

After my death

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Note: *Takes place right after Homecoming. It contains some speculation on my part of Peter's abilities, and the connection he shares with Nathan. Of course, it probably wouldn't be canon in the future, but I'm just itching to write this. Enjoy, and please tell me if it's okay since it's my first Heroes fanfic. Ta! PS: I write in British English, hence the 'u' in odd places. Ahem. :P*

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For a long time, Peter Petrelli couldn't say anything. All he could do was sit uncomfortably at the back of the police car and stare numbly at the back of the two police officers' heads. He could still feel the blood dripping from his blood-soaked hair and smell the coppery stench of his already-drying blood. The smell was so strong and nauseating that he wondered how the two men could tolerate it.

The cuffs clinked metallically as he tried to shift to a more comfortable position. The cop sitting in the passenger seat looked at him warily and then slowly turned his bored gaze back to the road.

I died.

The reality of it all hit him.

I died. My skull was broken, I'm sure of it.

Hell, I could feel parts of it knitting itself back together.

He shuddered as he remembered the terror he felt when he realised that there was nothing to stop his fall. He remembered his last memory before he hit the ground with a bone-shattering crunch – it was of Nathan, and he was at one of his many political dinners where he's trying to work up some juice to get people to throw money his way. Only Peter had never been to that party before. And then Nathan turned to look at him, as if he was there, and he wore a look of horror.

And he remembered saying to dream-Nathan: “I'm sorry.”

Then everything went black and there was an explosion of pain.

I died.

“Man, this is taking forever,” the cop driving the car muttered. He sniffed. Peter supposed the smell was finally getting to him.

“And on a night like this, too.” The other cop – he'll call him Cop 2 for now – gave him another wary look.

“Why the hell did you do it?” asked Cop 2, his voice not-so-friendly.

“Jerry-,” warned cop 1.

“Sliced open her head open and all that. For God's sakes, she's just a kid!” Jerry barked.

That woke Peter up.

“What? Someone was killed?” he asked in horror. He felt his insides turn cold. He didn't save her? Didn't save the right cheerleader? What if he couldn't stop Isaac's future? What if everything was for nothing?

“You're a piece of work, do you know that?” Jerry sneered.

That got him irritated. Here he was, arrested and suspected of killing a cheerleader after he saved another at the expense of his life. Instead of using their brains to think that perhaps he might've been injured, they suspected immediately that he was the culprit. Did his face scream villain or something?

“I didn't kill her. Would I be sitting there, in the pool of *my* blood, if I did?” he snapped.

“Do you think I'm an idiot? Nobody can survive that much blood loss!” Jerry snapped back.

“Shit, Jerry! You wanna screw up the investigation or somethin'?” the other cop interrupted.

Jerry merely scoffed and returned his hard gaze to the road.

“I didn't kill her,” Peter said. But he knew that they weren't listening.

“Tell that to the lawyer, kid,” said Cop 1.

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Cop 1, or Bob, as Jerry called him as they hauled him out of the car, steered him to a room where Peter realised they will take his picture. A lonely camera stood in front of a large, two-way mirror and Peter stared at it, wondering how his mugshot would look like – especially with the back of his head all bloody. He allowed himself a quick grin at that. He just died and came back to life and all he could think about was whether he'd look good in his first police photo. Of course, the people at the back of the mirror would probably interpret his grin as the evil smile of a ruthless killer.

Peter sighed in resignation as Bob steered him to the middle of the room and Jerry disappeared somewhere to get what he needed to process him.

Vaguely, he wondered how the fallout would be when Nathan finds out. He could see the headlines already: “*Petrelli brother involved in gruesome murder*”. Yup, that will effectively end Nathan's campaign. And Nathan will probably never forgive him for that. Just swell. And surprisingly, Peter didn't feel happy about the prospect of Nathan screwing up his campaign. Sure, Nathan was a class-A jerk, but Peter, being the schmuck that he was, still wanted Nathan to succeed despite everything that he had done to him.

He'd even prefer it if the headlines said this instead: “*Petrelli brother survives second suicide attempt*”.

He grinned. At least the papers would be reporting something true this time.

The mission *was* a suicidal one. And he wondered why he went ahead with it despite Isaac's painting and Ando's warning. Maybe Nathan was right: he is an idiot.

He was jerked out of his musings when the cop uncuffed him. He could hear Bob make a sound of disgust as he studied the back of his coat. It was soaked in blood.

“Take it off – the coat,” Bob muttered.

He sighed again, and took it off. He watched enough *CSI* shows to know that they want to process it. Hopefully he had one of the competent ones who will discover that most of the blood was his. Of course then there will be the question of how he survived the blood loss and where the blood came from, seeing that he now didn't have a scratch on him.

Bob took it from him with gloved hands and placed it in a clear bag. He scowled as he got some blood on his gloves. Peter thought vaguely that it must take a long time for big amounts of blood to dry.

“Take off your shirt,” Bob demanded.

“You want me naked or something?” Peter said with a grin; he actually felt amused by that stupid remark.

“Shut up and just do it,” Bob said irritably.

Peter rolled his eyes and took off the bloody shirt (if he knew he was going to die, you'd think that he'd choose something cheaper to wear) and turned to give it to Bob. He shivered as the cold air of the room hit his bare skin. But instead of taking the bloody shirt from him, Bob was staring at him with his jaw open.

“Shit!” Bob suddenly exclaimed and took a step back.

“What?” he exclaimed, just as loudly. He took a step forward, and Bob backed away some more staring at his chest.

“What the hell is taking so long, Bob?” Jerry said harshly as he came into the room, holding a bunch of papers.

And like Bob, he froze, staring at Peter. “Shit ...” he whispered and released his hold on the papers. His face went totally pale, and Peter was sure that he was going to tip over in a dead faint. The papers did a slow waltz before it landed in a scattered heap on the floor.

“Will someone tell me what the hell is going on?” Peter yelled. He was scared enough this time.

Then he felt it.

Drip. Drip. Drip.

Something warm and sticky was dripping down the side of his neck.

He frowned and carefully felt the side of his neck. He winced when he touched something sharp and bony. When he withdrew it, he saw blood on his fingers. He looked at the cops in shock, as if to tell them: *Holy shit, did you see that??*

Obviously they did, as they were still staring at him. Staring at his chest, that is.

Slowly, he turned his gaze to his chest and saw bony protrusions on the left side of his chest.

Bloody, broken ribs were sticking out of his skin.

He dropped his bloody shirt.

“Holy shit,” he muttered.

Boy, was he a mess.

He stared at the jutting bone fragments in fascination, unsure what to do. Then instinct kicked in – the same instinct that drove him to rearrange his twisted torso and straighten his shattered legs – and he reached up to gingerly touch the bones protruding from the side of his neck.

He tilted his head to one side and shoved the bone back inside the skin. He winced, expecting to feel excruciating pain. But he merely felt a twinge – as if someone just tapped him.

The bone – probably a piece of his spine - popped back in where it belonged with a satisfying crunching sound that echoed in the quiet room. And he could feel a strange ripple as the skin covered over the bone and felt another tingle as he felt the bone mend inside. He closed his eyes in relief and smiled to himself.

He opened his eyes to see Bob and Jerry still staring at him in utter shock. Their mouths were still hanging open. Bob suddenly sat down on the chair beside the camera, his face as pale as Jerry's now.

Gee, a little help guys? Call the medic or something, Peter thought, half amused and half hysterical.

He ignored them, and carefully shoved his broken ribs back into his chest one by one.

Crack!

He winced in reflex. Oops, hit something a little too hard.

Peter smiled in satisfaction as new skin grew over the jagged wounds on his chest. But that smile disappeared when he realised that the cops were still staring at him like he was an exhibit in a zoo. Okay, more like a monster in a zoo.

He met their shocked expressions with a calm one. Perhaps he should've done all of this in private, but he knew that this strange ability – which he was sure he derived from another person with special abilities - would fade, and he'd rather face their horror than the pain of a broken vertebra and shattered ribs. Just exactly who this special person was he didn't dwell on. Right now, he was as shocked as the poor cops themselves, and it was all he could do not to break down and gibber away like a hysterical mad man.

Peter let them stare a little longer, then said as calmly as he could: “I'm ready. Shall we begin?”

■ *To be continued in part 2 (final part).*