

Flightless Birds

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Flightless Birds

by [stuckybarnes](#)

Summary

So, really, he doesn't hate the job itself. He hates the dirt, the entitled people who visit his work, he hates the environment. But he can't hate the job itself. Because he needs the job - it enables him to keep being Spider-Man on the side, and make a living during work. Especially when there's a mob operating inside, and he and Wade are both unknowingly called to the scene.

OR

The mandatory stripper fic every fandom needs.

Notes

Hi, pals.

Firtstly, this story is going to stay true to the spirit of the characters.

This is going to be a slow burn story of an accurate representation of the struggles of adult performers and the stigma that surrounds their job. Peter will still be Spider-Man, of course, and will still be his shy, witty, sarcastic self.

There will be a lot of hurt/comfort, lots of time in the strip club, and EVENTUAL smut.

I hope you all enjoy!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Chapter 1

Perhaps it was luck, or fate.

No. No, never mind. Nothing was ever bred from luck and fate except naivete. *Time* is a much more likely culprit for this turn of events, and time didn't care whether you wanted it to pass or not. The interesting thing about time is its consistency. It is intrinsically flawed, because it isn't linear. Like, at all.

Lives are made of millions and millions of moments - some meaningful, some insignificant. All these moments pile on top of each other, over years and years, until a person is made up of them. And these moments are very important. These moments make a person happy, make a person sad, make a person depressed, or even make a person hollow. Moments could make a person wish they were dead, or make a person the happiest individual on earth.

And that wasn't fair, either. It is nowhere near fair that intangible concepts could mold a human being. But, again, time doesn't give a damn. It'll pass and allow the most inexplicable things whether you want them or not.

The other incredibly interesting thing about time is its pliability. Time is moldable, in a constant state of flux. Constantly in an ebb and flow. One minuscule choice, one decision, could set the balance off and change everything forever.

If the car was going slower. If the boy hadn't raised his music a notch. If the girl took a different route home. If that kid ran just a little faster on that particular day. If he wasn't on his phone while driving.

Or, in this case, if heroes didn't need day jobs. If the Avengers were less trusting.

If being an adult performer was a safer job. If mercenaries didn't have morals. If mobsters didn't follow cliches. If stripping didn't pay so well. If blood were thicker. If defenses were higher. If secret identities weren't so goddamned fragile. Isn't it obvious? Time, above all else, depends solely on *us*. Time is *dependent on us*.

That is why Peter doesn't believe in fate. Neither does Wade. Not one bit.

In the same sense, they don't believe luck is real, either. Sure, things happen. People win the lottery, run into the love of their life, avoid a terrible accident, miracles are seen.

And people foolishly mistake that as luck. As fate.

Naivete truly is the killer of all dreams.

But it's surely not because of luck. Nothing is because of luck. It's about being in the right place at the right time. It's about pure coincidence. It's about statistics and ratios and odds. Everything that happens, every person you meet, every life you save, every accident you avoid, every future lover you bump hearts and scrape skin with - it is because of pure chance.

The compilation of moments that made up Peter and Wade's lives didn't feel orchestrated. Nothing was planned or organized. And, really, if there was actually some higher power in the sky pulling everything along, they must be pretty damn sadistic - just ask Peter and Wade.

There was nothing particular about the choices these two made that led them to each other. But they were choices nonetheless, and they changed time.

As Spider-Man and Deadpool, their masked selves, the two were fairly acquainted with each other. They had fought many a crime together, sat on many a roof ledge together, and definitely ate many a burrito together. Deadpool and Spider-Man never really intended to ever meet up; it just so happened that Deadpool liked Queens, and Peter *patrolled* Queens, and so the two ran into each other nearly every month for the past four years. Occasionally, Deadpool would even stick around after a particularly rough fight, because contrary to popular belief, Spider-Man is squeamish when tending to his own injuries and Deadpool is used to blood. Spider-Man, still, though, has his wariness for Deadpool.

The thing civilians don't comprehend is - or, rather, have no need to comprehend - is that heroes and vigilantes are *people*. At night, by the time they patrol and stop crime and save the day, they've *already had* a full day of work, or school, or some menial, laborious job. So by the time these vigilantes set out into the night, they're already tired, irritable, groggy. However, being a hero doesn't pay - at least in physical *monetary* substance.

It pays intangibly, sure, with gratification, the overwhelming relief of helping someone who couldn't help themselves. But the world doesn't work like that, and it's not like they can sacrifice one job over the other; one is a moral responsibility, and one is an economic necessity.

So, how do you choose? You don't. You do both.

And so, Peter Parker goes to college every Tuesday and Thursday, for biochemistry. Peter Parker sends in photographs of himself in the Spidey suit to get some pocket cash from The Bugle, so that he can have a decent meal every once in awhile (a decent meal is usually the *extra* cheesy macaroni). Peter Parker has an abysmal sleeping schedule to make everything work. And, because the pay is decent, the hours coincide with his patrolling time, he needs to pay for his shitty apartment, and he's pretty *good* at it, Peter is a stripper at a fairly popular local bar, and has been for two years now. Peter is twenty.

Wade. Well. Inspired by his adventures with Spider-Man, Wade has been hoping to incrementally better himself and leave the mercenary business to get in good graces with his favorite webbed vigilante and the rest of the Gossip Girls over at Stark Tower. So, in a fit of kindness that was heavily forced upon him by Steve Rogers, Tony decided to give Wade a chance. He assigns Wade to go undercover in whatever way he deems fit to scope out mobsters who have been taking refuge in a local strip club, while still enjoying themselves in the ambiance.

It just so happens that the strip club Peter works at, and the strip club Wade is assigned to watch, are the same club. Of course, neither of *them* know that.

And yet, these choices of theirs changed things in the long run. They changed time. They always do. So, yes, fate, if you want to believe in it, is directly correlated to what we do. What choices we make. Everything we do and everyone we meet depends solely on time, which depends solely on us.

It's painfully human, really. Because while the normal ones, the ignorant ones, grovel at the hands of luck, it is us who have been controlling our own lives, unknowingly, after all.

Nonetheless, though, Spider-Man and Deadpool have known each other for years.

But Peter and Wade meet in a strip club, under undesirable circumstances.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

This chapter was really fun to write. Since I was a little kid, I've been reading DP's and Spidey's comics, and I really identify with Wade's humor, so I hope you all like this chapter!

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

Safe House #17. This is definitely one of his more habitable safe houses; there's no foul smell, and there's only water damage darkening one corner of the ceiling, above the fridge.

The lights flicker twice a day, which is better than Safe House #6. The shower only runs cold when the drug dealer next door is showering, so Wade can work around that. The heater splutters and chuffs pitifully in the winter, but Wade has always been a fan of sweaters.

There's only one crack in the window, and duct tape hasn't failed Wade yet. His next-door neighbor, to the left, is a different person every week, and the hallway is actually rather well-kept.

The day starts off well enough for Wade.

He narrows his eyes, peering through the blinds and examining the spindly frost on his window panes, brisk New York winter crisping the air outside. Nothing is out of the ordinary outside; just the way Wade likes it, because he really doesn't want to explain to the landlord why he has to plaster over bullet holes. Again.

Outside, there are no unusually dangerous faces; there's the guy who works at the newspaper stand who moonlights as a pot dealer, and the spritely con-woman who can't be more than seventeen, but Wade likes them. From this angle, there's a discreet, tiny white baggy that is tucked in the nook of possibly the only phone booth left in New York City, but drug deals aren't new, or particularly dangerous. There's nothing suspicious, nothing unsettling, nothing dangerous.

So, all in all, the day was normal. At least, his *morning* was.

"Are you sure you have the right number?" Wade questions, peering down the barrel of his gun.

"Painfully sure, yup." Tony says begrudgingly.

"This number belongs to Wade Wilson." Wade clarifies distractedly, blowing into the muzzle of the gun and coughing indignantly when gunpowder puffs onto his face.

"I know." Tony clips.

“You banned me from every Avengers and SHIELD facility and safe house on the East Coast.” Wade deadpans. “And *Texas*.”

“I know you’re banned.” Tony sighs.

“Like I would ever step foot in Texas, anyway.” He scoffs, tucking pink band-aids into the pouch of his hoodie. “You - you remember that, right? Like, you recall that I’m literally *banned*...” Wade hums, narrowing his eyes. He pulls jeans on before tucking his gun into the waistband of his pants and stuffing keys into his pocket.

“Yes, and I am temporarily *lifting* that ban for you to get your ass down here right now.” Tony grits out. He then hears a muffled chastise over the phone from someone sounding so *patriotic* that it can only be Steve Rogers.

Wade raises his brows in surprise. “Woah there, Tin Man. You are *way* too tiny to be that angry; it can’t be good for your health.”

“Just get over here.” And Tony hangs up, which, *rude*.

“Nobody says goodbye anymore.” Wade frowns.

With that, Wade groans in distaste at the prospect of having to get up and drag himself across town. He throws on a thick hoodie, tugging his mask on over his face before pulling his hood low over his forehead. Hello Kitty scarf wrapped tightly round his neck, Wade ventures out of his not-so-safe Safe House #17.

Thirty minutes and one very interesting train ride later, Wade waltzes into the lobby of Stark Tower.

“Hello, Mister Wilson.” JARVIS intones coolly.

“Hi, pal.” Wade smiles brightly under his mask. “Did Stark install a new interface for you? You look so slim, so sleek! So 2016!” Wade beams. He’d like to think that JARVIS laughed at that joke.

“That’s comedic. I understand the humor; new interfaces for technology are intangible betterment, whereas a slimmer physique is an observable betterment.” JARVIS says, and Wade raises his brows.

“Nothing gets by you, bud.” If JARVIS had a shoulder, Wade would've pat it.

Tony Stark’s penthouse is on the 92nd floor, and the conference room for the Avengers is at the very end of that floor.

“Hello, Tiny Dancers.” Wade greets, pushing the doors open.

Tony, Steve, Bruce, Natasha, and Clint all turn towards the door in comedic synchronization, confusion plastered on their faces.

“Cap! Big fan!” Wade says excitedly before blowing a kiss towards Clint, who chuckles. “And you. Hello, you beautiful archer, you.” Wade preens. “Hi, Wade.” Clint says.

“There's an advanced security lock on that door.” Tony blanches, gesturing to the door that Wade just pushed open.

“Is there?” Wade hums curiously.

“How did you get in?”

“I guess JARVIS has the hots for me.” He shrugs.

Tony narrows his eyes before sighing deeply, resigning and nodding his head toward the sofa for Wade to join them.

The penthouse conference room is a wide expanse of gaudy yet sleek extravagance. A dip in the center of the room reveals a fire pit, edges ridged to act as a circular, hollow table with fire at its center. A ring of plush sofa encircles the pit, a dark maroon color that offsets the dark walls. A minibar is off to one side, pristine black granite countertop, a flat screen television embedded into the wall to the left of the door. Wade saunters down into the fire pit and collapses onto one side of the sofa, everyone else sitting across from him.

Interestingly, The Avengers don't always wear their various uniforms and costumes and do in fact own some civvies. Natasha is in Clint's sweatpants, rolled up several times around the ankles, and a loose tank top. Tony is wearing what are probably million dollar loafers, and plush pajamas. Steve is in shorts and a typical t-shirt, but the left shoulder is looser than the right, and Wade has a feeling that the shirt belongs to Bucky. Bruce is in slacks and a sweater, and Clint looks like he just woke up, hair mussed and a butterfly bandage on his eyebrow. “I have a question. Do you all have homes of your own, or is it just an endless sleepover situation at Stark's?” Wade asks, gesturing around the place.

“Let's talk.” Tony says, hands open and spread in a placating gesture.

“Dad, I've already *had* the sex talk.” Wade argues, but rolls his mask up to his nose so that Clint can read his lips.

At this, Tony's amiable expression drops, and his eyes are seething, taking a deep, labored breath. He grits his teeth and a vein on his forehead bulges. Wade grins.

“So,” Steve starts, leaning toward Wade to block Tony, who leans back against the sofa. “It's become clear that you're trying to better yourself.”

“I sure am, *El Capitan*.”

Everyone is silent, and it becomes obvious that they want an explanation. Wade makes a bothered sound, huffing. Does it matter why he wants to be better? Why can't they just be happy? Heroes are *so* hard to please.

“Webs has inspired me to be a good boy.” Wade says cheerily. “I've been tagging along when he patrols, and the spritely little spider has seemed to have a positive influence on me.”

He says shortly. “Plus, gettin’ on your good side could save me a couple bullet holes and broken bones every now and then.” He shrugs, and Bruce narrows his eyes, pushing his glasses up higher on the bridge of his nose. The superhero knitting club seems pleased with this answer, though.

“How come you’ve been palling around with Spider-Man lately anyway?” Clint asks.

“Because he’s pretty. And he’s fun to have on your side. Not to mention, he’s actually not a piece of shit.” Wade says, not bothering to elaborate further. “Quit interrogating me. Why am I here?”

“Well, alright.” Steve nods, nudging Tony.

“We have a - Wade, we’re trusting you with -” Tony grits his teeth, glaring at Wade, who, for his part, is silent with a shit-eating grin on his face.

Steve shoots Tony a disappointing glare. “What Tony is *trying* to say is, we have a task for you. *Pro bono*. Since you say you’re trying to be better.”

[Ah, there’s the kicker. Pro Bono.]

{We’re not getting paid.}

[The good guys don’t get paid.]

Fine, fine, Wade thinks. *This is for the better, probably.*

“Sure thing, Capsicle.” Wade smiles tightly. “What’s this all about, anyway?”

“We need you to do some long-term undercover work.” Steve says plainly, and Wade knits his brows.

{That’s weird.}

Before Wade can comment that that’s not usually the Avenger’s typical *style*, Steve continues.

“There’s a mob trying to stay on the down-low, spending their time at a local strip club and taking refuge there.” Steve explains, and Wade makes a surprised sound.

“Kinda cliché, huh, folks?” Wade asks.

“Cliché or not, they’re a problem, ‘Pool.” Tony interjects. “And we want you to do some long-term work to scope them out. However you choose to go undercover, we’ll help forge an identity for you to validate and accommodate your story.”

Wade nods in understanding, reeling the information in his head, already assessing the necessary precautions and risk factors and the depth of this mission of sorts.

“This is us, trusting you.” Natasha says coolly, inclining her head at Wade.

“Right, right. That’s great, and all that. But why are *you* guys involved in a *mob* case?” Wade asks.

This is gonna be good. He picks languidly at a loose seam on his pink scarf while he waits for an explanation.

“Because we have reason to believe that the mob is primarily composed of mutants, mutates, or people who have some control over them.” Steve explains, his shoulders heavy.

Wade makes a face, rolling his eyes. Leave it to the Munchkins of Oz to half-ass their investigations. “And how the shitfuck do you know *that*?”

“We have an eye-witness employee at the club who saw one of the alleged members... ah, *push* a car out of the way to get to their own.” Steve says lowly.

Well then.

“Uh. Alright, huh. Steroids, maybe?” Wade asks, spreading his hands.

The group in front of him watches him with less-than-impressed eyes. “Doubt it.” Tony says, clearing his throat and standing with resolve to make himself a drink.

“Are you day-drinking? Really, Tin Man?” Wade chastises. “If you need someone to talk to, I can always -”

“It’s *tonic water*, and - look, are you gonna take this job, or not? We’re giving you a shot to prove yourself. To prove that you’re trying.”

“And why can’t one of you just pretend to be a bouncer or a stripper at the club? Stevie Boy? You’re telling me you can’t pretend to be a bouncer? And, *Natasha*? Why can’t you be the stripper, Steve be the bouncer, and then you’ll keep this little mission within the family?”

Natasha furrows her brows, eyes sparking with conflict. “Why am I the stripper in your scenario? Because I’m the woman?” She asks. Wade cocks his head in confusion. “Uh, *no*. That’s sexist. You don’t think any higher of me? You’re the stripper because nobody else here is a good enough actor. Bruce would flip his shit and go all Green Giant, Clint would burst into laughter, Steve would probably go into cardiac arrest, and *Tony* can’t be that sexy! You do undercover work all the time, so you’re the only one who would keep up the charade.”

Natasha ponders this explanation for a moment before nodding her head in agreement.

“Anyway,” Steve continues, confused as he glances at his teammates before returning his attention to Wade. “This is your shot. No killing, no money. Just you, showing us that you’re trying to change and that we can trust you.”

[Look at him, all beautiful with his patriotic glory.]

Wade groans, scrubbing a hand over his face. How could he say *no* to Captain-Fucking-America? That’s his goddamned hero. He’d probably need to do his own investigating on

this before he makes any moves, though. “Yes! Yes, alright, fine! I’ll figure something out and keep you and the rest of The Brady Bunch in the loop.”

Clint laughs at that, and Natasha’s lips are upturned at the corners.

“You start in two days, Friday night. The hours are... undesirable, but I have a feeling you won’t mind. We’ll keep you up on any information we find, and we expect you to do the same. One of us will send you the address.” Steve tells him, and Wade claps his hands together, standing from the rather uncomfortable couch.

“Well, this was a wonderful meeting. Very accommodating. Captain, always a pleasure. Natasha, badass and lovely as ever. Bruce, Big Guy, you’re a gem. Clint, you’re adorable, and I love you. Tony...” Wade trails off, making a noncommittal sound in regards to Tony.

Hand on the door, Wade turns back to the odd bunch. “For a completely unrelated reason, where is your snack bar and mini fridge?”

Before Tony can tell him to fuck off, Bruce chimes in. “First door on this floor to the left. You can have access as long as you keep working this job.”

Wade smiles.

Chapter End Notes

hope you liked that, pals! the next chapter is when Peter is introduced!
also, christ on a pogo stick, i was not expecting this many comments and hits already, so thanks!

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DON'T FORGET TO EAVE COMMENTS AND KUDOS :)

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Yikes, sorry it's been so long. I've been focusing on Dissonance.

ANYWAY, I REALLY enjoyed writing this chapter, and I hope you like it. I'm very excited to continue writing this story.

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

It's not the job that Peter dislikes, not really; it's the *stigma* of the job, the inherent layer of grime that seems to come with the job.

A job is a job, isn't it? Whatever pays the bills, right? If you're good at something, you might as well pursue it to make money. Nobody ever seems to think *why* people have seemingly undesirable jobs.

Peter dances for money, strips for money, is a waiter at a particularly high-end cabaret club.

The club is called *Wicked Webs*, which Peter finds hilarious and irritating simultaneously.

He's good at his job, and it coincides with his patrolling schedule as Spider-Man, so he does it. Simple.

The public, though, never thinks like that. The majority of the public will shame strippers, shame those who expose themselves for money, will consider them scum in public. They will abhor adult entertainers, until they're gasping and groaning at three in the morning in some car or cabaret bar or during some lap dance, handing fistfulls of money over, begging for more, *more*.

It's so funny, Peter thinks, that they think they are better. The contradiction is stark and very apparent, and yet the general public seems to deem themselves cleaner, better, higher, than adult entertainers; there to utilize, and then to discard and shame.

As if the same people who shame them aren't the same ones who keep the job alive.

To add to the unfairness, people seem to think that the way adult entertainers act during their jobs are the way they *always* act. This is... *absurd*, not to mention illogical. Do accountants and financial aid advisors bring their work home with them? Certainly not. They wouldn't dream of it. Why is the same not thought about adult entertainers? Accountants must not appreciate being asked constantly about financial advice, and Peter does not like being treated like he's at work constantly.

As much as he wishes, being Spider-Man doesn't pay in any monetary substance. Sure, it's a moral responsibility, and he gets paid in the *gratification* that his city is safe, that he saved someone. He *loves* being Spidey. He loves it more than anything in the world, loves saving people, loves sticking up for people who can't do it themselves. But Spider-Man won't pay his apartment bills, won't put food in his hungry belly, won't keep his heat on in frigid New York winter.

He is a stripper, he surrounds himself in this scene because it pays well, because he is agile and slim and lanky and flexible; courtesy to his powers as Spider-Man. These are all desirable traits in adult entertainers, especially young ones. Not only that, but his job starts at 9 PM, and ends at 1AM. Right after that, he patrols the city as Spider-Man for a while, relishing his tip money and buying food after a while of patrolling.

He then goes home, sleeps, studies, and repeat and repeat and repeat andand *and*.

So, really, he doesn't hate the job itself. He hates the dirt, the entitled people who visit his work, he hates the environment. But he can't hate the job itself.

Today is a Friday, and Peter hates Fridays with a passion. Fridays are the most crowded, the most drenched in cheap alcohol, the most careless, the most handsy. Despite whatever perceptions of strippers and people who work in such environments, Peter does not like unsolicited touch. He hates it. He does not like the grabby hands, the sneaking fingers, the acrid stench of beer breath and the scratch of money against his skin.

As Spider-Man, his senses are heightened to an astronomical level - sound, sight, touch, all of it is usually overwhelming. Sensory defensiveness probably isn't the best thing to have in Peter's work environment, but what choice does he really have?

He dances, strips, waits tables, but he is always in control. He never has sex, never lets them touch him past the extent of skimming fingers. Never. Nevernevernever. He can't tolerate it. Won't do it.

Peter burrows his nose under the collar of his thin jacket, pulling his wool hat over his ears before shoving his hands into his pockets. He skips onto the curb, kicking his longboard into his hand and unlocking the employee entrance at the back of the club.

The door creaks open, and the silence Peter was relishing is suddenly gone. He takes the first right on the narrow hallway, into the backstage room that functions as the employee dressing room and lounge. Bass-heavy music reverberates against the walls from the main room and makes Peter's ribs vibrate. There's only one other employee in the dressing room, on break, eating late dinner.

Peter undresses hastily, modesty not a concern around his other coworkers; none of them care - they're all doing the same job, wearing the same minimal clothes.

Tonight is Masquerade Night at the cabaret, just like every Friday. In terms of anonymity, Masquerade Night is wonderful. Peter pulls his labeled outfit off the clothing rack with minimal distaste, peeling the plastic cover off and chucking it onto the floor.

The costume is a black piece of extravagance - cloth that adheres to his skin mimicking peacock feathers in sleek greens and blues. The feathers start at his right shoulder and fan out to lick across his torso, the longest of the feathers ending somewhere near his left hipbone. Simple tight black shorts cover his bottom. A matte black mask that covers his eyes and tapers off into fine points makes his face look angular and interesting. He looks very pretty. Lithe. Sultry. Exactly what's intended of him.

To be perfectly honest, Peter doesn't really mind the tight clothes - his Spidey suit has gotten him accustomed to that, though he wouldn't mind some more coverage. He puts his backpack in his employee locker, keeping his civilian clothes, Spidey suit, and phone safe and sound until his shift is over.

He walks out barefoot, down the narrow hall and into the main room. Today, he only has to wait tables, and take up the occasional lap dance if he wants some pocket cash. All the better, Peter thinks as he adjusts his mask, because he's too tired to dance on stage today.

He stayed up even later than usual last night, meeting up on a desolate rooftop to exchange rumors of crime with Daredevil. He has become a sort of constant mentor and source of support for him, along with Scott Lang.

According to Daredevil, who "*overheard*" his information from the Avengers, there's a group of mobsters comprised of genetically altered individuals who are keeping up appearances at a popular, respected nightclub, hiding like VIP guests.

This club happens to be Wicked Webs, the same club Peter works at. Of course, he didn't tell Daredevil that. How could he? What would he think? Instead, Peter said he would look after this particular case, and Daredevil shrugged it off and agreed.

Perhaps working here is a good thing, for now, because he can keep a close eye on the mobsters, while still doing his job.

Before he starts his shift, he slips two buds in his ears. They dull the noise inside the club, help make things a bit more sated. The buds allow him to hear as a normal person would, without hearing all the different conversations, the different *clinks* and *bangs* and *jolts* and *booms*. With sensory input capabilities as strong as *his*, it's always good to have some sort of buffer.

As soon as Peter pushes through the double doors into the main floor, a glossy tray of sparkly shot glasses is pressed into his hands, one of the bartenders chiding him, "you're late, kid."

Peter murmurs an apology, grips the tray, and he lets a smile ghost his lips, corners upturned as he saunters deeper into the club. All the performing staff members and waiters are dressed in similar outfits, men and women alike. Some are dancing center stage, swaying atop bar counters, rolling their hips down onto eager clients, or simply gliding around the club serving drinks.

Peter walks distractedly, mind bouncing with ideas, things he'd rather be doing, an equation his professor gave him, what he'll encounter while patrolling the city tonight. He wanders

idly around the club until he has five dollars already just for “*lookin’ pretty*,” and only has one shot glass left on his silver tray.

He only stops ten minutes into his shift, when someone whistles at him. He hates that. He isn’t a dog. Gritting his teeth and turning to the whistler with bright eyes, Peter smiles tightly. “Yessir?” He asks, facing a man in a dark and surely expensive suit, strong features, dangerous eyes, as if he is above everyone else. He seems mildly intoxicated, a cold look in his gleaming jade eyes. Probably a high-end business man for a profitable corporation. Peter doesn’t trust him, but his Spidey senses aren’t alerting him either, so this man is probably just unpleasant and rude, not a serious threat.

“How much for a dance from you, huh, Princess?” He asks, and his voice gives away just how drunk he is, but his eyes exude superiority.

Peter hates that pet name. *Princess*. He shudders every time he hears it, brings him back to a darker time, a more defenseless time.

“Just a minute, Sir.” Peter starts, attempting to drop the tray off at the bar. Instead, the man grabs hold of his bicep, pulling him closer. Peter is instantly more alert, as if his skin is *screaming* where it was touched.

The contents of the last shot glass jostles, some alcohol splashing over the rim of the tray and onto the man’s pants. “I said *just a minute*.” Peter says more sternly now, snatching his arm back.

“This is your job, ain’t it? Don’t you want money?” He asks indignantly, gesturing rather crudely to his lap. “I just need to take this tray back-” This time, the man tries to hoop his fingers under the waistband of Peter’s shorts, tugging him near again. The tray jostles, more of the drink splashing down.

Irritated and defensive, Peter sets the tray down on the table with a rattle, leaning over the man, his hands braced on either arm rest. The man grins and leans back at first, but Peter stares down at him with distaste.

“If you manhandle me again, or grab me like a piece of furniture, I will let that shot glass fall on you. If it falls, your crotch will be soaked in alcohol. And then, your wife will think somebody was doing *body shots* off of you instead of working late at the office, like you probably *told her* you were doing right now. And I don’t think you would like that.” Peter says sweetly, looking at him under long lashes.

The man is obviously surprised that Peter spoke back to him, but equally surprised because Peter was probably *right*.

“This is my job, yes. But if you want to throw us around like rag dolls just because your wife can’t get you off, take your business somewhere else.” Peter says.

“You catch more flies with honey, Sir.” Peter picks up his tray, leaves with the man cursing behind him in fear and annoyance.

Peter huffs out a breath. He has standards; he won't dance for anyone who he doesn't feel safe with, who he doesn't feel comfortable so exposed with.

Walking to the counter, his eyes drift up to the second level of the club - the indoor balcony level. The VIP section. There are six people, all dressed regally, expensively. Three are seated beside each other on a plush sofa, a bottle of champagne sitting half empty on the table in front of them. They exude secretivity, elusiveness, trouble. They're definitely members of the mob.

What strikes Peter as even more unsettling, are the three people *standing up*. At first, they simply look like they're admiring the scene below, at the staff.

But Peter isn't just an ordinary person glancing up at the balcony. He can tell that they're actually in a standard Wedge Formation - they're *protecting* the people sitting down. This group is most definitely the mob, the inner members being protected at all times by lower-member mutants and mutates in the mob.

He turns away before anyone notices him staring, and the rest of his shift is business as usual.

At one in the morning, Peter finally sheds his costume, peeling off the mock-feathers and hooking his mask up, shuffling back into his sweatpants and hoodie, slipping on his comfortable tattered sneakers. One hundred dollars of tip money in his front pocket, he slings his backpack over his shoulder and tucks his long board under his arm.

The club is still fairly busy, and Peter avoids stumbling drunk people in his way with a practiced agility, pushing the door open and sighing as the music dissipates and muted melody is the only thing left to hear. He pulls his earbuds out and buries them in his pocket, busying himself with wondering what he could eat today that wouldn't cost too much.

"Burger." Peter hums in thought before scrunching his nose in distaste. No, not filling enough.

"Why is everything so expensive." He whines pitifully, kicking at gravel on the ground and wallowing in his own pity. Tiredness surrounds him like a warm blanket, more than usual, and Peter is contemplating if he should just go home and sleep tonight instead of patrol as Spider-Man, when a sharp tingle shoots down his spine from the base of his head.

He's immediately focused, eyes wide and senses alert. He whips his head around just as someone grabs his arm. Tight. It hurts him, actually.

Peter automatically notes that this is the drunk man from the club who demanded a lap dance aggressively from him. *Why me*, Peter thinks. *Why do I always have to get the weird ones?*

"I don't like not getting what I want, Princess." The man says, more akin to a growl.

Peter scowls at the man, trying to wring his wrist out of his grip. "Man, you really don't want to do this." He warns, but the man laughs.

“You’re threatening *me*?” The man laughs. “How old are you? What, eighteen? Nineteen?” He goads.

Peter hates situations like this. What can he do? If he defends himself like he can, people will know something is different about him. If he doesn't defend himself, he'll get attacked. The middle ground would be to defend himself with the bare minimum, but that's always too difficult to calculate; if Peter forgets to pull his punches, he could seriously injure a regular human.

“Seriously, you really don't want to start this.” Peter admonishes again. He's tired; he wants to go home, eat, and sleep. He doesn't want to fight this guy.

Peter’s words only seem to provoke him more, because then he's backing Peter into the nearest parked car, one hand on his shoulder and the other hand *far too close* to his crotch.

Peter makes a shrill sound, panic crawling up his throat and anger in his belly. His skin burns with the harsh touch of foreign fingers.

Immediately, he headbutts the man hard, grabbing his wrist and twisting until the drunken man shrieks. He didn't break it; just sprained.

“Can you, like, calm down, or something? And maybe stop being a pervert?” Peter asks harshly, but the man rolls his wrist a few times and a grin curls on his face. “I’d love to put that mouth to better use.” He purrs. Peter shudders, eyes hard, and then the man has the audacity to try and grab at him again.

In one swift motion, Peter dodges the man’s hand and grabs his wrist. He fractures it this time. The man howls in pain that is well deserved. “Leave me alone, and go to a hospital before that wrist swells up to the size of your ego.” Peter practically spits, stance defensive and wary.

Before the man can recuperate and attempt to strike again, he topples to the ground in a crumpled heap.

Peter blinks in surprise, only to find a tall man standing in front of him, fist raised. There's too many shadows to make out his face. “What a bag of shit.” The voice says airily, letting his hand fall to his side, and then, “Hey, you okay, Gorgeous?”

Peter says nothing, breath coming out in warm puffs as he stands in front of him, eyes wide and panicked, backing away from the new person.

Chapter End Notes

wooo hope you all liked that!!!

DON'T FORGET TO LEAVE COMMENTS AND KUDOS!!!

ig: heathen.son
tumblr: scruffydun

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Surprise! This story isn't dead! Sorry it's been so long - I was unmotivated and focusing on Dissonance.

Peter and Wade finally interact in this chapter, and I'm pretty proud of it!

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

“You knocked him out!” Peter screeches out of impulse, looking down at the unconscious man.

“Uh, *duh*. He was a piece of shit.”

Peter stills, panting. That *voice*. Fuck. Peter knows that voice.

The broad man stares at Peter with a look of perplexity that rivals his own. He waves his hands in front of Peter’s blank face in confusion. “Uh, hello? You broken, kid? You stoned? Did he slip you something? Are you roofied right now?” He asks, his voice escalating into a rising panicked crescendo. “Shit. I should get you inside until those wear off.”

Peter can’t answer right now. His mind won’t let the signal to speak move to his mouth. He’s short-circuiting. How can he even begin to talk?

Deadpool. Deadpool, clear as day, is standing right in front of Peter, at Peter’s *place of work*, and is currently speaking to him. Unmasked!

Peter doesn’t care that Wade doesn’t have a mask on; he’s seen Wade without a mask on dozens of times, and Peter truly doesn’t mind Wade’s appearance. But Wade is always unmasked! He doesn’t have a secret identity.

Peter, on the other hand, *does* have a secret identity. He really, really does. His entire life is reliant on the fact that him being Spider-Man *stays a secret*. He can't have his civilian life and his hero life mixing together; it's too dangerous.

But Spider-Man and Deadpool are... friends. So this is bad. This is really bad. The two men have a sort of... compatibility that is entirely unfounded, and thoroughly surprising to Peter. Deadpool has an astonishing modicum of respect for Spider-Man. They have a shared knowledge of obscure references, and their banter comes unnervingly easy to Peter. After a while, Peter even started tolerating him.

When Peter tag-teams with The Avengers and Deadpool is needed too, they always regard him as if he is an explosive ready to combust. That’s just not true, though. Sure, Deadpool’s

beliefs don't always align with the Avenger's, but they both have the same goals and intentions. Wade is inappropriate, definitely, and crude and spontaneous. But he is, admittedly, a good friend, if not a bit unreliable.

"I - I'm fine." Peter stammers then, his voice wavering more than he'd like. "I had it covered."

"Yeah." Wade huffs, nodding in agreement. If Wade recognizes Peter's voice, he shows no indication. "I could see that. Pretty strong for someone so slim." He says, and there's a hint of wariness there that Peter feels unsettled with.

"Are you sure you're okay, Pretty Boy?" Wade narrows his eyes, takes a step closer.

Peter takes a step back, eyes wide.

It isn't that he's scared of Wade; of course he isn't. But he isn't keen on being touched right now, and he wants to go home and sleep for approximately fifteen hours.

"I'm fine. I would've handled it, thanks. I get this shit all the time, working here and all." He says, clipped, shoving his hands inside his pockets and turning with the intent to leave.

A large hand claps onto his shoulder then, and Peter clenches his jaw, shutting his eyes momentarily. He turns back around to face Wade.

"Yessir?"

Wade hesitates, furrowing his brow line. "D'ya need me to walk you home? Call you a cab? Hire an escort? Perhaps I could call in a favor, and have Captain America carry you home, safely nuzzled against his amazing and soft chest?" He asks, perfectly content.

Peter openly scrunches his nose at Wade's typical behavior, but bites his tongue to keep from laughing regardless. It's even funnier because, as Spider-Man, Peter knows that the Cap *would* be willing to carry someone helpless home, and has carried Peter countless times after being injured in fights.

He allows himself a brief chuckle (*That doesn't make it seem like I know him, does it? Peter thinks.*).

"Mh. As much as I'd, uh, *love* to be pressed between Steve Rogers' patriotic bosom, I think I'd rather take the standard route and walk home." Peter says, smiling tightly.

The crumpled man on the ground between them groans incoherently, blinking fast and muttering. Peter looks down at him with distaste. He kneels down, hooks the man under the arms, and drags him to lean against the nearest car. Just so he doesn't get run over in the lot.

Peter crouches beside him momentarily. "You're lucky I wasn't wearing heels at work a few minutes ago." Peter says nonchalantly. "One kick from a heeled shoe could probably castrate someone." He shrugs, standing back up. The man, still only half-conscious, makes a panicked sound.

Wade looks curious at this. “That’s all you’re gonna say to him? Just a threat? Didn’t he try to grope you?” He asks blankly.

“Oh, he did grope me. But I broke his wrist, and you knocked him out. So I really don’t think he deserves to get run over by a car to top it all off.” Peter explains.

“Well, you sure are sweeter than me. I would’a let him rot.” Wade shrugs.

Peter knows this already.

“Well, uh...” Peter hesitates. What does he say? *See you soon?* No, he doesn’t want to meet Wade again in his civilian life. *Nice talking to you?* Eh, it could have been better.

“I should really get going. Nice meeting you.” He says instead lamely.

Wade waves goodbye excitedly.

Peter is at the end of the parking lot, when he hears Wade’s echoing voice.

“Hey, man! This isn’t me trying to disrespect you or only value your body, but you have a great ass!” He yells. “Top notch bum!” He shoots Peter a thumbs-up.

Peter is used to this erratic and mildly inappropriate but well-intended behavior from Wade. Wade talks to him like this all the time as Spider-Man. If anything, over the years, it’s grown to be a nice sort of constant during patrols and fights, knowing that Wade is still there making odd remarks.

Peter rolls his eyes but says nothing in return, waving once from over his head.

And then that’s it. They go their separate ways.

Peter boards all the way home with his tips in his pocket and his backpack securely over his shoulder, his mind reeling with today’s events. It’s a miracle that he manages to get himself up the stairs to his apartment without collapsing out of tiredness.

He fumbles with his keys before pushing the door open, stumbling into his dark apartment. He’ll patrol tomorrow night - he’s too tired today. He can’t help anybody if he can’t even keep his eyes open. He yanks his clothes off haphazardly, stepping out of his shoes and throwing the rest of his clothes on the floor, somewhere near his backpack and board.

He all but collapses into his bed, pulling his plush blanket over himself until he’s cocooned in warmth and the honking of car horns is distant and soft, and the pulsing music at the cabaret is but an echoing memory.

The heater in his apartment spits and chuffs pathetically, and if anything the useless slab of metal makes the room *colder* rather than warmer. He shoves his freezing hands between his thighs, and burrows his nose under the blankets, curling his toes.

Of course, because nothing ever comes easily for Peter, he doesn’t fall asleep right away. Instead, he lay awake in his nest of blankets, curled up tight. His eyes snap open, and he sighs

desperately, thinking about his encounter with Wade tonight.

God, how unlucky could he be? Wade Wilson showing up at Peter Parker's place of work - and even worse that he works at a strip club! Spidey and Deadpool are friends! What would Wade ever think of him if he found out? What if Wade suddenly recognized Peter's behavior tonight? What if he comes back again at some point?

Or worse, Peter thinks with wide eyes, *what if he decides that this is his go-to strip club from now on?* Peter gasps. *Double-worse!* He thinks suddenly. *What if Wade is for some reason investigating the same thing Peter is, with the mobsters?* Peter moans pitifully, squeezing his eyes shut with a horrid blend of anxiety and fear, all coiling in the pit of his hungry belly.

In a fit of desperation, Peter rips the covers away and pads out of his bed. He immediately shudders, skin prickling with goosebumps and teeth clattering together in the cold.

NyQuil always helps him fall asleep. He grabs the package that he keeps in the medicine cabinet and with bleary eyes reads the dosage instructions.

*For people 12 and up, take 1. Take 1 more if needed. **Do not** exceed 2 caplets in 24 hours.*

Peter scrunches up his nose, cocking his head at the directions. His metabolism is incredibly fast - *superhuman* fast. Drugs wear off on him twice as fast, and they take longer to start working. He'd need more than one pill to even make him feel a little groggy.

With a far-too-careless shrug, he knocks back three caplets, swallowing them with a handful of water from the faucet.

Sure enough, Peter scurries back to his warm bed, wraps himself up in his blankets, and is asleep in twenty minutes.

Wade, the mobsters, and his secret identity aside for now. Those are all tomorrow-Peter problems.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you liked that!

DON'T FORGET TO COMMENT AND LEAVE KUDOS IF YOU ENJOYED!

ig: petr.prkr

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Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

I'm back! I had a ton of fun writing this chapter, and I think you'll all like it!

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

The NyQuil had put Peter in such a deep sleep, that when his alarm went off at 9 the next morning, his surprise made him jump onto the ceiling.

His bare hands and feet pressed to the off-white ceiling, chest heaving in shock, he takes a moment to relax before dropping back down onto his bed. He rubs tiredly at his eyes and can feel pillow marks still indented into his cheeks.

The mid morning sun forces itself through the slats of his shades and shines down onto the floor in brilliant stripes. Despite the frost chilling the windows, birds chirrup outside happily. Peter finally stands from his bed, wobbling sleepily before righting himself. Goosebumps form immediately on his arms and legs, and he grabs a wad of his warmest clothes before making his way to the shower.

It takes a painful several minutes until the old rusty pipes in his shower muster the energy to spit out warm water. The shower starts with a pitiful screech, and moments later hot water finally sputters out. Peter steps out of his underwear and into the steam of the tub. Hot water streams over his back, a shock against the previously frigid morning air in his apartment. He sighs, tipping his head up and letting the water dampen his hair to his forehead.

His tendons scream in protest against the scalding water, the delicate spinnerets on each wrist practically hissing at the sudden heat. But he can feel the knots and strain from days of patrolling working out of his body as he rolls his shoulders. Beads of torrent water wash down his tipped head, down his sternum and against the plane of his back and thighs.

Lamentably, he acknowledges the fact that he's been working so hard and so tirelessly that the small comfort of soothed joints feels foreign and surprising to him.

But nevertheless, the steaming water heating his fingers and toes after sleeping in his cold bedroom feels *amazing*. He shudders as he ducks his head under the water, curls matting to the nape of his neck as the water envelopes him. He heaves a ragged, calm sigh, well aware that if his skin weren't more durable than the average human, he'd have minor burns from the heat of the water and steam. But this is just enough to soothe his tired joints. The water scalds him in a way that he doesn't mind, body tinged pink as the soreness works its way out of his muscles.

He takes greedy breaths of warm steam, rubbing his eyes and expelling the last of his sleep and grogginess. The water strips away all the physical grime of his emotions, washes away

errant glitter from the club. The ripples of water going down his ribs carry his stress, and the water dripping from his jaw carry all the times he screamed in frustration at the night sky as Spider-Man.

He isn't sure how long he was in his own head, but he's rudely startled when the water turns several notches colder. Peter scrunches his nose up distastefully at his apartment's old plumbing and washes himself quickly. His soaps are all dulcet scents, faint and very gentle. His senses were always a bit amplified as a kid, from a clever cocktail of anxiety and ADHD, but since he became Spider-Man, his sensory defensiveness has *skyrocketed* with all his new heightened abilities. It can get debilitating, and any fragrances with a scent too strong risk sensory overload or a migraine for hours.

He stands with his eyes shut as the water washes away all traces of soap, and finally, he cards his hair back and away from his face. He braces himself for the rush of cold air, and yanks the shower curtain back, stepping out and wrapping himself in his thickest towel.

He stumbles sleepily out of the bathroom, dries himself off haphazardly, and hastily puts on his thickest fitted jeans. He layers a thermal Henley over a hoodie, and wedges a beanie over his damp hair.

It's only when he finally collapses onto the couch to think about what he has to do *today*, does he remember *last night*.

"Fuck me *sideways*." Peter breathes, eyes wide as he scrubs a hand over his face.

Wade. Those sleeping pills had knocked him flat on his ass last night, and he didn't remember what he was thinking about before he fell asleep until now.

Wade.

He rests his elbows on his knees and puts his face in his hands, thinking. Wade was at his club last night - well, not *at* his club, but in the club's parking lot. So, close enough. They had a full conversation, and yet Wade didn't realize that Spider-Man and he are the same people despite their growing friendship.

It's always possible that Wade just wanted to go to a strip club and happened to frequent Peter's, but with a ball of dread in his belly, Peter finds that option unlikely.

Wade is a mercenary. He teams up with the Avengers, occasionally. And the fact that Wade somehow shows up at the exact same time Peter is on high alert because of the mutant mob presence in the club? Well, that only means they must both be trying to investigate.

And that's bad for Peter. *Badbadbad.*

How can Peter investigate this freely if Wade's going to be there unexpectedly? Surely Wade would get suspicious if the same boy from the club kept showing up when he didn't need to.

Frankly, Peter thinks, *I'm surprised he hasn't figured out it was me already.*

People say a lot about Wade. He can be brash, crude, inappropriate, blunt, snarky. All of that is true, but if anyone bothered to spend some time with Wade, they'd realize that he's actually quite... *nice*?

Nice isn't the exact word, but he's... different. He cares. He's like a walking paradox. He's lewd and a mess on the outside, but if people actually began to stick around with him, it becomes very clear that Wade has morals and rules and *values*.

Granted, he's still a prick. *But a nice one, usually*, Peter acknowledges.

With a resigned huff, Peter pulls himself off his springy, shoddy sofa. He inspects his fridge as if its contents will magically be different from the last time he checked. No such luck. There's a bottle of ketchup, one egg, and a can of Mountain Dew soda. The last time Peter drank a Mountain Dew, the sheer amount of caffeine gave him a panic attack and then made him sleep for seventeen hours.

So he shuts the fridge.

He still has two packs of instant noodles and one box of mac and cheese in his cupboard, but Peter considers eating one for breakfast to be a splurge. He could save that food for when he's done patrolling, or when he needs to eat after a shift at work.

Knowing Aunt May would scold him if she ever saw the contents of his fridge, he decides to make something of his early wake-up. He pulls on his thickest coat, which is really just a sweater with soft fluff lining the inside, and wraps a scarf around his neck.

Snatching his keys off the table, stepping into his shoes, and ignoring his rumbling belly, he leaves his dusty apartment and drags himself to the grocery store.

At least I can get a few small things, just to tide me over, he thinks. Peter loves the weekends, but it means he can't eat the free food at the club.

He takes a deep inhale when the automatic doors slide open for him at the grocery store, relishing the warm air that fills his lungs and swirls around in his empty belly. His glasses are definitely askew on his face, and his hood must make his hair look even more messy than it usually is. But as he opens and closes his fists to coax the warmth back into them, he can't see to mind.

Grabbing hold of a basket, he tries not to feel too sorry for himself as he strolls through the aisles of the store, dropping in several bottles of water, canned soup, instant noodles, and other cheap, quick-fix meals. He dimly remembers the tips he got last night, and decides to splurge on a bag of apples and pancake batter, and protein shakes when he has no time for breakfast.

In the medicine aisle, Peter feels his spidey senses shoot a sharp tingle down his spine from the base of his neck. His grip tightens on the basket and he straightens his back. His index and ring finger on one hand press gently to the inside of his palm out of habit.

His senses don't particularly scream out *DANGER*, but something feels off regardless.

“What do you *mean* I can’t buy the scratch-off ticket?” An all too familiar voice questions.

Peter’s eyes widen and he watches warily from behind a stack of toy cars.

“Uh, sir, well, I need your identification to prove that you’re of legal age to buy any type of lottery ticket, and you w-won’t show it to me.” A teenage cashier stammers out nervously, his Adam’s Apple bobbing in his throat.

Peter feels a bit bad for the cashier, but can’t help but huff out a tired laugh at Deadpool’s antics. Deadpool is wearing a large sweater, hood up and a baseball cap underneath it. He’s wearing dark jeans and gloves, and virtually no skin is showing, which is what he usually wears in his civilian life. Or, as much of a civilian life as he has.

“Wha - *really*? Do I seem like a seventeen-year-old jerk-off to you?” He asks, and Peter’s face flushes as he listens.

“Well. No. I - I guess not...” The cashier says, but it comes out sounding like a question.

“Good. That’s good.” Wade says smoothly. “So let me buy a scratch-off lottery ticket, for fuck’s sake! I’m a bored man, Bethany!” He says desperately, and the cashier jumps. Peter narrows his eyes. Wade really *must* be bored; for the most part, he only acts that mentally unstable for his own entertainment.

“Uh, m-my name’s Michael.”

“I like Bethany better.” Wade shrugs, gratefully taking the ticket from the cashier’s hand and smacking a dollar onto the counter.

Peter grabs a bottle of extra strength tylenol and waits until Wade is walking towards the doors, nose buried in the lottery ticket, scratching the paper with the tip of his knife.

Peter scurries quietly up to the jarred cashier, dumping his stuff onto the counter. “Can you believe that guy?” The cashier asks in exasperation, making conversation as he scans his products.

“You have no idea.” Peter mutters quietly, stuffing his hands in his pockets and feeling around for his crumpled cash.

Just when he thinks he’s in the clear, Wade makes an “*oooh!*” sound and whips his head around. “I just made thirty bucks! Capitalism can suck my - hey. *Hey!* You!” Wade says, voice rising in an excited crescendo as he spots Peter.

Peter’s eyes widen as he burrows his chin under his sweater, the *beep* of the price scanner droning in the background.

This is just his luck. Peter doesn’t know if he can manage Deadpool as Spider-Man *and* Peter Parker. Sure, maybe he can keep up his secret identity for a little while, but Deadpool is too clever, too... *all-consuming* to keep his identity a secret forever. Surely, at one point, something is going to slip.

It's easier for Wade - he has no issue with people knowing that Deadpool *is* Wade Wilson. At first, Peter thought Wade was one of those vigilante-types who were so far gone that they had no separation between his mercenary life and his civilian life. That the distinction between them was nonexistent. But that's not exactly true. It's not that Wade is too far gone to separate his identities - it's just that Wade has nobody he needs to *protect* in either life. And even if he does, they can protect themselves just fine.

"I remember you from yesterday!" Wade says, a smile under the shadows of his baseball cap. "You were in the parking lot of the -"

"Okay!" Peter screeches nervously, throwing his cash at the cashier and scooping up his grocery bags with a quick *thank you*.

"Yes! Uh, yeah, that was - that was me." Peter says awkwardly, and any hopes of just simply ending the conversation and slipping out the doors were abandoned when Wade *walks out with him*.

"Glad you got home okay." Wade says cheerily. Even as the automatic doors slide open to let them out of the store, Wade doesn't seem to mind the frigid chill in the air. Peter, on the other hand, lets the bags fall to his wrists as he shoves his hands in his jacket pockets.

"Yup, just fine, thanks." Peter says, voice muffled by the fabric of his jacket.

There's some silence, the wind whistling in Peter's ears. He's almost convinced Wade will just leave. But that's not how Wade works.

"Does that sorta thing happen a lot?" Wade asks.

Ah, Peter thinks, *here it is*. No matter how much Peter wants to keep his distance from Wade, he always manages to... *care*. It's hard to keep someone at arm's length when they're just so *decent*.

Even as Spider-Man, Wade always offers to patch Peter up, because he knows how squeamish he is around his own blood. Wade has even bought him food and sat with him on roof tops. He's spent hours with Peter after a rough night of patrolling, waiting until he was capable of swinging himself home without hurting himself.

No matter how brash and immature he is, he's just so damn good.

And, god, does Peter hate it.

"Yeah." Peter says as casually as he can. "But it's just... y'know, it's okay. I can defend myself." Sure, it'd be nice to be able to take it easy at his job, but he's used to defending himself as Spider-Man anyway, so it's not *too* bad. Besides, where else can he find a job that pays like that *and* coincides with his patrolling schedule - not to mention a job he's fairly good at?

"I'm not doubting that, Sugar." Wade says assuredly. "For someone so skinny, you're a feisty little thing."

“I’m not skinny.” Peter insists. “I’m acrobatically built.”

“I’m acrobatic, too.” Wade counters. “But not built like you.”

Peter huffs. They’ve had almost this exact conversation at some point before, as Spider-Man and Deadpool. “Yeah, ‘cause you’re *you*. You’re a mercenary. You’re more athletically built.” Peter shrugs his tired shoulders. “I *have to* be acrobatic, because I’m Sp -” he falters immediately, cheeks hot, “I mean, I’m a dancer. So.”

Wade nods in understanding, humming in a *true, true*, gesture.

But then -

“How do you know I’m a mercenary?” Wade asks, more a statement than a question. Peter freezes, jaw clenched tight.

Fuck. “I - everyone knows you’re a mercenary. You’re Wade Wilson.” Peter says confidently, risking a glance at Wade.

“Yeah, true.” Wade grins broadly. Peter breathes a sigh of relief.

“But, wait!” Wade interjects. Peter tenses again.

“That’s not fair! You know my name. What’s yours?” Wade asks curiously.

Here, Peter can either lie, or tell Wade his real name. If he lies, it could be dangerous because it appears that they’re going to be spending a lot of time together; Peter could get caught in the lie at any time. If he tells Wade his real name, that means Wade will know *Spider-Man’s* name, which naturally poses its own risks. It’s not like Peter thinks Wade would ever reveal his identity to someone, and Peter’s secret identity is *crucial*.

But Peter can’t afford to keep any more secrets. They’ll all crumble around him eventually, suffocating him, and Peter wants to avoid that for as long as possible.

“I’m Peter Parker.” He says, breathing it out quickly.

“Our names are both alliterations.” He coos, nudging Peter’s shoulder. “We must be special.”

A smile quirks at the corners of Peter’s lips. “Guess so.”

Between Wade making idle conversation, humming the *Full House* theme song, and pointing out every dog they see on the street, Peter doesn’t even realize that he’s nearly home.

“Oh! Uh. This - this is me.” Peter says, tipping his head to the downtrodden, tiny apartment building on his right.

If Wade thinks anything of Peter’s unfortunate living space, he doesn’t mention it. He takes a look at the building, nods, and pats Peter on the shoulder. “Well. Pleasure running into you.” Wade drawsls, like he’s actually serious.

“You too?” Peter says with less conviction than he wanted.

He easily takes both grocery bags into one hand, and unlocks the door with a creaking, rusty jangle. Just as the door is closing, and Wade is nearly out of sight, he calls something else out. “Remember, Pretty Boy, punch with your whole body, not just your arm! You’ll get more force behind it.”

Peter smiles wryly. If Peter actually punched with his whole body, he’d kill the poor person; he *has* to pull his punches. Wade is gone before Peter can cast another glance outside, though.

With plastic bag lines denting his wrists, Peter relishes the warm air inside his apartment lobby. He locks the door behind him, bypasses the forever-broken elevator, and takes the stairs to the very top floor, to his home.

He should be worried, because now, if Wade ever finds out his identity, he’ll know where Spider-Man lives. But his head is too busy reeling over how absurd meeting Wade twice in two days is.

When Peter shrugs off his jacket and empties his pockets, he finds Wade's thirty dollar scratch-off ticket in his hands. He smiles.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed! PLEASE don't forget to leave comments and kudos!

If you like this story, check out my main story, [Dissonance!](#)

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Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

the songs that inspired this chapter were "lying..." by p!atd and "apocalypse" by cigarettes after sex

i had a TON of fun writing this one, so enjoy!

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

At five in the afternoon, Peter gets stir-crazy cooped up in his apartment. He paces for a few moments, reads upside-down on the ceiling for a while. He even goes as far as to remove the panel in his bedroom floor and drag the material of his Spidey suit against his fingers before deciding it would be too early to patrol right now.

He folds up his suit again, and just because he can, he arches one wrist and ties his suit in a bow of webs. With a childish smile, Peter slides the plank of paneling back into place with the adhesive tips of his fingers.

Eventually, his curiosity gets the better of him and he has the overwhelming urge to search around the Club for the mob members.

It's your day off, Peter, he tries to reason with himself. What's your excuse going to be when co-workers see you?

This almost stops Peter, halting with one sleeve through a thermal henley. "Ah! I'll say... I forgot something." He hums, before pulling the thermal over his head and layering with two thick sweaters. He steps into his shoes, pulls a beanie down over his head, and then he's out the door with only his phone and a MetroCard.

By the time he arrives at Wicked Webs, it's already been snowing for ten minutes. It's fluffy, and the weather is cold enough and crisp enough for the flakes to pile up on the ground instead of melting into slush. His feet crunch against bright white snow and even though his nose is pink, Peter enjoys the weather over New York's muggy sweltering heat.

Walking up to the entrance, he doesn't see Wade, which isn't really saying much. Nevertheless it makes Peter feel better, now that he has even a slight chance of being able to explore without worrying about being caught by Wade.

Nobody questions him when he walks in at 6, only the simple greeting of a curt head tip by the bartender. "What, couldn't stay away, Parker?" He asks as he cleans the inside of a cup, and Peter offers a small laugh, rolling his eyes.

"Nah. Just wanted to pick up a few things."

He smiles kindly at some lesser-known employees, but his smile drops as soon as they leave, eyes alert and brows furrowed. As he gets closer to the employee lounge, the hairs on the back of his neck stand on edge and he feels eyes following him. Kneeling to tie an already knotted shoelace, he surreptitiously glances up to the VIP section.

He sees, more or less, the same set of people he saw the other day. All standing stiff and sure, eyes roaming the place below them. A few people are seated, some with drinks, some talking seriously over thick books, some with small smiles playing on their mouths as they survey the club.

One catches Peter's eye, and Peter quickly flashes a disarming smile before making his way down the hall.

He peers into the bathroom first; nobody there. As he walks further, he examines every vacant dressing room, every costume closet, every snack room. He searches through the dancer's lounge next. It's messy, but there's nothing out of the ordinary. Every locker is still locked, every costume still zipped.

Manager's office next, he thinks. It's the last door in that hallway, right beside the back entrance to the building. But as he closes the lounge's door, a sharp tingle shoots down his spine and his spidey senses bombard him. As soon as he turns around in the narrow hallway, a pair of big hands close around his shoulders, spinning him and shoving him against the wall. He's raised to the tips of his toes by a tall, slim man.

Peter grits his teeth and stares at the man, their noses inches apart. "Um. Can I help you?" Peter asks gruffly.

The man hums in question, smiling at him. He seems to have too many pristine teeth for his mouth. He has fair skin but dark hair and even darker eyes. From his grip on his shoulders, Peter can feel the indents of several rings on his fingers. "I was going to ask you the same thing. What's someone like you doing here, Princess?" He croons.

"That's not my name. And *someone like me* has a job here." Peter says shortly, and he pushes against the man's hold with as much strength as he can without revealing his powers.

But the man's strength seems to double. He is *curiously* strong. *Inhumanely* strong. Peter wonders what would happen if he used all of his strength, but he can't do that here. Not as a civilian.

"I know you work here; I know your schedule. I know everyone's schedule. So, what I don't know is why you're here *now*, snooping around."

Peter and the man stare at each other for several moments, eyes unwavering. "That's not really fair, man. You know, like, everything about me. And I don't even know who you are!" Peter says, a grin playing on his face. "Here, see - I'm Peter, I like reading and long walks on the beach."

His entire patient facade drops from the man's face. "Answer my question, boy." He all but snarls, and Peter doesn't like the predatory gaze in his eyes. This is a time when it would be

easier to protect himself as Spider-Man, but he *can't*, because he *works here*.

"I was looking for my shoes." Peter says simply, but it's clear that the man doesn't believe him when his cold eyes narrow and his bright teeth smile cruelly as he digs a knee between Peter's legs.

Peter makes a strangled sound, breath catching in his throat and pain swelling in his belly. "*What?*" Peter groans. "I'm *poor*! I'd like all my shoes to be in one damn place!"

The man's leg doesn't move, nor does his grip on his shoulders. He's watching Peter with a wary face, disbelieving and hard. "*Hello!* Do you mind, I don't know, *not sterilizing me?* I'm not in the mood to have your *knee* up my crotch -"

"Forgive me, but I'm finding your missing shoes story *hard to believe*." The man says lowly.

For the love of sweet fuck, Peter thinks, his impatience and discomfort tangible. He could throw this man into the wall across from him with one *finger* if he wanted to.

"Oh my *god* - *nothing* is going to be hard ever again if you don't get your knee the *fuck away from my* -"

And then, just like that, the man's grip on his shoulders loosens just enough for Peter to inch himself up the wall to alleviate some pressure. Peter turns to see what distracted the man.

"Hey, Peter! I think I found what you were looking for!" Wade says all too cheerily and casually, looking between both men. In a dark hoodie and fitted jeans, he steps forward and claps a hard hand onto the man's shoulder.

"Hi, friend. How about you stop harassing the employees? I wouldn't want to have to intervene." Wade says, and his voice is *cold*.

At first, Wade was just one, superficial human to Peter. He was crude and bold and inappropriate and violence did not scare him. All those things still apply, but now Wade is clearly more multifaceted. He is also fiercely protective, and caring, and even respectful, to an extent.

So the voice Wade just used, Peter knows, is more *Deadpool* than Wade.

"Deadpool, perhaps?" The man questions curiously, a wry but alarmed manner to his voice.

"The one and only, thankfully." Wade purrs, but Peter can tell he's running out of patience; so is he.

At the man's confusion, Peter only has to ram his palm with minimal force into the man's thigh. He staggers back in surprise, doubled slightly in pain.

Peter drops down onto his feet, giving the man a warning glance as he steps around to Wade.

"Well. Bye." Peter says, waving a hand.

“Toodles!” Wade chirps.

It looks like the man has something to say. Really, it looks like the man has *a lot* to say. But he collects himself and leaves through the back exit with only a huff, yanking his phone out of his suit pocket as the metal door clicks shut behind him.

Alone with Wade, Peter lets his calm facade drop, doubling over slightly, and holding his hands protectively over himself. “What a prick.” Peter mutters, to which Wade nods, placing a supporting hand on his shoulder.

“*Ouch.*” Wade hisses. “Right in the goods. You okay?” Wade asks, cocking his head.

Peter chooses to ignore his phrasing - a skill learned through years of hanging out with Deadpool. “Yeah, fine. I’ve gotten worse.” He says, which is maybe a concerning thing to say, Peter realizes, when he’s not dressed as Spider-Man. But Wade takes his word for it and doesn’t bring it up again, simply keeping the righting hand on his shoulder.

“So.” Wade starts as they eventually pull themselves into seats at the bar. “What’re you doing here?”

“I work here.” Peter says simply, taking his glass of water from the bartender thankfully and dunking a lemon wedge with his straw.

Wade huffs. “You’re not in a costume, or wearing *anything* with any ID. So it’s your day off.” He says knowingly, and Peter rubs his forefinger and thumb along the cuff of his shirt in a self-soothing gesture.

“I - uh, forgot my shoes here.” He says in a way that does not *at all* sound casual. *Way to go, Peter*, he thinks, *Spidey can lie no-problem.*

“Heels?” Wade purrs, wagging his eyebrows.

“*Converse.*” Peter counters flatly through narrowed eyes.

“Hm.” Wade says, a bit less interested. “Where are they, then?”

Oh. “Dunno. Couldn’t find ‘em.” He says quickly. If Wade thinks he’s lying, he doesn’t bring it up.

They sit and eat cheap bar food together. Not many words are shared between each other, but the occasional lyric from the speakers slips into their periphery.

Is it still me that makes you sweat? Am I who you think about in bed, when the lights are dim and your hands are shaking as you’re sliding off your dress...

Peter chews his burger, swaying slightly to the lyrics without really listening. He’s gotten good at tuning out the excess noise of the club. Granted, he loves the band, but his senses are considerably more reactive than other normal people’s.

Wade snatches one of Peter's french fries and dips it into his smoothie, legs swinging excitedly.

"Dude." Peter says bluntly.

"What?" Wade asks, mouth full. "Want one of mine?" He asks, and the sheer openness and earnest in that question makes Peter smile wide.

"Nah." Peter shakes his head. "Don't worry 'bout it."

So testosterone boys, and harlequin girls, will you dance to this beat and hold a lover close...

An hour later, when they leave, bellies full with cheap food, Wade walks him to the end of the parking lot, which Peter internally curses at. Hands in his pockets, Wade rocks on the balls of his feet as he looks into the skyline. He's obviously trying to say something, which is surprising to Peter, because usually Wade just says what's on his mind with absolutely *no* filter.

Peter burrows his mouth under the collar of his sweater, toes curled against the cold as he waits.

"Listen, Pretty Boy. I - you should try and stay away from those kinda people." Wade says then.

Peter bristles, brows furrowing as he straightens his shoulders. Those people? Is that what Wade thinks of them - of *him*? "That's my *job*, Deadpool."

Wade winces slightly at the lack of his real name, something that Peter finds curious but oddly.... *sincere*? "No, nerd. Not strippers. I mean, stay away from *those guys*. The ones in the suits. The ones that give off that edge. That cold, ruthless, watching-over-everything-in-the-shadows *look*." He says, leaning closer, his voice dropping to a stern whisper. "Those people are bad news. Okay? Just let me handle it."

Now, Peter almost wishes that Wade was talking about the strippers being bad people. Because now, it's obvious that the muggers are on *both* their radars. That means that Wade is going to be sticking around for a while, which puts a serious dent in Peter trying to figure out what's going on and shutting down the mob.

"It's not like I can really avoid them. You saw how they are." Peter reasons.

"Well try." He says, knocking on Peter's head gently. "You're a smart dude. You've got some fighting skills, I think. You'll figure out how to stay the fuck away from them, 'kay?" Wade says, and just like that, his voice is high and happy again. There's no arguing with Wade - Peter *and* Spider-Man know that.

Peter leaves with a pout on his face and his hands fisted in his pockets, feet trekking through the darkening snow on the ground. Obviously searching the club on his time off as a civilian isn't an option anymore.

Now what?

Chapter End Notes

hope you folks liked it!

please don't forget to leave kudos and comments :)

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Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Hi! Sorry this took so long - I've been really busy with my first year of college and ADHD and all that fun stuff! Hopefully, my updating schedule should be more common now! Enjoy!

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

He manages to wait out his curiosity until Sunday night. A whopping *one whole day*. *Good job, Peter*, he thinks. Sometimes he wonders if his ADHD is more of a hindrance to him than a helpful means of multitasking and hyper-awareness.

He does his homework, emails his professors, and talks to Tony on the SHIELD-issued phone he gave to Spider-Man (“*I’m bored, Stark. Got anything?*” “*Don’t you have friends?*” “*Okay, rude.*”) Eventually, he can’t take it anymore. His conversation with Wade yesterday had been nagging at him since he woke up, and no amount of sleep medication could calm his restless mind when he got home.

Now he’s hanging upside down from the ceiling in a nest of his own webbing, wrapped around his thighs in a criss-cross position as his hair brushes the floor, pouting. He’s bored, and no amount of staring at his lopsided room will make something magically appear to take his mind off the previous day.

God, he’s screwed. Wade very explicitly told him to avoid the very people Peter *needs* to investigate. How is he going to be able to get more information on the mob now? “*Those people are bad news. Okay? Just let me handle it.*” He had said it so kindly, too, like he really cared about Peter’s safety.

And it’s kind of like a kick to the nuts, because Peter knows Wade really is sincerely worried about his safety. With the mobsters on *both* of their radars now, it’s going to be hell for Peter to sneak around Wade *and* them both.

This means he’ll have to do most of his investigating as Spider-Man, not as Peter, which brings its own pros and cons.

But, *it is* something for Peter to finally *do*.

He tumbles out of his nest of webs and scrambles excitedly to his room. With a great jump, he sticks his palms to the ceiling and curls his feet up, crawling on his belly upside down until his hand presses into a discreet panel in the ceiling. He pushes it aside and pulls out his folded suit, sliding the panel back in place before leaping down.

He has two suits, courtesy of Tony Stark. It took a while, but eventually Peter grew to trust Tony - maybe not as a family member, but as a *mentor*, as someone who clearly cared about Peter despite some tough love. He still refuses to be a part of The Avengers, because there were too many things that Peter doesn't entirely agree with about their team, and the constant babysitting would drive him into a panicked and paranoid mess.

He thinks Tony and Steve are helicopter parents, in a way. Even when he occasionally teams up with them for missions, Steve and Tony are constantly bickering over what Peter should help with, because "*Hey, he's a little kid!*" and, "*If he dies I'm pretty sure I'd hate myself,*" and "*Tony, he's barely hit puberty yet, don't let him do that!*" He's just not used to all that... caring. Sure, Aunt May coddles him and has given him all the love in the world, but as *Spider-Man*? He's usually all alone.

Regardless of that, he gratefully took Tony's enhanced suits and SHIELD cell phone. "*Just in case,*" he had said, an almost protective smile on his face.

"*Right. Just in case,*" Peter had nodded, taking the light fabric and holding it close to his chest. Every time one gets damaged, Peter simply sneaks up into Tony's penthouse, drops it on the couch with some kind of smug note (*This got burnt in a fire. Also the stitching chafes my legs*). And when it's fixed, Peter gets an address on his SHIELD cell phone, with another equally snarky note (*Try not to die in a fire. Also I changed the seam pattern for your delicate legs*).

The suit he's going to wear today is light and aerodynamic. There are two parts; the pants separate from the top, blending together in a seamless line. Good for average nights patrolling. The second suit is a one-piece, with a long zipper in the back, better suited for action-filled nights that need to endure lots of tossing and turning. Both suits are strong, durable, with thick tinted eye plates to protect his heightened senses, and sturdy but malleable fabric to protect him from minor cuts and hits.

But this is just regular investigative work. Peter strips down before pulling the skin-tight pants over his body, rolling his ankles and stepping into the attached weightless boots. The waistband is high and tapers into a V at the front. The shirt is simple - tight, sleek, with reinforced fabric over the heart. It gets pulled down to fit seamlessly along the waist of the pants. He pulls on his mask and gloves last.

The wrist design on each suit is one of his favorite features. Each suit bares a tiny slit on the inner wrist, just big enough for Peter's webbing to pierce through. There's reinforced black material over the wrist and forearm, adding more protection over the sensitive spinnerets; they're a muscle like everything else, and if Peter puts too much weight on a web without proper preparation, or swings too roughly, it can *hurt*. Like, *bad*.

He slips his phone into his waistband, pulls up his squeaking bedroom window, and gracefully steps out onto the fire escape. He arches his back and tips his head up, relishing the cool air on his flushed face. He does aials on the railing to warm up, before stretching his arms out and dropping from the top story.

Shooting a thick cord of webbing just before his chest hits the pavement, he curls his body close and pulls himself up and away into the city, shooting web after web and taking in the

cold air of the night sky.

He loves it up here. He loves that this space belongs to *him*. There are no restraints, no cramped walls, nothing. He loves the wind lashing against the fabric of his suit, and he loves the *thwip* sound of each strand of webbing he shoots. He loves that there's no ground below his feet, and that he can throw himself and jump and be assured he can catch himself.

Most of all, though, he loves the rooftops. He finally lands on the top of Wicked Web's building, feet dropping down silently. Specifically, he loves the very *edges* of the rooftops. The thin raised ledges that make the wind seem so much stronger and the heights so much taller. He loves the anonymity and the safety of the rooftops. He loves that he can see and be unseen, content and safe and entirely in his element. He feels tiny up here, and sometimes feeling this tiny is nice.

He could spend hours up here alone, and he gets distracted so easily that he's done it before, but he has things to do, and he'd like to get out as soon as possible to continue with what little weekend time he has left. He pulls open the rooftop entrance door and frowns dolefully when it appears locked. Just his luck.

He resigns to jump down and walk around the building to use the back exit - he has a key for it anyway, working there and all. He tucks his neck down to his chest against the cold, and wonders for the thousandth time why his suit isn't insulated; it's really just thick reinforced spandex. *A little fur or thermal wouldn't hurt anyone*, he thinks begrudgingly, and maybe he could send Tony Stark a note about it.

He pulls the heavy metal door open with a guttural creaking sound and relishes the warmth that greets him - it's always warm backstage near the dressing rooms to accommodate the half-naked dancers.

Peter makes his way through the hall without notice. The club is already closed this late at night, but there are still lights on inside. His hairs stand on edge and his spidey-senses send strong shocks down his spine from the base of his neck. People are definitely here.

He's almost at the end of the hallway and his spidey-senses are going so haywire that even his *teeth* are hurting. He's about to pass the last door. It's the main office, and coincidentally only one with a window to view the main stage, seating area, and VIP section. No light shines through the doorway.

Before he steps one foot past the door, strong hands grab him, one cupping his mouth and the other tightening round the waist. He gets yanked inside the office and the door is shut with a soft *woosh* of air.

He's promptly pressed against the closed door, a knee between his thighs and hands on his shoulders. "What - *Jesus!* How many times does this have to happen?" Peter asks, exasperated. Immediately, he takes the man by the biceps to jump up and spring his legs into the stranger's chest. He knocks him down and immediately leaps to straddle his chest defensively, peering down at him.

"*Oh.*" Oops.

“It’s *you!* Spidey!” Deadpool whisper-yells excitedly, and Peter scrambles off of him, crawling backward until his back hits the door a few feet away before Wade decides to suffocate him in a hug. Because he’s been known to do that.

Of *course* it’s Wade.

“Long time, no see! What are you doing here?” He asks in a voice far too cheery for their situation. He props himself up on his elbows but otherwise seems perfectly content laying on the floor where he was tackled.

Peter swallows thickly. He was not prepared in the slightest for this conversation or series of events. “I...” *Was just in the area?* No. *Wanted to go to a strip club?* Absolutely not. *Was examining New York City architecture?* Never.

“My spidey-senses go off every time I pass this block. And I got a lead from Tony saying there’s been some weird activity here,” he says weakly and very unconvincingly.

But Wade, who never questions Peter’s many quirks or mannerisms, seems completely unphased by this answer. He’s grateful for that, especially when Peter’s under stress. Wade’s surprisingly good with Peter in general, actually.

“Hey! No shit! He told me the same thing! I guess you and I can work this one together, huh?”

Fuck. “Yup,” Peter smiles tightly under his mask.

Wade pulls himself off the ground, offering a hand to Peter. He takes it, and without any planning they creep over to the window and peer out at the mobsters on the VIP deck. They’re not doing much, just talking, but they shouldn’t be here *at all*.

“Hey,” Wade says lowly, not taking his eyes away from the window, “sorry for grabbing you like that. I know you have surprise touchy problems. I just thought you were some kid I knew here.”

Peter is struck with simultaneous feelings of warm appreciation and worry. “Oh. It’s okay,” he promises, and then, “What kid?” But he already knows the answer.

“Peter. He works here. He’s real sweet lookin’. Sharp as a tack and pretty badass. But he’s been noticing the weird shit happening too, and a day or two ago one of those guys almost hurt him pretty bad.”

Peter hums in curious acknowledgment like he’s hearing it for the first time, hissing quietly in pain at the reminder.

“I told him not to get in their way again, to just keep his head down. But I don’t think he’s gonna listen. He’s a real sneaky prick, y’know that? A lot like you,” Wade huffs, breath fogging the window glass.

“I’m sure he’ll be fine?” Peter offers. He doesn’t want to be too specific or say too much. He can’t risk potentially revealing his identity - both his identities. Wade finding out Peter works

at a strip club is, in his eyes, just as bad as Wade finding out he's Spider-Man.

Wade makes a low sound of disagreement. "I sure hope so, Webs. He's good."

Peter almost smiles. Almost.

After that, it was pretty uneventful. The few members there pulled out a dark, bulky duffel bag, but they could only guess what was inside from this view. Hopefully it was just *regular* guns or drugs, but with a mob of mutants and mutates, it was probably much worse.

It was past two in the morning when everybody finally left, and Peter had to squeeze his eyes shut and make sure they all drove off in their loud-engined cars before they came out of their recon spot.

They left through the back exit sometime later.

"Well!" Wade claps his hands together, "That was fun, huh, Spidey?"

"Wade, you have a really weird definition of *fun*." Peter says tiredly.

"Like you're surprised," Wade scoffs, nudging Peter roughly with his elbow. He's not surprised.

Eventually, Wade leaves on his own accord, smacking a masked kiss to Peter's forehead that he promptly wipes away and hits Wade for.

Peter has to stay behind to lock the door, an odd feeling settling in his belly. The cognitive dissonance of keeping such a complicated secret from someone who's kind of his... *friend* is daunting. It's not like Wade's even a perfect citizen, or that they have a lot in common. But Wade's constant support and crude humor is just so good.

Peter wished he didn't have to lie so much, and with determined resolve he walks home as a punishment for being such a mess.

Chapter End Notes

I hope y'all liked that! PLEASE leave comments and kudos if you did.

I get lots of fanart for my other fic, Dissonance, so if you'd like, tag me in yours!

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Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

Me? With a moderately consistent update schedule? For once, yeah. This will be sad and angsty.

BRIEF SEXUAL ASSAULT WARNING (not between Wade and Peter - between Peter and a guy at a bar).

Songs that lead this chapter: Pitchfork Kids by AJR
Jenny Was a Friend of Mine by The Killers
Bukowski by Modest Mouse

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

Peter puts his head in his hands, squeezing his eyes shut until he sees those familiar fuzzy spots behind his eyelids. It's halfway through the workweek on Wednesday, and he is in a decidedly horrible mood.

He hadn't been able to patrol since Sunday - he was too busy with work and studying. He'd occasionally see Wade idling around the parking lot or back entrance, waiting for members of the mob, but Peter never stopped to talk. He'd always been too tired, too irritable. And Wade seemed to be busy, too, sneaking around or asking frequent visitors things that they've noticed.

So Peter just kept his distance, and they did their own thing around each other.

He last saw Wade sometime earlier tonight, alternating between roaming around the outside of the club, and passing by inside and staying by the walls, looking for any odd behavior or new people who could be in the mob on the ground floor.

Now Peter blows out a long-suffering breath and picks at his free chicken tenders at the bar. His shift is basically over, and the bartender must have felt sorry for him because he pushed out an empty seat and offered a sympathetic smile. He sat, and a plate of food was put in front of him before the bartender got back to cleaning.

Peter chews distractedly, swinging his feet from the high barstool. He's only wearing tight black shorts and fishnets, and everything is uncomfortably tight. He can't wait for his shift to officially be over and put on his reliably tattered sweater and jeans.

Amid his wallowing, Peter's attention sparks when he catches sight of the reflection behind him in a vodka bottle on the counter. He leans forward, narrowing his eyes and looking at the small reflection. He can see the VIP section in the curved glass, and at least five members of the mob sitting sprawled over each other on the plush couches.

There's one man, with everyone else huddled around him. They listen intently, nodding and following along, and Peter can only assume that the man is talking. He leans over the counter, bottom off the seat and stomach pressing into the sticky countertop. It's then that he notices that the man in the reflection is the same man who confronted him in the hall the other day.

The man removes a pouch from his pocket, pulls out little pills that are so tiny they disappear between his fingers. Each person gets one pill, swallowing it eagerly. The man swallows his last, grinning wide.

Peter's mouth parts in confusion, furrowing his brows. "*What the...*"

Just when his ribs start to hurt from pressing into the counter, Peter jolts into focus and pulls his eyes away from the bottle when he feels a wide hands close down on his upper thigh.

Peter turns. A man has taken a seat next to him, his face still staring straight ahead. He takes a swig from a dark drink and finally turns his head to Peter slightly. His eyes are lidded and the perspiration on his temples probably reeks of alcohol.

Peter knows the type, sees it often enough. The thirty-something white collar men with families at home and respectable jobs, pretending they aren't gay, pretending they aren't bored at home. It makes them blunt, to-the-point, aggressive when they can finally do what they want.

"Can I help you?" Peter asks, more flat than a question.

The man doesn't answer right away. He raises his nearly-done glass to the bartender distractedly, finishing the last of his drink with a violent swig.

The bartender, Garrett, looks at Peter. Peter swipes the tips of his fingers across his neck in a haphazard *no, cut him off and give him water* gesture. Garrett nods, bobbing his head to the syncopated beat of the bass-heavy music, sliding a clear glass to him. He disappears then behind the bar to account for everything before closing time.

If the man notices this exchange, he doesn't show it. Peter doubts he notices much of anything right now.

"So," the man starts, swiveling in his barstool and turning to Peter entirely. God, Peter's exhausted. "So, how much is it for your tight ass?" His hand tightens on Peter's thigh.

"Or are you gonna be a good little slut and let me take you right here, for free?" Peter feels his face prickle, the tightness in his chest has a smothering effect. His hand tightens on the sticky bar counter until he can feel it splinter under his palm. *Exhausted* is an understatement, Peter decides.

Peter hides the sneer that contorts his lips, tries to say something only mildly defensive. But when he looks straight ahead and tries to compose himself, he sees the reflection in the glass again. They're still talking, more intensely now, and Peter can still see pills. Why are the pills still out?

The man's hand snakes higher up on his thigh, rubbing the cheap fabric of Peter's shorts between his calloused fingers. "No. No, that's not my job," Peter says weakly, because now he *has* to stay to figure out what's going on up there. What if he misses something big happening on the VIP floor with the mob?

Every nerve in his body is firing panic signals, his spidey senses shooting rapid sparks up his spine, raising the hairs on his arms. He should leave. Get away from this man. Sacrificing comfort for insight, for protecting the greater good, and *well* against his better judgment, he keeps his ass planted for now and ignores his senses.

"It ain't your *job*?" A scoff. "What kinda half-assed answer is that? *You* work here. *You* put on that whoreish little thing. And you expect *me* not to take what I want from it?"

Pretty much, yeah, that's how being a decent person works, Peter thinks. He tries to separate his mind from his body, to keep his eyes trained on the mirrors and the scene behind him, and to let his body float off for just a little bit, sure the man would come out of his drunken impulsivity.

"Consent..." Peter's about to try explaining, to prolong things. He narrows his eyes and can almost read the man's lips, if he could only focus just a *little more*...

"Consent? *Look at you*, already asking for this." A strained and startled yelp rips itself out of Peter's throat, balling his fists when the man pulls Peter's barstool closer with his foot.

And true to his word, consent be damned, the man's hand closes the distance and takes Peter between the thighs. Hard. He cups his palm and shakes in a *this is mine* gesture, fitting as much of Peter as he can in his hand.

Peter sits up straight, eyesight blurring at the assault. He lands a swift hard punch to the man's stomach at the same time someone behind him slams the man's head into the counter, sending his drink spilling into his lap.

Peter swings a leg over and scrambles backward off the barstool, staying out of the man's way, whether unconscious or not. He stares in shock for a moment, looking between the man's hand, now limp and hanging from the counter, up at Wade, eyes hard and angry. And then he looks up at the VIP section and a wave of frustration waves over him - the commotion startled them, and they've wrapped the evening up, gathering their things.

Grounding himself, Peter's eyes fall to the man's hand again, water droplets falling off his fingers and onto the floor. He takes a step back, puts his hands over himself.

"Pete..." Wade starts.

Fuck! "*Fuck.*" It's barely a hiss, and Peter storms off in the direction of the changing rooms.

He doesn't know what he's feeling. Or maybe it's that he's feeling too much, too many thorns pricking his sides at once. He's mad he couldn't focus on what they were saying in the VIP section. He's mad that he got groped. And, god, he's mad that he *let it happen* to get information.

Now that his mind and body are one again, he can feel the heat of his hands on his leg, can smell the sweaty stench of diluted alcohol on his skin. He can feel the assertive cupping of the man's hand on him, the way he just snatched him. Owned him.

Even if Peter wasn't moving away, he didn't deserve *that*. He made himself clear.

But fuck work, and fuck being Spider-Man, and fuck putting himself last for letting that happen. He pulls the door open to the empty dressing room, slams it shut behind him. It's caught and closed softly, and Peter knows it's Wade without turning around. He doesn't care, running his hands through his hair and pacing and very much considering kicking a hole in the drywall.

Wade's hand takes hold of his arm to steady him; Peter snatches it away with a feral sound, eyes guarded. He feels bad as soon as he does it - he knows it's Wade. But touch right now is... draining. Stressful.

Wade pulls back, raises his hands up in a placating gesture. "Sorry."

"No," Peter says, because there's nothing to apologize for, not really.

"Yes. Sorry." Wade insists. Peter takes the apology, nods his head. Peter turns around aimlessly, searching for his clothes that he'd thrown down in a hurry before his shift.

"You... you okay, Sugar?" Wade asks. Peter looks at him; his fists are opening and closing, rolling his shoulders like he wants to go back out there and finish what he started.

Peter shrugs, snatching his clothes off the floor and dusting them off. "I dunno. I... I feel kind of stupid," and then, "Can you turn around?"

Wade averts his gaze and Peter peels off the shorts quickly, sneering at the fabric sticking to his thighs. He dresses silently, poking Wade in the shoulder when he can turn.

"Why stupid?" Wade turns to look at him.

Peter doesn't want to tell him.

"I thought I could handle it. Didn't think he'd do... *that*." Peter hangs his costume up on the hanging rack, very interested in every errant thread and very disinterested in anything near Wade's face. It separates them, a wall of clothes between them until Peter can only see Wade's feet. This shouldn't even be an issue - Wade doesn't have to worry about Peter because *Peter is Spider-Man*.

But, hell, when has that ever stopped Wade from worrying? Wade didn't seem like a worrier, not at first. But Peter knows Deadpool. And Deadpool knows Spider-Man. Wade is fiercely protective of his friends. Past the snark and the crude gestures and inappropriate jokes, Wade cares more deeply than Peter has ever thought possible for *anyone*.

"I stayed because I was watching those mob guys in the vodka bottle reflection. When I jumped off the barstool, it spooked them and they left. I should've kept still."

Wade is silent for several seconds before he curses loud, striding over and pulling the clothes apart on the rack like a curtain, coming face-to-face with Peter. “I *told* you.”

“I know.”

Wade stares, makes an incomprehensible sound of distress, rolls his eyes and dramatically hurls his body away, bringing his hands to his head. “God! You don’t listen!”

Peter crosses his arms, watches Wade. He bites his cheeks to hold back his frustrated yell. This is *exactly* what he didn’t want. He didn’t want this meshing and intertwining of his two lives, he didn’t want the chaos of Wade knowing him as two different people. He didn’t want to have to hide. And he didn’t want that man’s hands on him. He wants to throw up. He wants to run home and scream. He wants to shower and sleep, and maybe sleep in the shower.

“You’re just like *him*!”

Peter knows who *him* is. It’s him. Spider-Man. He feels guilty. He feels dirty.

“You didn’t listen, and you let yourself be uncomfortable, you just...” Wade scoffs, shaking his head.

“What? What did I do? Did I ask for it, Wade?” Peter bristles, stepping through the rack to stand inches away from him, their heat heavy between them as Peter looks up at him through furrowed brows.

“*Of course not.*” Wade is serious, devastatingly so.

“I can’t just ignore things I see. I work here. This is my life. This is my *whole life*, you have no *idea* how much of my life this all is,” Peter strains. He can feel the vein on his neck pulse angrily. This is Spider-Man and Peter Parker’s lives colliding in the worst way Peter can imagine.

“It’s your life, but it is *not* your job to risk your safety.” Wade is stern, stepping closer. Peter steps back.

Peter was going to sneak around no matter what Wade said - if not as Peter, then as Spider-Man exclusively. But it would sure as hell be easier to do some inspecting during working hours inside without drawing attention to himself.

This is the worst idea ever. And Peter has a very, very extensive list of worst ideas.

“Then bring me with you. Let me help. You’re here anyway. Just work me into your stuff. I work here. I’ll have no choice *but* to see things.”

Peter can see the bulge of the vein in Wade’s forehead. A heavy sigh, his shoulders sagging slightly underneath his jacket. “You’re not going to listen to me?”

“*You’re* not going to listen to *me*?” Peter looks up at Wade with daring eyes. He’s used to it; used to this back-and-forth. But there is a certain intimacy now that has no right to be there. Something personal, close.

Peter pushes down his feelings for what just happened. He ignores the pain in his belly, the hard lump in his throat, blinks away the tears glossing his eyes. He rips away the lingering touch of the drunk man, peels each layer of hurt away from himself.

“Fine. Fine!” he roars, puffing out his chest like it cements his reluctant decision.
“Insufferable.” Wade shakes his head.

“Kettle, black.” Peter narrows his eyes and Wade grunts in frustration but does not dare argue.

“You really got me between a rock and a hard place, you know that, don’t you, kid? And not the good kind of hard place, either.” It’s more of a passing comment, prodding and poking fun at Peter’s stubbornness.

Peter hums. “Yeah. I know.” He did know.

Chapter End Notes

Hope y'all enjoyed that! Leave a comment and kudos if you did!

Message me about questions on my original writing on my IG at petr.prkr!!

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

Ouch. Six months without an update, my bad. Sorry it's so short! But it's very hurt/comfort, so that's always a plus!

Songs for this chapter:

Broadripple Is Burning - Margot & the Nuclear So and So's

Climbing Up The Walls - Radiohead

Lucky - Radiohead

Lilac Queen - mewwithoutYou

Heaven Only Knows - Bob Moses

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

Wade insists on walking Peter home again. *Insists.*

Peter had denied this at first, didn't want the company, wanted to be alone. But Wade pleaded, said something about *shock, gonna set in, shouldn't be walking home alone while you're so distressed, I would be a total dick if I let you walk alone.*

But it isn't all that bad. It never really is with Deadpool.

"Not to *damsel-in-distress* you, or anything like that," Wade assures, somewhere between the club and his apartment, mixed in with everything else that hasn't stopped coming out of his mouth.

Peter is thankful for the one-sided conversation, though; it makes him feel less embarrassed when he leans on Wade for dizzy spells, taking half his body weight like a heap of feathers. Being partners (*acquaintances? friends?*) with someone who talks so much, Peter has learned to blur the noise into his periphery until it all sounds comfortably dimmed.

Which is nice, especially for his heightened senses. He takes a breath and focuses on the brisk air blowing across his face, sticking his hair to his damp forehead. He focuses on the rhythmic *tap tap tap* of their shoes hitting the floor in unison. Peter steps on a crack. Wade misses the crack. He focuses on Wade's hand on his waist, firm and not trailing anywhere it isn't meant to.

The knotted strings of his sweatpants knock rhythmically against his thighs, and it's just light enough to be aggravating and unsettling. Like a wave washing over him amid the babble of Wade's words, Peter is flooded back to the club, sitting at the bar counter.

The phantom grip returns to his thigh suddenly, and Peter stops dead in his tracks. The constant buzzing of the city from his spidey-senses slows to a deafening halt, and right there on the cold street, Peter falls to his knees and throws up on the gum-and-pebble cement.

Wade holds his back wordlessly, thumb arching across his spine as Peter coughs and retches, tears blurring his vision.

“I’m fine. I’m fine.” That’s all Peter says, almost a whisper, to whoever will hear it.

“Don’t have’ta be,” Wade hums, taking his arm and pulling him back up.

Yes, I do. “Yeah, I do.” Peter spits on the ground, grimacing at the taste of bile in his mouth, burning and sharp. He has to be okay for so many reasons, he can hardly count them all. Wade doesn’t understand. Or, at least, not until he knows Peter as both Spider-Man *and* Peter.

“Well, *you’re not*,” Wade says, harder this time, keeping Peter upright as they start walking again, “At least not right now. Want me to guess why you puked? Why you’re so disoriented right now? It was probably the drawstrings on your pants that took you back, huh?”

Peter’s lip curls. Or maybe it quivers. He isn’t sure if he wants to cry and punch Wade, or cry and press himself closer to Wade. He’s too observant. *Fuck*, Peter always forgets how *observant* Wade is; a trained mercenary, an army man. He knows the trauma is definitely at least *somewhat* to blame for Wade’s personality, but he also knows Wade acts like that sometimes to throw people off.

“I’m not trying to make you feel *worse*, Petey. I’m trying to make you... *feel*. Like, in general. Because, take it from me, especially with stuff like that, you can’t try to ignore it.”

“Yeah,” Peter says.

“Do you want me to tie your drawstring?”

“Please,” Peter whispers.

And that was it. Peter is too caught up in his own head to stop Wade when they finally reach his apartment, when he takes him up the stairs in his apartment building with Peter leading the way. He unlocks the door with shaking fingers. The stress, or the panic, or all the stairs, or all three of those washes over him and a spell of dizziness hits him.

Peter steps out of his shoes, almost tripping over them as he stumbles on his way to the bathroom. He can sense more than see Wade’s worried hand hovering inches behind his back in case he falls.

He yanks the medicine cabinet open with too much force, and rattles several of his sleeping pills out into his palm. Swallows them dry.

He squeezes his eyes shut against Wade screeching, “*uh, woah!*”

Shit, Peter thinks belatedly, *too many pills for a regular human*. “They’re baby-strength,” Peter supplies weakly, “cheaper than the adult brands.”

When Peter turns around to face Wade again, Wade waves a hand. “No, I don’t care about how many you took. It’s not like I’m the fucking poster child for safe health habits,” he reasons.

Peter sighs in relief, nudging past Wade and into his tiny bedroom. He braces himself against the doorframe with a webbed grip as his vision blurs and his stomach rumbles angrily. Wade steps in front of him, hooks a hand under his arm, his finger hooking around his back to keep him up. Peter hums indignantly, slipping out of his grasp.

“*That’s* what I was worried about,” Wade notes, the worry hidden deep in his throat, “if you downed sleeping pills, you won’t wake up if you puke. You could aspirate and choke in your sleep.” Peter wants to object, to wave him off angrily, but he pauses, swaying a bit. He’s right. *Fuck*, he’s right. Peter hates that.

Peter doesn’t know what to do. He really doesn’t, at least not right now, and he also really doesn’t want to deal with any of it, even if knew how. His plan is to put the problem off for as long as possible, and then go from there. Which, in his experience, is not a particularly *good* plan, but it hasn’t killed him yet.

“Then I just... won’t sleep,” Peter shrugs. He eyes his bed, warm and soft and inviting and beautifully horizontal. He makes a soft sound in the back of his throat, somewhere between keening and exhausted. Without any more thought, Peter throws his bag down and empties his pockets, loose change scattering to the floor. With jerky movements, he pulls his hoodie off over his head, dropping it to the floor.

“Want me to turn around?” Wade asks. His voice startles Peter from the door frame, arms crossed over his broad chest.

Peter laughs a mirthless laugh, shaking his head. “No,” he says. *I’m used to changing with a bunch of other people*, he wants to say. But Deadpool - *Wade*, isn’t *other people*. “I’m not getting totally naked, don’t worry,” he adds instead.

“Oh, I wasn’t worried, Pete,” Wade hums, and Peter really laughs this time, a smile on Wade’s scarred mouth.

Peter fumbles with his fly before kicking off his pants, pulling his boxer briefs back up a bit when they almost slid off with his pants. In a strike of morbid curiosity, Peter dares glance up and watch Wade’s expression. He’s just watching patiently - *intently*, absolutely, but patiently. He doesn’t know what he expected, knew that Wade would never cross his normal level of crudeness, but the reassurance sat comfortably in his belly anyway.

His eyes droop threateningly, a reminder of the sleeping pills he took. They kicked in faster, but Peter also knows they’ll wear off faster, too. Much faster. He pulls the covers back and curls up instantly, rolling onto his side and watching Wade watching him.

“I’m not gonna sleep,” he promises, face half-buried under a thick blanket.

Wade raises hairless brows. “Oh, yeah?”

“Yeah,” Peter counters. Pauses. Thinks. Then, “You... you can stay if you want. But I won’t throw up again. It was just... nerves.”

“Nerves,” Wade repeats flatly, but he slides down the wall with bent legs.

“You know what I’m talking about.” Peter bristles, eyes hard and tired. He rests his hands high between his thighs under the covers. *Because it’s cold*, he tells himself.

“I do. Yeah,” Wade says, softer this time, his hands fisting and unfisting from where they lay across his knees. And in his tired mind, Peter swears it’s like Wade could see him under the blankets.

“Watch me,” Peter warns, eyes half-lidded, “I’m gonna be back to my kickass self tomorrow, and you and I are gonna solve this mob shit.”

Wade laughs, tipping his head back against the wall. “Fuck yeah, we are. Get your beauty sleep. Not that you need it.”

Peter barks out a laugh and falls head-first into sleep wondering why he let Deadpool into Spider-Man’s home, let alone let him stay while he sleeps, watching over him like a bastardized guardian angel.

Chapter End Notes

Woo! Peter making questionable decisions, as per usual! Hope you all enjoyed that! Thanks for sticking around! I finally finished my most popular work, Dissonance, so you can HOPEFULLY expect more frequent updates now!

Follow me on social media to stay updated, and DM me for questions about my writing!

ig: petr.prkr

tumblr: petr-prkr

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

oof. been a while. double-majoring in college is some real shit! but, never fear, i'm deeply invested in all my stories despite how sparse updates may appear: i'm wholly insistent on continuing all of them, because i love them, and love y'all.

enjoy this! lots of angst

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

Wade was gone when Peter woke up in the morning that Thursday.

This was good, he supposed, because his spidey-senses woke him up ten seconds before his alarm did and he shot a cord of webbing across the room to grab the clock and shut it off. Once he got his bearings, he turned to where Wade had been laying against the wall only to find it bare. A sticky note with a crude smile was in its place.

Something between a smile and a grimace crossed his face upon seeing it.

Saying he felt like he got hit by a semi-truck would be putting it lightly; he head thrummed in time with every heartbeat, and his belly was sore with heaving and contorting himself so tightly in his sleep.

When he realized it was Thursday, a class day, his mood lifted exponentially, and with a healthy (probably not healthy) dose of Ibuprofen, his day passed quickly. It had been his first school day since... *everything*, and Peter found it both a relief and impossible to focus on his classwork.

Every time he would really get into it, every time he would fall into that comfortable and familiar pattern of absorbing, inhaling new formulas and studies and theories, his mind would lurch to the present and be taken back to the mob, to Wade, to last night.

He snapped two of his favorite pencils accidentally, and maybe pressed too hard on the marker tip when he was the only one to answer the problem on the board, but he can't say he didn't thrive in class like he always had a habit of doing. Academia used to be the only area he thrived in when he was younger, but after the bite, his brain had to share the stage with his spidey-senses and enhanced physical abilities. They were like two worlds warring within him at any given moment. A sense of responsibility filled his belly with all his newfound strengths, especially after Uncle Ben.

He can't say he minds, but it's certainly more to handle sometimes.

It's about nine at night now, the sky navy and black and blotted with flickering street lights. He's long since finished his homework, treated himself to an extra large portion of microwavable mac & cheese. His belly still rumbles after he finishes, and he knows he isn't taking care of himself like he should be. Granted, his heightened immune system and metabolism protect him and give him more energy, but he also needs to *feed* his body a lot more.

Either way, he thinks, *this is it*. He's a hero on a budget.

So Peter staves off his grumbling belly and puts on one of his suits. He can't get used to the initial cold feeling against his skin for the life of him, and he knows Stark installed a heating unit but he's too stubborn to ask how it works. Wasting no time, Peter opens his bedroom window, steps onto the fire escape, and leaps off.

It doesn't take long for Peter to stumble across some action, even for a Thursday night. He stopped a purse-snatcher, kept two drunk women from stumbling into oncoming traffic, and quite roughly dumped a molester onto the steps of the nearest NYPD precinct before swinging the shaken teen back to their apartment in Brooklyn.

It was no wonder that, over the course of the night, Peter had slowly been working his way closer to the club. The neon blue and pink lights of Wicked Webs stayed on all night, not that it was closed now, anyway. He swings onto the roof and lands silently between the whirring fans and air vents. The roof entrance is always locked - too many criminals, go figure, but Peter is fine crouching on the roof for now. He makes his way to the ledge, sitting above the blinding neon where nobody would be able to make out his shape.

He starts to get bored after twenty minutes of no odd behavior - no noise, no people aside from the occasional drunk leaving the bar, no sign of the mob. He's about to consider napping before his spidey senses send a sharp tingle down his back and he bolts upright.

A black panel van across the street yanks open its back doors with a horrid squeal, and a herd of four men barrel out - three much larger than the other, who stays comfortably behind them. Peter immediately recognizes the slimmer man as the one who cornered him in the hallway a few days ago. The Boss. He motions them forward with a wave of his hand as a father and his son are passing by the club.

The tingling in Peter's skull is unbearable. Peter swings down from the roof just as one man knocks the father unconscious, and two others go for the boy. He screams bloody murder as one man holds his arms back and the other rushes a hand to his mouth. Peter narrows his eyes.

"Hand-feeding? Really, guys? I think that stops once they reach the toddler stage of life." But as soon as he says it, he knows. A small pill flashes between the man's giant fingers, the boy's mouth still clamped shut behind it. Now panic fills Peter's chest, and he acts fast. He lunges for the man who knocked the father out first, swinging a hard right hook to his jaw. The man drops for a moment before throwing a punch at Peter's stomach. He dodges easily, grabbing his outstretched fist and yanking him closer, right into Peter's elbow. The man drops like a pile of rocks and Peter makes quick work of webbing him up so thickly that even the *Hulk* would have trouble.

He needs to take out the one trying to force-feed the boy immediately. The kid is doing a good job kicking and biting, but he can't be more than ten and he's going to want to scream at some point, and Peter knows the man will waste no time wedging the pill inside his mouth at the first chance he gets. He comes up behind him and kicks his legs out from under him. Still, the man doesn't drop the pill, but at least it's further away from the boy's mouth. He regains his footing quickly and snarls at Peter with a set of yellowing teeth. He looks like a raging bull coming at him, and for the umpteenth time, Peter is glad his costume has a mask to hide his shock. The man comes at him fast in a tackle around the waist, and Peter has to dig his feet in and use more of his strength than usual, throwing an arm over the man's shoulders for some leverage.

Peter furrows his brow at the effort he has to use. It's not impossible by any means, but it more than he usually needs for every day patrolling, or, say *normal* mob members. "*What* are in those pills, man! Most people stick to good old fashioned steroids, y'know?" He huffs, "I mean, sure, they cause some shrinkage *down below*, but it's probably still way better than whatever the guy in charge is feeding you." He nods his head slightly in reference to the boss man standing calmly by the panel van.

The man doesn't react, only throws several hard jabs into Peter's stomach and ribs, and a quick knee to his groin. Peter blows out a pained breath, his ears ringing. *That strength*, he thinks dizzily, *it's like they're all just inhumanely strong and reactive*. He can already feel his skin searing under every hit he took, can feel the muscle bruising and his ribs starting to ache. In their current position, Peter grabs hold of the man's head tucked under his arm and knees him in the nose. When the man doubles over, Peter clasps his hands together and swings his elbows sharply between the man's shoulder blades. He drops to the ground, eyes shut and mouth slack open, and Peter webs him to the other unconscious one, keeping a close eye on the one unwebbed hand, pill still intact inside his meaty fist. It glows green and lurid in the late moonlight.

Peter realizes his current problem as soon as he looks back up from the floor, but there really was no avoiding it, either. The last man who was holding the child's arms back now scoops him up entirely, holding him up to cover his own torso. Peter eyes narrow angrily, and the man's body language changes in fear. "*A child* human shield? Really?" He growls.

The man swallows thickly, eyeing Peter up and down. "What, are you scared? Do I scare you?" He asks, stepping forward on sure feet. The man takes small steps back, the boy making quiet whimpers in his arms as his feet dangle. Before the last man can do anything rash, Peter webs his hooded head, and yanks it right into his knee, catching the boy in his free arm when the man drops unconscious. He still managed to swing a fist into Peter's lip before he dropped, and the sting is palpable now.

He sends the boy to call 9-1-1 on his father's phone, and to stay right there until the police come. Peter huffs, turning his attention to the boss beside the van. For his part, he's been quiet, neither making a move to help his men or to grab the pill. Just watching. Staring at the fight. At him.

"I have it on good word that you work out of that strip joint," Spider-Man gestures his head to the club across from them, "don't you get tired of staring at men all day?"

The boss smiles slightly, ducking his head as if reveling in an inside joke before looking back up at Spider-Man. “But you’re far more interesting than the whores dancing around in there all night.”

Ouch, Peter thinks, resolving to tackle that cognitive dissonance with himself another day. “Way to get a girl’s attention,” Spider-Man fans himself, “I’m curious now.”

The boss leans off the van, takes lax steps toward him, tip-toeing around his dropped men like they were a slight inconvenience. “The pills, I know you’ve noticed.” He kicks lightly at the man’s fist, and the green pill catches the light once more. “I give them to civilians, like we were *trying* to do to that boy over there, until you showed up.” Peter can feel him try to tamp down his frustration.

“They do something rather interesting, not to the discredit of the scientists and doctors who tirelessly worked on them.” He picks it up, holding it between two fingers. Peter tenses and watches the boss’ movements, but he doesn’t seem to be in any rush. The pill is liquid inside, almost see-through.

“For a brief amount of time, after ingestion, this little pill gives humans... extraordinary powers. It’s as if they’ve been gifted the brief pleasure of being a mutate.” He smiles wide, the pride radiating off him and settling uncomfortably in Peter’s chest.

“Of course, a pill with this power has a short half-life. It only lasts so long before the adverse withdrawal side-effects start presenting themselves. And it seems that, the more pills they take, the more painfully and inconsequentially human they feel after it wears off.” He looks back up at Peter, and smiles impossibly wider when he notes the shock tensing his body. “So, of course, my friends are very loyal.”

Spider-Man swallows. “Your *addicts*, you mean.”

“Semantics,” he shrugs, and with an effortless flick, the glistening pill is tossed up in the air toward him. Peter narrows his senses in on it, catches it easily, closing his fist tight.

“My... *addicts*, if you insist, have made quite a few waves in the city. They’ve attracted your attention, and many others, as I’m sure you know.” Peter nods warily, and can hear sirens wailing in the distance, weaving through city streets and bouncing off the empty late-night buildings. He rolls back on his heels anxiously. The boss seems to understand why.

“I’ll make it quick,” he resolves. “I give these pills to civilians, and they’ve already made a stir. But, you,” he scoffs, shaking his head, “You? A mutant with your abilities? Your sheer strength, your agility, precognition? Consider the *power* you’d have with me.” His teeth are bared in power, alight and invigorated passion in his eyes that makes Peter more than a little uneasy.

“I’ll let you go now, Spider-Man. Keep the pill. See how you like it before you try destroying our reputation again.” He has the nerve to sound charitable, and it makes Peter’s muscles flex and his blood roar in his ears.

But the sirens are drawing near, too close for comfort with their red and blue lights reflecting off nearby buildings, and Spider-Man shoots a web away just as the boss disappears from the scene down an alley. Spider-Man stays perched on a high building just within eyesight, to make sure the boy and his father are taken care of, before swinging to the only person who comes to mind.

After making a quick stop at Stark Tower to drop off the pill (with a note that reads, in a messy scrawl, *Found this on some mob guys. Lemme know what it does? Like, chemically? I've got an idea but it isn't fun. Xoxo, Spidey.*), Peter ducks behind one of the dumpsters he stashes a backpack of civilian clothes in, loops it around one shoulder, and with burning ribs and a bloody lip, he swings to Hell's Kitchen to see a Devil.

Chapter End Notes

hope you all enjoyed that! it was fun to write, and it's given me an idea for the next chapter (yes, i mostly wing each chapter after a brief understanding of plot points)!!

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Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

i'm finally on summer break and therefore BACK ON MY BULLSHIT. expect updates! enjoy!

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

The good thing about being acquaintances with a blind vigilante? Someone that you can trust, who is not only another hero, but is also a *real* adult, can bandage you without seeing you.

The bad thing? He has questions.

Peter lands unsteadily on the fire escape, sticking to the rusting metal with a webbed grip. Between the lateness of the hour and the frosted windows, he can't see inside, but that doesn't mean Matt isn't home. Peter wouldn't pay the electricity bills if he didn't need the light either.

"Hey," he breathes, voice quiet. Matt will hear. "I know it's late. Sorry about that. Hope you're not out patrolling. I could..." Peter shakes his head, staring at the sky like it'll open up and laugh at him, "I could use some help."

If this was Wade, or even Tony, he'd have no qualms about just opening the window and stumbling in. But Matt has an actual civilian life that is starkly separate from his vigilante life. Peter respects that. After all, so does he. So he waits, speaks quietly enough so that only Matt can hear, just in case someone from *Matt Murdock* life is here when someone from *Daredevil* life is.

Not to mention, Matt is the only person who knows he's Spider-Man. Not even Tony knows. Not even May. Matt didn't even find out on purpose. Some super unfair blind super-person power where everybody's heartbeat sounds different to him, every breath, every smell. Peter Parker met civilian Matt Murdock *once* in Stark Tower, and the next time they happened to meet up during a patrol, Daredevil took one pause and grinned at Spider-Man like the devil he was. And here they are.

Still, he prefers to keep the circle small. He has to.

Sure enough, the fire escape window reels up and out comes a disheveled, shirtless, and week-old-bruised Matt Murdock. "You smell like blood. What did you do?"

"I got a little bloody," Peter shrugs, and Matt deliberates for a moment before guiding Peter inside with a long-suffering sigh, taking his backpack from him and setting it on the floor.

He drops Peter unceremoniously onto the scuffed leather sofa and proceeds to move toward the light switch before Peter makes a series of sounds that Matt thankfully interprets as *no!* Instead, he walks sure-footed into the kitchen and comes out with a few ice packs and an overstuffed first-aid kit just as Peter is peeling off his mask and collapsing onto his back with his head on the armrest.

“You’re well-stocked.”

Matt huffs, jangling the first-aid kit in acknowledgment. “I know a nurse.”

Peter raises his brows. “Does the nurse know you? The Daredevil you?”

Matt nods. “Lucky,” Peter notes, and Matt smiles grimly and sits down on the edge of the coffee table in front of Peter.

“Want to tell me what happened to you that’s making you smell like blood and anxiety?” Matt questions, unsnapping the kit and running gentle fingertips over the contents, taking out what he needs.

“Is that different from how I usually smell? I thought it was my signature scent.” Peter offers weakly, laughs, and then grunts in pain, holding his stomach. The skin throbs under his hand.

Matt gives him a long-suffering stare, his face tired in the pink-and-purple glow from the blaring billboard outside his window. “Funny. Take off your suit,” he says before helping Peter peel the fabric down to his thighs. Matt takes a moment to sit and listen, or *whatever* he does, before grabbing one ice pack and holding it over Peter’s crotch. Peter hums in tentative agreement and Matt places it down and chuffs in wry amusement when Peter sighs in relief.

“Kind of creepy how you do that stuff.”

“Maybe if you stop leaking pain and heat signatures, I won’t do it anymore,” Matt counters.

“Fair,” Peter grumbles, and Matt smiles knowingly before tearing the seal of a disinfectant swab and running it over Peter’s torso. Peter bites the inside of his cheek as it stings some of the torn skin. Matt tosses it back onto the table, uncaps a minty salve and spreads it over Peter’s stomach and ribs. It’s cold, nice, numbing. He makes quick but careful work of it, and in a few moments, he’s helping Peter sit back up so he can wrap a thick layer of gauze tightly around his ribs, securing it over one shoulder and pinning it in place. He places the last ice pack over Peter’s belly, and hands him a bottle of ibuprofen before closing the first-aid kit back up. Peter swallows the pills dry.

Peter leans back on the sofa, and by the time Matt returns after cleaning up and putting the kit away, he’s significantly sleepier and the pain is a pulsing ebb.

“Give me the short story; I know you’re tired, and your healing factor isn’t good enough that you don’t need any beauty sleep.” Matt sits beside him.

Peter laughs despite himself, adjusts the ice pack between his legs with an awkward crinkle so he doesn’t have to hold it anymore. “There’s this mob operating inside my workplace.

They seem human - they *are* human, but the guy in charge is feeding them pills that give them temporary mutant powers. They're all dangerous, and they're all hooked on whatever's in the drug. I ran into them today trying to force-feed a kid one of the pills. The leader took an interest in me; I think he's recruiting." Peter picks at the fraying hems of the gauze. "I'm flattered," he deadpans.

Matt stays quiet for a moment. Peter lets his eyes close. "I ran into a mob once. They all reeked of chemicals, but none that I'd ever smelled before. Every time I heard about a crime I thought they'd had a part in, it smelled like the same chemicals when I stopped by the scene. But that was in Hell's Kitchen." His tone is grim.

Peter knows Matt is thinking the same thing he is. "And I was in Queens. So either it's the most obscure coincidence in the world, or this syndicate is way bigger than just a few members."

"Not good," Matt says.

"Not good," Peter agrees.

"Who else knows?"

"I kept the pill from today and dropped it off at Stark's before coming here. Asked him to tell me what was in it and what it could do. So the Avengers know, and Wade knows because the Avengers actually asked him to go undercover in my workplace to inspect the mob in the first place," Peter explains in exasperation. "It goes without saying that Mister Stark doesn't know Spider-Man works there."

Matt runs his hands up and down his thighs in consideration, before, "Deadpool is working with you? Why didn't you go to him?"

Peter sighs. This sucks. He shouldn't be surprised anymore when his life throws him ridiculous curveballs, and yet, each time something like it happens, he has the nerve to be shocked. How does he explain something so extremely *not normal* and distinctly reeking of *Parker luck*?

"Yes," he says, "and no. He's working with Spider-Man on the mob, *and* with Peter Parker. Two different people to him. He thinks I'm just a human who works there that happened to notice something sketchy was going on, so now I convinced him to work with me, mostly because he's worried Peter Parker is gonna get himself hurt."

"Shit," Matt says.

Peter turns to him. "I thought Catholics don't curse. How many Hail Mary's does that get you?"

Matt laughs. "I don't think any of these scenarios exist in the realm of Catholicism. Sometimes things are just shit," he responds, and Peter can't help but agree.

“Where, exactly, do you work? If you don’t mind.” Matt asks, and it’s an innocent enough question, considering Peter knows what Matt’s job is, but hell, he’s talking to the vigilante that punishes sinners with his very moniker being *Devil*. He’s really not sure how much more Catholic guilt Matt can handle. He’s not even sure if *he* can handle it.

There’s no doubt that Matt can hear his speeding heart, but he stays quiet, waiting.

“*I’m a stripper*,” Peter blurts, and wastes no breath as he barrels on. “Mostly I just wait tables and bring people drinks and look pretty and dance sometimes, but I need the money and it’s, like, the only job I could find with hours that would still let me be Spider-Man *and* go to college, and I have the body for it, so I guess it works. And I know what you might be thinking, but we’re just like anybody else, and -”

“Peter, shut up.”

Peter shuts up, feeling more than a little dejected and nervous.

“You’re working in a notoriously dangerous industry, below your level of expertise and outside of your field, all so that you can make ends meet, get a degree that’s important to you, and continue saving people and finding fulfillment, and you’re only twenty. You do it because you have to even if you’re exhausted. There’s no shame in that, and there never will be.”

Peter blinks. Takes a breath and shuts his mouth. Blinks again. “Oh.”

Matt smiles. “Yeah.”

And that was that. “Your civilian life and your vigilante life are intersecting right now, though.”

“Yep,” Peter pops the *P*.

“I hate when that happens,” Matt says apologetically, and Peter thanks the gods for having friends within the hero business.

“How long do you expect to keep that up?” He asks, which is a very valid question that Peter has no intention of solving.

“No clue,” he sighs, and Matt pats his shoulder, reaching over the back of the couch and pulling off a thick knit blanket. He stands, tips Peter back so he’s laying down again, and covers him with the blanket.

“You’ll figure it out. I’ll be here if you get knocked on your ass again and I’ll keep you updated on anything the mob might do around Hell’s Kitchen.” With that promise, they say their goodnights before Matt disappears into his bedroom.

For once, Peter is too exhausted and too stressed to stay awake thinking.

Chapter End Notes

what will peter do? how will he fix his absolute disaster of a life? who knows! (i know)
(kind of)

anyway, hope you liked that! PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO LEAVE KUDOS AND
COMMENTS - I THRIVE OFF READING WHAT Y'ALL SAY.

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Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

heyo! i'm back with a longer one for y'all :) kinda soft, kinda tense, pretty neat. enjoy!

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

There's a sticky-note stuck to Peter's head when he wakes up on Matt's couch that Friday morning. At least, he *hopes* it's morning, or close to it.

Figured you needed the R&R. Had to go to work but there's cereal in the cupboard and protein shakes in the fridge. Shower is past the kitchen. ~~Have fun at work~~ Have a safe day at work.

- Matt

Peter laughs weakly at the messy scrawl before balling it up. He scrubs his hands over his eyes, wiping the last traces of sleep from them as he pulls himself up with a groan. He's sore, but doesn't feel like death. He can work with that - it's practically his baseline.

He grabs the now-water ice packs, places them back in the freezer where he can see their previous indents in the frost, and tosses the sticky-note in the trash before inhaling about a quarter of Matt's cereal supply, moaning in excitement. God, he wishes he had money for a consistent food supply that can keep up with his metabolism. He moves around Matt's house in a sleepy blur. Washes the dishes he used. Realizes he's still in his underwear and smells distinctly like sweat and blood. Finds his backpack. Grabs clean clothes. Steams his sore muscles under the scalding water of the shower. Briefly jealous of the seemingly endless supply of hot water at Matt's apartment. Changes into civilian clothes. Grabs another sticky note, looks up Braille online, and presses the tip of a pencil deep enough until the indents spell out a dotted *thanks!* Feels properly proud of himself.

By the time he even thinks to check his phone for the first time, it's past one in the afternoon, and Peter is all but shoving his clothes and dirty suit off the floor and stuffing them into his backpack. He pauses, takes a cautionary whiff of his suit, and reels. Bloodstains, asphalt burn, and there are a few snags and tears in it, too. He changes back into the suit hastily, tossing his civilian clothes into his bag and swinging out through the open window.

He has just enough time to drop the suit off at Stark's and budget in another much-needed nap before heading in for his shift. It took him twenty minutes to swing over to the Tower, and he's already planning the fastest way to change out of his dirty suit, slip into his clean back up, and swing back out as he's sliding open the highest window to Stark's penthouse.

He's sliding open the locked-but-not-really window through narrowed eyes, blowing away misty condensation from the stray cloud dancing through the highest peaks of the tower when

he finally gets his feet in, shutting the window behind him.

“Hello, Spider-Man,” says JARVIS calmly.

“Hey, bud,” Peter smiles, taking his backpack off and unzipping it.

“Hello, Spider-Man.”

“Hey, Tony - oh my - *god*. Mister Stark,” Peter shrieks, clutching his backpack close to his chest. “What are you doing here?”

Tony blinks, shutting off the coffee maker and returning to the living room with an unearthly large cup of coffee. He leans against the sofa pit, taking a long sip and watching Peter. He’s still in his pajamas, lucky, blue plaid pants and a white thermal. “I live here, kid.”

Peter splutters, dropping his backpack and looking around. “Well, yeah, but you’re usually gone,” he mumbles, scuffing his foot against the pristine floor awkwardly.

Tony huffs out an amused laugh. “Fine, fair.” He sets his coffee mug down on a side table. “Dropping off one of the suits?” He asks, gesturing to the open backpack on the floor.

Peter nods eagerly, looking down at his worse-for-wear suit. “Got a little banged up after, uh, yesterday. Did you get my note?”

Tony nods grimly and looks like he has more to say, but takes a long chug of his coffee instead.

“Can you... could you turn around?” Peter asks.

Tony is about to comply, before putting two and two together and pointing an only half accusatory finger at Peter. “So the suit you’re wearing is the one that needs to be fixed?”

“Um. Yeah.”

“Why didn’t you just wear the clean one here, then?”

That’s a remarkably good question, and if Peter had woken up in his *own* home today, *without* nursing yesterday’s wounds, then he would’ve had a clearer head and done exactly that. “Well. Well, you’re usually not here when I stop by, and the lights are usually off, and, look, I... I had a day, okay? No, I had *days*. Could you please turn?”

Tony shakes his head in thinly-veiled amusement, putting both hands up placatingly and turning around. “JARVIS, stop recording until Spider-Man is in his suit again,” Tony intones. Peter scans the room and makes sure Tony isn’t facing any reflective surfaces before pulling his mask off with a sigh and raking hair away from his forehead.

Peter is bouncing on one foot trying to peel his other leg out of the fabric when Tony speaks up. “Where’d you find that pill, anyway?”

“Fought it out of some guy’s hand trying to force-feed it to a kid. The head of the mob let me keep it. Seemed to get off on what would happen if a mutate took a temporary mutate-producing pill,” he says as casually as possible, finally getting his foot out of the suit and folding it up, tossing it onto the couch by Tony. He takes it, inspecting it for damage.

“Ah, same guys who I’ve got Wade keeping tabs on,” Tony says, sticking his finger through a hole in the side of Peter’s suit and holding it up to the light.

“Yeah. Same guys,” Peter says quietly. He’s not willing to say more and potentially compromise his identity by association.

“Figured both of you run the same circles anyway, more or less. Good. Neither of you is working it alone, at least.” He seems earnest. He’s not wrong, either; it would be harder if they were both in each other’s way.

“Anyway. Bruce and just about every other scientist on my payroll are down in the labs working on it right now.” Peter pulls on the pants of the clean suit, shimmying the material up his thighs to settle securely at his waist. He should feel so much more awkward about changing to the back of his mentor. But, god, his life’s a mess.

“And?” Peter asks. “Anything so far?”

“So far?” Tony sighs. “So far, it’s looking like one hell of a drug. Half-life is about twelve hours on a normal person. But we’re still testing all its properties and capabilities.”

“People can do a lot of damage in twelve hours,” Peter says solemnly. He pulls the suit shirt over his head, shoving his arms through and rolling his wrists until he feels the holes of the fabric line up with his spinnerets.

“Big time. We’re doing some tests on cell samples at an escalated pace. When the effects of the drug wore off on them, the cells...” Tony struggles for words, and Peter desperately wishes he could tell Tony to just speak scientifically, that he would understand what he says. “The cells basically went into sympathetic overdrive. Full panic, no outlet, total destruction and withdrawal symptoms. The body has no more pill to run through, so it starts attacking itself trying to exert the same power and energy the pill gave them. Someone can theoretically get hooked on just one pill, if not for the powers they get temporarily, then for the sheer danger it puts their bodies through during withdrawal the longer they take it.”

Chills form all along Peter’s arms and neck, face pale as he pulls his mask on. “Bad,” he whispers, mostly to himself.

“Yeah. No walk in the park, that’s for damn sure. They’re making temporary mutates with ‘roid rage and the desperation for another fix. That’s...” Tony stares into the black of his coffee, “more than bad.”

JARVIS informs Tony that the cameras have turned back on, and Tony finally turns back around to face him. “I want you to be careful. Wade, too, as unkillable as he is, the bastard. Don’t think either of you is immune to this shit because you’re not fully human. Be *more* careful than a human would.” He points at Peter with a look in his eyes that Peter can only

compare to the eyes of his aunt when she would see him come home with a black eye after school. It makes him take a step back.

“We’ll be careful,” he promises. He means it.

Tony nods. Finishes the dregs of his coffee. “Good. I’ll let you know anything else we find out when I finish fixing up your suit.” Peter thanks him, zipping his bag up and slinging it over his shoulders.

He’s opening the window back up when Tony speaks again. “Spider-Man. Please try not to die. That would suck for me.”

Peter smiles warmly under the mask. There’s that hint of Tony Stark’s subtle endearment.

“You too, Mister Stark. Say *hi* to Bruce and Pepper for me.”

Tony nods his head and raises his coffee mug in affirmation, and then Peter drops from the window, swinging a web at the nearest skyscraper.

He’s home by two-thirty, where he promptly strips, collapses into bed, and naps fitfully until his shift at nine, dreams a swirling haze of glowing green pills. He wakes up with just enough time to change into sweats and a hoodie, and skateboard over to Wicked Webs for his shift.

Only when he pushes open the back door that leads to the dancer’s lounge-slash-dressing room and gets a costume thrust at his chest by Cindy does he realize it’s masquerade night again. Peter sighs. He hates masquerade night with a burning passion. Cindy is wearing a short, feathery black dress, a detailed white and gold mask adorning her face, bright red lipstick highlighting her knowing smile.

He takes his own costume from her. It’s similar to her own, only the men are all wearing small black shorts, black cuffs on the wrists and ankles, and a translucent black shawl-robe *thing*, open at the front. His mask is black and silver, pointing up at the end of either eye, dropping sparkles onto his shoulders and chest each time he turns his head. He wasn’t spared from the red lipstick, either.

The house is full tonight. *Loud*. A slow, sultry song is blaring from every speaker, and Peter is hit with the realization that he forgot his earbuds at home. Resolving to keep to the sidelines for as long as he can, he gestures to Garrett from across the room that he’ll take over the bar. Garrett takes his cue thankfully, wrapping up his shift, clocking out, and leaving in a matter of seconds.

Through the reverberating music and uproars of laughter and whistles and the slip of hands wrapped around poles, he notices Wade immediately, standing tall and strong right outside the front door. He’s keeping up with the whole security schtick, only barely, glancing down at IDs and sparing an uncaring look into backpacks and purses before letting people in. But Peter notices the angled turn of his stance, can read his body language as easily as his own - one minute turn of the head and Wade has full view of the upper level of the club where a few members of the mob are.

Peter smiles despite himself - a reprieve amid the chaos. And really, he should know it's isn't quite a reprieve; he and Wade are still doing a *job*. But somehow, it's different, better, because even if they aren't close as civilians, Deadpool has always been there for Spider-Man in his own crude and ridiculously lewd way. And, god, is it nice to have a constant like that. Even if that constant is a tormented, skilled mercenary.

He tries to stifle the noise booming through his ears and ignore the way the black cuffs chafe against his spinnerets as he sidles up around the bar, dropping his elbows onto the sticky counter with a keen smile. "Hi there. What can I get for you?" Peter offers lamely to a customer, and just like that, his shift starts.

Bar duty is fast and simple work; no outlandish customer experiences, no brawls break out, nothing unsavory among any clients. Halfway through, while Peter is spending as much time as possible polishing a cup to surreptitiously watch the VIP section, he notices the man - *the* man - dispensing one pill to each of the three members around him. He even recognizes one as one of the cronies he fought the other night, an angry lump on his temple.

He sets the glass down, glancing toward the front door only to note Wade distractedly handing someone back their ID, pulling his eyes away from the VIP section and looking at Peter, too. They share a grim look before breaking eye contact.

It isn't until the last hour of his shift is Peter inevitably summoned to the stage when one dancer's shifts end and the crowd is just as large as it was before. He gets a cover for bar duty, washes his face quickly, and wishes desperately that he didn't forget his earbuds all the way until the moment he steps up onto the stage.

If he's being realistic about it, he's luckier than some of the other dancers who don't want to actually be in this profession - his... *acrobatic* background is so strong that he doesn't actually have to *dance*. People are more excited and curious about seeing everything he can do with the pole. To them, that *is* dancing, and maybe it really is. The fluidity, the ease, the strength at which Peter can stretch and swing and twist and climb and drop and move. Everything that makes him Spider-Man and everything that gave him this job - who can say that isn't dancing at its core?

But Peter does his best to block out the blasting music in the club, ignores the stage practically vibrating beneath him from the bass and the yelling crowd. He breaks every few minutes to sway closer to the crowd, to smile and wink and wave and bat his lashes and open his waistband to collect singles and fives and even the occasional ten. He can hear everyone's heartbeat in his ears like a chorus, can hear their breathing, their murmurs. He ignores the excitement, the want, the lust in their eyes. Instead, he looks for Wade's face by the window as he's wrapping one hand around the pole again. And Wade is looking black, face an unreadable mix of awe and warmth and calculation.

And maybe, somewhere there's something else in his expression. But he isn't leering or gawking. Far from it. His eyes are very pointedly on Peter's *face*.

Peter smiles faintly at him before he swings up onto the pole and begins again. He thinks Wade smiles back. By the time Peter glances toward him again, upside down and looking

over backward at everyone from high up on the pole, Wade has shifted slightly to better face inside.

He tries to focus on the awe on Wade's face, the sheer pride. He tries *not* to focus on what he hopes is his own paranoia and not the faint trace of recollection in Wade's eyes. Because Peter knows Wade well enough to know the curious, calculating look on his face. Of course. Of course, Wade would be smart enough and attentive enough to have a vague sense of *deja-vu* over Peter's smooth and skillful intricacy swinging around a pole and Peter's smooth and skillful intricacy swinging in the air on webs as Spider-Man. This was poorly planned on his part. God. But by the time Peter looks back again, the look on Wade's face is gone.

He's made about two-hundred dollars throughout his entire shift at the bar and on stage, and at thirty minutes to closing, bar staff are nudging drunk people out of their seats and calling them taxis, Wade is lifting them up by their armpits and throwing them out when they get handsy, and Peter is shuffling off the stage pulling cash out of his pants, folding it all neatly, and then tucking it right back in. He's about to motion to Wade that he's going to change, but one of his managers approaches him with a confused look on his face.

"Big guy wants one last round of drinks." He points to the VIP wing.

Peter stiffens. "I'm not on bar duty," he says, which is not a lie.

"I know. He wants you, though. Any idea why?"

"No," Peter says, which is a lie. But he takes the note with their order on it, and grabs the cheap beers they wanted from behind the bar. Wade sees him stack the bottles on the tray, and Peter eyes the VIP section pointedly. This is the first red flag, and Peter and Wade both know it: the mob can afford top shelf, expensive imports. But cheap beer? They don't want to drink, they want an excuse to *talk*.

Wade makes quick work of getting rid of the rest of the clients causing a raucous, and has all his attention on Peter from the door by the time he's made it up the stairs to VIP.

He places the tray on the tips of his fingers and unlatches the velvet rope with his free hand, stepping in and closing it behind him. He forces down the shudder his spidey-senses trigger, rolling his neck awkwardly to expel the sharp tingling. He smiles coolly, keeping calm, and hopes to every absent god that the men don't recognize his voice from their run-in with Spider-Man.

"Round of beers for you boys?"

The head of the mob that Peter has become unfortunately familiar with gestures toward the stout table in a noncommittal gesture. Peter chews the inside of his cheek. They really don't care about drinks. They want to talk. With him specifically. They could at least try to look nonchalant. But instead,

"You're a wonderful dancer. My name is Roman. Please, sit down." With a flick of a finger, one of the cronies sitting across from him stands, freeing a seat for Peter. Peter sits

awkwardly, tugging the hems of his shorts down and skimming a finger over the fold of cash. Peter raises his brows, offering a smile.

Roman sticks his hand out to shake and Peter leans back instinctively. In his periphery, he sees Wade stand even taller, even stronger, somehow every angrier, and Peter gives a quick, almost imperceptible twitch of the head: *no, it's fine, stand down, soldier.*

To Roman's credit, he simpers and doesn't press it, putting his hands back in his lap. "I'm sorry we started off on the wrong foot the other day in the hall; you'll have to understand my paranoia."

"Withdrawals?" Peter asks. The hairs on the back of his neck stand upright after he says it and he wishes, just for peace of mind, that he could casually take his costume cuffs off to have access to his spinnerettes.

Peter can see the man's jaw clench just slightly, but it seems that he's said something right after all because a wide smile takes over his entire face and he says, "Clever boy for noticing what we do here. But not quite. We're just trying to keep things under wraps to the general public, is all. This is rather need-to-know."

Peter leans back and folds his arms over his chest. "And who is need-to-know? The mob and the people you make addicted?"

The men around him seem to double in mass at the implication. Peter keeps his eyes on the one he's speaking to.

"That's a dirty word. I prefer *enhanced*."

I'm enhanced enough, Peter thinks wryly. The spider bite has given him more than he can handle sometimes and it wasn't even his choice.

"Sure. Well, I'm not enhanced. So why are you telling me more than I already figured out about this?"

Roman leans back to pull something from his pocket. A small capsule pill in a clear bag. The same neon shade. "Would you like to be enhanced?" He extends his hand, and Peter knows it's better for his safety *and* his job not to seem confrontational. So he takes the bag. Inspects the pill through the plastic as if he's never seen one, never held one before.

"Why?" Peter asks quietly. *Why me?*

"I told you. In part, at least. You're a very good dancer."

Peter stiffens. "Is this one of those situations where a drug lord gets a bunch of hookers he finds hot addicted to their product so they can spend all their time with each other and he can basically take advantage of them?"

Roman laughs. It almost sounds genuine. "God, no. I'm not that shallow." But the way Roman's eyes trail across his body tells Peter that isn't entirely true. "I mean that you're a good dancer in the technical sense. You're clearly stronger than the others, and I'm educated

enough to know that pole dancers need significant strength to begin with. You're more flexible and get tired less frequently, too."

Peter holds his breath. God, he must know. He braces himself to fight, or at the very least deny his identity until he exhausts Roman.

"You're simply better than the rest. Not to mention smarter, too, considering that only you and your friend Deadpool down there have noticed with any substance what I do. It's thrilling to consider how skilled you could be with some help." He gestures to the pill. Peter tucks it into his waistband.

"That pill's effects can last anywhere from eighteen hours to a day, depending on body weight and tolerance. If you decide to try it, of course."

Peter says nothing for a moment and Roman nods to signify the end of their conversation.

He takes the tray of untouched beers from the table, one hand on the velvet rope before Roman calls his name. Peter and Wade both turn toward him at the same time. "This is me, reaching out a hand. I don't know if you've simply *accidentally* discovered my organization, or are actively snooping into it. I don't care. But this is me, again, telling you, *to keep it to yourselves*," he says each word through his teeth. "Perhaps that pill will convince you."

It's a threat. Not an obvious one, but it gets the point across even better.

"Good to know," Peter nods as he turns toward the stairs again. "These beers are still going on your tab, by the way."

He can practically *hear* Roman's smile. "Of course."

Just his luck that the same mob boss would offer Spider-Man *and* Peter Parker a pill. What a disaster. Peter sighs, walking with Wade back to the bar. "You hear all that up there?"

Wade takes a seat on one of the barstools as Peter cleans up for the night. "Yeah. He wants you *bad*, Petey," Wade says grimly.

"Lucky me," he grumbles, and Wade huffs out a humorless chuckle.

Throwing a beer-soaked rag over the side of the sink to dry, Peter sighs in relief as he's finally done, the VIP section long-since empty. Only the closing shift is left, and Peter clocks out before making his way to the dressing room with Wade close behind him.

They're alone - all the other dancers have left as soon as their shifts were over, and Peter doesn't blame them one bit. Wade closes the door behind them and this time, Peter doesn't change behind the hanging rack. He's not horribly modest, for one, obviously, and he trusts Wade as both Spider-Man *and* Peter. Implicitly. It's almost strange, but it's hard for Peter to call a time where he hasn't known he could trust Wade somewhere deep in his mind.

Peter tucks his roll of cash and the pill into his backpack before peeling off the skin-tight costume and hanging it back haphazardly on the rack. Wade, for the most part, keeps his eyes on his face. A stupidly warm gesture that Peter has noticed twice tonight when circumstance

can allow him to do otherwise. Peter tries to keep his expression neutral at the wave of relief that hits him when he removes the tight leather cuffs from his spinnerettes, tossing those over the hanger, too.

“Are you scared?” Wade asks, sitting on one of the cushioned vanity seats.

Peter changes silently. “A little,” he admits, but not for the reasons Wade is probably thinking. He’s afraid of losing his job, he’s afraid of drugged up assholes harassing him at work and being unable to sufficiently protect himself around everyone else, because the *undrugged* assholes are bad enough already. He’s afraid of Roman finding out his identity, he’s afraid of Wade finding out his identity and feeling hurt, or worse, mad. Or worse, put off by the fact that *this* is Spider-Man’s job.

And then, because the silence is heavy and Peter knows Wade, Peter looks up curiously, pulling on his sweater and thin coat. “Are you?” he asks. “Scared?” He grabs a cheap make-up wipe from the vanity and begins the grueling work of trying to remove glitter and matte lipstick.

He can feel Wade watching him, thinking. “Not for me.” And it’s so honest that it makes Peter’s chest hurt, and it makes Peter wonder how much it’s making *Wade’s* chest hurt.

But there’s thankfully no time for talking about secret identities or feelings because Wade notices Peter struggling to scrape off his makeup using the cracked vanity mirror and takes the wipe from him, standing up and scrubbing it gently across Peter’s cheekbones and mouth. “But somebody had to be smart and stubborn and won’t keep his pretty head outta shit,” Wade hums, but he’s smiling, and so is Peter, begrudgingly, because now they know it isn’t as simple as that, and Wade isn’t really mad.

“I spend too much time with self-sacrificial smart-asses,” Wade says with nothing but contentedness.

“You’re telling me you worry about *Spider-Man*, too? He’s... Spider-Man,” Peter asks, brows furrowed. Wade swipes the red-stained wipe over his mouth and grins when Peter scrunches up his face.

“Uh, *duh*. It might be harder, but he can still die. And he’s so damn *good* that it’s almost like he makes a point of trying.” And it makes perfect sense for Wade to worry about Spider-Man, because Peter worries about Wade, too, and he can’t even *die*. But, still. Still.

“Well, I’m sorry for worrying you.”

“But not for getting involved in this mess?”

“No,” Peter says proudly, stubbornly, honestly.

Wade pretends to gag, folding up the wipe and tossing it before standing back up. “God, what’s it like to have morals?”

Peter shoulders him, grabbing his backpack and holding the backdoor open. “Don’t act like you wouldn’t know, Deadpool.”

And he thinks Wade smiles under the shadow of his hood as he steps into the cool night air.

He doesn’t ignore the way Wade casually scopes the perimeter of the club before he parts ways with Peter for the night; Peter has the same instincts. He only wishes he could tell Wade that.

Chapter End Notes

WOOO! hope you folks liked that! don't forget to leave comments bc YA BOY THRIVES ON COMMENTS

stay tuned; the next chapter is gonna be... wild.

ig: petr.prkr

End Notes

If you want to check out my main Spideypool story, check out ["Dissonance!"](#)

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