

Dysfunctional: A Strange Encounter

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Dysfunctional: A Strange Encounter

by [InkpotGod97](#)

Summary

"So, Sorcerer Supreme, huh?" Peter mused as he leaned against the wall trying to seem 'cool'.
"Like Crunch Wrap Supreme?"

Peter's second family is a bit dysfunctional.

Christmas with the Avengers is always a great time.

Peter has had a stressful past couple of weeks. From a chaotic field trip to nearly killing someone, Spider-man needs a break. But holiday cheer doesn't last forever.

After a successful holiday, Peter and the team head back to the city where Peter intercepts a plot to target a member of the Avengers. After being injured, Peter crashes through the window of the Sanctum Sanctorum and into the world of Stephen Strange. Can the Sorcerer Supreme help the Avengers with their enemy? What does Tony Stark think of their new ally? And can Peter figure out who is after his family?

Senior Year is proving a lot more difficult than he first imagined.

Or when Peter meets Doctor Strange and he saves Peter's life only to end up teaming up with the Avengers to help fight the good fight.

Notes

Make sure to read the first two stories first!

Merry Christmas

Chapter Summary

Merry Christmas!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Once again, the Avengers found themselves on opposite sides.

And this time, it would be different.

“Alright, team,” Tony said, his armor glinting in the winter afternoon. “They may think they’re smarter than us, but we’ve got some big guns,” Tony said, pointing to Loki who was already grinning as he planned his attack.

“They’ve got Maximoff,” Natasha said eyeing the other team.

“And we’ve got Vision,” Tony pointed out. “They’re not getting the jump on us, not like last time. Steve isn’t going to win, we take him out first. Pete, I need you on Barnes, he’s not going to go down easy, but you’ve beaten him before.” Peter nodded, the Iron Spider suit shining brilliantly under the sun. Peter checked his web shooters as Karen went through a system check.

“Rhodey, you take Wilson and Natasha’s on Barton,” Tony said. “While Loki takes care of his brother, I think—” Tony was cut off by a projectile from across the field hitting him in the back of the head. “Foul!” Stark stood up from behind their barrier and gestured towards Pepper who sat on the wing of one of the quinjets sipping coffee with Bruce and Laura. The Barton kids were just inside as they watched the carnage safely behind the bulletproof glass.

“I thought there were no rules!” Pepper called back. Tony glared at his fiancé and then turned towards the enemy. Wanda stood across from him, fully outfitted in her red leather, a snowball wrapped in red energy hovering above her palm.

“We’re at a ceasefire, Maximoff!” Wanda grinned and sent the frozen projectile towards him. Tony ducked just in time to avoid it, his helmet materializing over his head in seconds. “So much for a fair fight.”

“Let’s take them down then,” Peter said, his own mask covering his face as Team Iron Man braced for the greatest battle of superhero history:

The Annual Avengers Snowball Showdown.

For the Christmas Eve event, there were two teams. Team Iron Man that consisted of Iron Man, Spider-Man, Black Widow, Vision, Loki, and War Machine. And then Team Cap with Captain America, Winter Soldier, Scarlet Witch, Thor, Falcon, and Hawkeye. Hulk was sitting out this year. The big green guy *loved* the game, but after he destroyed a plane the year before, Banner decided he would referee alongside Pepper and Laura. However, Bruce did have a snowball cannon, designed by Peter, to run interference.

“They won’t go easy,” Vision pointed out.

“Neither will we,” Tony said, his arm transforming into a canon specifically designed for this occasion. All the heroes were outfitted in their top gear for the showdown and they were taking no prisoners. “Loki, as we discussed.” Tony nodded to the trickster. Loki was one of the more excited heroes of the group. Peter wasn’t surprised. The god loved chaos and games. Loki took a breath and then with a wave of his hand and a faint green glow, the battlefield was littered with Loki duplicates.

“The sign of war has been given!” Thor bellowed from behind them as thunder crackled above.

“Avengers!” Tony bellowed. “Attack!” They threw themselves into the fray. Tony shot to the sky alongside Rhodey. Vision gave Nat a lift as she headed towards Clint while he took on Wanda. Peter jumped over the barricade and was met with an entertaining sight.

“Karen, are you getting this?” he said to his AI.

“Of course, Peter. Mr. Leeds is getting the live feed now.” When Peter had mentioned the event in passing, Ned was hurt. How could his best friend never tell him about this? So, as an apology, Peter gave Ned a live view of the battle. Ned was to call him after it was over. Peter didn’t think it was going to last that long this time.

The multitude of Lokis were chucking snowballs left and right as the real Loki headed for Thor. Since the death of Odin, Loki had been able to break the enchantment that restrained his frost giant abilities. As he approached his brother, Loki generated an ice-cold fog, surrounding the god of thunder.

While Loki was immune to the cold, Thor was not.

Thor, paced under the Jötunn magic before calling a bolt of lightning and shattering it across the field, eliminating the illusions of his brother and giving clear sight for his team. Wanda used this to lift about thirty snowballs and sent them towards the flyers. Tony and Rhodey easily dodged the snow and Vision let them phase through him. In return, they hit Sam.

Tony raised his cannon and went right for Cap who crouched behind his shield before throwing it right at Stark. The shield hit Tony who retaliated with a dive to the ground and a repulsor shot which blew up a section of snow, dousing the Captain.

“That’s a shot for the books, Tony!” Peter called as he latched onto Rhodey’s boot and went for Bucky. The soldier was holding a snowball the size of a bowling ball in which he proceeded to throw at Peter’s face. “Oh god!” Peter yelled as he detached from the web and

fell towards the ground missing the snowball by inches. Peter rolled out of the fall and shot two webs, securing Bucky's arms down as he catapulted himself over the soldier. He was hit with a lightning blast at the last second. "Not fair!" Peter yelled as he sailed overhead and crashed into a nearby tree. Laura lifted the number ten.

"Why does your wife have scoring numbers, Barton?" Sam asked through the coms.

"She finds it entertaining," Clint said through gritted teeth as he chucked snowballs at his best friend. Nat was dodging them easily as she threw her own, smiling the whole time. "And she likes Thor a lot, hence the ten."

"I'm sure she does!" Tony quipped. An arrow found its way to him the next second. When it exploded, powdered snow erupted in the billionaire's face. "*How?*"

"Pays to have a friend with shrinking tech," Clint grinned.

"Dammit, Lang!" Tony shouted as he dived for Steve again. Peter had picked himself up again and with the help of his extra four arms, he easily made his way through the fray, chucking snowballs at anyone he had in his sights.

"Web grenade!" Peter yelled as he threw one towards Wanda. The webbing encapsulated her instantly and Vision pelted his girlfriend with snow. The witch threw the web off easily and launched herself into the air, Vision catching her instantly. Both of them laughing the whole time. Peter couldn't help but laugh himself at the ridiculousness of the situation.

A bunch of superheroes having a snowball fight as if it was an all-out war. Peter was honored to be a part of the chaos. He caught sight of the Asgardians as they circled each other, both smiling. Thor juggled snowballs in his hands as Loki watched every move his older brother made. "What's wrong, brother? Afraid of a little ice?" Loki taunted.

"I think you are forgetting who led the missions to Jotunheim, Loki," Thor said.

"And you're forgetting who's its king." Loki grinned before raising up a bunch of snowballs and pelting his brother. Thor just took the ambush, falling to the ground, his booming laughter echoing. Peter looked back to the sky to see Sam and Rhodey trying to get each other with snow cannons while Bruce tried to snipe them from his spot on the ground.

Peter didn't know what counted as a win. This was the third year they had done this. The first was right after Sokovia when Peter wasn't yet a part of the team. They didn't do it when the team was *literally* at war, obviously, but this was Peter's second Showdown and he was still confused on the rules. "So, tell me again how anybody knows that they won," Peter said as he shot two more snowballs towards Bucky.

"Is everyone still on their feet and acting like idiots?" Rhodey said in his ear.

"Uh, yeah," said Peter.

"Then nobody has won yet!" Tony said as he flew overhead with what Peter thought was a trailer. "Until now!" he yelled like a madman before Rhodey joined him and the two metal-

clad men dumped the contents of the trailer onto Steve, Bucky, Clint, and a still-laughing Thor. Tony and Rhodey high-fived and laughed themselves.

“Uh oh,” Sam said as he watched the trailer become wrapped in crimson. Wanda, who was still in Vision’s arms flipped the trailer and sent it downward, trapping Iron Man and War Machine beneath it.

Thor was then up in a second and had restrained his brother, shoving the raven-haired man’s face into the snow. Loki gave up then and just accepted defeat. At least until he shot a wave of cold into Thor’s face and both gods fell, acting like the children they once were.

Wanda then somersaulted out of Vision’s arms and threw her boyfriend into a large snow bank a few meters away. Sam caught her as she fell, taking her carefully to the ground. Peter ran towards Bucky again, but Banner had the spider in his sights. Peter easily dodged the snowball, the Iron Spider arms smacking them away on instinct. Peter was untouchable in the game with his spidey-sense.

That is until Wanda got a hold of him and tossed him clear into the air. “Can spiders fly?” She asked with a smile before sending him higher, accompanied by a whirl of snow. As Peter tumbled through the air, he got her in his sights before launching a snowball right at her forehead. Wanda fell backward and Peter...well he fell towards the ground.

Peter shot a web to the sky and Loki caught it in his magic, keeping it aloft as Peter swung to the ground and caught Natasha just before Clint hit her in the face with a snowball. The two spiders tumbled to the ground sputtering in the snow. Peter’s mask retracted, and he and Nat looked at each other for a moment before they collapsed into heaps of laughter.

“Victory!” Clint yelled, his arms above his head as he stood atop his team’s barricade. Peter raised himself up onto his elbows as he saw Cap, Bucky, Wanda, Sam, and Thor all rejoicing in their victory with the archer. He looked to the rest of his team and the only one on their feet was Loki. Tony and Rhodey had escaped the trailer and sat against it, their helmets off, frowning. Vision lay in the snow bank watching Wanda as Clint hauled her up next to him. Nat lay next to Peter, exhausted.

Peter got to his feet.

“Team Cap wins!” Pepper shouted from the jet with Bruce and Laura holding up number tens.

“Rigged!” Tony yelled.

“Dude!” Clint hollered. “You guys have a *literal frost giant* and still couldn’t win,” Clint said laughing.

“Vision was pulling back,” Rhodey said.

“Well, he’s not one for choosing sides,” Steve said approaching Tony. “Look on the bright side, Tony, our teamwork has never been stronger.”

“You’re right, Rogers,” Tony said. “Teamwork. Gotta love it.” Tony grinned before looking to Peter who had made his way towards the captain. “Just like old times, eh Cap?” Steve’s brow furrowed just as Peter leaped over him, shot a web at his shield and took it into his own arms. Tony then lifted his snow cannon and shot a hefty amount of powder into his friend’s face.

Steve sighed, a smile on his face, as he brushed off the snow. “Did that make you feel better?”

“Oh absolutely. I’ll accept defeat, but that was my consolation prize,” Tony said with a shrug. “Nice job, Pete!”

“Thanks!” Peter yelled balancing the shield on his arm. “Another one for the books,” he announced.

“Sure is, kid,” Sam said as he tucked into his wings brushing off his shoulders.

“Great, so can we go inside now? I’m starving.”

“You’re always ‘starving’,” Tony said accepting Steve’s outstretched hand.

“Too bad only the winners get Bucky’s cherry pie,” Wanda said as she ran by the teen.

“Oh no, you don’t!” Peter said taking off after her, his webs aiming for her ankles. Steve sighed in amusement, clapping Tony on the shoulder.

“What’s a family Christmas without a little competition?” asked Steve.

“Don’t try to act cute, Rogers. I’m getting some of that pie.” Steve grinned before he took off as well. “Steve!” Tony yelled, flying after him as round two started over Bucky’s baking.

In the end, everyone got pie.

After the team had changed out of their armor, Peter and Wanda still vied for the final piece, but Clint had snatched it up while neither of them was looking. Peter had been on Winter Break for a week now and all was good. Everything stressful from the previous weeks, the field trip, Flash, Boyko, it was all out of his head. Peter was finally sleeping better and planned to spend the rest of the year in a relatively calm environment.

“Oh, that’s ridiculous!” Clint yelled suddenly.

Well, calm was one word for it.

Clint was facing Tony who was shrugging. “He’s calling me out for cheating,” Barton said to Natasha who was sipping on her hot chocolate next to Peter.

“Hey, I’m just saying you used outside tech as an advantage...” Tony pointed out with a sip of his coffee.

“Lang is a part of the team!” Clint countered.

“Yes, but was he here today?” Rhodey interjected. Tony pointed to his best friend.

“The Colonel has spoken!” Tony announced raising his mug in triumph. “I rest my case, Barton. You have won in the eyes of the refs, but I won in spirit and that’s all that matters.”

“I don’t...” Clint trailed off, before sighing and raising his own cup to Tony who grinned. “Good game, Stark.”

“Always a pleasure, Barton,” Tony said as he walked over to Peter and Natasha. Nat excused herself to go find more food and Tony took her place on the couch. “Alright, lay it on me, how boring is your holiday?” Tony asked.

“If this is boring, I don’t think I want to know what you guys think is fun,” Peter said with a smile.

“Oh, this? We’re just getting warmed up, Pete.” Tony smirked. “but really, are you having a good time?”

“You worry too much, as usual,” Peter told him. “Tony, *I’m having fun*. And I agree with you about Clint.”

“Which is why you are my co-captain. Don’t tell Rhodey.” Tony leaned back into the couch and propped his feet up. The two of them sat on one of the sofas in the corner of the main living room. The rest of the team were dotted around sinking into their own conversations. Lila and Cooper were sitting with their dad as Clint talked to Natasha and Bucky. Laura had Nathaniel with her as she spoke with Wanda and Vision. Maximoff was making Nathaniel’s toy elephant float in front of his face. The three-year-old clapped as he smiled up at his Aunt Wanda.

Thor and Loki were with Bruce recounting some story that Brunnhilde had told Loki a couple days before. Peter hadn’t met the Valkyrie yet, but with every story, he wanted to more and more. Rhodey, Steve, Pepper, and Sam were standing around one of the many Christmas trees drinking and smiling. Peter took a deep breath and relaxed further into the couch, drawing up his hood.

“I know last year was rough,” Tony started, pulling Peter from his thoughts. “And I know you’ve been dreading the holidays and I just wanted to make them special.” Peter placed down his pie and turned to Tony.

“Every day I spend with the team is special. And not to sound too sappy, but I wouldn’t want my Christmas any other way,” Peter said. Tony placed his mug down and grabbed his kid into a hug, Peter yelping as his dad smothered him. That was something else: Peter had started calling Tony “dad” in his head. He hadn’t said it out loud yet and didn’t think he would ever, but MJ was right: Tony was pretty much a father to him.

Tony pulled Peter's hood over his eyes and held it down as he used his other hand to sneak towards Peter's plate. A web shot out from the teen's sleeve and caught Tony's hand. "Now who's cheating?" Peter said peaking out from under his hood. Tony rolled his eyes.

"I'll be able to sneak around you one of these days, Pete. Mark my words," Tony said.

"Only MJ can do that, so good luck." Peter shoved a mouthful of pie into his mouth.

"The only reason she can do that is that you let her. You are always looking for her so when she does manage to show up, you're anticipating it. Face it, bud, she's got you in her—"

"If you say she's got me in her web, I'm leaving. I will literally pack my bags and go live in Wakanda after a dad joke like that," Peter warned. Tony was stone-faced.

"I'd like to see you try to spin that one," Peter groaned as Tony exploded into laughter.

"That's it, I'm calling Shuri."

A few hours later, Peter found himself on the roof of the residence building.

He had just finished a phone call with Ned. He and his best friend raved about the Snowball Showdown. Ned couldn't believe Thor had actually hit Peter with a bolt of lightning. "It didn't hurt, I swear," Peter assured him. "Low voltage for sure, I think, *and* I was wearing the Iron Spider, so I'm good." The two teens talked for about an hour before Ned had to go help his mom with dinner. Peter stayed on the roof for a while when Clint showed up.

It seemed Lila had gotten ahold of her father as he was sporting one of her Christmas bows in his hair. "I like it," Peter said. "It's very *Miracle on 34th Street*," Peter joked. Clint grimaced and sat next to him, letting his feet dangle over the edge.

"You know you make Steve nervous when you come up here," Clint said.

"Says the man who jumps out of planes without a parachute," Peter pointed out.

"What's that thing he says to you all the time?"

"Uh, 'do as I say not as I do unless what I do is incredibly boring'?" Peter guessed.

"Not sure about that last part," Clint smiled.

"No, I'm pretty sure that's it," said Peter.

"So," Clint began. "you doin' alright?" Peter sighed.

“Between you and Tony and the looks Pepper keeps sending me, I have enough people checking up on me for one holiday. Clint, I’m okay. I’ve *been* okay since Thanksgiving. You don’t need to slip into Dad Mode every time you’re around me. That’s Steve’s job.” Clint picked the bow out his hair and held it between his fingers.

“Actually, that’s Tony’s job. Yeah, yeah, I know he’s not really your dad, but Peter he *loves* being your not-dad. Does that make sense?” Peter shook his head. “Look, I’ve known Tony for a while now and there are only a few people that he is *that* personable and *that* comfortable with. Rhodes, Pepper, and Happy are his people. And now, so are you. Sure, Stark likes us, some more than others,” Clint laughed. Peter smiled. “but he has those four special places in his iron heart for the four of you. And I never say it, but we owe you a lot.”

“For what?” Peter asked.

“After Germany, after Siberia... Vision would tell us how Tony was when he would come to visit Wanda. Tony was...he was starting to act as he did before all of this started,” Clint said gesturing to the grounds around them. “but then Vision said he was starting to gain his ‘Tony Stark glow’ back. Not sure if Stark ever had a ‘glow’, but those were the android’s words. Anyways, this was because of you. He had this new kid in his life and you brought the spark back into him. Something we should have never let him lose in the first place.”

“Tony doesn’t blame you for what happened, Clint,” Peter told him.

“It doesn’t matter. We chose sides,” Clint said. “For years we were a single unit. We would die for one another and then that damned day in Leipzig...I could feel it in the air, the disbelief. Especially for Cap, Natasha, Stark, and I...we can’t ever let something like that happen again.”

“Why are you telling me this?” Peter asked.

“I just want you to know how much this all means to us. We don’t have many other people besides each other. At least not people who can say they’ve fought aliens and giant robots together,” Clint said causing them both to laugh. “Look, Cap may be our leader, but Stark... he’s what keeps us together whether he knows it or not and without you picking up the pieces we left, we may have never become a team again. So, again, we owe you.”

“Well,” Peter began, unsure of what to say to that. “I suppose I owe you guys as well.” Clint furrowed his brow. “If you guys hadn’t of had Tony’s back all those times fighting aliens and giant robots, I may have never met him.”

“You still would have been Spider-Man,” Clint pointed out.

“Maybe, but I would have been alone when my family died. Tony took me in when I had nobody. Sure, I had Ned, but his parents wouldn’t have been able to keep me. I would have gone into the system and being an Avenger would have been out of the question. And Clint, not to be dramatic, but I would literally dissolve into nothing if I couldn’t be Spider-Man.”

“Then it’s a good thing Tony likes to collect genius kids,” Clint said with a laugh, but Peter was confused.

“What do mean, ‘kids’?” Peter asked. “As in...plural?”

“He never told you about Harley?” Clint asked, afraid he let something slip.

“No...who the hell is Harley?” Clint stood then, fiddling with the device on his belt.

“Best if you just ask your father,” Clint said as he jumped from the roof, attaching a cable to the railing and landing on the balcony below.

“Clint!”

“Later, Pete!” the archer said as he ducked inside. Peter took out his phone.

“Karen, who is Harley?” he asked his AI.

“According to F.R.I.D.A.Y, Harley Keener met Mr. Stark when he was in Tennessee in 2013 after the Mandarin attack.”

“Anything else?”

“Classified,” Karen said.

“What? From me?”

“From everyone,” Karen said.

“Interesting...” Peter said. “Remind me to come back to this.”

“Of course.” Peter stood up then and jumped from the roof himself, landing easily in a crouch. A knock on the window came behind him and he turned to see Steve standing there. He was in a new mood Peter had discovered. He called it: Why-Doesn’t-Peter-Ever-Listen-To-Me Steve. Peter just saluted Cap and continued down to the ground level.

He loved Cap, but sometimes the super soldier forgot Peter was still a superhero without his suit. Cap didn’t worry when Sam jumped off ledges or when Bucky tumbled out of buildings. Peter figured it was because he was still annoyed Tony took him to the fight in Germany when he was only fourteen. But Steve would have to get over that.

“F.R.I.D.A.Y., direct me to the nearest table with food, please.”

“Miss Potts has just set out guacamole in the main room.”

“On my way!”

As Christmas Eve came to a close, Peter headed to bed early.

Even though he claimed the lightning bolt didn't hurt...it still took a lot out of him. He mumbled a vague goodnight to his family as he hauled himself to his room. Compared to his room at the Tower, this one was sparser as he didn't spend as much time upstate. Tony had given him a room in the East Wing, near to his own bedroom.

Tony had kept his word and decorated the entire residence building. Even Peter's room had a small tree in the corner that lit up with blue and red lights. Tony had kept him out of the room until he had finished when the team had first arrived at the compound. Peter couldn't keep the smile off his face as Tony proudly showed off all his hard work. It was the little things that made the boss happy.

Peter lay in his bed, his eyes on the ceiling as he slowly drifted off.

He was woken up early the next morning by someone poking his cheek. Peter cracked his eyes open to see a wide-eyed Lila Barton staring at him. "Mornin', Lila," Peter grumbled.

"Merry Christmas, Peter!" Lila yelled as she jumped onto the bed and the nine-year-old grinned down at him. "Daddy told me to come wake you up!"

"Of course, he did..." Peter said rubbing the sleep from his eyes. He found the clock on the wall. It was nine a.m. "Merry Christmas, Lila," he said as she hopped off the bed and ran to the door. Cooper was waiting for his sister on the other side. Peter watched the two of them run off before tossing his legs over the side of the bed. He reached for his phone.

8:03 \ MJ: Merry Christmas, Peter.

8:04 \ MJ: Don't forget to do your decathlon work. I mean it.

Peter snorted and typed back a quick message.

9:02 \ Peter: Merry Christmas, MJ. And don't worry, I already did all your fun-sucking work.

Peter texted Ned too to wish him a happy holiday and then headed to the common room.

The coffee hit him first. He nearly groaned at the smell of it. Peter wasn't one to drink caffeine. It usually made him even more on edge, but there were moments of weakness that he craved the heavenly dark drink. And this was that moment. He was still half-asleep when someone pressed a mug of the stuff into his palm. Peter clutched it to his chest and sighed. "It's coffee, Pete, not the Holy Grail," Rhodey said drinking a cup of his own. Peter took a long sip of the coffee. He peered over the cup to look at Rhodey.

"It's *my* Holy Grail," Peter said. Rhodey shook his head and went over to sit on the couch. The Barton kids had already started on their presents. Nathaniel was covered in ribbons and tape courtesy of his older siblings. Natasha was sitting with Lila as her niece opened some type of new hand-held game. Cooper was playing with a foam bo staff Clint had got him. Laura looked on with worry as his father beamed with pride.

Peter crossed the room and into the kitchen where he found Pepper. “Good morning, honey. Merry Christmas,” Pepper said as she kissed Peter on the forehead. He hugged her back.

“Merry Christmas,” Peter yawned. He exchanged the holiday pleasantries with Bucky, Wanda, Vision, and Sam as they all got breakfast. Loki and Thor were up as well. Thor was grinning at something Steve said as Loki watched the Barton kids, confused.

“Such small things make the small children happy,” Loki observed.

“They’re toys. They make most little kids happy,” Peter explained.

“When Thor and I were young we went to other worlds to learn about other customs. They would sometimes present us with gifts. Is this similar?” Loki wondered.

“I suppose...” Peter said slowly. “Everything is different on Midgard.”

“Yes, so I’ve noticed,” said Loki. Peter chuckled and went to find Tony as more gifts were handed out. He passed Bruce in the hallway.

“Hey, Doc, where’s the boss man?” Peter asked.

“Tony is talking to Happy on the phone. Said he’ll be down in a second.” Bruce said as he headed into the kitchen. Peter nodded and decided to wait. Happy was visiting his mom before heading the compound this afternoon. A few minutes later, Tony sauntered down the hall. His face lit up as he saw Peter.

“Hey, kid. Merry Christmas,” Stark said pulling the kid into a hug. Peter hugged him back tight.

“Merry Christmas, Tony,” Peter said with a grin.

“Clint wake you up again?”

“He made his daughter do it this time.” Tony laughed.

“Of course, he did. Now, please tell me there is more of *that*,” Tony said pointing to the coffee in Peter’s hands.

When it came to Christmas with the Avengers, presents weren’t the biggest part.

The Barton kids got the most of them. They also made sure to send some gifts Cassie’s way as well. She had video chatted them after opening them. She was grinning as she held her very own Avengers flight jacket. It was Nat’s idea.

As for the rest of them, they all drew names a month before and it was a sort of Secret Santa type deal. Though within a team of super spies and nosy geniuses, it never stayed a secret. This year, Peter had drawn Wanda. For her gift, Peter had given her a necklace with a multifaceted crystal in the center. If she shone her magic on it just right it would reflect the ruby energy into a million little stars. Both Tony and Loki had helped him with it. The crystal was from Vanaheim and Peter had to cut it just right to get the effect. Tony helped him with the measurements and Loki enchanted the crystal, so the psionic energy wouldn't damage it.

"Oh, Peter, it is wonderful," Wanda said as she held the gem in her hand. "Thank you," she said, leaning over to kiss him on the cheek. Wanda then turned to Vision to share with him the effects of her gift.

Peter eyed the rest of the gifts. Bucky had gotten Rhodey some records they had been talking about for a while. Some stuff from the 40's Barnes enjoyed. Thor presented Steve with a bottle of Asgardian ale which Steve was rather thankful for. Loki had given Natasha a beautiful dagger, no doubt one of his own making. She was twirling it around her fingers, admiring it.

A package landed on Peter's lap. He looked up to see Sam winking at him. "Is this going to blow up?" Peter teased.

"It's Christmas, Web Head, I have class," Sam said.

"Mmm-hmm." Peter smiled and opened his present. It was a poster of *Empire Strikes Back*, signed by George Lucas himself. "*Where...how did...what?*" Peter choked out, holding the poster gently.

"Apparently when you're a superhero *and* friends with Captain America, you can get a lot of things," Sam said with a grin. Peter looked to Steve who winked at him. Peter stood and pulled Sam into a hug.

"Thanks, man. This...this is amazing."

"Anything for you, kid." Sam clapped him on the shoulder. As Peter admired his present, others were passed out. Even with the drawn names, people still bought other presents. Bucky had gifted Nat with a vintage bracelet and something that made her laugh, but Peter figured was an inside joke. Tony had given Pepper something encased in glass that made her tear up. Peter got a glance at it later. It was an engraved plaque with a date on it: June 24, 2019.

"Wedding date," Pepper said coming up behind him.

"He finally chose one?" Peter asked, surprised.

"About damn time too," Pepper said with a smile. "I trust you can make it."

"I wouldn't miss it for the world, *Mrs. Stark*," Peter said and wrapped an arm around his soon to be sort of step-mom.

After more gifts were passed around, Peter presented Pepper and Tony with theirs. A set of bracelets that would glow when they were near each other. "Just in case you're ever without the suit. They work off the Stark Satellite...and other satellites, but don't tell anyone I used their codes." Pepper shot him a look of disapproval before going back to admire the band around her wrist. "If you need to find each other, they work like beacons. The closer you are, the brighter they glow. Watch." Peter turned on the bracelets and both lit up in a startling light blue. Much like the color of the arc reactor.

"Well, I'll be damned, kid," Tony said, staring at the device. "these are amazing. Thank you." Pepper kissed Peter on the cheek before turning to her fiancé and kissing him as well.

"Thank you, Peter," Pepper said. "My two favourite boys, always spoiling me so much."

"I taught him well," Tony sighed dramatically. "And speaking of... Underoos, come with me." Tony lead Peter through the residences and into an elevator. Tony hit the button for the garages.

"Why didn't Pepper come?" Peter asked.

"She thought we should have this moment. You know, man to man," Tony said.

"Man to man?"

"Oh, you know what I mean," Tony said as the doors opened and they exited onto the second level of the parking garage. Tony took Peter to a back corner of the garage. In a corner space was a large shape covered with a tarp.

"Tony..."

"Stop right there!" Tony yelled. "No talking. I know you said I couldn't buy you a car. I don't get what your aversion to a nice new Audi is, but I'll go with it. However! You did not say I couldn't do this!" Tony ripped the tarp off and in the space was a 1970 Chevy Chevelle. Well, parts of one. The car was in pieces and the red paint was scratched off in places, but it was a beautiful mess. "I wanted to give it to you finished for graduation, but I thought maybe we could work on it together. Juice it up with a bunch of cool toys. We could even add some hidden Spidey details."

Peter approached the car and ran a hand along the hood of it. Sure, Peter loved fighting alongside Iron Man, but Tony Stark the genius mechanic was his favourite Tony Stark and this...this was the best present he could ask for from the man. "So, you like it?" Tony asked. "I know we're working on EEVAA, but I figured we could work on this on the weekends when we don't need to be superheroes and whatnot." Peter looked over to Tony and nodded.

"Yeah, I think that's great! This is great! I love it, thank you, Tony." Peter pulled Tony in for a hug for the second time that morning.

"You're welcome, kid. Now, let's see what we can make of this beauty. I'm thinking hidden suit compartment in the trunk and definitely adding Karen," Tony said as they dived into brainstorming ideas for what they now dubbed the "Spider-Mobile", name subject to change.

By mid-afternoon, both were covered in grease and were headed inside for showers. The two heroes met up with everyone in the theater room as they settled down to watch movies. The previous year the team was called to assist in a situation downtown, but this year they were determined to have the day off. If anything was dire, Ross was to call them, but unless it couldn't be handled without the Avengers, they were staying put.

F.R.I.D.A.Y. had a marathon of classic films running with a few animated ones for the kids. Peter sat between Steve and Bruce as they watched. Steve had excused himself halfway through the second film to answer a phone call he seemed excited to receive. "Who do you think it was?" Peter asked Dr. Banner.

"Hill." Natasha and Laura both said in front of him.

"Maria Hill?" Bruce asked. Natasha turned around.

"The one and only," Nat said with a grin.

"Steve and Agent Hill?" Peter asked.

"Nothing has happened yet," Laura put in. "but it's only a matter of time. That man lights up like a Christmas tree whenever she calls."

"I like it," Tony interjected. "both control freaks with hero complexes and the desire to challenge Fury to no end. It works."

"Hill..." Loki said. "I think she tried to kill me once."

"She did," Clint said as he popped popcorn into his mouth. The kids had fallen asleep and were sprawled across multiple theatre seats. "Tried to kill me too, probably," Clint said thinking back to the helicarrier battle.

"Interesting," said the god. When Steve returned, everyone gave him knowing looks and he just ignored them, but Peter could tell the captain was in a better mood. It was Christmas after all.

By the end of the day, everyone was stuffed with food, some were happily absorbed in a glass of Tony's famous eggnog, and everyone was enjoying the holiday wind-down. Tony watched as Peter told Steve all about his new car. He was so worried about giving the Chevelle to his kid, didn't know what Peter would think. But seeing his face light up at the prospect of building his first car was the best Christmas gift he could have gotten.

Pepper moved to stand next to him by the fireplace, rubbing a hand over his arm. "What are you thinking about?" she asked.

“We got lucky with that kid,” Tony said. Pepper followed his gaze to Peter. “He’s one of a kind.”

“May raised a good kid, Tony,” Pepper admired.

“That she did. I hope she’d be proud of how he is now. How he’s dealt with all of...this,” Tony said gesturing to the room.

“May knew he was special, and she trusted you, honey.” Tony looked to his fiancé. “I think she’d be proud of both of you.” Tony leaned over and kissed her deeply.

“I love you,” he told her.

“I know,” Pepper beamed. “Did you show him his other present?” Pepper asked quietly. The weight in Tony’s jacket pocket seemed to grow heavier.

“No, I think I’m going to wait,” Tony said.

“Are you afraid he’s going to say no?”

“It’s not that, Pep, it’s more that I’m worried he’s going to say yes,” Tony admitted. “I mean, not much will change between us, but if we officially adopted Peter... all of this becomes his. How do I just *hand* it to him?” Pepper leaned her head on his shoulder.

“It will all work out, Tony. It always does.” Tony hugged her close as they watched as their team, their family settled in for yet another successful Avengers Christmas.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry about that joke, you know which one.

So I have recently decided that I MAJORLY ship Agent Hill and Cap, so that will show up eventually. Stephen IS in this story. I just needed an introduction chapter first. I am not going to focus so much on May in this story as there was a lot in the previous stories. I’ve been wanting to write a snowball fight for a while so hope it turned out well. Also, I know Loki doesn’t use his telekinesis much in the MCU (I think it’s one time in Thor 2) but he DOES have the ability so there you go. I know I didn’t say everyone’s presents, but I thought it was a waste of time. What do you think the others got?

A lot of my ability knowledge comes from MCU and Marvel Wiki pages so bear with me.

ALSO: i know that Loki doesnt use his frost giant abilities in the MCU without the Casket of Winters, but I think he was nerfed so I give him all the icy goodness.

Never Easy

Chapter Summary

Peter and the team head back to the Tower only for Peter to get caught up in a car chase that isn't what it seems.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Once Christmas had passed, the team headed back to the city in preparation for New Year's Eve.

Tony always threw a big party and Peter was once again invited this year. He was invited last year but declined due to his grief.

As they resettled and the party planning was in full effect, Peter disappeared into his room to escape the many caterers and lighting designers. They were only in the main entertaining space, but Peter would rather avoid people as much as possible. He wasn't one for small talk. Peter went and hung up his new poster above his bed. Sam and he may butt heads a lot, but he really did love the guy. Peter lay around before he got bored and went to find Tony.

He found the mechanic in the sub-level workshop that was completely devoted to Tony's many cars. He was finishing bringing the Chevelle into the main working space of the shop. Peter knocked on the glass door and Tony waved him in. Not that Peter needed to knock, the Tower was his house too. "We really need to think of a different name for your car, kid."

"I'll get right on that," Peter said, hopping up onto one of the workbenches. "So, I've been thinking..."

"Uh oh," Tony said. "Nothing ever good comes after that," Tony teased.

"What if we started telling people you and Pepper took me in?" Tony nearly dropped the socket wrench he was holding. "I don't want to cause any more unwanted attention, but I think that ship sailed as soon as you told the world you're a superhero. Not that that was a bad thing, really, we needed that. And by we, I mean everyone in the world. Me too, of course. You know, because who knows what else is out there. Well, I know what's out there so—"

"Peter!" Tony interrupted the babbling teen. Peter shut his mouth and wrung his hands. Tony, smiling, placed down the wrench and crossed the room to his kid. "Take a breath and try that again," Tony said. Peter did as much and then spoke slower.

“I don’t want to lie about where I live anymore,” Peter said for the first time out loud. Plain and simple. “I never wanted to tell anyone before because I didn’t think they’d believe me, but after the field trip and because some of the team have been around more, I just think it’d be nice to tick off another box, you know?”

“I do know, kid,” Tony said softly. “I’ve never had a problem with you telling people Pep and I took you in after May passed. It was your decision to tell people and it still is. My only concern was that it would lead to people connecting the dots between you and Spider-Man,” Tony explained. Peter nodded, understanding.

“I’ve thought of that as well and I know it’ll be harder to keep prying eyes away, but Tony,” Peter took a breath. “these past few days with the team made me realize that I don’t want to be seen as the orphan kid from Queens anymore. Because I’m not. I have this huge family and I want to be able to talk about it. We don’t have to do anything official, but I would like to stop hiding.” Tony was impressed at his young prodigy’s maturity about the subject.

“Well, kid,” Tony started. “We may *have* to make an official announcement or at least confirm any rumor. If we don’t then even more suspicion would arise, and most people have guessed Spidey is pretty young. So, if this something you really want to do, I can have Pepper draft something up. We can request privacy and all that jazz. That’s what we did for Lang’s kid and they leave Cassie alone.” Peter sighed.

“Okay, we’ll do it your way,” Peter agreed. “Thanks, Tony.” Tony reached out and slung an arm around Peter’s shoulders, resting his chin on the young boy’s head.

“Anything for you kid, always.”

After his heart to heart with Tony, Peter went to find Loki.

Peter found the god in the museum of all places. “Feeling nostalgic?” Peter asked as he approached the king. Loki was looking at the Battle of New York display. It held replicas of Chitauri technology as well as some original news coverage playing on a screen. His expression was stoic, but his hands were fluttering at his sides. “Loki?”

“This should have never happened,” Loki said, his voice low.

“Maybe it’s a good thing that it did,” offered Peter. Loki turned to him, his brow furrowed. “Not the whole, you know, major casualty and destruction thing, but *because* of this, the Avengers got together.”

“And if I had never brought the scepter to Earth, then Maximoff wouldn’t have gotten her abilities,” Loki said as his eyes flickered to the Sokovia footage on the far wall.

“No, but who knows what else Strucker was doing. He could have made Wanda and Pietro enhanced with other methods. Look, man,” Peter started. “We don’t blame Wanda for Sokovia, she was being coerced by Ultron. And we don’t entirely blame you for the Battle of New York. You know...*after* we learned about Thanos.” Loki cringed at the mention of his previous jailer. Peter didn’t know much about Thanos, only that he was powerful and that he tortured Loki.

“But there is much to blame on my part,” Loki said.

“Well, yeah,” Peter admitted. “but you’ve made up for your part. You saved your people, you’ve helped us in battles, you’ve even helped Jotunheim. I know a lot of us small Midgardians won’t know that, but you have an entire group of superheroes at your back, bud,” Peter said clapping Loki on the back. The god half smiled and gripped Peter’s shoulder.

“It wasn’t long ago I was the one giving you guidance, young Parker,” Loki said.

“And I took those words to heart, I promise.” Peter followed him as Loki made his way around the museum.

“My brother, always one for the dramatics,” Loki said as he watched a video of Thor fighting in London.

“I’m assuming he learned from the best,” Peter quipped.

“Amusing,” Loki said with a smile before his expression turned serious. “Barton informed on what transpired with the mercenary.”

“Since when are you and Clint so close?” Peter muttered as he looked at the Captain America exhibit.

“It’s complicated,” Loki said. “Peter, I do hope you understand that if that man *had* died, it would not change who you are.”

“I don’t know about that. I’m *pretty sure* killing someone changes a person.”

“Killing someone, yes,” Loki explained. “But someone dying because you were trying to defend another, that’s different.”

“Not to me it’s not,” Peter said.

“No, I’d imagine you value human life,” Loki said airily. Peter scoffed and looked to Loki incredulously. “We have a difference of opinion when it comes to the lives of others, Parker. To me, if a person wants to kill another, then their life becomes less...valued. Then again, I’ve been alive for quite some time and it all starts to feel the same after a while.”

“The same?”

“Insignificant,” Loki clarified. “Which is why I envy you.”

“*What?*” Peter sputtered.

“You are so young. You can still feel every wound and loss whereas myself and Thor...it became a part of life to lose people and win in battle. We are raised to be fighters and to take no prisoners. That is the Asgardian way. I’m not sure if you’d want to know the Jötunn way,” Loki said raising his brows.

“Yeah, maybe not,” Peter said. “But I get what you’re saying.”

“At least someone listens to me,” Loki muttered causing Peter to smile.

“I’ll see you later, big guy, duty calls,” Peter said as he headed towards the exit.

“Peter,” Loki called. Peter looked back towards the king. “Thank you.” Peter grinned and nodded before running up to his room and pulling on his suit.

“Hey Karen,” Peter greeted his AI.

“Hello, Peter. Did you have a nice holiday?”

“I did,” Peter said as he swung up onto the outside of the building and put the adjacent skyscraper in his sights before firing a web and swinging across. “Anything interesting happening?”

“Not at the moment, but I will let you know,” Karen informed him. Peter continued to swing through Manhattan, enjoying all the decorations that still lit up the many storefronts and Rockefeller Center. Peter wasn’t one to stay in the City for that long before heading to Queens, but he didn’t plan on staying out too long. Just enough to stop feeling so restless.

Peter swung down to Grand Central Station, perching next to the Battle of New York monument. Snow was abundant in New York at the moment, but Peter was able to construct a new web fluid that stuck easily to ice and he was incredibly grateful for it. Peter let his legs dangle over the side of the train station entrance for a while as he listened to the city around him. He could hear the faint singing of carolers in the distance and some angry cabbie on another corner. Typical New York, Peter thought.

It was a few minutes later that his ears picked up on the sirens. “Karen, what’s going on?”

“It looks like some sort of runaway vehicle. An armored truck has been stolen.”

“Any idea what was in the truck?”

“Only that is being stored in a bio-safe container.”

“CDC?”

“Unknown. The police don’t seem to be making any headway.”

“I’m on my way,” Peter said, jumping from the station and heading South. He followed the sirens through the streets with Karen providing him directions. He came across the scene quickly. Multiple squad cars were in pursuit of an armored truck going straight through traffic. No logo was on the side of the truck, but that didn’t surprise Peter. The government often transported things without it being official. S.H.I.E.L.D did it all the time. “Karen can you get me a scan of the component from here?” he asked as he swung above the chase.

“Unknown compound detected. Seems to be in a gas state.”

“Well, that’s...worrisome,” Peter said. “Let’s see if we can get closer.” Peter arched his body and let go of his web, landing right on top of the armored truck. He crawled over the side and when he looked in the window... “It’s empty,” Peter said, surprised. Someone had tampered with the brakes, setting something heavy against the gas pedal. Peter punched out the window and entered the cab. He released the gas pedal and swung out in front of the truck. He braced his hands on the hood and then dug his heels into the street.

He gritted his teeth at the vibrations that flew up his legs but managed to quickly stop the truck before it crashed through the intersection. Peter ran around to the back of the truck and pulled open the doors. It was empty as well except for a singular containment cube. “How did nobody notice the truck was empty?”

“Traffic cameras suggest whoever had taken the truck jumped out a few blocks back,” Karen explained. *“Component secured.”*

“Not necessarily,” Peter said slowly as he noticed a second cube on its side under one of the seats. It was empty. “There was another.”

“All good here, boss?” Peter turned to see a police officer looking at him.

“The truck was empty,” Peter said hopping out of the vehicle. “Someone took the other sample.”

“Can you track it down?”

“Yeah, I think so,” Peter said. “Karen, can you trace the containment tech?” Peter said as he headed for the nearest rooftop, saluting the police officers in the process.

“I am getting readings that the cube has been opened and the component is being handled.”

“Where!”

“West on 11th Street toward Greenwich Village.” Peter flew down 7th Ave and across, taking a shortcut off the 9th street station and into the village. He stuck to the taller of the apartment buildings, keeping the streets in his sights.

“Anything?”

“Traffic cameras aren’t catching anything. Scanning for component now.” Peter dove across to a lower building, perching on the fire escape. He could feel something in the air, something familiar, but couldn’t put his finger on it. *“Compound is in the area, Peter.”*

“Then where is it?”

“Stark Satellite is combing the streets now.” Peter hated this part of the job, the waiting. He preferred the fast life when it came to being a superhero. It was why he rarely went on missions with Natasha and Clint anymore. The Karpov operation was a rare occurrence when it came to the young spider. Reconnaissance wasn’t his forte. *“Peter, your target is running on a rooftop a block South from your position.”*

“How do you know that?”

“The containment cube has been opened,” said Karen.

“They never make it easy, do they?” Peter huffed before jumping towards the next building. Peter headed for the roof of the apartments that looked down at the aforementioned rooftop. Peter spotted the perp immediately. He wore black body armor and he could see at least two pistols on his hips. The guy was most likely carrying more, Peter figured. In the guy’s hand was a sphere, a port on the top with a small biometric lock on the outside. The guy was attaching some type of device to it. “Hand over the device and I’ll make sure you get one of the newer bunks at Rikers,” Peter yelled across. He didn’t think he had any power over what the inmates received at the prison, but it was all he could think of at the moment.

The guy looked up and Peter noticed a large burn was across the left side of his face, recent it looked. He looked a moment longer before turning and running for the edge of the roof. The guy cleared the space between buildings and hit the opposite rooftop. With a roll, he was up and running again. “Seriously? Who does this guy think he is? Me?” Peter said as he swung after him. The guy cleared one more roof, landing on a terrace before Peter landed before him. Then, much to Peter’s annoyance, the guy headed for the fire escape.

Peter shot himself up to the roof and waited for Parkour Patrick to appear once again. A few moments later and they were in their previous position only six more stories up. “Hey, look, man, we can keep this up all day. I don’t have anywhere to be. But I think that may need to go back on ice,” Peter said pointing to the sphere.

“Foolish clown, do you have any idea what this even is?” Parkour Patrick said, his voice not as deep as Peter was expecting. He also had an accent, French maybe?

“Biomechanics isn’t really my thing, but it could be. Let me take that off your hands,” Peter said, lining up his shot.

“Oh, I am happy to give it to you,” the man smiled before pulling his gun and aiming at Peter’s head. Peter easily dodged the two bullets that shot from the pistol just in time to see the man toss the device off the roof. Peter ran after it, shooting a web to catch it mid-air. Balancing on the roof edge, he pulled the device into his hand.

“Not the best plan, dude,” Peter said holding out the device.

“I think it worked rather perfectly,” The man said, raising a remote in his hand. Peter went to take the remote when the man hit the button and the sphere shattered in Peter’s hand. Yellow gas erupted around him, seeping through his mask and down his throat. Peter clutched at his

face as the gas entered his eyes and nose. “Had to test it on somebody. And why not a little superhero, yes?” The man who now deserved a much darker nickname approached Peter and with a good kick, the spider fell from the roof.

Amidst choking, Peter shot his hand out and tried to shoot a web to the side of a nearby building. But he was falling too fast and his webshooter wasn’t working, he fell not toward the street, but a townhouse nestled in the Village. The last thing he remembered before he crashed through a circular window was that feeling from earlier. The one he now remembered.

The sensation of magic.

Chapter End Notes

I just realized after the final edit on this chapter that the last part sounds a lot like the opening scene of TASM2...meh. That may be annoying, but whatever. This is a filler chapter for sure. Stephen is up next. Stay tuned...

Science and Magic

Chapter Summary

Peter meets the Sorcerer Supreme

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Doctor Stephen Strange was having a normal afternoon.

That is until a brightly colored superhero crashed through the window of the Sanctum Sanctorum.

Stephen had been studying a book of runes after Thor had mentioned a particular set of them that he found on Vanaheim. Strange didn't believe them to be of anything important, most likely just a nature spell of some sorts, but nonetheless he looked into it.

Wong was across from him archiving some of the Sanctum's more high-profile relics. The Cloak of Levitation was hovering between them as if it would try to offer assistance. Since taking over the New York Sanctum, Stephen finally felt at ease. Even before his accident, he hadn't felt a total sense of purpose or serenity even as a surgeon. Wong said it was because of the mediation, Stephen believed that he just *fit* within the mystical world. Whether it was fate or not, he didn't know, but as someone who could bend reality and look through time, he didn't think that the concept of fate was too obscure.

"Are you going to tell me why you are doing a favor for the Asgardians?" Wong asked. Stephen looked to his friend.

"It's not a favor. Thor mentioned it and I was curious. Not everything needs to be more than it seems, Wong," Stephen pointed out.

"Just admit you like them, Stephen," Wong said with a knowing look. "The frost giant, too."

"Loki is an arrogant and reckless individual," said Stephen.

"Of course, and why would you like *anyone* like that," Wong said as he picked up an hourglass and examined it in his hands.

"Is being snarky a requirement of being a librarian?" Stephen said just as the window above them shattered and a figure clad in blue and red crashed into the Sanctum. The Cloak of Levitation dropped onto Stephen's shoulders as the two sorcerers approached the shaking figure that had stopped at the top of the staircase, struggling to breathe.

“Is saving Avengers a requirement of being Sorcerer Supreme?” Wong asked as he looked at the hero he knew to be Spider-Man.

“It is today,” said Stephen as he knelt next to Spider-Man. Wong followed suit and gently removed the choking man’s mask.

Not a man at all, but a boy, who watched both of them, wide-eyed as he clawed at his throat.

“Of course, Stark has a kid fighting his war,” Stephen said as he placed a shaking hand under the kid’s nose. “He’s not getting enough air.”

“How could you tell?” Wong deadpanned.

Stephen ignored him and focused for a moment. Then with a multitude of intricate hand motions, cast a spell that allowed him to sense maladies. Amongst the orange symbols, a yellow dust wove in between. “He’s been poisoned.”

“Hospital?” Wong asked. Spider-Man grabbed onto Stephen’s arm and shook his head vigorously. *No hospital*, he seemed to say.

“My guess is that this kid doesn’t get his abilities from the suit,” said Stephen. “It’s most likely biological and I doubt he or Stark want his blood in the hands of medical professionals.” Spider-Man dropped his hand then, both returning to fists at his side. Stephen lay his hands on the boy’s chest and with another whirl of carefully crafted symbols, Spider-Man’s chest expanded and with a gasp, a yellow gas erupted from his mouth.

The boy choked as the poison left his system. Stephen pressed two fingers to the boy’s neck and checked his pulse. “Heart rate is already improving,” Stephen shrugged the Cloak off his shoulders. “Help him to the couch,” Stephen ordered his relic. The Cloak wrapped around the now wheezing teenager and took him into the parlor.

“Karen...” the boy muttered.

“Mother?” Wong asked Stephen as they followed.

“Why would he call his mother, Karen?”

“I don’t know, teenagers are confusing,” Wong said with a shrug.

“Karen,” Spider-Man said again. He swiftly fell into a coughing fit. Stephen produced a cup of tea on the table before the teenager. One of both mystical and medicinal properties.

“It’ll help your lungs,” Stephen said pointing to the cup. The young man looked to Stephen before looking at the tea. He eyed it suspiciously before taking in his odd surroundings. “Trust me, I’m a doctor,” Stephen said with a nod towards the medicine again.

Carefully, keeping his eyes on the sorcerers, Spider-Man lifted the cup to his lips and drank the warm liquid. Instantly, he sighed in relief as the pain and discomfort in his lungs ceased. Spider-Man then realized they had unmasked him. He searched for it frantically. “Looking for this?” Wong asked holding out the object. The sorcerer tossed it and clumsily, most likely

still weary from the poison, Spider-Man caught it. He hastily shoved it over his head and Stephen watched as the teenager froze before looking to his wrists. He tapped the devices Stephen assumed were for his webbing and nothing happened.

Something was wrong.

His suit wasn't working.

Peter was confused and he had crashed into what he could only assume to be Hogwarts. His chest was killing him and his senses were all over the place, but whatever was in that sphere seemed to be wearing off quickly. Peter figured that was thanks to whatever the two men in front of him did and his healing factor.

Peter tried to access any system within his suit, but it was dead. Karen wouldn't answer him either. It was as if it just shut down. The only thing even capable of doing that would be a very powerful EMP. And even then, it would have to be strong enough to touch the Iron Man armor.

Unless...that is precisely what it was. The device that the Frenchman had placed on the sphere was strong enough to shut down a Stark suit. The man had said he had to test it out...

The bastard was going after Tony.

Peter pulled off the mask and looked towards the two people in front of him. They were both dressed in what Peter would call: Game of Thrones Cosplay. One was taller than the other and Peter noticed how the taller one's hands shook at his sides. The movement was small, but Peter's eyes could follow it even with his system still recovering.

The room he was in was some sort of living room. Books littered every available space and it all seemed very...un-Stark. Out of the corner of his eye, Peter watched as the red Cloak slowly moved over to the taller man, the doctor, Peter remembered. The Cloak wrapped itself around the doctor's shoulders. That feeling crept upon him again.

Right, magic.

Magic.

New York.

Lightbulb moment.

Peter sat up straighter. "You know Thor," he said, his voice hoarse. "Thor said he knew wizards in New York, I never actually thought he was telling the truth." The doctor raised a brow.

“I’m Doctor Stephen Strange,” he said. “This is Wong. You’re one of Stark’s, right?” Peter rolled his eyes.

“Tony doesn’t own me,” Peter paused because, in the eyes of child protective services, he sort of did. “Well, it’s complicated.”

“Last time I checked, Spider-Man was an Avenger,” Strange said.

“As I said, it's complicated. I'm part-time,” Peter said. He went to stand and when he did, he felt a sharp pain in his leg. He looked down to see a glass shard embedded in his calf. “Dammit...” Peter swore as he pulled the shard free. Compared to his other injuries, this one was more of an annoyance and should be completely healed by the morning after a good night’s sleep. Which reminded him... Tony would have gotten a notification when the suit shut down.

“Want to tell me why you crashed through my window?” Stephen asked, folding his arms. Peter stood up on a shaky leg, it hurt, but he could manage.

“My suit shut down and I couldn’t catch myself on the web,” Peter said trying to listen for Iron Man thrusters. “Tony, uh, Mister Stark is going to be looking for me.”

“He’s got you on quite the leash,” said Strange. Peter shook his head.

“It’s not like that, he...looks out for me,” explained Peter.

“Which explains why you got poisoned,” Wong said.

“Hey, I’m not helpless,” argued Peter. “I can handle most things on my own. I didn’t know the device could be controlled remotely,” Peter said, distracted as he made his way to a window.

“That device,” said Strange, “that’s what poisoned you?”

“Some sort of dispersal device, I think...” Peter trailed off as a conversation from Thanksgiving came back to him. Coulson had said Karpov was looking for the same thing. Something that Pierce once had. A terrorist after a weapon that a HYDRA member once had who also wants to take down a leader of the Avengers? Sounds about right.

“What is it?” asked Strange noting Peter’s furrowed brow as he thought it all through. Peter looked back to the wizards.

“Nothing, just something we’ve been working on. I really need to get back. I’m sorry about your window,” Peter said sheepishly. “But thank you, for you know, not letting me die,” Peter said awkwardly. Strange nodded to him, somewhat amused. How this kid could be up talking and acting as if everything was fine after nearly dying, he couldn’t understand. He only wondered if the teenager had faced worse... “So, yeah, I just need to get home,” Peter coughed as he limped towards where he figured the door was. Even with his rising energy, Strange knew Spider-Man wouldn’t get very far, especially with a broken suit.

“Where is home?” Strange asked.

“What?”

“Home,” Strange repeated, “where do you need to go?”

“Uh, Stark Tower.”

“You live in Stark Tower?” Wong asked, clearly expecting Peter to have a separate life from his web-slinging.

“I told you it was complicated,” Peter said. Strange sighed, but nonetheless pulled on a gold ring and Peter watched as the doctor circled his hand and a ring of fire appeared in the room. At least that is what it looked to Peter, yet no heat echoed from it.

“This will take you into the garage of the Tower.” Peter stared at the portal with wide eyes.

“And here I thought Loki’s magic was impressive,” Peter muttered and Strange couldn’t help the smirk that appeared on his face.

“One more thing,” Strange said, halting Peter mid-step. “You got a name?” Peter went to argue about secret identities, but then looked to the mask in his hands and the wizards *did* save his life. He figured it was okay.

“Peter,” he said. “Peter Parker.”

“Well, then Mister Parker, try not to fall off any more rooftops, will you?” Peter nodded and then thanked the wizards again as he carefully stepped through the portal. The ring closed immediately after him. Peter tugged the mask on quickly and leaned heavily on the wall. He had tried to put on a brave face for Strange and Wong, but in truth, he felt like he had swallowed fire. His lungs weren’t aching anymore, but his throat burned and his head was pounding. Clearly, that tea only helped remove the initial symptoms.

Peter took a moment before hauling himself along the wall, keeping as much weight off his leg as possible and into the private elevator. “F.R.I.D.A.Y.?”

“Peter! Boss is looking for you!”

“Is he home?”

“No, he and Colonel Rhodes left after your suit went offline. I’ve already told him you’ve returned. He’s on his way,”

“Tell him to meet me in the medbay,” Peter said. “And please tell Bruce to meet me there as well.”

“Of course.” F.R.I.D.A.Y. took him up to the medical suits and Peter was happy to see that the staff had found somewhere else to be. Peter limped towards the doors when another elevator opened and Doctor Banner rushed to him.

“Peter?” Bruce said as he pulled the kid’s arm around his shoulders and helped him to a bed. “What happened?”

“I’ll wait to tell the whole story till Tony gets back,” Peter said as he pulled off his mask. “but you wouldn’t happen to know how to do a lung biopsy, would you?”

“Excuse me?”

By the time Tony had returned to the Tower with Rhodey, Bruce had a needle in Peter’s chest.

“What in seven hells is going on?” Tony said, rushing to Peter’s side. Peter who had swiftly changed out of his suit into a pair of sweatpants, grimaced at Stark.

“Hey, man,” Peter said, wincing as Bruce pressed the needle in farther.

“Don’t you, ‘hey, man’ me, Mister. Why does Bruce have a needle in your chest?” Rhodey stood by, waiting to break apart any father-son squabble. Peter flinched, gripping the sides of the bed causing the metal to groan as Bruce removed the biopsy needle. Peter took shallow breaths as the pain bloomed. “Peter...” Tony said prying Peter’s hands off the bed railings. “What happened?”

“I got gassed,” Peter said, his voice even more hoarse than it had been earlier.

“Come again?” Tony said. And so Peter told all three men everything that had happened with the car chase and the Frenchman. He didn’t, however, tell them about his interaction with Dr. Stephen Strange. A part of him knew he should have told Tony about the wizard, but he owed the doctor for saving his life and he didn’t think Strange would welcome a visit from Iron Man. “So wait,” Tony said. “If you got gassed, how are you not dead?” Two heartbeats of silence and Peter hoped his next lie sounded convincing.

“I don’t think I inhaled much. It still hurts like hell and I feel like my brain has been turned inside out, but I think I got lucky,” Peter said.

“You sure as hell did,” Tony said as he ran a hand down his face. “We’re going to need to track that EMP signal. If there is one out there capable to shut down my suits... Well, I don’t even want to think of what would happen. Any luck on that biopsy, Bruce?” Banner was at the monitor across from him as F.R.I.D.A.Y. ran test after test.

“No residual compound in his lungs,” Bruce concluded.

“So what does that mean?” Tony asked.

“Could mean a lot of things,” Bruce began. “There are plenty of agents that are undetectable once they get into the system. I’ll monitor him, but there is only so much I can do without knowing what was in the cannister.”

“You said the truck was government,” Rhodey said, chiming in for the first time.

"I figured it was," Peter said. "Unmarked armored vehicle. What else could it be?"

"That is a very good question. One that I intend to figure out," Rhodey said as he left the room, pulling out his phone.

"I am going to take his blood work up to my lab and see if I can get anything from my mass spectrometer. At the rate his respiratory system is improving, he should be well by tomorrow evening." Bruce pointed a finger at the teenager. "Stay here for the night so F.R.I.D.A.Y. can monitor you." Peter nodded and Bruce left him with Tony.

"Two days after Christmas and you're already getting yourself into messes," Tony said as he leaned his forearms on Peter's bed.

"I can't help it, it's in my nature," Peter smiled.

"I will fix your suit," Tony said. "but this won't be like the Vulture. You don't go after these guys alone. If the connection to Pierce and Karpov is true, then Cap and the Soviet Union are being brought in too."

"Soviet Union?"

"I think it's a fitting name for those two," Tony considered.

"Of course, you do, because you enjoy stupid jokes."

"Peter," Tony said, suddenly serious. "before your suit shut down, Karen notified me that you were in distress and all I could think about was that when you were trapped under that building."

"Tony..."

"No, let me finish. I've always felt horrible that you didn't have your suit then and yet even when you had it now, it still failed you. How am I supposed to keep you safe?" Tony said, his head in his hands as he looked at Peter's bandaged leg and the small lacerations on his face.

"Tony look at me," Peter said. Tony turned to him. "I know you worry and you have every right to. I mean, as you said, I'm always getting into messes." Peter reached over and squeezed Tony's arm. "But you need to also remember I'm not that breakable. Steve needs to as well," Peter considered. "I'm young, but I'm also pretty damn durable. It is not your job to keep me safe when I'm off being Spider-Man. Iron Man having my back in a fight is one thing, but I need you to start trusting that I can handle it. Besides, I've got you as a mentor, the man who built an ARC reactor in a cave." Tony smiled slightly.

"Bad things are going to happen," Peter continued. "and we can only work through the aftermath of it. I know I crack jokes and make stupid pop culture references a lot, but I do take what we do seriously. And I also know that no matter what, you *will* be worrying, but you need to stop blaming *yourself* for when bad things happen to me."

"So, what you're saying is to stop putting the weight of everybody else's troubles on my shoulders," Tony said.

“Exactly,” said Peter. “Think you can do that?”

“You know I can’t,” Tony admitted.

“Well, we’ll work on it,” Peter said as he shifted over and Tony sat next to him.

“Hey if that car chase was down near 7th, how did you get home so fast?” Tony asked as he looked for a movie for the pair to watch. Peter froze and hoped his bad lying was easily covered by the pain medication Bruce had given him.

“You’d be surprised who will take pity on an injured Avenger,” Peter laughed weakly. “Motorcycle cop gave me a ride.”

“Well, I know that’s a lie, but whatever, keep your secrets,” Tony said with a smirk as he selected an old James Bond film and they both settled in to watch as Peter slowly drifted off to sleep thinking of magical cloaks and healing teas.

Wong found Stephen in his study hours after Spider-Man, or rather, Peter Parker had left.

The doctor was peering into a microscope as a series of spells wavered around him. “What are you doing?” Wong asked. Stephen gestured to a swirling mess of yellow dust before him. “Is that the poison from the Parker kid?”

“In a molecular form, yes. I managed to extract some from the air before it dissipated. It’s... complex,” Stephen said as he looked through the microscope again.

“Did you take that from Christine’s office?” Wong asked, noting the Metro-General sticker on the side.

“No, I took it from Nic’s office,” Stephen said with a smile. “He won’t mind.” Wong sighed and approached the containment spell.

“What have you gathered from the poison?”

“That it’s not a poison at all,” Stephen said. “It’s...many things. A nerve agent if used one way, a corrosive if used another. And in some way, it’s a corrosive for bone and muscle. It can attack organic *and* inorganic materials.”

“How is that possible? What type of science would this be?” Wong asked.

“That’s just it, Wong,” Stephen said. “It’s not science, at least not entirely.”

“Magic?” Wong asked.

“Parts of it, yes. It seems to be some type of hybrid. The signature feels familiar.”

“One of ours?” Wong inquired.

“I believe so,” Stephen said.

“Are you going to tell Stark?” Wong asked. Stephen flexed his hands as he remembered how Peter had looked as the compound attacked his body. How terrified he was at the mention of a hospital. He *should* tell the Avengers, tell Tony Stark, but not with this new discovery.

“If the mystic arts are involved, I don’t want Stark anywhere near it. Not until I can figure out how to separate the two. Magic and science, that is.”

“Magic and science, huh? I think we both know someone who comes from a place just as such,” Wong said with a look.

“And I will cross that rainbow bridge when I have no other options,” Stephen said not wanting to call either of the Odinsons at the current moment.

“Well, then I will leave you to it,” Wong said as he headed out of the room. Stephen eyed the dust for a moment but couldn’t shake Peter Parker, and how he was sure the kid had already been through hell.

That is why Stephen found himself in his personal sanctuary with the Eye of Agamotto the next morning. The time stone glowed brilliantly as the Sorcerer Supreme looked back through the timeline towards the life of Peter Parker.

He had been right.

The kid had lost so much. From his parents in a plane crash to a mugging that left him without his uncle. Stephen knew it was an invasion of privacy, but he wasn’t bound by HIPAA as Sorcerer Supreme and he didn’t think the kid would tell him anything. Besides, if a sorcerer was targeting Peter, Stephen needed to know why.

Stephen watched as a younger Peter Parker gained his abilities. He had been right about it being biological. After a few months of makeshift costumes and viral internet videos, Stephen watched as Peter met Tony Stark for the first time.

Strange had met Stark before at a few conferences, but he doubted the billionaire remembered him. Stark was never sober enough to hold a conversation let alone retain one. However, the man that Stephen saw in the last few years of Peter’s life was...not as he expected. Even with the crumbling of the Avengers, Stark seemed to be grounded by Peter Parker. It wasn’t until Strange saw the moment that Peter’s aunt died, that he finally got it.

Tony Stark had saved Peter Parker. Just as Peter had saved him. In different ways of course, but Stephen now understood why it was “complicated” as the young hero put it. Stark had basically adopted the boy and with the events of Siberia and Coney Island, they had nearly lost each other. While Strange still didn’t care for Stark, he could now see the human beyond the armor.

This, however, still didn't explain why a magical compound was being targeted towards the superheroes. Unless there was a reason, and Stephen was being kept in the dark. Parker *had* said the Avengers were working on something. While Stephen held one half of the puzzle, the other remained with Spider-Man at Stark Tower.

Stephen closed the eye and sunk back down to the cushion below him. He had to talk to Peter again and try to work out what threat they were facing. Stephen got up and went to work on a tracking spell to find the spider. He also had to admit that even after the brief encounter, he really liked the kid.

Chapter End Notes

And there we go! I love Stephen so much and I am very happy to have him in the series now. He'll be in story 4 as well and possibly 5. I haven't decided yet.

As for that end bit, I know Strange can use the time stone to look into the future, so I can only assume you can use it to look into the past. If I'm wrong...well, too bad. A King makes an appearance in the next chapter so stay tuned.

My knowledge on the mystic side of the MCU is limited, so just take it for what it is.

The Genius, The King, and the Sling Ring

Chapter Summary

Tony meets Stephen Strange and Loki comes along...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Peter still felt a bit off, but by the next afternoon, Bruce had released him.

While Tony and Bruce got to work on tracing the EMP and trying to identify the compound, Peter had to get out of the house. His suit was still down, and he didn't feel like wearing the Iron Spider, so he just left as Peter. Webshooters adorned his wrists, but that was it as he took a cab to Queens.

On his way out, he had run into Steve and Nat who told him that Tony briefed them on what was going on. They were heading out to see Coulson to see if Karpov had any more information on the device Pierce had and why it was being transported. They said they would keep him updated. They were also making Bucky stay home since he had become quite angry after learning about Peter's incident. The Tower was now down another coffee machine.

"At least it wasn't the TV..." Tony had said as he looked at the carnage of the espresso machine. Peter had sheepishly snuck out of the kitchen afterward. The spiderling now sat on his old fire escape. Nobody had rented his old apartment yet so Peter often found himself drifting to the spot. It had a great view of Queens and it was quieter than Manhattan, which he appreciated very much. Peter was contemplating on whether to call Ned or MJ to see if they would want to hang out when a portal opened up next to him and Stephen Strange stepped onto the fire escape.

Peter balked at the sight of the wizard. "Peter," Strange said as way of greeting.

"Uh, hi, Mister, uh, Doctor Strange," Peter sputtered out. "What's up?"

"I wanted to talk to you about that compound you found," Strange said. "And also to make sure you were still breathing, which it seems you are."

"Yeah, still breathing and stuff," Peter said. "Doctor Banner helped speed along the process."

"Your healing process," Strange guessed.

"Yeah, it's pretty fast," Peter said. "What did you want to talk about again? The gas?"

"Yes," said Strange. "I think I may know what it is, but I need you to answer a question first."

“Okay...” Peter said awkwardly. “But how did you figure it out Bruce wasn’t able to get anything off my biopsy results.” Strange raised his brows at the mention of the procedure. “I figured there may be a trace left in the lung tissue, so I had him test it,” Peter explained.

“That was...very smart,” Strange complimented. “But futile. The spell I performed on you removed any trace elements of the compound. Even Stark’s strongest spectrometer wouldn’t have been able to find anything.”

“Worth a shot,” Peter said. “So, what do you need to know?”

“Are we the only sorcerers you’ve met, myself and Wong?” Strange asked.

“Sorcerer? Not wizard?”

“Yes, I am the Sorcerer Supreme and Wong is a Master of the New York Sanctum. It gets confusing after a while, I know,” Strange explained. “Have you had run-ins before?” Peter was a little disappointed they weren’t actually called wizards, but sorcerer was cool too. As for meeting one before...

“The only magic wielders I know are Loki and Wanda so no, never a sorcerer, why?”

“The compound is a hybrid that has traces of Eldritch Magic, the type that we use,” Strange said gesturing to himself. “I have a theory that a Master of the Mystic Arts may be involved with your enemy. Normally, I wouldn’t get involved with Stark’s business, but if there is a mystical threat as well, it is my duty to handle it.”

“You think one of your wizards, sorry, sorcerers, is working with the Nazis?” Peter said slowly.

“Nazis?”

“HYDRA,” Peter clarified.

“I thought HYDRA was dead,” Strange said.

“Well, you know the saying, cut off one head...”

“Right...well then, yes. It is a running theory. So, I have come to you because I need an audience with your boss.” Peter straightened.

“You want to talk to Tony? I think he has office hours...”

“I cannot just walk into Stark Tower with this information. If a sorcerer is really working with your enemy then I’ll need to speak with him outside of the city,” Strange said.

“There’s our compound upstate. We just got back from vacation there so it’s empty except for a few bots. I can have him meet you there,” Peter offered.

“Would it be possible to meet now?” Strange asked, clearly an impatient man. Peter thought for a moment.

“Uh, sure, he can get there in the armor quickly,” Peter said. “Give me a minute.” Peter pulled out his phone as the sorcerer leaned against the stairs to his left. Peter dialed Tony’s number.

“You better not need another lung biopsy,” Tony said as he answered.

“No, no, but I do need to talk to you, well not me, but someone needs to talk with you. It’s about the gas,” Peter said quickly.

“What are you talking about?” Tony asked. “Where are you?”

“I’m at my old place, but that’s not important. Can you meet me at the compound as soon as possible?” Tony sighed deeply on the other end.

“*Why?*”

“Because...okay, so, I wasn’t exactly telling the truth of how I got home yesterday.”

“Yeah, no shit,” Tony said.

“And I may have been way more injured than Bruce’s scans showed...” Peter cringed as Tony yelled.

“Peter! I swear to god, I will lock you in this tower until you are forty! Remember our conversation last night about me not having to worry about you? THIS IS WHY I WORRY!” Peter pulled the phone away as his sensitive ears stung at the volume.

“I know, I know, and I’m sorry, but this is important. The gas had magical properties and I met this man...” Peter looked to Strange who nodded. “His name is Doctor Stephen Strange and he needs to speak with you about all this. He may be able to help us find who did this,” Peter said, holding his breath.

“Magical properties...?” Tony said, his voice still tight.

“Yeah, remember how we thought Thor was just drunk when he talked about wizards in New York? Turns out he was right and they’re pretty helpful,” Peter said.

“You’re hanging out with a *wizard*, Peter...”

“Technically they’re called sorcerers and yeah. Look can you just come to the compound? Tony,” Peter paused, “he saved my life.” There was a beat on the other end and then Peter heard him call for the armor.

“I’ll be there soon.” Tony ended the call and Peter relaxed.

“Well, that went better than expected,” Peter said. “Though, he may not be in the best mood when we see him.”

“As long as he listens, I don’t care what mood he’s in. So, shall we?” Peter just nodded, not quite knowing what to do.

“Do you know where it is?”

“I’ve seen images of it before,” explained Stephen as he pulled on his gold ring once again and circled his hand.

“What is that?” Peter asked.

“It’s called a Sling Ring,” Strange said as the portal appeared. Through the ring, Peter could see the field they had just used for their Snowball Showdown days before. “It allows me to open dimensional doorways to other locations.”

“Like the Bifrost?” Peter asked as he stepped through. Strange followed and shut the portal.

“The Bifrost is a bit more intricate. It can travel between the nine realms. With this, I can travel anywhere as long as I can visualize it,” Strange explained.

“Eight realms,” Peter said sadly.

“Right,” Stephen said. “I had forgotten about that.” Peter took Strange into the compound and then deactivated F.R.I.D.A.Y. He hoped she wouldn’t mind, but if this were to be a secret meeting, Peter didn’t want any ears listening in. Peter and Strange went to the main building that was used for official Avengers business and training. He didn’t think Tony would appreciate him bringing Strange into the residences. “This place is a ghost town.”

“Tony sent the staff home for the holidays. Usually, there are more agents around. The compound acts as a secondary S.H.I.E.L.D headquarters for those who need it. Another base as well. Any staff who are working are at the Tower getting the New Year's Eve Party ready,” explained Peter.

Strange eyed the grounds of the compound out the window and noticed large scars upon the earth as if a war had been fought recently. Peter followed his gaze. “Yeah, that’s a bit of a long story.”

“Clearly,” Strange said. It was quiet for an awkward moment before Peter coughed.

“So, Sorcerer Supreme, huh?” Peter mused as he leaned against the wall trying to seem 'cool'.
"Like *Crunch Wrap Supreme*?"

Tony was on his way to his armor when he was intercepted by Loki.

“Off already, Stark?” he asked, curiosity seeping in his voice.

“Peter has gotten himself involved with some wizard so now I have to haul my ass upstate to deal with it,” Tony said.

“Wizard? What wizard?” Loki asked, his tone losing its light touch.

“Peter said his name was Strange, not like its weird, but his name is actually Stephen Strange,” Tony said with a roll of his eyes, and Loki flexed his hands.

“I’m coming with you,” Loki decided and headed to the landing platform that held the quinjet.

“Wait, you know this clown?” Tony said catching up with the long-legged god. “Thor was serious about wizards?”

“Sorcerers actually,” corrected Loki. “but yes, we’ve had a run-in. He’s arrogant and well, not somebody I care to converse about.” Tony activated the jet and lowered the ramp. He already had a suit on board if he needed it and then plenty at the compound. If all went well he wouldn’t have to use it on the wizard.

“You think I’ll like him?” Tony asked as he slid into the pilot’s seat.

“I do actually,” Loki said.

“Really, why?” Tony asked. Loki looked over at the man, noting the facial hair, the constant swagger, and occasional lack of self-awareness.

“Just a feeling.”

Peter watched the sun slowly lower as late afternoon turned to evening.

They hadn’t been waiting long, but with the armor, Tony should have been there by now. It wasn’t until Peter’s ears picked up on the whirl of the quinjet engines did he realize why they had been waiting so long. Peter pushed open the doors of the balcony and strode outside, Strange at his side. “What is it?” Strange asked.

“Quinjet,” Peter answered. Strange searched the skies, but couldn’t see anything.

“I don’t—” The compact jet flew through a bank of clouds a moment later. “Well, super hearing, check.” Peter smiled and shifted nervously on his feet as the jet landed on one of the many pads.

“Why did he take the jet?” Peter wondered aloud. His question was answered when the ramp lowered and Loki strode from the plane.

“Oh, perfect,” Strange said as he locked eyes with the King of Jotunheim.

“I take it you two don’t get along,” Peter offered as he watched Tony follow the god towards their position.

“I don’t think we’re meant to get along, ever,” Strange said as he walked back inside. Peter followed and continued to pace as he waited for Tony and Loki. “Are you always this restless?”

“It’s a symptom,” Peter said, distracted.

“A symptom of what?” Peter didn’t say anything and just jumped up, landing on the lower part of the ceiling. He jumped back down and continued pacing. “Right, part spider,” said Strange.

“As if the name, ‘Spider-Man’ wasn’t enough of a clue,” Peter snorted. Peter’s steps were halted by two sets coming in from the hall. Loki entered first, his eyes on Peter, almost as if he were scanning to make sure he was okay.

“Your Highness,” Strange greeted.

“It’s Your Majesty now, actually,” Loki bit back.

“I know,” Strange smirked. A dagger appeared in the god’s hand.

“Okay, calm down, Jack Frost,” Tony said stepping in between the two sorcerers. Peter was half a step behind Strange whom now looked to Tony. “Have we met before?” Tony asked.

“Based on the amount of alcohol in your system when we did, I doubt you’d remember,” Strange said. “It was at a medical conference in Boston nearly twelve years ago.”

“Did I dismiss you or something?” Tony asked, his eyes narrowed.

“If that’s what you want to call it,” Strange said.

“You’re not going to turn into a fire-breathing psychopath and try to kill the president, me, or my fiancée are you?”

“Hadn’t crossed my mind,” Strange said. Tony relaxed and then offered his hand. Peter noticed that Tony wore no armor, no watches with armor inside them, not even the nanotech housing. He had come in peace. And due to the lack of floating Cloak and intricate orange symbols, Peter figured Strange had as well. Strange, who Peter now realized was wearing gloves, took Tony’s hand and shook twice before dropping it.

Loki sauntered over to Peter, standing at his shoulder. “You should have told me about your new friend,” Loki said.

“Sounds to me like you hate each other, so I am glad that I didn’t, Your *Majesty*,” Peter mocked. Loki rolled his eyes but turned to Peter.

“Do you have any idea how powerful that man is?” Loki asked.

“Stronger than you?” Loki shrugged.

“In hand to hand? No. However, his magic skills...I don’t know who would win, but I wouldn’t completely bet against him. The Masters of the Mystic Arts is not just a Midgardian legend. They are spread out across the universe. And if Strange is Sorcerer Supreme, well, you’ve seen what the infinity stone Vision holds is capable of.”

“Strange has an infinity stone?” Peter whispered, surprised. Loki quirked his brows, but a subtle nod.

“Best not to make an enemy of the Sorcerer Supreme, Mister Parker,” Loki said before he went to stand by the far wall. He still had his dagger out as he watched Strange and Tony move over to the seating area, a long table they used for team meetings.

“So, what do you know, Doc?” Tony asked. Strange repeated what he told Peter to Stark and Tony turned to glare at Peter as Strange told him about their first meeting. “I’m sorry, but you *crashed through a window*, stopped breathing, and then just went home like it was nothing?”

“I was *struggling* to breathe, I didn’t *stop* breathing,” Peter argued.

“Peter Benjamin Parker...” exasperated Tony as he sighed heavily. “You were still in bad shape when you came home.”

“That was from the fall and most likely a punctured lung. Concussion too,” Strange interjected. “When he left the Sanctum, there was no gas still in his system. I’m thorough.”

“He’s a neurosurgeon,” Peter piped in and both Tony and Strange looked to him. “I googled you when I got home.” Tony started to put pieces together.

“Stephen Strange...” Tony said softly. “I heard about you a couple years ago. You were in a car accident, nearly died,” Tony looked to Peter. “Not long after Leipzig.”

“I was,” Strange said. “but I got better.”

“With magic?”

“In a way,” Strange said and his tone had a finality about it that Tony dropped it. He never liked when people pried into his own medical history and his used to be a glowing beacon in the center of his chest.

“So, let’s say you’re right and one of your magical pals is helping whoever was helping Karpov,” Tony said, Peter went to ask, but Stark beat him to it. “Natasha and Barnes found evidence that Karpov had multiple mercenaries working for him who were not on site when you three took him in.” Peter nodded. Tony turned back to Stephen. “Why create it?”

“To kill you,” Loki interjected. Peter nearly jumped at the sound of his voice. Loki was one of the three people he knew that could stand completely still and you’d forget they were even there. Bucky and Nat were the other two. “If this magical disease can eat through metal *and* flesh then you’re the prime target, Stark. Make any new enemies lately?”

“Oh, you know me. I fly over the wrong apartment complex and I have an entire army of angry soccer moms coming for my head.”

“It’s a long list,” Peter clarified.

“What about your other iron-clad member?” Strange asked.

“Rhodes?” Loki asked and Strange nodded. “I don’t think they’d go after Peter if they wanted to hurt Rhodes.”

“I don’t think *they* meant to come after me at all. I was just there, and they decided to use me as a guinea pig,” said Peter.

“And the EMP?” Tony asked.

“Everyone knows Iron Man made Spider-Man’s suit. Unfortunate coincidence so they could test the EMP as well?” Peter guessed.

“Probably,” Tony agreed. “And what about the truck? Pete, you said it was unmarked.” Peter’s stomach dropped then. He had forgotten to share an important bit of information. The other cube.

“Right, the truck. So when I stopped it, the reason I went after the guy who poisoned me was that he took the other containment unit,” Peter said.

“The *other* containment unit? As in there is another one?” Tony said standing from the table and gripping the back of his head.

“After everything that happened, I just forgot to tell you,” Peter said. Stupid! Stupid mistake. Another reason why everyone always worried about him. “But the police have it.”

“Which means HYDRA knows exactly where their second unit is,” Strange said.

“Can’t you just do your Sling Ring thing and get it back?” Peter asked Strange.

“The Masters of the Mystic Arts prefer to be kept in the shadows, Mister Parker and opening a portal into a busy police station or rather, a CDC site is the complete opposite.”

“Right,” Peter said. “Okay, well then we use this as an opportunity.”

“What are you thinking, kid?” Tony asked.

“HYDRA goons are going after the compound and if we know where it is, we know exactly where they’ll be,” Peter said excitedly. “We can take them down.”

“Not without Steve,” Tony said. “and not without the nanotech suits. They should be less susceptible to an EMP blast. It would disrupt them for sure, but their programming is...well, Vision helped so they should be more durable.” Tony said hopefully.

“Iron Spider on a domestic mission?” Peter asked, wearily.

“You wore it for a snowball fight,” Loki said with a gesture over his shoulder. Strange looked back to Peter, a brow raised.

“I told you it was a long story,” said Peter.

“What does Captain Rogers have to do with this?” Strange asked.

“Steve and HYDRA have a history,” Tony explained. “Widow and her sad boyfriend took the last one, us and Cap can handle this one.” Strange shrugged.

“Once you get the compound, you’ll need to hit it with an opposing energy to knock out the magical properties. Mine won’t work because it is Eldritch as well. After that you should be able to treat it like any other infectious substance,” Strange explained.

“Maximoff can do it,” Loki said. “Her psionic force should disrupt it.”

“Wanda Maximoff? The one whose powers came from the Mind Stone?” Strange asked and Loki nodded, completely aware that he was the reason the Maximoff twins gained their abilities. “She’s strong?”

“Incredibly,” Loki confirmed.

“Then, yes, that should do it,” Strange said. “I can track the component, but you’ll have to get it yourselves.”

“And what will you be doing?” Tony asked.

“Trying to figure out which one of my fellow sorcerers is trying to kill Iron Man,” Strange said as he stood, threw open a portal and strode through into a foyer of some kind. Peter recognized the Sanctum immediately. “I’ll let you know once I’ve located it.” And in a flash of orange light, the Doctor disappeared. It was silent before Tony looked to Loki.

“You were right, Wednesday Addams, I do like him.”

Chapter End Notes

Yay for Loki and Strange banter. Eldritch magic is everywhere as seen in GOTG2. I also figured that Loki was aware of the type of magic, just not Strange as he didn’t know him in Ragnarok. Whether who would win in a fight...my bet is on Loki, but Stephen literally turned a black hole into butterflies so I can’t be sure.

I hope you like the way I write Strange. He’s a lot like Tony with less crude humor and more condescending remarks so that’s what I tried to do. All this Karpov/HYDRA/Pierce stuff will be revealed by the end of the series. Some may like it, others may not. *shrugs*. I also figured Strange and Stark must have crossed paths at some point. Both geniuses, so who knows. I know this is a bit Avengers lacking, but Steve and Wanda are coming up so stay tuned.

Organized Chaos

Chapter Summary

Steve, Peter, and Tony go after the compound.

Loki and Wanda work together.

Peter extends an invitation.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“You want us to do what?”

When Tony and Peter had returned to the Tower to tell Steve their plan, the super soldier wasn't too sure on the whole idea.

“Really, Steve, is it *that* farfetched to get a little outside assistance?” Tony asked.

“From a sorcerer who we've never heard of before that can suddenly help us take down HYDRA operatives?” Steve said. The three of them met in the lab while Loki had gone to speak with Wanda and talk her through her part of the mission. Peter knew that Loki tried to look out for Wanda even if the god would never admit it.

Peter sat on the lab table between the two men, hoping he wouldn't have to intervene in another argument. “Yeah, basically,” Tony nodded. “Look, I met the guy. He's impressive, to say the least. Besides, he needs to find out which one of his buds is helping the squid heads,” Tony said. “We both have jobs to do and we just happen to be working the same one.”

Steve uncrossed his arms and leaned against the table next to Peter. “Do you trust this Strange?” he asked Peter.

“He saved my life, Steve,” Peter explained. “Plus, even Loki said the guy was incredibly powerful. I mean he didn't say many nice things about him, but I think it was his version of a compliment.”

“Magic is dangerous,” Steve pointed out.

“Yeah, but this stuff is different,” Tony said. “Strange uses elf switch,”

“Eldritch,” Peter corrected.

“Yeah, that’s I said, wet witch,” Tony continued. “Steve, I feel this one in my gut. We want the same thing and if it takes one more HYDRA operative out of the picture then we have to take the chance.”

“And if the EMP takes out the suits again?” Steve asked.

“You act as if I am completely useless without it, Rogers,” Tony said with mock offense. “I think I’ve proven myself in a fight sans armor, but we have the nanotech incase and Peter doesn’t even need a suit,”

“And what about Wanda? What kind of danger is she in?” Steve asked.

“According to Loki, none. She’s not going to try and destroy the compound, only disrupt the magic. Think of it as a *magical* EMP,” Peter interjected. “I also have a feeling this one may only be a prototype.”

“What do you mean?” Tony asked.

“Well, based on what Strange said, that gas should have killed me almost right away. It also didn’t eat through the metal in my suit. I think it was a base of sorts and they were moving it to finish the final project.”

“But if they were moving it themselves, why was the truck hijacked?” Steve asked.

“Another theory,” Peter said. “Whoever is running this show, was double-crossed. My bet is that whoever made the chemical compound is willingly working with HYDRA but is unaware that they’re not playing fair,” said Peter.

“And maybe the only way to get the magical element was through whoever HYDRA was stealing from,” Steve offered. “Sounds about right.”

“So, you’re in?” Tony asked.

“Breaking into a government facility to steal a magical bio-weapon so we can take down an organization I’ve been fighting since the 40s,” Steve sighed. “Yeah, I’m in.”

Tony was finishing up some tune-ups on his nanites when a portal opened in front of him.

Stephen Strange stepped through, a red cloak slung across his shoulders. “Dude, boundaries,” Tony said as he stood from the lab table. Strange rolled his eyes and Tony swore he saw the cloak around him twitch with irritation. Tony blinked.

“I found the compound,” Strange said. “It’s at an abandoned zoo in Queens. I’m assuming they took it there to study it.”

“Do you think they’ll destroy it?” Tony asked.

“Probably not,” Strange said, “but since they don’t know what it is, I doubt the federal government wants it logged in any official capacity.” Tony nodded in agreement. He knew a lot about how the government handled unidentified objects. As did Thor. Coulson erected an entire city when Mjolnir fell to Earth. Thor had managed to get to his hammer, but all government agencies had learned since then.

"What exactly is this bio-weapon?" Tony asked.

"From what I can tell from initial observations, it's a lot like Sarin in that it attacks the nervous system and is undetectable until directly exposed. However, Sarin is both colorless and odorless. This one is not, which makes me think there is a secondary component to it," Strange said. "But we won't be able to determine that until the magical barrier is down. So to speak." Tony couldn't help but cringe at the thought of the deadly poison and how Peter had inhaled it and how It had nearly killed him. "It's not finished, though," continued Strange. "If it had been, Peter would be dead. Whatever they added to it, made it not as lethal in the nerve agent aspect, but lethal in a way that it could still be upgraded." Peter had been right, Tony thought. It was a base for a much deadlier weapon.

“This zoo,” Tony said, taking a deep breath. “Fortified security?” Strange shrugged.

“That’s for you to figure out. I told you I’d find it and I did. How you acquire it is your business, Stark,” Strange said.

“Fair enough,” Tony said. “Not sure how giving they would be if I just asked for it, so we’re going to have to get a bit creative. Any luck with you sorcerer hunt?”

“I have a theory.”

“Care to share?” Tony offered. Strange just stared back. “Right, secret magic stuff. Tell me something, Doc, this whole Sorcerer Supreme gig, are you actually doing anything? Is it working?”

“Is your universe still intact?” Strange asked calmly.

“Pretty sure,” Tony nodded.

“Then, it’s working.” Tony narrowed his eyes and then they flitted to the cloak, which he was now positive was moving on its own accord.

“Are you always this cryptic?” Tony asked.

“Usually I’m the person asking that question,” Strange said with a slight chuckle. “You’ll find the weapon here,” Strange produced a slip of paper with GPS coordinates on it and handed it to Tony. “Get it to Miss Maximoff as soon as possible,” Strange said as he stepped back towards his portal. “Oh, and Stark,” Tony looked up, “try not to inhale any. I don’t want to make a habit of saving the Avengers,” Stephen said and then the portal spiraled closed.

“Asshole,” Tony muttered. “Fri, upload these coordinates and send a copy over to Karen as well.”

“*Right away.*” On his way to find Peter and Steve, Tony ran into Thor.

“I heard you met Stephen Strange,” Thor said.

“That I did. He’s...something, that’s for sure,” Tony said as the two men walked through the Tower.

“Strange holds one of the most important positions in the universe, Stark,” Thor went on to say. “Think of him as the Mystical Gate Keeper to the whole of the Universe.”

“I thought that was your friend’s job,” said Tony.

“Heimdall is to protect and watch over the Nine Realms. And yes, he keeps his eyes on the rest of the universe, but the Sorcerer Supreme is different from what I’ve learned. You sometimes feel that the weight of the world falls upon your shoulders,” Thor said slowly. “In a way, the entire weight of all dimensions and worlds, fall on Stephen’s. We may be Earth’s first defense against aliens and murderous machines, but when it comes to mystical threats, those fall upon the Masters.”

“Lead by the Sorcerer Supreme,” Tony said, understanding. “So, I should give him more credit.”

“You should give him all the credit. Even I don’t know what threats they’ve protected Earth from. I dare not ask either. I can tell when a man has been through war, Stark, and Stephen Strange has been and returned many times.”

“You’re saying he’s faced death?” Tony inquired.

“More than once,” Thor said. “He’s helped me and now he’s helped you. One day, the Avengers may need to return the favor,” Thor paused as Tony entered an elevator. “However, if the day comes that the Sorcerer Supreme requires our help for one of his wars...well, we can only hope most of us make it out alive.”

When Wong stepped back through the doors of the New York Sanctum, the last thing he expected to see was a caged sorcerer in the center of his foyer.

“Stephen?” Wong called out. Strange stepped into the room from around the corner, a spell book balanced carefully in his hands.

“Wong,” Stephen greeted.

“Are you going to make me guess?” Wong asked gesturing to the sorcerer before him.

“A remnant of Kaecilius,” said Stephen. “I told you I had a theory of who was helping Stark’s enemy.”

“One of his zealots?” Wong asked as he circled the cage Stephen had constructed. The young man behind the glowing bars fought against the magic, but still, the cage held. “I thought the rest of Kaecilius’ followers were taken into the Dark Dimension.”

“Which makes this one that more interesting,” Stephen said as he flipped through the tome. “Where were you hiding?” Stephen muttered as he looked to the struggling sorcerer. “He’ll be taken to Kamar-Taj for questioning.”

"Where did you find him?"

"I didn't," Stephen said. "He found me. Caught him trying to sneak into my sanctuary. Most likely looking for the containment spell with the particles of the compound."

“Has he given you anything?”

“Just a whole lot of nonsense about working with others who had been wronged. Not exactly helpful,” Strange said.

“Should we tell Stark?”

“Stark doesn’t need to concern himself with my business. I’ll figure it out,” Strange said as he formed a portal and wiped the rogue sorcerer to Tibet.

“Now what?”

“Now we wait to hear if Parker and his team succeed in recovering the compound.”

“Do you have faith in them?” Wong asked.

“If there is one thing that Stark is good at, it’s getting what he wants.”

Tony was being outnumbered.

“If we go in guns blazing, then they could trigger any number of other devices that we don’t know about,” Steve said as he, Peter, and Tony stood on the outskirts of the zoo. The three Avengers had arrived shortly after dark. Steve and Peter taking one of their SUVs while Stark flew above. “Stealth is our best option.”

“I agree with Cap,” Peter said, his armor shining in the moonlight.

“Of course, you do,” Tony told him. “I’m not saying we don’t enter quietly, but the way I see it, the more chaos, the better. It allows us to get the compound without being noticed. If they

think some other major attack is happening, Pete can slip through the mess and get the sphere.”

“Or, it allows HYDRA to get in and out without being seen because we were acting like idiots,” Steve argued. “Element of surprise is always a good idea.”

“Yeah and look how well that turned out the last time we attempted to recover something,” Tony said reminding Steve of their first Sokovia raid to get Loki's scepter.

“That was different,” Peter interjected. “And it did work when we took that base in Canada. Look, Strucker had to have known you guys would have gotten there eventually in Sokovia. Why would the FBI or CIA or whoever is holding this thing expect three Avengers to sneak into their facility?”

“It’s a combination of both with help from DHS according to Coulson,” Tony said.

“And why isn’t he helping us with this?” asked Peter.

“They have their own issues to deal with,” Tony said.

“Well, we need a plan because I hear company,” Steve said, and Peter nodded, looking to where Cap was turned as they listened to approaching vehicles. The tent city was set much like the one in New Mexico. But with the bones of the zoo surrounding it, it was more of a challenge than a few measly plastic tents and constructed runways.

“I really liked this zoo...” Peter mumbled as the armored trucks pulled up.

“Why is it abandoned?” Steve asked.

“A lot of it was destroyed during the whole Stark Expo thing,” Peter explained. “Then after the Battle of New York, most of the money went into rebuilding the city. They just never reopened it.”

“And now it’s being used to examine magical chemical weapons,” Tony said. “What a world.”

“We need to move,” Steve said as at least fifteen men emerged from the vehicles, all dressed in tactical gear.

“What’s our plan, Cap?” Tony asked. Peter straightened up as he noticed an open hatch on the aviary dome.

“If you guys can take out the HYDRA assholes,” Steve shot him a look. Peter ignored him. “Then I may have an idea on how to get the compound out of there,” Peter said pointing to the dome. Tony’s helmet materialized over his face and had F.R.I.D.A.Y. zoom in. The compound was in a sealed glass box surrounded by overconfident scientists. Steve raised his binoculars and looked as well. He then turned them on the moving HYDRA operatives.

“What are you thinking, Peter?” Steve asked.

“Have you guys ever seen that movie, *Mission Impossible*?”

The shooting from the enemy started before Tony or Steve could even attempt a stealth mission. “More of a rescue op, then?” Tony said as he crashed through the front gates of the zoo and headed for the first squid.

“I’d say a bit of both!” Steve yelled as he engaged another. As scientists and agents ran in opposite directions, Peter remained out of sight as he headed for the dome. Quickly and quietly, Peter took down unsuspecting agents, DHS, he figured. Knocking them out without his webs. If they didn’t know Spider-Man was on site yet, then he was determined to keep it that way for a while.

As Tony and Steve caused their amount of panic in the main area, Peter kept to the shadows. Organized chaos within the tent city, just as Tony wanted. Peter made it to the dome and shot two webs, hauling himself to the top. Peering through the hatch, Peter could see five lab technicians standing around the sides of the structure, trying to stay out of sight of the oncoming fire. And like amateurs, they left the sphere unattended. Peter didn’t know where the EMP was or if they even had it on them, so he had to move fast.

Just like Tom Cruise, Peter lashed a web to the inside of the hatch, then to the back of his suit. Cringing at the slight mechanical sounds the Iron Spider made, Peter lowered himself down over the box, but when he tried to pick it up, it wouldn’t budge. It was then that he noticed the containment unit was attached to an even bigger contraption. He'd have to break the glass. Peter swore softly to himself before looking around the room for anything that may help cause a distraction. A sprinkler system caught his eye and behind the mask, Peter smiled mischievously.

Tony was finishing taking out a HYDRA agent when three scientists ran past him, all of them were coughing and covered in soot. He turned his head to where they fled from and saw that the dome was on fire. “Status, Spider-Man?” Tony said through his gritted teeth.

“Man, old wires *really* don’t respond well to short bursts of electricity!” Peter yelled over the coms.

“You started a fire?” Steve asked as he vaulted over a fallen vehicle.

“I meant to make a small one so that the sprinkler system would go off as a distraction,” Peter said sheepishly.

“And did it work?” Tony asked, shielding two FBI agents from enemy gunfire.

“Did what work?”

“DID. YOU. GET. THE. SPHERE?”

“Oh, yeah, I got it,” Peter said as he swung to the exit of the zoo where Redwing was waiting with a cryo-case to take it to Wanda. “Package secure,” Peter said.

“Great job kid,” Tony said. “Do you maybe wanna come help us out?”

“On my way!” Tony turned to find Steve when he was met with the barrel of a grenade launcher and he was reminded of a similar situation in which his kid had been in weeks before. The grenade shot toward him, but a blur of blue landed in front him first, a shield coming up to cover the both of them. Grenade hit vibranium and both Avengers flew back into a broken carousel. Tony’s mask retracted as he looked over at Steve who was gritting his teeth as he disentangled himself from a colorful metal seahorse.

“Nice save,” Tony breathed.

“Just another one you owe me, old man,” groaned Steve.

“Old man? Alright whatever you say, Star-Spangled Man,” Tony said as he offered his friend a hand. Steve accepted, and Tony hauled them both up. Suddenly, a mass of webbing dropped down before the two men containing two HYDRA agents. Peter landed next to Steve.

“Did we get them all?” he asked.

“Fri?” Tony asked.

“It seems the rest of the HYDRA agents have retreated. Also, you may want to retreat yourselves.”

“Why...?”

“Stark!”

“Oh,” Tony said as he turned to the man who had called out to him. Everett Ross stormed towards them. “Agent Ross, what a surprise.”

“Don’t play games with me Stark, what the hell are you doing here?”

“Us? Oh, well, we are protecting your very secret and kind of creepy pop-up lab...thingy. What in *gods name* are you guys even *doing* here?” Tony said, aghast.

“Where is it?”

“Where’s what?”

“You know damn well what!” Ross said. “Where is the bio-weapon?”

“Is *that* what you’re doing here? I thought it had to do with wildlife conservation.” Tony looked around the burning remnants of the zoo. “You’re not doing a very good job, Everett.” Ross, clenching his fists, stepped towards Tony. Steve slid in between them.

“I think what Tony meant to say,” Steve shot his friend a look, “is that we had inside information that a HYDRA raid was going to happen and didn’t have time to alert you beforehand.” Ross sighed and ran his hand through his hair.

“Can I speak with you, Rogers?” Ross said pulling Steve to the side. Tony and Peter watched on as the two men argued. Well, Ross argued, and Steve listened with his disappointed grandfather expression on his face.

“Did Steve just lie?” Peter asked at Tony’s side.

“He’s actually pretty good at it now,” Tony said. Multiple agents took the remaining HYDRA operatives into custody as Cap worked to not have the three heroes arrested for trespassing and some breach of an article of the Sokovia Accords. Peter didn’t think they broke any rule from the Accords, but then again, he never actually read the entire thing. “I need to speak to that one!” Tony called out as the DHS agent pulled the HYDRA agent with the grenade launcher into the back of the car. “This will just take a second,” Tony said with a smile at the agent who shrugged and walked away.

Peter stood by and listened as Tony gripped the operative by the back of the neck. “You’re going to tell me who you’re working for and if you say Karpov then I have some news for you, buddy, he’s never seeing the light of day again.” The operative spit at Tony’s boots.

“You are so naïve, Stark,” the man said. “If you think Grigory Karpov was the only HYDRA officer to live on, you are even more of an idiot than I first thought.”

“Who are you working for?” Tony asked.

“Why don’t you ask your friend,” he spat. “Stephen Strange. He’s bound to know something by now.” Tony’s brow furrowed. “Hail Hydra.” Tony reacted quickly, throwing a punch and knocking the agent out. He waved over the DHS agent.

“Check them for cyanide capsules,” Tony said gesturing to the HYDRA agents jaw. “You’ll want them alive to question them.” Tony strode away and back towards the entrance to the zoo. It looked as if Steve had patched things up with Ross enough that they weren’t going to be hauled away in handcuffs.

“What now?” Peter asked.

“Now,” Tony looked to his two teammates. “we head back to Wanda and then I get some straight answers from the Sorcerer Supreme.”

“Ross is pissed at you,” Natasha said as the heroes returned home.

“And I really don’t care,” Tony said. “Where’s Wanda?” Natasha nodded towards Banner’s lab. “Has she had any luck?”

“Loki is with her. Apparently, it’s a lot more unstable than we first thought,” Natasha said as they entered the lab. Loki and Wanda were in what Peter would call a magical clean room. Bruce had set up a small portion of his lab to protect the rest of the tower from the compound by using one of the airlocks. Loki stood across from Wanda in the glass box as she prodded the sphere with her energy.

“With it being airborne,” Bruce said coming up beside them, “it’s risky to open the sphere. Loki most likely would be fine, but I can’t say the same for Wanda.”

“The we don’t keep it airborne,” Peter said. Tony looked at him. “Condensation,” Peter said as if it were the most obvious thing in the world.

“And that is why we pay all that money for you to go to your fancy school,” Tony said with a grin. “Bruce, we’re slacking.” Tony reached over and pressed the intercom button for the clean room. “Wanda, Loki, we’re going to need you to turn the gas into a liquid.” Loki looked over at him.

“If I were able to do that, I would have, Stark. I’m not versed in transmutation,” Loki explained.

“I know,” said Tony. “Which is why we’re doing this with science *and* magic.”

“And if that doesn’t work?” asked Wanda.

“Then we’ll improvise, but have faith, Maximoff,” Tony said. “Okay, so usually this is done with lab tech, but it may just work with both of your abilities. Wanda when I say so, I need you to place pressure within the sphere, can you do that?” Wanda nodded.

“Think of it as the air is circling the gas like a tornado,” Banner added.

“And Loki, you gotta cool it down,” Tony said. “We’re not sure what this stuff is exactly made of so there is no way to know its boiling point. But if we do it slowly enough, it should start to liquify.” Loki looked skeptical but nodded nonetheless. He removed his jacket and rolled up his sleeves. Wanda tied her hair back. “Okay, both of you start now, slowly and carefully.”

Wanda’s magic lit up the glass sphere as she slowly rotated it amongst the gas, pressurizing the container. At the same time, Loki placed his hands on the globe and carefully dropped the temperature a few degrees. Bruce kept his eyes on the monitors as the two worked their magic. “Little more,” Banner said, and they increased their power.

Peter watched nervously. He knew how horrible that gas was. Nobody moved as Loki and Wanda worked, but eventually, droplets started to appear within the glass sphere. “That’s

good, keep going,” Tony said. What felt like hours later, the entire sphere of yellow gas was a pale liquid swirling around the globe.

“That is a lot faster when you use magic. Who would have thought?” Peter said, impressed. Loki waved his hand above the sphere and recoiled slightly.

“The magical component is still active in this form,” Loki said. “Your turn,” he said to Wanda. They both stepped back, and Wanda pulled on a mask just to be sure. Carefully she unlocked the seal on the top with her magic and then attacked the liquid directly. When she pressurized it early, she only placed her magic in the air surrounding the compound, not the poison itself. When psionic met Eldritch, both forces bounced off each other, but Wanda held fast.

“How’s it going?” Both Tony and Peter jumped to see Strange standing behind them.

“When did you get here?” Peter asked.

“I’m assuming this is Strange,” Banner said as he monitored the levels in the clean room.

“Introductions later,” Tony said. “She’s doing it now,” Tony told Strange.

“How will we know when the magic is gone?” Peter asked Stephen. Strange stepped towards the glass wall of the clean room and watched the witch. Loki glared at him, but Strange ignored him.

“Once she stops feeling resistance,” Strange looked to Peter. “That’s when the spell should be broken.”

“Not to change the subject,” Tony said. “but do you have anything to tell us, Doc?” Strange went to speak when a glow of red encircled the sphere. The liquid was now fully consumed in Wanda’s energy. Peter thought it looked like a bowl of red Jell-O, but he was also hungry so his thoughts weren’t too coherent.

“That should do it,” Strange said. Wanda sealed the sphere again and removed her mask. Both she and Loki went into the smaller airlock and were decontaminated before they walked back into the lab. “Loki,” Strange greeted.

“Strange,” said Loki as he passed him. Strange turned to Wanda.

“I hear you are sort of a big deal,” she said with a tilt of her head and Peter knew she was trying to look into his mind.

“You can try, but that won’t work on me,” Strange said, his eyes locked on Maximoff. Wanda’s eyes glowed softly as she tried again, but soon she sighed.

“Formidable,” she said before joining Banner and Loki by the monitors.

“Let’s leave Bruce and the weird science friends to deal with this,” Tony said with a gesture to the bio-weapon. “Steve, Nat, come with us.”

Peter, Tony, Strange, Steve, and Nat were joined by Bucky, Sam, and Thor up in the main loft.

Thor and Strange greeted each other, but the rest of the team looked on with skepticism. “Can our lives get any weirder?” Sam asked as he watched Strange’s cloak float next to him. Bucky looked exhausted as if the old man had seen enough weirdness for two lifetimes.

“What aren’t you telling us, Strange?” Tony asked, pulling everyone away from introductions. Strange crossed his arms.

“Why am I getting the feeling that you already know?”

“So you admit you know who has been running this show?” Tony asked.

“No,” said Stephen, “I came here to tell you that I found the sorcerer who was responsible for enchanting the bio-weapon. Be grateful that I did, Wong had to convince me.” Natasha snorted. Peter could tell she already liked him.

“Who was it?” Steve asked.

“A former acolyte of Kaecilius,” Strange explained and then went on seeing the confusion. “Kaecilius was a former Master of Kamar-Taj who set out to destroy our world with the Dark Dimension. I managed to stop him, but it seemed there was a single man who remained.”

“You said ‘was’,” Steve said. “What happened to this Kaecilius?”

“When he brought forth the Dark Dimension, I made a deal with its keeper, Dormammu. I would only release him if he took Kaecilius and his disciples with him and gave his word he would not invade our dimension again. Kaecilius is dead, but his beliefs don’t seem to be,” Strange explained.

“Sounds like HYDRA,” Bucky added.

“You had to release him? From what?” Peter asked.

“A prison of sorts,” said Strange.

“Who put him there?”

“I did,” Strange said, unbothered. “I found the rogue sorcerer and he has been taken back to Kamar-Taj to be questioned and will be dealt with accordingly.”

“Did this acolyte give you anything else?” Tony asked. Strange paused for just a moment before shaking his head.

“Nothing note-worthy.” Tony looked like he wanted to argue but took a chance and trusted the sorcerer. “Well, then, if that’s all, I’ll be on my way.”

“Use the door,” Tony said. “Oh, and Strange,” Stephen turned back. “Thank you,” Tony said extending his hand. Strange considered him for a moment before taking his hand.

“We both have jobs to do, Stark,” Strange said with a smirk. He then shook Steve and Natasha’s hands and once more with Thor. Bucky and Sam stayed away from the sorcerer, giving him nods instead.

“I’ll walk you out,” Peter said, following the Sorcerer Supreme into the elevator. “Well, this has been an interesting past couple of days,” Peter said leaning against the wall.

“That’s one word for it,” Strange said, relaxing a bit more as well. “How do you stand to live with all of them?”

“It’s a big tower,” Peter said with a laugh. “They’re not that bad, trust me.”

“You may be the only Avenger I do trust, Parker. Alongside Thor, I suppose,” said Strange.

“I think Tony will grow on you. He just likes to make people think he’s an asshole when he’s really not,” Peter explained.

“I know all about the intricate layers of being an asshole, Peter. I wasn’t always this giving,” Stephen smirked.

“Giving? Is that what we’re calling it?”

“For now,” considered Strange. “So, now what?” Strange asked as they stepped out of the elevator into the garage.

“Well, what are you doing on New Year's Eve?”

Chapter End Notes

This whole bioweapon thing isn’t going to be explained until story 5...sorry. It’s a process! However, one more chapter to go up and it’s the party! Highly inspired by the event at the start of AOU. More of a feel-good chapter and that will explain most things from the previous chapters.

As this story is fully based on Peter, Stephen's investigation into the remaining acolytes won't be a part of the main story. If that is something you'd like to see, I could think of a one-shot once I finish this series.

The mystical aspect of this enemy is taken care of, but they are far from done with the Avengers! Stay tuned

Happy New Year

Chapter Summary

Happy New Year!

Peter gets a few surprises, gets super sentimental, and receives some good and not so good news.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

People friendly.

That is what Tony had said the Avengers were going for these days. And he had hit the nail on the head when it came to his New Year's Eve party. By the time Peter headed down to “the party deck”, the event was in full swing. Tony had invited their usual crowd that consisted of most members of S.H.I.E.L.D., Military personnel he deemed worthy, Stark Industries employees, certain members of the press that hadn't tarnished the team's name, and a bunch of plus ones and other friends. Peter had asked Ned and MJ to come, but Ned was out of town and Michelle had mentioned something about not wanting to engage in small talk with people she could care less about.

Peter hoped he wasn't involved with that group.

Peter *was* glad, however, to see that his invitation to Strange had been accepted. Both Stephen and Wong were in attendance, dressed in civilian clothing rather than their mystical work attire. Wong was with Thor and Loki by the bar while Strange spoke with Bruce near the staircase. Peter smiled. Perhaps this partnership would be more than just a one-time thing.

“You didn't tell me Bert and Ernie were coming,” Tony said as he approached Peter.

“Be nice,” Peter warned. “They helped us.”

“Oh, I have no issue with Wong,” Tony said. “I may even invite him to my wedding. It's Strange that I'm still not fully sure on.”

“Not everyone is plotting against you, Tony,” Peter said as he grabbed a crab cake from a passing tray.

“I don't think he's *plotting* anything, but I don't think he told us everything that acolyte told *him*.” Tony took a sip of his drink. “I just don't want it to come back and bite us in the ass.”

“And if it does? We’ll handle it,” Peter assured him. Tony looked to the kid next to him and his mind flitted back to a document in his office.

“Hey, kid—” Tony was cut off by Natasha arriving at Peter’s shoulder.

“Peter, there you are,” Nat said, Bucky was behind her, a drink in his hand. “Got a second?” Peter looked back at Tony.

“Go on, I’ll find you later,” Tony ushered.

“Did you want to talk about something?” Peter asked.

“It can wait,” Tony promised and left to find Pepper. Peter watched him for a second before turning to the redhead.

“What’s up?” he asked.

“We managed to get something out of Karpov after all,” Natasha said. “Apparently all we had to do was get James to ask the questions,” Nat said looking at Bucky who rolled his eyes.

“Has a bit of an obsession with the Winter Soldiers, doesn’t he?” said Peter.

“It’s disturbing,” Bucky said as he sipped his beer, “but we got what we needed.”

“Which was what?”

“Remember that device we found in Canada? The one from Pym Tech?” Natasha asked. Peter nodded.

“Scott said it was harmless, an atomic emission detector,” Peter said.

“One that is not so harmless anymore,” A new voice said. Peter turned to see Hope Van Dyne approaching them. Scott was with her. “Nice to see you, Peter.” Peter had met Hope shortly after they resolved the Accords issue. He liked the Wasp and liked the brilliant scientist behind the winged suit even more.

“Hi, Hope, Scott” Peter greeted. “What do you mean it’s not harmless?”

“Well, the technology itself is still what it’s always been,” Hope went on, “but we managed to track its history and where it went after they stole it from us. HYDRA bought it from a black-market dealer and they were planning on selling it to another high-paying client,” Hope said.

“It was all on the drive that Natasha managed to get from the base,” Scott said.

“We think it was going to be used to check the potency of the chemicals within the gas,” Natasha said. “Mostly likely a modified version of Pym’s original design that would be able to measure both scientific *and* mystical elements.”

“Is that even possible?” Peter asked.

“HYDRA used the Tesseract to make weapons, Pete,” Bucky said. “Going from space energy to magic isn’t that much of a leap at this point.”

“All this just to kill Tony?” said Peter, trying to wrap his mind around everything. How these worlds of science, magic, and alternate dimensions were being put together just to kill someone he loves. None of it made any sense.

“Not just Tony,” Scott said. “We think,” Scott gestured to himself and Hope. “that whoever is doing this, wants to get rid of all the Avengers or rather anyone who is enhanced in any way. They’re not just building a chemical weapon, it’s a plague.”

A plague.

A disease that would be programmed to take out any enhanced individual whether that would be with advanced skills, powers, or technology. Natasha and Bucky were certain they managed to stop the production in its tracks and with the HYDRA operatives behind bars, it was unlikely that anything was imminent.

However, Peter knew that the one in charge was still out there. They would have to find them soon, but hopefully, with the Avengers retrieving the base compound and Strange taking out the sorcerer that was helping them, the enemy would need time to regroup. Which would give the team time to find them and stop them before anyone was hurt...or worse.

Peter was getting some air on the balcony next to a much-needed space heater when Strange found him. “You have to hand it to Stark,” he said. “He’s got a hell of a view.”

“You should see it from the roof,” Peter said fumbling with a glass in his hands.

“I hope that isn’t what I think it is,” Strange said eyeing the nearly empty glass.

“It’s cider,” Peter assured him as he finished off the glass of sparkling apple juice. “Not that the real stuff would do anything anyways. My metabolism is too fast.” Strange smiled at the disappointment in the teenager’s voice.

“Do you *wish* it was the real stuff?”

“After learning someone is trying to wipe out superheroes with a mega disease? Yeah, maybe just a little bit,” Peter said.

“Yes, Stark caught me up to speed,” Strange said. “If I can help, I will.” Peter looked to the sorcerer.

“Thanks,” Peter said, setting his glass down on an empty cart. “It’s crazy to think that this isn’t the worst thing they’ve faced,” Peter said looking through the windows at his team. Peter especially looked at Wanda. She was at Vision’s side, smiling at something Maria Hill

was saying. Steve was next to Hill, his hand on her back as he hung onto every word she said. Strange followed his line of sight.

“Miss Maximoff is rather unique,” Strange said.

“Yeah, Wanda is amazing,” Peter said softly. “She’s the closest thing I have to a sister.”

“I noticed the stone around her neck,” Strange said. “I don’t think I’ve seen a gem like that before.” Peter was tempted to ask about another type of gem Stephen was familiar with but thought better of it. He didn’t know what the infinity stone in Strange’s possession could do or why he had it in the first place. He would avoid that topic for a while.

“The crystal is from Vanaheim,” Peter explained. “Loki did me a favor. It was her Christmas gift.” Just as he said it, Wanda demonstrated the necklace’s capabilities to Hill who smiled brightly at the brilliant red stars that erupted from the stone.

“Why that particular gift?” Strange wondered. Peter turned from the window and looked to him again.

“Wanda hasn’t always liked her powers. A couple of years ago something horrible happened in Lagos that nearly destroyed her,” Peter explained.

“The suicide bomber,” Strange nodded. “I remember seeing that on the news. One of the main reasons for the Accords.”

“Yeah, well, I met her shortly after that and she was always afraid of hurting someone. I knew that she thought of her powers as evil at times or just incapable of helping and only hurting. So, I thought I would give her something that could help her associate her powers with something...beautiful.” Peter shrugged. He thought his reason was corny, but it was true. He loved Wanda and he would do anything to protect her. Even if she could kick his ass any day.

“And here I thought you were just another one of Stark’s mindless robots,” Strange joked, but the smile on his face was one of warmth towards the boy.

“Hey, our robots are not mindless. They have personalities,” Peter joked. “Don’t let F.R.I.D.A.Y. hear you say that.”

“Wouldn’t dream of it,” Strange said with a smile.

“Random question,” Peter said suddenly. “but you worked at Metro-General right?”

“Yes, why?” Strange asked.

“Did you know a Doctor Nicodemus West?” Peter asked and Strange couldn’t stop the snort that came out of him.

“I did, why? What did he do now?” Strange asked.

“Nothing, he just won’t stop emailing me,” Peter laughed. “I needed some information on brain injuries back in November and I tried to talk to him. He wouldn’t answer me until I mentioned I ‘worked’ for Stark Industries. Now he won’t stop trying to meet with me and talk about TBIs and ‘weird occurrences’.” Strange laughed

“Really? ‘*Weird occurrences*,’ That’s what he’s calling it?” Strange said. “Nic and I worked together. Then we crossed paths again after, well, after everything happened. The only weird occurrence he encountered was myself and my former teacher dressed in our robes. Now, Doctor Palmer,” Strange smiled. “She’s a hell of a surgeon and if you need medical advice again, she’s the woman to talk to.”

“Sounds like you know her well,” Peter hinted.

“Christine and I...” Stephen sighed. “Probably not going to happen again.”

“Well if it happened once...” Peter offered. “Take it from a teenager who has been pining after his best friend since Sophomore year,” Peter paused. “Actually, I have no advice as it has *been* since *Sophomore. Year*.” Peter said.

“I think I’ll forego the dating advice from a genetically modified seventeen-year-old.”

“Hey, man, we all got our quirks,” Peter pointed out. Strange shook his head, smiling. He then noticed Clint approaching and excused himself to go talk to Thor.

“Do you think he’d do my daughter’s birthday party if I asked him?” Clint asked watching the sorcerer walk away.

“I wouldn’t ask,” Peter warned. Clint shrugged.

“Come with me, it’s freezing out here,” Clint said as he pulled Peter back into the warmth of the Tower. Clint and Peter joined Rhodey near a buffet table. Peter started eating immediately.

“So, I tracked down your truck,” Rhodey said.

“Huh?” Peter said, his mouth stuffed with shrimp. Clint noticed and dug for some himself.

“That unmarked truck,” Rhodey explained. “The one that was used to transport the gas.”

“Oh, yeah, what about it?” Peter asked, wiping at his face.

“It was stolen a week before and scrubbed. No way to track it back to whoever initially took it or which agency let an armored truck out of their sights.”

“So, you got nothing,” Clint pointed out.

“Just eat your shrimp, Barton.”

“No, this is good,” Peter said. “Now we know they’re good at taking stuff they need. They’re not amateurs. Thanks, Rhodey, everything helps.” Rhodey saluted him with his champagne

and Clint and Peter went back to the seafood bowl.

Tony found Peter a little over an hour later.

"I figured out the EMP situation," Tony said as he slid next to Peter at the banister of the second level.

"You did?"

"Yup," Tony said. "Not an EMP at all."

"It wasn't an EMP?"

"Well, it was, but not in the way they usually work," Tony explained. "It was centralized. Meaning that the device must have been on you when you fell. My guess is that it fell off when you crashed into Strange's place. This is a good thing, that means that it needs to be in contact with the suit. So less of a *burst* of electromagnetic energy and more like what your taser webs do. As long as they don't hit us, suits should be fine."

"How did it get on me though? The guy never touched me," Peter said.

"Until he kicked you off a roof," Tony pointed out.

"Oh, right."

"Could have been inside the sphere and jumped onto you when it broke, who knows. But the signal was too condensed to be anything else," said Tony.

"Well, that makes me feel a little better."

"I say we stop talking about this all together for the rest of the night," Tony offered. "It's New Year's Eve, we should be having fun, not worrying about HYDRA or magical plagues."

"You're right," Peter said and then remembered something from Christmas. "Let's talk about something else, like...Harley Keener?" Tony's brows shot up.

"How do you know about Harley?" Tony asked.

"Clint mentioned him at Christmas," said Peter with a vague gesture. "I was just curious on how close you were or are, you know?" Tony turned to Peter and placed his hands on the kid's shoulders.

"Peter."

"Tony."

“You worry about the most ridiculous things. Harley is a kid that I met when I was down for the count. I told you about Tennessee and that whole mess, right?” Peter nodded. “And I told you I had someone help me fix my suit and figure out the whole Extremis thing?” Peter nodded again. “That was little Keener.”

“You had a child help fix your broken million-dollar suit?”

“More like a billion-dollar suit, and yes, I did,” Tony said. “I also took a child to fight Captain America and may have sent Cassie a grappling gun for Christmas.”

“Excuse me?” Scott said as he passed by.

“Nothing!” Tony sang. Scott gave him a dark look and continued back towards Hope “Point is, I am not the best when it comes to kids and how they’re *not* supposed to do dangerous things.”

“I can see that,” Peter said.

“Harley is important to me. I keep an eye on him, try to make sure he’ll get into a good school and all that, but Harley is different than you. He’s the little ankle biter who helped me out big time and I owe him a lot, but you’re *my kid*, Pete,” Tony said and then took a deep breath. He looked over Peter’s shoulders and waved Pepper over. “And speaking of you being my kid...” Pepper joined her boys. “We have something to ask you.”

“Okay...why do I feel like I’m about to be proposed to?” Peter joked.

“Because in a way you are,” Tony said and Peter was just noticing how nervous the man was. Tony reached into his jacket and pulled out a bundle of papers.

“We had these drawn up months ago,” Pepper said, “but haven’t been able to find the right time to ask.” Tony handed Peter the papers and Peter unfolded them. He was silent for a moment as he read.

“These...” Peter gasped. “These are adoption papers.”

“Yes, they are,” Tony said. Tony reached down and took Pepper’s hand in his. “I know it’s a lot. I mean, you’d be the heir to Stark Industries and technically take over the Avengers someday. Though, I was already planning on you doing that anyway,” Tony said.

“We don’t want you to think we’re trying to take your name from you,” Pepper added. “You’d still be a Parker, you wouldn’t even have to change your name. You could hyphenate if you wanted. But if you’re willing, we’d like to make you officially a part of the family. Legally, that is. You’ve always been our family.”

Peter couldn’t believe it. Of course, he had thought this over before. MJ had said that he was already Tony’s son in so many ways, but this would make it official. “You wanted to stop lying about who you were and I think this may be the first step in doing that,” Tony offered. “We understand if you need a few days to think about it, but—” Tony was cut off by Peter throwing his arms around him and Pepper.

“You both are crazy if you think I wouldn’t want to be a Stark,” Peter said. “Well, a Parker-Stark.”

“Oh thank god,” Tony said as he hugged his kid back. The three of them separated, but Peter kept hold of their hands.

“Even with all the craziness going on, I would have always said yes,” Peter said. Pepper wiped at the tears on her cheeks. “I don’t remember my parents that much. Bits and pieces, sure, and I can recall certain memories, but Ben and May were *it* when I was little. Then when they were gone, I didn’t think I’d get that again,” Peter said. He was getting rather sentimental this evening. “You guys have given me that. Parents. And I’d be an idiot not to say yes.”

“Yeah, you would,” Tony laughed. “but you’d be our idiot no matter what.” Pepper leaned forward and kissed Peter on the forehead.

“You’re not going to be the only Stark anymore, Tony,” Peter pointed out as he ran his hands over the papers. Tony looked to the love of his life then to the kid that meant everything to him.

“I’m pretty okay with that,” Tony said, grinning. “I love you guys.”

“We love you too, honey,” Pepper said before she kissed her soon-to-be husband. “Okay, one more surprise for the evening.”

“If it’s another car...” Peter said with a laugh.

“Nope, better,” Tony said and then pointed over Peter’s shoulder.

Peter, confused, turned and then he almost forgot how to breathe. Every thought left his brain, except one:

Michelle Jones looked stunning.

MJ was wearing a short black and red dress with long sleeves; her hair was pinned up as usual, and she wore black combat boots. She looked at him, her hands clasped in front of her, unsure what to do.

Peter’s parents shoved him forward and watched as Peter slowly made his way over to her.

“We’re parents,” Tony said, not quite believing it.

“I told you it would all work out,” Pepper smiled and kissed him again.

Peter approached MJ and said the first thing that came to mind, “Wow.” MJ snorted.

“For someone who is constantly rambling, that was...underwhelming,” she said, her hand tucking a stray hair away.

“Sorry, I just... you look really nice, beautiful even, and I sort of checked out for a second. Not because I didn’t want to be looking, but because you caught me off guard...”

“There he is,” Michelle smiled. “And thank you. You don’t look half bad yourself, Parker.” Peter looked down at his ensemble. Tony had convinced him to wear a dress shirt, but he stopped Tony at a full suit. Jeans and a nice black shirt was Peter’s limit at the moment.

“Thanks,” he said. Over her shoulder, Peter caught the eye of Strange who was watching the two, he winked at Peter. Peter looked back to MJ. “Uh, do you wanna go up to the roof? It’s a bit noisy in here.” MJ shrugged and told him to lead the way.

It was nearly midnight as they arrived on the roof of Stark Tower. Peter picked up one of the blankets from the many chairs and slung it around Michelle’s shoulders. “Thanks,” she said quietly.

“I thought you didn’t want to come,” Peter said as they stood at the railing and listened to the bustling city below.

“I didn’t,” MJ said. “Until I remembered that I didn’t have to talk to everyone. Just you.”

“And that’s enough?” Peter asked. He was glad Michelle didn’t have enhanced hearing because his heart was beating a mile a minute. MJ looked to the city and then back at him.

“Definitely,” she said. “What are those?” MJ asked, pointing to the papers still clutched in Peter’s hands.

“Oh, they’re adoption papers,” Peter said, staring at them. “Tony and Pepper are going to make it official.” Peter couldn’t help the grin that appeared on his face a second later. “I’m going to be a Stark.”

“I told you,” she said, lightly pushing him.

“You did,” Peter agreed. “It’s just going to be crazy, you know? Not just having the Stark name, but running the business and having to deal with all the press... I’m not sure how ready I am for all of it.”

“You’re ready,” MJ said.

“How are you so sure?” Peter asked.

“Because,” said MJ as she tentatively took his hand. “Look, I don’t know anything about being a superhero and I don’t know what it’ll be like when the whole world knows Stark is your dad, but,” MJ paused. The lights of the city illuminated her skin and Peter couldn’t stop staring at how lovely she looked and how warm her hand was in his even at the end of December, surrounded by snow. “Peter Parker is an amazing person. People may not know he’s Spider-Man, but they’ll soon know what I’ve always known.”

“Which is what?” Peter asked.

“That you’re special. And not because you’re super strong or because you hang out with Captain America, but because you’re you, Peter. And to me, that’s better than any superpower,” MJ said. “I know I act like I don’t care...”

“I know you do,” Peter interjected, tightening his hold on her hand. “I know you care,” he said. “And if we’re being all open and stuff right now,” MJ raised her brows. “You’re pretty special too, Michelle Jones. So, we can pretend to not care and act like immature idiots all we want,” Peter joked and MJ couldn’t hide her growing smile. “because we know who each other are.” The countdown below started through the streets.

10...9...

“Peter Parker-Stark?” MJ considered. “It does have a nice ring to it.”

8...7...

“Think you can handle a little extra attention?”

6...5...

“And why would I need to consider that?” MJ asked.

4...3...

“I think you know. Unless, I am totally reading this wrong. And have been since Sophomore year...” Peter said, mentally slapping himself.

2...

“Peter...” MJ said, shaking her head.

1...

“Yeah?”

Happy New Year!

“Just shut up and kiss me.” So he did.

And upon that rooftop, amongst the celebrating across the city and the Eastern coast, Peter Parker held Michelle Jones in his arms as they rang in 2019. The coming days weren’t going to be easy. They had a bigger enemy to face and a lot of work to do. Peter was to become a Stark and somehow finish his Senior year in one piece, but he could do it.

He *would* do it.

He had his family behind him, his team, his best friend who was probably going to freak when Peter told him about MJ, and finally, he got the girl.

As it turned to 12:01 on January the first, Peter and Michelle curled up on one of the deck chairs and watched as brilliantly colored fireworks shot into the sky from Time's Square.

Even after meeting Strange and knowing Loki and Wanda, nothing was more magical than that moment under the stars as a new year began.

Chapter End Notes

So remember when I said Spideychelle wasn't going to be in this story? WHOOPS. I couldn't help myself! They are just so damn precious! I hope this chapter helped wrap up some questions from earlier. I tried to wrap up most things. More to come in the next two works. As Infinity War doesn't exist in my stories, you won't see Thanos or the Guardians, but Wakanda will show up in either story 4 or 5.

Side note: if anyone could tell me how old Harley was in IM3, that would be great! I swear he said his age at one point, but I couldn't find it!
Thank you for reading!

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