ago.

“Must be some friend. That thing costs as arm and a leg! Uhm. If you don’t mind. Can I check it’s production code? It should be on the back panel, just under the battery.

Steve doesn’t really see the significance of it but he hands over the phone.

Michael pops open the back, exposing the battery and circuits, looking for that little-

“Wow.” Michael moans, really just moans and melts in his seat. “Production no. 1. Literally the first phone off the line, or the prototype for every other Starkphone out there. This has got to be worth a hundred thousand, at least.”

Steve might have spilled some hot chocolate on it just this morning, and he pales at that.

Michael returns the phone, almost sadly, to him after putting his number. Steve makes a note to take better care of it.

Clint flops onto the empty seat when Michael leaves, giggling madly and smelling like he’d bathed in beer, a full glass of something in his hand.

“They like you.” He mumbles, leaning into Steve, pushing an accusing finger to his chest, emptying half of his drink on the counter.

“Who does?” Steve plays along, plucking the drink from Clint as he tries to get him to sit up straight.

“Everyone. Jesus, you are so hopeless.” Clint slurs, making a grab for his drink and missing completely, instead utters a groan as he splays on the counter.

“Okay, I think it’s time to go home now.” Steve chuckles, placing some cash for the drinks and then bodily heaving Clint to stand up.

With some effort, he gets Clint to walk with him out of the bar, towards the sidewalk where his bike is parked. Course, Clint is muttering nonsense into his ear, to which he nods and entertains, keeps the conversation going so that Clint doesn’t fall asleep on him. The ride back shouldn’t take too long, they’re only a few blocks away, and he should be able to get them back before Clint nods off.

Except. There are three men encircled around his bike, smoking cigarettes and muttering among themselves.
When they see him they stop, and sneer at him. When it’s clear that he’s heading for the bike, one of them speaks up.

“This yours?”

Steve’s instincts scream that they’re up to no good.

“Yes.”

“She’s a beaut, bet she runs great on open road.”

“Haven’t tried, but she’s suppose to.”

“Mind if we borrow it?” The two behind him chuckle.

Steve grits his teeth, hoists Clint up a little onto his shoulder.

“C’mon fellas, we don’t want any trouble. I just need to get my friend home. He’s had a too good of a night.” Steve tries, but when one guffaws, he knows it’s no use.

“Is that so? Me and my boys just want a good night ourselves, and I think this would do just the thing.” He runs a hand over the bike’s seat. “C’mon. Couple of faggots like you don’t deserve something as nice as this.” The man makes a point to say, a slimy smile on his face.

A hot spike of anger runs through Steve. It’s easy to imagine punching the man, and then taking his time with his friends until they’d learnt their lesson, and had better manners. He wouldn’t even need his shield for this. A good ‘ol fist fight might just be enough to shake off the melachonly he’s been feeling for the past week.

It’s an excuse though, to abuse and hurt, and Steve knows it.

They move a little closer, some intimidation tactic no doubt, and Steve swears he hears the shuffle of cloth and metal.

With resignation, he fishes out his keys and tosses them over.

“Alright. Take good care of her.” He sighs, ignoring the way they gleefully look at each other.

“Thanks a lot, faggot, glad you understand sense.” They laugh and ride off with the bike, hooting and hollering.

Steve ends up giving Clint a piggyback halfway their journey back

“Steve?” Clint murmurs sleepily, his arms draped loosely around Steve’s neck.

“Hmm?”

“Did I lose us your motorcycle?” Clint yawns.

Steve has to take a deep breath before answering. “No, they’re just jerk. They’ll get what’s coming to them.”

“We coulda taken ‘em.”

“I know, but it wouldn’t be the right thing to do.”
Clint only pukes once that night, and then curls up in Steve’s bed instead of his own when Steve had been busy cleaning up the mess in the toilet.

He considers taking Clint’s bed instead, but then Clint whines and Steve finds himself with a very handsy Clint who’s determined to pull him into bed.

Steve doesn’t bother resisting, let’s his Omega senses purr in delight that another Omega seeks him for comfort.
So this is like a half-chapter, since I didn't have as much time to write this week because of another fic I'm doing (It's also Stony if anyone wants to check it out), and also because I have to rewatch a few movies for reference, so I present this bonus chapter instead.

This chapter bridges the gap between Avengers and Ironman 3 for Steve.

STRIKE, Steve quickly learns, is more pack-like than anything else.

Brock Rumlow (Mid-Alpha) takes charge, runs the team with efficiency and skepticism, while Jack Rollins (High-Beta) keeps everyone in line for Brock, ensuring the hierarchy is well and stable, and Brock’s position isn’t compromised in anyway, which was the most common problem when it came to anything pack.

In fact, Steve is surprised that Fury would allow a team so pack-like to exist. But maybe it only means he isn’t worried of being usurped from his own position.

“Brock.” The Alpha had introduced himself, shaking his hand firmly with a smile. “Glad to see we get Captain America on this op.” He says, the first time they meet.

“I think Fury just wanted someone experienced to watch me.” Steve says in turn. He’s gone through a summary of Brock’s file. Only two years in SHIELD and he’s completed fifty successful ops, only one mission had gone awry and he’d requested immediate evacuation for his team. He’s never lost a man during a mission. Steve has to say, he’s quite impressed.

“Flatterer.” Brock grins at him, and then introduces him to Jack, who is his weapons expert and sniper.

They crack down the mission details within minutes. A small op, stealth, recovery of a stolen weapon cache that had gone missing a few weeks ago. Minimal security, but getting caught might mean an international incident.

It’s his second mission in SHIELD, barely a month since his and Clint’s vacation ended, and six months since New York.

He’s getting back into the groove of things, his shield feels good in his hand, and the missions give him purpose.

##########

Steve feels bad for thinking that the operations are easy. Five months and ten assignments in, he can draw the obvious differences between his time in war.

He remembers when they had to hike three miles from their makeshift camp to get any reception for their radio, in some desperate attempt to send a message to base, and even then it crackled like a bitch and there was always the threat of being intercepted.
Becoming restless for days while they wait for news, not sure if their runner’s lost or dead. Laying still on their bellies for hours when an entire unit gets on top of them, praying to God above that they don’t spot the hastily hidden supplies in the bushes. When they couldn’t light a fire to stay warm at night, else risk getting spotted by the enemy.

 Weird how the ‘enemy’ slowly doesn’t even register as a human being when you’re hungry, cold and desperate. Where sometimes the only line between life and death is shooting first.

 He knows what a man sounds like when he’s minutes for death and they’re still days from the nearest medical station. He knows what it feels like to dig his fingers in the dirt, in some semblance of a grave, because no one else would. Because the dogs would get the body before the Nazis could. Because a dead body stinks and it would compromise their position.

 He made a small grave for Bucky when he lost him, just a mound of dirt covered in snow, a cross carved out from a dead tree placed on top. They couldn’t find the body, and couldn’t risk the extra day digging through the ice to look for him, not when they were getting reports that HYDRA had something big planned and it was coming together fast.

 He tries to push them out of his mind, but sometimes even the trees look like the ghosts in his past, and when he’s in it bad, he can hear their voices whisper in the wind that still makes him hesitate.

 *They’re dead.* He has to remind himself.

##########

He has nightmares of the Chitauri invasion.

Buildings collapsing around him, torn through like paper by the armored worm.

People screaming left and right, and yet he’s alone all at once.

Chitauri stabbing him over and over again with their spears.

Natasha strewn across the ground, body broken from a fall, eyes open and unseeing.

Clint strung by his rappel arrow on top of a building, limbs torn off and hung like a puppet.

Thor on the top of the state building, the tip pierced right through his chest, his blood spilling out.

Bruce Banner with a hole straight through his brain, his eyes still glowing green.

Tony, ripped and mangled to pieces, arc reactor long since dead, his armor crushed and bloodied.

##########

“Leave your message, you know who I am. I may or may not get back to you.” *Beeep.*

“Heya Tony, I was back in DC and I thought I should tell you. Uhm. I wanted to give back the phone you gave me, so if there’s a way I can send it back safely, do tell me. If you ever want to catch up, I’m free on weekends. Bye.”

Steve has thought about this conversation for a while. He can’t take anything back, it’s just the way things are, but the bridge isn’t burnt, just unstable.

Thing is. He knows he can’t have Tony Stark, no matter how much he might want him, he can’t. He sees him and Pepper on the news all the time, a ‘Power Couple’ as one news article so
proclaims. And they are, they’re gorgeous together, Steve would have to be both blind and deaf not to know it.

When he’d left Tony there in his penthouse after the Chitauri attack, left him there for Pepper, he promised himself that he wouldn’t get between them.

Tony didn’t need him, he was, at most, some pet project to the billionaire, the poor lost Omega that Tony deemed it worth his time for. Because that was Tony, he was nice and kind even if he tried so hard not to show it. Kindness, that Steve had been too desperate for. And he’d taken advantage of that, whilst providing nothing in return.

Pepper was Tony’s equal, who could give as much as take, support the billionaire with his endeavors in the way that only she could.

And what was he?

A beaten down soldier with super strength and a case of shellshock.
So, uh. Hi. I updated. Like holy hell it's been a long time. But seriously, sorry to everyone who's been waiting on the chapters. I had like a tiny tiny bit of this written and then shit hit the fan.

A short recap on my absence. I had a shitty breakup and I've been feeling down because of it but I'm getting my life together again. New job, new schedule, stopping impulse buying, setting aside more time to write. Yep, my new years resolution.

So, uh, enjoy this chapter and sorry again. Crazy thanks to everyone who has been reading and leaving kudos and comments all this time.

“Would you like to enlighten me on why Stark sent in a request form for you?” Fury stares at him with his one eye, as if Steve would cave in just from that, as if Steve could ever hope to explain the mystery that was Tony Stark.

“No clue, sir.” He answers, standing at parade rest, his hands behind his back as he looks as blankly as he can at Fury.

Steve has an inkling, of course. Maybe this was Tony’s way of asking for him to come, where he can finally return the phone, and clarity could be made. It was too expensive a gift to ignore, he felt almost at debt to the Alpha.

He hadn’t gone into heat for the year, the missions were taking it’s toll even on his body, and it didn’t help that he took them as often as they came. They stretched from three days to a month, though he thinks that SHIELD has figured out that he’s better with quick insertion maneuvers than actual stake outs, he’s honestly surprised that no one has argued with him yet.

But his lucky streak would come to an end sooner or later, and he would need Tony’s help once again. Before that, however, he wanted to be sure that they were both at an understanding. Fury doesn’t look at all convinced, but shoos him away with papers and a date.

There’s no Happy to escort him to Tony’s Malibu home, though the car and jet are familiar.

Steve’s not sure if he’s upset or happy with it. On one hand, he’s been coddled enough. He doesn’t miss the way that Natasha gives him the side-eye when she think he doesn’t notice, though she doesn’t say a word. Clint hasn’t been around, so Steve doesn’t have anyone to give it to him straight, and he’s left to guessing. His therapy sessions have been reduced to a month, at least some good had come from the Chitauri invasion. Credibility for his position as leader, and to ensure that he wouldn’t break under pressure.

Steve isn’t ignorant. He knows that Fury has been testing him ever since he’d woken up. It’s a startling discovery as to how in depth they’ve studied his life, from where he grew up to his exact list of ailments. His life, or at least previous life, had been studied, investigated, re-studied, and
then published in books.

Which is strange in itself, being able to read about himself in book, almost as surreal as dying. He feels near anxious about the things they’ve gotten right and takes some comfort on the details they’ve gotten wrong.

Which made his ‘awakening’ all the more suspicious. Fury would have known he’d gone to that baseball game. The dates themselves didn’t match up. Nor did the nurse in his room. Her clothes had been non-standard, his mother had been a nurse after all and he knew every speck of her uniform from top to bottom, his senses had blared in alarm at the wrongness of it.

But that has been all a test, hadn’t it? Set up perfectly, with Fury in the appropriate spot to explain the situation to Steve, looking like the best option possible.

Fury got what he wanted, he showed whoever doubted him that ‘Captain America’ could still operate, that seventy years in the ice hadn’t inhibited his skills. That ‘Captain America’ could still be a symbol to be used. Steve wouldn’t be surprised if they had footage of his awakening.

Steve likes to see the best in people, a way for them to show that they could be more than they appeared. Others might not have given him the same opportunity, but that did not mean he would let bitterness cloud his judgement.

Even if Fury was hiding something, dangerous and foreboding as that sounded, Steve was determined to be within reach to stop the man if need be.

##############

The door opens for him without a knock, which is, huh? He would think that Tony’s security wouldn’t be so slack.

“Jarvis?” He tries, pausing to twist and reach into his bag for his shield.

“Wonderful to meet you again, Captain Rogers.”

Steve relaxes, pressing his shield back into his bag. “Nice to hear your voice again too. Is everything automatic now?” The word automatic still feels strange on his tongue.

“Sir has performed several upgrades to the estate, which includes bioscans within entry ways.” Comes the crisp reply.

Steve was vaguely familiar with bioscans.

“Can you please let Tony know that I’m here?”

After a pause. “Sir asks to make your way to the basement lab, with a reminder to bring your shield.”

So he supposes he should go to the lab now.

A quick thanks to Jarvis and he walks through the home. The furniture has been rearranged somewhat, roomier, though everything was still there. He vaguely wonders if his room has been touched in anyway, but then quickly dismisses the thought.

The doors open to him once he’s within distance, the lab is messier than he remembers. Unpolished Ironman units littered the lab, either halfway done or kept in their chrome states.
They’re… Different. Looked different, felt different when compared to the Ironman he had last seen Tony wear. It’s been a year, of course there would be differences but somehow they aren’t quite as refined as Steve had expected. They seemed blunt, almost thrown together with the way they are designed, lacking the finesse that Steve has come to expect.

Tony’s pops out from what looks like a combination of an engine and a generator, screwdriver between his teeth and a wrench in his hands.

“Perfect, c’mere.” Tony say through the screwdriver.

Steve bounds over, careful not to step on anything, until he’s right over Tony. He’s holding wires in his other free hand, while he thrusts the wrench against a bolt to keep it in place.

“Grab that motherboard for me.” Tony mutters, motioning behind him.

“Uhm.”

“The green thing with wires sticking out of it.”

“Right.”

Somehow they manage to spend an hour like that, with Tony’s head inside the machine and Steve handing him things that were out of reach, doing as Tony instructed, or holding onto Tony’s tools until he otherwise needed them.

By the end of it, Tony finally puts all his tools down and stands back, crossing his arms as if to criticize his own work.

In that stance, Steve notices Tony’s biceps, larger and bulkier where the muscles curls. Even Tony’s face looks a lot more defined, harder and firmer than he remembers it, like he’d lost a layer of fat, but seems gaunt against the harsh light that he works with.

Tony stares back at him, an amused smile on his face, which jolts Steve back into the present. He refuses to think that he’s blushing and shifts his gaze to the machine.

“What’s it suppose to do?”

“You’re looking at the very first prototype generator for the arc reactor. The first step into commercializing clean energy. Stark Tower was just a pet project, a hello world to the world about what my little baby can do.” Tony enthuses, patting the generator on it’s hood. “At least, she will be once I put her through her paces.”

“That’s amazing, Tony.”

Tony sniffs like that’s a given, leans over to wipe his hands with a hand towel. He looks at Steve, really looks, and Steve has to mentally tell himself not to squirm.

Tony’s eyes land on his bare neck.

“Oh, I uh. I couldn’t wear the necklace all the time. On missions. Nervous I might lose it. Didn’t want to lose it.” Steve fumbles, feeling almost naked now that he was under scrutiny.

But Tony only moves past him, shrugging.

“I didn’t expect you to wear it all the time. Not on missions anyway.” Tony quickly dismisses. “By the way, was your latest mission the twenty third or the twenty fourth?”
“Twenty fifth, actually. There was a slight complication that had to be settled at short notice.” He thought it redundant to ask whether Tony was keeping tabs on him. He already knew that JARVIS could break into SHIELD’s network, almost on whim.

“Ah.” Tony supplies, moving past the machinery and brings out drinks from the lab’s cooler. “Celebration?” Tony inclined a drink towards him, a testing smile on his face.

“Why’d you call me down here, Tony.” Steve pushes, a smile on his face when Tony noticeably deflates. Doesn’t stop the Alpha from unscrewing a bottle and taking a long sip from it.

Tony motions over to one side of the lab, bringing along the bottle with him, maneuvering past the new Ironman units and into a noticeably darker and tidier portion of the lab. “Lights J, and pull back the curtains.” Because there honest to God curtains in the lab. Steve rolls his eyes.

Loud, almost exaggerated theatre lights burst open, and a sheet of cloth falls to the floor and it’s…

His stolen bike.

Steve’s jaw falls open, certainly not what he’d been expecting.

“But. How?” Is all he musters, taking a timid step, looking back at Tony for approval.

Tony points the bottle as a Go ahead. “What? Did you think SHIELD has Harley-Davidsons just lying around for ninety year old to joy ride?” He scoffs. “It was dad’s. Or yours now anyway, since he left it for you in his will. When the bike’s tracker didn’t coincide with your phone’s, Jarvis assumed something was amiss.”

Steve traces a hand over the bike. It looks pristine, clean and taken care of, definitely not how he had left it. And certainly those bullies wouldn’t have bothered to keep her in tip top shape.

It’s strange to think that he had dismissed it.

“But that was almost a year ago.” He mutters, still marvelling that the (his) bike was here in one piece.

“Apologies. It would have been done earlier if I wasn’t so… Busy.” Tony motions to the room, almost as if he’s inviting Steve to take a jab at the mess. But of course Steve knows better than to be taunted. “A few upgrades here and there, and an anti-theft system. If anyone except you tries to start it, it just won’t.”

Tony moves next to him and pries the keys out of the ignition, dropping them in Steve’s palm.

“Why the keys at all? Why not a fingerprint scanner?” Yep, he was proud to remember those. Tony actually blinks at him, almost aghast.

“First of all. This baby is fitted with Starktech security, biometric scanners that can read a 3D object while in motions and patterns it into its core database, you can teach it how you move, and it can anticipate what you want to do.” Tony sweeps his palms over the handle, almost lovingly. “You’ve got your personal AI for voice recognition and voice commands, but don’t expect anything as fancy as Jarvis.”

“The only reason I left the keys in was because I didn’t think you were a ’push to start’ kind of guy.”
“Push to start?” Alright, he understood half of what Tony had been saying about the bike, some better than most, but that was the most confusing phrase he has heard yet.

“Ugh. See? Trust me Cap, stick with the keys, they’re more your speed anyway.” Tony bounces off the platform to cradle his bottle.

It’s quite touching really. Not a scratch on the bike. Steve’s never had anything fresh out of the factory before but he imagines this is what it would be like. He’s just itching to take her out for a spin, wind in his hair, curled around that body while he speeds through the open road, nothing but the roar of the wind as his company.

He hadn’t realized how much he missed riding his bike until now.

“Thank you.” Steve chances a glance at Tony. There’s something almost accusatory in Tony’s eyes, mystifying and electric, before it’s swept away with other emotions, and waved off with a smile.

“It’s nothing, Cap. Just being a team player.” Steve winces at the bitterness Tony doesn’t try to hide. “Anyway, I’ve got a meeting at with my manufacturers later-ish.” Tony makes a movement towards the door.

“Oh, wait.” Steve calls out, prying his phone out from his pocket. “Here.”

Tony takes a look at the phone, brow raised.

“Is something wrong with it? Is it because of the tracker? Hand it over to Jarvis for a debug. If it's hardware related just leave it on my desk.”

Steve blinks. “I sent you a voice message about it. I want to return it. It’s too expensive a gift for me to carry around.”

“Expensive? Says who?”

“I met this guy, Michael, he said that—”

“Wait a moment, who’s Michael? Are you dating someone?”

“No?” Steve quickly answers back, but the blush has already started. “A guy I met at a bar. Anyway, he said that it was worth a lot of money.”

Tony scratches the back of his head, looking pinched. “Sure, the Starkphone isn’t cheap to begin with, better material than Apple for one thing. Collector’s value maybe, as the first phone we officially produced but.” Tony shakes his head, pushing the phone back towards Steve. “Keep it, I don’t know who you’re talking to but I gain absolutely nothing if you return it.”

“But he said it’s suppose to be worth—”

“I know.” Tony all but growls at him. “But that phone is only worth it’s weight in scraps to me. So keep the damn phone, it's better with you than with me.”

They’re chest to chest now, Tony’s eyes hazy, locked into his. The Alpha had been trying to push against him for half of the conversation, but Steve held his ground.

“Tony. I can’t accept this.”

“Why? Because someone told you it’s worth money. Newsflash, Cap, I have no problem
throwing money at things. I’m an eccentric billionaire, it’s what I do.”

That stung. Enough to make Steve back down a step and allow Tony an inch into his space. “Am I one of those things too?”

There’s disbelief, and then shame, before Tony seems to realize their proximity and promptly jumps back as if burned. “Fuck. That’s not.” Tony cuts off, breathing hard. “That’s not what I meant, and you know it. If you want to throw it away, it’s fine. The phone is yours, I gave it to you.” He says, calmer by a margin.

They stare at each other.

It’s Steve who looks away first.

Tony leaves him there, muttering just under his breath, unheard if it were not for the serum. “I’m not drunk enough for this.”

############

His room is as he had left it.

It should feel reassuring, a sense of comfort to a space that was his. Except it’s also a reminder of Tony’s kindness.

He unpacks what little he has, resting his shield by the bed, and lays on the comforter with his hands to his chest.

The phone is still in his pocket. Tony had sounded upset when Steve had tried to return it. And Steve wasn’t stupid as to why. He had seen the flash in Tony’s eyes, near wild at the mention of Michael. Which made little to no sense.

Wasn’t Tony with Pepper?

A high-level Alpha could in fact be entitled to two Omegas or more in certain cultures, provided that the Alpha could provide for them both. A scrap of information Steve had thought irrelevant, but now shed some light to the situation.

Was that what Tony had been hoping for? Two Omegas by his side? He could certainly support them both, as was so bitterly thrown earlier.

He sighs and shakes his head, curls to sleep still in his SHIELD clothes.

############

There’s a soft ping that rouses Steve from sleep. He blinks in the darkness, light slowly brightening to ease him from slumber.

“Captain Rogers?”

“Jarvis?” He yawns.

“If it is alright, might you see to Sir at meeting room A. He is having difficulty with returning to his room.”

Steve immediately jumps to his feet, muscles tightening in anticipation, hand already on his shield.
“What’s the situation?” He asks calmly.

“Nothing that requires that.” There’s almost amusement in AI’s voice. If an AI could be amused, JARVIS has it down pat. “Merely that the meeting had not ended well, and Sir is currently having trouble collecting himself.”

“Y’sure I don’t need the shield?”

“Only if you decide to defend against the lounge chairs.” Comes the dry retort.

Shield down, he leaves it by his bedside once more, following the lights on the floor that Jarvis provides to make his way to the meeting room.

He finds Tony in a corner, curled in on himself, staring at a potted plant.

“Tony?” He voices his concern, trying to see what had happened.

Tony’s head whips towards him, eyes manic in their energy, teeth bared in display.

Feral. Steve’s mind provides, before he is pounced on.

Tony’s hands roam his body, brisk and checking, a huff at every crevice as the Alpha inspects him thoroughly. Steve keeps his breathing calm even when Tony’s hand reaches his cock, pauses at the mound of flesh before sliding down to his thigh, wriggling into the space between his ass.

“Tony.” He breathes out, and the Alpha’s eyes snap to his, darker than they had been. “I’m suppose to take you to your room. Will you let me?”

Feral Alpha’s weren’t like feral Omegas. Their sense of territory were heightened, and dropped into Fight a lot faster. While feral Omegas turned bitchy and demanded attention, feral Alphas demanded respect.

Tony snarls at him, and Steve breaks eye contact. He knows he can take him, wrestle him to the ground if necessary, but this was Tony, the least Steve could do was try. So even when Tony presses his face to Steve’s neck without permission, Steve lets him, remains pliant while the Alpha performs his check on him. He can’t imagine what Tony would be like if he had brought his shield.

When Tony seems to be content with his inspection, he settles back, looking a lot more relaxed than he had been.

“Can I lead you to your room, Tony?” Steve tries again.

There’s no affirmation, but Tony lets Steve take him by the hand through the halls, eyes focused solely on Steve as Jarvis guides them.

The door opens for them automatically. It occurs to Steve that this is his first time inside Tony’s room, and tries not to look at anything too personal. It’s a bigger room than his, surprisingly void of any science that Steve would have come to expect from a man like Tony. Sparsely decorated, large windows that offer a view of the beach outside, pieces of furniture Steve would much more consider as art. And of course the large bed in the middle of it all.

Tony, just as Steve guessed, breezes past him, circling the confines of his room. To the untrained civilian, it looks random, as if Tony is shifting through each corner of the room, touching various objects and placing them elsewhere, going as far as shoving a sofa right up against the wall and pushing a decorative lamp away until it tipped over and fell. To Steve, he can see Tony making a
clear path to the exit, taking care of blind spots and checking his weapons (Yes he saw the repulsor arm that Tony sneakily repositions by the bedside table).

The Alpha slumps and growls at the open windows, staring out at the water.

“Jarvis, blinds please.” Steve says softly, gaining Tony’s attention once more.

The shutters slowly fall down, covering the view.

And this was the part he was most anxious for.

With his territory checked, Tony rounds back towards Steve, shucking away his clothes while he does so. Clever fingers undo the buttons of his suit and undershirt, clothes discarded on the floor as he gets closer and closer to Steve.

Tension runs high, and Tony sheds the last of his clothes. Given the full view, Steve keeps his eyes to Tony’s chest, noting that Tony was indeed thinner than he had been, muscles sharper and more defined, the new arc reactor providing gaunt light. Direct eye contact would mean a challenge.

Tony places a hand on Steve’s shoulder, sliding down the collar of his shirt, then further to his navel, and turns around. A request if anything.

Controlling the shakes, Steve undoes his own shirt, placing it neatly over a chair, and does the same with his pants and underwear. He holds his breath as he joins Tony on the bed.

Tony’s body posture is languid, sat on the bed while staring hungrily at Steve. He only lies back when Steve climbs onto the bed within, hands quickly finding purchase on his hips to pull him in.

Steve goes willingly, allows Tony to position him as he pleases, strong hands guiding him to face away from Tony.

There’s a hand on his pec, another curled under him abdomen, a soft brush of lips on his shoulder. And then Tony is pressing against him, buries his nose to Steve’s collar and takes a deep inhale, arms curling around his body in a hug. There’s a half-hard cock pressed to his ass, pushing against him, hot and thick where it touches him.

Hot breath in his ear, Steve shudders, a lick to his ear and soft whines from Tony. And that breaks him the most, because even like this, of course Tony would still ask for permission.

“Tony. I can’t.” God he’s such a mess, he can’t even do this one thing for Tony.

There’s a pause, and then the cock is gone from his ass, but Steve knows that Tony is still hard from expectation. The Alpha doesn’t stop lavishing his neck with little kisses though, and one hand plays with his nipple still.

It tapers off, eventually Tony’s breathing turns slow, fingers merely finding purchase on Steve’s body but do nothing more. He falls asleep right after Tony does, still wondering if he did the right thing or not
Hey, it only took a month.

Special thanks to the three people I'm rping with, ya'll delayed this chapter. lmaojkjk. But seriously, you guys are awesome.

Gonna try to get the next chapter up to regular schedule but yeah, no promises still. My new job has me working ten hours a day, with saturdays so. Yeah, I actually get tired now, haha.

Anyways, I hope you guys enjoy this chapter. And oh yeah! As a totally vague question, as in don't think about it too much and no context given.

Clint or Natasha? :D

Leave your answers in the comments. Thaaanks.

When he wakes up, Tony is staring at him, so calmly that’s it’s mildly alarming.

“Jarvis? How long has Tony been awake?”

“Approximately ten minutes.”

“You could always just ask me.”

Tony’s voice is rough, like he hasn’t had water for days but he still manages to smile. There’s a certain tiredness in his eyes that doesn’t escape Steve’s notice. But Steve would prefer a tired Tony to a feral Tony, there was just no telling what the man could do.

“I’m sorry. I couldn’t tell if you were still feral or not.” He supplies.

They’re both still wholly naked, though now covered by a blanket that Tony must have placed on top of them at some point. It’s still dark out, hard to tell with the blinds down.

“Time?”

“It is four fourteen in the morning, Captain.”

“Morning run?”

“In an hour.”

“Does that mean I get snuggles?” Tony teases, nudging at Steven’s legs with his knees, but quickly soberes up when he feels Steve stiffen. “It was a joke, Cap.”

“I know.”

“I really really don’t think you do.”
“It’s nothing.”

“Oh please, if you’re calling this nothing then it’s the same as calling last night nothing. SO how about this. You tell me what’s bugging you, and I tell you what’s bugging you.”

“Bugging you, you mean.”

“He’s attentive after all, give him a round of applause ladies and gentlemen.” Tony’s grin is contagious.

Steve sighs.

“Fine. Me first.” Tony sniffs, pulling more of the blanket towards him.

“First of all. Who’s Michael?”

Steve groans. “Aw Tony, c’mon.”

“It’s a legitimate question connected to the bug that’s bugging me. Else would you like to go first?”

“An alpha I met once at a bar.” Steve gives in.

“And did you two?” Tony does an approximation of sex with his hands.

“No! Of course not.”

“Oh.” Tony grins sheepishly at him. “I mean. Your heat and all. I thought you might have found someone else to help you with it.” The grudging tone goes noticed.

“I didn’t go into heat this year.” Steve says truthfully, irked that Tony had assumed.

“So that two week vacation in California was-”

“An operation you shouldn’t even know about.” He sighs.

Tony only shrugs, adjusts himself on the bed and props his head with a curled around, studying Steve.

The information leak was a minor issue. Where was it safer than in Stark Servers anyway, and if he understood correctly, they’d be in Tony’s personal servers too.

It was the surveillance that bothered him.

Steve already knew that SHIELD kept its eyes on him, and Fury was especially interested in his personal being for multiple reasons. He just didn’t think that Tony would resort to the same thing. Thought that the alpha knew at least when to let him be and trust that Steve could take care of himself.

“So that’s what has been bothering you?”

Tony supplies him with silence, eyes turning guarded with the question. Steve has to wonder what it is that had caused Tony’s feral state in the first place.

It’s a while before Tony answers.

“Haven’t been sleeping well since the Chitauri. There I said it. Been so fucking keyed up. It keeps
replaying, over and over again, the wormhole, the fleet. The Nuke.” Tony adds with increasingly panic. The shudder he can’t hide speak more volumes to Steve. He can finally place that tired look Tony always seemed to have.

With careful movements, he adjusts himself, inquisitive when it comes to a hand on Tony’s arm, sliding into Tony’s arms until skin touches skin and Steve’s head is tucked underneath Tony’s chin. Tony’s been frozen on Steve’s first contact, stiff as Steve presses himself into the alpha’s space.

And then there’s ragged breathing, broken and pained that breaks the silence, hands curling over his back, pulling him in close, a sob in his ear where Tony’s head lay.

“It’s alright. You’re alive.” Steve whispers, stroking Tony’s arm as the alpha takes his hand and just cries. Steve holds him, let’s Tony smell and feel him, as a memory and something solid, as sure as anything.


“Sshh Shh Sshhhh, just breathe for me, okay?” Steve soothes, bringing a palm up to caress Tony’s cheek, smiling as Tony goes through the motions. “That’s good, just a few more. Perfect. Deep breaths. Don’t try to talk, just close your eyes and relax. I’m right here, Tony. You don’t gotta worry.”

Slowly, Tony’s breathing evens out, the shudder in his breath dissipates, until Steve can hear Tony’s quickened heartbeat underneath the silence.

“You must think I’m-”

“Don’t.” Steve warns, stern in his gaze that puts Tony to silence. “Don’t belittle yourself. What you did was good and self-sacrificing, and you’re suffering for it.” He doesn’t say that Tony doesn’t have to. Good men suffer for the many.

It’s what he thinks about Tony anyway, a good man. A decent man. In a world that seemed to lack them.

They stay like that for a while, in stretched silence within the safety of Tony’s bedroom. Steve lays his head to Tony’s chest, listening to the familiar hum of the arc reactor, the smell of Tony’s scent, still a little too frazzled, brings him closer, while Tony’s fingers card through his hair.

Omega instincts tell him that this is right, comforting the Alpha and providing him with physical support. This is a good place to be, covered in warmth and protection, away from prying eyes and outside threats.

“I could go for some hot cocoa right about now.”

“What?” Huh? Steve blinks from his daze.


They get dressed, Steve awkward for a moment but then realizes that Tony doesn’t seem to care much for their nakedness, and places on clothes almost like the way he puts on the uniform. Efficient.
Steve expects some sort of machine, kind of like Tony’s coffee machine (He’d learned how to use it with Jarvis’s help), a press of a few buttons and it would grind, whirr, and pump out the drink that Tony so craved, but with chocolate

So he’s surprised when Tony wrangles out a pot from the cabinets, takes out a brown lump from the cupboards, and retrieves a carton of milk from the fridge.

It must show on his face because Tony grins at him. “What?” Tony says coyly.

“Was expecting something different, is all.” He can’t find it himself to say old-fashioned because this was the only way he knew to make chocolate himself.

Tony turns, pouring out milk into the pot and setting it to boil. “Sometimes simple is good too.” He says, plucking out a knife from the drawers.

Just watching Tony maneuver the kitchen is surreal enough, even if it’s something as simple as chopping away at the brown lump, turning them into smaller chunks. In fact, he hadn’t been sure Tony even used the kitchen, everything had been far too pristine when he had first started using the kitchen, he had doubted that it had seen much use before him. Maybe he’d been wrong though, Tony seems to know where the everything was, as he pushes the chunks into the steaming milk, taking out a whisk next to lightly mix the pot.

“It’s a cocoa bar, pure chocolate.” Tony answers in lieu of Steve’s questioning look. “Sort of like dark chocolate, only a lot more condensed. Jarvis, well not Jarvis Jarvis, the real Jarvis, the butler we used to have back when I was a kid. Kinda ironic now that I think about it, I’m friends with Thor, actual god of thunder. Jarvis made me this whenever I was scarred from a thunderstorm. Or bribed me with it to get me into bed.” Tony chuckles, letting the mixture sit as he leaned over the counter to look at Steve.

“Eventually, he taught me how to make it myself, which lost him a bargaining chip, he never could get me into bed after I turned eight, which is probably not a great age to introduce someone to open fire either but I claim innocence. I think he was secretly proud when I stopped burning myself. Eventually.”

“He sounds like a good man.” Steve smiles, catching the warm expression on Tony’s face, soft and mellow.

“The best.” Tony lets it hang there, and Steve doesn’t press, sensing a memory drawn by it.

The smell of chocolate drifts through the kitchen, Tony lightly taps the pot and takes out another container. “The secret to good cocoa is the sugar. Specifically, brown sugar.” He adds in two scoops of brown sugar and continues to stir.

A mug is pushed into his waiting hands, empty, along with a tupperware full of tiny marshmallows.

“Ahh.”

“Put in as much as you’d like. Go ahead. I won’t judge.” Tony chuckles, turning back to the stove, flames flickering off.

Steve dutifully adds a spoon of marshmallows into his cup. They’re not quite as fluffy as he remembers them being, like little plastic pellets, in fact makes tink sounds when they fall to the bottom. He shakes them for good measure.

“These used to be fluffy.” It’s a near grumble.
“For this, you’re gonna want them hard.”

Steve’s not entirely convinced, eyeing the marshmallows even as Tony fills his cup with hot chocolate. The little marshmallows foam with the heat, rising with the drink until they coat the top perfectly, tiny lumps above the chocolate.

“C’mon, we can drink on the balcony.” Tony says with preamble, taking both their cups with him and towards the balcony that overlooked the ocean, atop the cliffside where the mansion precariously hung from. Glass outlined with metal railings to prevent them from failing.

Steve sits on the offered single seat, plush with cushions, a table in between them where the cocoa is placed. Tony offers him a smile, and pushes the mug his way, which he accepts.

It’s a pleasant surprise when he does drink, the chocolate just short of scalding, warmth enough to stave off the slight chills of Fall. Not that Steve has felt truly cold, not since the serum, but he could imagine the comfort it would bring. He moans into the drink, taking in gulps, the little marshmallows are kind of like sugar cubes, he muses, popping sweetly in his mouth with little crunches. He’s suddenly sorry that he hadn’t added more.

He looks to the side just enough to catch Tony giving him a strange look, his own mug cradled in his hands like a precious thing.

“I guess you like it?”

“Surprisingly. I was suspicious of the marshmallows.” He says honestly, giving his own cocoa a fond look, nearly halfway into his drink already.

Tony chuckles, amused and light. “So, fess up. What’s been bothering you.”

“Was this the ploy? Getting me cozy with a cup of cocoa and then making me spill all of my secrets?”

“Ahh, damn, I’ve been found out.” Tony says in mock sigh, leaning back on his chair and then taking a sip from his chocolate.

They sit in amicable silence for a while, Steve taking his time with his drink now, afraid that as soon as he finishes, he’d have to say something, nervous about the topic at hand.

Bothering him? God. A truckload of things that can’t seem to be put to words, no matter how hard he tried. It was easier to say things that he meant. Simple things that were suppose to be ideals that he stuck to, it was why everyone would give him chuff about his speeches back in the Howlies. Because at the end of the day, they knew that whatever came out of his mouth came from the heart, no backwards agenda or hidden motive, even if it was the corniest bullshit they ever heard.

But this? He wasn’t sure how to explain it, when he was so confused himself.

“What do you want from me, Tony?” He hadn’t meant it to sound so forceful but it did. “You call me out here for almost nothing. And when I tried to return the phone you became defensive. Getting jealous of another Alpha when you have no reason to be.” He pauses, hoping that Tony would interrupt at some point but the man stays silent.

“I don’t understand what it is you want from me. You have Pepper and- I can’t be a secondary Omega, I just can’t. It wasn’t how I was raised. It might be alright with you, since you’re a High-level Alpha, and the law says you can claim two Omegas, no one would bat an eye. But that’s not me, I wouldn’t know how to do that.” His voice quivers, fingers worrying over the cup, and still
Tony says nothing. He doesn’t know how he could possibly compete with Pepper.

Steve’s shoulders drop, he hadn’t noticed he’d had them so stiff before, sighing as places his empty cup on the table, eyes falling to his hands. “If this is just. Pity.” He hates that word too. “Then I can’t accept it. I can get by fine on my own. You don’t have to be nice to me just because SHIELD thinks I’m broken.” It’s almost like his asthma all over again, stuttered breaths as he tries to calm himself enough to take in air. It’s all in his head, his lungs are fine, he knows, but he struggles all the same.

Suddenly, he gets a lap full of Tony, straddling him, pushing him against the chair, hands firmly on his shoulders as he catches Tony’s expression. There’s a twist there somewhere, like a kept secret, a crooked smile, relief, an almost tortured grimace, and several other emotions he’s too afraid to read too much into.

“We’re fucking idiots. I wasn’t sure.” Tony shakes his head, runs a hand down the curve of Steve’s neck that makes him shudder. “Me and Pepper. It never really worked out. I couldn’t. Well. I’m an actual asshole, it’s that simple.” Tony frowns, his gaze softens, and falls to Steve neck where he thumbs the skin there.

“And fuck, okay, I get it. Where you probably misunderstood me, because like I said, I’m an actual asshole who can’t get his head on straight for forever, barring minor pockets of time where maybe I might think I’ve done something good but then it all comes crashing down in a heap.”

“Tony, I don’t-”

“Let me try to explain, okay? I’m saying that I like you. As in, like you. And if it had been up to me, I wouldn’t have let you leave after your heat was over.”

Steve’s not sure on what to say to that, so he goes for the obvious. “I like you too.”

Only Tony could react to that with another grimace and then a sensual grind that has Steve’s cock very interested where it’s nestled against Tony’s ass.

“See, when you say it it sounds so damn innocent and wholesome.” Tony grumbles. “I’m too damn afraid that I’ll mess this up for you.”

“You haven’t so far.” Steve provides helpfully.

“Because I’ve been stopping myself from having you.” Tony actually laughs, dark and sinister, a flicker over Steve’s body that alludes to just what he’s thinking. There’s a hand on his chest, demanding as it squeezing a pec, ghosting over a nipple that has Steve squirming. “If it had been up to me. Oh Steve, you don’t want to know what I’ve been thinking. The morning, the end of your heat? If I had had my way? I would have brought you along to Stark Industries, kept you seated on my lap during that meeting with the General. I’d play with your nipples right in front of them.” He punctuates with a firm pinch to Steve’s tit, holding the bud between two fingers and twisting.

Steve suppresses a gasp.

“Oh, they would have gotten so distracted by the way you would smell, happy and aroused. They’d be so fucking jealous of the beautiful Omega on my lap, unable to touch. Only look.”

Sometimes, Steve forgets how powerful Tony truly is, between his status, company, money and sheer willpower.

Steve knows that much, power play between Alphas, internal politics that strayed between the
norm where normal Fight couldn’t occur. The Omega was like a bartering chip, a show of power, in turn could also show great disrespect towards another Alpha. To arouse an Omega in a room of Alphas was as good as any of that, especially when the Omega was not to be shared. It would have been Tony practically spitting at the face of the General, displaying an Omega just off his heat like a war prize. It was dangerous.

“I’m not a tool for you to use, to piss off some other Alphas or grab someone else’s attention.” It shouldn’t turn Steve on so much. Tony looks almost proud. “No, of course not. It’s a fantasy, your submission to me. I know it’s already a gift when you were in heat, damn sassy and demanding.” He smiles fondly at the memory.

“Fuck. See. I was thinking I could give you the time to figure yourself out first.” Tony leans forward, pressing his nose to Steve’s neck with another grind of hip. “You’re young, you deserve to explore what you like, fool around maybe and enjoy yourself. I can wait, be there when you need me to be, and then I’d take care of you like a good Alpha should.” A tongue presses to his pulse point, Tony’s body so warm on top of his. “Well, I thought I could wait. But I couldn’t stop myself from checking up on you, worrying, maybe a little bit too much.” He looks at him almost embarrassed, and Steve would have believed him if it weren’t for the hand that continued to fondle his chest through his shirt.

“This is… A lot for me take in.” Steve admits, not to mention Tony was being distracting on how he was touching his body.

“Oh believe me, I know.” Tony pulls away, Steve only managing not to look disappointed by the withdrawn warmth. “This wasn’t how I planned to tell you. I wanted to court you a little first, take you places and give you things to show I was interested before telling you my intentions.” There’s that smile again, soft and kind.

Steve blushes at that. No one has ever told him straight out that they wanted to *court* him before. He didn’t think that that still applied to today, admittedly it sounded outdated even to him.

“Sounds pretty old-fashioned.”

“It’s not always a bad thing.” Tony chuckles, touching Steve’s neck again, like couldn’t believe he was allowed. “And anyway, if we were following tradition, I would have been allowed to hurt any other Alpha that came onto you.” Tony growls, pressing his nose to Steve’s neck in a possessive gesture, sucking at a pulse point. It shakes a moan right out of Steve. “Could have marked you, drove off anyone who had bad intentions to you, would have been allowed to protect you.” There’s an extra bite in Tony’s voice, gruff when he speaks.

“I lied, you know.” Tony suddenly admits with a sigh. “Jarvis pinged me the moment it got a distance from your phone tracker. Those guys that took your bike? They got a visit from a very very pissed off Ironman.” Tony snarls. Steve can see a memory ghosting through his eyes before his expression turns into dark amusement. “They won’t be harassing anyone for a while.”

Some deep part of Steve understands that this is Tony with no holds barred, if he were to truly command attention, the way a High-level Alpha would and could. Pinned beneath the gaze of those dark brown eyes that bore through the edges of his soul, it’d be easy to just say yes, allow Tony whatever he liked. The high musk of Alpha overlapped even the smell of the ocean. Strong. Powerful. Insistent in a way that Tony has never been before.

But then when has Steve ever gone for easy?

“I’d like some time to think about all this first.” Steve decides, solemn.
“Of course.” Tony doesn’t argue, only nods in understanding, but his hand dips down, past Steve’s chest, towards his navel, and palms Steve’s half-hard cock through his sweatpants. “But then what about this?” A hint of a smile in his words. “Looks like someone’s very interested.”

Steve huffs, the blush persisting. “I told you I liked you.”

“So you did.” Tony hums, pushing past the clothes and taking a firm grip of Steve’s cock. Tony’s hand is warm on his stiffening cock, Steve moans openly as Tony sets a slow pace, easy pleasure that has him sighing.

He’s wet between the legs too, feels the arousal build while Tony takes his time, kneading and stroking his cock, his eyes never quite leaving Steve.

“Push your shirt up.”

Steve obeys, pulling his shirt up just enough to expose his nipples to the chilly breeze. Tony makes quick work of the display, latching a mouth to one nipple, while he uses his free hand to twist and worry the other.

“Oh, g-god, Tony.” Steve groans, wrapping his arms around the alpha, thrusting into the hand that continues to torture him. He knows he hasn’t got long, not with Tony’s clever mouth flicking and sucking his chest, not with Tony’s scent putting his body in overdrive.

“That’s it, sweetheart. You always react so good for me.” Tony growls, pulling away.

Steve’s nipples pebble at the cold air, and he squirms from underneath Tony, bucking and thrusting as Tony flicks his wrist to bring Steve off, one hand on Steve’s shoulder to balance himself.

It’s too much. Tony’s hand turns rough on his cock, wringing out pleasure until he spits out pre-cum, dribbling from his slit. He feels so empty, yet he knows he’s on the edge of coming, chasing at the pleasure that’s just out of reach, eyes squeezed shut as he moans obscenely.

“Fuck, you’re so beautiful like this.” He hears Tony say, breathless as if he’s the one being touched. “C’mon sweetie, that’s it. You’re so good, moaning so prettily for me. Come on, just let go.”

And he does.

Steve curls in on himself as he orgasms, body suddering in waves of pleasure, coming all over his chest in spurts, he can feel the wetness of his slick dribble out of his hole, pants turning sticky with his fluids.

He gasps for breath, but then Tony leans in to take his mouth in a bruising kiss, stealing his air away while he dizzily tries to respond, a hand still milking his cock.

“There you go, handsome. Easy now.” Tony whispers when they break apart, allowing Steve precious air at last.

They sit there for a while, Tony lying on top of him to keep them warm, Steve’s hand on the base of his spine, until the sun rises, the dark skies slowly brightening with color, and the first sounds of the morning reach their ears.

It wouldn’t hurt to miss a morning run, Steve thinks.
Holy shit, it's been almost two months since the last update. I swear like half of this was written in a week, and the rest has been pitter-pattering for days. It's longer than usual, but don't let the length fool you. Thank you to everyone who's still keeping with the updates, I know I suck at keeping to a schedule but I swear I love you all for leaving kudos and comments throughout the weeks.

Clint won the last round. Which means he gets the part of the secret thing I'm planning. No questions this chapter, but I'd still like to know what everyone thinks so far. Anyways, here's the next chapter.

Hot water.

Perhaps his most favorite thing about the future (present?) was its abundant supply of hot water.

Blissfully hot and steamy, he sinks right into the tub, groaning in delight as the burn quickly turns into a warmth that envelops his entire body. The tub, of course, like everything that Tony owns, is huge, big enough to hold four other people with plenty of room to spare. There were even setting that would shoot jets of water around.

He missed this, when he’d moved back to S.H.I.E.L.D. and went back to using regular shower installation. To say he’d been a bit disappointed was an understatement. Perhaps in the first few days back at SHIELD, he’d quietly wished to be in Malibu again, surrounded by plush things and provided comfort. Admitting does little to ease the guilt, he’d gotten used to the comforts of Tony’s home much too quickly during his first stay.

He’d punished himself a little then, convinced himself that whatever it was he and Tony had had during his cycle was all part of the contract. Tony had been a good Alpha, treated him well during heat, better than any other Alpha he’d had, but Steve hadn’t wanted to hope for anything further. Come to think of it, he might have tried to push Tony away.

Bucky always did say he was his own worst enemy.

It seemed almost… Dream like to think that Tony wanted him too. Part of him was still in disbelief. An Alpha like Tony (?) taking a liking to him? Probably wouldn’t have even looked at him twice before.

He sighs in the bath, scrubbing the rest of his body down, turning pink cheeked at the memory of earlier while he reaches between his legs. Tony’s eyes, dark and looming, promising wicked things while he touched him. He rubs between his cheeks, where the slick had gathered, and pinks further, his cock decidedly taking interest in those thoughts.

Somewhere, in the heat-addled memories, he recalls Tony giving him a bath. Half-dragged into the tub in the first place, he might not have been the most cooperative until the hot water touched his skin. They’d lazed in the water until they pruned, Tony scrubbing him clean with attentive
fingers. There was care there, a quiet that Steve hadn’t known was important until he was soaked in it, where the desperation of heat dialled down but his mind was still too far gone to truly comprehend much other than the present.

He sighs while he strokes him, spreading his legs to reach down further, rubbing up and down his shaft as it thickens with memory. The heat. More than a year has passed but it’s still largely arousing on Steve’s part. How many times had he clung to those moments to get off before he slept? An embarrassing amount of times, so much so that it’s become close to second nature to recall it.

He’d tried to reason with himself at first, pretend that the dark-haired Alpha in his fantasies wasn’t Tony, but simply a stranger that his mind had helpfully conjured to quicken his arousal. He’s even forcefully tried to change the fantasy, imagined a bigger Alpha, thick thighs and blonde hair, clinging to older memories when he was smaller and the Alpha would cover his entire body.

He’d punished himself then thinking he’d deserve the treatment, allowed the makeshift Alpha to call him a slut, a whore, a little breeder for taking a knot so well, the terrible grind of arousal enough to churn an orgasm out of him.

But then. The fantasies changed. At some point, on more than one occasion, the visuals morphed. At first, it would be the blonde Alpha, strong, domineering, pinning him onto the bed with his body while ravishing his shoulder, forcing his legs apart with his knee. He would throw his head back, stifle a moan while he fucked his own fist for completion. A moment later, the figure above him was leaner, surer, would slowly caress his cheek and a slow grind of cock on his own. There were garbled words of encouragement, said in a warm tone that made his chest squirm. Sweet heart. So good. Beautiful. The fantasy would whisper, a soft fondle to his tits. That got him harder, slicker down south. There’d be phantom pressure on his ass, a cock pressed inside, clinging to the idea of being fucked open.

He would open his eyes, muffling the sounds of his orgasms, and more than once had felt disappointed that he wasn’t met with deep brown eyes.

Now there was a new bud of arousal, slow-formed at the idea that Tony wanted him in return. The way those clever fingers touched his body, skating through his nipples and onto his cock. The way Tony had tugged at his erection and that had placed him dangerously close, to the point of moaning. That half-formed smile when Steve does come, Steve too dizzy to fully understand what that smile had meant.

He comes in his fist after a few more strokes, and washes away the remnants of his activities.

Steve did say that he wanted the time to think about it first, to look into it further, even if he was too far gone on Tony to begin with. There was always the chance that it was lust, Tony’s body had been the first he’d been in contact with since awakening, it made sense that he would want pleasure from a familiar person. Or worst yet, biology. Since Tony was a compatible High-level Alpha, it would make sense that his own Omega instincts would seek him out.

It was what bothered him the most. Truthfully, he admired the man for his intelligence, his wit and charm, bravery that he’d shown time and time again. But past that, he knew little to nothing about Tony, other than little tidbits he’s managed to pick up; like how the Alpha liked blueberries, preferred his coffee black with no milk or sugar, muttered to himself while he worked, favored the
right side of the bed, could apparently cook (still debatable), and was the strangest Alpha Steve
has gotten to know yet.

"No. It’s not. Hmm. Dummy is. It’s complicated, our relationship.” Tony tries to explain while he
plays around with a hologram of a device that Steve hasn’t asked about but it looks like a watch.

“I only asked why you made Dummy, since you’re always saying such mean things to him. I
don’t understand why you keep him, that’s all.” Steve looks at the little claw-armed bot, who was
politely clicking his (Did robots have genders?) claw at him.

Tony clicks his tongue impatiently, twirling the device and does a flick. The hologram breaks
apart into smaller holograms, smaller gears and plates which Tony prods around. “Made him in
highschool, modified him in college. He was my attempt at a rubber ducky solution.”

“Rubberduckerly?”

“Okay so. When you’re a computer programmer, code doesn’t work for shit and you don’t know
why that is because no matter people say we aren’t one with the matrix and we make mistakes too
despite the number of things we say. And yes, that’s me admitting that I make mistakes too, so put
that hand down, Rogers before I put it down for you.”

Steve chuckles and respectfully returns to his sketching, a half-done drawing of Dummy, mostly
due to the amount of plating and wires on the little robot. Half-done because, for a robot, Dummy
can’t seem to stay in one pose for longer than a minute, so Steve has taken to drawing him in
freeform.

“So. Codes. Breaks all the time, there’s always going to a bug, or glitch or… Just something goes
wrong, especially during testing phase. One thing works, another thing doesn’t, blah blah blah, it’s
a disaster, everything crashes. Getting it so far?”

“So. Codes. Breaks all the time, there’s always going to a bug, or glitch or… Just something goes
wrong, especially during testing phase. One thing works, another thing doesn’t, blah blah blah, it’s
a disaster, everything crashes. Getting it so far?”

“Sure. It’s like… Uhm. Grammar, you said before? Like computer grammar and if words aren’t
typed in the right way, it gets broken?”

Tony nods enthusiastically, continues fiddling with his hologram, twists and manipulates little
pieces. “Exactly. Except it’s grammar with logic. Like. Imagine trying to explain something to
someone in English, give them a task and then logical checks so that they do their jobs in a very
specific way. Say, getting your groceries. You want them to get you chips. For the sake of data
entry let’s say… Doritos, nacho cheese flavor, but only if they come in the biggest bag, and they
aren’t over five bucks. If those aren’t available, then any cheese flavored chips will do, so long as
the bag exceeds thirty grams, but then only has five grams of salt per serving. Now, explain all
that in a Chinese or something, different grammatical rules, different terms. That’s basically how
programming works. You’re speaking the computer’s language, and it can get insanely frustrating
when you have to learn all kinds of different languages just to get something working.” Tony says
all this while minor hand gestures, mostly still focused on his desk.

Steve, for the life of him, spaced off somewhere between chips and salt, but he understand that
programming is difficult, enough. “So… You’re learning a new language, but then it’s all
commands that the computer has to follow.” Gosh, he’s thankful that JARVIS seems to
understand English just fine, he’s not quite sure how’d he be able to talk to him otherwise.

“Yep, computers are basically slaves to the whims of humanity.” Tony nods solemnly. “But see,
it’s incredibly frustrating learning to code, and even more frustrating when something doesn’t
work the way it should. And thus comes the rubbery ducks to the rescue. See, the only way to go
through the errors of logic in the code is go through it step-by-step, looking for the piece you’ve gotten wrong. Sounds easy enough, but when you’ve got thousands of lines of code to go through, and no one to talk to. I don’t have to tell you it starts feeling insane.” Tony gives him a look that Steve equates to understanding what he means, so Steve nods anyway.

Dummy clicks sympathetically, pushes his tracks right to the sofa and taps at the sketchpad on Steve’s lap.

“Rubberducks are stand ins, as audiences, as clients, as fellow coders. They’ll look at your with their judging eyes, and stupid smile, pretending to understand everything you say even when they don’t. But they’ll be there for you, night and day, combing through each every line of code right alongside you until you’ve found the error at last.” Tony’s grin widens, the hologram he’s fiddling with turns compact again. Now that Steve can see it, it kind of resembles a watch.

“JARVIS, put this on manufacturing, stat.”

“Uploading, sir. Estimated completion in fifty three minutes and five seconds.”

“So that’s what Dummy is for? So that you can talk and he’d listen?”

“Sort of.” Tony shrugs, shifting his attention to Dummy now that his work is finished. “See, the satisfying this about rubberducks is that they’re quite tough. They can take a beating, or, the frustrations of a recluse coder who has to take his frustrations out on something. Rubberducks get thrown around, squashed, stabbed, melted, blasted, flung out of windows… I managed to destroy a box of them in one go at some point, with little more than a screwdriver, divots, and lots and lots of glue.”

Steve could imagine a smaller, ruffled tony, screaming at a rubberducksy and tossing it out a window, and can’t help but smile.

“So, you decided to torture Dummy instead.”

Tony fake-gasps. “Why I never. I’ll have you know I treat him very well. He gets the best motor oil the market can offer, plus I’m his personal mechanic.” But his grin goes sheepish, pushing himself away from his desk in favor of settling himself next to Steve on the lab-couch instead. “Sort of. Not really. That might have been the original draft but then all the possibilities dawned on me. Rubberducks have nasty shifty beady little eyes, so I figured, what about something else. At first I put googly-eyes on a stick but then that didn’t really work out. But that gave me an idea. Say, something that could track eye movement, face tracking, could listen to audio cues. Something that could run away at the sound of danger, but otherwise stay still. Why stop there? Voice recognition, minor commands just- Why are you laughing?” Tony pouts.

Steve, for the life of him, though he desperately tries to keep a straight face, barks out a laugh as he hugs Tony’s side. “Tony, I gotta tell you something, it’s gonna blow your mind.”

“Oh yeah? What’s that?”

“You wanted a dog.” Steve chuckles into Tony’s neck, even as the man struggles in his grasp. The sketchbook is quickly tucked away, lest it be kicked and crumpled by a squirmy Stark.

“Ugh. No. Robot are way cooler. They don’t pee or shit all over the place. Also. Engineering. Technical design. A beautiful mesh of metal and battery. Robots!” As if that explains everything.

“Sure, Tony. All I’m saying is that what you’ve described sounded like a pet to me.” Steve says innocently enough, which earns him a light slap on the shoulder and a grimace.
“Out. Get out. You are officially banned from the lab until you admit that robots are better than dogs in every possible way.

“Really?”


Steve chuckles, gets an idea, hauls Tony before he can protest, and half-drags him to sit all the way up on the couch. It’s easy to fall to his knees, shift to the floor and, lower himself until his chin rests on Tony’s thighs.

He does owe him. “Are you sure about that? Isn’t there anything I could possibly do?” He says, as coy as he can muster, flutters his lashes like the gals in the USO used to do when they sold war bonds to deep-pocketed Alphas.

It doesn’t work quite as well without makeup and a bit of paint on his lips, but he can smell the immediate reaction. Aroused Alpha, Tony’s scent suddenly stronger by two-fold, spiced and deep. It excites him, his senses tingling with this new found power, watches Tony’s eyes go a hint darker.

“I’m open to suggestions.” Even as Tony tries for casual, Steve twists his thumbs on the band of Tony’s loose pants and does little more than play with the fabric.

He remembers the first time he’d gotten to his knees for Tony, bowed down so that Tony could present him the necklace, felt fragile and strong at the same time when he did. He regrets not bringing the necklace, it was in his drawer back in S.H.I.E.L.D. tucked away when he’d gotten tired of people asking about it. There’s an itch he hadn’t felt before, a want to have it on his neck as some offering to Tony, some symbol that he could show.

Slow as molasses, he sheds Tony of his pants, pulled down just his thighs to reveal his cock because of course Tony wouldn’t have bothered to have underwear on, not in his own home. Nor, if Steve were to guess, while a wanted Omega was so close by.

Which means, his mind is quick to remind him, that earlier, Tony had been rutting against him, there had only been one thin layer of cloth between them.

Steve licks his lips as they dry at the memory, takes a shuddery breath and the sight of the cock in front of him instead. Tony’s not even hard, not yet anyway, which Steve want to remedy. He strokes the flesh appreciatively with his hands, a light squeeze when he gets to the base, which earns him a groan from Tony.

“Oh, don’t mind me. I’m just listening to suggestions. Please do continue. In fact, I might just be a little more inclined to take suggestions now that I see the benefits to it. A suggestion box should be- Oh god, your mouth!” Tony babbles are cut short when Steve engulfs his cock.

It’s a little easier than he remembers, half-hard cock in his mouth. Easier to take him to the base like this, the tip of his nose pressed to coarse hair, the first flutter in his mouth as Tony’s cock hardens. He nearly gags when it flexes, pushing deep inside his throat, resettles his hold on the base while he takes the cock over and over again, jaw slack and careful.

He pulls off with a slurp, kisses the base of Tony with more teeth than necessary, nips just by the flaring knot and down his balls, twirls his tongue in mock play.

Tony can’t seem to get enough, his hand twisted in Steve’s hair, hard and stinging. It makes Steve’s hole slick where he’s knelt under Tony.
“Suggestions.” Steve says casually, after a noisy *plop* when he pulls off from sucking balls.

Tony looks at him, dazed. “Huh?”

“I’d be happy to take suggestions.” An innocent smile on his lips while he strokes Tony’s dick in slow measure, enjoys the flex and jump of it that thrills his senses. He’s not quite sure, but it’s like Tony’s scent gone darker. Like stone left for days in the rain, earth at a constant grind on the surface, metal heated in a forge, a freedom he can feel as surely as he can taste on his lips.

A muttered cursed, grip renewed. “You’re a white winged demon, I swear.” Steve counters with another swirl of tongue, transitioning to swallow around Tony’s head, a convulse of muscle around that musky taste. He knows he does it right when Tony’s breath catches, and it’s worth the extra nails on his scalp. “God, yes, you can take it deeper, can’t you? Of course you can, *christ* that answers that question.” Tony’s head lolls back, body practically climbing the couch as Steve does as suggested, taking Tony’s cock as deep as it will go, pressed to the back of his throat, his lips just touching the swell of Tony’s knot at his base.

He does it again and again, keeps his jaw pliant, let’s the drool slip past his mouth and cover Tony’s cock to turn it slippery and wet, breathing through his nose even while Tony pets his face.

“Not sure if I should be thanking the man who taught you to suck cock or feel jealous that I didn’t get to teach you myself. You would have been a wonderful student.” The Alpha looks at him now, dark-eyed and red-cheeked, hunger that Steve recognize, that must be reflected in his own eyes. “That’s it, sweetheart. I know you love sucking cock. Don’t try to deny it, you do it so well, so fucking earnest to please. Damn eager to have it down your throat.” Steve groans around the cock, sucking harder, bobbing faster. “What I’d do to have you in my office, definitely would make time there a lot more interesting. The number of times I’ve imagined you under my desk, blowing me in the middle of the day, just the threat of someone bursting in and finding us. Made me pop a boner one too many times. Just like that, baby. So good, making me feel so damn good. Would you like that someday?”

Steve answers by withdrawing until only Tony’s head in his mouth, and tongues the sensitive bundle of nerves between the head and shaft that has Tony groaning in pleasure. His boxers are ruined at this point, slick-drenched and sticky, clinging to his ass, cock hard where it’s confined still. Sweet torture.


Steve pulls off of Tony’s cock, quick as lightning, shucks his shirt and shorts. He returns to kneeling, Tony pumping his cock viciously in one hand, angry-red and throbbing, the other keeping Steve’s head where he wants it. “Gonna come all over you, Sweetheart. And you’re going to want it. Right?” Because of course Tony would ask.

“Yes.” Steve doesn’t even stutter.

Maybe it’s a little bit of instinct, or his own perversion. When Tony growls, a sure sign of his release, Steve opens his mouth. Tony comes all over his face, drips down his chin, follow the lines of his neck and gathers by his collarbones. Flecks land on his tongue, and he doesn’t even realizes that he licks his lips before he swallows what he gets. It’s a burst of bittersweetness, the taste of Tony still on his tongue, and it’s with morbid fascination when he watches Tony’s knot swell to full size, twitching right in front of him.

“Holy fuck, I take it back. You’re straight up the devil.” Tony gasps, eyes still on him but Steve
can tell Tony’s brain is elsewhere. “Come here, lie down.”

It’s a straight and direct command, one that Steve has no trouble following as he ambles onto the couch, bare for Tony’s ideas. He really is thankful for the serum, his knees aren’t even sore.

If anything, the Alpha is efficient. There are fingers quickly lining up to his hole, gathered with his own slick. The first thrust is three fingers right up his ass, makes Steve yelp and sob by the sudden pleasure of being filled. He’s wet, but still tight, maddening friction on his walls while Tony fucks him silly. By the time he feels like his body is starting to loosen, there’s suddenly a hand on his cock, quickly jerking him off.

Tony holds his body, tightly in command, wonderfully aware of the things that would make Steve come and what would not. He brings Steve right to the edge of orgasm, where Steve feels like he’s flying off the sofa in a heated rage to reach his orgasm, only to fall sharply down when Tony pinches his cock enough to hurt, biting down the impending orgasm while Steve sobs his desperation.

It’s small mercies when Tony finally decides to fuck his prostate, talented fingers rubbing and prodding the sensitive spot while Steve moans his pleasure.

“Beautiful.” He comes like that, too keyed up and aroused to hold off any further, with Tony’s fingers all the way in his ass and the constant pump on his cock even when he does, shooting all over his own chests, milked through his orgasm until his body feels buzzed and sated.

Steve all but collapses where he lays, like he’d run for days, non-stop. Tingles of afterglow as Tony continues to touch, in languid fascination. He follows the contours of Steve’s body, like mapping him out piece by piece, strong fingers that feel sure and solid. Steve doesn’t miss the fact that Tony is also smearing their come together, a heated mess over his chest and neck, his face is already very sticky. “I need another shower.”

“Maybe.” Tony laughs, but leans down to kiss him anyway, short and sweet, a little crinkle in his nose when he pulls away. “Definitely.”

Steve shoves him lightly. “Who’s fault do you think that is, jerk.” He grins anyway. It’s a strange twinge in his chest.

“I was just listening to suggestions.” Tony corrects, another kiss, this time deeper, knowing, builds and builds until they break away panting. “Go take a shower before you blame me some more. I’ll be here. And brush your teeth, your mouth tastes like dick!”

When Steve does return from a shower, with fresh-clothes, he finds Tony asleep on the couch, half-falling over.

As gently as he can, he resettles Tony on the couch, hefts the rest of his body further into the paddings and uses the pillows to barricade him further. Tony squirms through the process, fighting against every movement until Steve let’s him be. He deflates, sinking into slumber, breath slowing down until Steve’s sure he won’t wake for a while.

Tony looks calm like this, without the ragged edges of feral and stress to mar his face, handsome in a way that calls to the artist in Steve to capture the moment on paper. Sort of like a wild animal suddenly caught in a rare moment of sleep, the sight suddenly worth much more with knowing. Steve carefully rests a blanket on top of him, tucking a stray hair to Tony’s ear that threatened to tickle his nose.
And now the urge is close to boiling, as he shuffles through his discarded things from earlier to give way to the itch. Pencil and pad in hand, he quietly carries over a chair and flips to an empty page to start.

“Thank you, Captain Rogers.” JARVIS says after a ping, light and non-threatening amidst the sketching. He hums in response, changing his strokes from light to heavy as he so needs, short and long pulls of lead along the paper.

“How long has it been since he’s had a decent night's rest?”

“Sir was able to have a five hour deep sleep cycle after you had brought him to his room. Prior to that, deep sleep had not been achieved, resulting to an average of four point seven hours of sleep within a thirty six hour time cycle, normally broken between five naps.”

God, Tony. He should never had left the man alone, regardless of another Omega or not. There was still a part of him that could have remained professional, he knew, that even with what messy tangle of emotions he had had, he could have at least been Tony’s friend, been there if the man had wanted him.

“When was the last time he was like this?”

There’s a pregnant pause, a hum like JARVIS was thinking. Steve understood that JARVIS was like a computer, an Artificial Intelligence that lived within the confines of Tony’s lab (servers?) or about as close to that. Even then, Steve wasn’t entirely sure what JARVIS was truly capable of, and Tony hadn’t seemed intent to explain. Almost like a secret, no one truly knew of JARVIS’s existence, save for a few, and even in passing. But Tony had also politely explained that JARVIS was no prisoner either, and free route through the internet and through Tony’s own data servers in Stark Industries. Tony described millions of processing power. Like a brain, Tony said, but faster at math and remembering information, he’d joked at the end but Steve knew it was true. So for JARVIS to pause as he did, Steve couldn’t help but think there was more to it.

Finally, it seemed he was finished deliberating. “The last time Mr. Stark had exhibited similar signs of distress was when he had first returned from Afghanistan. It was seventy three days before Sir could sleep for over five hours, and another fifty five before he stopped awaking to nightmares.”

Right, Afghanistan, Tony’s kidnapping. Steve had read the files, along with the press and news articles during and after his abduction. Shortly after returning to America, Tony had gone on to shut down Stark Industries’s weapons department, and subsequent department that correlated to them. Weapon contracts were scrapped, and what manufactured missiles and gun were stripped down to their core and blueprints locked away. And then Iron Man appeared and Tony had outed himself the very next day.

“That must have been very difficult for you. Not being with him.” He pauses from his sketch, takes his time to look Tony’s sleeping form once more. There would have been no Tony to brighten the room, to throw insults at his robot pets, nor would there have been anyone to speak to JARVIS. The house would have been empty.

“I had calculated that the chance of his return had been at zero point twenty five percent after the first thirty days. He had amassed one thousand four hundred ninety-two messages during that period.” There’s a certain gravity to JARVIS’s tone, and not for the first time, Steve wonders where he’d learn to speak. Intonation, inflections, even if Steve could not see JARVIS, he could tell that the AI would have looked at him with downcast eyes. “I had-” Again, there was hesitation. “Mr. Stark’s search had been fruitless after the first month, and when it became clear that the authorities were not catching wind of his captors, I took it upon myself to further the
search. Every satellite I could upload myself into, I did. I scoured through radio scans and live feed, any sort of link that could point to Sir’s whereabouts. Then it was a matter of convincing Colonel Rhodes to follow the coordinates out in the desert to find him.” At that JARVIS sounds tired, relieving an old memory.

“Did Colonel Rhodes know it was you?”

“No. I played the role of anonymous informant. I sent the coordinates to his private email, along with a photograph I took with the satellite I was linked to as proof of authenticity.”

So JARVIS hadn’t exactly trusted Sergeant Rhodes of his identity, not to that extent, despite the closeness of Tony and the Sergeant shared (“Oh, you’re gonna love Rhodey-Bear. He’s a huge fan, he did his thesis on you but don’t tell him I said that, I wanna see him hold in all his fangirl-stares.”).

“Sounds like you didn’t trust him too much.” He knows he’s encroached on something personal here.

There’s another stretched silence, which Steve takes to tightening his sketch with stronger strokes. “Mr. Stark has given you alpha access throughout the household.” Comes the answer.

“Information on my data servers, access throughout Stark households, any and all services I am able to render are at your disposal. Sir has put a remarkable amount of faith in you.” The last one almost sounded hopeful.

Steve doesn’t understand the amount of trust given to him, something he so clearly hasn’t earned, suddenly given to him without preamble. He looks to Tony again, sleeping, curled underneath the blanket, face relaxed. Not in peace, Steve realizes, but in the blankness of dreamless sleep, a welcomed respite if Steve has to guess of the man’s night terrors.

The drawing of Tony on his sketchpad is just as the Tony in real life. Strewn on the sofa, loose fitting clothes, a blanket that barely clung to his body, toes peering from underneath. Curled in tight, appearing smaller than he already look against the bundles of cloth around him. His face lacked the serenity of sleep, Steve had drawn him with the slightest twitch on the brow, lips turned down in a frown, neck turned to the side for comfort.

It’s still a rough sketch, it would probably be another hour before Steve is happy with it. But he knows where he’d put the lines of stress, add shadows to show the hollowness of Tony’s cheek, bags under the eyes that spoke of Tony’s lack of sleep. The drawing is sound, an echo of what Steve sees, but it still feels so wrong.

It’s a strong desire to see Tony truly relaxed. He wants to see what peace looks like on Tony. What happiness might look like on his already handsome face. He wants to see Tony smile, without the weight of the world on his shoulders.

“Jarvis.” He gulps, decision made. “Do you think you could show me what happened to Tony after he came back?”

Instead of answering, one of the screen on Tony’s desk lights up, several files already on display.

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“Mrhm.”

Steve twists to look at an awakening Tony. Hair sticking all over the place, he looks like a disgruntled hedgehog huddled under the blanket.
“How long was I out?” Tony says, casting a bleary eye at Steve.

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“Five hours and thirty two minutes, Sir. It is currently six forty-eight in the evening.”

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“Hmph.”

“Hmph.”

“Here.” Steve provides helpfully, pushing a mug of coffee into Tony’s hand, which he gratefully takes, moaning right into the cup.

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“Oh my god, you’re the best.” Tony says after draining half of the cup in one gulp, which Steve thinks is amazing considering the coffee was still steaming hot.

“Would you like some pancakes to go with that? You haven’t had lunch yet, so I figure you must be hungry. I thought you’d find the irony in breakfast for dinner.”

“Sure, I could go for some brinner.” Tony says, cradling his cup and taking another sip before he stares suspiciously around the lab. “So you found the hot plate I see.”

The hot plate, of course, is right on a work desk. Steve places a couple strips of bacon and sets it on a low sizzle. “Yup! Jarvis told me where it was. It’s amazing! Like a little moveable stove.” Steve comments happily, making sure the heat isn’t on too high, preferring his bacon chewy and juicy, before he remixes the pancake batter he’d used earlier just so that the flour wouldn’t clump together again.

“The word you are looking for is portable. I forgot I had that. I forgot I bought that!”

“It was a gift from Colonel Rhodes.” JARVIS interjects. “He had hoped it would remind you to eat regular meals.”

“Oh no, are you conniving with Steve?”

“All he did was tell me where the portable stove was!” Steve retorts, undignified.

“You are, aren’t you?” Tony chides JARVIS. “It’s a scheme to get me to eat! Collusion! Betrayal! Treason! I expected better from you, Jarvis. And Steve, you haven’t admitted that robots are better than live animals. No, I didn’t forget. Traitors. The both of you.”

“Jarvis is pretty swell.”

“Aha! So you admit that you’re both colluding behind my back!”

It’s fifteen minutes of ridiculous arguing. Which ends in a fit of laughter when Dummy rolls between them and hands both Tony and Steve DUNCE caps.

Pancakes are enjoyed after.
Old Memories

Chapter Notes

Holy hell, it's been 3 months?!?!?!! I was so sure it hadn't been 2 but then 3 snuck up my ass. Same old same old, work has been tiring, just need time to write between all the fic ideas but this one was like a month of thinking, and then another month of writing. I hope people are still interested in this, I believe I should be building up traction for the upcoming chapters too.

As a question not related to this fic. Big Steve or Small Steve?

As always, thanks for reading, the comments and kudos. Always, always, appreciated, and if there are concerns, just leave a comment below.

Anyway, here we are, chapter 19 (already?!) which still serves as an in-between for Avengers and Ironman 3 and then next up is Winter Soldier.

“Shield.” Tony says expectantly, both hands thrust outward to receive said item.

Steve raises a brow. “Is that how you ask for things?”

“Pretty much.” Tony says with an uncaring shrugs, opening and closing his hands like a child, motioning for the shield.

( JARVIS later informs him that this is what are called 'grabby hands’ and shows him several different clips when Steve doesn’t believe that it’s a real thing. )

“Manners.” Steve chides, motioning with the shield, holding it to the side, just out of reach. Like bait for good behavior.

Tony huffs, looks at him like his ridiculous.

Steve gives him an expectant stare.

“Fine. Please, may I have your shield do that I can make it better than it already is, which makes it actually more useful to you so it would be great if you’d let me do this nice thing for you.” Tony says, with a lot of very pointy words and expectant eyes back at Steve.

He knows a lost cause when he sees one, stubbornness a mile wide that shouldn’t make him smile, hands over the shield anyway even while the response was less than pleasant.

Steve’s leaving tomorrow anyway. And with a few upgrades to his phone and checking out the bike, Tony insists on giving the shield a once over before he leaves. Which Steve thinks is just a ploy, since Tony’s been asking for it since day one.

Tony holds it, sturdily in tight hands. Steve swears he can see his eyes glaze over for a moment, taking note of the shield and flipping it over to look at it.

“Lighter than I expected. Definitely gives off more of twang vibe than a baf.”
“Twang?”

“Sixties cartoons reference, sorry, just geeking out a little because wow.” Tony smiles that tiny boyish smile, full of wonderment. “Captain America’s Shield. Makes me wanna punch Hitler and talk about justice.”

“By all means, geek out all you want.”

Tony gives him a look of half-fondness and half-exasperation but instead flips it over again, looking at the bright paint.

“Used to have your posters all over my room. Howard was a huge fan. There’s an entire warehouse full of his ‘collection’ of you.” Tony laughs. “He used to say things like you’d probably blush to your tips if you ever saw everything that they’d made about you, and that was his excuse for buying the most ludicrous shit. I’ll take you to see them someday, it’ll be a memorable trip.”

“Sounds very much like the Howard I knew.”

To Steve’s credit, he manages to hold in a cringe. He’s seen the ‘memorabilia’ in his image. From pop art comics, tin boxes and statues, it felt strange to see Captain America in almost every form imaginable. People wore shirts with designs of his shield, in hundreds of different ways.

It’s often that he asks himself, why? Why did all this people choose to carry his symbol in the most mundane things possible? Coffee mugs and the like, seemed pointless in the grand scheme of things.

The Legendary Captain America.

It sounded horrible.

“Tell me about him.” Tony says suddenly, an expectant look before he realizes what he’s said but there a stubbornness there anyway, not wanting to take it back.

Steve smiles kindly at him. “The Howard I knew wouldn’t have been the same as your father.” An echo of what he’d first said about Howard to Tony during their brief disagreement about the man. He knows he’s treading on something close to Tony’s heart, an image of his father that had not yet been so revealed, as much as it was treasured. “What would you like to know?”

That has Tony thinking, turning towards the shield for something to do, tracing the perfect etch of the inner circle of the pattern.

It’s somewhere to start. “Howard made that shield for me.”

Tony blows out a laugh. “Is that what he told you?”

“It’s what I know. I picked it out from his bunker myself.”

Tony regards him, a smirk on his lips. “It wasn’t. Do you even know what it’s made of?” Challenging. Playful. Steve can’t help but be strung along.

“Vibranium.”

“Ever heard of anything else the military had that was made of vibranium?”

“No? From what Howard said this was all they had.” Which he had found odd at the time.

Tony chuckles. “That’s because it wasn’t manufactured by the military in the first place. See,
vibranium as a metal is extremely rare. Unlike copper or iron, which are common minerals, there’s only so many known vibranium deposits in the world. Want to hazard a guess as to how the U.S. military got ahold of enough for your shield?”

“I’m sure you’ll tell me.”

“Hmm, but it’s no fun if you don’t take a guess.” Tony actually pouts at him but continues anyway. “It’s from Wakanda, a relatively small nation but technologically advanced in their ways. It’s often contemplated that Wakanda was one of the first nations to educate their population equally, regardless of orientation, and they were better off for it. Imagine that? Alphas, Betas and Omega receiving the same education as early as the eighteen hundreds?”

“So the shield was in fact from Wakanda, not something developed by the military or Howard.”

“Well, it was a gift.” Tony turns it over again, so that the curve of the shield rested unstably on the table. “In the middle of the war, the government was trying to get as much help as possible. Funding, technology, supplies, anything to sustain the war and win.” He tests the wobble of the shield, frowns, and motions for them to move away.

“That part, I know.” Steve trails along, just a hint curious, though he knows that Tony can’t help but show off and all will be explained, with or without his intervention. “First six months of enlistment, I was touring throughout the country, given a script and told to stick to it.” He frowns. He hadn’t hated his time with the gals. Truth be told, he’d gotten used to it to a point, he nearly started believing that the stage was his place in the war effort.

Still, it made him feel like a fool, standing in front of actual men who’d fought on the field, those who have seen actual horrors. It had taken that to realize that he had gotten complacent.

Tony places another metal table, this one with clamps on it’s side. He props the shield, holding it sturdily with the clamps. The knobs tighten automatically, securing the shield in place.

“What are you doing to the shield exactly?” Steve worried.

“Wait. I’m not done with the story!” Tony chides, but readjusts the shield on the table anyway, placing it where he wants it and then shuffles around through drawers. “Back to that. Wakanda didn’t want to take part of the war. Surprise surprise, they just wanted to stay out of it, take no sides and do whatever it is they do over there.”

Tony makes a triumphant sound, finally taking out a tool that Steve perceives as a drill, and grins at him. Which doesn’t really alleviate his worry.

“Found it.”

“What exactly are you doing to my shield?” Steve says, tone noticeably much more worried now that Tony has involved a power tool.

“Oh relax.” Tony waves off, plugs in the drill and tests it with a whir. “So, before I was interrupted so rudely, our government, the American government, during the height of the second World War against the Nazi’s was asking for funding and weapons from Wakanda, a highly secretive, relatively peaceful nation. Didn’t go so well, obviously. And for laughs, this is a hypothesis from my part because Wakanda is still a secretive nation and no actual commentary was given, but maybe, just maybe. Wakanda, when America was asking for guns, grenades, missiles tanks, airplanes. It sends.” Tony pauses for a effect, though Steve could already see where it was going. “A shield. Can you imagine that? A shield? Not even a sword. In a war where everyone was racing to make the better gun, more ammo, capacity, higher accuracy, less
inconsistency with the amount of gunpowder, firing power. So you see where I’m getting at?”

“I think so?” Steve has to wonder why it was that Tony was going on and on about this. Yes, he understood that Wakanda had practically spat in the face of the war at the time, specifically at the America for handing over such a thing in the first place. Like handing over a candy wrapper to a hungry beggar, almost goading.

“I don’t think you do.” Tony says after a while, having leaned over the shield and the drill had started up again, this time pressed to the underside of the shield. “A shield for defense. It was purely by chance that it could have been used. Not a lot of people know about the shield at all, it’s origins, how it was made. Many people still believe it’s made of some metal compound, some steel and iron, very medieval. Not many know about Vibranium, because it’s such an uncommon element, such an expensive metal, that it can hardly be used by the average person. In fact, because of it’s significant worth, it’s only used by the military, even NASA couldn’t afford this shit.”

“What’s NASA?”

“Space program.” And then Tony pauses, and shakes his head. “Space talk later. Anyway, I’ve said a lot already. Bottom line. The shield was a joke, but now it’s this grand symbol of hope, dreams and patriotism, when it isn’t. It’s why Wakanda is never credited for it, it’s probably incredibly embarrassing to be shut down like that but it became important anyway. It didn’t even come from America, was never developed by anyone, and it was purely by chance that you’ve picked it up at all, isn’t that right?”

Steve shifts on his feet. “I suppose? I’d say a lot of my becoming would fall under chance, yes. Howard had shield by the dozen lined up for me to choose from, but this one was the only one that had seemed right.” He thinks back to that moment, when Howard was bombarding him with choice after choice, confounded him with alloys, weight, density and more. Howard hadn’t even offered the shield to him, it had just laid there, unassuming and looking nothing like all the others. It wasn’t flashy, didn’t have all the contraptions stuck to it, it was plain and simple, and it had called to Steve in it’s humbling way.

“I’m almost done you know.”

Tony steps back. There’s a new slate of metal attached to the back of the shield, thin, but Steve could make out the edges where it just one from the otherwise smooth curve.

“What’s that?”

“A magnet. A very high-powered magnet. The best part? It’s controllable. A recent discover of mine, haven’t patented it yet, wanted to test out uses first. Wanna try it out?”

“How so?” It was his shield.

Tony suddenly looks around the lab. “Where did I-?” He mumbles to himself, before darting away and looking through the other desks.

“Aha!” Comes the triumphant yell, holding up what looked like a watch. The same watch he’d been working on the night before. “Here. Put it on.”

Steve straps it to his wrists. The watch looked well-crafted, chrome and heavier than he expected it to be. He wriggles it on his wrists and then is surprised when it whirs and then suddenly resizes to fit perfectly on his wrist.
“Sorry, should have warned you about that. Wouldn’t want it to go loose while in action.” Tony sounds not very apologetic at all. “Anyway, stretch out your fingers, let it recalculate.”

So Steve does, though he doesn’t think that the watch really does anything at this point.

“Now. Put your hand up, like Lion-o and say- Oh wait, you wouldn’t know that reference.” Steve throws him a face. “Just kidding. Don’t worry. Just put your fist in the air, yep, away from your face, and say ‘Shield activate’.”

“And what does the shield do?”

“Shield activate.” Steve mimics.

And he can sort of feel it, the watch almost shudders to life, feels like it’s suddenly buzzing with unknown energy on his wrist.

“Just stay still. Now say ‘return’.”

“Return.” And then suddenly, the shield comes flying at him. If it weren’t for Tony’s instruction, he would have dived right out of the way. But as it is, he remains still, stiff with his arm still up. The shield goes straight for his wrist, he feels it connect to the face of the watch with a satisfying clunk. He looks back at Tony with a bewildered look, and Tony is grinning his mouth off.

“Fantastic! I’d say that’s a good first test, don’t you?”

“You could have warned me.” Was his dry retort. He would liked it much better if he knew that the shield wasn’t going to hit him on the face.

“Next time. It’s fine. Nothing bad happened.” Tony waves off, already closing the distance between them.

“You jumped back ten feet!” Steve suddenly realizes, Tony farther off than he had be a moment ago.

Tony shrugs, already motioning for him to bring his fist down. “Well, of course. Safety measure and all, it was the first test. I’ve run the numbers and power required, trajectory calculations and magnetic pull experiments but this was the first I’ve done an actual test.”

“And you didn’t warn me?”

“You could have handled it. Okay, hold onto the shield now. How’s the grip? Nice and firm? Good, great. Now say ‘Release’.”

“Release.” Just like that, the magnet gives up the shield, and Steve has it in one palm.

“Shield deactivate.”

“Shield deactivate.” And the watch powers down as well. Steve’s breathing a little heavier than before, a quick realization that that had actually scared him, to have his shield come flying at him had been terrifying.
“We can change the activation codes. Any word or keyphrase you’d like, I thought we’d go basic and somewhat serious. Honestly, we can still go with ‘Thundercats ho’ if you’d like, catch and release words. I’d also kind of like to toy with the idea of an electromagnetic field, for deflecting metal debris and bullets, probably. Or at least iron-based bullets, An EMP blast would be fine too, I’m still working on an EMP shield for the suits, it would be nice to test things out with that.” Tony rambles on while Steve catches his breath.

“I’ve always wondered, was it your idea or Howard’s to paint it this red, white and blue monstrosity?”

“Mine.” Steve admits. “Had to live up to the name ‘Captain America’ after all. And I figured that painting something up like that would draw a lot of attention. The more attention there was on me, the less they’d be on my guys.”

“Somehow, knowing you, makes a lot of sense.”

“You shoulda seen Howard’s face when I told him that, thought I was insane for doing it.”

“He’s has no right to judge. He was damn good engineer, but he was an atrocious designer.”

Steve actually laughs. “Me and the guys used to call him that. The engineer. Oversaw all our equipment personally.” He has some good memories to cling to, even if half of them were laced with pain. He clung to those memories, bitter happiness and spiked injury underneath each one.

“Tell me about him.” Comes the quieter request, a repetition of earlier.

Steve has to pause and think about it, wonders for the most part what Tony wants to hear. He knows the deep-seated resentment for his father, the way the man had basically shut out his son in favor of work. It was a glazed fact, underplayed only because Howard had had so many other successes that near everyone else felt that, while yes it was such a shame that the man hadn’t spent time with his son, it was almost expected. A sacrifice of family for work. It mattered very little in the long run, it seemed to many, since Tony had followed so closely in his father’s footsteps regardless.

He knew the effects of an absent father himself, the strange emptiness, like a something curiously missing. His Ma did her best in raising him, and the Barnes’s family was quickly to fill in whatever space of family he needed and more. It was never a question of loneliness, but a quiet question in the midst of his life.

Steve still wonders. Would his father be proud of the man he became today? A question that would never be answered, yet he feels that it has shaped his life in its absence regardless.

“He wasn’t always The Engineer.” He starts out, takes a seat on the lab’s couch while he rests to the shield to one side. “We all knew him as Howard Stark, futurist, inventor, bit of a schmoozer and a good snake oil salesman.”

Tony chuckles. “Yeah, I bet.”

“Coulda skinned a cat and sold it off to a dog if he tried.” Steve grins at that. “But he meant well most of the time, enthusiastic at best. So one night, when me and the Commandos get invited to a fancy party, full of important officers and swells, the kind that goes on and on while Alphas with
the biggest egos butt heads to see who’s got the longer stick.”

“Oh yeah, I know all about those.”

“Y’know how many Omegas get invited to them? Near none. Unless you count a floozy hanging off an Alpha’s arm. Course, that means unmated Alphas take it upon themselves to entertain any Omegas that might be bored at the proceedings.”

Tony has a face of comical horror, dropping into the couch next to Steve. “Are you saying-? Did dad-?”

Steve grins. “He shimmies up to me and says, he says to me.” Steve throws an arm over Tony’s shoulder, who is absolutely hiding a smile. He does his best impression of gruff Alpha. “Hey doll, you look about lovely tonight. What say you and me ditch the joint and have fun on our own.” Complete with head cock.

“Holy shit. Dad never mentioned this.”

“To be fair, he was conked with wine. He couldn’t deny a drink unless he was working.”

“I sense a juicy part.”

“I’m getting there.” Steve chuckles. “So I tell him. Maybe later Mr. Stark, but you’re just the man I was looking for.” Steve takes a pause. “I heard he liked that kinda stuff, ego stroked like most Alphas.”

Tony snorts but nods in approval.

“I tell ‘em, my gun has been acting up. Magazine won’t slide in perfect, sometimes a bullet jams in the chamber, and it doesn’t fire at all when it rains.” Steve shrugs. “He says, doll. That’s all easy. I can fix all that in my sleep. I’m the engineer. He says all that and then gives me this real…” Steve stops to try and find a word. “A real slimy look.” Sounded about right for the time.

Tony eyes widen, mouth twitching into a silent laugh and motions for Steve to continue.

“Then he says he wants a kissing in exchange for fixing my gun.” He leaves out the part where Howard makes a lewd joke about helping him shoot straight, that particular line had him cringing on the spot. “At this point, he’s hangin offa my shoulder, the guys are starting to get a little antsy, people are looking our way.” He blushes at the memory. The muttering that had been audible to his hearing, the cleared throats and unfettered stares.

Steve goes on. “I froze on the spot, never really been to that many fancy shindigs before, cos in a back alley I woulda socked the fella right off me, or at least I would have tried to. But I’m in dress uniform, with my guys around me and a ton of people around me just looking. I wasn’t sure what to do.” People didn’t look at him that way, he wants to say, they ignored him, because he was the runt, that piece of Omega ass that was too little to be bothered with. With the attention, he’d become aware of how people’s eyes latched on, expecting, hungry for something from him. Something he hadn’t figured out yet.

It makes him smile anyway, because now he knows a little better, and it was embarrassing moments that have built him up and rounded him off. Thanks to them, he wasn’t so green anymore, and he’s learned to deal with people with the patience his Ma had tried to instill in him.

“Did you actually do it?” Tony prods his arm, something knowing in his look though he says nothing else. “Kiss dad?”
Steve grins. “Not exactly. Cos the next thing I know is, Bucky’s separating us and is holding Howard by the collar of his fancy suit. I still remember the look of confusion on Howard’s face before Buck plants a big sloppy one, right on his lips!” He has to let out a bark of laughter at that. “And it’s not a short one either, it musta been a whole ten seconds before they pull apart. Howard’s staring at Bucky, all flushed and gawping, and Buck just turns to the rest of us, shrugs his shoulders and says ‘My rifle could use an upgrade too. Be dumb not to take him up on such a great offer.’”

Tony laughs, fast and unbidden, and Steve joins him until they’ve got tears in the corner of their eyes, fighting to catch their breath as Tony leans on Steve’s shoulders for support.

“I did kiss him after when Bucky finally let him go. All I thought was what a poor guy, messing with a couple of punks from Brooklyn, didn’t even think it through.” Steve sighs out, it’s happy and relieved.

“Good to know at least someone knocked dad down a peg. Christ, no wonder he never mentioned it at all, must have embarrassed himself so much he shut up.”

“To be fair, he passed out an hour later when we hauled him back to base, fell asleep right on his cot the moment Dum Dum stopped rifling through his jacket for a cigar.”

“Did he at least give you guys the upgrades you wanted?”

Steve nods. “We were off-base after a couple of days, but he sent out re-supplies for all of us, including a bunch of modified 1911, a new sniper rifle for Bucky, and coffee that didn’t taste like dirt when we set it to boil. Buck reckoned it was a pretty swell deal for a couple of kisses. Howard was always a little wary of him from then on, and the punk would throw out a kiss at Howard whenever they were in the same room. Made for a couple good laughs.” Steve lets the memory seep in, a stupid moment in time, Howard rushing out of the meeting room, the rest of the boys holding in laughter while Bucky throws them a look of utter mischievous intent and pride.

“Sounds like a great guy. You miss him, don’t you.” It wasn’t a question, just an observation, that makes Steve’s breath catch in his throat. He’s avoided this, talking in detail, because the memories seep in and it gets harder and harder to pull out of them. He talks in general terms with psychiatrists, who have all but given up on getting him to open up and cleared him off for missions anyway.

‘Steve Rogers gets homesick’ must be in their clipboards somewhere. Almost irrelevant, if it were not for the fact that home was 1940 with no hope of return and everything he’s known is either gone or dead.

‘Yeah.’ Is all he can say, and it comes out as a rasp. Mentally, he seeks Tony’s presence for support, just a lean to his direction, head turned to focus on Tony. “They. Y’know they. They got him all wrong in the books, made him sound like a lost puppy licking at my heels, when it was the damn opposite of it. Bucky was smart, real smart. Interested in science and how the world was changing. Nevermind when we were kids, we were both dumb and stubborn. Out in the field, didn’t know the first thing about being a Captain. Buck was a Sergeant for longer than I was enlisted, he had the respect of all of em cos they knew what he’d been through, he knew how to handle the men and give orders.” He gasps. “Me. I. I-”

He’s not sure what he looks like, his face won’t cooperate but it’s painful. He can feel his eyes
crinkle, jaw tighten, lips pressed into a stressed line. Feels almost like crying but without the tears, just the awkwardness of it.

Tony doesn’t move, not exactly, supports Steve weight and takes him wholeheartedly.

“I wish I could have met him. The way you talk about makes me know he’s a good man.” Tony says after a while, when Steve has stopped shaking through the memories.

“I wish the two of you could have met. I think he would have liked you. Would probably try to fight you first but he’d have warmed up after a while.” Steve breathes out. “He would have asked all the questions about everything here, from what it’s made off and how it works, and probably if he could make one himself.”

“Go on, tell me more about him.” Is a kind indulgence, but Tony needles him with insistence.

So Steve does. In a way, sharing Bucky with Tony.
Love Shack

Chapter Notes

So it's been two months, huh? Is it too late to say updates will be irregular?

Updates will be irregular.

No excuses. Just tired from work, I went from working 8 hours a day for 5 days a week to 10 hours a day for 6 days a week, so yeah. Most of the time I'm too sleepy, haven't adjusted well to waking up earlier. I did just come back from a week of vacation though, so don't feel too bad for me.

So instead of making ya'll wait for Sundays, I'll be posting them as I write and edit, when I feel like the chapter is as good as it's going to get for the subject matter at hand.

No comments for this chapter, just a friendly reminder that this fic is rated explicit and thus, some topics might be distasteful to some, not just in past chapter but also in chapters coming along.

As always, thanks to everyone who's been reading, commenting and leaving kudos for the work. Really, I started this, happy to have a hundred-ish readers, but with the number of views, I'm inclined to think there's a bigger number to it. Thank you <3

He keeps to the dark, Clint on his heels as they rush through the building, weapons carefully tucked close to their bodies.

It’s a relatively minor mission, not quite for the likes of Captain America, but it holds a closer role to Steve’s chest, and Clint’s.

Mating block. An illegal one running under the guise of a registered business, the dark underbelly of it all. Unwilling Omegas, drugged and restrained, an underground market for Alphas and Betas who didn’t care if they harmed their partner or not. If they were willing or not. Sold to the highest bidder.

It’s days of going undercover, of following targets, rumors and acting as bait before they have an address for where most of the Omegas are being kept. But that wasn’t enough, they needed names and locations. It wasn’t hard to figure out that the Omegas were being moved across country, to different mating blocks under different credentials.

Natasha has that part covered, already in the control room of the building, retrieving locations and names from their database and forwards it to SHIELD for immediate operation. Steve has no doubt Brock will be taking one of those location, with his pack system and Omega on the team, it would be difficult not to feel disgusted.

“Come on, boys. Hustle.” Comes her voice on the comm units. “No falling asleep on the job.”

Clint scoffs, presses his back against the wall as a guard walks past them. They needed to get to the Omegas first, in case the guards got antsy and shoot their cargo if they thought that would be
“The one time she gets the easy job, she’s already complaining.” He grumbles as they take a flight of stairs deeper into the building.

“You’re very welcome to offer assistance, Black Widow.” Steve supplies, checks the corner before they barrel past to the basement. “How’s security?”

“Terrible. CCTVs are on indefinite loop, I dare say you’ve got a clear shot to the basement with at most four guards in the way.”

“Would you look at that, two for each of us, Captain.”

It’s short work, barely a challenge, but it’s a terrible feeling in his stomach when they do liberate the victims. Most are young Omegas, Steve would think they’re all too terribly young, frightened and shaking when Clint and Steve come in. It’s the reason they’d decided that it was better that Natasha didn’t come along for the rescue, the presence of an Alpha might set them off, further stress them.

Young, too young to be subjected to this kind of thing.

Steve places his feelings aside for the mean time, focuses on helping each and every Omega out of the facility and into support vans, huddles over scared Omegas, and offers gentle words for them. There’s a strained scent in the air, sour with fear and confusion, wide eyes and stares, while most are led away, too silent. Drugs, if he has to guess, to keep them quiet and obedient. Steve hates it.

But even more confusing are the ones that scream and cry not to be taken, clinging to each other, being difficult as agents slowly pry them apart, forcefully if needed.

Steve watches them, as they babble through their tears and anger. I want this! I want this! They insist, even when they’re being held against the vans to zip tie their arms. Protest to being saved.

“Why would people do that?” The ride back their little apartment that has served as their base of operations is quiet, Steve hunched over where he sits in the back row, gut still churning from the scent and smells.

It’s a quiet moment of misery before Natasha answers from the passenger seat. “There’s been a decline in Omega population as of late, no better market to sell them in.” Sounds as grim as it was. And Steve can make the connection from there. Slaves, or whatever equivalent it was to the present standard, forced servitude to the will of the buyer. There was more than one way to imprison a human.

His fists clench over his lap, jaw held tight in disappointment. He’d thought the future would have found some solution to this, the hope he had had when he’d learned that mating blocks were better had made him thought that it was gone for good.

No, he knows now that it hasn’t. It has only moved to someplace hidden, without regulation or rules, even more dangerous than it’s predecessor now that it could work on it’s own terms. Greed it’s main power.

“It’s asshats trying to take advantage of a situation is what.” Clint adds in, grim tone says everything he thinks about it. “And Alphas and Betas with enough money in their pockets to make the buy.”
Natasha casts Clint a sympathetic look, turns to Steve. “Today’s progress was good. That’s one hideout down, the rest we can hunt until they scatter like rats.” Sounds like a promise. Or a mission.

Steve nods, catches the darker undertone of the conversation and says no more.

They drive back to their little headquarters, which is really just an old apartment turned AirBnB that Clint had nicknamed the ‘Love Shack’ (He doesn’t get this reference). There’s not much in the apartment, most of their things are on their person, but there’s beds and warm water which was more than enough for them.

Washing the grime and blood off of their bodies, they settle in for the night. Natasha gets her own room, which neither of them argue about, both Omegas with enough self-preservation instincts not to deny her of it, and instead share a room between themselves.

It almost feels like those nights, back when it was just him and Clint, except he’s coming down from a full mission with him and adrenaline still courses through him. It should be habit to him now, and a few times it is. He works out the extra energy, extra adrenaline, by hitting the gym or painting, something to concentrate on to burn all the extra energy his body packs in at an anticipation of a fight. He also knows that’s not normal, most other people coming down from an adrenaline high run off on their hormones, but eventually they tire down and look for rest.

For him, it isn’t the same, the energy is there, pumped into his system at a moment’s notice, but unlike other people, he can go on for a couple more days, a sort of restlessness settles upon him when that is the case.

So even while he gets in bed, he already knows that it will be a while before he can actually fall asleep like this.

But there’s a question on his mind from earlier, and he wonders if he should ask or keep quiet for now. They’d executed a successful mission, that was in no doubt, but the end had left a bitter taste in their mouth.

He looks to Clint, already curled in bed, sheets pooled at the end of the bed because of the heat, but not yet asleep, in fact, stares right back at him, as if expecting something of him.

Clint doesn’t make a fuss, motions to Steve’s hands, just half-punches his pillow into order and falls in for the long night. “Just whatever you need to say, Cap, I’m a big boy, I can handle it.” Which is just as reminiscent of that night, his eyes a less miserable than they had been.

Steve manages to stave off the flush from his face. He hadn’t realized his fingers had been twisted into his sheets like fists, poised and upset on his lap. “I thought things would have changed for the better. When I came out of the ice, they told me we’d won the war.” Which had sounded strange to him at the time, to simply awaken be told what he wanted to hear. “But they didn’t tell me what we lost since then. I thought that these things wouldn’t happen anymore.”

He thought he was becoming used to the Present, a hope that had been allowed to grow in what he now realizes is his own ignorance. He hadn’t… Questioned anything. Accepted the information and thought he could trust that people knew what they were talking about.

“You hoped for too much.” Is the gruff response, as if Clint could read his mind. “People are fucked up, and it’s—” Clint shakes his head. “It’s a fucking lottery system, being Omega is like, you’ve got dealt the worst hand in the deck and you hope to hell that the river can give you some luck but you know everyone’s got a better stack than you. Doesn’t matter if you manage to win a few times, they’ll clean you out the first chance they get. Omegas got it way worse back then, I’m
not saying they didn’t but–"

“But it’s not equal.” Steve finishes for him, sighs in deep, breath heavy in his chest. “Is it still-? Are Omegas still payment?” He didn’t think they were anymore, but. Tonight was a leadup to all the information, of hoping and hoping nots. Omegas still treated like cattle, for trade and stock.

Clint’s scent turns electric charged. His usually smooth scent of breeze and wheat comes out almost burnt to Steve’s senses. “Underground. Mostly. It’s illegal but it sure as hell doesn’t stop a lot of people from getting their way.” Is a heavy inflection on people, enough that Steve has to wonder where Clint thinks he fits into the equation of ‘people’. “Hardcore traditionalist Alphas.” Clint grits out. “Who still think the Omegas are god’s gift to Alphas, meant to get fucked and pump out baby after baby for their entire lives like livestock on a farm.”

“It wasn’t- You know, back then, if an Alpha owed some money, you bartered an Omegas time.” He remembers bitterly, haphazard comments and sneers, when people would goad Bucky into lending Steve for all the meaning of the word, like he was just a thing to be passed back and forth. A night, a week, a month, it wasn’t uncommon to throw it up as an acceptable trade, especially when food was scarce and supplies were few. It wasn’t always that bad, a handful of times because even back then people knew it was something of a bad practice, but he knows it hadn’t been a far sentiment from Hardline Alphas in the military, their gaze roaming and near unfolding.

“But it wasn’t like this. Selling an Omega is different.” Steve argues, begrudges that fact that something like this could happen, could even be allowed to happen. Omegas as actual things, with a price tag to their name and their lives written off.

Clint gives him a look, one that pulls his brows together in thought, lips forced into a neutral line, his body lax where he lays. But. But his eyes say it all, usually cocky full blue eyes are dim, even dimmer than they had been that night. Where that moment had been filled with shame and anger, this one is filled with depressing acceptance, of hollow defeat and estranged emotions.

“’M not saying it’s good. Already said it was all fucked up. I don’t have all the answers, can’t speak for people who’re too proud to admit when they’re in the wrong but.” Clint frowns. “For other Omegas, it’s not the worst choice.”

Steve’s nostrils flare. “What do you mean by that?”

Clint only seems to frown further. “Again, not saying it’s good. But imagine this, alright? An Omega is uneducated, has no job experience cus no one’s gonna hire ‘em over a Beta or Alpha. Course, that only means that Omega can only apply for an Omega job, and even then, those are limited enough and some are filled by Betas too. What’s the play?”

That tired acceptance is back, and Steve just knows that Clint is remembering something. “What they did with those kids was wrong. You don’t just take people and force them into being servants or breeders, it’s not right.”

“Not disagreeing, Steve.” Is another reminder, less patient. “But some choose it for themselves. A few do anyway. Those couple of kids back there? The ones that wanted to stay? Their families probably get a fee for them going along with it. And then an allowance for however long they stay with their buyer.” Clint speaks with controlled remorse. “Better than everyone going hungry, better than getting rejected for jobs day after day because you were born a certain gender.”

Steve blinks, finally understanding. “You were-?” He doesn’t dare finish it, for fear of what he might say, for what Clint might want to keep secret.

The stiff nod is answer enough, but Clint goes on. “Me and my brother. All we had was each
other, y’know? I figured that, if I could feed us both, it’d be better than sitting around with our thumbs up our asses.” Is an attempt at lightening the mood, but Steve knows better. Knows what it feels like to be desperate and hungry, knows what it is to hand over a piece of dignity in exchange for warmth and food. Even when Bucky was begging him not to. ’Cus you’re worth more than that, Steve!’

“I understand.” Steve says, a different chill going down his body, the night spoiled despite their success. The memories come rising, of cold winter night when his lungs wouldn’t cooperate and when he’d try to stifle them, because he felt so useless and he didn’t need to wake Bucky enough with his damn cough. Bucky still needed to work down the docks in the early morning, bring home enough for the both of them to survive on, especially with scarcity of food already.

He remembers it. One day, when his legs don’t feel like they’ll crumple from underneath him from fever, and Bucky was out working, he slipped out of their little home and went to the mating blocks, cos no matter how bad things were, there were always gonna be some Alphas who wanted to get their rocks off.

He remembers it, with bruises down his side and thighs, but a bag full of food in his hand, enough for a couple of days if they froze some of it out on the porch. Setting the table and waiting for Bucky to get back, greeting him by the table with their portions set, a candle he’d dug around for and stuck to the table.

He remembers it, the way Bucky’s gray eyes nearly jumped out of their sockets at the sight of the meal, putting two and two together because Steve was never good at keeping secrets from him anyway, and they’d argued a whole lot about it already.

‘I can carry my own weight around here, Buck. Ain’t fair when you’re doing all the work for us.’ He remembers saying, voice hurt when Bucky only stares at the meal with disappointment, eating nonetheless because they couldn’t afford to waste anything, but he didn’t waste anytime on telling Steve how angry he was with him.

‘Not about that, y’shouldn’t hafta do something like that for us.’ Was the remark back, that just made Steve’s stomach churn. ’’Cus you’re worth more than that, Steve!’

They didn’t speak for a couple of days after that, but Steve was finally well enough to try and find a job, did get one at a pharmacy as an assistant clerk on the count of his writing and mathematics, and that went on for a while. But he’d never forget the clear disgust that had been on Bucky’s face.

Clint must have sensed his mood and keeps quiet, for that Steve knows that they must have had similiar experience, and that only sours the mood further. It’s a moment of hesitation, breath caught in his throat,

“Can I climb in bed with you?”

That gets Clint’s head turning, smell of surprise over the tang in the air, and there’s a rustle of sheets when he sits up. “Sure, I don’t mind.”

Steve takes one of the pillows with him and slides right next to Clint. The bed really isn’t made for two, he can feel the hard muscle of Clint’s arm just right beside his, and it must be a ridiculous sight as the pair of them shift around, trying to find the most comfortable they can get and stick to it.

Eventually they do, with Clint just slightly lower than Steve so that the blanket can cover the both of them, his head place precariously on his chest, and their arms on top of each other in a half-hug,
while their knees bump against one another.

It had felt easier back then to slot together, or Steve supposes it had been a much more terrible night and neither had cared much for comfort anyway.

“Is this the part where you tell me you’ve been gay all along, we exchange our vows of love and then kiss passionately?”

“But I’m not gay?” Steve ponders, not getting the joke.

Clint huffs. “Shame, I could have gone for some kissing and then a cuddle after.”

Steve waits a beat. “I can smell it on you, you know.” He breaches the topic.

“What? My hard-on? I’m not even half-mast yet.”

“Clint.” He hisses, face flushing.

That gets him a sly smile, and a shift of limbs. “Relax, I’m just kidding. You’re horribly straight, and you go for High Alpha the first chance you get. I still don’t get you and Stark, whatever makes you happy, man but whenever you feel like experimenting—” There’s a roll of hip, though it lacks heat and is clearly meant to tease him, Steve yelps.

“Clint.” Steve tries for stern, to get a grasp of the situation. “I know, okay? You don’t have to—”

“M sure Stark’ll let you play around with another ‘mega, probably’d—”

“pretend like this with me—”

“get off on something like that. Watch us—”

“I know you’re married, Clint.”

“touch and kiss and— What?” That gets him to stop, which is a relief.

Steve presses his body to Clint, he can smell the fresh wave of panic and surprise, gathers him in his arms. “I know, okay? I can smell it on you.”

Clint is quiet for a while. “Serum-enhanced senses. Probably how you knew I was Omega in the first place.” Clint grumbles, mostly to himself, frowns right into Steve’s chest. “There goes that reveal.”

Steve hums in acknowledgement. “I guessed you didn’t want people knowing. It wasn’t in your file.”

“I didn’t count on you being able to smell a mated pair. Didn’t think that that was possible even.”

“Sorry.” And Steve is truly apologetic in what he knows is private.

“Well, fuck.” Clint bounces right back. “If it’s you then, that’s fine.” Though Steve can still detect the panic from earlier, it’s a little less clear when Clint lays deflated on his chest.

“I really am sorry.”

“What does a married pair smell like?” It’s probably a distraction, one that Steve goes on with willingly.
The question makes him think, no one had ever asked him of this, mostly because he’s never actually anyone that his sense of smell had been so enhanced. “It’s two scents rolled into one, but I know that they’re two separate scents somehow, not sure how I know, just do.” He finds himself stroking along Clint's back, following the curve of his muscles.

Clint hums. “And what’s my scent?”

Steve fidgets. It used to be a bit of taboo to ask, usually only spoken between close friends or lovers. It would be rude to just go up to a stranger and talk about scent but that in itself Steve finds himself thinking. Clint is his friend, and this was something they could share. He reaches down, utters a sound of question. Clint bares his neck and let’s him scent, the soft scuffle of sheets and hair the only sound for a while.

“Yours is, like freshly stacked hay, nice, the smell of old paper and ink.” He finally decides, rolls that in his mind and can’t think of anything else that that is a close approximation. “And over that, freshly peeled oranges, a slight bitterness of the peel that adds to the scent, and wood dust.”

“Huh.” Clint says after a while. “Same thing that Laura said, except she said newspaper but that’s pretty close, just a word choice.” Clint smiles at him. “Oranges.” He hums the words. “Yeah, that’s right.” Is a softer, Steve can tell Clint is thinking about his mate.

“What’s mine?” He ventures, wonders if scents could change. Steve bares his neck, shuffles around so that Clint can reach with ease.

“Ocean.” It pops right out. “Christ, your scent is like the entire fucking ocean. Alive and wild. Never smelled anything like it. Did you always have this scent?”

“Yeah.” He answers, mouth gone dry. Bucky had answered the same thing, and then went on a tirade about seaweed and fish smell, ending with a philosophical question about whales and the deep. Buck had always been keen on fiction.

“Stark must love it. Are you two-?” Clint nudges his chest.

Steve hopes it’s dark enough to hide his blush. “Sort of. We’ve talk about it sometimes.”

“Talk about it. Very polite for a Brooklyn boy. Do you fuck out of heat or not?” Clint grins.

“Clint!” Steve hisses, definitely blushing now. “Is it really appropriate to talk about that right now? Right after the mission?”

“Making you uncomfortable makes me feel better.” But Clint settles down anyway, an annoyed huff. “I won’t judge. Sometimes we get horny, it’s fine now Steve. It’s acceptable. We aren’t sexual deviants if we like a knot outta heat anymore.”

Which was news to Steve. “Really?” Back then, an Alpha owned an Omega’s arousal, and outside of that Omegas were rarely knotted if it weren’t to make pups. An Omega wasn’t suppose to get wet if the Alpha didn’t want it, the only exception was for heat, the Omegas biological signal to look for a mate.

“So, the two of you have or haven’t?”

It’s a moment of pause from Steve.

“Look, I’m just kidding around, you don’t have to-”

“We have.” Steve answers, the blush doesn’t go away.
“Oh.” Clint actually sounds surprised, and sits up to stare down at Steve, expression serious. “Does he do kinky things with you? How big is his knot? Is he as good as everyone says he is?”

Steve sighs. “Barton, you’re goddamn gossiping goose.”

He shrugs. “So? You never done sleepovers with a bunch of O’s and blabbed about Alphas you’d dated?”

“Never talked to anyone about sex before. Not while outside of heat anyway.” It hadn’t been appropriate back then, those matters should be kept between two mates, thank you very much.

“That’s kinda sucks, Steve.” He honestly isn’t sure if Clint is kidding or not. “Everyone should have someone to talk to about sex, just to know if stuff’s normal or not. You do watch porn, right?”

“N-No? Not in this century.” Emboldened, he continues. “I used to look at blue pictures, and before that, educational leaflets in Omega school.” Which were like diagrams on how heats were to be proceeded by, what to do, how to go about it, along with tips on how to please an Alpha.

“Aww. You should try to watch a little bit of porn. Ideas about sex and some positions should help, if you and Stark get serious you’re gonna need it.”

“He’s not- you know. Not as bad as people make him out to be.” Steve grumbles, the ridiculous blush doesn’t go away, even while he knows he’s side-stepped a question. “He’s very nice to me.”

“I’m sure he is. Handsome and rich too, an Omega’s wet dream.”

Steve stares at him, suddenly feeling upset.

Clint laugh. “Aww, shit, nah Steve. Not like that. I’m happily married.” He shrugs impressive shoulders. “I know better than to snatch a High’s prize. And I wouldn’t do that to a friend.”

He blinks at Clint, slowly dissecting the feelings he had. A churn in his gut that’s dissipating with every moment aftwe Clint assurance. It helps that Clint has settled back down, head on Steve’s chest, strangely feels like submission. Low-Omega, he’d scented that on Clint too, a softer taste on his tongue.

“I know you wouldn’t.” Steve sighs, finds that he believes it, even if jealousy flared earlier. “Anyway, wouldn’t be a good much. I’m too much for him to handle. I’d drive him mad after three days!”

“It’s a wonder how we put up with you.”

Clint thumps him weakly on the stomach, doesn’t mean much harm in it so Steve just chuckles at him.

##########

He can’t sleep, unsurprising. He’s not sure if it’s the adrenaline or the thoughts but he’s restless. Clint has fallen asleep, or asleep enough that Steve doesn’t feel guilty about slipping out of bed to roam.

His first thought is to get his sketchpad, but thinks better of it. There was no telling where his mind would, what details he might conjure. So instead, he goes for his phone.
It’s where he’d left it, in the little lockbox that their room had. Clint had told him that the box was a scam for most part, an easy way for would-be theives to know where exactly guests have stowed away their valuables. But Steve hadn’t wanted to bring his phone with him to the mission, feeling antsy about just leaving it around.

The solution? They super glued the box to the floor. Now, it wouldn’t go anywhere without the proper chemicals, which Natasha insists she has.

Punching out the code, he plucks out the Starkphone from the box, still turned off like he’d left it.

It boots up quickly, a simple flash of the Stark Logo before the menu pops up.

He and Tony had been exchanging conversation over text. Mostly because Steve didn’t have his phone all the time, and their timezones didn’t always line up, but when they had the opportunity, a call had been a better way to talk. And Steve feels like it must mean something if he gets a fuzzy feeling in his gut when he sees that Tony is calling. Jitters, he thinks, but he smiles every time anyway.

Six messages.

TS: [Can't sleep well. Bad dreams. I miss you.]

TS: [Busy with missions still? Call me when you’re done, let’s talk vacation time, you've earned it.]

JARVIS: [01 OFFLINE]

UNKNOWN: [Whatever you hear, don’t believe it. I'm alive. Stay safe.]

JARVIS: [01 ONLINE]

UNKNOWN: [Back. I'm fine. Call J when you can.]

Steve stares at the phone, reading through the short messages before he calls up Jarvis.

It answers on the first ring like it always does.

“Captain Rogers.” Comes the familiar tone. “How may I assist you?”

“What happened to Tony? Is he okay?” He asks immediately, shuffling his feet away from his and Clint’s room.

“Sir is currently fine. He is resting as of the moment.”

Steve’s bites his lip, drops into a chair. “Is he really okay?”

“Truthfully, he is still recovering from his injuries. He has accepted medical treatment, but refuses to be confined to a hospital.” A moment of hesitation, before JARVIS goes on. “If it is not too much to ask Captain, if you could come visit sir and talk some sense into him? I believe it would help.”

JARVIS sounds so earnest for a machine, for a voice that lived in a computer. Steve still has some trouble understanding how human-like JARVIS truly was.

“Of course. Yes.” Even though he feels drained both physically and mentally, the news about Tony felt like a jolt. He leans forward, elbows on his knees. “I can leave first thing tomorrow.”

“Very well, I shall schedule a driver to pick you up at your location.” And it must say something
about how well Steve is acclimating to JARVIS that he doesn’t bother confirming if the AI knew where he was. “The Stark jet is available for your comfort, it will be waiting at the airport upon your arrival.”

“Alright, thanks Jarvis.”

“My pleasure, Captain.” He can almost feel the smile in the AI’s voice. “Ah.” Comes the sound of surprise, and then almost uncertainty. “Sir has awoken. Would you like to speak with him?”

Steve’s breath catches. “Yes. Please.”

There’s a soft click, followed by silence and then- “Hi, Steve.” It comes soft and sleep-drowned, raspy and an octave lower than usual, like Tony had just woken up and eavesdropped on him and JARVIS. “Are you colluding with my robot butler?”

Steve smiles, notes the slowness of how Tony speaks. “Good morning. A little collusion might be happening. He’s worried about you I think.”

“Oh, he worries too much. Always has. Has this weird idea that I might blow myself up if he isn’t looking. Me? Blow myself up? As if, right?” Steve can hear rustling cloth in the background, as if Tony was nestling sheets around him. Makes him want to be there, right next to Tony.

“I’m sure you’d find much more creative ways if you tried. How are you? You sound a little…”

Drugged, is the word Steve would prefer to use but decides not to.

“Mhmm, just woke up, I’m on the good stuff. Doctor’s orders.” Tony hums into the call. “J says you’re coming over.”

“Is that okay?” Steve feels terrible for suddenly getting in the middle of it, especially when it was as if he’d forgotten Tony and his texts. He hadn’t been there for Tony, in the capacity that he could have. He makes a promise to himself to check his phone more often.

There’s silence for a while, Steve can hear Tony’s breath over the phone. “I miss you.” Breaks the silence, Tony’s voice cracks over the line.

“I miss you too.” Steve mutters back, heart clenching.

Hollow laughter. “Then get your ass over here, soldier. Being stuck in bed sucks. Having you here would make it much much better.”

“I leave first thing tomorrow.”

“Good. Can’t wait.”

##########

“I’ll see the both of you back at base. Shouldn’t be more than a week at most.” He continues on, after a brief apology as to why there was suddenly a chauffeur in front of their AirBnB. Of course, Natasha had alerted them both of it’s arrival, ready to shoot if anything got too suspicious but Steve was quick to clear the air before Natasha could pursue.

“Next time, tell us in advance.” She sounds sullen, but otherwise unperturbed.

“I’ll try, it was all very sudden. There was an offer for it, and I couldn’t refuse.”

“Ha!” Clint points at his face, suddenly looks so gleeful. “Did you hear what he said?”
Natasha’s expression doesn’t change. “I did.”

Steve continues to look confused.

“You don’t? You didn’t mean?” Clint’s face turns into a scowl. “Someday, Steve. You, me, Nat. Movie marathon back at base. Action, suspense, tears! We’ll get a projector and everything, barf up popcorn, chocolate bars and candy.”

“That sounds terrible.”

“Agreed.” Natasha smirks. “I’d like to nominate Jaws for the list.”

“Nomination accepted! Prepare for a night of terror, Captain.”

Steve can only laugh. “Okay, consider me intrigued. How’s about we do it when I get back? Make it an entire night. I’ll see you both by next week. Stay out of trouble you two. Captain’s orders.” They salute each other for kicks before Steve ducks in the car, driven off to the airport.
It’s Sunday and there’s a chapter. Yaaayyy.

Not much to say except it’s a flashback scene. Some dissonance from Steve’s initial memories but I blame Steve’s stubborness in this matter. I’m still delaying Steve and Tony’s reunion, one more flashback chapter to be done before they see each other again, but soon.

Also, as a forewarning, the ‘sex’ part of this chapter contains dubcon for Steve. If you’d rather skip it, when Steve starts taking his clothes off, you might as well skip it.

Hope ya’ll like it. Thanks for the kudos and comments, and don’t worry about the donation stuff, it’s only for whoever is interestes but you can still find it here. Closes on Tuesday :)

Also, Thor Ragnarok, woooo. Haven’t seen it but it’s coming out in my country on Wednesday, so I’ll catch it by then. Hope you guys get to see it because apparently it’s been getting good ratings.

*It ain’t fair.* He thinks venomously, even while he digs into the meal he’d prepared for the both of them. It’s not even anything really fancy, just a hunk of pork, boiled and made into stew over the stove with a few vegetables he managed to beg off Mr. Stiles. His mom had always been good at making a good meal out of ordinary food, even if were from scraps. It’s still the best meal they’ve had in weeks, at least it’s warm and fills their bellies, fends of the cold that creeps into the house even with boarded windows. Bucky doesn’t just get to ruin their dinner and sit there looking at him like Steve’s the one at fault.

“Stop glaring. God, you’re gonna set me on fire with that look. I told’ja before ‘bout what I thought, and you go behind my back anyway.” Bucky says, tossing his spoon into the half-empty bowl like it’s done him harm. “You know what they say ‘bout what happens in ‘em mating blocks. Omegas fucking lose their lives over there and no one gives a shit. Omegas get hit by Alphas they don’t know, and that’s not even the worst of it.”

Steve huffs. “You can’t tell me-”

“It ain’t a request!” Bucky snarls, pounds his palms on the table, rattles all the cutlery and plates on it. “I’m telling you to stay outta there fer your own good. ‘Cos if you do-”

“Oh yeah?! What?” Steve growls right back, stands as well, makes up for height by glaring at Bucky and showing teeth. “It’s been months since I got a job, and I been doing nothing while I tweedle my thumbs and wait for you to come home, dead tired and complaining about work.”

“I never complained that you don’t work-”

“I know you don’t.” Steve cuts him off sharply, not backing down. “Y’just moan and groan ‘bout the long night. Yer not bothered that I don’t work. But I am. I won’t just sit here and let you work your back out while be both slowly starve through the winter.”
“I know. I know. Christ Stevie, I’ve been working extra shifts to cover us both.” Bucky says out of frustration, throwing his hands up in the air. “Even so, we don’t get payed by the hour no more, just by how much cargo we load in an’ out. An’ lately it ain’t been a lot.” Bucky shakes his head. “Dock work’s slow, even at three in the morning, they say we’re gonna have to join on the war effort with the Brits soon so there ain’t a lot coming into the city any more.”

“That’s why, I can’t just sit here and draw.” He sees Bucky let out a sigh, continues on, emboldened. “No ones gonna be looking at our pictures if a war’s going on. I’m not gonna let us both go hungry, not if I can do something about it. I can carry my own weight around here, Buck. Ain’t fair when you’re doing all the work for us.”

“Not about that, y’shouldn’t hafta do something like that for us.” Bucky just shakes his head, slumps onto a wooden stool that they usually use for painting. “Cus you’re worth more than that, Steve. It’s ain’t a decent living. And it’s dangerous.”

“It pays well.” Steve insists, even if he has to hide the shudder from the memory of that Alpha nosing against his neck, all instincts screaming at him to pull away but he doesn’t. “It’s just gonna be a few times, just to get us through.”

Bucky laughs, all hollow and morose. “Y’think yer Ma woulda approved of this? Swear to God, Steve, she’d be rolling in her grave if she knew what you were thinking there.”

Steve goes very still, takes in a deep breath and let’s it out, eyes Bucky with cold eyes. “Now Ma. I knew she told you to look after me, before she even came down with illness. And you’re just trying to honor her wishes. But Ma knew what it was to sacrifice yer pride. I do too. Do you? Or are ya too embarassed to know an Omega who’d fuck to stay alive?”

Bucky stares at him, gray eyes tired as ever. Steve knows it’s unfair of him to unload it all to Bucky like this, but he sees no other way.

“You ain’t my Alpha, Buck. Can’t tell me what to do.” Steve says, still stubborn.

That makes him suck a breath, shift in his before ultimately stands, away from Steve and into their little bathroom. Steve hears the tap open, drips of water pouring out, Bucky splashing his face with it.

“You always say that like I ever did anything to really stop you.” Bucky comes back, work boots creaking the wooden floors. “Like I ever did you a great dishonor just cos you’re an Omega.” He shakes his head. “Fine Steve Rogers. Go prove whatever the fuck it is you wanna prove. You wanna go around fucking Alphas, y’just make sure you clean your boots before you come back, don’t need snow tracks all over the floor for someone to slip on.”

Bucky turns around and slams the bedroom door behind him, Steve’s heart pounding hard in his chest.

He plucks up his courage, no point in backing down now, grabs his coat and heads out into the night.

It’s not that cold, but he still bunches up his snow coat over himself to stop the shivers. He’d been lucky in the afternoon, not so much now, not with the chilly wind biting against his cheeks.

But he does reach the mating blocks, grateful for the meager heating in the lobby as he walks right up to the counter. Cos it’s no different looking than an inn, except he knows better.
“Back so soon. Didn’t you say you were only considering part-time.” Says the female Beta, peering at him from over her papers.

“Had the time. Thought I might as well use it.” He answers back, clipped and impolite, but the blush on his face doesn’t go away. He blames it on the cold.

“Of course. How very lucky of us. Name, again?”

“Steve Rogers. Twenty-one.” He’d filled out forms earlier. His name, age, address, mundane things he doesn’t think they should know anyway, so he might have lied a little on them too. Mostly, he tries to answer the ‘sex’ questions as honestly as possible. Things he’d be willing to do, and things he outright didn’t want to.

She scribbles that down. “Anything you wanna add on your contract?”

“No, maam. It’s fine as it is. I’m still going to be participatin’ part-time.” Even if he knows it pays less, at least he can come and go as he pleases.

He jumps when the door opens, a burly Alpha heading straight through the door, only glances at him before walking right past through another set of door. He shouldn’t be so skittish, it just reminded him of how very public it was.

“Right. Will you come here for heats as well?”

That catches him off guard. The Beta must get it a lot from other Omegas because she continues on without so much as a look. “We’d like to know in advance, you see? Some Alphas don’t like having an Omega in heat, a lot more of a handful and finicky. They just come here for a good time. But some don’t mind having an Omega for a day or two, somewhere on the tailend when it’s starting to fade.”

Ahh, of course. It wasn’t as if mating blocks were set up to actually find mates. More of a place to blow off some steam during an otherwise terrible night. Heats were just that, looking for a mate to see it through. There would be less emotion if the heat wasn’t finished with the Alpha. Nothing personal. Nothing too emotional.

But he also knows Alphas like an Omega in heat, especially a bitch begging to be bred.

“I’ll come around during my heat. Won’t know until a week or so though, when slicking starts. I’m not exactly… Regular.” Yet another thing wrong with him.

She nods, another scratch on the paper. “Not a problem, either you come here or not, you gotta tell us so that we can warn the others. How long do your heats normally last?”

“’Round five to seven days, depends on the weather.”

“Five to seven?” She repeats, looks at him like she doesn’t believe him. “That’s irregularly long. Have you been talk to a doctor about this?”

“Yes?” He’s not sure why it’s such a fuss. “Said my heat was perfectly natural and healthy.”

“Hmm.” She writes on her paper anyway. “Now. On the point of contraceptives.” She dots the paper and looks at him.

The door opens again, making them both stop to look at the newcomer. Another Alpha. This one
eyes him openly, grin on his cheeks that stretches all the way to his eyes. “What’ve we got here, Annie?”

“Oh, nothing, Will. Just a new Omega, running him through the basic. You better get in there and find a regular, I don’t want you scaring this one off with your charm.” Annie rolls her eyes, but Steve can tell it’s all in good jest.

Will chortles. “He doesn’t look like he scares off easy, do you son?”

Steve just really looks at him. Late thirties if he had to guess, thick combed-down black hair and a growing belly underneath a plush coat. Steve just smiles. “No, sir.”

“See? He’s fine with me. Prettier too when he smiles.”

Annie just sighs. “Yes, yes. However, we still need to go through papers, Will. I believe Samantha is in, if you’d like someone familiar.”

“Oh, I can tell when I’m not wanted.” Something tells Steve that he likes to think he understanda but not really. “Have it your way, I will see you soon enough.” He tips his head to Steve and walks off, past the set of doors that Steve knows leads to the lobby.

“Now, as I was saying, most Alphas understand that they gotta use a rubber, but some are just stubborn. They prefer natural, and really get into it.” Steve blushes. “There’s a medicine, not approved by any medical institution yet but it’s proven effective for Omegas. A little tablet that stops pregnancy. Would you be willing to take it?”

This. Well, this part Steve didn’t know. Annie carefully lays it out for him. “I wouldn’t judge you for not wanting it, it’s risky business even though we haven’t had an incident yet. Our Alpha clients come looking for a… Bare experience, and they fork over a good amount of money if an Omega is available for it. That extra goes to paying for the medicine and to you of course, should you agree.”

She leans in a bit closer. “And if there were any… Incidents. We can certainly help you take care of it.” And that chills Steve to the bone.

“I’ll… I think I’ll skip with that, Maam. Thank you for the offer.” He says without wavering.

She seems to expect that kind of answer as she writes that down as well. “Good of you to be honest, Steve. But if you ever changed your mind, you can always have it.”

Steve thinks he’ll never really want it, not in the way she suggests, but he nods anyway.

Papers squared away, she hands him a little card, nothing but typewritten numbers on it.

2512.

“For reference, whenever you come in. That’s your number. You hand that over at the counter whenever you’re done, they’ll give you your due.”

He nods, tries to smile. Jitters, he thinks, but he smiles anyways.

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He’d gone through this earlier, past the set of doors, the lobby. But this time he hands over the card instead of his name, and the Beta behind the desk copies it onto a piece of paper, and hands him back the card.
But it’s the same, he’s through another set of doors, a viewing room of sorts. Except, this time there are a couple of other Omegas around. Figures, it was later in the night, more Alphas free with their time than in the afternoon, so of course there’d be a couple more Omegas to fill in that gap.

He eyes them apprehensively. It had been easier when he was all alone, playing with his hands while he waited. Somehow, he ought to strike up a conversation, even if it’s something as simple as a ‘hello’ and ‘weather’s been terrible’, but he’s beaten to the punch.

“First time, Hon?” One of the Omegas says, a smile on her painted lips. “No need to be so scared. In here, we’re all just co-workers, aren’t we?”

Steve snorts, but takes a seat, one of many, realizes that they’re all facing towards the window for better viewing for the Alphas. “I suppose. Don’t think it’s much of a job though.”

“You come in with empty pockets, go out with a bit of padding and a little out of breath, what’s so different?” She laughs, clearly a regular around here if she feels so comfortable about it. A manicured hand is thrust in his direction, which he takes in good nature. “Starla.”

“Starla?”

“Hon. First rule around here, never give out your real name.” She says. “Saves you the dignity of being called out in public.” And up close, he can see the thick powder on her face, carefully pinked cheeks, and fakeness of her curls. Wonders how different she would look if she wasn’t so dolled up, but maybe that’s just the artist in him.

“Noted. Any tips on a new name?”

“Oh don’t listen to her, she’s enjoys the charade way to much.” The other Omega calls out, rolls his eyes at the pair of them. “Starla here reckons herself an actress.”

“I will too be an actress.” She shoots right back, like a child who’d been promised candy. “It’s just taking some time. For the mean time, it wouldn’t hurt to practice, John. Unlike you, I have dreams and aspirations I must reach. I will not be stuck in this block for my whole life.”

“Keep dreaming, love. Not my real name by the way, there’s some merit to a stage name.” John adds in, a smirk as he stretches out his legs. “Better pick something you don’t mind being called over and over again. But an Alpha’s brain loses any form of higher thinking once their knot shows. Poor things, really.” He peers over the window. “Ahh, looks like our first customer.” He waves at the window and Steve turns to look as well.

It’s not Will, thank goodness. But a smaller Alpha, with glasses and a receding hairline, with a coat that fitted his form well. They all sort of perk up, but remain in their seats. It wasn’t the first time Steve felt like he was being judged on looks alone, but the Alpha’s gaze flits towards each of them, and then clearly points at John.

“Looks like I am up.” He smiles, and gets on his feet. “See you two some other time then.” And he pushes right on through.

When he leaves, “Ohh, he’s just so English and posh. I’d hate him if I didn’t know that it’s nothing personal.” She sighs.

“Have you been here long?”
“Oh. Some, oh, odd years, it doesn’t help to count.” She says. “It’s good money. Easy money. But it’s not much to live on, unless you do it every night. I think you’re a nice one though. The nice ones get picked up by an Alpha around here, then they never come back, or they become not-so after a while.” She shrugs.

Steve doesn’t really think he should ask if she thinks she’s still nice, or if she’s doesn’t. It springs up, but he has a feeling he shouldn’t really get too attached to anyone around here, no matter their intentions.

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He’s picked last, not surprising at all. But he distinctly remembers seeing only one Alpha looking at him and deeming him proper before he gets up to the room.

He has it to himself for a moment, takes off his shoes first and then his coat, but when he starts to undo the buttons, there’s a throat being cleared.

“Keep it on.” The tone is commanding, and Steve has half a mind to keep getting undressed anyway, but bites his lip and drops his arms, looks at the Alpha as blankly as he can. Then there’s another one, younger, definitely younger than himself, peering from behind.

The older Alpha ushers the younger one in and closes the door behind him. “Your name, sir?”

“Adam.” Steve answers.

“Very well, Adam. If you wouldn’t mind the wait, you can relax on the bed.” The way the older Alpha says it, it doesn’t sound like a suggestion at all. Steve lays on the bed, the rest of his clothes still on, propping himself up on his elbows, heart hammering on his chest despite himself.

The younger Alpha peers at him. “He’s so tiny, Uncle Ed.”

“Of course he is, Andrew. He’s an Omega. They are very delicate creatures, my boy. It’s why I have to teach you first, before you try to find your own mate.” Ed affirms, and Steve has to stop the retort that’s on his tongue, and just slumps back. Just an hour, he thinks to himself. He can control himself for just an hour, right?

Eventually it does move along, Ed leading Andrew throughout the experience. Slowly taking away Steve’s clothes one at a time, reveals skin and carefully touches him, like they really are afraid he’d break. Steve utters nothing, chided already for speaking, except the occasional groan when their hands feel good over his body, warm against the cold of the room. Clothes divested, Ed moves him to a kneeling position, makes him face them with his legs folded under him.

“See how he responds?” Ed goes along with the narrative, as he explains each action to Andrew, like Steve’s body is this chart. “A gentle, but firm touch is required. An Omega will do anything to please their Alpha, given the right incentive.” And that really does make Steve’s eyes roll, which earns him a light slap on the face. “Never be afraid to discipline the Omega, they have to learn their place. You will respect me, Adam. My nephew must learn how to handle an Omega on his own.”

It’s vastly different from his earlier encounter in the blocks, when the Alpha had simply commanded him to remove his clothes and the Alpha had gone on to touching him like he owned him.

Here, Ed slowly instructs Andrew on what to do, from the way he glides over Steve’s thighs and
legs, brushing up against his cock. It’s all very methodical, and Andrew’s fumblings are no better, either too gentle or too rough to matter.

But he gets wet anyway, shame heavy at the back of his mind, when Andrew twists fingers into his ass and he gets slicker by the moment, cock even twitching in interest.

“There. You see? Touch him as you’d like, he is made for your curiosity.” Steve moans softly, unconsciously presses back on those fingers. Then, another finger is added, but he can tell just by the way it feels that it is Ed that had added his own finger.

The pair of Alphas play with his ass for what Steve feels like is for hours, alternating their movements so that Steve can’t expect anything, not with the way Andrew’s thinner longer fingers curl all over the place, curious and almost frantic, and Ed’s thicker digits are relentlessly getting him stretched.

“I’ll go first.” Even Ed’s voice seem a little strained, belt buckle jangling loose as he takes off his pants.

Ed steadily pushing in, bare and huge, not even giving Steve the time to adjust, making his senses ring at the feeling of being stretched open. He’s wet enough that it doesn’t hurt, but there’s still that discomfort of suddenly being filled with more than he is prepared for. Ed only stops when his hips are flush to Steve’s ass.

“Feed him your cock.” And Andrew does, shucks off his own pants and lines himself up to Steve’s mouth.

Steve does open his lips, sticks his tongue out for show, and Andrew smears the head of his cock over Steve’s tongue, moaning at the first feel of wetness. When his cock is all the way in Steve’s mouth, Andrew lets off a shudder, cupping Steve’s chin to keep him properly on his cock, earnest thrusts that make Steve squeeze his eyes.

“Doesn’t that feel good?”

“Yeah.” Andrew replies, all dazed and starry-eyed, looks at Steve in wonder. “Do they all feels this good?”

Steve sucks on him, dazed himself, lathers Andrew up with his tongue and tastes the musk of him. He’ll never admit it outloud, but it’s a different satisfaction having a hard cock in his mouth, that send happy tingles to his brain and spine.

Ed grunts, thrusts into Steve just a little rougher. “Omegas are made for sex, son. You get yourself a nice Omega and you can enjoy them all the time.”

Steve’s mind is a little gone, two cocks distracting enough that he can’t really follow the conversation but he can tell that Andrew is close, by the tiny gasps and frantic movement. Ed must notice too, because he suddenly stops moving to Steve’s dismay, and pulls out.

“Here.” He slaps Steve’s ass, and offers it to Andrew. “Try some of this. He’s still tight. The small ones are like that, always tight even if you’d fuck them daily, they always fit right on your cock.”

The bed shifts and dips, Andrew positioning himself behind Steve, the soft sound of stretched rubber over flesh. “God, it looks so tiny.” But is undeterred. And truthfully, it takes him a couple of tries to push in, cock in hand while Ed holds Steve by the chin, thick cock slowly thrusting against his cheek, hard and covered in his own slick, making sure he can smell his musk.
Andrew isn’t any bigger than Ed, but he fucks Steve will newfound energy, thrusting enthusiastically into him, the wet slap of skin on skin suddenly sounding more erotic. “Oh God… Shit. This is better than his mouth. Wetter too.”

Ed hums, pushes the head of his cock to Steve’s lips and just runs the tip over his teeth, making him taste his own slick on his cock. “Careful now. They’re fragile. You fuck too hard and he might break apart. Slow down, Andrew. Pace yourself. You want to outlast him. He can come many more times than you can.”

And it turns into just that, a marathon of how much they can shake Steve apart. He’s almost grateful that he isn’t required to speak during it all.

His first orgasm hits when Ed pinches and squeeze his nipple. It surprises him, his fingers smooth and warm, his vision whites out and squeezes tightly on the grunting Alpha behind him, coming on the bed. Vaguely, he hears Ed’s voice, probably a narration of techniques but Steve blocks that out.

By his third orgasm, tears streak his face, Andrew is finally shaking after his orgasm, and it’s almost with panic when Steve pulls away so that the knot doesn’t lock them together. He doesn’t like getting knotted if he can help it, only in heat when it’s necessary, but otherwise he avoids it whenever possible.

It earns him a hard slap on the face from Ed when he notices. “What a proud Omega. You were made for a knot, and you will accept it when it is given.”

So while Andrew lies on one side of the bed, exhausted from fucking Steve, Ed positions himself right behind him again, places on a condom, and lets himself in Steve’s hole.

By now, Steve feels too raw and open, but Ed’s cock is merciless on him, burns his insides and stretches him even further. What pleasure he can derive from it is also laced in pain, and Steve cries out from it.

“You will receive a knot, Omega, whether you like it or not. Andrew!” He barks, catching the younger Alpha’s attention. “Next time, when you feel yourself knotting, you push, even if the Omega might pull away. You grab them by the thigh if you must.” And Ed demonstrates by stronghandedly lifts Steve hips until his knees are off the bed, and fucks into him at the new angle.

“No, no-” Fingers are thrust into his mouth, salty from sweat and slick, muffling his noises.

And Steve is left to wraps his legs around the Alpha’s waist while his arms crumple from under him. He hopes to hell he doesn’t sound as pathetic as he does the fourth time he finds release, dry and unfulfilling by now but the Alpha’s cock wring it out of him all the same, shaking hard around the thick flesh that penetrates him.

Ed’s hold is firm on his hips however, not letting squirm out of his grip, a final push to make sure his knot takes and seals them together with it. Steve panics, squeals and gasps out, fists curling in the sheets. “That’s it, that’s it, sshh, I’ve got ya.” Ed soothes, presses his palm between Steve’s shoulder blades to keep him down.

It’s only a few short minutes of being kept on a knot, but Steve slumps on the bed, closes his eyes. The shame of being knotted sits tight in his chest.

He hadn’t thought he’d be turned into a training Omega here at the blocks, but it’s not the worst thing that could have happened. He’s grateful that Ed had kept it utterly simple, and Andrew had
been more curious than lustful when it came to his first Omega. He knew that there was always the possibility of getting unsavory characters here in the blocks, but neither had ill-intent on him.

Speaking of which, Andrew neared them, carefully places Steve’s head on his lap and strokes through his sweat-damp hair. Instinct, Steve thinks dully, to coddle the Omega after a bout of sex.

“He’s purring.” Andrew says in wonder when he scratches Steve’s scalp, sending a tendril of pleasure down his neck and shivers on his spine. His mind feels oddly blank, not the same kind of numbing emptiness like in Heat, filled with only desire and wants, but simply… Odd and calm.

Ed sets him down, knot releasing them both, and arranges him to lie on his side, Ed covering his back while Andrew warms up his arms, Steve’s head still on his lap.

“Treat them with tenderness, son. And they’ll show you the same affection.” And it must be something hardwired in Steve, that when Ed offers his hand to pet Steve’s cheek, Steve leans into it without a word, the soft palm of the Alpha warm on his exhausted skin.

Andrew hums above him, dips his hand down to the bones of Steve’s skinny shoulders.

They give him some time to rest, but eventually they remove themselves from the bed, quiet sounds of shuffling clothes and buckles while Steve lazily covers on the bed. He’s aware of the sweat on his body, the slick between his legs, but he doesn’t want to bother with thinking about the consequences, doesn’t want to think about Bucky at home. He’ll have to shower, hide the smell of sex.

At least tomorrow, they can have some bread for breakfast. Good coffee was too expensive these days, but maybe he could scrounge up some cracked beans if he’s persistent enough. And while he was at it, potatoes before they put them on display at the market.

He almost doesn’t notice the way Ed leans over him, and if he really wanted to be stubborn, he could try to ignore him altogether.

But the Alpha had been kind, the amount that was unmistakable, so Steve rolls to his back, belly shown, that much was a offering, looks up at Ed, waiting for him.

Ed clears his throat. “You were very lovely tonight, Adam.” The fake name rings in his ears, but it makes him smile nonetheless. “A little willful at the start but that’s normal for unmarried Omegas. If you’re ever without an Alpha during heat…” He places a calling card on the bed, just next to Steve’s head. “The boy is still wet behind the ears, but I’m trying to do good by his mother and teach him how to treat an Omega properly. We’d provide for you, of course, during your entire stay, and a little extra to help you along afterwards.”

And it’s that awkardness that makes Steve think that Ed doesn’t frequent mating blocks himself. “I’ll think about it.”

Ed nods, and leaves him. The click of the door almost a sound of finality for the night, back to the way things were.

Steve feels so exhausted, but he forces himself up, uses the bathroom to clean himself, wiping between his legs, washing his face, gargles his mouth even if the taste of cock won’t go away until
he properly brushes. He's shaking and shivering afterwards, the towels too thin to be much help, but it's a necessity, and he shuffles around for his clothes to go home.

It's with shame when he takes Ed’s card and pockets it, an address and number, that will haunt his drawer until he can’t ignore it anymore, or until his heat comes along and option is there. Because, as much as it would hurt his pride, going through a Heat without an Alpha was still something he wanted to avoid.

He pushes that away, focuses back on thinking about breakfast. He’s been out most of the night, and Bucky’s probably at the docks for his early morning shift by now. If he hurries, he might have time to bring him something to eat.

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