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### Relationship: Wade Wilson & Steve Rogers, Steve Rogers/James "Bucky" Barnes, Developing Tony Stark/Wade Wilson, Established Natasha Romanoff/Clint Barton/Phil Coulson, Queerplatonic Bruce Banner/Thor, Steve Rogers & Tony Stark, James "Bucky" Barnes & Tony Stark, Past Vanessa Carlyls/Wade Wilson, past Nathan Summers/Wade Wilson - Relationship, past James "Rhodey" Rhodes/Tony Stark - Relationship, past Pepper Potts/Tony Stark - Relationship
### Character: Tony Stark, Wade Wilson, James "Bucky" Barnes, Steve Rogers, Natasha Romanoff, Clint Barton, Bruce Banner, Thor, Jarvis, Nathan Summers | Cable, Vanessa Carlyls, Pepper Potts, James "Rhodey" Rhodes, Nick Fury, Natalie the Spider Bot
### Additional Tags: Pining, (It's a forest in here), Friends to Lovers, Developing Relationship, Slow Burn, (On the Ironpool), Lengthy Discussions About Butts, Deadpool Thought Boxes, Insecure Wade, Insecure Tony, alternating pov, Fluff and Humor and Angst, It's only fluff/humor right now but trust me angst will come, Tony Stark Is a Good Bro, he also adopted everyone oops, Post CA:WS, I'll tag as I go, JARVIS is an enabler, Denial, someone save steve, Self-Esteem Issues, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, fury is a stucky shipper, tony's terrible jokes, Panic Attacks, Trust, and trust issues, Spooning, Cuddling, i cant believe i havent tagged that yet theres so much fucken cuddling in here istfg, everyone is a petty bitch in this fanfic, Breaking the Fourth Wall

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**a kick in the teeth is good for some**

by kyasuu

### Summary

The one where Steve introduces Wade to the Avengers.

(Or: In which Wade and Tony get along way too well, Steve has the most pathetic crush on Bucky, Natasha and Clint aren't great matchmakers but get an A for effort, Bruce and Thor think romance is overrated, and there's a hypocritical swear jar.)
Notes

My first foray into the Marvel fandom! Let me know what you think in the comments below?

Dedicated to the two friends who were there for the entire writing process and encouraged me. Love you guys!

(By the way, please do check out the video that Wade and Clint mention. It'll be worth your time, I promise.)

See the end of the work for more notes.
“So,” begins Steve, leaning on the counter as casually as he can manage, “I have this friend.”

“Cool, don’t see how that’s any of my business,” Tony says absentmindedly, poking at the hologram projected by his phone. “I’m not your mom.” He pauses, finger hovering over the screen. “At least I hope not.”

“Oh, uh, it does kind of concern you,” confesses Steve, watching with mild fascination as the blue lights shift at Tony’s movements. “I kind of wanted him to meet you guys.”

Tony catches on pretty fast, thankfully, and his eyes briefly flicker up from his work to meet Steve’s. “Yeah, sure, bring him over,” he replies, answering the question Steve hasn’t gotten around to asking yet. “I can clear a few empty rooms on one of the guest floors.”

“Thanks,” Steve tells Tony sincerely, watching as Tony twitches and drops his eyes back to his holograms; he’s still not great with receiving thanks or praise, and it’s adorable. “I’ll ask him what time he can come around here, and I’ll let you know.”

“Right,” Tony says, standing up, eyes never leaving his phone or holograms carefully. “Well, I’ll be down in the lab, so you know where to find me. See ya, Capsicle.”

He saunters off, and Steve grins a little at his obvious attempt to run away before pulling out his cellphone, dialing a number.

“Hey, Wade. It’s me, Steve. What do you say about staying at the Avengers Tower for a bit?”

Steve watches anxiously as Tony slowly pinches the bridge of his nose and inhales extremely slowly like he’s struggling to understand. He does that a lot for someone who’s a self-proclaimed genius. “You,” says Tony, and Steve winces, oh shit, is he mad, “make friends with the weirdest of people.”

Okay, that’s not as bad as Steve had anticipated. Tony sounds exasperated, but his tone is fond, so Steve thinks he’s in somewhat safe territory. He relaxes a little, though Steve still isn’t sure Tony isn’t about to sic JARVIS on him. Just to be safe, Steve turns on the coffee machine. “I mean, considering who I live with, is being friends with an ex-mercenary really that weird?”

From where he’s lounging on the couch, Clint shouts, “I take offense to that!”

“He’s not wrong,” Natasha calls at the same time.

Tony opens his mouth as though to respond before seemingly changing his mind, letting the hand he’d raised drop to his side. “Point taken,” he concedes, ignoring Clint’s offended “hey!”. “But given that I thought you were all about being a law-abiding citizen, Deadpool isn’t exactly the person I thought you’d get along with. At all.”

“Wade’s not a bad person,” Steve protests, ignoring the ridiculous “law-abiding citizen” part. Just because he gives the impression that he is doesn’t mean he actually is a law-abiding citizen. “The guys he went after were bad people, okay?”

“I’m not insinuating anything,” Tony huffs, raising his hands in the universal sign for surrender.
“I’m just saying that I thought your personalities would’ve clashed. A lot. Apparently that’s not the case, so good for you, and I get another reminder that I don’t get people.”

“Wouldn’t have expected it either,” Natasha comments, flipping through a thick file. Wade’s, Steve realizes pretty quickly. He supposes it’s her way of being protective. “So, how did you two meet?”

Bucky groans. “That sounds like you’re talking about his, I dunno, boyfriend or something,” he says, something Steve can’t discern in his voice, and Steve watches as everyone else in the room smirks. To his bewilderment, Bucky sputters, face reddening slightly, and proceeds to flip everyone off with both hands. It’s awfully endearing.

“That is two quarters in the swear jar, Sergeant Barnes,” JARVIS comments, and gritting his teeth, Bucky throws two coins into the swear jar across the room with unnecessary force. They still make it into the jar without even touching the rim, because of course they do.

“Thank you. We are currently at twenty two thousand, three hundred fifty six dollars and fifty cents,” JARVIS reports.

“Don’t.” Bucky growls, glaring daggers at everyone in the room before anyone can say anything, “even think about it.” Clint sniggers, casually ducking out of the way of the pillow Bucky throws at him. Natasha smirks smugly, the expression reminiscent of a cat.

“I’m very confused,” Steve confesses as it devolves into a pillow fight between three highly skilled assassins. Steve winces as Natasha drives her hand somewhere painful before bashing Clint in the face with a pillow and ducking under Bucky’s next attack.

The coffee machine sputters to a stop, calling for Steve’s attention, and he’s about to hand the cup of finished coffee to Tony before remembering his aversion to being handed things and just slides the cup over the counter.

Tony just snorts, a very small but amused smile touching his lips as he takes the coffee and takes a sip. “You’ll figure it out eventually,” he says, patting Steve on the arm before heading back down to the workshop.

“I think I broke into this place once,” Wade says out of the blue, shifting from foot to foot and staring at the ceiling as they stand in the elevator. Steve chokes, glancing nervously at the ceiling for JARVIS’s response.

Steve is pretty sure here of all places is not the greatest place to say something like that. They are in an elevator. Who knows what JARVIS could do to them in here?

“I assure you, Mister Wilson, that you have not.” To Steve’s surprise (and immense relief), JARVIS sounds amused. Of course, not at the fact that JARVIS can feel amused, but more at the fact that the AI hasn’t done something horrible to them. “If you had, I am sure you would be feeling my wrath. Skynet has nothing on me.”

“Huh,” Wade says, voice thoughtful. “Guess it wasn’t in this universe, then. And you could just call me Deadpool, or Wade. Apparently there’s some other guy with the last name Wilson. I’d hate to get us confused.”

“That is fine, Mister Pool.”
Wade grins. Steve isn’t sure how he can tell, what with the mask, but the red and black mask has always been oddly expressive. “Dopinder called me that,” he comments. “Deadpool is actually just one word, but I’m cool with Mister Pool.” He stops, and his face lights up. “No, wait! Call me your ‘dope ass fresh prince’.”

“Understood, my dope ass fresh prince,” JARVIS says, sounding extremely amused as Steve stifles a laugh. A moment later, JARVIS adds; “We have arrived at our floor.” After a brief pause and a soft ding!, the doors slide open.

Steve suddenly comes to the realization that he’s really nervous. What if Wade and the Avengers don’t get along? Or if he just doesn’t get along with Tony? Since Tony owns the Tower, that would pose a lot of problems. Or, hell, what if he doesn’t get along with Bucky? Or worse… what if he gets along too well with him, and Wade tells Bucky all about Steve’s stupid, stupid crush on him? That would be an absolute disaster and he’d have to become a hermit and hide in Tony’s workshop for the rest of his life.

Wade slaps him on the arm, snapping Steve out of his spiraling thoughts. “You’re more nervous than I am,” he laughs, giving the most ridiculous of thumbs ups. “I’m the one who’s potentially about to die a very horrible and very gruesome death. I bet it’s going to be something straight out of Final Destination.” Steve manages a smile, thankful for Wade’s ridiculousness.

Wade cocks his head almost like he’s listening to something, and his expression scrunches up a bit. But before Steve can say anything, Wade loops his arm through Steve’s, charging outside and dragging him out of the elevator, marching into the room like he belongs there. “What is up.”

“The opposite of down,” Tony quips almost immediately, not even looking up from his tablet. “You’re Steve’s friend, then?”

“I can’t believe you just said that,” Wade says, ignoring Tony’s question, and lets go of Steve’s arm, resting his arms on the back of the couch to glare at the top of Tony’s head. “The opposite of down. That was terrible, you goddamned heathen.”

For a moment, Steve notices Wade tense up, like there’s been some sort of negative response, but Tony just snorts with amusement, looking up from his holograms at last. “Welcome to the Tower, yadda yadda. I’d say more, but I’ve been told that I don’t know how social interaction works.”

Steve hears Wade mutter something that sounds like oh shut up under his breath before clearing his throat. “Not you,” he says, louder, but doesn’t clarify. He does that a lot, actually, but Steve’s never asked. Before Tony can say anything in response, Wade plows on brightly. “So, you’re probably wondering, what’s with the red suit? Mostly so you can’t see me bleed. Red stains white so badly, and do you know how often I get shot? Not fun, man. ‘Course, the watchers get some sense of glee at me swearing up a storm every time I get shot up the ass.”

“A quarter in the swear jar, my dope ass fresh prince,” JARVIS says.

“Never mind that,” Tony says, and Steve is impressed by the fact that he doesn’t even bat an eye at Wade’s ridiculous title. “Every time? As in, it’s happened on multiple occasions?”

“People are jealous because I have a very nice ass,” Wade tells Tony.

“It is a very nice ass,” Tony agrees, nodding slightly. “However, I also have a nice butt and somehow I’ve never received a bullet in the gluteus maximus.”

“What is with your fixation with butts?” Steve pauses. “What is with the twenty-first century’s fixation with butts?” Predictably, nobody answers, because there really isn’t an answer.
“Sir, you owe the swear jar twenty-five cents.”

“Is ‘ass’ even a swear word?” Tony complains, flopping over and resting his feet on the arm of the couch.

“Fifty cents now, sir.”

“Why do you guys even have a swear jar? Are there children with pure, virgin ears in the Tower? What do you even do with the money?”

“We do it for charity and donate all the money accumulated at the end of the month,” Steve says as Tony shoves his hand into the crack between the couch pillows and procures two quarters, rolling over and dropping them in the jar labelled “Watch Your Fucking Profanity” sitting on the coffee table. “At the end of the month, whoever swore the most has to clean all the dishes next month.”

“We are currently at thirty one thousand, four hundred thirty six dollars and twenty five cents,” JARVIS says.

“What the actual fuck.”

“Fifty cents, my dope ass fresh prince.”

Wade pauses. “I feel like I really don’t want to know, but what happens if you don’t pay the swear jar?”

“Every hour you do not pay the swear jar, your fine doubles,” JARVIS informs him. “If you have not paid your debt by the end of the week, I will personally extract fifty thousand dollars from your bank account and donate it to Westboro Baptist Church.”

Wade swallows audibly, procures two quarters from god knows where, and puts them in the swear jar.

An hour and a half later finds the three of them yelling at the TV screen and donating a lot of money to charity. At some point, Tony had just shoved a fifty dollar bill into the swear jar. “Oh, you are so going down--motherfucker!”

Wade’s head drops onto the seat of of the couch as his character is launched off the stage, marking the final kill. “Did you say something about me going down?” Tony asks innocently, looking disproportionately smug, controller lax in his hands.

“Fuck you very much,” Wade huffs, the controller in his lap. “The only reason why I’m not fighting you one vee one i-r-l is because you’re pretty, you lucky bastard.”

“I’m torn between feeling disgusted that you actually said that out loud in day-to-day conversation and being flattered that you think I’m pretty,” Tony informs Wade, looking more cheerful than Steve’s seen him in a while.

“Both,” Wade says cheerfully. “Both is good.”

“Road to El Dorado!” Steve exclaims triumphantly, fist pumping. “I understood that reference!”

“Oh my god,” Tony whispers, clutching his chest, and exchanges a wide-eyed glance with Wade.
Steve blinks, enthusiasm fading. Oh dear, did he get the reference wrong?

“He’s adorable,” Wade breathes, staring at Steve. Tony beams widely at him, and offers Wade a fist, which Wade bumps with a fist of his own.

(Steve is starting to feel like he has made a grave mistake by introducing these two to each other.)

“JARVIS, save that video, Bucky will love it,” Tony orders, grinning cattily, and Steve splutters, face immediately reddening.

“You’re adorable,” he coos, which isn’t helping at all. Steve tries to appreciate his efforts, but he can’t really bring himself to.

“Don’t worry, you’re adorable,” he coos, which isn’t helping at all. Steve tries to appreciate his efforts, but he can’t really bring himself to.

“Perfect blackmail material.”

“I hate you so, so much,” Steve says, and he’s almost sure he means it this time.

“Love you too,” Tony says, and blows him a kiss.

“Good morning,” says Clint to announce his presence as he walks into the room, his footsteps otherwise silent. “Who’s Lasagna Man?”

“Okay, first of all, rude,” Wade sniffs into the pillow he’s buried his face in, not moving from his spot on the couch (read: the entire couch). He’d been in that position since Tony headed down to Bruce’s lab (which Wade had agreed not to go anywhere near) to Science and Blow Things Up about an hour ago. Steve had occupied himself with reading. “Second of all, it’s four in the afternoon.”

“Welcome back, Clint,” Steve calls, shutting his book and looking up to see Natasha right behind Clint, who’s leaned himself against the back of the couch. Unsurprising, since they’re practically inseparable. “And you too, Natasha.”

Natasha nods once to acknowledge his greeting before peering over the couch that Wade is currently occupying. Her expression is inscrutable, and Steve finds himself nervous on Wade’s behalf, even if Wade doesn’t flinch. “You’re Wade Wilson,” she states matter-of-factly. “Deadpool.”

“Oh, right,” Wade confirms, cheery tone muffled by the pillow and the mask. He gives an awkward thumbs up. “I actually almost called myself Captain Deadpool before I realized how stupid that sounded.”

“Yeah,” Clint agrees, grimacing. Steve watches apprehensively as the two highly skilled assassins stare down at Wade, who still hasn’t moved from his (frankly uncomfortable looking) position on the couch. This could go pear-shaped in so many different ways and Steve would really rather not be present for any of those situations. “That’d make your name tackier than it already is. And we already have a Cap.”
“Excuse me, my name is not tacky.” Wade rolls onto his back to sit up, looking affronted. “It’s cool.”

He pauses, tilts his head, like he’s listening to something, and looks like he’s about to say something else, but seems to decide against it. Judging from the looks on Clint and Natasha’s faces, it hadn’t slipped their notice either. Neither of them say anything, though.

Clint just grins, propping his arms on the back of the couch. “I still think Lasagna Man suits you better,” he drawls.

“Fuck you very much, Katniss,” says Wade, flipping Clint the bird and already pulling a quarter out of god knows where and throwing it into the swear jar before JARVIS can say anything.

“Twenty-five cents, my dope ass fresh prince,” JARVIS reminds him, and Wade rolls his eyes, putting another quarter in the jar.

“Please don’t,” Natasha comments dryly, her arms crossed. “He’s a taken man.”

“I would be down if I wasn’t though,” Clint says, giving Wade an over-exaggerated wink. “You have a nice butt, you dope ass fresh prince.”

Wade positively preens. “You’re forgiven, Hawkbutt.”

_and we’re back to butts._ “Why do you guys talk about butts so much?” Steve demands, spreading his hands and dropping his book in his lap. “I swear to God. Everything is about butts with you guys. What actual f-- heck.”

“Because butts are lovely,” Clint answers, laughing at Steve’s completely unimpressed look. “Have Tony send you that YouTube video about butts. It’s so good. And then you’ll understand.”

“Domics?” Wade inquires excitedly, turning to look at Clint, who nods in affirmation. “Yes. Such a good video. Truly outlines the importance of butts.”

“I don’t understand,” Steve says helplessly, looking at his palms.

“Internet culture is very difficult to understand,” Clint says sympathetically. “But I can’t help you with your strange lack of fascination with butts.”

“I bet you’d understand if we were talking about Bucky’s butt,” Natasha comments smugly, and instantly Steve’s face grows about twenty times hotter. Steve _glares_ at her when she smirks, but it has no effect on her. Wade makes a strangled choking noise which Steve quickly realizes is a stifled laugh, so he glares at him too. He’s pretty sure the goddamned blush kills the effect because Wade just laughs harder.

“Why are you like this,” Steve moans, letting his face fall into his hands. “You guys are horrible.”

“You love us,” Clint says, a shit-eating grin plastered to his face, so wide it looks like it hurts. “Because we are very good friends, and we’ve listened to your spiels about one James Buchanan Barnes enough times to fall in love with the guy vicariously.”

“Can we go back to talking about butts?” Steve asks desperately, trying to get his blush back under control. “Please.”

At Clint’s wicked grin, Wade’s matching expression, and Natasha’s small smirk, Steve wonders if he’s going to regret this decision.
Steve hears rather than sees Tony and Bruce coming, the former chatting the latter’s ear off about whatever the hell they were sciencing downstairs, with Bruce occasionally offering his opinion about something or the other.

“--and if we--” Tony cuts himself off when he enters the room. “Ohhh-kay?” he says, drawing out the “oh”. “At least you guys look like you had fun.”

Wade gives a tired thumbs up from where he’s been buried under a pile of fluffy pillows more expensive than his life insurance. “Steve started it!” he chirps cheerfully, pointing an accusing finger at Steve, who doesn’t have it in him to deny it. “You have really nice pillows, by the way. Can I have some?”

“Sure, knock yourself out,” Tony says, dismissively waving his hand. “But what did you guys do to piss Steve off enough for him to instigate a pillow fight? I’ve never managed to do that.” He sounds a bit put out.

“They wouldn’t shut up about butts,” Steve wails, not moving from his spot on the pillows littering the floor, feet on top of the seat of the couch. The two assassins and ex-merc managed to wear him out pretty quickly.

“I love my butt and won’t shut up,” Clint sings, completely out of tune, and Steve halfheartedly throws a pillow at his head. He misses. Clint’s shit-eating grin only grows in size. “And I never know when to stop!”

“To be fair, you asked for the subject change,” Natasha points out from her perch, a pile of pillows. She looks like a queen. A very terrifying and beautiful queen. “We complied.”

“You guys are horrible,” Steve repeats, because it’s true no matter how terrifying and beautiful of a queen Natasha may be. “I regret becoming an Avenger. Please turn back time and make sure I never take that serum.”

“Please don’t say that in front of Reed Richards, ever,” Tony snaps, shuddering. “He’s going to take you seriously, and actually try and build a time machine. We do not need to clean that mess up.” He clears his throat and grabs Bruce’s arm, tugging him closer to the edge of the pillows. “Anyways, ‘Pool, this is Bruce Banner. Say hello.”

“What’s up? Wanna join us in our pillow pile?” Wade pries a few pillows off of himself to sit up and beam at Bruce, who blinks once at the mask, but otherwise makes no comment on it. Bruce eyes Steve, Clint, and Natasha suspiciously before shaking his head. “I’ll pass. It looks too much like the aftermath of a warzone for me,” he says wryly, heading for the kitchen instead, and Natasha snorts derisively like Bruce has made a mistake. As far as Steve’s concerned, he did the right thing.

“Sounds perfect for me,” Tony comments, walking towards the pillow pile and just falling face-first into the pillows, lying there motionless for a good minute or so before he rolls over, face slightly flushed but markedly more relaxed.

“J, order pizza.” He pauses. “Do you know if Thor’s going to be around, Bruce?”

“Good chance he might be,” Bruce answers, not pausing in making what Steve assumes is his tea. “The cabinets are stocked well, so you don’t need to worry about anything other than the pizza.”
“Very well,” JARVIS says. “I have placed the order; no pineapples, because we do not want a repeat of what happened the last time we ordered Hawaiian.”

“Wait, what happened the last time you guys ordered Hawaiian?” Wade asks, sounding far too interested.

Steve grimaces, suppressing memories of that incident. “You really don’t want to know.”

“There were broken bones,” Natasha says in lieu of agreement, and if Natasha agrees, then it’s definitely true.

“There were tears,” Clint adds, his eyes going glassy.

“ Mostly mine,” Bruce huffs, sounding mildly exasperated.

“There was a Twitter war,” Tony says gravely, looking somber and very much traumatized. “And I had to deal with it.”


“It may not be in your best interest to reveal your personal preferences, my dope ass fresh prince,” JARVIS warns Wade before he can say anything else. Steve hears a choked noise from the kitchen.

“ Dope ass fresh prince,” Bruce manages, sounding like a strangled cat.

“It was to avoid confusion,” JARVIS explains patiently. “As we already have a Mister Wilson, it would certainly serve to be confusing if I referred to my dope ass fresh prince as Mister Wilson as well.” He pauses. “It is also because I find the title amusing.”

“Stark, you have the coolest AI,” Wade declares, sending the ceiling a thumbs up.

“I know, right?” Tony says with all the pride of a parent.

“Thank you, my dope ass fresh prince,” JARVIS replies, and Steve is pretty sure that if he could, the AI would be preening.

“You know,” says Bruce hesitantly, “shouldn’t you be putting a quarter in the swear jar?”

“I will give the title a pass,” JARVIS says primly. “Because I find it amusing.”

“Do you really want to argue with JARVIS?” Clint asks, plucking the pillow from behind his head and fluffing it up before putting it back.

“Point taken.” There’s a clink which tells Steve that Bruce has put a cup into the sink, the sound of soft footsteps following, and Steve sees him round the couch, taking a seat next to Tony delicately.

“Thought you said it was too much like a warzone.” Steve spots Natasha surreptitiously touching a pillow like she’s ready to throw it at any given moment. With good reason, though. Steve himself digs his fingers into one of the pillows; Bruce is vicious in pillow fights.

“Relax, you guys,” Tony huffs, moving a little closer to Wade to make room for Bruce next to him.

“Easy for you to say,” Clint snaps defensively, hugging a pillow to his chest. “Bruce likes you.
You’re his favorite.”

“No, that’s Thor,” Tony corrects immediately. “Thor is everyone’s favorite, except JARVIS, because JARVIS’s favorite is me. And me, because my favorites are JARVIS and the bots. No offense, humans.”

“Thank you, sir,” says JARVIS, sounding as pleased as an AI can sound pleased. “We love you too.”

“Thor is everyone’s favorite until he starts playing Smash,” Steve grumbles, staring at the ceiling. “Then everyone hates him.”

“God, I know right,” Clint agrees, groaning. “You don’t get it, Lasagna Man. You will once you play against him.”

“Sounds fun,” Wade says. “It can’t be worse than a sandpaper dildo.”

“I want to ask you where you got that analogy from but I’m honestly scared of the answer,” Tony admits. “So I won’t.”

“Sir, Captain Rogers; Sergeant Barnes has returned,” JARVIS announces, and--Steve can’t help it, he has the most pathetic crush--he sits up, excited.

“Just like a puppy,” he swears he hears Natasha says. Of course, if he asks, she’ll just deny it. He glares at her anyways. She smiles innocently in response, fooling nobody.

The elevator dings, and Bucky, grumbling to himself, walks in, running a hand through his hair.

“Welcome back,” Steve calls, his face stretching in a familiar smile, and Bucky breaks out into a beautiful grin.

“Stevie! Well my day just got a thousand times better.” He swings his legs over the couch (which had been overturned during the battle) to flop into the mess of pillows on the floor next to Steve, face first into the pillows. He looks awfully uncomfortable with his legs propped up on the couch and stomach on the pillows. “Who started it?”

“Steve did,” Clint, Natasha, and Wade all chime at the same time.

“That’s a first,” Bucky says, sounding mildly surprised. He turns to Wade, tilting his head. “Also, who’s the red guy?”

“Lasagna Man,” Clint says, smirking at Wade’s open irritation.

“Shut up, Robin Hood.” Wade is about to throw a pillow when Tony’s arm shoots forward, grabbing his wrist.

“This is Wade Wilson,” says Tony. Sternly, he adds, “We will not be having another pillow fight unless you guys want to skip out on the pillow fort. So behave.”

“Aww, but I missed it, Mom,” Bucky laughs, grinning. Tony gives him a flat and unimpressed look that makes Steve feel like he did something wrong, despite not even being on the receiving end. He knows exactly where he learned that expression from.

“Oh my god, do they actually call you ‘Mom’?” Wade asks, laughter in his voice. “Because I can see it. Oh my god. That’s adorable.”
“Sometimes,” Bruce answers, a faint smile on his lips. “It’s an accurate analogy. He provides food and shelter for us, and in turn we fill up his life and irritate him and occasionally remind him that we love him.”

“This is getting dangerously sentimental,” Clint says, huffing. “Let’s change the topic.” He turns to Wade, smirking wolfishly. “You’re the newcomer! Talk about yourself!”

“What? Why am I supposed to talk about myself? Aren’t you guys supposed introduce yourselves too?” Wade whines. “I know about as much about you guys as you guys know about me.”

“We can go in a circle, and then we’ll ask Wilson questions,” Natasha suggests, sliding down the pillow pile to sit next to Clint. Steve isn’t sure if she’s serious.

“What, like this is a fu-- freaking classroom?” Bucky asks, catching himself at the last moment and rolling over to press himself to Steve’s side. “I’m down.”

Tony mutters something that sounds suspiciously like “Hi down, I’m Tony”.

“Please tell me he didn’t say what I thought he just said,” Steve says under his breath.

“Oh come on,” Wade grumbles. He shifts, pillowing his face on his arms. “Can’t we just skip the stupid introductions and just trade questions?”

“That works,” Natasha allows, shrugging. “We can do that.”

“Then--what’s with the mask?” Clint inquires immediately, sounding deeply curious. Steve snorts softly; he’s known Wade for years, and he still hasn’t gotten much of an answer to that question.

“I look like Ryan Reynolds crossed with a Shar Pei,” Wade answers, tone dry. “Like the dog. What’s your favorite color?”

Clint stops, looking mildly surprised at the honestly dull question, and blinks. “Uh, purple,” he responds.

“Ladies or gents?” Tony nudges Wade with his elbow, grinning.

“I would date an alien if they told me they liked me,” Wade admits shamelessly. “Regardless of gender. They could have a tentacle dick and I’d probably suck it. So I’m pansexual. What about you?”

“I’m very much bi and ready to fly,” Tony says, smirking.

“Wait, seriously?” Bucky grins. “Does that mean the rumors about you and Rhodes aren’t actually rumors?”

Tony rolls his eyes. “I said I was bi, not that I was fucking everybody I have an emotional attachment to.” He tosses a quarter into the swear jar.

“I’m sensing a ‘but’ here,” Bruce says.

Tony gives him a cheeky smile. “But we were in a relationship,” he continues. “Before Pepper. We broke it off peacefully because we figured that we were better off as friends.”

“Shit,” Clint says, throwing a quarter into the swear jar without actually even seeing the jar. There’s a clink to inform them all that yes, it made it in. “We’re actually learning stuff about each other. Amazing.”
“Anyways,” Tony says, “since you asked me a question, Bucky, I’ll ask you one: ladies or gents?” He pauses. “It was actually two questions, but I’m nice so I’ll let it slide.”

“Both,” Bucky says instantly before smiling bashfully. “Aww, man, it’s so nice to be able to say that out loud and not get judged.”

“It is,” Steve agrees, wholehearted. Being closeted because you’re afraid of how people will react is, quite frankly, horrible. “I know nobody asked, but I’m, um, bisexual too.”

“Aromantic,” Bruce confesses, smiling a little shyly. “I’ve never seen the appeal of romance, especially considering how much of a mess it can make. Regular relationships are difficult enough to maintain.”

“I’m pan with a plan.” Clint’s grin threatens to split his face in half as the entire room glares at him. Wade sniggers and offers a high-five; Clint leans over and returns it. “Pansexual buddies!”

“If I had to label it,” Natasha says, “I’d probably be demisexual.” She shrugs. “I’ve never paid it much thought.”

“Since we’re on a related topic,” Clint begins, looking at Wade, “are you in a relationship?”

“Nope,” Wade replies, popping the “p”. “The whole romance thing doesn’t work out for me. We usually end up friends.” He looks like he wants to add something, but has decided against it.

“The pizza has arrived,” JARVIS interrupts before anyone can respond. “Which movie will we be watching first tonight, Agent Romanoff?”


“I will be playing it once the pizza has been delivered to this floor and the pillow fort has been constructed,” JARVIS informs them. “I have received a message from Miss Foster saying that Thor is currently on his way to the Tower. He will arrive in approximately three minutes and forty-seven seconds.”

“Pillow fort,” says Wade, sounding giddy as everyone reluctantly picks themselves off the floor. “Pillow fort.” He looks like he’s vibrating with excitement.

“It’s tradition,” Tony says, lips quirking in a small smile as he gathers up a few pillows and relocates them for the pillow fort. “Every Friday, we gather for pizza, ice cream, and movies in a pillow fort, unless someone started a second pillow fight. Then we just sit on the couch and glare at whoever started it.”

“It actually happens way more often than just once a week,” Steve adds, obediently carrying an armful of pillows to wherever Bruce or Tony points. “We do it whenever someone’s having an off day, or if we just came back from stressful Avengers business.”

The elevator dINGS, and Bucky bounds towards it, shouting, “I’ll get it!” over his shoulder as the doors slide open, revealing Thor and a stack of pizza boxes.

“Thor!” Bucky exclaims, grinning. “Come in, come in…” Steve watches as he takes half of the stack of pizza boxes and trots over to where the pillow fort is coming along nicely. He hides a small smile as Wade carefully places another pillow in the pillow fort, moving aside for Steve to put a blanket over all the other pillows to make sure a minimal amount of food ends up on the pillows.
“A most jovial evening to you, shield brothers and sister!” Thor thunders (Steve laughs a little internally at the pun), setting Mjolnir against the wall and away from the door. It’s a rule; keep Mjolnir out of the way so nobody trips on it. “We have a new friend amongst our midst, it seems. Are you perhaps the friend the good Captain has spoken extensively of?”

Wade waves at Thor enthusiastically, nodding. “Yep, Wade Wilson or Deadpool at your service,” he confirms. “You’re Thor, right? You read a lot of Shakespeare?”

Thor rumbles an amused laugh, shaking his head as he sets the stack of pizza boxes next to the work-in-progress pillow fort. “I have indeed read some of his work,” he says. “However, I much prefer your more modern tales, as I find them to be more light-hearted and to my taste, even if I do not understand all of the references.”

Wade seems to be about to respond when he turns around to see the pillow fort. Steve tries not to laugh at his flabbergasted expression.

“What the hell?! What, do you guys have blueprints for this thing?! Did you guys, I dunno, calculate how much force the roof puts on the walls ?!”

Tony looks offended, pausing in his careful placement of the next pillow. “Of course we did, you heathen,” he exclaims, a hand over his arc reactor in an expression of his deep offense. “I’m a genius, I have to put my gorgeous brain to use properly!”

“We’re all masters at building pillow forts by now,” Natasha says, tone a touch amused. “We do it so often, we could make a pillow fort anywhere. This thing could survive an earthquake.” She pats the side of the pillow castle before heading towards the kitchen.

“It could probably survive a fire, too,” Clint muses. “Knowing Tony, these pillows are fireproof.”

“Are you serious,” Bucky says flatly, sounding on the verge of laughter.

“Tony, why are you like this?” Steve sighs.

“Um, excuse me, Thor has fried my poor pillows too many times for me to want to repeat.” Tony crosses his arms petulantly. “Not your fault, big guy!” he adds hastily, uncrossing his arms just as fast to wave his hands frantically. “I’m just saying .”

Thor just chuckles and picks up the pizza boxes, crawling inside the pillow castle, Bruce quickly following.

Natasha returns with several large tubs of ice cream and spoons, sliding into the fort after Bruce. Steve joins them, taking a seat next to Natasha but leaving a big enough space for Clint to squeeze in between them, patting the spot next to himself when Bucky pokes his head through.

“C’mon, dude,” Steve hears Tony from outside, “you can join us. Promise that nobody bites.”

Bucky curls up into Steve’s side, resting his face on his thigh like an affectionate puppy, and Steve misses the rest of Tony and Wade’s conversation, temporarily distracted. But it seems that Tony managed to coax Wade into joining them, because the two of them join the rest of the Avengers in a moment. Tony crawls in, dragging Wade in by the hand and sitting himself firmly next to Bucky, situating Wade next to himself.

“Pizza,” Tony demands, making grabby hands at Steve, who rolls his eyes but hands the pizza
box to him anyways. “Thank you!” he chirps happily in response.

Steve takes his own box of pizza and opens it, basking in the warm and cheesy smell. Pizza is a fucking blessing.

The TV flickers into life, not too bright but still visible in the warm dimness of the pillow castle. Steve spares a glance at Wade, who’s still frowning at the slice of pizza in his gloved hand as the movie starts. But he seems to get over it, since Tony’s preoccupied with his own pizza, and everyone else is with the beginning of the movie.

Steve turns back to the movie and leans against the pillows, feeling Clint’s warmth pressed to his side and Natasha’s elbow occasionally brush against his. He hears the occasional tapping from Tony’s fingers dancing on his tablet, kept to a minimum brightness as to avoid disturbing everyone else, and Wade muttering commentary about the movie to him, Tony sometimes laughing. He can see Bruce and Thor leaning into each other in the other corner of the pillow fort, Thor entranced by the movie.

Bucky is laughing with Steve as Michael Bryce and Darius Kincaid scream obscenities at each other, and Steve can feel every shake Bucky makes. Steve’s laughter softens to a small smile as he looks at him, his face washed in the light of the movie and eyes bright with amusement and contentment.

It’s a good look on him, Steve thinks, and rests his hand on his best friend’s back, warmth spreading through him when the touch isn’t shaken off.

*I’m so gone*, he realizes, and he finds he doesn’t even mind.
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

In which Wade and Tony bond off screen, Wade and Tony bond on screen, and Steve maybe gets out of denial.

Chapter Notes

New chapter! I hope you guys enjoy! Comments and kudos are always appreciated. <3

I do make a few cracks at Stony in this chapter, but I'm a filthy multi-shipper, and I do ship Stony, so I don't mean any harm by it! It's a warning because some people might not be comfortable with it.

Ah, by the way! You guys might want to keep an eye on the tags at all times. I will be updating them as the story progresses, and while I do have a good idea of where I want it to go, some things are... unpredictable. Happy reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Steve is on the way to the kitchen for something to eat when he hears Tony say, “-- on, Bucky,” sounding exasperated as Steve rounds the corner and walks into the room. “I promise you, he--” Tony stops when he sees Steve, and the exasperated look freezes before it melts into a smile. “Hey, Cap!”

Bucky’s back is to him, covered with a bright pink blanket. He doesn’t turn around, crouched with his feet on the couch, and Tony pats him on the shoulder, handing something Steve can’t see to him.

“It’s three in the morning,” Steve says uncertainly. Do they do this often...? He finds himself irrationally jealous at the thought, but he pushes it away. “Are you two okay...?”

“Peachy,” Bucky grouses, voice nasally. He sniffs wetly, and that immediately sends Steve into panic mode.

“Oh my god, are you sick?” he exclaims, pushing his need for food away and ready to run over to the couch when Tony gives him the universal sign for stop, though he looks ridiculously amused. Steve isn’t sure what’s so funny, but he doesn’t ask.

“He isn’t, so don’t worry,” Tony answers for Bucky. When Steve looks closely at him, he notes that he looks tired. Then again, he always looks tired, not that that’s a good thing. Bucky still doesn’t turn towards him, but there’s the clink of metal against a bowl, and movement under the pink blanket. He’s eating something. “I don’t even think you super-soldier types can get sick, so don’t worry your pretty head, Cap.”

Steve is pretty sure it’s his imagination, but he thinks Tony puts way more emphasis on pretty than...
he’s supposed to. Bucky makes a choking noise, and Tony looks like he’s struggling not to laugh. “You’re horrible,” Bucky hisses after coughing once or twice.

“No, I’m Tony,” Tony replies, quite cheerfully, and ducks under Bucky’s swipe, a small, suppressed grin on his face. (Steve notices he still puts some distance between himself and Bucky.)

Steve just stares and decides nothing is worth sitting through Tony’s shitty dad jokes. “I’ll just leave you two alone,” he says, mildly horrified. “I’m going back to bed.” He turns around just as Bucky lunges at Tony with a loud war cry, the latter squawking and grabbing a throw pillow to defend himself with.

The next morning, Steve heads back to the kitchen, hungry, thanks to Tony’s god awful jokes. He loves the guy, sure, but no thanks to the jokes. It’s a sentiment shared by everyone else except Thor. Steve isn’t actually sure if Thor actually doesn’t get the jokes or if he privately finds them amusing and is just messing with the rest of them. He wouldn’t put it past him.

Steve is snapped out of his thoughts when he passes by the couch, spotting Bucky sleeping quietly on the couch. His breathing is quiet, and he doesn’t snore; it’s something that had changed after Steve found him again. It makes him a little sad, but he doesn’t dwell on it. He’s still Bucky after all.

There’s a soft pillow shoved under his head, and the obnoxiously pink blanket’s been thrown over him. Steve grins fondly, patting Bucky’s head gently so he doesn’t wake him, and quietly pads towards the fridge, mindful of his sleeping friend.

“Well aren’t you up early,” mutters Wade, out of nowhere, and Steve just about has a heart attack. He jumps a foot in the air, slapping a hand over his mouth at the last second.

Once Steve is fairly certain his voice isn’t going to come out an octave too high, he turns to Wade and breathes, “Jesus Christ, Wade, you scared the crap out of me.” Wade blinks.

“Oh, sorry,” he says, sounding only slightly apologetic, reaching around Steve to get to the milk in the fridge. “I thought you noticed me, but I guess you were too busy making the goo-goo eyes at Barnes.” Wade grins cheerfully at Steve’s flush, elbowing him slightly before heading for the bowls and cereal.

Wade’s wearing the suit still, Steve notices belatedly, and distantly wonders if the delayed reaction is because of him being so used to it.

“Shush,” Steve says halfheartedly instead of making a comment, swatting at Wade gently, mindful of his strength. “How’s the tower?”

“Pretty good,” Wade replies, pouring the milk into a bowl full of cheerios and banana slices. “Gotta admit that I’m not exactly used to it, though.” He offers nothing more, and Steve doesn’t ask anything else as he pops two pieces of bread into the toaster. It’s a quiet toaster, one that Tony had proudly set up in the kitchen after multiple complaints of the toaster waking people sleeping on the couch, something that’s more common than one would think.

Wade picks up his bowl of cereal and his spoon, heading out of the room. Steve doesn’t stop him, since his friend’s always been like this, eating on his own before coming back. While Steve doesn’t think whatever Wade’s hiding under his suit is really as bad as he makes it out to be, he
isn’t going to pressure him.

A small click alerts Steve to the fact that the toast has popped up, and he pulls it out, replacing it with new slices of bread and smearing butter on it. He makes a few more for himself before smearing some with nutella.

He’s never actually liked nutella, but Bucky adores it. Steve’s seen him eat nutella straight from the jar with a spoon. He doesn’t approve because he doubts it’s healthy, but Steve doesn’t stop him either.

Steve sets the plate down on the coffee table out of Bucky’s reach just so he doesn’t knock it off in his sleep before he swipes one of the water bottles waiting by the door as he toes his shoes on for a run.

“Feel free to tell anyone where I am if they ask,” Steve tells JARVIS quietly.

“I will do so. Have a safe trip, Captain Rogers,” JARVIS murmurs in response as Steve leaves.

“Hi, Steve, welcome back!” Tony exclaims, head swiveling towards Steve so fast, Steve’s momentarily afraid his head’s going to snap right off. Steve frowns as he wipes the sweat off his face; Tony’s practically vibrating. Oh dear.

“When was the last time you slept?” Steve asks, trying to convey his disapproval the best he can, because Tony gets hyperactive when he’s gone more than forty-eight hours without sleep.

“Never mind that!” Tony beams, a tired but excited expression as he holds up a spider-like object in Steve’s face. It’s black, with an hourglass on its back, and the size of a pinky nail. “Look at this guy! Natasha will love him.”

“Jesus, you look like sh --crap. You look like crap,” Wade cuts in, and offers Steve a cold, new water bottle, which he takes gratefully and unscrews. Super soldier or not, running fifteen miles at six thirty in the morning is still exhausting. “How long have you been up?”

“The last time Sir has slept was for thirty minutes, approximately fifteen hours ago,” JARVIS butts in before Tony can answer, sounding rather irritated. “Sir has not slept more than an hour in approximately fifty-three hours.”

“You’re a traitor,” Tony declares, glaring at the nearest camera and jabbing an accusing finger at it. “Now Cap’s going to make me go to bed. I don’t need to sleep.”

“Forget Cap, I’m going to make you go to bed. Come on, Mister Stank, off to bed.” Wade slips his arms under Tony’s armpits before bodily dragging him towards the door. Tony squawks loudly, fighting pathetically against Wade’s grip.

“Stank ?!” Tony shouts, sounding appalled. “I’ve never been so offended !”

“Sorry,” Wade says, not sounding very sorry. “But like hell I’m letting Stan Lee make that joke before me.”

“Cap, some help?” Tony yelps as Wade pulls him through the doorway. He scrabbles at the edges of the doorway, but to no avail. Steve just follows after them, thoroughly entertained.

“His room’s on the floor above this,” Steve tells Wade, tossing his now empty bottle into the
recycling bin. “I’ll tell you which one.”

“Steve, you traitor!” Tony wails dramatically. He spots something behind Steve, and brightens up. “Bucky! Help me! These two are bullying me!”

“This idiot hasn’t slept in fifty-three hours,” Wade yells before Bucky can make a comment. “He is going to bed.”

“Sorry, Tony.” Bucky smirks at Tony’s outraged expression as he approaches and picks up Tony’s feet. “C’mon, off to bed with you.”

Steve follows them up the stairs, the elevator not being big enough for the four of them. Eventually, Tony stops struggling and starts complaining loudly, though his tiredness is made evident by his yawning. By the time they actually manage to drop him on his bed, he’s asleep, the spider thing he made placed on his bedside table.

“Does he do that a lot?” Wade asks, sounding exasperated. At Steve’s grimace and Bucky’s nod, Wade rolls his eyes. Or Steve thinks he rolls his eyes. Wade gives the impression that he’s rolling his eyes, at least.

Steve gives Bucky a sideways glance, and the disgruntled confusion on his face pretty much says that he’s going through the same confusing thought process that Steve is. It’s comforting to know that he’s not the only one perplexed.

Steve nearly has (another) heart attack when the phone suddenly goes off. “Jesus!” he yelps, nearly falling out of his chair and dropping his book. Bruce just twitches a little, but it’s a little gratifying to see that he’s not the only one who reacted.

“JARVIS,” says Clint, holding up his phone. “That’s Steve’s new ringtone.”

“Understood, Agent Barton,” JARVIS replies, and Clint grins at Steve’s glare. Natasha doesn’t even look up from her whittling whatever she’s whittling, but he can see her suppress a smile, which makes her just as guilty in Steve’s eyes.

“Shoot, sorry,” Wade mutters absentmindedly, pulling out his phone and answering it. Steve blinks, surprised at the outdated phone, and then surprised at himself for calling it outdated. He’s been spending way too much time with Tony.

“Vanessa, sweet pea, my better half, my--” Wade begins, laughing as he’s cut off by whoever’s speaking on the other side. “Doing great! How’s Japan for you? Kill anyone yet?”

Knowing Wade’s ex, it’s not entirely impossible for her to have killed someone. Steve’s met her a couple of times, though their first encounter was… terrifying. Something Steve would really rather not repeat, because Vanessa Carlyle is honest to god scary. She could probably kill Steve with her pinky. He’s heard all about the “hakuna his tatas” story.

Across the room, Clint mouths something like, “Who?”, to which Steve mouths back, “His ex.”

Clint looks contemplative for a moment before nodding once and going back to the DS he’s playing on, the sound having been shut off during Wade’s phone call.

“Are you serious?” Wade demands, and Steve looks up again. There’s something unreadable in his tone; Steve doesn’t know what to make of it. When he notices the others looking at him, Wade
just waves dismissively, still talking into the phone. “If you see him, shoot him in the kneecap for me, and then tell him I say ‘fuck you’.” He pauses. “And then give him a kiss, and tell him it’s from me.”

Steve exchanges looks with Clint and Bruce. He’s not sure who Wade’s talking about, so he shrugs helplessly at their quizzical expressions.

“Don’t actually do what he tells you to do, please,” Wade says hurriedly, “I don’t care what he tells you, getting shot in the head hurts.” There’s another pause, and Wade’s expression (mask? This is too confusing) softens. “Love you too. Call you later.”

He pulls the phone away from where Steve assumes his ear is and hangs up. “That was Vanessa,” he says to answer the unasked question. “She’s my amazing ex-fiance. She could probably kill a man with her pinky.” Wade pauses. “She could kill me with her pinky, and I’d thank her.”

“I believe you still owe the swear jar, my dope ass fresh prince,” JARVIS states, and Wade rolls his eyes (gives the impression that he’s rolling his eyes, Jesus this is confusing) and puts one into the jar.

“Who did you want her to shoot in the kneecap?” Steve inquires, a little hesitant. If Wade’s never brought him up, it’s probably someone he doesn’t want brought up.

“My other ex,” Wade answers cheerfully. “Sometimes I want him to fuck my brains out, and sometimes I want to shove a sandpaper dildo up his ass. And not in the kinky-fun-times way.” He casually flicks another two quarters into the swear jar.

“I’m not entirely certain that’s healthy,” Bruce comments dryly.

“Do not,” Wade warns, his tone deceptively mild as he points his phone at Bruce in a vaguely threatening manner, “judge my coping mechanisms.”

Bruce holds his hands up in the universal sign for surrender. “Alright, alright, just saying,” he placates.

“Got any other crazy exes we need to worry about?” Clint jokes before letting out a whole bunch of euphemisms as he dies in Mario Kart. “Fu-- screw you too, Toad!”

Wade pauses, like he’s about to say something, but thinking better of it. “Nah,” he settles on. “Nobody you need to worry about. You don’t need to worry about Vanessa or Nate, though. Vanessa only gets violent if there’s a good reason for it, and Nathan, uh. How do I explain this.”

“Shut your quiznak, Yellow,” Steve thinks Wade mutters under his breath. He’s a little confused as to what a quiznak is, and he’s not sure who Wade’s talking to either.

“It’s… complicated,” is what Wade settles for after a long while of contemplating.

“Isn’t everything,” Natasha replies absentmindedly, flipping her knife around expertly. Steve casually scoots his chair just a little farther from her.

“Deep. But point.” Wade sighs, like he knows what he’s about to say is insane and nobody’s going to believe him. “Uh. Nathan doesn’t technically exist. In this time. Because he’s a time traveler.”

“What,” Steve says, unsure if Wade just said what he thought he just said.

“It’s as ridiculous as it sounds, I promise,” Wade grumbles, dragging his hand down his face.
“Why do you think we’ve broken up so often?”

“I feel like I’m going to regret this,” Bruce says, “but how many times?”

“Sixteen,” Wade answers promptly. “Probably more, but my memory is fu-- screwed six ways to Sunday, so I can’t really say.”

“Jesus .” Clint looks up from Mario Kart to stare at Wade. “Most people give up after the second or third breakup, man.”

“I am evidently not most people,” Wade points out reasonably. “And neither is Nathan. I know his dad. His dad is younger than me .”

“I’m sure Steve can relate at least somewhat,” Bruce comments dryly, smiling slightly at Steve.

Steve grimaces--the whole thing with him knowing Howard and Tony Stark both? Awkward as all hell. “God, please don’t remind me. Tony makes enough jokes about me being ancient as it is.”

Wade grins and Steve is tempted to gag him because he knows that expression. “Honestly, though, if you and Stark got together, I wouldn’t be sure who the cradle robber was.”

Steve takes a few moments to process what Wade just said before it actually sinks in. “ What the fuck ,” he sputters. “Wade, why .” Wade cackles loudly, leaning back into the couch. Clint is laughing as well, covering his mouth and shaking silently while Bruce looks like he’s hard pressed not to join in as well. Natasha, to her credit, is still working on whatever she’s working on despite the slight shake to her shoulders.

“Are you more offended at the prospect of you and Tony together or at the cradle robber comment?” Natasha inquires innocently, though the small tug at her lips gives her away instantly.

Bruce gives in, snorting.

“Oh my god,” Steve groans, burying his face in his hands. “Why are you like this. Why am I friends with you guys. I’m resigning from the Avengers. I’m going to move to some secluded island where not even JARVIS could find me and I’ll be a hermit for the rest of my life.”

“I assure you, Captain Rogers, that regardless of how secluded your island may be, I will be able to find you,” JARVIS intones ominously. “As it is, Captain Rogers, you owe the jar a quarter.”

Steve withdraws a quarter from his pocket and puts it in without another word.

Wade and Clint seem to compose themselves, out of breath but still shaking slightly with small bouts of laughter. Clint inhales slowly, setting his DS down with shaking hands.

There’s a moment of peace and quiet, and Steve is thankful, about to open his book again.

“You still haven’t answered Tasha’s question yet,” Clint says, smirking.

Steve throws his book at Clint.

It misses, because of course it does, but Clint noticeably does not make another comment about it again.

“Why was my copy of Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy on the floor?” Steve looks up to see
Tony holding up the book he’d thrown at Clint earlier, its owner frowning in sleepy confusion.

“I threw it, sorry,” Steve apologizes, offering Tony a cup of coffee as a peace offering so he doesn’t kill him. Despite being extremely attached to his technology, Tony also happens to be extremely fond of keeping paper copies of books. Something about the smell or whatever.

Tony accepts the coffee, setting the book on the counter and patting it softly. “What did Clint do this time?” he asks calmly, taking a gulp of coffee that makes Steve’s mouth water in sympathy; how he drinks coffee piping hot is beyond Steve.

“How did you know it was Clint?” Steve inquires, half-curious. “Maybe I just didn’t like the book.”

Tony fixes him with a severely unimpressed look, and Steve smiles sheepishly. “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy is an amazing book,” Tony says peevishly. “So you certainly did not throw it because you disliked it.” The slightly manic and coffee-fueled look in Tony’s eyes challenges Steve to argue. Wisely, Steve doesn’t. Serum or not, a ceramic mug full of hot coffee would hurt if thrown in his face. “Bucky was… doing something in my room while I was sleeping, so there’s no way he said anything.”

At that, Steve feels a pang of jealousy, and it must show on his face because Tony gives a sly smile. Thankfully, Tony doesn’t make a comment, merely continuing. “The only other people here today were you, Clint, Natasha, Bruce, and Wilson. You wouldn’t throw anything at Bruce because he’s terrifying in pillow fights, and if you threw anything at Natasha, she would fling you into the sun.”

“You threw a hairbrush in her face,” Steve mutters mutinously. “And she just glared at you.”

“It’s because I’m her mom,” Tony tells Steve primly, to which the latter just rolls his eyes. “According to Clint at least. Anyways, throwing anything at Wilson would be like kicking an injured, abused puppy. With your guilt complex—”

“Hypocrite—”

“—you’d never forgive yourself,” Tony continues like Steve hadn’t spoken. “So it’s definitely Clint.” He sets down his now empty coffee mug. “So what did he say?”

“He didn’t even say it,” Steve mumbles.

“What did they say, then?” Tony presses, sounding immensely curious.

“My dope ass fresh prince said that if you and Captain Rogers were in a romantic relationship, he would not be sure if you or Captain Rogers was the cradle robber,” JARVIS offers when no answer from Steve is forthcoming. Steve makes a face, feeling like he’s chewing on a very sour lemon.

Steve watches Tony’s face carefully, seeing several emotions flickering over his face before settling on pure, unbridled amusement, and he collapses on the counter alarmingly fast, laughing. “You—” Tony gasps, straightening up a little. No small feat, either, considering how hard he’s shaking. “Your face.”

“Excuse me,” says Steve, mildly offended.

“JARVIS, do you have video of the incident?” Tony calls.

“Yes, I do, sir,” JARVIS responds. “Shall I download it to your phone?”
“Please.” Steve scowls at Tony, who pats him on the arm and meets his gaze. “Don’t worry about it, Cap,” Tony soothes. “My feelings for you are completely platonic. And everyone knows you make the goo-goo eyes at Bucky. They’re just teasing you.”

“I do not make the goo-goo eyes at Bucky!” Steve squawks even though he knows it’s a lie. Tony just quirks an eyebrow at him, propping his cheek up on one hand. “…I do not make the goo-goo eyes at Bucky,” Steve repeats unconvincingly.

“You know, if you two don’t hurry up and get your shit together, Fury’s going to blow a gasket,” Tony comments, flicking a quarter into the jar. “And Natasha and Clint are really going to handcuff the two of you together.”

Steve deflates. “Am I really that obvious?” he asks morosely, looking down at the countertop, which suddenly is really interesting.

“Howard thought you were a thing,” Tony informs him.

“He what,” Steve gapes, dejection momentarily forgotten in the wake of new information.

“He thought you and Bucky were together,” Tony repeats patiently. “You broke into an enemy base on your own to save him, Cap.”

“Well, of course,” Steve says, confused. “I would do that for you, too, you know. Any one of my friends.”

“I’m touched,” Tony replies, somehow sounding both extremely sincere and extremely flippant at the same time. “But seriously, you were very desperate to get him back, according to Howard. And seeing the two of you interact, the only thing that’s missing to make it really a relationship is the kissing and sex.”

Steve’s face flushes a little at the mere idea of kissing Bucky. He very determinedly puts all thoughts of going any further than that with him out of his mind. “Oh my god,” he squeaks, covering his face with his hands.

“You are adorable,” Tony tells him. He shifts on his arms, his expression turning serious as he meets Steve’s eyes. “Okay, but seriously,” he continues, “you know the reason why I came to terms with my bisexuality was because I actually thought the two of you were together, right?”

Steve actually did not know that, no. He feels a little lightheaded. “Oh,” he says faintly.

“If Captain America likes men, it’s okay, right?” Tony huffs a small laugh, gaze sliding sideways and going somewhere far away briefly before looking up into Steve’s again. “Take it from probably the most emotionally constipated person in the Tower.” He gives a small, encouraging smile. “Confessing wouldn’t hurt.”

Tony straightens up, pushing himself off the counter. “Well, back to work.” He stretches luxuriously, back cracking painfully loud, and Steve winces in sympathy. “I had a nice nap, so I’ll catch you later, Cap.”

“Thanks,” Steve calls as he watches him head back down to the workshop. Tony twitches, and Steve gives a grin as affection washes over himself.

“Yeah, yeah, good luck, Rogers!” Tony shouts back from somewhere Steve can’t see.

Well, Steve certainly has a lot to think about.
“JARVIS?”

“Yes, Captain Rogers?”

“Do you know where Wade is?” Steve asks, frowning. He’s been searching for his friend for the past half hour, and he’s not on the floor where the guest rooms are, he’s not in any of the kitchens, and he’s not in the family room.

JARVIS pauses a moment before he answers, likely to ask for permission. “My dope ass fresh prince has been with sir in the workshop for the past three hours, Captain Rogers,” he reports. “Neither of them would be opposed to your company. If you are so inclined to do so, please bring some food from the kitchen, as sir has not eaten anything in awhile.”

Despite JARVIS phrasing it as a request, Steve knows it’s a demand. A little surprised that Wade’s with Tony, he makes a few sandwiches and heads on down bearing a tray.

“Hey,” he calls, entering through the doors JARVIS had opened for him. Both of them swivel to look at him at the same time, and Steve shifts from foot to foot, because damn, that was unnerving. “I have… food?” he suggests hesitantly.

“Food,” says Tony, almost dreamily. “Food. Cap, you are a god amongst men.” He makes grabby hands at the tray in Steve’s hands, and, laughing a little, Steve sets the tray down within both Wade and Tony’s reach. Predictably Wade doesn’t even look at the food, but DUM-E whirls over it inquisitively.

“No, that’s Thor,” Wade corrects from his seat on a wobbly looking stool, and Tony throws his head back, laughing as he fiddles with something in his hands. There’s a spark and then--

“Balls!” Tony exclaims, dropping it (and the sandwich) onto the table. DUM-E recoils in surprise.

“Whose balls, though?” Wade asks interestingly, and Tony, to Steve’s horror, actually stops looking dejected about the fried sandwich to look into the air contemplatively.

“I… dunno.” Tony frowns, tapping a finger to his cheek, taking another sandwich with his free hand.

“Why are you guys talking about genitals now?” Steve sighs, resigned.

Neither of them acknowledge what he says, which doesn’t come as a surprise to Steve, which says a lot about how well he knows these idiots. “Wolverine’s?” Tony suggests, though it comes out partially muffled because of the food in his mouth.

“Those are good balls,” Wade agrees (disagrees? Steve doesn’t even know, considering the context of the situation). “But weren’t you cursing? Don’t use good balls as curses.”

“Why are they like this,” Steve whispers to himself.

“True. But how do you know if he has good balls?” Tony inquires, going back to whatever he was doing before, though with considerably more care for the sandwich.

“I didn’t sleep with him, if that’s what you’re thinking.” Wade laughs, flapping a hand in front of his face. “Okay, I did, but like, not in the sexy way. I literally shared a bed with him a few times
before, but I never actually did the do with him.”

“Huh. How did that go?”

“I nearly overheated,” Wade admits. “So I rolled him off the bed and onto the floor. He didn’t even wake up.”

Steve clears his throat awkwardly, and the two of them turn to look at him at the same time again. “Please don’t do that,” he squeaks. DUM-E, a little slow, turns to look at Steve as well, though he looks more confused than anything else.

“Do what?” they inquire at the same time, wearing matching expressions, and Steve just knows they’re doing it on purpose.

“Oh, right,” Tony says, waving his wirecutter. “What did you come down for? I know JARVIS tries to get everyone to feed me because he thinks I don’t know how to take care of myself—”

“He would be right,” Steve mutters.

“-- shut up, Cap --but that’s definitely not the only reason why you’re here.”

“Uh,” Steve says, throat dry, because now that he’s actually about to say it, he feels a bit dumb about it. “I came down to get relationship advice? From Wade. And you, probably.”

Tony and Wade exchange a glance, and Steve shifts on his seat, mildly uncomfortable. DUM-E makes a confused but supportive whirring noise.

“You tried to go to me for relationship advice.” Wade looks like he doesn’t know whether to laugh or cry. “You do know that Vanessa and I broke up, right? And that whenever I see Nathan, I’m not sure if I want to strangle him or kiss him?”

“I don’t know, okay?” Steve shrugs helplessly. “I… I’ve never actually even been in a relationship,” he admits. “There’s nobody else to go to.”

Tony puts down his wirecutter, which does wonders for Steve’s elevated heart rate. He looks like he’s about to refute him before he buries his face in his hands. “Fuck,” he groans. “You’re right.”

Wade squawks indignantly, turning to look at Tony. “What do you mean he’s right?!”

“He’s partially right, at least,” Tony amends, putting a quarter in the jar. “He can’t go to Bruce because have you ever seen him talk romance? He can’t go to Thor because when he is around; his idea of human romance comes from teenage romances. He definitely cannot go to Natasha or Clint.”

“Why not?” Wade whines, sounding suspiciously like he’s sulking. “Aren’t they together?”

“Absolutely not,” Steve yelps. DUM-E makes an alarmed noise at the sharp increase in volume, and Tony shakes his head wildly at him as he goes for the fire extinguisher. “I am not going to Natasha or Clint for relationship advice. They’re going to tie me up and have Bucky rescue me like I’m some sort of damsel in distress. Or the other way around.”

“Oh,” Wade says as DUM-E rolls away from the fire extinguisher to join U and Butterfingers, to everyone’s relief.

“You said partially right,” Steve says, hopeful. “Who else could I go to?”
“Pepper, definitely,” Tony says instantly. “Or the other Wilson! Sam. Maybe Agent.”

“All of them are really busy though,” Steve says hesitantly. “Not to say that you guys aren’t busy!” he adds hastily. God knows Tony has too much work. “But you’re in the Tower most of the time that I am. I have literally nobody else to go to for this whole thing with Bucky.”

Tony picks up the wirecutter again, turning his gaze back to whatever he was making. “Well, at least you’ve stopped denying it,” he sighs. He drops the wirecutter, probably figuring he doesn’t need it. “Someone give me the big wrench.”

Wade reaches for it and holds it out to Tony. Steve’s about to tell him that Tony really doesn’t like being handed things for whatever reason, but the words die in his throat when he sees Tony deliberately wrap his fingers around the wrench, hand shaking slightly as he takes it, and Wade lets go of it.

“I don’t know, though,” Steve says cautiously, watching Tony carefully as he goes about doing his thing. “I’m not sure if it’s actually, you know, love I’m feeling. What if it’s just a stupid crush, and if we get together, I find that I don’t actually like him that way?”

“And we’re back to square one,” Wade mutters. Louder, he says, “Steve, buddy, I assure you, you are deeply in love with James Buchanan Barnes. You are so gone it’s not even funny.”

Steve opens his mouth to deny it out of reflex before he decides against it, shutting it with a loud clack. He stares at his hands, twisting them anxiously, and thinks about it. Thinks about his stupid crush on James Buchanan Barnes.

No, not a crush. Love. Steve blushes.

“Now you’re getting it,” Tony says approvingly, and, horrified, Steve slaps a hand over his mouth. I said that out loud, didn’t I?

“Yes, you did,” Tony answers. “And yes, you did say that aloud too too.” Tony smirks as Steve’s mortified blush turns darker and hotter. “Don’t worry, Cap, it’s nothing we don’t already know.”

“So you guys have known that I internally wax poetic about Bucky the entire time?” Steve blurts out, and someone please kill him already. “…Please forget I said that.”

“Internally, he says,” Wade snorts delicately. “Please. I’ve heard you talk about Barnes like the sun comes out of his a-- butt.”

“I’m not that bad,” Steve protests.

“You once came down here and described Bucky’s smile in perfect detail,” Tony tells him. “Used a lot of metaphors.”

“…I’m not that bad,” Steve repeats weakly.

“You are smitten,” Wade says firmly, his tone leaving no room for argument. “And there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. Except maybe the fact that you make the rest of us suffer because you don’t make a goddamned move.”

Steve groans and covers his face with his arms. “Fine,” he mumbles, and, mustering as much sarcasm as he can, adds, “I am very much deeply in love with Bucky.” The words feel funny in his mouth, but he can’t say he dislikes it, even if he’s starting to feel like he’ll overheat at any moment now.
“You’re not allowed to say it sarcastically,” Tony scolds, and Steve hears him swivel around in his chair. “Try again, and look me in the eye while you do it.”

“Why did I think coming to you was a good idea,” Steve whispers.

“I can’t answer that question,” Wade says bluntly.

“Cap, this is all on you; why you thought coming to us was a good idea is beyond me.” When Steve looks up, Tony’s expression softens a little. “How about this? I’ll set you and Pep up for a date— platonic,” he adds at Steve’s expression. “She’ll talk you through this dating shtick. She’s probably better at this whole relationship advice thing, since I’m the reason why we didn’t work out.”

Steve frowns, and opens his mouth to protest against that, but Tony raises his hand in the universal gesture for stop. "Steve. Not the time. You can talk me through my insecurities after you’ve cleared up your own. Trust me, you need a lot more help than I do in the relationship department.”

“The saddest part about that statement is that I can’t even argue,” Steve sighs.

“Nope, you can’t,” Wade says, completely unsympathetic. “But hey, you made some progress! It only took you, like, seventy years to get out of denial!”

Steve groans, and buries his face in his hands again.

“I hope Miss Potts doesn’t do this to me…”

Tony cackles like a madman, waving his wrench around dangerously. Steve pushes his chair a little bit farther away from him. Self-preservation instincts kicking in. “Oh, Cap,” he says sweetly. “She’s worse.”

Steve doesn’t turn when the doors to the gym open, but he has a pretty good idea of who just joined him, even if their footsteps are silent.

“Hey, punk. You were in the workshop for a while.” Bucky punches him lightly in the shoulder as he passes by, eyes sweeping over the decimated punching bags. “Damn, you went through a lot. They make you angry?”

“Nah,” Steve replies honestly. The truth is a little more embarrassing, but Bucky is the last person in the world he’s going to tell the reason to. He punches the bag with probably too much force, because it snaps off the chain and lands on the floor with a loud thud. “Aww, damn. Not another one. Just… frustrated.”

“What kinda frustrated?” Bucky asks, tone teasing as Steve hooks up another bag. He chokes and drops the bag before he gets it secured in place, another flush of heat rushing up his neck as he turns to look at Bucky.

“Oh my god,” he screeches, voice an octave higher than normal. “Why. Too close to the truth.”

Bucky waggles his eyebrows before snorting loudly. “Your face, oh my god.”

Steve’s about to retort, but Bucky’s smirk turns into something softer and fonder. “You’re adorable,” he teases in the same tone that Tony used, but Tony didn’t make him feel so ridiculously warm. (If he did, Steve would be pretty concerned, but that’s not important.)
“Oh,” he squeaks, feeling like his brain’s short-circuited. This isn’t even the first time he’s said it, but it sure is Steve’s first time reacting like a damned fool. He’s blaming Wade and Tony. Definitely their fault. “Um. Oh my god.”

Bucky cocks his head to the side a little, concern flickering in his gaze. Steve tracks the way a lock of hair falls over his cheek before he forces his gaze away from it. I DON’T NEED THIS RIGHT NOW. “Steve?”

HELP Steve screams internally. HE’S TOO CUTE FUCK ABORT ABORT FUCKING ABORT

“I. I need to go,” he blurts out, and flees the gym like he’s got an angry Pepper Potts on his heels.

I, Steve thinks despairingly, am so, so fucked.

Chapter End Notes

Come scream at me on tumblr! I’m @kyasuu
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

In which Tony is only good at processing emotions when they aren't his emotions, Bucky overthinks things, Natasha becomes Too Powerful, and Steve is an idiot but a cheeky bastard at the same time.

Chapter Notes

chapterly reminder to always double check the tags before proceeding!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“J, put in a call to Pepper please,” Tony calls, setting his tools down. The robot on his desk remains mostly in parts, the poor thing having gotten shot by Natasha when it had dropped into her room to clean. Speaking of Natasha, the mechanical spider (who he had lovingly named Natalie) he made for her is currently stumbling around in a container. He’ll have to shut her off before she figures out how to break out, but for now he lets Natalie have her fun.

He briefly checks on Wilson, who’s passed out on his couch. He’s been so still for the past hour, he almost looks dead.

Speaking of Wilson, Tony isn’t entirely certain what to think of him. What he knows is SHIELD’s file on him, and the two days he’s actually had contact with him. SHIELD has him listed as a potential (though minor) threat and only briefly mentions his status as a dishonorable discharge; they’ve elected to just leave him be, since he isn’t doing anything harmful anymore. Apparently, he went on a killing spree a few years back, though considering all of his hits were already on SHIELD’s shit list, they let him be. They weren’t happy with the collateral damage, but they couldn’t do anything about it.

His file has him listed as “unstable” and “unpredictable”, mentioning that his more erratic behavior only appeared after said killing spree began. And interestingly, before that same killing spree, he had disappeared completely from even SHIELD’s radar for approximately a year after he was diagnosed with several different types of cancer. He was presumed dead before he showed up again wearing a red suit--and nobody has gotten a single picture of his body or face afterwards.

The file also mentions his relationships with several members of the X-Men, despite being human. There’s a clipping attached of his previous medical record, all proving that he’s very much human, and not a mutant.

Tony knows better than to trust SHIELD’s assessments of personality completely, but he also knows that there’s some shred of truth in them. From his own personal experience with Wilson, he does honestly think he’s a decent guy, even if he’s a little on the eccentric side.

It only takes a few moments for Pepper to pick up, and when she does, it snaps Tony out of his thoughts. “Tony, it’s twelve in the morning, go to bed,” is what she greets him with, and Tony
gives her a cheeky grin.

“Aww, Pep, it’s good to see you too! And besides, I slept eight hours today already; I am not sleeping for another twenty-four hours at least.” He pauses. “Well, technically it was yesterday, since it’s twelve AM, but semantics.”

“That’s not healthy,” she says, though she and Tony both know that’s useless. Tony gives, like, zero shits about his own health when there’s engineering and inventing to be done. “Anyways, what did you call me for?”

“I really, really need you to give Cap some goddamned relationship advice,” Tony answers, deciding to cut the bullshit (for once) and get straight to the point. “It took us way too long, but Wilson and I managed to finally get him out of denial, but, like, we need you to take the wheel now.”

Pepper quirks an eyebrow. “I’m impressed,” she responds, sounding amused. “Well, that would make my job a lot easier. Consider it done. I’m free the day after tomorrow--well, technically, tomorrow, since it is twelve AM. Does noon at that café he likes sound okay?”

“I’ll let him know,” Tony assures her. “Thanks, Pepper.”

“I will be paying myself extra,” Pepper informs him, smiling. “Will that be all, Mister Stark?”

“Yes, that will be all, Miss Potts.” With that, the video call cuts out, and Tony turns his attention back to the robot.

“JARVIS, as soon as he’s awake, let Cap know that he has a lunch date with my ex.”

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Tony rubs at his eyes, blindly groping around his table for his coffee and making a noise of delight when he finds it. It’s cold, but it’s still coffee, and therefore still a gift to this world. “JARVIS, what time is it?”

“It is nine forty-seven in the morning, sir,” JARVIS replies instantly. “Perhaps some rest would be prudent.”

Tony huffs and rolls his eyes, patting the nearly completed robot before checking on Natalie again. She’d found a way through five different containers and Tony had nearly panicked when he realized she was gone one time because he was so engrossed in his work. JARVIS had easily located her, but Tony was rattled enough that he decided to shut her off.

“I’ll go take a break, yeah.” He stands up, stretching and hearing the satisfying crack of his back when he bends a little, heading upstairs for coffee. Tony glances at the spot where Wilson had been last night, now empty, and wonders when that happened. “Huh. When did he leave?”

“Approximately two hours ago, sir. He did not want to disturb you, so he left without saying anything. You were quite engrossed in your work.”

Tony doesn’t say anything else until he reaches the kitchen, just nodding once to acknowledge JARVIS’s words. When he enters, he makes a beeline for the coffee machine.

“Morning, Tony,” Clint says from where he’s raiding the fridge. “Coffee,” is Tony’s response, turning on the coffee machine.
“Wow, rude, I see how I rank in your list of priorities,” Clint sniffs haughtily, but it’s too exaggerated to be anything but a joke. Tony, knowing it’s safe, ignores the archer, making a show of waiting for his coffee to be ready.

As soon as it pours into his cup, he inhales the scent and swallows a huge gulp, sighing happily and setting down the cup. “Morning, cupcake.”

“Aha, there you are!” Clint exclaims, sliding into one of the chairs and offering Tony a plate of leftovers as he eats a pickle straight out of the jar. Tony eyes it suspiciously, Clint’s smile too wide to be truly innocent, but he takes it anyways; he’s fairly certain his teammate isn’t going to poison him. Fairly certain.

When Tony takes a seat, he eyes Clint warily. “Out with it now,” he orders, taking a bite of leftover pasta. Not a traditional breakfast, but nobody who lives in the Avengers tower should ever be trusted with a stove. The toaster’s safe, because Tony made goddamned sure they wouldn’t break another one after the twenty-sixth one.

“I hear Wilson was sleeping in your workshop,” Clint begins, eyes gleaming, but Tony cuts him off instantly.

“No, I do not know what he looks like, hello, privacy.” Tony gestures with his fork in a vaguely threatening manner, and smiles innocently when Clint scoots a little farther away. “And no, we did not do the do. I’ve known him, like, two days.”

“Where did the playboy part of your description go?” Clint whines, kicking his feet. Tony only knows he’s kicking his feet because ouch that’s going to bruise. In retaliation, Tony ruthlessly crushes the foot with his own.

Tony rolls his eyes in response as Clint starts a game of footsie with him, finishing up his pasta. “Nowhere, but seriously, it would be so awkward. I bet Steve would give me the stink eye for days.” Both of them know the “playboy part of his description” was moot after Afghanistan, but neither of them mention it.

Clint grimaces, though whether it’s at the thought of Steve’s stink eye or at the fact that Tony had trapped Clint’s ankle with his feet, Tony doesn’t know. “Yeaaah, good point.”

“Oh, right.” Tony holds his coffee away from Clint as the archer tries to steal it, shoving Clint’s foot off of his own. “Cap’s out of denial.”

Clint whoops loudly, grabbing at Tony’s coffee but Tony doesn’t budge, scowling at the archer. “It only took, like seventy years!” he crows victoriously.

“Wilson made that joke already,” Tony informs him, taking a gulp of coffee and daring Clint to steal it with a glower. “Get your own coffee, you heathen.”

“Maybe the next time we set them up at least Steve will know it’s a date,” Clint says contemplatively, a wicked gleam in his eye. “Also, your coffee always tastes the best.”

“Have we tried the closet yet?”

“I have a heart condition!” Tony screeches when Natasha’s voice sounds right behind him, clutching at his arc reactor and making sure he didn’t spill any of his precious coffee. “Are you trying to kill me?!”

Natasha smirks, relieving Tony of his coffee cup and taking a sip before returning it to him,
earning herself a fearsome scowl. She walks behind him, ignoring it and taking a seat next to Clint.

“And for the record, yes you did use the closet already,” Tony grumbles, calming his racing heart and then drinking the rest of the coffee in one go, just so neither of the two assassins can get to it. “And neither of you will be trying anything else with the two of them. You two are terrible matchmakers. Offense intended. Sorry Natasha.”

“Why aren’t you apologizing to me?” Clint complains halfheartedly.

“Because Natasha can kill me,” Tony answers, shrugging. “But seriously, please leave the two idiots alone. I already got Steve to talk to Pepper.”

“But--” Clint begins.

“No,” Tony says sternly, standing up and putting his mug into the sink. He rubs the bridge of his nose. “Natasha, come by the workshop later today. I have something for you.” He pauses. “And do not work on Operation Stucky. Please. You’re going to traumatize them both even more at this rate.”

Natasha shrugs. “I’ll try.” Knowing that’s the best he’ll get from her, Tony shakes his head, sighing, and heads back down.

“Sir, Sergeant Barnes has entered the workshop,” JARVIS announces quietly to get Tony’s attention. He blinks out of his engineering stupor, setting his wrench down on the table and looks up to see Bucky heading down almost hesitantly.

“You look like shit,” Tony says bluntly, standing up to meet Bucky halfway, shoving a fifty into the swear jar as he does so, concern fluttering in his chest as he makes Bucky sit on the couch. Softer, he asks gently, “What happened?”

He does look like shit, to say the least. His eyes are red-rimmed like he either had a horrible, horrible case of allergies or he’d been crying. Since super soldiers don’t get sick, Tony’s leaning towards the latter. And because there’s not much that Tony can think of that would get Bucky to cry, he’s pretty sure he knows exactly what the cause is. Rather, who the cause is.

Bucky shifts cagily, and Tony takes a few steps back, sitting on the stool instead, knowing he needs his presence, but distance would be appreciated. He waits patiently, but Bucky shakes his head silently, so Tony takes it as his cue.

“Did I tell you about Natalie?” Tony comments offhandedly, reaching behind him for the container with the mechanical spider, taking the offline creature and holding it out for Bucky to see. “For Natasha.” Tony knows as soon as Bucky makes the connection between Natalie and Natasha, and he takes it as a victory when Bucky manages a small, watery smile. He himself plasters on a bright smile, plowing on. “She’s a mechanical widow--got lots of functions, but she’s most useful for inconspicuous spying. Like, sure, if Natasha asked I could totally give her an actual widow’s bite, but that’s a bit too much power to be leaving in Natasha’s hands--she’s fucking terrifying enough as it is.”

Tony taps the spider with his free hand. “She’s EMP-proof--took me forever to figure out how to do that, especially on such a tiny scale, but hey, lots of work and genius paid off. Super small, and a master of escape. I had to power her off because I was scared she’d end up running off--she
went through five containers last night, can you believe it?!”

“I also seem to remember you falling out of your chair in a panic after realizing she was gone,” JARVIS comments dryly, and Tony makes a huge show of glaring at one of the cameras in the room. “You also ended up spending an entire eleven minutes trying to find Natalie when you could have asked me.”

“I am going to reprogram you,” Tony threatens, though everyone knows he’d never. He loves JARVIS too much for that. “Such disrespect. I’ve never been so hurt in my life.”

“My apologies, sir.”

“Shush your face, JARVIS, we all know you aren’t sorry.”

“No, I am not.”

Tony turns towards Bucky dramatically, glad that he’s looking a lot better, and smiling a little. “Can you believe JARVIS?” he demands, gesticulating wildly with his free hand and careful not to accidentally throw Natalie. “Such cheek, and to his mother no less.”

Bucky gives him a smirk, and even if it’s not as sharp as it is usually, it’s a marked improvement from the quiet sadness from earlier. Tony’s glad. “You sure you’re the parent in this relationship?”

Tony gasps loudly, pressing a hand to his arc reactor in a show of great injury. “You wound me, Barnes,” he wails. “How could you. My heart is broken.” Even as he sways and gestures exaggeratedly, he’s still carefully keeping an eye on his friend.

“Thanks,” Bucky murmurs, his smirk melting into something more genuine and soft, and Tony grins toothily, purposefully misunderstanding.

“What, for letting you roast me? It’s not like you guys don’t do it to me regardless, you heathens.” He hops off the stool, dropping Natalie into her container again and making a big show of putting her back where she’d been originally. Whether Bucky wants him near or not is up to him, once more.

Choice, after all, is extremely important to Bucky, and Tony’s not going to take that away from him.

Bucky nods once and Tony wastes no time in leaping onto his extremely comfortable couch, casually making himself comfortable on Bucky’s lap. “You are my favorite pillow,” he informs Bucky, sighing happily before explaining.

“Bruce is nice about it but he doesn’t like being a pillow for anyone except Thor, because Thor is Thor,” he rambles. “Thor and Steve are too much muscle, like, damn, they’re hot, but not comfortable for me. I like soft people. Natasha is fucking terrifying man, she is not a good pillow. Clint’s a good cuddler, so he’s okay. But you’re my favorite.” He reaches up and blindly pats Bucky’s cheek, grinning into his leg when Bucky makes a disgruntled noise as Tony’s finger gets up his nose.

Tony drops his hand and traps Bucky’s arm in an awkward hug, rolling onto his back to ease the strain on his arc reactor and to look up at Bucky, letting his grin fade into something more serious.

“So, do you want to tell me why you came in here looking like someone killed your kitten?”

Bucky shifts, expression sad, and Tony suddenly has the urge to strangle Captain America. “I,” he begins hesitantly before stopping. Tony waits patiently, patting Bucky’s arm encouragingly. “I think Steve’s uncomfortable around me,” he blurts out, sounding dangerously close to tears. “I
don’t think he lo-likes me back.”

That is so far from the fucking truth that Tony literally just had confirmed yesterday that Tony himself wants to curl into a ball and cry, but he has more pressing matters, like making sure Bucky doesn’t because Tony hates seeing him cry. It’s like seeing an injured puppy whimper.

“Oh, sweetheart, how did you come to that conclusion?” Tony exclaims, sitting up and maneuvering himself into a sitting position, guiding Bucky’s head to his shoulder while privately plotting murder. *Steve fucking Rogers, you idiot, what did you do?*

“He ran from me,” Bucky mumbles into his shoulder, voice wet, and Tony’s breath catches a little as he runs his fingers calmingly along the other’s arm. “He ran from me.”

*I am going to break my hand on his face,* Tony thinks viciously, because he knows that Bucky’s utterly terrified of hurting or scaring Steve; Steve had been the only one who had never stopped trying to reach out to him despite all the shit that he’d done as the Winter Soldier under HYDRA’s influence. Seeing him run away from Bucky (even though Tony knows it’s Steve’s own goddamned feelings, the idiot) must be devastating.

Out loud, Tony says, as reassuringly as he can, “He didn’t run from you, sweetheart. He was running from his own feelings. He’s an idiot.”

Bucky lets out a nasally sigh, breath warm against Tony’s shoulder. “He’s never run from me before.” He’s pretty stuck on that, Tony notices. It’s something that he’s realized about him--Bucky has a tendency to keep picking at something that’s bothering him, no matter how small, until it starts getting all twisted up in his brain and he’s somehow convinced whatever had happened is his fault, and the end of the world. (He wonders if it was common before HYDRA took him, or if it was only after the Winter Soldier.) Tony does the same, but that’s unimportant.

Tony draws in a deep breath, exhaling only after there’s a slight burn in his lungs. This is partially his fault, he knows, but he puts the guilt aside, because it’s not important right now. “Steve wouldn’t run from you, Bucky,” he promises softly, and this is an absolute truth. “He would go to the ends of the universe for you. He wouldn’t dedicate years to someone he didn’t care about immensely. So, Bucky, I promise you that Steve did not run away from you.”

Bucky’s quiet, and Tony knows he doesn’t fully believe him. “It’s… it’s so hard to believe, you know?” he says at last, and Tony does know, even if he doesn’t vocalize that thought. “That someone--someone as good as Steve would even.” He breaks off awkwardly, probably feeling embarrassed. “Um, sorry.”

“Nothing to be sorry for.” Tony doesn’t open his mouth to sing his praises because he knows how Bucky feels--no amount of extol will make him feel any different.

The other falls silent again, and Tony doesn’t press, merely absentmindedly running his fingers along the metal arm and through Bucky’s hair, humming slightly. He doesn’t know how long they stay like that, but he does notice when Bucky’s breath evens out into sleep, which Tony has no issue with--considering the state he came to him in, it wouldn’t surprise Tony if he hadn’t slept at all last night.

Well, neither had Tony, but Tony’s used to it. Sleep schedule? He doesn’t know her.

“JARVIS,” Tony calls to his AI, pitching his voice low, “if anyone comes by, tell them we’re busy, but if it’s urgent, they have to be quiet.”

“Consider it done, sir,” JARVIS responds, voice just as soft. “Perhaps you should get some rest at
this time as well.”

“Maybe,” Tony allows, and normally he’d shrug, but the movement would probably wake Bucky, who’s an incredibly light sleeper.

JARVIS’s silence is somehow approving.

One moment Tony’s relaxing, the next he’s blinking blearily as he awakens, staring at the familiar ceiling of the workshop with a blanket over him; he recognizes it as the same obnoxiously pink pillow from yesterday. Tony sits up sluggishly, rubbing at his eyes. He must’ve fallen asleep. “J, how long was I out?”

“Six hours, sir. It is currently thirty-four minutes past five PM,” JARVIS answers calmly. “Agent Romanoff came by two hours ago, but I, as you ordered me to, informed her that you were busy. Sergeant Barnes left approximately sixteen minutes ago, and had left the Tower three minutes ago.”

“Jesus,” Tony mumbles, his tongue thick in his mouth. He shifts, and starts when there’s a loud crinkling noise. Patting around, Tony locates a folded sheet of binder paper under the blanket, and opens it.

Written in Bucky’s now familiar scrawl is a single word-- “Thanks.” Tony can’t help the small smile that grows on his face. “When he gets back, tell Bucky I said, ‘Anytime.’ ”

Tony is looking around for Natasha when he walks past Wilson, whose expression (mask? Tony really does not need an aneurysm over the logistics of Wilson’s ability to emote through a fucking mask like, ever) can only be described as disgruntled.

“You okay?” Tony asks, mildly concerned. He looks more irritated than upset, which is a relief. Tony does not want to deal with any more tears today.

“I’m shit at comforting people,” Wilson growls in lieu of a reply, throwing a quarter into the swear jar across the room. There’s a faint clatter as it meets the rest of the coins inside, and sounds almost angry.

Tony’s mouth forms an “o” shape, and he nods knowingly. “Was it Steve?”

“He’s having a crisis,” Wilson confirms, sounding exasperated and utterly done. Tony can relate. “He’s an idiot. Lovable, but he’s an idiot. He apparently panicked and fu--fricking ran when Barnes told him he was adorable of all things. What the actual fu--rick. Frick.” Wilson scowls at Tony, who grins and gives a cheeky thumbs up. “I hate you and your stupid swear jar. And your stupid fifty dollar bills.”

“Sucks for you,” Tony singsongs cheerfully. He’s a billionaire, so he doesn’t have to worry about the swear jar as much, except there’s no way he’s doing the dishes every month so he’s a little cautious. “But yeah, you’re not the only one who had to deal with a crying super soldier today.” He stops temporarily, sighing deeply. “Those two need some serious help. I’m this close to letting the superspies deal with them, but it’ll end in tears. Mine, probably. Because Fury would have my ass for letting his OTP get fucked over.”


“Nobody ships Stucky as hard as Nicholas Fury does,” Tony informs Wilson seriously, not a hint
of sarcasm or humor in his tone. He’s been present for one of Bruce, Thor, and Fury’s secret rage meetings concerning Steve and Bucky, and Tony does not have any desire to return, especially after the second time Fury nearly shot him where the sun don’t shine. Tony would rather deal with the Chitauri army all over again. “Not even Agent ships them that hard.” He pauses. “How do you know Fury, anyway?”

“Professor X has contact with him,” Wilson answers, shrugging. Tony frowns—he wasn’t aware of Wilson’s affiliation with Charles Xavier. He knows Wilson is friends with a few X-Men (that was in his SHIELD file) but he wasn’t sure of who he knows. His confusion must show on his face because Wilson continues, “I told Colossus that I would consider joining his merry band of misfits if he helped me a couple years back. I didn’t, like, actually join, but I talk to them sometimes.”

Tony’s eyebrow raises higher. The file didn’t say anything about Wilson being a mutant, either. Either SHIELD’s been slacking off, someone’s been messing with SHIELD’s files, or there’s a huge misunderstanding here. He says so as much.

“There’s a file on me?” Wilson demands incredulously. At Tony’s unimpressed look, Wilson rolls his eyes (? Tony is so fucking confused). “Of course there’s a fu--fricking file on me. It’s SHIELD.” He groans, scrubbing at the place where Tony assumes his nose is. “No, I’m not a mutant. SHIELD’s gotten that much right at least.”

Tony gets the impression that there’s a lot more to that statement than Wilson’s actually letting on, but he doesn’t press. He figures it’s none of his business. “I see. Anyways, I have a delivery to make for one of our resident spies.” He holds up the container with Natalie in it. Wilson leans in, peering at it.


Tony preens a little, because he can’t help it. Praise is so nice. “I know, right? I named her Natalie--but you probably don’t get that joke. J, where’s our favorite superspy right now?”

“I’m up here, thanks!” Clint’s voice comes from the vent above them, and Wilson screeches in surprise, at which Tony laughs loudly.

“What the ass,” Wilson wheezes, clutching his heart as Clint casually drops out of the ceiling vent. Tony did the same when Clint first moved in, but he eventually got used to it. It happens when you live with someone for five years.

“A quarter in the swear jar, my dope ass fresh prince,” JARVIS reminds him, and Wilson scowls at Clint like it’s his fault as he throws another quarter into the jar. Clint blows a raspberry at him like the fucking child he is.

“What the hell,” Wilson amends, sounding a bit like he’s in shock. Tony stifles his laughter while Clint looks like he’s suppressing giggles of his own. “The ceiling vent. What the hell.”

“It’s high up, and it scares the daylights out of people.” Clint shrugs, smiling lopsidedly. “What’s not to like?” He turns to Tony, his smile turning dazzling. It has no effect on Tony because he’s lived with Clint’s bullshit for so long. “So, Tony, my bro, what did you want?”

“Nothing from you,” Tony replies cheerfully, casually flipping Clint off. “I said our favorite superspy, didn’t I?”

Clint gasps, one hand over his heart. He leans back, eyes blown comically wide. “Are you saying
that I’m not your favorite superspy? Oh, the betrayal. I thought we had something special!”

“You stopped being my favorite after you broke my coffee machine,” Tony informs him primly. “And besides, you wouldn’t have any use for our new friend, Natalie.” He holds the spider bot out to Clint, who hoots gleefully as soon as he makes the connection.

“Oh my god,” he cackles, cooing a little at the inactive spider. “The nerve. Tasha’s going to kill you, and then kiss you. Where is she, anyway?”

“Agent Romanoff is in the family room, Agent Barton,” JARVIS offers helpfully.

“Thanks, J. You guys coming?” Tony heads for the stairs without waiting for an answer; since the family room is only one floor above, he doesn’t see the need to take the elevator. Clint and Wilson follow closely behind.

“I have something for you!” Tony calls as he spots Natasha lounging on the couch, a book in her lap. He stops when he reaches the couch, holding out the small box to her as she turns towards him. Nervousness flutters in his chest but he squashes it down with practiced ease. Even after five years, Tony still has that lingering fear of his friends not liking or even hating whatever he gets them.

Natasha takes the box, turning it over in her hands to see the contents of it. “Did you get me a spider,” she says with no inflection, and Tony grins, his nervousness dissipating instantly. Score.

“Her name is Natalie,” Tony tells her with no small amount of giddiness.

When Natasha’s face goes carefully blank, Tony watches intently as she appears to try and suppress the emotion on her face. Amusingly, Tony can see her lips twitch like she’s trying her best not to smile.

“What does she do?” Natasha inquires, picking Natalie up and placing her in her palm to inspect her exhaustively.

Tony brightens instantly—he loves explaining things, and while a lot of the explanation tends to go over most people’s heads due to how fast he tends to talk, Natasha isn’t one of those people. “Oh, right! She’s EMP-proof, so you don’t have to worry about her being disabled in the field. She’s got a little camera on her and she can easily connect to any devices you have, so she’s perfect for scouting locations, especially since she’s so small and nobody tends to suspect a spider. Kinda like you.

“She’s also a master of escape. Do you know how many times she got out of her containers before I decided shutting her off would be safer? Don’t answer that question, JARVIS.” JARVIS somehow manages to make the silence that hangs in the air sound amused. “Of course, you could teach her to come back anywhere as long as you tell her.” At Natasha’s questioning look, Tony smiles. “She’s a learning AI, like JARVIS and DUM-E.”

“If she’s a learning AI, why didn’t you just tell her not to leave the container?” Wilson questions, leaning against the couch. Tony frowns at him disapprovingly.

“Obviously because then she’d imprint on me, and she’s Natasha’s spider bot, not mine, and I didn’t want to interfere with a budding relationship,” Tony answers. Natasha blinks, the only sign of her surprise. “Also, DUM-E, U, and Butterfingers would get jealous.”

The other three exchange grins (though it’s a small smirk in Natasha’s case), and Tony’s brows furrow in confusion. “What?” he asks, just a touch defensive.
“You are so adorable,” Wilson coos, flapping a hand at him. Tony feels a flush crawl up his neck, but he forces it down; he’s done it so many times, he’s gotten it down to an art form. The press will judge everything he does, so he’s learned to control it. Mostly.

“Shut your face,” Tony huffs haughtily, embarrassed even if he’ll deny it to his last breath. He changes the topic to save face. “Anyways, if you have any questions about how Natalie works, you can ask JARVIS. He’ll walk you through setting her up and everything. I’m heading back down to the workshop.”

“The shameless Tony Stark is embarrassed,” Clint teases, catching on, at which Tony just rolls his eyes, used to Clint’s antics. “Just because someone told him he was adorable.”

“I’m not adorable,” he grumbles, flipping both him and Wilson off. “I’m sexy.” He wiggles his eyebrows for emphasis, and both of them snort loudly. Clint wrinkles his nose in disgust.

“Yeah, no,” Clint decides, and Tony’s almost offended, sending Clint a mock hurt look. He knows Clint doesn’t mean it, though. “Sorry, Tony, but you are not my type.”

“Oh, right, you like the scary ones.” Tony nods agreeably, smirking.

“I am not scary,” Natasha says unconvincingly, and all three of the others look at her disbelievingly. She smiles innocently, and if Tony’s being honest, that’s more chilling than anything else.

“You could break Steve in half with your pinky,” Wilson says incredulously. “You are terrifying.”

“I feel like giving you a spider bot minion was a mistake,” Tony admits, only half joking. “I’ve made you too powerful.”

“At least you did not give Natalie the actual widow poison,” JARVIS says helpfully, and Tony squawks when he sees the calculating gleam in Natasha’s eye. Okay, time to abort.

“Anyways, I’ll be down in the workshop, bye!” He turns tail and runs, because Natasha with that look in her eye is dangerous and Tony does not want to bear witness to whatever might happen. There’s no shame in admitting that he’s fleeing, because Natasha is extremely fear-inspiring.

“Sir, Captain Rogers has returned,” JARVIS announces. “Shall I, ah, persuade him to come down to the workshop so you can break your hand on his face?” There’s a brief pause. “Please do not break your hand on his face. It would not be conducive to productivity.”

“Your concern for Cap is truly touching, JARVIS. Send him down.” Tony sets his work aside, the robot he was repairing just about ready to go back to work. “Anyways, I’ve mostly cooled off, so you don’t have to worry your beautiful code about the state of my phalanges.”

“That is good. Captain Rogers has been summoned, sir. He should arrive in approximately one minute.”

“Thanks, J.” Tony goes to take a seat on the couch, kicking the blanket aside and cursing under his breath when his foot gets tangled in it and he ends up tripping onto the goddamned couch in a graceless heap. “Why,” he whispers into the couch cushion.

“Captain Rogers has entered the workshop, sir,” JARVIS informs him, but Tony doesn’t move
from his face-down, and, if he’s being honest, uncomfortable (but being honest is overrated), position on the couch. He hears the blanket unravel itself from his ankle and fall to the ground with a thump.

“Uh, did you want me?” comes Steve’s mildly concerned voice.

“No, that’s Bucky,” Tony replies automatically, rolling over when the pressure on his arc reactor gets to be too much. He lets out a short exhale, staring pointedly at the ceiling. “Why are the two of you like this. Please get your fucking shit together. You make each other cry more than my exes ever made me cry. It’s pathetic, and it’s hurting me. And Fury, but he’d sooner die than admit that.”

Steve sounds utterly horrified when he says, “I made him cry?! Oh my god. What did I do?”

“According to him, you ran away from him, but I set that straight for the two of you. You are welcome.” Tony turns to glance at Steve, who looks utterly exhausted. Despite his earlier annoyance, Tony softens. “Wilson said you were pretty upset as well.”

“Yeah, but I didn’t cry!” Steve exclaims, though considering the expression on his face, Tony’s pretty sure he came pretty close. He looks like a fucking kicked puppy. Any lingering irritation Tony had felt vanishes instantly. “I feel terrible. Oh god, he must hate me.”

“Not as much as I do,” Tony assures him, completely honest. He’s pretty sure it’s physically impossible for Bucky to hate Steve. Like, Steve turning HYDRA is more likely than Bucky hating Steve. That level of impossible.

“But you don’t--oh.” Steve scowls at Tony, and Tony knows Steve thinks it’s intimidating but it’s a little like seeing a puppy snarl. “Take this seriously!”

“I am!” Tony huffs, throwing his hands in the air, mildly frustrated. “I said, he doesn’t hate you! It’s like, impossible for Bucky to hate you. You literally woke him up from seventy years of brainwashing by saying his fucking nickname.”

“But I hurt him!” Steve protests, face openly sad and awfully fucking tragic, fidgeting with his hands like he doesn’t know what to do with them. “I made him cry.”

Tony makes a face. He can’t see it, but he imagines it looks pretty pained, because that’s exactly how he’s feeling right now. Pained. Extremely pained. So pained he’s turning transparent. Like a window pane. “I was going to break my hand on your face for that,” Tony admits, “but I forgave you because you came in looking like a kicked puppy. And now I really want to hit you where the sun don’t shine because you made me think of the worst fucking joke I’ve ever made.”

Steve balks, the sadness and shit on his face dissipating briefly to give way to confusion. “Do I want to know?”

“No, you really don’t.”

“Oka-- we’re going off track! Tony, please take this seriously! I made my best friend cry!”

Tony recites pi internally, up to about twenty places, before he speaks. “Yes, you did, and that’s because you’re an idiot and very much scared of your own feelings. But before you go off to apologize to him-- and you better do it --you have to understand that he doesn’t hate you.”

Steve opens his mouth to speak, but Tony holds up one hand, at which Steve’s mouth snaps shut with an audible clack. “Seriously, just go find him and apologize for running off because you’re an idiot. And maybe while you’re at it, fucking confess your undying love for him.”
“If I did what I did to him, I would hate me,” Steve mutters. Tony sincerely disagrees, but that’s a conversation for another day.

Tony sighs and pinches the bridge of his nose. “Look, Steve, you made a mistake. Super soldier serum or not, you’re still human, and you’re not infallible. Relationships are pretty much built on hurting each other and making up for it, even when what you did was more hurtful than you intended it to be—and you clearly didn’t intend for you running away from the personification of your extremely gay thoughts to be seen as running away from Bucky.

“Can you honestly say that Bucky’s never hurt your feelings before? I’ve known Rhodey for over twenty years, Steve, and we’ve hurt each other countless times. We’re still friends. Yes, you messed up this time. But if you’re really hoping for this relationship to last, you’re going to have to make up for it, so go find him and apologize.” Since when did Tony become the voice of reason when it comes to relationships?

(Oh, right, because fucking Clint and Natasha are horrible matchmakers and Fury would fucking kill him.)

Steve’s staring at him with round eyes, and Tony can’t tell what he’s thinking. He scowls. “What?” he snarls, though there’s no real bite to it.

“Oh, uh.” Steve smiles. “That’s actually really good advice.”

“Don’t sound so surprised!” Tony grouses. “You come into my workshop—”

“Which you told me to come down to…”

Tony ignores him and plows on, “—and insult my helpful advice.”

“Hey, I never said it wasn’t.” Steve’s smile turns just a little cheeky. “Thanks, Mom.”

Tony sputters, nearly falling off the couch. Clint and Bucky calling him that he’s okay with, because they’re both annoying little shits who don’t know how to take care of themselves, but Steve?! “Oh my god, not you too! They’ve corrupted you!” he screeches, fumbling around in between the couch cushions to find the sage incense (which Clint had gotten him as a gag gift one year) and waves it at Steve. “Begone, foul creature!”

“Oh my god, is that sage,” Steve says in an admittedly impressive monotone. “I’m so terrified. I’m in distress. I guess I really do have to get out of here.”

“Take yourself and your fucking cheek out of my workshop, young man!” Tony makes a shooing gesture with the sage, hissing threateningly.

“I’m going, I’m going.” Steve backs away into the elevator, which JARVIS conveniently opens for him.

“And you’d better fucking talk to Bucky, you idiot! Apologize! Confess! Go forth and do great things!” Tony yells.

“I will, if Bucky’s considered a great thing!” Steve shouts back, and Tony is rendered momentarily speechless.

Then he takes his sage and, with pinpoint accuracy even Clint would be jealous of, throws the sage and nails Steve right in the head as the elevator doors close.
Steve’s muffled howl of pain makes all of the emotions he had to deal with today *so worth it.*

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed! Come yell at me on tumblr @kyasuu!
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

in which the author finally fucken has an ironpool centric chapter

or:
Tony and Wade bond over lion robots and trust is exchanged. There’s also a lot of cuddling.

Chapter Notes

> tag update, please check it out!
> so sorry for the late update! i started another fic (a looong one-shot gift for a friend) and i opened art commissions so i’m just a touch, uh, overwhelmed.
> yes i watch voltron season 4 came out today and i watched it all
> i hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tony, still mildly shaken by the sage incident, heads towards Bruce’s room in hopes of being able to distract himself with science. When he gets there, he frowns when he notices the door ajar, a slice of the light from inside on the ground outside. He hears rumbling snoring--Bruce doesn’t snore that loudly.

But Thor does.

(It sounds a little like thunder, as cliche as it is.)

Grinning a little, Tony closes the door completely as quietly as he can manage, leaving his favorite Science Bro and his cuddle buddy to their cuddle time. Bruce needs the sleep anyways. As usual, Tony completely ignores the hypocrisy of that thought, heading off towards the family room, a couple floors down. Since Bruce is unavailable, he’ll go find someone else. Any Avengers who aren’t sleeping often use the family room, since it just feels like… home. As cheesy as that sounds.

He’s stopped by what sounds like a steady stream of curses and ragged breathing, along with another faint voice speaking calmly. Concerned, Tony follows the source of the sound, and when he rounds the corner, he spots… Wilson?

“Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck,” he’s biting out, each word sharp as a knife, gloved fingers digging into his mask. “Shit, the one time--shut up, please, for fucking once--”

JARVIS is currently listing the date, time, and weather repeatedly--what he always does to ground Tony when he’s suffering from an anxiety attack. Eyebrows knitting together, Tony clears his throat to let Wilson know he’s there, and walks into what he hopes is the other’s line of sight. He takes a seat on the ground to make himself as little of a threat as possible. Just in case, he gives Wilson a wide berth.
“Wilson,” he says, making sure his voice is as clear as possible, and JARVIS’s voice tapers off into silence. Wilson acknowledges his presence with a shaky jerk of a nod. Tony notices his mask is rolled up to reveal the bottom half of his face, but he forces himself to ignore his curiosity. But it’s too late—he can’t unsee the heavy, permanent scarring on the bottom half of his face; no wonder he wants to hide. “List three, uh, black things in the room. Can you do that for me?”

“Your shirt, my gloves, your watch,” Wilson rasps after taking a shuddering, deep breath, his voice more steady than Tony had expected. The mild surprise probably shows up on his face, because Wilson chuckles weakly. “JARVIS talked me through the worst of it—thanks, by the way. You showed up after the actual panic attack. I was mostly just… venting.”

Tony frowns, the concern barely fading. It sure didn’t sound like just venting but the fact that Wilson’s mostly coherent is something he should take into account. “Are you okay?”

He flinches back a little when Wilson snarls, “Shut the fuck up, Yellow.” out of the blue, and instantly Wilson shrinks into himself as well. “Sorry,” he says in a small voice, the lower half of his face covered up by his arms.

“Um… yeah. It’s okay.” Tony calms his racing heart, watching Wilson intently, who’s shifting uncomfortably under his gaze. “You didn’t answer my question, though.” And who the hell is Yellow?

“I’m… Wilson looks like he’s trying to find a word for whatever he’s about to say, and Tony is willing to bet his entire fortune that he’s about to say “okay” or “fine” or something along those lines.

“If you say you’re okay, I swear to god I’m going to find some way to inconvenience you,” Tony promises, waggling a vaguely threatening finger at Wilson. “And it’s going to be super annoying. I’m good at annoying. Very good.”

Wilson winces. “Okay, I’m… I’ve been better,” he amends. “I’ve been worse, though, so…”

“That’s a fair answer,” Tony acknowledges, and claps his hands so loudly even he himself jumps. “So, Wilson, are you a snuggle person?”

“What?” Wilson sounds like he’s gotten whiplash from the topic change. For once, his mask is doing its job and not showing any emotion, much to Tony’s disappointment.“Uh… I guess? Like, cuddling? Or sex? Because I admit you are a very attractive individual, but I’m really not up to it right now.”

Tony rolls his eyes, privately pleased at the “attractive individual” comment. “Cuddling, genius. Body on body snuggle action, with no sexytimes involved. I’m not about to take advantage of you in this state, and I swear to god, I feel like if I did the horizontal tango with you after only three days of knowing you, Steve would give me the stink eye for years to come.”

He stands up, bending down and offering a hand to Wilson. “So, wanna be cuddle buddies for the night?” Tony gives an exaggerated, lascivious wink which draws a short laugh from Wilson, who takes his hand and pulls himself up. On the inside, Tony marvels at how his lips curl slightly and the scars on his cheeks shift as he smiles.

“You readers better be fucking happy,” he thinks he hears Wilson mutter. Tony just brushes it off as him mishearing whatever Wilson actually said, dragging the other into the family room with his hand never leaving Wilson’s so he can’t escape.

He finally lets go of it after he sits Wilson down on the couch. “Pick something for us to watch,”
Tony instructs as he pushes a pillow behind Wilson’s head and digs out a blue blanket from the drawer under the couch (which Tony insists is totally necessary, regardless of what Steve says, fuck you very much Steve, Natasha agrees with him) and ignoring the knives beneath the layers of soft things, hopping onto the couch next to Wilson.

“God, I wish I could say Wolverine: Origins, but a: it definitely doesn’t exist in this universe, and b: I don’t hate myself that much,” Wilson groans, tilting his head to look up at the ceiling. “Uh--god, I really want to pick another Ryan Reynolds movie, but I really don’t want to see my own face for another two hours--Voltron: Legendary Defender.”

Tony frowns. “Voltron… Legendary Defender?” He’s never actually heard of that show, but Wilson’s scandalized gasp and the way he sits bolt upright is telling enough.

“What the quiznak,” Wilson squawks, waving his arms frantically. “Even the author—who, by the way, didn’t know that that weird smell is weed, not skunk, until this year—knows what Voltron is!” He turns towards the readers. “What the hell?”

Tony peers in the same direction Wilson is looking and sees nothing but the doorway. The empty doorway. “Who are you talking to?”

“Them!” Wilson insists, pointing to the readers. Tony doesn’t see anyone, so he assumes Wilson’s just fucking with him. “But there are more pressing matters here, like the fact that you don’t know what the greatest show of all time is.”

“I know what Avatar is, Wilson,” Tony points out dryly, and Wilson gives a long, wounded noise, his head falling heavily on Tony’s shoulder. Tony hides an amused smile.

“I hate that I can’t—even argue with you. Screw you, Stark.”

“At least call me ‘Tony’ if you want to screw me,” Tony says, keeping his tone as light and casual as possible as he ignores Wilson’s sputtering, gesturing vaguely. “J, put on Wilson’s ‘greatest show of all time’, will you?”

“Done, sir,” JARVIS announces as the lights dim and the TV flickers to life. Tony adjusts his arm a little as Wilson burrows into his side and hogs the blanket.

“Wade,” Wilson says out of the blue as they watch Lance and Hunk sneak through the halls of the Garrison. Tony’s gaze briefly flickers to Wilson.

“Hm?”

“Wade. It’s only fair. Tony.” With that, Wilson shifts again and throws himself over Tony’s lap like a fucking cat, causing him to squawk loudly in surprise, and at the same time Pidge screeches on the screen.

Tony blinks once in surprise before his expression melts into something softer. “Okay, Wade.”

He turns back to the five teenagers on his screen, watching as they learn to pilot alien lion robots and sitting through his companion’s excited commentary and making some comments of his own.

Tony tries not to feel too giddy about this—but he realizes that Wade hasn’t rolled his mask back down yet.
Five hours later, they’ve just finished up the first season of Voltron.

“What the fuck?!” Tony screeches, tossing the popcorn they had made at some point during episode two at the screen. “They can’t just-- wow! These writers are fucking diabolical, what the fuck?!” He turns towards Wade with a glare, only a little bit manic from the lack of sleep and the high of the show. “You better tell me there’s a fucking season two.”

“There’s a season two,” Wade promises with a wheezing laugh. He looks far too amused by Tony’s reaction. The asshole. “Dude, I had to wait six freaking months for season two to come out.”

Tony is instantly horrified. He clutches his arc reactor. “How are you alive,” he demands. “What the hell.”

“Sir, I believe you owe the swear jar twenty dollars and seventy-five cents,” JARVIS interrupts helpfully. “I would also like to inform the both of you that Agent Barton is currently on his way down and will enter the room in approximately one minute.”

“Oh, shoot, thanks.” Wade yanks his mask back down all the way before turning to Tony with what Tony assumes is a smile. (Oh come on. We’re back to this shit?!)

“Let’s finish up season two later. You need to get some freaking sleep.”

“Which isn’t healthy,” Clint points out from the doorway, and Tony turns to glower at him. The asshole isn’t even affected, so Tony flips him off for extra measure.

“That is twenty-one dollars now, sir,” JARVIS reminds him, helpful as always.

“I’m going to sell you to Apple,” Tony snarls, though there’s no real bite to it. “I’m sure they’ll find a good use for you. Maybe you’ll be the new Siri.”

There’s a pause. “Apple? At least sell me to Microsoft, sir.” JARVIS sounds almost hurt.

“No I don’t!” Tony protests, scowling instantly and crossing his arms over his chest petulantly. “It’s only six AM, I’ve gone seventy-two hours without sleep!”

“That is twenty- one dollars now, sir,” JARVIS reminds him, helpful as always.

And you still owe the jar, sir. May I also remind you that you were the one to implement the swear jar?”

“And I regret that decision every day,” Tony sighs, even if it’s a lie. Swearing for charity isn’t that bad, and considering the Avengers often meet with children, maybe it’s for the best that they learn to control their language. Steve had approved at the time, except Tony knows he secretly has one hell of a filthy mouth (it’s extremely amusing to see Steve struggle not to swear when he gets annoyed or frustrated with something; his mouth twitches and his expression just twists). Actually—not so secretly now, since everyone’s been present for that one time Steve let loose a stream of curses at that one asshole at a press conference.

That was an amazing day. It didn’t go on air (think of the children) but Tony has a copy of that video. The reporter’s scandalized (and terrified) expression never fails to make Tony’s day.

Wade’s mask wrinkles a little in a show of distaste. “God, you guys are so PG13,” he sniffs. “I’m so glad my movie got an R rating, because I would’ve cried if I had to censor myself the entire time.”
“You have a movie?” Clint asks as Tony shoves a twenty and a one into the hypocritical swear jar viciously.

“And I’m getting a sequel in June next year,” Wade pronounces proudly. “A lot of people are disappointed that there isn’t a Black Widow movie yet, and honestly, same.”

“Why, are there like, three Avengers movies?” Tony inquires, fairly certain Wade’s just pulling his leg. Clint’s expression tells him he’s thinking the same thing.

“Yeah, actually, except the third one is coming out next year,” Wade continues. “Except this fic is canon divergent, so it takes place a bit after the Winter Soldier and isn’t completely Iron Man 3 compliant.” Tony exchanges a glance with Clint, confused; the fact that Clint doesn’t get it either is slightly gratifying. Wade probably figures neither of them understand anything he’s saying. “Oh, the readers will get it. You probably won’t.”

There’s a long moment of silence, and Tony leans against the back of the couch, comfortable and warm. Unbidden, he yawns, and slaps a hand over his mouth as soon as he realizes he’s doing it.

“Oh my god.” Wade positively squeals. “He yawns like a small kitten.”

Tony makes an indignant noise, glaring at him, though he imagines his sleepiness lessens the effect, because Wade makes another utterly horrifying cooing noise at him. “Small kitten?!” he complains. “You could’ve just stopped at ‘kitten’; I am not small.”

“For a grown man, yes you are.” Clint flicks the back of his head, and Tony yelps, swiveling around to glare at the archer, not sure if he’s more offended by the flick to the head or the insinuation that he’s below average height. “And that means it’s time for bed. No more lion robots.”

Tony brightens up immediately as an idea hits him--lion robots! He could totally make-- “Tony, no,” Clint says emphatically, and Tony marvels a little at Clint being the mature one for once. “That would be an incredibly bad idea, and a huge waste of materials and space. Bed.”

“But I’m not sleepy!” Tony whines, lying through his teeth, and all three of them know it because Wade just snorts loudly, and Clint rolls his eyes. Tony tries to pout and turn the kicked puppy look on them.

“I will get Bucky and Steve,” Clint tells Tony in retaliation, a threatening gleam in his eye, and Tony knows he means it. “Or Thor,” he adds, and that’s it, Clinton motherfucking Barton is a fucking menace.

“No, don’t, don’t wake them up!” His response is pretty much instant, despite himself--Bucky, Steve or Thor shouldn’t have to be woken up just to put Tony to bed. He can do that himself--

“You are so easy to manipulate, oh my god,” Wade chortles, and Tony buries his face in his hands, embarrassed and sighing deeply, feeling his breath around his face--because he knows it’s true. And Tony’s helpless to stop it, even if he’s aware of it. He lets loose a deeply wounded noise.

“C’mon, Mom, off to bed,” Clint singsongs, swatting at his back gently, but Tony jumps with surprise anyways. He gets to his feet as Wade does, heading towards the stairs.

“I hate you so, so much,” Tony says as Clint and Wade herd him up the stairs, flanking him so there’s no place for him to run. “I hope your next burrito has all the sour cream on one end of it.”

“Oh my god,” Wade gasps, sounding genuinely hurt. Oops. Except Tony is miffed at him too, so
he does not feel an iota of pity for him. “That’s a **horrible** thing to wish on someone; I am literally hurt *for* Barton right now.”

“I don’t even like burritos,” Clint points out, tone utterly dry, because he’s horrible like that, and who the fuck doesn’t like burritos?

“What the a--crap, who the f--heck doesn’t like burritos?!” Wade exclaims, and now he sounds genuinely offended. More offended than he was a moment ago, if that’s even possible. “I no longer feel bad for you. I hope all of your water bottles are lukewarm.”

Clint squawks; it’s his turn to sound hurt. “That’s so **mean**.” He sounds like he’s on the verge of good to honest tears and Tony wipes a hand down his face, feeling a thousand times more exhausted than he did a moment ago.

“J, why are they like this,” he says with no inflection as Clint and Wade trade stupid and somehow hurtful (? What the fuck) wishes on each other. And he’s stuck listening to them, because somehow both of them are able to keep an eye on him and prevent him from escaping while crying like children over trivial things. This is a special kind of hell.

“Unfortunately, sir, I believe that is a question of nature versus nurture,” JARVIS answers, except it’s not really an answer. “So I cannot answer that question.”

“That was a rhetorical question,” Tony huffs, narrowing his eyes at one of the cameras. There’s a silence from J (Wade and Clint still haven’t shut up yet) that’s suspiciously innocent. That’s more telling than anything, and Tony is reminded once more that his brain baby is such a sassy little shit.

Tony wonders who the fuck taught him that. Oh. Right.

Rolling his eyes, Tony stops at his bedroom door, blinking hazily at the door knob. What do you do with it again…? Clint jabs him in the soft part of his side, startling Tony out of his sleepy daze. He shakes his head slightly to clear the tiredness clinging to his mind like cobwebs and he opens the door. Right. That’s what the door knob is for.

Tony stumbles towards his bed, Clint guiding him with gentleness that would’ve surprised him five years ago. Maybe even two years ago. Not important. What’s important is that there’s a bed under him, it’s very fucking soft, and he just pulled an all nighter watching a Netflix original about fucking lion robots. And now he wants to build a giant lion robot, except Clint is an asshole, and Clint won’t let him build a giant lion robot.

He hears Wade and Clint murmuring quietly, but in his haze of sleep deprivation, Tony isn’t able to hear what they’re saying. Right--all nighter. Tony forces himself to open his eyes, surfacing briefly from the murkiness that is sleep, and tries to make his vocal chords work. “Wade,” he manages to slur, flopping a hand in his general direction. “Bed.”

He sees Wade and Clint exchange looks, Clint looking like he’s trying his best not to laugh. “Uh,” Wade says hesitantly, “like I said, you are a very attractive individual, but at the moment, you’re. Not in the right state of mind--”

Tony scoffs and rolls his eyes, lucidity returning a bit. Why does everyone assume it’s about sex with him? “You pulled an all nighter with me,” he reminds him in the most reprimanding tone he can manage. “Go the fffff *rick* to sleep.” He only barely remembers not to swear because there is no way he’s paying the jar right now.

“Oh,” replies Wade lamely, sounding relieved. “About that--I, uh, don’t actually need to sleep
“Oh my god,” Clint interrupts, looking utterly done. “Go to freaking bed, Lasagna Man. You don’t get to pull the same excuse Tony uses.”

“But I really don’t need to sleep!” Wade protests, waving his hands frantically.

“Nonsense. You stayed up as long as I did,” Tony huffs, rolling onto his back and crossing his arms, fixing Wade with the most unimpressed gaze he can muster at the moment. Wade doesn’t quite wilt but he looks pretty close under the combined weight of Tony’s most unimpressed look and Clint’s flat stare.

“Okay, okay, fine!” Wade folds after a few more seconds of intense silence. “I’ll just—”

“You’re sleeping here,” Tony blurts out, and when both Wade and Clint turn to look at him, he scrambles to justify himself, because there’s no way of retracting that statement without looking like a fool. “I’m going to sleep on you so you don’t leave. And actually sleep.”

Wade’s mask looks as flustered as a mask could possibly look flustered while Clint’s surprised expression slowly melts into something closer to a smirk. “Don’t get up to any hanky panky, you two,” he taunts. He pauses. “Does that mean I can call Wilson ‘Mom’, too? How about Lasagna Mom?”

Tony resolutely ignores the burning in his ears and the way Wade makes a loud choking sound. “Shut your trap, Hawkbutt,” he grumbles, and, his expression turning calculating, Tony lunges at Clint with all the energy he can muster at the moment, pouncing on Clint.

Clint shrieks shrilly with surprise, but his hands scrabble to catch Tony before he can hit the floor. “What the ever-loving frick?” he screeches as Tony goes boneless on him, trusting the archer not to drop him. “Get off me, you’re heavy.”

Because he’s a little shit, Tony rests his chin on Clint’s head and wraps his arms around it, humming cheerfully. Despite Clint’s complaint of Tony’s weight, he’s not even shaking under it. “You can join us in bed,” he says cheerfully.

“But I, unlike you two, already slept,” Clint huffs into Tony’s stomach, breath warm and tickling Tony. “That reminds me--get your butt back here, Wilson. Go the frick to sleep.” Tony grins, turning a little to see Wade guiltily slinking back to the bed from where he’d probably been attempting to escape and taking a tentative seat.

“Damn, this is soft,” Wade exclaims when he sinks into the mattress, sounding surprised. “How much did you even spend on this?”

“Too much,” Tony admits, snorting slightly. “I don’t even sleep in here half the time. The couch is more my bed than anything else.” He holds on a little tighter as Clint starts to move, stopping at the edge of his bed and dropping him like a sack of potatoes. The only reason why he doesn’t bitch about it is the fact that his bed is soft.

He sighs happily, rolling under the blanket and pulling it up all the way past his head. When that gets too suffocating, Tony pokes his face out from below the covers, toasty warm, energy fading again. “Good night,” he announces, already hazy with drowsiness again, and doesn’t wait for a response before he’s out like a light.
It’s warm.

There’s also something heavy on him.

Tony blinks awake slowly, the world gradually shifting into something vaguely recognizable. His brain is still fuzzy, like fog in the morning that’s slowly being burned away, and with every slow blink, the world sharpens a little more into focus.

“Wha--” he tries to say before he’s greeted with the sight of one Wade Wilson, aka Deadpool, sprawled over him and snoring into Tony’s side. He’s also still in full uniform.

He tries not to panic, hoping desperately that he hadn’t done the do with the guy--he’s cool and funny and has a good taste in TV shows, but Tony’s known him for like three days, for crying out loud, he hasn’t done the whole playboy thing since Afghanistan--oh right. The memories come rushing back and he relaxes.

His racing heart calmed, Tony doesn’t move so Wade doesn’t wake up, staring at the far wall and tracing weird patterns in the shapes in the wall to pass the time. “J, what’s the time?” he croaks, keeping his voice low.

“Nine forty-six, sir,” JARVIS answers, voice equally quiet out of respect for Wade. “You slept approximately three hours and twenty minutes.”

“Huh,” says Tony, just a little surprised. “Not bad.”

JARVIS’s silence is somehow disapproving, but Tony ignores his AI’s (admittedly good) advice all the time, so he’s not too bothered. Since he’s not exactly sleepy at the moment, Tony settles in, waving at JARVIS to bring up some holograms for him to check on his work with. And because, despite the way he may act sometimes, Tony has some self-preservation instincts, he checks to see if Pepper or Rhodey’s sent him any messages before anything else.

He notices that JARVIS had picked up a call from Pepper independently, and pulls up the transcript, reading through it. She’d mentioned that she would be getting ready for her platonic lunch date with Steve, and that she hoped Tony would just learn to get a normal sleeping schedule.

Snorting derisively, he flicks the hologram away to move onto actual work. Tony pointedly ignores the fond smile that’s stretching over his face, helpless to stop it. There’s work to be done--Stark Tech doesn’t design itself, and he certainly doesn’t trust the newbies in his company, even if Pepper hired them.

He’s not sure how much time he spends reviewing designs with Wade a warm weight on his hip, but Tony’s startled out of the trance when there’s a sharp rap on his door.

“Captain Rogers is at the door,” JARVIS informs Tony when he turns questioningly towards the nearest camera.

“Let him in,” Tony replies absentmindedly, dismissing the holograms with a flick of the wrist as the door opens, revealing Steve in-- what. “Why are you wearing a suit?” Tony demands, squinting at Steve suspiciously, who’s starting to look like a fish out of water.

“You’ve known each other for three days, Tony,” Steve choke's out, face turning a worrying shade of red. Tony frowns, what is he-- oh. Oh right. Right. Yeah. This--this definitely isn’t. Yeah.

“Oh my god, no,” Tony squawks, waving his hands wildly and feeling his ears start to burn. “I.
No. No. Steve, no--I didn’t,” he stammers, his thoughts a jumbled mess. “We didn’t. Do that. Uh. Even—not even I would do that, no.”

All his moving must’ve woken Wade up, because the guy stirs against Tony’s hip. “What,” he says into the blanket, words muffled.

Steve elects to ignore him, his relief so palpable Tony can feel it across the room, his hand leaving his face. “So—so you guys didn’t, uh, you know. Fondue.” He makes a vague hand gesture that Tony doesn’t even pretend to understand.

“Oh god, what? No. Definitely no hanky panky, and definitely no cheese involved.”

Wade groans loudly and rolls over onto Tony’s stomach, turning to the door. “...Steve, are you wearing a suit?” is what comes out of his mouth, and he sounds pretty lucid for someone who just woke up. Tony is instantly jealous and squashes down the urge to roll him off the bed.

Tony snaps his fingers. “Right! Why are you wearing a suit? You look ridiculous in that thing, change out of it. Seeing you wear a suit is like. Like Natasha wearing a bonnet. Just no. You pull it off, but you definitely don’t look right in it.”

Steve’s expression turns into something akin to horror. “Why would you ever put that image into my head.”

Tony grimaces, rubbing the bridge of his nose. “Now you know how we feel. Steve, why are you wearing a freaking suit,” he repeats slowly.

“I’m supposed to meet Pepper in an hour,” Steve answers lamely, shifting from foot to foot and looking deeply uncomfortable. Whether it’s because of the fact that he’s wearing a fucking suit or if it’s because he walked in on two of his closest friends sleeping in the same bed, Tony doesn’t know.

“And you thought wearing a suit would be appropriate?” Tony sits up, shamelessly pushing Wade off of his stomach. Wade whimpers pathetically.

“My pillow,” he wails dramatically, clutching at the blankets bunched around Tony, warmed by their body heat.

“I’m not your goddamned pillow,” Tony grumbles, though any and all grouchiness is just for show. “Steve, you’ve met Pepper before! She’s not going to bury you six feet below the ground.”

Steve squints at Tony dubiously. “She brought a shovel the first time we met,” Steve squawks, flailing. “And then she stuck it in the ground and then looked at me for sixty seconds without blinking with a frightening smile. I’d never been so terrified.”

“I am fairly certain that Aunt Peggy shot at you,” Tony reasons dryly, though he actually didn’t know Pepper had threatened Steve. It’s not that hard to guess why she did it, though. Pepper rarely ever gets violent, but whenever she does it’s usually because of (or for) Tony. He’s not even ashamed to admit that he thinks it’s totally hot, even if they broke up awhile back.

(He. He may or may not have popped one when she completely and utterly destroyed Aldrich Killian. Or when she destroyed the armor homing in on her.

The thought that had passed through his head was first-- holy shit that could’ve been me, and then, right afterwards, holy shit I wish that were me.

“A shovel, Tony,” Steve repeats, bringing Tony back to the present, and that’s probably a good
thing because it would be so fucking awkward if he popped a boner while Wade was in his bed, even if the reason why he popped one was totally unrelated. “Peggy never wanted to kill me, but I think Pepper did. Really, really badly.”

“She doesn’t want to kill you now,” Tony reminds him, settling back onto the bed. At least he’s pretty sure she doesn’t want to anymore. From what Tony’s seen of their interactions (because even if they’re not that often, Tony’s lived with the Avengers for, like, five years, and Pepper is one of his closest friends, there’s no way she’s not going to interact with the rest of them) they’re pretty cordial. “She’s offering you relationship advice, not taking you to the guillotine. Now please change out of the suit, Steve. I promise you’ll be fine, but I can’t promise that I’ll avenge you if she kills you because if Pepper kills you, you probably deserved it.”

Steve opens his mouth, expression almost offended, before he closes his mouth, is silent for a moment, and opens his mouth again. “You have a point,” he admits. “I’ll get changed--and I’ll, uh, try not to. Um. Stick my foot in my mouth again.”

“Have you made up with your boyfriend yet?” Wade is studying his gloved fingers in the same way someone would study their nails in a show of boredom as Steve makes a strangled noise from the doorway.

“I don’t get you,” Tony says, disbelieving. “You made the most horrible dirty joke yesterday but the moment Wade calls Bucky your boyfriend you panic?”

Steve lets loose another pitiful noise of embarrassment and covers his face with his hands. Tony exchanges an exasperated glance with Wade.

“You still haven’t answered the question yet,” Wade says, leaning against Tony’s stomach again. Tony doesn’t bother pushing him off this time, but he does note that he is in the perfect position to shove him off the bed.

“I want to talk to Pepper first,” Steve admits, finally pulling his hands away from his face and scratching his slightly red cheek. “Just in case I mess up again, because god, I don’t need to do that again.”

“That’s probably a good idea.” Tony nods approvingly. “By the way, Steve, I may have yelled at you and broken a stick of sage incense on your forehead--”

“Oh my god, you did what?”

“--but I would do the same thing to Bucky if he hurt you,” Tony continues cheerfully, ignoring Wade’s giggles. “Both of you are my idiot teammates and fluffy ducklings and I have an obligation to protect you.” He scowls at the cheeky expression making its way onto Steve’s face. “Shut-- Steve, no, don’t you dare--”

“Thanks, Mom,” Steve says anyways, because he’s a little shit.

“Wade,” Tony says, turning to the person in question, who looks towards him, dead serious, “if you kick Steve’s ass for me, I’ll pay for your swear jar for the rest of your visit.”

Wade is silent for a moment, and Steve casually starts to back out of the room. “Sorry, Steve.” Wade’s voice is perfectly cheerful. “No hard feelings, but I really, really don’t like this stupid filter.”

“Go, go, go,” Tony stage-whispers, and Wade launches himself off the bed at Steve, who screams and turns tail to run. Once both of them are out of earshot (which is pretty difficult because Steve can scream very loudly), Tony turns to JARVIS. “Hey, J,” he says, “first thing: make sure Wade
doesn’t actually, uh, kill Steve. I was joking.”

“Noted. And the second thing, sir?”

“Make sure I have quarters everywhere. I feel like I’m going to need them.”

JARVIS is silent for a few moments, and Tony feels like if he had a human body, he’d be shaking with laughter. Tony feels mildly insulted. “I think you would be right, sir,” he says at last.

After another few hours of working on his company tech (Wade had slipped back into the room around halfway through the checking spree, looking smug but being quiet as he curled up against the bend of Tony’s stomach and thighs. To Tony’s eternal glee, he notices Wade’s rolled his mask back up halfway), Tony receives a text from Pepper.

_I’ve sorted him out. I think._

Tony types out a lazy reply, _thx pep i hope u enjoy whatever u buy urself_

_I will_, Pepper’s text assures him. Somehow the text sounds sinister, despite the innocuous font. _Anyways, Tony. What’s this I hear about this “Wade Wilson”? Are you sleeping with him?_

Tony blinks, uncomprehending at the text. Wade hasn’t moved in a while, still fucking around on his cell phone, but at Tony’s sudden laxness, Wade glances towards him, looking mildly concerned.

Steve is a petty bitch. Tony is _so_ gonna get him back for this.

(Hey, Tony never said _he_ wasn’t a petty bitch.)

yeah, Tony replies, because he’s a little shit.

…_Tony, please tell me you’re joking._

_no im not_

_im literally sleeping with him rn_

_were spooning lol_

Tony pauses and looks at his bedmate. “Are we spooning?”

Wade doesn’t stop in his gaming even as he responds, “Yeah. We totally are.”

“Oh, just checking.” He turns back to the text messages.

_its k happens to the best of us_

_If you were sleeping with him, as in fucking, I was only going to ask if you used protection._

Tony chokes a little as he types his next response, _wtf pepper im like 40 sth not 16_
Really? I couldn’t tell.

pep ur so mean

Tough love, baby.

And I mean that as in you are literally a baby.

wow im heartbroken

in tears

Anyways, I’m back to work, now. Tell me all about Mister Wilson later.

u could just ask steve theyre friends

like theyve known each other for like 5 years lol

also see ya pep

love u

Love you too.

“Who were you texting?” Wade asks casually in a tone that implies he doesn’t mind if Tony doesn’t answer.

“Pepper.”

“Do you have a friend named Salt as well?”

Tony snorts as he discards one of the designs. Wouldn’t work, and it’s too costly to be profitable. “It’s a nickname, and Salt would be Bruce,” he answers dryly. “You wouldn’t know it looking at him, but he’s not shy, he’s reserved. He can be really mean when he wants to be.” That one time he’d sat in during one of Fury, Thor, and Bruce’s rage sessions was a… mistake. To say the least.

Wade is silent for a moment, probably digesting that information. “I can see it,” he says, finally. “What about a Cumin?”

“This is getting a little ridiculous. We’re the Avengers, not the Spice Girls.”

There’s no response, and Tony goes another few minutes working in comfortable silence before he breaks it. “What are you playing?”

“Candy Crush,” Wade answers, and before Tony can laugh at him (because really, Candy Crush?), he continues, “And shut your fucking face, Mister Stank, Blind Al downloaded it. I don’t even know why, she can’t even fucking see the screen.”

“You used that joke already!” Tony whines, mildly offended even as he absorbs this new information--there’s someone in Wade’s life called Al, and she’s blind. A friend, probably. “Who’s Al?”

“The old lady in the laundromat. Yeah, the one I broke sixteen walls in. Fourth wall break in a fourth wall break, remember? Don’t answer that, Tony, that wasn’t for you.” Wade grumbles under his breath at the game when he doesn’t do something right. “Anyways, I lived with her for a bit. We switched up paying rent, she ignored me while I jacked off, I ignored her while she
“Three quarters, sir,” JARVIS informs him, and Tony sighs even as Wade takes on an expression that can only be described as “shit-eating”. He rummages around under his pillow, “aha”-ing when his fingers brush against leather, and he opens his wallet. Or one of them, anyway.

“I don’t want to go to the swear jar,” Tony complains, pulling out a hundred dollar bill. The hypocritical jar is sitting in the corner of his room, and he’s on the bed, which is not cool. Well, one of the jars. There’s one in pretty much every room. “Can I just hold it out and pretend it’s in the jar and put it in when I get up?”

“Certainly,” JARVIS allows, “but I will be reminding you incessantly if you do not pay.”

“Thanks.” Tony pats the hundred dollar bill as he shifts a little. “I feel like you’re going to be the reason I go bankrupt,” he says.

Wade smiles at him wolfishly, and Tony doubts it’ll ever get old, watching the way his face--his face, not his mask--shifts. “You fucking bet your ass I will be,” he responds quite cheerfully.

Tony gives an exaggerated huff, making it a point to turn back to his SI projects. But his heart is still soaring because--trust. It’s the biggest gift anyone could give anyone (in Tony’s case, anyway, and he thinks Wade is the same way).

And Wade has given it to him, however tentatively.

In the midst of his sappy thoughts, he almost sends Rhodey a few questionable pictures, and hastens to delete them before he can send.

(And this, ladies and gentlemen, is why Tony Stark does not do emotions.)

Chapter End Notes

Tumblr is kyasuu!

End Notes

Yell at me on tumblr @kyasuu! :D

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