Tony's Little Black Book (Night in Front of the TV)

by hellbells

Summary
Tony DiNozzo's Black Book is ever full. These are just a few names of who might be in there.

Notes

This is the second collection of Phase Two of Tony's Little Black Verse. Each Volume will close out with 50 entries - any pairing requests should be added to the content page as it will make them easier to track.

All pairings here will be a TV theme that doesn't fit into the Law and Spyzone. Typical TV shows but no means comprehensive: - Stargate SG1, SGA, True Blood, Teen Wolf, Nashville, Chicago Fire, House, Chicago Med, Person of Interest, etc
Other Complete Volumes of Tony’s Little Black Book can be found at.

1. **Original Black Book**
2. **Tony’s Little Black Book (Law and Spyzone)**

**Entries**

1. **Jack O’Neill 2** (Stargate SG1) - Sequel - **Options Ahead**
2. **Evan Lorne** (Stargate Atlantis)
3. **Rick Grimes** - (The Walking Dead)
4. **Greg House 2** (House M.D) - Festive Sequel - **Time for a Wedding**
5. **John Sheppard 2** (Stargate Atlantis)
6. **Jacob 'Jake' Stone** (The Librarian)
7. **Sirius Black** (Harry Potter) - Extended Version: **Snapshots from a Magical Life**
8. **FP Jones II** (Riverdale) - Expanded Story: **Riverdale so Long**
9. **Dean Winchester 2** - (Supernatural) Sequel - **Special one in his life**
10. **Jake Green** - (Jericho)
11. **Mark Sloan** - Grey's Anatomy
12. **Ronon Dex 2** - Stargate Atlantis - Sequel - **GQ and Dreadlocks**
13. **Ryan Hardy** - (The Following) - Follow up to **First Love Never Lasts**
14. **Robert Chase** - (House M.D)
15. **Rupert Giles** (Buffy the Vampire Slayer) - Festive Sequel - **Double Dates Interrupted**
16. **John Reese** (Persons of Interest)
17. **Tom Chandler** (The Last Ship) - Extended Story (WIP) - **To Battle Seas and Viruses**
18. **Sam Seaborn** (The West Wing) - Extended Story - **Fight all Corners**
19. **Jackson Oz** (Zoo)
20. **Mark Sloane 2** (Grey’s Anatomy)
21. **Dr Hank Lawson** (Royal Pains)
22. **Danny Ocean** (Ocean's Trilogy)
23. **Sean Renard** (Grimm)
24. **Sam Winchester** (Supernatural)
25. **Luke Hobbs** (Fast Five)
26. **Jack Ryan** (Jack Ryan TV)
27. **Captain Cold/Len Snart** (Legends of Tomorrow)
28. **Jack Carter 2** (A Town Called Eureka) - Sequel for **Tony goes to Eureka**
29. **Jonas Taylor** (The Meg 2018)
30. **Nathan Stark 2** (A Town Called Eureka) - Sequel for **The Soon-To-Be-Hotter Spouse**
31. **Remus Lupin** (Harry Potter) - Expanded Version (WIP) - **Dog Days are (Just Beginning)**
32. **Josh Lyman** (West Wing)
33. **Castiel** (Supernatural) - Expanded Story: **Divine Assistance**
34. **Owen Hunt** (Grey's Anatomy)
35. **Eric Northman 2** (True Blood)
36. **Adult Stiles Stilinski** (Teen Wolf)
37. **Sheriff Noah Stilinski 2** (Teen Wolf) - Expanded Story - **A Fae Awakening**
38. **Dr Derek Sheppard** (Grey's Anatomy)
39. **Chris Argent** (Teen Wolf)
40. **Sheriff Noah Stilinski 3** (Teen Wolf) - Sequel for - **Making Magic**
41. **Steven Caldwell 2** (Stargate Atlantis) - Prequel for **Baby ... I Really Can't Say**
42. **Castiel 2** (Supernatural) - Sequel for Short- **Divine Assistance**
43. Remus Lupin 2 (Harry Potter) - Sequel for Attack Dog?
44. Nick Burkhardt (Grimm)
45. Methos 2 (Highlander TV) - Sequel for expanded story: Death's One True Companion
46. Luke Hobbs 2 (Fast and Furious Franchise) - Sequel for - No One Expects Tony
47. Daniel Jackson 2 (Stargate SG1) - Sequel for expanded story: Too Hot for Words
48. Will McAvoy (The Newsroom)
49. Aaron Shore (Designated Survivor)
50. Patrick Jane (Mentalist)

Other collections in the verse

Phase 2

- Tony's Little Black Book: Shades of Grey
- Tony's Little Black Book: Big Heroes
- Tony's Little Black Book: Holiday Collection 2017

The rest of phase 3

- Tony's Little Black Book: Turn of the Women
- Tony's Little Black Book: The Threesomes
- Tony's Little Black Book: The Fusion Zone
- Tony's Little Black Book: Author's Favs
“Major-General” was certainly not how he expected his life to go. Hell, the fact that he was alive long enough to reach the age was a surprise for one. Oh, and the several black marks were the other surprise. Yet, here he was, Major General Jack O’Neill, newest Joint Chief.

He’d accepted the move to the Pentagon because a) he didn’t trust anyone else to run the Stargate program and b) to get as much distance between him and Sam. Things had not gone the way she wanted and she couldn’t handle what he’d told her after DADT’s repeal.

He was not the type to have a mid-life crisis, he’d saved the planet one too many times to freak out.

What he wasn’t too old to do was try and drown his sorrows in a whiskey that was almost as old as he was.

The bar was a classy one and only let the law and military types into its establishment. A new man walked in, wearing a tux with tie loose around his neck and a gold badge flipped over his waistband. Jack found himself enthralled by the glimpse of smooth tanned skin at the v of the open shirt, wanting to see just how far that tan went down the guy’s chest. He seemed weary for a guy in a tux this early in the evening though. Jack found his maudlin thoughts passing to curious ones involving mischievous green eyes. “Aren’t you a little over-dressed for a Fed?”

Jack needed to know if this was a baby political shark and someone he should avoid. His new bar buddy smirked at him.

“I just ducked out of an award evening, hence the penguin suit.”

Jack shrugged because that was as good a reason as any. “Don’t blame ya’. Jack.”

Tony took the proffered hand, shaking it and letting his hand linger for a fraction longer than a simple friendly greeting. “Tony.”

Jack looked back at the barkeep and put two fingers up, he slid the second glass over. “My gift for having to put up with the small sharks this evening.”

The Agent cocked his head to the side as if he was contemplating a great mystery. “So where do you fall on the small shark spectrum.”

“There is nothing small about me.” Jack responded with a wicked grin as he savoured the very fine whiskey.

Tony shivered at that tone. “I would hope not.”

“Besides, forget the sharks, it’s the snakes you need to watch out for.” O’Neill said and Tony didn’t disagree.

This evening was definitely ending better than it started. Still, Tony wasn’t in a hurry to speed this up, sometimes slower seductions were better. And Jack here was hitting every one of his likes all at once. He leaned in closer. “So what has you drowning your sorrows?”
“I let myself get promoted to a desk.”

Tony chuckled. “Well, I’m sorry to hear that ... So am I in the presence of a General or an Admiral, please say General.”

O’Neill smirked. “Major-General Jack O’Neill if we’re getting formal about it.”

Huh, so Tony was talking to the newest Joint-Chief. He was just relieved he wasn’t attached to the marines or navy as it might have made his day job more difficult. “Oh thank god. NCIS Very Special Agent Anthony DiNozzo. Oh, and I hope we don’t get formal as that would be a crying shame.“

“Why is that?”

Tony rose to the challenge, leaning close enough that you couldn't mistake his signal. “Well, you’re hot and single and I have a burning desire to help you get over your promotion.”

Jack was more than okay with that plan. He wasn’t stupid enough to reject the hot younger agent who liked him. “My hotel work for you?”

Tony threw back his whiskey. “Yes, Sir.”

“No rank in bed, I have no need to massage my ego.”

Tony hoped so - he was planning to massage something else entirely.

~*~

It turns out that Jack was as good as promised and used every bit of his soldier's stamina to take Tony apart piece by piece. Tony fell into an exhausted, satiated sleep not long after two in the morning. Jack followed him into a slumber next to him, relaxing way more than he should next to his new lover. Looking at the peaceful man in his arms, Jack found himself hoping that this was not a one-time event. If it was, he could say that Tony had done exactly what he promised and helped him get over his promotion.

Sill, fate was not friends with Jack O'Neill and meant they wouldn’t get to have these conversations at a normal rate. The reason why? Well, just after three in the morning his hotel door was kicked in. With the first wood splintering, both men were up and rolling to the side of the bed. Interestingly, Tony went for a knife as Jack went for his gun.

Fucking Ba’al was there - the cockblock. O’Neill really hated this snake, he was going to make it his life's mission to kill every last freaking copy of the guy. The cockblock even managed to have a villain cliche monologue. “I have finally found you, O’Neill, now you’ve stopped hiding in that mountain of yours .”

Two things happened at once, Ba’al opened a jar and raised his hand with a goa’uld hand device aiming to incapacitate O’Neill. O’Neill shot the clone first right through the hand and then another straight between his eyes. He was turning, gun still raised to take care of the snake. He really hoped that Tony wasn’t about to get snaked as he really liked him.

The view he was treated to was spectacular.

Tony was crouched over the carcass of a dead snake. His knife was skewering the damn thing in half. Once he was sure it was dead, Tony stood up wiping the gore from his hands and was looking
for something to clean his knife.

“Got a cloth to clean my knife?” Was the first thing Tony asked Jack.

“I’m falling in love.” Jack said and there wasn’t a hint of sarcasm. He was telling the truth, Tony was funny, great in the sack and killed snakes without worrying about silly things like clothes.

“Me skewering a freaky snake is all it takes and what the fuck is that thing? And the walking now dead cliche over there?” Tony asked, his inquisitive mind taking over now the threat was over.

Yeah, there was something not right there. Ba’al was not usually careless and wasn’t the type to let himself get shot. Jack knew why he hated Washington - it wasn’t the small sharks who thought they were vicious - It was the freaking Goa’uld you still had to watch out for.

“So you better put some clothes on before my people get here.” O’Neill said with reluctance because he was so enjoying the view right now. As he said it he was pressing his alarm to signal all clear but send a clean-up crew. It said something about his job that he had four types of alarms for different levels of FUBAR situations.

Tony smirked. “And you too, buddy, or is this a possessive thing? You don’t like people seeing my ass?”

Jack rolled his eyes but he shouldn’t start throwing out orders without pants on. “Nah, the caveman act is not as hot as you might think.”

Jack looked at the dead Ba’al and sighed because, he guessed, his theoretical coming out was about to be announced to the military anyhow. Oh well, he’d saved the planet so people could butt out of his bedroom. Jack asked Tony. “Is this going to cause problems for you at work?”

Tony shrugged because his mask at work was so good he doubted they would even believe the truthful story. “They will not believe that I spent the night with you. They will think I am lying about a bimbo I should be dating. What about you?”

Jack smirked. “I’ve saved the world, I’m entitled to sleep with whoever I like. If they don’t like it, fuck em, I will go back to my cabin in Montana.”

Tony had his suit pants on and had his white shirt on - if not buttoned. “Is it wrong that all I can think about is I deserve hot mountain rugged sex.”

“I can work with that,” Jack replied. He saw a light appear at the end of the hallway. “Well, here comes the cavalry ... How the fuck did Ba’al find me?”

Daniel stepped through the door and quickly categorised the scene. The younger male had clearly been enjoying his evening with Jack before Ba’al interrupted them. Good for Jack. “Hello, Jack so Ba’al annoyed you. Did you stab the symbiote?”

Jack shook his head. “Nope, that would be Tony here and before you say anything else. Tony needs to sign his NDA.”

Tony rolled his eyes and he knew what NDA stood for after a few of his operations crossed with the military. “And just how many non-disclosure agreements will I be signing?”

Jack smirked. “Enough to blow your mind.” Jack promised because who didn’t want to know that aliens were real.
Tony was distracted as he buttoned up the rest of his shirt, especially as a number of soldiers seemed to be coming into their expansive hotel room. “You already did that.”

Jack snickered. “I’m good but if I changed your worldview then your previous partners were doing it all wrong.”

Daniel interjected and pressed his radio. “Major Davies, we need a non-disclosure agreement at O’Neill’s hotel room.”

~*~

Tony knew that the bigger the NDA the bigger the rabbit hole he was about to descend down. The man beamed directly into O’Neill’s room. “Very Star Trek.” Tony said calmly looking at Jack. “Is this just an advanced tech thing or full on Alien thing?”

Even as he asked the question he was starting to sign every relevant page. He knew what the document amounted to - spill a secret and the government would make you disappear.

Davies took the completed forms and disappeared back to wherever he was stationed.

Daniel could honestly say he was lost for words. He’d briefed people on the stargate when they were exposed to the truth. He’d watched people lose their minds and freak out over the truth. Jack’s boyfriend just lounged back and asked was it a tech thing or alien thing? Well, it answered the question of whether they were suited or not.

Jack was laughing and looking way more relaxed than he had the last time Daniel had seen him. “You are something else.” He pointed at the dead symbiote. “Crazy snakes that I warned you about. They take over people and give them megalomaniac tendencies and a belief that they are one of the Egyptian gods. Major douchenozzles.”

Tony snorted. “So weird goatee is an enemy of yours?”

Jack nodded. “Is this putting you off a second date?”

Tony shook his head. “Nope, you will be more than okay with my normal run of the mill enemies. I have the worst luck, including and up to, serial-killers handcuffing me to them, catching an antibiotic-resistant pneumonic plague and a crazy-ass Mossad ninja who seems to want my ass.”

Jack’s response was reflexive. “Your ass is mine and I don’t share.”

Tony smirked stepping closer. “And here was you telling me that the caveman routine wasn’t hot.”

Daniel was shaking his head. “Can I go? Because this is going back to flirting and I do not need to see my best friend’s ass.”

Tony shook his head and deliberately didn’t look at Jack because there was a pull there and he didn't want the distraction. Jack looked at the hotel room which was a mess. “No Daniel, you can handle clean up here whilst I see Tony safe back to his place.”

Daniel quirked an eyebrow. “He stabbed a goa’uld with a knife and you’re worried for his safety?”

Jack sighed. “Danny, I am just trying to be a gentleman and don’t make me look bad.” He lowered his voice. “I really like this guy.”
Tony was snickering. “Come on, Romeo. I am guessing we will see my apartment, after all.”

~*~

Jack was exhausted and he decided to use his powers for a little bit of good. “You’re NCIS, right?”

Tony nodded. “That’s right.”

Jack was on the phone to Phillip Davenport. The great thing about the stars on his shoulder was he didn’t have to pay attention to niceties like time considerations. “Hey Phillip, morning.”

Well, it was, Jack was trying to be polite. “One of your agents won’t be at the office tomorrow until midday. I hope you can smooth things with your director. He had a trying morning when one of my bad guys tried to kill him, don’t worry he killed it.”

Jack rolled his eyes. “It’s, DiNozzo, Phillip, and I promise to give him back, maybe.”

Tony is torn between amusement and fascination. “You are not going to give me back?”

Jack looked at his apartment and he could see masks and shields were not only part of his armour. This was a refined apartment, not the one that belonged to skirt-chasing wannabe frat boy. “Do you want me to?”

Tony looked at Jack. “Not really no, which is crazy as we just met.”

Jack chuckled. “You’ll learn with the stargate that we roll with everything and seize each day.”

Tony thought about it and agreed. “You got me, let’s try and sleep.”

“Try and sleep?” O’Neill smirked and did his best Yoda impression. “There is no try, only do.”

Tony had a wicked smirk as he shed his clothes. “True, but there will be me and you in a bed, naked. I may get distracted.”

Jack could take that invitation. He was not trained to be a stupid man.

Things only got better and better the more they got to know each other. They lived to screw with people's perceptions and Tony caused quite a stir as Jack’s date to the Presidential Dinner. Jack, in turn, caused quite a stir when he came by the Naval Yard to pick him up for a dinner date - All because because people refused to listen to reason regarding Ziva's placement on the MCRT.

It was okay though thanks to his awesome lover.
General Sheppard should not be enjoying his days quite as much as he was. McKay had caused a riot in the lab and then squashed it - causing three scientists to take up an hour of his time telling him how horrible his husband was and he should keep a better check on him.

Sheppard had stopped just listening at that point and spoke up. “I don’t have any intention of changing my husband in any shape way or form. Now, I may be a high-combat asset who would happily walk into a war zone. Hell, I live in one. What I’m not is stupid ... I have no intention of courting an argument with my husband because you have no character or spine. Go and consider if Atlantis is really where you want to be and let me know.”

Lorne walked in as they scurried away. “Are you breaking the scientists again?”

Sheppard pouted and it was not his fault they couldn’t handle him correcting their math. It was sloppy not to change the sign in the calculus equation. It could have caused the bomb to fail and if he’d missed his chance to blow up that Wraith hive he would have been most aggrieved. “If they don’t want to be shown up by a flyboy mad-haired pilot then they shouldn’t do sloppy math.”

Lorne shrugged. “If you like Sir, and what is our meeting about today?”

Sheppard had made sure his assistant scheduled a thirty-minute meeting with his military commander so that he could have a refuge of peace and quiet. It had been one of his demands before he’d accepted taking over as leader of Atlantis from Woolsey after the old man wanted to retire.

“You Lorne, it is about you.”

Now that startled his second. “What? Why?”

Sheppard rolled his eyes. “If I have to hear anyone else moon over the fact that my Military Commander is mooning over the Agent Afloat one more time ... I might actually shoot someone … or maybe even more than one person.”

Lorne chuckled hearing just how vexed the General was. He found himself asking. “Should I apologise?”

“To whom? Me or DiNozzo?” Sheppard countered, hoping Lorne saw sense. He was saying this because he wanted his friend to be happy and he hadn’t been since David chose to stay on Earth.

Lorne sighed. “I am not that bad.”

“Show me the message pad.” John ordered, knowing what he would see.

Lorne wanted to swear but this was his CO and he respected the man too much. “Happy?”

The pad spoke volumes, Lorne was a stunning artist and if he hadn’t chosen the air-force and duty he could have probably made a career as an artist. It showed DiNozzo laughing and somehow managed to capture the guy’s personality. No one who was living would say DiNozzo was ugly but Lorne managed to elevate him somehow.

“Go and ask the man on a date, Lorne. I can’t stand watching a grown colonel pine.”
Lorne was a smart man, and he’d lived in the Pegasus Galaxy too long to let something procrastinate. You never know what might be discovered the next day, or kill you the day after. He asked Atlantis where Tony was and she tugged him gently in the direction of the mess hall.

There was one secret that Lorne, Tony, and Sheppard already shared - Atlantis was a little more sentient than they reported. She adored all three of them but loved Tony’s open curiosity that the more military men had been trained out of over the course of their military service.

~*~

Tony was unaware of all this. He’d settled into Atlantis quickly, mainly because the city herself adored him. His bloodwork was one of the reasons he’d been pulled into the program instead of being sent out to the Seahawk - General O’Neill had sent him to another galaxy entirely and he loved every minute of it.

He could even handle the wannabe Marilyn Manson aliens that wanted to chow on him. He never expected to end up the deputy leader around this crazy beautiful city with insane marines and nutty scientists but let’s just say there wasn’t a damn thing that Gibbs could do where he would happily go back to being the SFA of the MCRT.

General Sheppard adored him as he handled administrative issues with ease. He could talk the talk and shoot the breeze with the soldiers but had enough smarts about him to keep up with the scientists.

Tony’s favourite person and new best friend was Dr. Rodney McKay. He was the biggest bastard in this galaxy and Tony adored it. Their opening meeting had cemented their friendship. McKay had taken one look and said,

“You, Italian Gigolo, better not be after my husband.”

Tony had smirked. “Not at all, I like to be the pretty one in my relationships, Dr. McKay. Plus, I would be stupid to try and steal the husband of a man who builds nukes for fun. I also prefer Tony to Italian Gigolo but whatever is easier for you to remember.”

Rodney looked him over one more time and declared. “We can be friends.”

That had been that, and Lorne and the others noticed one other amazing talent Tony had apart from Atlantis giving him shiny gifts. He could wrangle scientists without them even noticing it. So of course when Lorne wanted to have a serious conversation Tony could be found chatting to McKay. This wasn’t going to be painful at all if McKay was in a cranky mood - he hoped like crazy that he’d had his morning caffeine.

Lorne sucked in a breath. “Can I join you?”

McKay grinned. “Yes, you may as you are not stupid. So, how was your meeting?”

Lorne was only too happy to take such an opening. “Well, the General spent the entire meeting bitching at me apparently on your behalf.”

Tony frowned because he didn’t know anything about an issue. “Why would General Sheppard be hounding Lorne, McKay?”
McKay was in his happy place - caffeinated up to his eyeballs. “I simply told John that I hated watching you two pine and since that ridiculous law has disappeared, you should just date and stop making my female scientists almost combust with their fantasies.”

Both men flushed but Tony wasn’t the type to take such a comment without responding. If he was, then he wouldn’t be friends with Rodney. “Hey, it is not my fault that we’re hot. You should give them more breaks so they can fulfill their own love lives.”

McKay snorted. “Yeah, that doesn’t work so well. Too many brains and no action. Plus, what happened to wanting to be the pretty one in the relationship?”

Tony rolled his eyes. “You are not subtle.”

McKay smirked. “I never pretended I was. Now, instead of bitching you two out for moving glacially slow, I have mysteries of the universe to unlock.”

Evan and Tony were left alone and the atmosphere should have been tense and awkward. Tony though just continued to sip his coffee. “Oh, you can meet me at my quarters at seven.”

Lorne knew better than to ignore orders. “Yes, Sir.”

Tony just raised an eyebrow as he got up to leave. “So that may just be a discovered kink of mine.” And sauntered away leaving Evan staring red-faced into his coffee cup.

Lorne disappeared before he could hear the gossip grow. What amused him more was the happy buzz he could feel in his head. It seemed Atlantis wanted him or was it Tony to be happy. It didn’t matter as he hoped they would be happy together.

He figured who better to ask about a perfect date spot than the city. What he got in return was a series of images and suggestion. It was a pretty spectacular view.

Date night planned and now he had to inform the new soldiers that they would need a weekly session with Ronon to make sure they didn’t end up as Wraithbait.

~*~

Tony was feeling nervous and excited all at once which was not his norm. John looked over his desk. “What is it?”

“Nothing, just thinking about tonight.” Tony answered distractedly.

“Lorne Colonel’d up and asked you.” Sheppard said in a way that suggested he knew the answer to his question.

“Yeah he did, and I have you and McKay to thank for that.”

Sheppard waved him off. “Nah, just don’t want to hear Rodney bitch about it anymore.”

Tony said nothing because he knew there was more to it than that. He was grateful and as such, he wouldn’t bust John’s working mask. “If you say so.”

John knew all the signs of excited energy and took pity on his expedition deputy. “Teyla, you in
the mood to give Tony a Bantos lesson?”

Teyla’s voice came over the comm system. “I can be there in ten minutes.”

“You heard the woman. I wouldn’t be late.” John said he had all too often been on the end of Teyla’s bantos rods.

“Right.” Tony said and did move quickly to the training rooms. He picked up his training bag and headed for the changing rooms.

Tony had been a follower of Eskrima ever since joining the police force - when it was drilled into him that a gun should not be his only line of defence. Working and training with Gibbs simply continued that. He liked the discipline and the fact it encouraged him to use whatever came to hand. Plus, it followed through if he was using a knife.

Tony saw Teyla waiting for him and bowed formally. “Thank you.”

“You don’t need to thank me, Tony.” She said with her easy smile. Tony was guessing that someone had filled her in on why he was nervous which was ridiculous. He was a grown-ass man in the Pegasus Galaxy, he was the Deputy Expedition leader of the Stargate base and loved every day more than the last. It may have taken going to another galaxy but he finally had a home that he would fight to keep. So why was he nervous?

Oh yeah, he was going on a date. If only the people back at NCIS could see him now, they would be in for a shock. You see the difference is very simple, he cares about Lorne more than he knew.

If only the people back at NCIS could see him now, they would be in for a shock. You see the difference is very simple, he cares about Lorne more than he knew.

“You wish to talk, or spar?” Teyla asked him.

“I want to talk but we’ll spar instead.”

She laughed. “You sound like John when you say that.”

Tony chuckled. “It’s a man thing.”

That was the last spoken word as the pair moved through several practice drills that worked as a warm up for the pair. Others were always intrigued and a little bit jealous at how Tony wasn’t always ending up on his ass after only a minute. He still did, only for him, Teyla had to work for it and they both improved their skills as a result.

Ten minutes later, out of breath but feeling more settled. “I have a date.”

Teyla still looked as serene as she had at the start of their spar. “I assume it is with Colonel Lorne.”

“That’s right, he asked me at lunch.”

Teyla raised her sticks to signal the start of their next round and started to circle looking for an opening to exploit. “And you are worried?”

Tony shrugged but rose his sticks at the first parry. “Sure, I like him a lot. I want it to go well.”
Teyla whirled around to follow up her initial strike. “So it will surely if you both want it and will work for it.”

Tony chuckled even as he jumped over a swinging circular attack. “You make it sound so easy.”

Teyla smirked as she reversed her attack and caught his legs mid-jump. He fell to the floor in a heap. She was kind enough to offer him a hand up. “In my experience, men over complicate matters of the heart unnecessarily.”

Tony chuckled at the way she cut to the heart of the problem with such ease. “You may have a point. Okay, I get it. Can we just spar and practice?”

So they did and Tony left thirty minutes later, sweaty and in need of a shower. He was so focussed on his shower that he missed Lorne and Ronon coming into have their sparring practice.

“So you ready?”

Lorne was too busy watching Tony walk away and wishing he could help him get clean. “Huh?”

Ronon frowned not knowing Evan to be absent-minded. “You okay?”

Teyla smirked as she finished packing her own belongings. “He is distracted in the same way you are when Amelia trains.”

A dawning light goes off in Ronon’s eyes, he claps Lorne’s back. “Good, it’s about time you get a bedmate.”

Lorne took a deep breath. “Let’s not get ahead of ourselves.” Because yes, he did want that but at Tony’s speed. “Please can we spar?”

“Sure thing, buddy.”

~*~

Lorne was punctual and outside Tony’s quarters at seven o’clock. “Evening. You ready?”

Tony’s smile grew wider seeing Evan at his door. Evan looked great in the black jeans and black shirt with just a flash of his neck showing. Tony felt himself wanting to explore further. He realised any nerves he had were silly, he wanted this date, so with a winning, smile he stepped outside. “I am so ready... Where are we going?”

Evan had a wicked smile. “A surprise that Atlantis has helped me with.”

Tony grinned. “Well, Ally does like me.”

“I know, it is greatly amusing to myself and the General how much. It’s driving the scientists crazy.”

And their conversation continued to flow as they moved through the corridors. Tony chose to ignore the sighs from the scientists as they passed. Evan grinned at one who was staring just a little too closely at Tony and stepped a little closer.
Tony’s shy smile let him know it was okay and Lorne didn’t hide his relieved grin. He took them to a pier with what he felt was the most spectacular view of the city. “Not bad, Lorne. Not bad.”

Lorne snickered. “Should I not bother with the meal then, if you’re already impressed.”

Tony smirked. “Hey, I deserve to be wooed.”

“Yes you do, and I will leave you in no doubt.” Lorne said with such an intense look that it sent a shiver down Tony’s spine.

*The damndest thing was Lorne did exactly as he promised. It meant that any new arrivals on Atlantis were always unspeakably jealous of how in sync the leadership was and what great relationships they all had.*

*The latest argument revolved around who was the prettiest one out of Lorne and DiNozzo. The current voting was fifty-fifty much to John and Rodney’s delight.*
Tony DiNozzo had the worst luck in the world, or was it the best? In the years to come, he would never quite be able to figure that out. Rick Grimes felt much the same but he knew they both had two incredible strokes of luck.

Chapter Notes

Massive thanks to Edronhia who helped me to avoid a writing black-hole.

Tony DiNozzo had the worst luck in the world, or was it the best? In the years to come, he would never quite be able to figure that out. Rick Grimes felt much the same but he knew they both had two incredible strokes of luck.

- Rick was sent to Bethesda during his medical treatment
- Tony contracted an antibiotic-resistant form of the plague and was placed into a protective coma to help heal him.

It worked out well for Rick and Tony as despite all their troubles - they ended up facing it together.

Rick came to with a gasp and tried to sit up. Christ, what had happened to him and where the fuck was he?

He knew it was a hospital room but it wasn’t the usual Memorial where he usually went to when injured. This room, the machines beeping and he saw another male in the bed to the side of him. He was sleeping, his chest rising and falling in a way that suggested it was a normal sleep not that of a coma.

What was going on? Where were the nurses? The Doctors?

“HELLO!” Sadly, Rick managed less a shout and more a gasp. He didn’t think talking should hurt - his injury must have been worse than he suspected.

The man in the other bed woke with a relieved grin on his face, “Hey, starshine. Boy, we’ve missed out a lot while we had a long beauty sleep.”

Rick felt a little bit more relaxed at knowing he wasn’t completely alone. This situation was hinky in the extreme. “What? What happened?”

The other man looked pretty pale and seemed to struggle to find the words. “Well, according to
your charts you were shot and the lung went bad. Congratulations, you now have healthier lungs than you did before you got shot. We both have and I kid you not, we have Dr. Brad Pitt to thank for still breathing.”

Rick gratefully took the offered ice-chip. “And the bad news?”

“The world has gone to hell in a handbasket and the majority of the population are now zombies.” Rick’s face must have spoken volumes because the guy shrugged and carried on with his explanation.

“Yep, surprised me too when I woke up. We have some luck. We’re at a military hospital and I have reinforced the hospital ward but ... our rations are running out, as well as the electricity so I am so glad you’ve woken up from your beauty sleep now. Otherwise, we might have had an issue.”

Rick couldn’t process the news - it seemed to be out of a Hollywood script, there was no such thing as zombies... except where there was. He’d seen the news clippings and Tony let in a fraction of light and it was enough to see a horde that would occasionally pass through the ground s of the hospital.

Rick felt like he would have lost his mind if he’d woken up alone. Tony was a cute lifeline, and competent too. They made plans together, it was ironic that they were both law enforcement and they could no longer stay in the hospital that much was clear - otherwise the place that had healed them would become their doom.

“Where do we go?” Rick said, not knowing anything about the area.

Tony sighed because he didn’t think there was a right answer here. The only trouble was that failure now had the ultimate price - death by Zombie. He wouldn’t give in and he knew that much at least. “Doesn’t matter where... there are no safe zones so wherever we go at the very least we need supplies.”

Rick looked as hopeless. “I have to know what happened to Lori and Carl.”

Tony smiled because he wished he had a family to find. He didn’t but he was loyal and he would stay with Rick as it was as worthy a cause as any. “So we go to Atlanta.”

“Just like that?” Rick asked because he wasn’t naive.

Tony shook his head. “Well, we’re both stronger. We’ve got medication for both of us, thank god for readable medical notes. I need to make a stop at NCIS to check on what happened to my team. That’s a fifteen-minute drive ... my hope is we can stock up on weapons and fuel there and everything else we will need along the way.”

Rick could only smile with renewed hope. “We’ll face it together.”

~*~

The drive down to the Navy yard was in a word, horrific. The drive should have taken fifteen minutes but that was before the zombie apocalypse. There were too many cars in Washington littering the roads, so they were forced to walk. It was a wicked way to figure out that whilst they’d healed they were not at 100% fighting fitness.

Tony was smarter than this. “We need to walk, and make them think we’re one of them.”
“What do you suggest?” Rick asked intrigued by the idea.

They’d taken refuge in a building that used to sell insurance having been forced to abandon their jeep. Tony grimaced but was used to practicality winning out over sensibilities. In undercover, you did whatever you had to do to survive and now, he would do what was needed to survive the apocalypse. “The virus is transferred by ingesting the blood, like any blood disease.”

Rick nodded as they had read everything they could in the safe parts of the hospital, after all, knowledge was power. “Yeah, and our wounds have healed so we’re not at risk of infection through open wounds.”

Tony sighed. “So we take our jackets and dip them in zombie blood and walk right through them. They have no sight and their hearing is minimal so they must be identifying the living through their sense of smell.

Rick shrugged. “Let’s try it. We have little choice.”

And they managed to let a horde of zombies pass them by with this risky tactic. They were able to breathe but they didn’t want to draw any attention, they felt ridiculous mimicking their movements and sounds. But hey, whatever works and by some miracle - it worked.

NCIS had gone into emergency mode, Tony tested his code and he would never be so grateful for his high-security clearance as now as it still worked. The shutters released on the doorway and they braced themselves with an axe and a makeshift spear. The entrance was empty so no zombie guards and they closed it after they passed through, wanting the protection the shutters would afford them.

Rick whispered. “Which way?”

Tony took the same steps he’d taken thousands of times before. The hallways were eerily quiet and no one was around. Tony hated every second of it but they needed what NCIS could give them. Answers. Tony suspected the big towns would be a mess and if their shortish journey to NCIS proved anything it was the truth.

He hoped there would be a record of which plan the government enacted. He just hoped they enacted something or it would be simple chaos. Tony knew what he suspected but he hadn’t said it - because hope was a powerful tool.

The bullpen was still orange so some things never changed but it didn’t hide the zombie blood splattered on the walls. Tony had to love government paranoia - the world had gone to shit and what looked like a shootout in the bullpen but hey, there was a power.

His desk was clear and there were no bodies around his desk so that was a bonus. His password still worked, even better.

There was one video message cued for him to access the minute he logged on to the system. That didn’t have to be in NCIS but Tony froze seeing who the video was from - Gibbs.

~*~

Gibbs’ face came on the screen. “Tony, if you get this. Get out into the countryside, quickly forget cars, you will be better off with a horse. You avoid the cities, the government had no plan for this. The virus ran too quick and the cities fell one by one. I left the papers for you should you ever awaken. I hated leaving you there without anyone to watch your six but I made it as safe as I could.
You remember the rules I taught ya and don’t go anywhere without rule 9 times five. Minimum.”

There was a wry grin. “If not I will haunt ya ass and I will make sure Shannon and Kelly do too.”

Tony wiped a tear from his eye as he knew what this message was. Gibbs would not be the type to stay down and wait out a fight. He would have taken the fight to the enemy even if it was a ravenous zombie virus. Tony was one of the few to know about his first wife and daughter. “Rest in peace, boss. I hope you’re with your girls.”

Rick had stayed silent just hovering to his side, with a gun raised and primed for anything to attack them. He’d heard the message for what it was, a father saying goodbye in this crazy world. He didn’t know what to think, would Lori have been smart enough to stay away from Atlanta as it was the biggest closest city. Shane, his best friend, would have seen her safe. He hoped.

~*~

The message made them rethink their plans. “We need bags, guns and non-perishable food and then we make our way slower and by foot or horse.”

“This will take us weeks, are we prepared for that with supplies.” Rick asked, not worried but asking seriously.

Tony grinned. “Well, the kitchen here was well stocked. McGeek may have loved his computers but he had the latest map. We just need to snatch as many guns as we can and get to the horse yard.”

“I’m with you, Tony.” And that was the simple fact of it, Rick Grimes was with Tony DiNozzo until the end. Yes, he wanted to find Lori and Carl, but that wasn’t the man who’d stayed with him, who had a chance to leave him and waited. The man who was willing to go with him to Atlanta on the crazy chance that he might find his family.

Tony smiled. “So we’re off to find horses.”

“Not without scavenging the guns.” Rick reminded him.

Tony smirked. “I want knives too, they never run out of bullets, or make a sound.”

“Let’s get both.” Rick responded seeing a perfect compromise.

They were not stupid men though, they were relatively safe and they used the time to rest in MTAC, having swept the office for anyone who might be alive and secured the bullpen level. This would probably be their most secure place to sleep for quite a while.

~*~

They had to try two horse yards to strike lucky. In the second one, they struck gold, two beautiful mares who were not yet feral or infected. Boy, that had not been a fun discovery; that the disease could spread to animals.

Still, the men were alive, had transport with food, weapons and their drugs to last until they hit a small town. They wouldn’t risk the bigger towns, but they would try the closest small town where the population was under 2,000. Tony and he had circled and planned their route to try and take the least time, whilst avoiding the most densely populated areas.

They rode their horses long and hard but bunkered down when evening fell. They found a barn
with easy exits but easy to secure and lay down on the hay. The stayed close together, knowing that
if the temperature dropped they would have to use each other to stay warm. There was no
heterosexual freak out as they’d admitted the first night that their Kinsey scale was a little fluid.

Rick didn’t understand what it was about darkness but it made it easier to talk. “You know, I am
closer to you than I was my wife in the last six months. That last day she screamed at me, she
wished I dropped dead. Hah, showed her.”

Tony listened but said nothing, knowing Rick needed to talk. If this is what he needed to focus and
Tony just had to listen, he could do that. “That’s her loss, Rick Grimes. You’re a pretty great guy.”

“You’re just saying that because I am the only person still alive around here.” He said with a self-
deprecating voice.

Tony shook his head. “Don’t sell yourself short. I would have made a move on you if you weren’t
conflicted about your marriage.”

Rick bit his lip and spoke the words he knew to be true. “I hope Lori is alive, she is the mother of
my kid but it is Carl I need safe. He’s my son.”

Tony squeezed Rick’s hand, ignoring the feeling in his own heart. Now was not the time, he would
not take advantage of a vulnerable man. “We’ll get your answers.”

~*~

There had been a close call in a town by Charlottesville nearly three weeks later. They’d braved the
medium sized Target that could see them stock up on their medications and their food. It had been
going so well, it turned out that pharmacist was still trying to serve customers even after his death.
Rick was holding the zombie off as the gun had jammed. He couldn’t reach his knife. “TONY!”

Tony had been there and kicked the zombie off him and then dramatically skewered the zombie to
the wall. He’d been frantic with worry pulling Rick up. “Are you hurt? Bit?”

Rick shook his head, words were taking a little bit longer. “No, you saved me.”

Tony didn’t think, he kissed Rick. Hard. Pouring all his relief into the kiss.

He could blame adrenaline and the like but Rick poured all of his emotions into that kiss in return.
The gratitude, the relief and the affection for Tony into that one kiss. Day in day out, they worked
together to stay alive and keep moving forward.

~*~

Their days didn’t change much but the touches, whilst not as sexual, didn’t stop. Tony had made a
vow to move as fast or slow as Rick wanted.

Their excitement grew when they heard a group, who were definitely alive but Christ, they were
loud. Tony and Rick shared a look that spoke volumes, it was like they wanted to make themselves
zombie bait. They were arguing for Christ’s sake, loudly.

“Look, I just want to grab supplies, and it was not my idea to head into the city.”

Tony whispered. “We can stop them but then we have to defend them and apart from silent and
broody, the others are walking, talking disasters.”
Rick heard what he was saying but he got a feeling that he knew Tony fairly well since he’d awoken from his coma. “Can you live with yourself if you leave them to be eaten?”

Tony sighed because Rick played hardball. “No, I can’t. If they get you killed, I am going to be pissed.”

They chose to stop the cars by using their horses to get them to stop. A young teen popped his head out of his red car. “Hey, we need to get to the city. Don’t be dicks.”

Tony snorted. “A dick would let you go into the city that was overrun with zombies. You are not thinking clearly.”

“What choice do we have?” The grouchy big bear of a man asked. “We have mouths to feed.”

Tony rolled his eyes. “You look at a map, and you plan. You hit the small towns where the populations are less than a thousand.”

“Oh yeah?” A blonde woman said. “What makes you such an expert?”

Tony shrugged because there were no experts when it came to the apocalypse. They were those who adapted or those who died and he didn’t think there were too many in between scenarios - not from what they had seen. “Well, we awoke from medical comas in Bethesda and we’re still alive.”

“DC! How did you get so far?”

Tony patted his horse. “Bella here. I liberated her and she has seen me good and you know that strategy you sneered at? ... Well, that is what Rick and I have done and it has kept us alive.”

The teen boy, who they found out was called Glen was nonplussed. “Why would you come this way and not head for the wilderness of Canada.”

Rick was the one to speak. “My estranged wife, Lori, and our son, Carl, should be around here.”

The group all looked at each other. Tony was a trained investigator and so was Rick. Tony was the one to bark. “What? Speak up.”

Dale was the bravest of the group. “Well, there is a woman Lori Walsh, and her son with us. They’re with her husband though.”

Rick nearly fell off his horse. He wanted to snort because here he had been denying himself everything he wanted and Lori was apparently married to his best friend. Jesus Christ. He started laughing but it was dark and cynical.

“What is with crazy cakes?” The bear asked.

“Shut up, Merle.” The woman hissed, clearly uncomfortable around him.

Tony didn’t care about any of them, his only concern was Rick. “Hey, you said it yourself, you were looking for Carl. Fuck Shane and Lori, they can do what they want. We protect Carl that is the short and the end of it.”

Rick nodded, “My best friend though?”

Well, there was no accounting for taste but Tony didn’t say it. He was reminded back to their conversation a while ago in a barn where Rick admitted his marriage was over and now there could be no guilt.
Tony shrugged. “There is a bright side in this.”

“What?”

Tony smirked. “Am I hotter than Lori?”

Rick snickered. “Oh yeah, you don’t have bitterness marring your face.”

Tony puffed up. “Well, there you are. We can have sex now without worrying about guilt and I can piss your ex off by being hotter than she is.”

Tony was right, Lori did lose her mind and did not accept that she had lost Rick. Tony was about to put her in her place when Carl did that - Rick’s son asked to live in their tent instead.

*It did change quite a few things, Shane never got jealous and the group never went to the CDC in Atlanta. As a result, Shane never went nuts and Rick, whilst leading the group, never got drunk with power. If he ever got close, Tony would drag him off somewhere and he came back calmer and more rational.*

*Life wasn’t good - it couldn’t be - but the apocalypse ended up being survivable and relatively safe for them - which not many groups could boast.*
Brad Pitt looked at the patient lying before him and his frustration grew. Tony was perhaps his most memorable case during his medical career - and sadly a current patient again. The shooting had caught DiNozzo’s lung and he’d been contacted due to his special medical history. The trouble was - he couldn’t fix what was wrong and with his worsening condition he needed his proxy. Brad knew that there would be difficult decisions needing to be made and Tony needed someone to speak in his place. “Contact Gibbs, he needs to get here.”

His long time nurse and partner, Emma looked up. “Is this for proxy permission?”

Brad nodded, there must be something that could be done - the man had beat the plague, for christ’s sake, a shooting should not be his end. “Yeah, it’s time.”

Emma snorted. “It is not Gibbs you need but rather Dr. Gregory House.”

Now that got Brad’s attention. There would only be one reason for Tony to change his proxy from Gibbs, a significant other. “When did that happen?”

She smirked. “I have no idea but you get to break it to the agent who is wondering why he hasn’t had to sign forms.”

Pitt wanted to sigh but there was a bright side to this. As miserable as Gibbs could make people feel - House if his reputation was to be believed, was a thousand times better. This would more than likely end up like a clash of the Titans. He had a better idea, he would phone Dr. House first and let Gibbs know when House arrived.

~*~

Tony’s eyes fluttered open and he groaned as the pain hit him all at once. The bullet had passed through a lung - he could tell. It felt like every breath was just too much effort. An ice chip hovered in front of his lips, which he gratefully licked.

He knew that hand - it was lovers. He didn’t remember going to Princeton, wait this was Bethesda. Christ, where was Gibbs? He’d not introduced his boss and lover for good reason. He’d always figured it would be the equivalent of an unstoppable force meeting an immovable object.

Tony tested his voice. “I fucking hate being shot or I would sex you up stupid right now.”

House snorts and lies on the bed with him, now Tony is awake. “Not in the hospital, dear. Cuddy told us we should have some class even if this isn’t her dungeon.”

Tony grinned at House even if he felt as weak as a kitten. They had plenty of class. It had been a tactical move on his part when one of his female ducklings kept giving House long lingering looks. House said very little, he got his leg up on the bed and Tony just curled around him. The sad thing was the two them sleeping whilst one of them was injured was not a new trick.

“What happened?”

Greg sighed, knowing Tony would ask that when really all his boyfriend needed was to sleep. “You got shot, it went bad, Pitt couldn’t find it. He almost contacted Gibbs but the awesome nurse
let him know that I was the proxy! I waltzed in ... managed to act like a bigger bastard than your boss and ... figure out what was wrong with you.”

Tony had wide eyes by the end because that sounded quite a lot in what he had thought was a short amount of time. Only one look at Greg told him it might have been longer. “How long?”

“A week.”

Tony winced and not from his physical pain. “I’m sorry.”

House shushed him, he was just relieved that they could still talk to each other. They soon fell asleep and no one in the hospital was brave enough to wake up Doctor House, who had proved in short time there that his reputation was well deserved.

~*~

Dawn broke and Greg opened his eyes to a figure staring from the corner of the room. House sighed. “You know the whole Marine intimidation routine doesn’t work on me. My father tried it and it abysmally failed.”

“What does work?” Gibbs asked with open curiosity. He was aware that in medical terms, this man, despite his mysterious connection to Tony, had the power to evict him from the hospital.

House smirked, knowing his answer would annoy the agent. “You would have to ask Tony.”

“Why didn’t he tell us about you?” Gibbs asked as it was frustrating him the most out of everything.

House snickered, seeing that for all his famous instincts they had monumentally failed him when it came to his boyfriend. So he maintained the frustrating responses. “His response would be I stole him.”

The talking must have awoken Tony as he grumbled. “You stole me, and I stole you.”

House rolled his eyes at the glare from Gibbs. “I explained at the time I was borrowing you.”

Tony didn’t relinquish his hold on House and managed to let Gibbs know just how serious he was about his boyfriend. “Borrow implies you will give me back and what makes you think I will let that happen?”

House snorted fondly. “Geek.”

Tony carefully snuggled closer to Greg and sighed with relief when the pressure eased from his wound, he was too exhausted to stay awake any longer. “Your geek.”

“That’s right.” House agreed and stared directly at Gibbs as he replied. This wasn’t a pissing contest as there was no contest, a contest implied that both sides had an equal chance of winning. Gibbs had been too stupid to see what was right in front of his eyes. And Greg, well, he was only too happy to take advantage of the man’s stupidity.

Gibbs sighed and knew that he would not get any answers from the man until Tony was on the mend. He had a feeling that none of the team would do any better.
Abby was confused to see Gibbs. “Why aren’t you at the hospital?”

Gibbs snorted. “To answer that question you should probably ask Tony’s boyfriend.”

Abby whirled around from Major Mass Spec because she didn’t believe what was coming out of her silver fox’s mouth. “Our Tony?”

Gibbs nodded, still wondering how he’d missed it. The relationship he had observed wasn't new - that much was for sure. “Yeah, a Dr. Gregory House.”

Abby spat out her cafpow. “He is a legend.”

Gibbs shrugged as all he saw was a legendary arrogance. “Well, he’s Tony’s proxy. I left when they were snuggled together on a bed.”

The fact that it had made him think of Shannon was another reason he'd left. Abby’s mind was whirling, she was applying this new data to what she knew. “Gibbs, it must have happened during your siesta. There was an operation that the Director wanted Tony on but he refused point blank. He said he wouldn't betray someone special only he wouldn’t tell the team who.”

So there was the break in trust. Gibbs wanted to say something bitter but how could he? He knew things were wrong when he returned but he was too busy trying to get as many of his memories back as he could. Once they had, too much time has passed and Gibbs had kept ignoring the problem instead of dealing with it.

~*~

Abs had kept thinking about what Gibbs had said. She hadn’t spoken to Ziva and Tim as she knew how blind they were to any of Tony’s positive points. The room was quiet and there was a figure on the bed. She had to grin, realising that technically there were two figures on the bed, only they were so close as to be one.

“Hey, Tony, and his silver fox.”

“I like this one.” Greg said with a grin on his face.

Tony looked a little less like death warmed up. “Yeah, Abs is cool. Sit a while as long as you are the only one.”

She nodded. “So how did this happen?”

House chuckled. “It was at Princeton, there was a stupid city function and Tony was being a good little officer. I was so bored and he was too, I could tell. So I stole him but I was kind enough to let his boss know. I mean, I didn’t want to be accused of actual kidnapping.”

Abby snorted. “Oh, Tony would have been a willing captive I’m sure. You are brilliant and mean and Tony is a sucker for that.”

House smirked as this one seemed to know Tony better than the others. “You’d be right again.”
Tony nodded before adding. “Yeah, and I am done staying away.”

Abby gasped. “It’s that serious?”

Tony grinned even if it was weak. “If we were the type we’d marry.”

House frowned. “Who said I wouldn’t marry you?”

Tony was sure it was the excellent drugs he was currently enjoying. “It wasn’t a criticism, Greg.”

House rolled his eyes. “I know that but I would marry you in a heartbeat. You’re hot, have your own handcuffs and you don’t hate my snarkiness. Plus you have a very talented tongue and your personality isn’t too bad either.”

Tony grinned crookedly as whilst others may be horrified by the statement - he recognised it for a declaration of love. “You just want to see what Cuddy and Wilson will buy us as a wedding gift.”

“The idea is not without its appeal, I can’t deny it.”

Abby was watching the verbal tete-a-tete and was sure she missed some of it. “Did you just agree to get married?”

Tony looked at House and snickered. “Yeah, when I’m better. First, I have to find a job in Princeton.”

House raised an eyebrow at his now fiance. “No. First, you have to move your stuff, your ass and, God help me, your movies into my place.”

The wedding was another tale entirely, involving angry Ninjas meeting stubborn doctors and learning a mighty lesson. The ninja may be angry and stealthy but not as quick as a needle wielded with power. Cuddy should have been angry but covered for House and chalked it up as a wedding present on the grounds that she deserved it. Tony was pretty sure that the ensuing argument between her and Gibbs may have just started the courtship for the fifth Mrs. Gibbs, even if she isn’t a redhead. One thing was certain - between the dramas happening around them and with his adored and adoring husband by his side, the next phase of his life was definitely something Tony was looking forward to relishing every minute of.
The data burst had a startling piece of news. DADT, a long since antiquated policy in John’s eyes, was now over. He could hear Richard saying the words to him and he’d never believed it would happen whilst he served. He’d locked away his sexuality in a box at eighteen knowing that if he wanted to fly for the military, that was what he would have to do.

He’d played fast and loose with some of the rules and ignored orders when he thought it necessary to protect his men. And yet, he hadn’t broken that rule. He couldn’t. He’d wanted the skies and that was the price. Plus, he wasn’t naive. His looks had garnered attention all the way through boot camp so he worked hard on being a prickly, nasty bastard and to a certain extent, it had worked. If that failed, he played clueless, pretending he didn’t notice that he was being hit upon.

“Well, that’s been a long time coming.”

Woolsey nodded. “How do you wish to proceed?”

Sheppard thought about it for a second. “I’ll call a full battalion meeting and relay the message in full. Don’t worry Richard, I will relay just what will happen should my soldiers not be enlightened.”

“And what will happen?” Beckett asked, sounding a little concerned.

“Don’t worry, Doc. You won’t have to clean up. Chewie and I will just go on a hunt.”

“Can I join in?” DiNozzo asked. “I hate bigots as much as the next guy and a Marine did train me.”

Sheppard shrugged. “Well, it would be rude to deny you.”

Woolsey interrupted their little conversation. “And now can you tell me the serious plan?”

The look shared between DiNozzo, Ronon and John suggested that they already had their plan. However for the appearance of civility John offered an alternate solution. “I suggest we ask the the psychiatrist to deliver a series of mandatory sessions for all personnel on sensitivity and understanding.”

McKay chipped in. “I agree, I’ll make it mandatory for the scientists as well.”

“The medical staff will not be exempt.” Beckett promised. The man had come back and taken over as the Chief Medical Officer as Keller didn’t want the added stress of the role.

Woolsey looked pensive. “And if we have hate crimes?”

Sheppard smiled but McKay was the only one who knew that smile. It was the one usually reserved for the Genii. “Then they better get off Atlantis before I find them. I will take it personally.”

Ronon smirked, he had always liked the bloodthirsty part of his friend.

~*~

Rodney and John were at their favourite part of the city - the Pier. “So how do you feel now you can openly date?”

John spat his beer out. “Excuse me?”
Rodney rolled his eyes. “Don’t treat me like one of your grunts. I know you, you’re my best friend and I have seen the way you look at DiNozzo.”

“Everyone looks at DiNozzo’s ass, including you and you have Jennifer.”

McKay shrugged. “I have eyes and the man is like a great piece of art. Still, you have an advantage over the others who are staring at him with heart eyes.”

John still hadn’t confirmed or denied Rodney’s suspicion - old habits died hard. “What are you talking about?”

Rodney smirked as he sipped his beer. “He is looking back when you are not watching. Plus, come on, you two were practically flirting in the meeting this morning.”

John shook his head. “I have to watch out for my men, Rodney, and this is going to suck no matter how progressive it is. There are some who are not going to take this well. I already have permission to ship anyone out back to the SGC.”

Rodney frowned. “And then what happens to them?”

Sheppard smirked. “O’Neill mentioned that the McMurdo base needed its soldiers rotated.”

McKay chuckled because as much as O’Neill could frustrate him, he was a class act in certain cases. “I like the man’s style.”

“Don’t let Keller hear you saying that she can be very possessive of you, you know.” Sheppard teased his friend. He would support the relationship because as much as they appeared to be an odd couple for some - when it boiled down to it, she made Rodney happy for now and that was all that mattered.

McKay wasn’t the type to play around. “When will you let yourself be happy?”

“I am, Rodney, you worry too much.”

Rodney snorted and threw his can into the bag between them that now held all the empties and that seemed to be the end of the conversation for now.

~*~

Tony adored Atlantis and it was a mutual love affair. The city rolled over to do his bidding in ways that it would ignore anyone else including Colonel Sheppard. He wishes he hadn’t thought about the man. He was every dream of Tony’s rolled into one neat package. He really was too attractive for his own good.

The city kept nudging him to ask out the Colonel. He wondered if he shared the fact Ally was actually a giant yenta he could avoid a trip to Heightmeyer’s couch. He somehow doubted it.

One of the more surprising friendships for some was the one that sprang up between DiNozzo and Ronon. DiNozzo didn’t treat him like he was a walking talking weapon and Ronon didn’t immediately hit on him. It was refreshing. Although, there had been a hilarious conversation in the mess hall. It had gone like this ... “You’re hot so why aren’t you sleeping with someone?”

Tony blushing. “Thanks, big guy, but Amelia would kill both you and me if we tried.”

Ronon smirked suggestively. “It might be worth it ... or she could join us.”
Tony chuckled at the way two people close to them dropped their plates, obviously having been listening in. Tony and Ronon responded with identical classy suggestive smirks which had the scientists blushing deeper. “And anyway, I am too busy.”

Ronon’s look called bullshit. It didn’t help Tony’s case that as soon as Colonel Sheppard walked into the mess hall, he started to track his movements. “If you say so...”

Tony looked sheepish. “Let’s go spar.”

Ronon snorted. “It won’t help but why not.”

~*~

McKay looked at his distracted best friend. “You should man up and ask him out.”

John suddenly paid attention. “What?”

“The Agent you keep staring at.”

John huffed. “Let’s not start that one again, Rodney.”

Rodney rolled his eyes because generally, he may not pay attention to silly matters like who liked who but he had enough smarts to know that his best friend liked the new agent and seemed to be doing his best to stay aloof. “Okay, but if you want me to believe it then stop staring at his ass.”

John took his apple and sought refuge in his paperwork. Now Rodney knew there was something there - John never did his homework if he could help it. He sat down next to Teyla and Woolsey so he could have some intelligent conversation.

“What are we going to do about John moping for Agent Hotcakes?”

Teyla sipped her tea and quirked her eyebrow. “Excuse me?”

“John and DiNozzo. They are pining after each other ... and when I asked ... he said he had paperwork to do.”

Woolsey’s eyes widened. “You mean to say I might get my paperwork on time?”

McKay nodded. “Now do you see why I am concerned?”

Woolsey nodded but Teyla interrupted, acting as a voice of reason. “The two men will find their way to each other. I wouldn’t recommend interfering as rather than helping them achieve their desire you may cause them to pull apart further.”

McKay pouted knowing that when Teyla spoke words of wisdom they should not be ignored. They had a tendency to bite him on his ass, or she would manufacture a sparring practice and make him regret it personally. “I hate to see grown men mope.”

“They are smart men, they will figure it out.”

The look Woolsey and Rodney shared suggested they felt otherwise. It didn’t matter what they thought however, as there was someone else who wanted her two favoured people to see what they could be together.

~*~

Tony entered the transporters and even after having been in the city for a month it still made his
inner sci-fi geek smile. Yet today he was dumped somewhere completely new, an older part of the city. “Ally darling, what am I doing here?”

He got a strange picture of a heart in his head. He and Ally communicated but it was through pictures. “What’s wrong with your heart, sweetheart?” Tony asked, concerned that there was something wrong with the beautiful city.

The next image was of his own visage. “My own heart?”

There was a burst of feeling, which Tony recognised as concern for him. It did warm his heart even if it was a city that was looking after his well-being better than his own parents. “I’m okay.”

There was now a mental equivalent of a shake of a head. He didn’t get into an argument because before he knew it there was now a second occupant in the lavish room.

“What the hell? DiNozzo, do you know what is going on?” Sheppard asked him.

Tony snorted. “Ask the city.”

Sheppard looked up at the ceiling and blushed. “My heart is just fine according to Beckett!”

Tony chuckled at the exasperated look on the Colonel’s face. It was endearing. “I don’t think she means physically. She showed me a picture of me and my heart as well, do you know why?”

“Because she is a bigger yenta than McKay, that’s why.”

Tony could admit to being a little confused. “I’m not following.”

Sheppard bit his lip. Why was it that a Genii invading force and taking them on single-handedly seemed easier than talking about his feelings. “I told McKay and he has been pestering me to act on it. It seems the city took a leaf out of McKay’s hands. I’m sorry.”

Tony was starting to see what was happening here. He hadn’t believed he would be in with a chance. The gossip on the city said that he was unattached and liked it that way. “Don’t be, you’d only be giving a guy hope.”

“Yeah?”

Tony spoke softly but made sure sincerity ran through his voice. He was well aware that he’d be chipping away at some pretty big barriers. “Yeah, I mean I like the guy. He’s pretty intelligent, a good leader works hard for everyone, I just wish he’d let someone look after him.”

Sheppard sucked in a breath. “I wasn’t allowed to let anyone look after me the way I want and now... I don’t know how.”

Tony hated the vulnerable look on John’s face and he couldn’t imagine what it must have been like to repress a part of himself for so long - all so he could serve. “You know, you’re pretty BAMF and I can look after myself. What do you say - wanna try together?”

Sheppard nodded and Tony took that as permission to steal a kiss. It turned into a little more heated than a kiss but neither minded too much. They were just giddy on the first flush of romance.

“Is that trying?” John asked him, so much joy in his eyes that Tony wanted to see more of that look. It looked good on him.
Tony shook his head. “No, it’s a promise of so much more.”

Even the city glowed a little brighter for a second. “Colonel Sheppard, Agent DiNozzo, are you receiving?”

Sheppard touched his radio. “Yes, Radek, we hear you.”

“We need your help. The city just surged and it is an unexplained phenomenon.”

Tony collapsed against Sheppard, shaking from his laughter. Oh, it could be explainable but how best to say it. “It’s fine, Radek. Nothing to worry about.”

“No, no. It is very clear that all phenomena must be explained.”

Tony rolled his eyes and took a deep breath to get himself under control. “Radek, take me off the central line and listen to what I have to say.”

“Go ahead, Agent. You are now on a private line.”

Tony looked at John because this wasn’t just his life and whilst DADT had been repealed it wasn’t Tony’s secret to reveal without permission. He got a nod and a smile.

“I just kissed John and that was when the city brightened. Now, don’t say a word. Let me and the Colonel figure us out and then ... just think about how well you could sweep up in the betting rings that John and I don’t know about.”

John was now smirking at him. He liked this devious side of Tony. “You’re a genius.”

Tony had to grin. “Maybe, but don’t tell people that. So I say we make this date space and I am sure Atlantis will help, won’t you girl?”

They both got the mental equivalent of a huff, which they both took to mean, of course, don’t be stupid.

They both entered the transporter at the same time, with matching grins. Only, when they arrived at the gateroom - they had their game faces on. They would figure this out in their own time - together.

~*~

They didn’t get too much time to sneak around though, as a trip through the gate a month later had Rodney complaining. “Tell me again why you didn’t have to participate.”

Sheppard grinned. “I’m in love.”

Knowing that in saying that, it was both an explanation and a source of frustration.

When then sex ritual had come up the first thing that had come to his mind was - Tony. He didn’t want to betray him even if he knew that Tony would understand that it would have been necessary. His team had been held under armed guard and John had risen, not knowing that he’d already passed the test.

“Let the travellers go.”
Sheppard had stood up and shaken the village leads hand. “That was a test?”

“You’re heart is pure to the one you care for. We have no right to interfere.”

He could see Rodney suck in a breath, and he was sure that Teyla and Ronon were sharing matching grins. It was disconcerting. Right now, he didn’t care, he’d got the materials Atlantis needed and he wanted to get back to the city.

“Good to know, and if any of my people return will they be required to sit the test?” Sheppard asked thinking of the people in Atlantis, and already mentally creating a list of a team who would return.

“No, you are a leader.”

John nodded, made a polite goodbye and he was ushering his team back to the city. Of course, Rodney was not going to let this go. “So who is your heart pure for?”

Sheppard kept walking forward. The last month and a bit had been a massive change in his life but for the better. “You mean you don’t know?” And then stepped through the gate.

Rodney was slower when it came to matters of the heart but even he couldn't miss the look shared between John and Agent DiNozzo. “You and Agent Hotcakes got together?”

Now some may have been distracted or acted a little shocked at the casual outing of their relationship. Tony just sauntered down the stairs. “Well, who can blame me, you have met John, right?”

Sheppard smirked at him. “Now, Rodney and the rest of you - mission check up and then debrief so I can make it to my date tonight.”

Tony called out. “See you later, darling.”

Tony had chosen to move to Atlantis unwilling to be sent out to ship like a recalcitrant child. It had felt freeing to tell Vance to stick his job. Atlantis had been unexpected but a joy just to be around. He hadn’t expected John but he was glad that DADT had disappeared so he could find something he’d never expected - love.

He could talk about their trip back to Washington meeting a bitter MCRT and John schooling them all for having the temerity to be rude to Tony. He could - but honestly, what he remembered most about the visit was the proposal in the hotel room.

The MCRT was simply forgotten and all his focus was on the man next to him and the exciting future awaiting.
For those in Washington, there was a great question doing the rounds of the gossip mill. Just what on Earth had finally managed to get Tony DiNozzo to finally move away from NCIS? All had recognised his brilliance but none had managed to break his loyalty to his mentor - except now someone apparently had.

Only it was not someone, but something - the Library. When Tony had found out about magic and the constant battle to keep it out of the hands of bad legions, he had fan-boyed for a short second before engaging in a fight to protect a cute cowboy.

That was only the beginning.

~*~

Tony was in a bar trying to shake off his bad week. He noticed the cowboy as he walked through the door. He stood out amongst the power suits of Washington and Tony had to like a guy who was willing to walk his own path in life.

“You’re not from around here.”

Jacob smirked. “No, Sir, I am not. Oklahoma born and raised.”

“You’re a long way from home.” Tony observed.

The guy shrugged and raised his hand to shake it. “Jacob Stone.”

“Anthony DiNozzo Junior.”

Jacob grinned. “So what’s good on tap?”

“The IPA.”

Jacob had to smile at that because he preferred a good beer. “Now this is my kind of place.”

Tony smirked. “Sit a while.”

Jacob did just that. “So what do you do, Mr. DiNozzo?”

“It’s Agent DiNozzo but I prefer Tony, and I work for NCIS.”

Jacob smirked. “Exciting. I work as a librarian, nothing too exciting.”

Tony snorted and didn’t call him on the polite lie. “If you say so, Mr. Stone.”

“Jacob.”

Tony smirked. “Well, alright then.” Tony froze up seeing the group who entered the bar. They were clearly looking for someone. “You made any friends since coming to Washington?”
“No, no I have not. I am looking for Cassandra and Ezekiel who are my colleagues in fact. Why?”

Tony sighed and casually pulled his gun from his jacket, he was developing a fine sixth sense for trouble and he didn’t want to waste any seconds. “That group has your picture in their hands and I don’t think they are looking to find a cute drinking partner.”

“Ah man, I thought I left Ninja bar fights in Oklahoma, Baird is never going to let me go anywhere.” Jacob complained.

Tony had no idea what was going on but it looked like he would be defending the cute cowboy. “Now would be a good time to pick up a bar stool.”

“I know, don’t tell me how to handle a bar fight.”

The group finally spoke. “Tut, tut, Librarian - the Guardian let you go out all on your lonesome. Anything could happen.”

Tony stood up having finished his drink, he was going to be really annoyed if he’d lost his drink. “You know, I was enjoying a quiet drink with a new friend and you just had to disturb us. Makes a guy mad.”

“You know nothing about magic, mortal. So be quiet.”

Tony snorted. “Out of interest, Jake, how well does magic stop a bullet?”

“Depends on their power level, Dulac can stop you but he can’t stop a punch.” Jacob finished with a sly smirk.

Tony smiled but it was the one he’d learnt from Gibbs. “Good to know.” And raised his gun. “Now leave please, this is the one time I ask nicely.”

Strangely enough, they chose not to leave nicely and while Tony had come here looking to drown his sorrows, he’d ended up in a bar fight instead, with a laughing hollering cowboy. Tony probably shouldn’t be thinking this was the most fun he’d had in ages - but he was.

“Why won’t you just leave?” Tony said, not getting this group. They were clearly up to no good.

The sword was different but a sword was just a long knife and Tony was never without his. Tony teased his opponent. “You shouldn’t hold a big sword if you can’t use it.” The wild thrash was good for effect but lousy for actual fighting. The swing arc was so wide that Tony ducked under it and managed to gain an advantage.

“Retreat, he’s clearly a guardian too,” DuLac ordered.

Tony collapsed against the bar. “Bartender, another drink.”

Stone was laughing at his side, almost collapsed into it. “Wow, you sure know how to party.”

Tony snorted. “No, I am just thinking about how I explain this to my boss without using the word magic.”

Two people had entered and Jacob knew them and greeted them warmly by the names of Eve and Flynn. Tony was standing to the side debating if he could escape because as hot as the cowboy was
- he had work tomorrow.

~*~

“Who is this, Jacob?” The blonde female asked, and her bearing was all military.

“Agent Anthony DiNozzo and more intriguingly, after our bar fight ... which I would like to add, was so not my fault, DuLac called him a guardian.”

Flynn, the male, looked around Tony and was intrigued. “A second guardian, huh? Well, I suppose that would be beneficial.”

Tony felt justified in shouting. “WHAT IS A GUARDIAN? AND MAGIC?”

Eve snorted. “Oh Agent, I was you two years ago. I have a suggestion for you ... come with us. Let us give you the sales pitch and then we will see what happens.”

~*~

Tony got the sales pitch and he was assigned as the second guardian to the satellite library of Alexandria, which was nuts to say, but oh well. He was learning to reevaluate what he considered normal and not so normal. That had been nearly two months ago and he hadn’t regretted it. He had a great job and his boyfriend was pretty cute even if he had a penchant for bar fights.

The door system to get to his job was handy to say the least, he didn’t know many who could say their closet door transported them to work. It was kind of perfect as well, considering the beating at his door. “Tony, open the damn door. Did I say you could leave? You have to speak to me some time.”

Well, that would be a red flag to more than just a bull. Gibbs might not know it but the world did not dance to his beat. He was an adult and could do whatever he damn well pleased. In stepping through the door, Tony greeted the caretaker of the library. “Morning Jenkins, are Cassie and Flynn staying out of trouble?”

Jenkins snorted. “They were talking science so I left it to them. Colonel Baird wanted to talk to you about leashing Stone.”

Tony had a wicked grin. “Now that’s not our thing, whatever she does with Flynn is their business. We don’t judge as long as all parties are consenting but I draw the line at animals.”

Jenkins was awesome and had more than a few secrets all on his lonesome. Tony already had a few ideas about who he might be but asking a guy if he was the basis of Merlin required you knowing a guy a bit. “You are a breath of fresh air and the loss of the librarians has decreased significantly now there are two guardians.”

There was a thump, a crash and a loud scream of both a male and a female variety. Jenkins just sighed. “I think you’re up, Guardian Two.”

Tony snickered, calling out. “Anyone injured?”

“Only my pride.” Jake called back.

Tony shouted back. “I’ll kiss it better. What about you, Cassie?”
“I don’t think Stone will like it if you kiss my boo-boo too.” Was what he got, as a reply that had Tony laughing. He’d finally got through the stacks to them both.

Tony helped Jake off the floor. “Maybe not, but we both would like to help you, my lady.”

Tony hadn’t understood what working in a true team environment would feel like. There was Flynn, the head librarian, and his Guardian, Eve. They’d changed the rules with magic seeping back into the world and employed three other amazing if very different characters.

Tony was beginning to understand Ezekiel and Cassie but the one he’d spend a lifetime understanding was Jake. He was fascinating, a true genius, who hid his genius for his family. He could speak about art and literature in a way that made you want to weep or go back to school and study harder.

“You should not be getting eaten by the books!?"

Jake shrugged like it was no big deal that a book had just tried to eat him. It was just another day at the library. “It’s our fault we forgot to feed it some meat earlier, so it went for my arm instead.”

Tony sighed. “Come on, cowboy. Let’s get you some first aid.”

Jacob kept hold of his hand as he pushed him to the foyer area. Tony called out. “Jenkins have you got anything for bite wounds.”

“You forget to feed Hannibal’s Diaries?”

Jacob rolled his eyes. “Yes, I forgot. It is not a big deal okay.”

Jenkins just huffed as he got out a small suture kit. “Tell that to your arm.”

Tony said nothing as he himself had had the lecture the week before when he’d ended up getting stabbed protecting Ezekiel and his damn wondering fingers. Luckily for him, Flynn had some pretty cool elixir that healed him right up. It was a wondrous thing too, the elixir, as it healed his lungs - fully. It didn’t differentiate between the stab wound damage and the plague damage. It was incredible but not something he could share with a medical professional who wasn’t in the know.

“Will he live?” Tony asked.

Jenkins rolled his eyes. “Yeah, the man who is smart enough to be four of the five leading art historians but forgets to feed a book ... will live. His arm will be no good so you should take him home for the day.”

Tony was more than okay with that instruction. “As he is technically Eve’s, can you tell her what you said?”

Jenkins snorted. “Yes, I will tell the big bad scary Colonel that I told you to take your boyfriend home.”

~*~

Tony stepped through the door which right now was his and tuned to his apartment. “Come on,
Cowboy, go lie on the couch and I’ll make us some pasta.”

“What time is it, out of the library?”

Tony looked out his window. “Night time apparently. Sit, relax awhile.”

Jacob put his feet up. “Have they stopped banging on your door?”

Tony chuckled from the kitchen. “You’d think two months of no contact would give them a clue or something that I don’t want to talk to them.”

Jake snickered. “Darlin, some people are just slow on the uptake. I keep telling you this.”

Tony came back and put a plate of pasta in front of his lover. “You’re right. You okay managing to eat this?”

“Well, you didn’t make it spaghetti so I’ll be good.”

The evening was quiet and domestic and Tony shifted the plates into the dishwasher. The sounds of music washed through the apartment and they lay on the sofa, careful to mind Jake’s injury. Tony was almost drifting off when the banging at his door started again. He sighed, they were persistent.

Jacob was grumpy. “Call the cops on them.”

Tony snickered at the thought of them being led away in handcuffs. The only trouble there was he knew they wouldn’t go quietly. “Nah, it’s best to let them in ... I’m ready to say what I need them to know.”

“I got your back, Darlin.”

Tony knew that, intellectually and emotionally, and that was probably why he was ready to face the NCIS team. He reluctantly got up off the couch to open the door. He might not want to do this but he was going to enjoy their reactions when they got answers to questions they were going to ask.

~*~

Gibbs. McGee, Ziva, and Abby all fell through his door when it suddenly opened. Jacob sat on the couch perfectly silent and so blatantly judging them. It was glorious.

“Darlin, who are our guests?”

Tony had a blinding smile. “Well cowboy, this is Agents’ Gibbs and McGee, Officer Ziva David, and technician Abby Sciuto.”

“Your old workmates?” Jake said as if he didn’t already know the answer.

“These are the ones, now I know you might get the wrong impression with how they rudely tried to bash in my door.” Tony said in a voice that didn’t even try to hide how pissed he was.

“You got a promotion?” McGee said, disdainful at the very idea.

Tony smirked. “Yes I did McGee, and your congratulations are noted.”
“How?” Ziva asked.

Tony rolled his eyes. “Hey, don’t give me that look, Jake. You hid your doctorates for a while too.”

Abby frowned. “You have multiple doctorates?”

Tony had a sly smile knowing that their self-righteous storming over had been derailed with just a few simple sentences. “Who is that question at? Me or Jake?”

Abby cocked her head to the side. “Both of you I guess.”

“He has four at last count although, he is working on another. Me, I stopped at two, work became too hectic.” Tony confessed choosing to sit back down, leaning into Jacob’s good side and arm. He didn’t feel like standing at attention for these people any longer.

“I didn’t say you could quit and you didn’t say anything at all to me.” Gibbs said quietly.

Tony shrugged. “You came back from Mexico and made it abundantly clear what you thought of me, Gibbs. I am not a child, I won’t fight for scraps of approval.”

Ziva used her hands to encompass him and Jake. “And what is this?”

Tony rolled his eyes the immature display. “This is a person, who I happen to adore and we were having a lovely domestic evening before it was interrupted by people who claim to be family but seem to want to do nothing more than tear me down. So you know where the door is.”

He actually turned on the TV screen and then chose to ignore the NCIS crew until they left. It was cathartic in a way that he hadn’t realised he needed until after he had said his piece.

Tony’s life had changed drastically in the last few months since he’d learnt about magic but that wasn’t the real magic... No, that was right here with Jake, just enjoying some peace and quiet. It was a gift beyond compare and one that Tony would happily be a Guardian for.
Snapshots of a Magical Life (Sirius Black)

Chapter Summary

Tony's life takes a drastic change after a family party on his mom's side ends badly.

Chapter Notes

Warnings - There is an off-screen deaths of a family by the Deatheaters. This is one of the more severe AU stories I have written and the world building in this will make for a lengthy story.

The snapshots of a Magical Life (Sirius Black)

Tony was staring at the ashes of what was his family home feeling very confused with the world. Bewildered didn’t even cover it, he’d gone to the local village with his Uncle because he was bored of the party. They kept talking funny and he was sure that some of them weren’t even talking in English.

Uncle Clive was the best, he’d stopped his boredom and took him for a treat in the village. They had the best candy there.

Uncle Clive was talking with some funny dudes. He knew that Daddy said that the English could be funny but this was weird even for that. They kept talking with weird words like Fuego, Mordesmorde and even Avada Kedavra.

The policemen asked his Uncle, “Who is this?”

Clive stood up, a hand on Tony’s shoulder. “He is my heir, Antonius Paddington.”

The others may have missed it but Clive had seen the magic sparks when Tony handled some of the magical artefacts in his home. It spoke of a magical ability that Clive knew he would enjoy nurturing.

Tony didn’t understand but he did feel something settle deep inside him. He knew that his Uncle had made a promise so good that he felt it in his bones. He didn’t know enough of the magical world to understand about unbreakable vows.

~*~

Fast forward a year or two and Tony was at Hogwarts. He’d learnt everything his Uncle had to teach him. Magic was like the best movies, only there were no props or special effects - it was all him. Tony’s family on his mother’s side were deeply magical and had a magical legacy entrenched in the elements. It didn’t seem to matter that he was only magical on his mother’s side. Tony had
breezed through his first six years playing chaser and completing his studies. He was glad to be a Ravenclaw, apparently he was all Hufflepuff but had too much of the Paddington blood to not seek revenge against those who wronged him.

No matter what some of the less enlightened members of his cohorts thought. “He may be pretty but he is tainted.” The blonde aristocratic voice declared managing to make his sneer audible.

Tony quirked an eyebrow. “Is that so, Lucius? You should discuss the matter with your father as he was seeking a betrothal contract between us. He felt that merger between the Paddington and Malfoy family was the right way forward..”

“That can’t be true, you filthy liar.”

Tony stepped forward, losing all of his loose, relaxed stance. “Oh, but it is. Thankfully, Lord Paddington sent a polite rejection ... However, ... if you keeping calling my Lord a liar, I will happily meet you on a duelling platform.” Tony finished, knowing that he was one of the fastest duellers in the year. He would be as his Uncle had employed Aurors to get him up to speed with protection. Uncle Clive’s idea of protection amounted to ensuring you could kill your attacker first.

“You would need a second.” Malfoy pressed, hoping that his family’s reputation would scare off anyone supporting Paddington.

Sirius Black had witnessed the last of the confrontation. He usually kept to his own House and the marauders but - an official reason to mess with Lucius Malfoy? Well, that was just golden. “He’s got one, who will yours be?”

“Lestrange.”

Sirius snorted because Lestrange, whilst physically imposing, had yet to use his mind in a duel as it would be too taxing. “Well, I will be sure to remember to quiver in my boots, you may have to remind me though.”

“You’re a disgrace to your family, Black.”

Sirius jauntily called back. “And thank Merlin for that!”

Tony turned back. “You know you didn’t have to do that.”

Sirius bowed low and kissed Tony’s hand. “Oh, have to, no. Want to, well, that’s a different matter. I think I like you.”

Tony leant against a wall. Sirius Black liked him and he wasn’t sure if that was a good or a bad thing. He guessed that only time would tell.

~*~

Dumbledore called both Malfoy and Tony to his office. “Boys. I heard a report of an alarming nature.”

Tony smiled sweetly. “Sir, I can assure you that I said no to the betrothal contract.”

Malfoy rolled his eyes. “You should watch that attitude.”

“Why?” Tony challenged. “You think you are wizard enough to do something about it?”
Albus sighed, knowing then that the alarming reports of a peer’s duelling were in fact true. “You cannot be thinking of duelling, boys. What kind of example would you be setting?”

Tony smirked. “One that fear and gossip are not standard practice and should be challenged at all quarters.”

Dumbledore bowed his head and had to make a decision. “I will allow this to happen but I will be overseeing it and the rules will be adhered to, gentlemen.”

Tony frowned. “My uncle raised me to be an honourable man so I don’t like what you are implying.”

“No offense was meant, Mr. Paddington.”

Tony wasn’t convinced by the eye twinkle and grandfather routine. Uncle had asked to be kept updated on his activities in the school. It seemed that Uncle Clive didn’t trust the fact that the man held three rather key and influential roles in their society.

Black was waiting at the bottom of the staircase. “Hey, Sirius”

“Darlin, is the mean Slytherin trying to back out of the challenge?” Sirius taunted.

Tony shrugged. “Well, that remains to be seen. We should go and practice anyway.”

Sirius had a delightful grin, it reminded Tony of a mischievous puppy. He had no idea how apt that analogy was - yet. Sirius pulled him along. “Come on, this place is perfect.”

Tony was startled by Sirius grabbing his hand but let himself roll with the flow of magic. If his actual magic had jolted with the touching of their hands, well, that was between him and his magical core. Tony was dragged along to a fifth floor and the corridor didn’t look like much. “Why are we here, Sirius? Despite the rumours, I am not a sure thing in a broom cupboard.”

Sirius pouted. “Oh, if I wear you down I want more than a broom cupboard.”

Tony grinned. “I will bear that in mind. So, shall we spar?”

Sirius quirked. “I’m a Black, and as much as I disagree, I learnt my lessons early.”

Tony snorted. “I didn’t, I didn’t know I was magical until the death eaters wiped out my entire family apart from my Uncle Clive. Thankfully, I am assured I’m a great heir and a true Paddington for whatever that is worth.”

Sirius had a crooked grin. “It means that we will be outstanding together.”

Tony got the feeling that he wasn’t talking about the duel. In fact, it was confirmed an hour later when they collapsed on the floor panting.

“Now that was fun.” Tony confessed as his breathing evened out.

Tony looked over at Sirius who lay next to him with his hair wild and eyes bright, grinning just as much as he was. He finally got why people could fall in love at a glance. “You’re as vicious as you are stunning.”

“You will turn a boy’s head with comments like that.” Tony replied, falling back on sarcasm. It was his best defence and kept most people away from him.
Sirius rolled over so that he was close to Tony but not touching him, more of a tantalising tease. “Not a line, not with you. I don’t risk a duel with Malfoy for just anyone.”

Tony knew what his Uncle told him, to trust his instincts and his magic. It was telling him that the Black heir was serious in his regard for Tony. “Let’s duel Malfoy and if we win you can take me out to Hogsmeade.”

Sirius smirked, “But you are the one duelling.”

Tony snickered. “Well, I need to have some extra incentives.”

Sirius sealed the deal with a kiss. “Now that is how we will seal our deals from now on.”

“I can get behind that.”

And that was the start of a courtship that started with a duel, and a date and kept on going. Uncle Clive and Sirius’ grandfather, seeing which way the wind was blowing, made the betrothal contract between the couple. The fact that at the same time, his grandfather names Sirius as his official heir also managed to alienate his mother further was really an added bonus for both boys.

~*~

Tony’s emotions were so volatile that Dumbledore had blocked anyone from him. He was an elemental who’d been told his only remaining family member was dead. He was grieving, and at the same time, he was having the rich Paddington family magic landing on him all at once. “Out the way.”

Dumbledore shook his head. “I can’t let you do that, Mr. Black.”

Sirius rolled his eyes. “Sir, with all due respect, that is my betrothed and I can help him.”

At any other time, Sirius might have enjoyed the look of shock - but now was not it. Tony needed him more than his need to be mischievous. He wrapped Tony up in a hug and let others disappear for a few minutes behind a protega nigrum shield. It was a Black family special shield, allowing for curses to pass through it from the caster but blocking everything short of a cruciatus or killing curse.

Tony whispered. “The dark wanker took my only remaining family.”

Sirius had to grin even as he hugged Tony because it was clear that this had not broken Sirius may not be too keen on his family, on the grounds they supported Voldemort, still there were some character traits that ran true like what to do when crossed. “So we make him regret all his life choices.”

~*~

Tony and Sirius had kept up their vow to be a thorn in the Dark Lord, more commonly known as the dark wanker around their Auror office. The only couple who truly succeeded in being a worse thorn in the Dark Lord’s side was James and Lily. And they’d only done that by having a prophecy child who was fated to finally destroy the bastard.

Sirius and Tony had been in their office. They’d found it ironic when Moody had paired the lords and husbands together. Apparently, Moody felt Tony was the only one capable of somewhat reining in Padfoot.
The call came in. “The Potter warding notice.”

Tony and Sirius shared a look. There was only one person who’d be stupid enough to attack the Potter hideout - Voldemort. Fucking dark wanker. Tony thought in a less than wizardly way. Oh well, Tony and Sirius had set the wards around James and Lily’s place and lethal was putting it mildly. It would have taken more than a few Deatheaters to break them down.

Their wands were in their hands and they were appariting through the ministry which they weren’t supposed to be able to do. It was not their fault that individually they were powerful but their marriage bond allowed them to pool their magic to make crazier stunts happen.

Moody’s voice was behind them - they didn’t care, this was their friend. The front door was blasted in, Tony cursed. “That fucking traitorous blasted rat.”

Sirius moaned and even though he was in his human form - he sounded more like a Grimm in that moment. James was in the hallway, his body lifeless, they knew the look all too well. He’d been caught by the worst of the unforgivables. There was a scream from the nursery area. “Harry.”

Tony and Sirius ran quicker than ever before. “Please be okay.”

The nursery looked like a burglar had ransacked it. Lily was dead as well and there was baby Harry tucked in her arms even as she fell. They saw the blood on his forehead.

Tony was the one to gently pry Harry out of Lily’s arms. They needed to look after their godson more than revenge. “Sirius, forget Peter. We will catch the little rat bastard. We need to focus on our godson now.”

Sirius took a deep breath. “You’re right, I’d hate to think what would have happened without you here.”

Tony kissed him lightly, careful not to squash little Harry. “Well, thankfully, we never have to worry about it. Let’s get out of here before I have to act like a pissy noble.”

Tony could play the part with ease and Sirius adored that Tony could have the Wizengamot on their tippy-toes dancing to his tune. The apparition of a new figure had Tony sighing. “Too late.”

Albus Dumbledore was moving forward toward them. “Now boys, give young Harry over.”

Tony smiled sweetly. “Over my dead body and no matter how much power you think you have ... well, even the Blacks won’t cross the Paddingtons.”

“He should be with his family.” Dumbledore tried to reason.

Tony never let go of Harry and trusted Sirius to have his back. “We’re his godfathers. Don’t fight this, Albus. Peter was the secret keeper and he betrayed them. We’re his godfathers, so upon the Potter’s deaths, should custody not transfer to Sirius and me, the Goblins will be releasing the documents to every major newspaper in Europe.”

Albus saw the Lord hiding behind the Auror. He realised that Clive Paddington had taught his heir every bit of his own ruthlessness. “Very well, but this boy will need to be protected.”

Tony rolled his eyes. “Then who better than two vicious Aurors, who also happen to be peers of the realm.”
Sirius held his breath as Tony did a slide-long apparition to Paddington Manor. It was unplottable, untraceable and had Goblin War Wards that Ragnok himself had created and cackled while he’d done it.

“This is going to be difficult, isn’t it.” Sirius said looking into those emerald green eyes.

Tony nodded. “Yep, but we will honour our promises and kill anyone who tries to harm a hair on our godson’s head.”

And boy did they. *Harry never knew what sleeping in a cupboard was like. He'd never know harm at the hands of those who were supposed to care for him. What Harry knew was the fierce devotion and love heaped upon him by his two godfathers who were determined to raise him in accordance with their dead friends’ wishes.*

*So this just into expanded version - can be found [here](#).*
Riverdale so long (FP Jones II)

Chapter Notes

The show is Riverdale and FP Jones is played by the delightful Skeet Ulrich - a bad boy biker type. Oh, and this fic can be wholly blamed on my muse wanting to see Tony on a motorbike.

FP Jones II - Riverdale so Long

Riverdale, of all the places he ended up back in, Tony had to return to Riverdale. He'd hated it when he'd been a kid and stuck at his father's brother, Cliff's, place. Why his father was a DiNozzo and his Uncle was named Blossom, well, Tony never asked.

He’d left for college and hadn’t looked back, he found the place to be on the wrong side of Stepford Wives for his tastes. The Southside had been more fun but Uncle Cliff would have kittens if he ever went anywhere near there.

Tony returned today, twelve years later, at the request of a cousin but he’d always thought of Cheryl as his niece. It was nice that for once, Vance wasn't a dick about allowing him his leave immediately. How could he not? Cheryl was beside herself with the death of her twin.

The time for introspection was over as he’d pulled his Mustang up the Blossom’s drive.

“Uncle Tony!”

His niece greeted him with a grand grin although he could see the strain of trying to be cheerful to him. “Hey, little one.”

“Everything is so wrong.” She said into his shoulder.

Tony’s heart went out to hear it and he stroked her back, hoping to offer at least some small comfort. “It will be for a while but you’re strong and I will help where I can. I know a thing or two about investigations.”

~*~

The sheriff, within two seconds, made Tony want to facepalm. To say he was clueless was an understatement. The kids at the local high school showed more about them. Tony (just barely) remembered to play nicely.

“So you have no evidence?”

The Sheriff shook his head. “The body was in some type of industrial freezer and stored for a week before being put in the water. Hard to make it look like a drowning with the bullet wound in the head.”

Tony sucked in a breath because Riverdale was not DC, Jason should have been safe. “Any
motive?"

“Just the fact that your niece said he was planning to skip town with his girlfriend, a Walker.”

Tony raised an eyebrow at that. He’d not been to town for a few years but the idea of a Walker and a Blossom dating was as likely as Romeo and Juliet and a happy ending. “How the hell did that slip past Uncle Cliff?”

The Sheriff smirked. “I don’t know, one minute they’re in here complaining that he’s run away and taken his nana’s ring and then we’re declaring a missing person case. My money’s on a Serpent. It wouldn’t be the first time Cliff had got mixed up with them.”

It didn’t make sense.

“How would a maple syrup company need a biker crew to be enforcers? It’s not exactly a ruthless business.”

The Sheriff frowned. “What are you implying?”

Tony shrugged as he had no idea. “At this point when I am investigating, I think about all the questions I have then go about answering them. Where do the Serpents hang out?”

“You can’t go there, you reek of law enforcement!”

Tony smirked, “Oh, Sheriff. You don’t know me but undercover is my specialty.”

~*~

Tony could not believe what he was wearing but one did not go to a biker bar in a Zegna suit. So leather trousers and a white crisp shirt were the order of the day. He didn’t make eye contact with anyone, that wasn’t how it was going to work. He simply headed straight to the bar and ordered his beer. It took less than ten minutes for someone to try and make a name for themselves by harassing him.

“Hey! Who are you?”

Tony snorted, turning around on his stool. “Someone peaceful who just wants to drink.” His piece said, he turned back to his drink like the guy wasn’t worth a second glance.

A hand gripped his shoulder and Tony reacted on instinct, not allowing a threat to remain behind his back. The biker was taken down with a cops move and before he knew it, bad boy biker had his head on the bar. Tony leant down. “Now, I repeat. I just want a drink in peace. Do we have a problem?”

“I will kill you.”

Tony rolled his eyes. “You know it is a really stupid idea to threaten someone who is a Federal Agent. I just want a drink and to hide from my relatives who would never come anywhere near here.”

A voice chuckled and Tony wanted to shiver, it was sexy and he hadn’t even seen the body to match. He turned his head. “Is he yours?”
“Kind of. I’d prefer you didn’t hurt him even though he deserved it.” The biker leader replied.

Tony let the guy go. “Anthony DiNozzo.”

“Forsythe Pendleton Jones II. I prefer FP.”

Tony smirked but made no dig about the name. “I can understand that, so as long as you’re okay with me hiding from Uncle Cliff here, we’re cool.”

“You’re a Blossom?”

Tony shrugged as he’d shocked the guy. “Only by blood and not by choice.”

FP shrugged. “I can salute that.”

Tony sensed he was going to order a drink but thought better of it. There was a story there but not one for a first conversation. Tony was bold and as he slipped out of the bar, he used a pickpocket trick to slip his contact information into the other man’s jacket.

“Hey, you left this.”

Tony whirled around leaning back against his Mustang. “No, I left my details because I want a date. I figure if the idea doesn’t appeal, your man enough to say no.”

FP stalked closer. “What makes you think we’re compatible? You’re a northside boy, or is that the appeal?”

Tony leant in closing the personal space between them to zero. “I’m not looking for a cliche.” And he sealed it with a kiss. It was electric and Tony broke the kiss, licking his lips wanting more. One look at FP and he could tell he wanted it too. “Call me for a date place. I will let you pick so you feel comfortable.”

~*~

A day later, Tony was meeting FP in Pop’s diner which apparently was the only place to meet anyone in Riverdale. The leather trousers and biker jacket were replaced with jeans and flannel for FP and Tony was in trousers and a casual but smart shirt.

“Hey.”

Tony stood up. “Hey, so we’re meeting incognito?”

FP shrugged and saw the darks looks being thrown in his direction. He ate them up after so long so with a wry grin. “I have a reputation to uphold.”

Tony hoped that his sexuality was flexible in that respect. “Is this your way of gently letting me down?”

FP shook his head as his grin turned sexy. “Not at all, I just don’t get why you would want a date with me?”

Tony shook his head hearing the self-loathing, he was no stranger to it himself. “You’re hot, mysterious, oh, and you have a bike.”
“I’m a mess.”

Tony sipped his milkshake. “A hot mess. I can deal with whatever you throw at me.”

FP let out a sigh of relief, believing that just might be true. He really hoped so because if Tony kissed him that way again, he wasn’t sure what he wouldn’t agree to.

~*~

It turned out that over the next month Tony proved just how ready he was to commit - helping FP with a murder arrest; dealing with his Uncle Cliff killing himself and the general craziness around Riverdale. Oh, and let’s not forget FP came with an adorably curious and inquisitive kid. Tony personally saw future cops, not journalists when it came to FP’s son, Jughead, and his girlfriend, Betty.

Jughead and Betty were at the diner with them. Tony being Tony took them to the diner for a celebratory ‘you’re not going to be locked up party’.

Jughead was relaxing but anytime one of the Riverdale populous stared at the table they were given a fierce glare. “I hate this place.”

FP sighed because right now he couldn’t disagree. The time in the town jail had helped him get through the alcohol withdrawal but he couldn’t pretend he was pleased to see any of town’s faces. Tony broached it carefully as this was huge. “Now listen, how would you feel coming back to DC? I won’t lie - it is very different from this town but FP, this place is toxic for you. Plus, I think it’ll be a good place for Jughead.”

FP looked to his son, he hadn’t always been a great Dad. A fact that he’d worked on improving, hoping he’d get the chance. He would have given up hope but Tony and Jughead kept visiting him. Tony had made sure he didn’t get railroaded and hadn’t let Cliff Blossom get close. FP decided to take a leap of faith. “Yeah, I think we can take a trip and see what happens.”

Jughead and Betty cheered, hugging each other. “We want to go to Georgetown.”

Tony smirked. “Well, I do know the area so let me show you around, providing your mom is okay with that, Betty.”

The bubbly blonde was grinning so wide. “Oh, I will make it okay.”

~*~

Tony still couldn’t believe he’d convinced FP to move to DC full-time with him. The fact Jughead and his girlfriend were going to George Washington had helped. The fun part though for Tony was FP was helping him confound his team.

Like today. The case had wrapped and Tony was too tired to drive but he wanted his own bed and his lover. One message to FP had confirmed he was no longer teaching anyone how to ride their motorbikes and would collect him with his proper bike. The job FP had found for himself was a good fit, he was trained on motorcycles and they wanted him to teach others. The fact he was a ‘real’ biker appealed to many in the area.
Tony was just waiting for FP and Abby was bouncing up and down. “Come and drink with us, Tony. Please?”

Tony groaned at just the mere thought. “Abs, I want my bed, not alcohol.”

The roaring sound of the motorbike pulled up to the sidewalk distracted Abby for a second. In fact, Abby purred. “He is so sexy I’d take a ride on him anytime.”

The guy took off his helmet and the fantasy only improved. Tony grinned, knowing he was about to blow her mind. “Bye, Abs.”

She gasped, seeing Tony take the helmet then slide on the back of the bike and mold himself to the biker. Oh my, now that was a picture worth imagining.

~*~

McGee didn’t believe Abby, there was no way that Tony was dating a bad boy biker. It just didn’t fit his image. “You want me to believe that Tony is sleeping with a guy?”

Abby shrugged because she didn’t much care, she knew what she’d seen. “I know what I saw, Timmy.”

Lunchtime was a proper one for once, so Tony decided to stretch his legs. Tim and Ziva had seen the small smiles as he looked at his phone and got curious - so decided to follow him.

The coffee shop had some good food and Tony met a young blonde girl and her boyfriend, Tim was guessing. Ziva frowned. “Is it a daughter he didn’t know about?”

Tim shook his head. “He would have said and been way more freaked.”

As he said that, the roar of the bike could be heard in the square and Tim whispered. “Bad boy biker.”

Ziva frowned. “What?”

“Abby said he was dating a bad boy biker... I didn’t believe her.”

Ziva’s eyes rose to her eyebrows as the biker slid off his bike and strode over to Tony’s table. The kiss was just the right side of chaste for a public place - barely. It was clear that Tony was happy with his new paramour. “So he is gay ... no wonder he didn’t want me.”

Tim let his eyes go wide because there was no good answer to this. “Yeah, who gets to tell Gibbs.”

Ziva jumped when Tony’s voice jumped in.

“How about - no need as he already knows. You two have cases to follow up on so what are you doing here?”

Tim and Ziva actually blushed. “You, we, … ”

Tony smirked. “Abby told you I jumped on the back of a bad boy motorcycle yesterday and you didn’t believe her.”

“You’re Tony, the ladies man. I thought she was playing a joke.”
Tony traded heated looks with his biker, making the kids groan. “Dad, you promised no grossness with the boyfriend in front of me, and I promised to return the favour.”

The biker looked rueful. “I did, didn’t I. Well, Tony, shall we get out of here? We promised the kids we’d go that exhibition they want to see.”

Tony chuckled. “Don’t give me that, FP, you want to go too.”

The biker shrugged and with a roguish grin and wink. “I have a reputation to uphold.”

Ziva and Tim were thrown off their game but knew they could get Tony on one thing. “You have work this afternoon.”

Tony smirked back at them. “No McJealous and Ziva, I don’t. I booked it off for some family time. Bye for now.”

Tony threw the money down on the table. “Let’s go before the traffic picks up.”

Tony was happy and no matter what they said or did, it slid right off him, although Tim noticed after the sequel release of his book where Agent Tommy died - there were two bike chapters that kept driving past his house all night for a week. The local cops wouldn’t do anything for him - It took Tony to ask them for anything to get done. That burned Tim as he wanted to do it on his own. In truth though, what burned more was seeing the way Tony pulled away from all of them completely and left them to their own devices. He was happy with his family and they were no longer part of it.

They only had themselves to blame.
Tony still could not believe that he was taking a road trip with Dean and his brother, Sammy. He couldn’t help but call the law student that as he had the most adorable reaction to it. Plus, it made Dean smile when he did so that was a bonus.

One minute he was getting home exhausted from traveling back from Camp Pendleton - the next, he had a harried almost-brother-in-law asking for help tracking his boyfriend’s father. The crazy thing was that he and Dean were already going, having arranged for leave from work.

Correction, Dean was going to find his Dad, Tony was going to make sure that John Winchester couldn’t take any more of Dean’s soul or drag him back into the fold of vendetta 101. So far Dean was just focusing on the drive - which was going to take a while. Tony just kept imagining punching John in the face - it helped.

~*~

Sammy was being a typical little brother and being nosey. “So how did you meet?”

Tony smirked because that was the wrong question. “In a bar.”

Dean snorted at that response as it was more of a Gibbs’ response than that of Tony. Still, he could get the point Tony was making. “You gotta learn the right question, little brother, especially if you want to be a lawyer.”

Sam scowled but took on board what he said. He could admit that he’d been more than surprised to find Dean as a detective, living with a man. It was quite far removed from what he’d been like before he left. Sam could think of only women as being Dean’s targets. “Okay, was that a butt out or ask a smarter question?”

Dean smirked, looking back using the driving mirror in the car. “Ask smarter questions and it’s not like you couldn’t pick up a phone.”

Sam huffed. “Well, you left with just a note saying not to call unless we got our shit together and stopped our crazy arguments and vendettas. Dad didn’t listen and when I wanted to go to law school, it caused another fight.”

Dean sighed, knowing his father, he knew how this ended. “So Dad, being a stubborn marine, kept on hunting alone.”

Sam shrugged as there would have been no stopping the man even if they tried. “I was done putting my life on hold. I took your advice and carved out a life of my own.”
Dean grinned. “Best thing I’ve heard all day. So tell us what you know about Dad.”

Sam shrugged. “Not much, only what Bobby knew - which was there was something odd about a five-mile stretch outside Jericho. Dad went down to investigate and three weeks later we get that message, which is when I drove to find you.”

Tony had stayed quiet as he’d been reading through the case files. There were ten victims and if this was a serial killer, the victimology would suggest a female, looking at helping her fellow females by killing those who could harm other women emotionally.

“All males, all known to enjoy the company of women but in relationships.” Tony thought about it now from a supernatural perspective. “So who is the woman in white?”

Sammy looked in shock at Dean who was chuckling. “What? We met when a succubus made a play for me. He’s a Federal Agent - he did his research. Look at the evidence and it is a fair jump in logic”

Sam looked concerned. “A succubus doesn’t just make a play, so how did you escape?”

Tony turned his head back. “I was hotter and more inspirational, in more ways than one. She couldn’t compete.”

Dean threw back his head with laughter as it wasn’t an idle boast. “He’s right, you know. Now the upside for you having two legitimate officers of the law means you won’t have to fake one.”

Tony nodded. “And the earlier victim was previously in the marines so I have the jurisdiction to poke around.”

From the back seat, Sam was the first one to see the sign proclaiming that Jericho was seven miles away. The sight of local cop cars surrounding an abandoned car made all three of them share looks. Dean was the one to say it. “Who wants to guess that a man is missing and won’t be found?”

Sam gave him a look. “Shall I drive around and pick you up?”

Dean and Tony shared a whole conversation with silent looks the way only in sync couples could. Dean finally nodded. “Yeah, see if you can find the room Dad no doubt holed up in.”

Sam nodded and took the keys off Dean. “Try not to start a fight.”

Dean frowned as Sammy started driving away. “Don’t scratch it.”

~*~

The local cops were still milling around the abandoned car and Tony and Dean stood back for a few seconds getting a feel for the local’s idea of what was going on. It didn’t take long for them to realise that they didn’t have a clue. It was understandable as they wouldn’t be looking for supernatural causes.

The Sheriff noticed them. “Can I help you?”

Tony stepped forward. “Special Agent Anthony DiNozzo. NCIS. This is my partner Detective Winchester. You have had another victim?” He phrased it as a question but knew the answer already.
The Sheriff was about to protest but realised he could do with the help as he had no idea how to explain this case. “We have no idea and no clues, apart from this one small stretch of road.”

Tony looked around the edges of the car. “Have you asked for a profile of the killer?”

The chief shook his head. “This is a small town, the budget won’t allow it.”

Tony shook his head. “Well, I looked at your reports and victimology and I can tell you a fair bit about your killer.”

“Will you brief the staff?”

Tony nodded. “Sure thing, we’ll get rooms in town and then debrief at the sheriff’s office.”

~*~

Dean was bitching. “Why did I let him take my car?”

Tony snorted. “A moment of insanity?”

Dean scowled, ignoring his amused looks. “Stupid dad, and not taking back up, man I hate this place already.”

Tony snickered at his boyfriend’s bitching, he only got in this mood when he was seriously worried. “We’ll figure it out.” He tried to reassure Dean.

“Are you sure my crazy family won’t scare you away?” Dean asked him and Tony could hear the insecurity in his voice.

“Darlin, I fought a succubus for you, surely that tells you I’m in this for the long haul.”

Dean kissed him softly. “It does, you know.”

“Hhhmmmm.”

As Dean rested his forehead against Tony’s, he realised he’d never thought he’d be interrupted with his boyfriend at this age. “Sam, I say this with all the truth in my heart. You have the worst timing.”

Sam shrugged. “So he will look like a crazy supernatural kook.”

Dean looked around the room in disbelief at how stupid his father had been. There was researching the case and then there was trying to look like a serial killer. “Damn it. We’re so lucky no one has figured out he’s missing.”

Sam shrugged. “Go on then, Tony, tell him.”
“Any agent or cop surveying this scene would think killer. He’s stalked the victims, then collected mementos and the supernatural element is fuelling his fantasies. That’s how I would see it.” Tony finished, thanking whatever deity that a Deputy hadn’t already seen this room.

The walls looked like a who’s who of potential killers if they were searching for a Supe. “Hey, look, Daddy Dearest thought like I did ... Women in White and even found the name of our little lady.”

“Constance Welch.” Dean muttered the name out loud. There was no fear that by saying her name, he’d summon her close. After all, his Dad was a paranoid bastard and had warded his motel room to keep out the fiercest of demons.

Tony looked at the two brothers. “So, plan?”

Sam knew what the process involved. “Salt and burn the bones before she takes any more men.”

Tony liked the sound of that. “You do that and I’ll distract the cops at the station by giving them their profile of fair Constance. Just don’t die on me in the meantime.”

Dean kissed him lightly and let Tony know he was onto his plan. “Don’t punch my dad if you run into him.”

Tony didn’t make a promise he had no intention of keeping and Dean knew it. Dean sighed and tried another tactic, “Don’t punch Dad until I can see it.”

Tony smirked. “Now that I can promise.”

Sam had gasped in shock at the idea of someone punching his Dad. Tony though, he looked fierce and determined and totally in Dean’s corner. Sam was glad as no one had ever really been solely on Dean’s side since the fire that killed their mom when Dean was four. He was ashamed to admit that he hadn’t always been in his brother’s corner either but he would do better.

“Is he serious?”

Dean nodded because every word Tony had said was true. “Oh yeah, he has been for quite awhile. It was a meeting I was hoping to put off.”

Sam didn’t know what to say. “Huh. We need to find Constance Welch.”

Dean sighed. “Let’s start with the faithless bastard husband.”

~*~

Tony saw them pull a guy who looked distinctly recognisable. He groaned as there would be no way for him to punch the guy in the face. He was glad he’d hand-typed the profile for the Sheriff clearly stating that the killer was a female, late twenties - early thirties who was scorned by a man and as a result wanted to kill those she deems faithless and harmful to her fellow women.

The Sheriff read it. “Jesus, it sounds like Welch’s wife but she’s dead.”

Tony shrugged as he knew the Sheriff wasn’t wrong, sadly, he’d not be able to bring the dead killer to justice. Dean and Sam would be able to stop the killings.

“There are some wooded areas around here if she was from this town she’d know how to survive.”
The Sheriff rubbed his hands over his face. Christ, oh lord. This was going to be tough. “So it’s not the guy in lock up. We caught him messing around and he had some weird shit on him.”

Tony had to think about this carefully, he weighed up letting the man stay in jail with the disappointment on his son’s faces. “No, no he couldn’t - probably just a fruitcake who wants to believe in the supernatural.”

The Sheriff looked like he wanted to keep him or protest. In the end, he sighed and rattled his keys as he opened the lock on the cell. “You’re free to go, Mr. Arnfaran.”

Tony pretended to be surprised. “Huh. There was a Samuel Arnfaran at the motel I checked into. Relation?”

The man shook his head. “No, Sir. Thanks.”

He said thanks but his tone implied that he’d rather go a few rounds of torture than admit that. Dean would say that nothing had changed on that front. Tony forced himself to stay silent as a way to keep this civil until they were away from prying eyes.

~*~

Out in the parking lot, Tony had his hand on his phone. “Are you done with the salt and burn?”

Tony huffed. “No, there wasn’t judgement but the cops are going to be looking for our Constance.”

John was listening in his own car, somehow this agent man knew what was going on and was close to Dean and Sam. He had no idea just how close Dean was to Tony. He had to make sure this man was safe, and not a demon.

Tony could guess at the man’s thought patterns and actually let John Winchester follow him. Only to expedite a reunion between father and sons so he could get back to DC before Gibbs had kittens.

He pulled into the parking lot of the Motel, watching the none too subtle car that had tailed him pull in moments later. Really, he was a Federal Agent and he thought these tactics would work?

Tony strolled into the motel room to see two bedraggled Winchesters. “Hey, honey. I’m home.”

Sam groaned not liking the gooey scene developing in front of him. Impressively, considering he was holding an ice-pack to the chest, he still managed to bitch. “I just had a ghost slam me into a wall. I do not need to see this.”

Tony, who had been pulled into a hug by Dean, turned his face to smirk at his all but brother-in-law. “You will be back with Jessica soon enough.”

Sam shrugged but the wince let Tony know how much pain he was in. “True but that is still my big brother.”

Dean rolled his eyes. “And don’t you forget it.”

The knock at the door disturbed the easy banter. Tony groaned knowing who it would be. “That will be your Dad, he trailed me from the station. It’s a bit rich considering I helped get him a release.”
Sam sighed. “Gratitude isn’t something John Winchester would ever recognise. You could save his life and he would have a go, saying it was his kill or something.”

Dean opened the door, “Hey, Dad.”

“He is a demon!” Was all he said before charging in no friendly greeting to his sons, or apology for freaking them out by going incomunicado.

Tony let John get into the room before he punched him in the face. The eldest Winchester went down, more from the shock than the initial punch.

Sam was in shock, Dean was laughing. “Now you’re never going to convince him that you’re not evil.”

Tony didn’t care too much. He’d vowed to do that for how badly the man had screwed with Dean’s head. All he offered in his defense was, “Hey, he deserved that for how he treated you growing up.”

Sam saw the unrepentant look on Tony’s face and knew that he wasn’t sorry. Sam snickered. “Man, I can’t wait for Thanksgiving.”

John started to come around. “Why are you talking to a demon like he is family?”

Dean stood up tall and proud, not taking any more crap from the man. “Hey, that's my boyfriend you’re talking about. And check the room, you paranoid jackass.”

John looked around the room and looked as sheepish as he ever could. The room was full of wardings for spirits and demons. He didn’t want to concede ground so demanded to know, “Why was he at the station then?”

Dean face-palmed. “Tony knows you are important to me and helped since I went with Sammy.”

Tony stood as silent as a sentinel, Gibbs would be so proud of him right now. When Winchester looked at him expectantly, Tony just smirked. “What he said.”

*The crazy thing was - John disappeared from the motel room leaving his kids in the dust. Sam looked bewildered, whereas Dean just looked like he’d expected it. Tony patted Sam on the shoulder and ordered they go and eat their disappointment away.*

*John watched them from outside the diner. It was better this way, he could hunt the demon and his sons would be safe. The demon had taken too much away.*

*He should have known better - The best way to fight was as a team but that deserves its own story.*
Jake could not believe he’d listened to Tony. Worse, he’d actually gone along with the plan. “This is stupid.”

Tony chuckled at the pout he could hear in his boyfriend’s voice. At their age, it was ridiculous, unless of course you loved the person and then you just found it ridiculously endearing. “Jakey, you just helped bring down Ravenwood, your family is not anywhere in their league.”

Jake was still pouting. “That’s what you think. Wait until you’ve met Johnston Green III and see if you still think that.”

Tony was taking a leg of the driving as Jake had been way too tense and wired to drive safely. He was doing this because he knew that Jake badly wanted to reconcile with his family. Still, he didn’t want to do it if Jake was getting so nervous he’d start having a panic attack. Tony was well aware that Jake had a few demons that could trigger PTSD - they’d discussed them. “Look, say the word and I turn this car right around to Topeka and I never mention it again.”

Jake smiled because he knew Tony would do just that. He knew that Tony wouldn’t even hold the waste of time against him. He really had struck lucky to find someone that cared for him unconditionally. “I’m nervous okay, and I don’t like the way your boss made us take so many weapons with us in the trunk. I don’t think even your badge will help us if we get stopped.”

Tony would have shrugged because that had been weird. Gibbs had, for once, not given him any shit for taking time off to go on this road trip with Jake. The only thing he had done was, after cowboy steaks, chucked a duffel bag full of weapons and demanded they take them to Lawrence.

“Phone your mom.” Tony nagged, knowing that Jake needed to hear her voice as it would soothe at least some of his worries.

Jake chuckled because Tony really did know how to help him settle his mind. “Okay.”

As he picked up the phone, he saw the ten-mile sign for his hometown. Well, this was it, the prodigal son was returning home.

~*~

The town was quaint and so different from DC that Tony found it refreshing. It was such a different pace of life. “Wow, no wonder you hate DC”

Jake gave him a look. “I don’t hate all of DC.”

Tony squeezed his knee. “Good, I don’t come to Kansas for just anyone.”
And that was when the blast shook the car, Tony saw the mushroom cloud over Denver and as the car spun he was pretty sure he saw one over Columbus too. His brain knew what he was seeing but he couldn’t believe it, two nuclear bombs had just detonated. And then everything went black for a few moments.

~*~

Tony woke first and his first thought was to check on Jake. “Jakey, you okay?”

“Wha...?”

Tony’s hands were checking Jake over. He looked okay for the most part but Tony knew some of the most dangerous injuries were the ones you couldn’t see. However looking at Jake, his eyes weren’t glassy and there were no lumps or bumps that signalled internal bleeding. His relief was palpable, he kissed Jake hard just revelling in the fact they were alive. “Thank god you’re okay.”

“I ache all over but we’re alive so I’ll take it.”

Tony couldn’t agree more. He hadn’t said it yet but now was the time. “I saw two mushroom clouds, one over Denver and one over Columbus.”

Jake paled. “Jesus, did your boss know?”

Tony shrugged as that thought had been rushing through his mind as well. Gibbs had been weird but Tony had put it down to his boss being a paranoid bastard. “I couldn’t say. Look, the world is crazy but we’re alive so let’s just get to Jericho and check in on your family. We’ll take stock there and figure out our next move together.”

“Together.” Jake vowed to him.

~*~

Their drive was silent and eerie. Spookier because of what they knew. It was going okay ... until the birds started falling out of the sky. Not just one of them but all of them. Tony pulled over to the side but the minute he stopped the car, the engine started to smoke. This was so not good.

They stayed in the car, clutching each other’s hands whilst it rained birds. It wasn’t out of fear but to more remind themselves that they were not alone. They were weighing the danger of staying in a car with a smoking engine with the chance of being hit by a radioactive bird. The truth was, neither of those options sounded appealing.

Jake let out a breath when it stopped. “What a day!”

Tony smiled. “And to think you thought talking to your Dad would be the most horrible part of your day.”

Jake laughed roughly at that because right now that did seem so stupid. “Yeah, we need to get out and walk. The town is about three miles out.”

Tony nodded because there was no other option. “We should get the bags and make tracks. We’ll take the guns and the little first aid kit. Also, and this is non-negotiable before we go anywhere we’re going to take a swig of iodine.”

“Why?”
Tony explained it. “Helps your body with low radiation doses, gonna taste like crap but we won’t die.”

Jake was okay with that. “In that case ... bottom’s up.”

Jake took the first swig before passing the bottle to his lover. “So we better make tracks as it’ll get dark soon and I don’t fancy being out of town when night falls in these circumstances.”

Tony nodded. “After you, Kansas.”

Jake rolled his eyes but smiled as he picked up his weapons bag. The world was going to shit but he still had Tony and he was going home - it could be worse. Jake shared some of the stories of his youth, he didn’t need to sanitize them with Tony as he already knew the worst things in his past. Tony was walking with Jake for about an hour before they heard it. “Mister. Mister. You gotta help us, she’s gonna die.”

Tony and Jake quickly followed over the ridge. Tony had gently eeked out the problem from the child; the school bus had crashed. The driver was apparently asleep according to their teacher who couldn’t walk but the little girl couldn’t breathe properly having hit her throat against the seat in the crash.

Jake saw something that concerned him, in the bush, there were the remains of a prison bus - he gently nudged Tony to let him see it too. His lover saw it and nodded. It was information to store but they’d deal with the current crisis first.

Tony knew how much Jake would freak around kids. “Hey, little guy. Where is the bus?”

The kid pointed at the bus that was smacked into the hillside. Tony sighed because this was going to be difficult to get moving. It was full of second graders by Tony’s estimate and a teacher. Tony took a full sweeping glance. “No surprise guests.”

Jake nodded hearing what Tony wasn’t saying. “I’ll do the first aid, you keep a lookout.”

They hadn’t reached the bus. “Are you sure?”

Jake wasn’t sure about anything. In fact, he hated the whole thing but he wouldn’t let his personal issues see a kid die. He just needed to keep his mind in the moment and hope he didn’t have a flashback to Iraq, which was easier said than done. “I have the greater first aid emergency training, it makes sense.”

Tony didn’t argue as his mind was already on the escaped prisoner bus. There was enough danger already out there without adding human danger to the mix. Jake entered and did a good job at calming the kids whilst Tony stood on the steps of the bus to make sure they didn’t get any rogue visitors.

The teacher looked pale and banged up herself. Her leg was definitely broken. Tony distracted her. “Hey, what’s your name?”

“Heather Graham, I teach the second grade.”

Tony smiled although it might have looked less intimidating if he didn’t have the shotgun in his hand. “Special Agent Anthony DiNozzo.”
“Oh, that explains the gun.” She said like it was an average thing. Tony got the impression that there wasn’t much that phased this woman. She came across as sweet but he could just tell she had a steel backbone.

“I need a straw, her breathing has stopped.” Jake shouted. “Ice - I need to keep the swelling down while I find a straw.”

Tony watched as the ice went to the back, everyone else seemed to slow their breathing down in response to the scene in front of them. He was watching Jake closer and could see his lover’s struggle for calm.

Tony had his own eureka moment. “Do you have tape? Sellotape.”

She nodded and handed it over not quite seeing how the tape and the horrific problem linked. Tony figured being kids on a school trip they had juice. “Right I need everyone to get their straws from the lunchbox drinks and pass them to me.”

Quietly, Tony propped the shotgun by the teacher. “If you see something outside, yell, don’t be brave.”
She nodded knowing there were things he wasn’t saying because he didn’t want to scare the children.

He took a deep breath. “MacGyver - eat your heart out.”
He’d fashioned a much wider tube by sticking all the tiny straws together and sharpening the edge so that it could pierce the skin. Once he was sure it would hold up, he made his way through the horde of children. “Hey, use this.”

Jake took it, grateful as it would do in a pinch. “I gotta do this.”

Tony squeezed his shoulder. “You got this and I will get the bus moving to get us back into town.”

Jake whispered. “Stay.”

Tony didn’t make a big deal out of it, that wasn’t how they worked. “You got it, babe, I’ll stay right here.”

The gurgling sound of rasping breath had never sounded so sweet as it did when the cute little blonde opened her eyes. “Hey Stacy, don’t talk. Just stay right where you are.” Jake ordered.

Tony was relieved the little girl was okay but that didn’t mean the situation wasn’t fraught. Dark was setting in, there was the escaped prisoner bus and the bombs to consider. As a result, Tony really wanted to be in Jericho yesterday. “Let’s get you lot home.”

The teacher, Heather, chuckled. “Home is nowhere close though, judging by your clothes and accent.”

Tony shrugged and with a wink. “Home is with this one.”

~*~

It had taken a quick tweak to the engine but soon enough the school bus was making steady progress toward the town. The children singing songs as a way to hide how scared they were. Tony’s smirk had grown, choosing to live in the moment. “Not the first time driving the bus?”
Jake smirked right back. “First time with permission.”

Tony sighed. “So this wasn’t quite how I envisaged meeting the Parents.”

Heather grinned as it was such a refreshingly normal worry, compared to their crazy day. “Rescuing a school bus full of kids will help.”

Tony shrugged. “Nah, that was Jake. I just provided the security.”
“Well, you do make an attractive couple, you’re going to shock a lot of people, and those you don’t shock - Well, you will probably break their hearts.”

Tony had heard it before but he only had eyes for Jake. Jake with his desire to fight wrongs as the little guy and not take any crap, well, Tony could admit he’d been inspired and willing to change things in his own life.

*And now, his love for Jake may have just saved both of their lives. He had no confirmation but he felt it in his gut that Washington was gone. He would face angry parents, small towns and whatever else life could throw at them - as long as he had Jake by his side he could cope with anything.*
Tony was in New York and had come back to Manhattan as he hated Long Island with an abiding passion. He’d done his due diligence and watched as his father married wife number five. Tony was impressed - this one was marginally older than he was. Wife number four had been five years younger. That was just plain squicky in Tony’s mind.

“I need scotch, preferably older than I am.” Tony announced to the bartender who smirked right back at him.

A man chuckled beside him. “He’s smirking because I said the same thing to him.”

Tony turned around to see a cute guy. Wow, he was not too shabby at all. Rich too, so wouldn’t be after Tony’s money. It was a little sad that he had to consider that but once bitten, twice shy. It was a saying of his Uncle Clive’s but oh so true. Tony didn’t actually parade it around in Washington but he had enough money that in reality, he didn’t ever have to work again.

“Oh, well damn, let’s drink to bad weeks.” Tony offered.

The guy raised his glass. “Mark Sloan.”

“Tony DiNozzo.”

Mark twisted his chair to move closer. “So why are people as hot as us having bad weeks?”

Tony had to choke at such a direct question. “Wow. Okay, since you asked, I will play. Daddy dearest has sunk his claws into his latest rich wife. I was demanded to attend the charade. Sorry, the wedding. And, he had the cheek to ask for my trust fund to support the beginning of their marriage.”

Mark winced. “Okay, that is rough. So mine is my best friend is one of the most successful, if not the most successful neurosurgeon in the world and yet he is neglecting his beautiful wife. She is so sad and keeps hinting at me comforting her. I can’t do it, Derek is my brother even if he is being an ass about it.”

Tony sighed because that was a sucky situation to be in. “You know nothing good comes out of that situation right?”

Mark chuckled darkly as that was an understatement. “Hence the drinking in a bar.”

Tony snorted. “I get that but there is a big plus. One is, it is really good expensive scotch and two, you met me.”

Mark raised his glass as that was oh so true. He’d been feeling in a funk only seeing the problems and not the potential solutions. “You’re not wrong.”

The drinks kept flowing and neither man when asked what they talked about later, would be able to recall. It was just so easy to talk to each other.

“Well, well, I wondered where you got to. Addison was worried.”

Tony frowned at hearing the new voice. “Is this Derek?”
Mark grinned, eyes glassy from the alcohol. “Yep, my brother from another mother.”

Tony rolled his eyes and teased his new friend. “You said that you could handle your scotch.”

Derek snorted. “Good stuff, nope, he’s a lightweight when it comes to that.”

Tony shrugged as that wasn’t his problem. Plus, Mark was only buzzed, not seriously drunk. “Back to mine or yours?”

Derek huffed. “Well, I know the way to Mark’s.”

Mark seemed delighted. “Perfect. You are so awesome Derek.”

Tony got the feeling Derek didn’t think so right now. Still, he didn’t care much at the moment. He’d come here to unwind and Mark had helped him do just that. He didn’t want to wave goodbye just yet.

~*~

The morning after, Tony awoke to a warm body next to him. He checked his clothing and noticed he was still fully clothed. *That was different.*

His new friend, Mark, was already awake and smirking at him. “Well, I think Derek disapproves of us.”

Tony sighed. “Hey, plenty of people disapprove of me. It has developed my ability to not give a shit. A perfect mask when working in law enforcement.”

Mark chuckled. “I’m working on it. You know what? You are a hell of a lot better than my shrink.”

Tony had a salacious grin as he turned to face him. “I am so much better. Let me prove it.”

Last night, after Derek had left tutting about making bad life choices, the two men had come to the agreement to wait until morning with clear heads. They were both hot and now sober and of sound minds - so decided to work up an *appetite*.

~*~

McGee looked at Tony confused. The SFA was in on time, which was rare when he returned back from leave. He looked *content* was about the best word for it. Ziva had tried a few barbed comments and they’d all rolled off Tony like they were water. He was completely unruffled. McGee wished he had that ability.

Ziva rolled her eyes. “To be this Zen you must have had a *bowl* in the hay.”

“Roll, Ziva.”

McGee perked up as he hadn’t thought about it that way. “At your father’s wedding?”

Tony smirked. “Boys and girls, you don’t really want to gossip about my love life ... you are always complaining that I share too freely. Well, now I am being sensitive to your requests.”

Wow. Silence. Tony was definitely going to treasure this moment for a long time. It was the perfect
opportunity to get the SFA paperwork done for the month. The government did love its bureaucracy.

“You’re not going to tell us anything?” McGee asked.

Tony smiled. “Nope. I don’t feel like sharing. Senior got married. The end.”

Gibbs smirked, knowing something the others didn’t. This was an SFA who was genuinely besotted by someone. It was going to be an interesting few months. Washington was going to see another side to the mercurial SFA - a balanced one.

~*~

Vance looked at the logs in disbelief. There had been a change in DiNozzo but this was unparalleled. “How many cold cases?”

Gibbs smirked. “Five in the last week.”

Vance was doing the math. “You’ve had two hot cases that you’ve wrapped.”

“Correct.” Gibbs was waiting for him to realise it.

“These were DiNozzo’s code. You give the team separate cold cases to review.”

Gibbs nodded. “They have to be good to be on the MCRT so I won’t waste them looking at the same cases, Leon. It would be a waste.”

Vance choked on his toothpick. “So how the hell did DiNozzo solve five cold cases, practically one every three hours?”

Gibbs shrugged. “He met someone, I believe.”

“Where are they and how do I get them to DC?”

Gibbs shook his head and he was only making this suggestion to Vance as it was time for Tony to have his own team. He’d told his protege as much over dinner last night. “Why not send him to where the significant other is?”

“And where would that be?” Vance asked, having picked up on the lack of pronoun being used. Interesting - not that it mattered.

“Seattle.”

Vance thought about it. “You know the leader of the office for the Western Seaboard has resigned.”

Gibbs nodded. “I’m aware. Tony has the experience and the gravitas to lead - exactly what you need. Plus, if he’s close to his partner his mind won’t have split priorities. He is always professional in these cases so don’t think I’m saying otherwise. He deserves a shot at having a full life.”

What Gibbs wasn’t saying or cared to voice was that he didn’t want his protege to become like him fully - living only for work. He deserved to have a full relationship like he’d had with Shannon.
Mark had gone to Seattle on a wing and prayer. He was lucky that Tony was so understanding. Just like they’d predicted, Addison had cheated. Thankfully, his mind was so full of Tony that it hadn’t been him she’d seduced. Worse, it had been Derek’s intern, Randy. The irony of his name hadn’t been lost on him or Tony.

Derek had cut and run so fast. It got worse from there, Addison was depressed and upset her husband had disappeared. Mark tried to be understanding but it was a little difficult when she’d cheated rather than admitting she was unhappy.

It had taken six weeks before Addison had followed Derek to Seattle in a bid to win him back. Yep, that’s right, Derek apparently had some lusty blonde intern. He sighed as hearing all the rumours and gossip - well, he couldn’t help but think it would make a great tv show.

And now he was in the damn rainy city hoping to save his brother and friends’ marriage. Derek had seen him and been shocked. Mark had smirked. “What - you didn’t think I’d follow you? You’re my brother Derek, I just needed time to sell the practice and let my apartment.”

“What about Tony?”

Mark smirked. “We’re figuring it out. I’m lucky he’s understanding.”

Derek laughed, much to the surprise of the interns who’d tried to listen in. “You so are.”

The epic bromance of McSteamy and McDreamy was growing around the hospital. Meredith found it amusing as long as she was kept out of the gossip. A federal agent caught her attention, he was hot too and definitely needed a McName. “Can I help you?”

“Yeah. I’m looking for Dr. Mark Sloan.”

Meredith smiled. “I can show you the way - he’s our new Head of Plastics.”

The guy seemed amused. “I’m aware.”

“Do I get a name when I have to introduce you?” Meredith asked him, curiosity getting the better of her.

“Mark knows my name.”

She pouted and mystery guy smirked. “Oh, your Derek’s Intern aren’t you? Wow, I bet Addison had kittens seeing you.”

Meredith shrugged. “It was a memorable first meeting that’s for damn sure.”

The guy offered a small smirk and conciliatory offer. “I’m Mark’s.”

Meredith stared in shock because she knew what that sounded like. There was no room for interpretation there, the kiss Dr. Sloan pulled the Agent into, dealt with any lingering doubts. Wow, this pair was definitely going to break a few hearts. She needed to find Cristina to share the gossip with ... she would’ve said goodbye but they were too occupied with each other.

*It was true what they said, the good men were married, gay or taken and she had the feeling that*
Dr. Sloan and his agent were about to become all three.
Tony was grinning at Ronon, his man was not comfortable in a suit. He may look fantastic in it but he was definitely not comfortable. Truth be told, Tony preferred Ronon in his favourite leather trousers. He tried to remind him of this fact. “Relax, Dreadlocks, we’ll be back home soon enough.”

He got a grunt in return but didn’t take it personally. He knew that Ronon was unfond of Earth and he could understand his issues. Earth was teeming with people, just like Sateda was before that final wraith attack. Still, it wasn’t just that, Tony knew that Ronon didn’t get, what was in Ronon’s mind, all the stupid rules. He didn’t either which was probably why he and Ronon worked so well together.

They were not alone as Ronon’s team was also present. The paperwork and reports did require a yearly meeting in Washington. The fact they’d be in Washington for mere forty-eight hours and would then be forced to spend three weeks on a tin can, sorry, the spaceship Daedalus, to return home seemed a little odd to him.

“I hate Washington.” Rodney declared as he sat ungracefully in his own chair. Tony was glad to have SGA1 with him, for backup.

Tony shrugged as he was indifferent to it, for better or worse this had been home for a while. He was just glad that Morrow had helped him see the wood from the trees and given him a better offer. He dreaded to think what might have happened if he’d stayed there after the Seahawk fiasco. “You get to use it, Rodney.” The look of horror on Rodney’s face suggested he doubted that but Tony was quick to finish. “I much prefer the base though, before you start to argue.”

Sheppard smirked and raised his glass. “She is a beautiful place to live.” After all, Tony and John shared a very strong expression of the ATA gene and thus Atlantis doted on them. The other occupants in the city had come to accept the favouritism as they had little choice. “So. Whose meeting is next?”

Tony groaned as it reminded him, so far Rodney had completed his with the IOA and so had Sheppard. “It’s mine at Homeland with Director Morrow.”

Ronon frowned because he didn’t think Tony would have a problem with his boss. He seemed to respect the guy. “Why’s that an issue?”

Tony chuckled because he saw the defensive reaction, Ronon was ready to go to battle for him. “Not for the reasons you think. I have the worst luck and I just know I will run into my previous team.”

McKay didn’t like the idea of anyone trying to pick on one of his friends. The story of the MCRT and how Tony came to leave the team had come out during one of their team nights. He did remind Tony that he had true friends now. “They are beneath you - I mean they are stuck here.”

Tony knew it to be true and didn’t hide his smile. “Oh, I know. To be honest, I just don’t want the hassle. They can’t attack any part of my life - great job; great friends; great lover ... I really can’t complain.” It was amazing how much his life had changed in just two years.

McKay still was unhappy. He didn’t make many close friends so he was very protective of the ones
who he could get along with. “What were the bobo and chuckles called on this team again?”

Tony knew that in his mind they would now forever be called Bobo and Chuckles. “Agent Timothy McGee and Agent Ziva David but I wouldn’t even know where they are now. We were split up and on separate teams before I left for the base.”

McKay and Sheppard shared a glance, Tony didn’t even want to guess but Ronon and Teyla seemed to agree with whatever their silent plan was. Tony never got a chance to find out as he and Ronon needed to make tracks for his meeting with Morrow.

~*~

Tony exited Morrow’s office and was grinning as he now had a whole evening free to take Ronon around the city before they were reporting back to the Pentagon for the air express trip up to the Daedalus for their trip home early tomorrow morning.

“You ready to blow this joint?” Tony asked his partner, joy at the fact he was free evident in his voice.

“You said no weapons.” Ronon was still vexed that he wasn’t allowed a blaster out of the mountain. How was he supposed to protect his team?

Anyone else may have been fooled by the innocent face, not Tony. “Cute. Let’s get out of here. Are we meeting the others or do we have the whole evening free?”

Ronon smirked because that he’d definitely planned. “Evening free.”

“TONY!”

Tony sighed and for a second leaned against Ronon. He was taking just a few seconds to decide whether he was going to pretend like he’d never heard at all. He knew that there would be no good way to fake it and he was an undercover specialist. So he went for a better option, complete and utter professional detachment. “Agent McGee, what can I do for you?”

“You left!?” McGee all but screeched. His anger was purpling his face in a most unattractive way.

Tony snorted because he couldn’t see why there would be a shock at that idea. Oh wait, they probably expected him to stick around to be their verbal whipping boy. Well, not this one - Tony wanted Tim to understand that. “I sure did. There was no way I was going to be sent away like a naughty schoolboy for doing my job and following the orders of my Director.”

“What are you doing here?” Shock and confusion still reigned, he was definitely on the back foot following Tony’s diatribe.

Tony snorted - he didn’t know why his inner voice sounded like Rodney saying It’s not nice to play with your food but he was happy to go along with it. He knew that being deliberately vague would frustrate the hell out of his probie, which is exactly why he did it. “My job. Surely you heard I’d transferred to Homeland. I had a meeting with the boss.” Like it was the most obvious thing in the world.

Tony technically worked for HomeWorld Security but that could hardly be known to the wider public so for ease’s sake he reported to Morrow. “Aaaanywwaaaay, bye McGee.”
Tony was two hundred percent already done with the conversation and it had only just begun. Tony looked at Ronon as they walked away, just knowing that his taciturn lover would have an opinion.

“You cared about McWeasel’s opinion?”

Tony actually laughed at the disdain in his lover’s voice. It was more than obvious he didn’t have a very positive opinion of McGee. Ronon always had been a good judge of character, it had been his years running from the Wraith which had honed those instincts. Tony did answer him honestly. “Yeah, looking back - not my finest moment but just remember it was what led me to you so I am over it.”

Ronon growled. “Only thing stopping me going on a hunting trip.”

Tony grinned at his boyfriend because he knew that was true. “Hey. I am alright. There is no need to defend my honour.”

Ronon shook his head. “There is every need - you are my one. You did the same for me.”

Tony opened his mouth to argue but promptly closed it, realising that yes, he was right, he had. He’d done the threat assessment when Ronon had been brought to Atlantis by Sheppard. He was so glad he’d listened to his gut because Ronon had ended up becoming the most important person in his life. “You’re right. Let’s get some food and head back to the hotel.”

Ronon perked up. “You mentioned Italian?” He would let Tony change the subject for now but he’d been serious.

Tony’s grin grew wider. “Oh yeah, let’s go Matteo’s.”

~*~

They’d been at the restaurant for about thirty minutes when he spotted his former teammates enter the place. Tony just facepalmed, you would think people would take a hint. “You have got to be kidding me.”

“What is it?” Ronon asked, wondering what had set Tony off.

Tony huffed, aggravated at his time with Ronon being infringed upon. He’d wanted to show him this restaurant ever since they’d shared stories about their favourite cuisine. “Little McTattletale has brought back up to annoy us this time.”

Ronon surveyed what this backup amounted to and he wasn’t impressed. The Genii posed more of a challenge. “Not impressed.”

Tony would dearly love to see Ziva’s face if she heard Ronon’s assessment that she didn’t even rate on the danger scale to him. He was almost certain it would bruise her fragile ego. He doubted it wouldn’t take long for it to become a reality though, as his old colleagues were making a beeline straight to their table.

Tony looked his lover straight in the eye. “No matter how rude or annoying they get, please don’t stab, shoot or knock them out.”

Ronon snorted. “No promises.”
Tony chuckled and braced himself as the group reached their table. “Did my ignoring you not give you a hint, McStubborn?”

Tim looked uncomfortable. “Ziva and Abby demanded that we talk to you.”

Ronon just stared at the trio. “Are we supposed to care?”

Tony laughed and it was rich, revelling at the look of shock on their faces. It seemed they hadn’t picked up on the fact that they weren’t the centre of the universe. “According to their idea of the world we should.”

“Who is this, Tony?” Ziva purred and Tony wanted to throw up at her trying that tone with him.

“My lover, Ronon.”

Wow. Pure silence. It was blessed and he didn't think he’d managed to shock all three of them silent at the same time. Ever.

“You left us, Tony.”

Tony shook his head. “No, Vance wanted to send me away to a boat and Morrow gave me a better offer. Why should I have stuck around?”

“Gibbs isn’t the same without you.” Abby said with a pout.

Tony huffed. “Abby, Gibbs is a grown ass man who does not need me to stand by his side for eternity. I have needs too.”

Ronon smirked at the annoying female. “Don’t worry - we care for him. Better than your team did.”

Ziva stood up, her ego obviously ruffled. Tony stepped up to this one. “Ziva, you try your Mossad ninja crap on Ronon you are going to come off second best. Now, I am not going to be reprimanded like a child. I won’t apologise for finding a life that is separate to NCIS as I love my life now and I didn’t speak to you lot as it was obvious to me that we’re not friends.”

Abby looked close to tears. “You were never this cold.”

Tony stood up and Ronon stayed in his personal space. He had to smile seeing Sheppard and the others in the entrance of the place. “There is nothing cold about me. Now if you'll excuse me, my friends have arrived and we’re having a night of liberty before returning to work. Bye-bye.”

And Tony walked out the door and forever out of their lives - he didn’t even look back. McGee had tried to hack Tony’s file to see what he was up to nowadays and after a four-star general had informed him of the consequences he wisely back off. The solve rate had dropped thirteen percent even with getting two new players into the team. It made no difference, the MCRT would never regain the agency high it had once enjoyed and it’s best investigator was now living a happy and fulfilling life in another galaxy.
Ryan woke in the hospital and his first instinct was to check his chest. This time, there was no gaping wound, only a mess of hair. He found himself smiling. Tony was so brave. He’d actually kept Carroll on his toes long enough for Agent Gibbs to take him out.

He’d remembered each moment of being in that cabin. He had to thank Carroll for stripping Tony - it had been a wonderful distraction from fear of death. He’d spent so long using alcohol to chase away the demons of his past and Anthony DiNozzo had done it without trying.

He stroked the hair and Tony hummed awake slowly. “Hey, sleepyhead. How are you doing?”

Ryan grinned weakly. “Way better for you being here. For the record, I can do a much better date.”

Tony chuckled at the humour. “Oh, I know. You can prove it when you get out of here.”

Ryan didn’t understand the pull they had but he didn’t want to explain it. If he was being rational he might think they were moving too quickly but it wasn’t that at all. He’d understood it in the cabin when Carroll had both Tony and him at his mercy. Tony and he had both run and hidden from the past, but they hadn’t been living. Joe Carroll’s death had freed them of a spectre they hadn’t realised had been hanging over them.

“I will.”

Tony’s laughter floated through the room. “Sleep, Ryan. I’m not going anywhere. The new Director won’t let me work till I see a shrink so I think I’ll help with your recovery. I’m no nurse but I can play the part.”

Ryan groaned as parts of him stirred before he fell asleep once more. At least this time he fell asleep with a smile on his face.

Tony watched Ryan sleep once more and he couldn’t believe their luck. They’d survived Joe’s attention and that was more than most of his victims could claim. Tony was done letting Joe dictate any part of his life. The bastard was finally dead and could no longer hurt him or anyone else.
There a knock at the door and turning his head, he saw Gibbs in the doorway. “Hey, boss. Come on in.”

“How is he?”

Tony sighed because that was tricky. The hospital was treating him as Ryan’s partner and he hadn’t dissuaded them. “His heart got a pounding from the crap Joe and his goons used, plus you know - the being tied to a table.”

Gibbs stood there for a second. “And you?”

Tony looked up with a smile, weak due to tiredness but a true smile. “You know what? I feel relaxed and free, which is so odd. I just need Ryan to be okay. I can’t let Joe take anything else.”

Gibbs patted him on the back. “That’s the spirit. I’ll keep Todd and McGee away for the day but you’re going to have to consider what happens next.”

Tony sighed. “Oh yeah, they know about the masks. Damn.”

Gibbs smirked. “You’ll figure it out. Make sure you rest - it wasn’t too long ago you were in here.”

Tony nodded, knowing what Gibbs was trying to say without saying it. “I will be careful, boss, and thanks for getting the bastard.”

~*~

Todd and McGee stepped into the hospital room. It was odd, they weren’t here to check on the patient but rather his primary guest. Tony or was it Claude? This was still so confusing. McGee, in particular, was struggling to deal with the information overload. There was one minute and he thought Tony was a lazy SFA who got by on charm, the next minute he’d found out that Tony was actually Claude. Not to mention he was previously married to a man and a Professor, holding a Ph.D.!

“Hey, how are you?”

Tony looked up and shrugged. “Waiting on the crap to clear Ryan’s system.”

Kate observed the hands that were permanently linked. She quirked an eyebrow and Tony just smirked, neither confirming or denying her suspicions. “Good for you. I have to ask - is it Tony or Claude?”

She saw the question race through his mind, so many emotions usually kept hidden raced across his face. “Tony, I think, the only one who I can hear call me Claude, is Ryan.”

Kate smiled. “Well, we’re glad you are okay and I’ll be glad when you’re back to work. It’s weird right now. Haswari is being hunted by three teams. Although Director Morrow, before he left, ordered our team to stay away.”

Tony sucked in a breath and knew he needed to warn the junior agents. “Look, Gibbs gets these cases that he won’t shake and they can turn crazy. Be glad and review cold cases, I always find those satisfying.”
McGee huffed. “Why? They’re unsolved.”

Tony had a massive grin. “Exactly, McProbie, the lure of solving a mystery is vital to any investigator.”

Kate could see his passion and enthusiasm, she was just frustrated that he’d hid it from them. Why hadn’t she seen it? She was supposed to be a profiler. She didn’t get Tony and Ryan as she thought the spectre of Joe Carroll would stop them. Still, she couldn’t control them and this was something that they’d figure out on their own.

She tapped McGee’s shoulder. “Come on, McGee, time to go back to the office.”

“We just got here.” He said bewildered.

Kate glared. “And now we’re leaving, I will explain in the car.”

~*~

Ryan woke slowly, feeling much stronger and coherent. There was a head asleep on his chest. He didn’t push him off, he was sure that Claude was a dream. Still, Claude woke up, obviously detecting noise or his breathing changing. “Are you sure you’re not a dream, Claude?”

Claude shook his head. “No, I am not. Do you know you’re the only one I can stomach calling me by name? How crazy is that?”

Ryan looked sad for a second. “You get to be whoever you want to be.”

Claude smiled. “Oh, I am. And we’re going to be so much better together.”

Ryan couldn’t find himself disagreeing. He wasn’t disillusioned, he knew he was a functioning alcoholic and had nearly slipped into the not so functioning. Claude made him see that there was still so much he wanted to do. He was done avoiding life. “Agreed.”

Hardy fell asleep, although he felt better his body was still recovering both from the beating at the hands of Joe and what he’d put his body through.

~*~

It was a month since the incident that had seen Carroll die and Tony could have done without this little hoop to jump through even though it was a stipulation for returning to duty. He should have taken the FBI offer and gone to lecture at the academy like Ryan had. He hadn’t though, and now he was facing the NCIS psychiatrist. He had nothing against the profession, hell, he had a Ph.D. in psychology himself, which in part was the problem.

“So how do you feel?”

Tony rolled his eyes. “My former husband attacked us and kidnapped me but thankfully we’re alive and Gibbs made sure he was not. I can’t complain. Honestly, I feel free. Now can I go?”

She seemed surprised by his candour. Tony smirked because he would do what was needed to get the hell out of there. If he needed to lead them on a merry chase he would but the truth would see him free far quicker.
“You mention we and us.”

Tony shrugged. “I’ve been on several dates with Agent Hardy. We may not have had the best timing but it feels right.”

Her eyebrows shot up to the top of her head. “You mean to say you are going on a date with the man that caught Joe Carroll?”

Tony shrugged as she didn’t have the right perspective on it. “Why not? He is hot, cultured and adores sports. What’s not to like?”

She approached it tentatively, not realising that she was now on the backfoot. “Surely, it would be triggering?”

Tony shook his head. “Lady, I have been chained to a serial killer whilst working for NCIS, caught the plague and hidden my identity for five years. The dates are something I am quite looking forward to.”

She looked cautious but it was obvious that Tony could not be dissuaded so she settled for, “I hope it goes well.”

Tony was far more confident. “Oh, they are going great.”

~*~

Kate saw Tony come back from his appointment. “You okay?”

Tony nodded with a smirk. “Sure. The shrink is confused but I don’t care so there is that.”

McGee didn’t get it, you could tell as he wasn’t trying to hide it. “Why?”

Tony had a wicked grin. “She thinks it’s wrong that I’m dating Agent Hardy ... and I don’t care what she thinks. I wouldn’t have gone unless Shepard had demanded it.”

Kate smiled and showed her support for Tony. “Well, I think you two fit together.”

Tony nodded but changed the conversation, not wanting to talk about it anymore. He was relieved that some of his past was out but he was now finding his feet once more. After all, a few of his masks had been shattered and now he was building new ones. He couldn’t pretend he was a skirt chaser anymore, or that he was just a jock.

It didn’t matter. When he got off work he’d pick up Ryan from his last lecture and then go for a drive to his favourite place. It was out of Washington but not too far a drive. This was their fourth date and Tony knew he was in way too deep for the number of dates but it felt right.

~*~

Tony stood listening to the end of the lecture. He adored how passionate Ryan was for the technique and the nuances of the case. It made him have a small pang, as he did miss teaching. He wasn’t yet ready to return, he’d not yet managed to shake all the connotations of his former husband. He would though, in time.

“You ready to get out of here?”
Ryan hugged him, grinning. “Oh yeah, what you got in mind?”

Tony smirked. “It’s a surprise but you will love it.”

And what do you know? Tony was right - they’d taken his Mustang and drove it out of the city. This little restaurant was on the side of the interstate. It was perfect, quaint and Italian food reigned supreme.

The night ended way more fun and they knew that they were compatible on all levels. Tony walked into work whistling. Not even Gibbs’ bad mood put a dent in his high. McGee and Kate looked at him like he was a lunatic.

“What are you smiling?”

Tony shrugged. “It’s a good day.”

They obviously didn’t agree.

~*~

All was going so well until those damn bastard crazy cult of killers kidnapped Ryan. They’d built up Joe like he was a fucking messiah - and snatched Ryan as he was going to be the sacrifice to bring him back.

Tony shuddered at just the thought. Ryan wasn’t going to die. He was so having words with the FBI - there was supposed to be security on the campus.

Fornell was apologising to Tony but Tony wasn’t listening. “Don’t worry. I will get him back.”

“How?”

Tony looked back but his face was blank, he couldn’t let emotions interfere right now. “Channel a bigger bastard than any of those wannabe misfits could hope to be.”

Kate gasped. “Tony, you can’t.”

Tony snorted, and his voice even changed to the cold purr that Joe used so infamously. “Oh but I can, Caitlin.”

Oh wow, he even had the accent. Tony prayed that Ryan could forgive him for anything potential flashbacks he may trigger. The trouble with predators was you needed a bigger predator - In Tony’s mind, he couldn’t think of anyone worse than Joe. If this would get Ryan back, he could play the role. He’d worry about the effect later on.

~*~

He was at the doors of the church the freaky cult had inhabited. “You need to wear a vest!”

Tony snorted. “Oh yes, nothing says psycho killer like wearing an FBI bulletproof vest?”

Fornell sighed. “If you die, Gibbs will never speak to me again.”
Tony chuckled because that wasn’t true. “He forgave you for marrying his wife. I think he’ll forgive you this.”

Fornell mattered. “Like wives ten a penny, kids not so much.”

Tony would file that away for later. Not so much now. He had to get his lover back - there was no way he was going to let Joe screw up his life from beyond the grave. The two idiots that opened the door screwed up their face. “Who are you?”

Tony smirked but he never let the smile reach his eyes. “Claude Mathews.”

“You lie.”

Tony smirked. “I lie about a great many things but I know who I am. And you know what? Joe would hate what you’ve done in his name.”

The group was listening to him, spellbound. This was the problem with cults, they were full of sheep if Tony could sway them this might just go without bloodshed.

“How? We took the man who took him from us!”

Ah. Now Tony had found the supposed leader. “No, you took his nemesis. Joe considered Hardy, his Moriarty, his ultimate foe. He didn’t want him dead through cowardice. There is no honour in this kill.”

“You should want him dead more than anyone!”

Tony chuckled but it was oh so cold, and he watched several of these would be killers shiver. If Tony scared them then they were definitely in over their head. “No, this isn’t anything like the revenge I had planned. I wanted a knife fight to test our wits and see who was better.”

The leader saw a chance to wrest control back. “We’ll untie him and you can have your wish.”

“Put a knife in his hand. I want a fair fight.” Tony purred.

“Do it!” The leader ordered. He’d let Mathews take out Hardy and then kill him. No one would be able to deny his leadership then.

Tony had a manic grin. “I like this group and the ickle FBI thought I would plead for his life. Bless them.”

Hardy waited for himself to be untied. “So this is it, huh?”

Tony played it indifferent. “Well, how else would it play out. Double tap to the chest?”

Hardy was put on his feet and gripped the knife. They’d smacked him around but gone for sucker punches. The knife in his hand, he sighed. “So on three?”

The groups were around them in a circle but only two of them had guns. Tony grinned. “Sure, one, two ...”

They didn’t get to three. They both used their knives to take out the gunmen. They fell in shock and Tony sprang into action grabbing the gun, so did Ryan. The second they had the weapons. “Down on the ground. I said - down the ground.”
Most of the would-be cult killers dropped to the ground. The only one to stay on his feet was the leader. “Why?”

Tony grinned. “Didn’t you hear? Ryan’s my lover now, and he is even better than Joe. Did you really think I would let you kill him?”

“You’re one of us, you know you are.”

Tony rolled his eyes because he was most assuredly not a deranged psycho. It was bad enough channelling Joe for the last fifteen minutes. “No, I am an Agent first. So I repeat - down on the ground.”

“I will make you shoot me before I am taken alive.”

Tony took a disarming shot. He was going to make sure the idiot stood trial. “Sorry, I have a date tonight with the man I love and you were taking too long.”

Ryan chuckled as the FBI stormed the place. “I fucking love all of you, you crazy bastard.”

Tony huffed. “Says the man who keeps being kidnapped by psycho serial killers.”

Ryan didn’t care about the eyes on them, he pulled Tony close and kissed him soundly. “Yeah, but I did one smart thing,”

“And what’s that?”

“Fall in love with you.” He said softly enough that reached their ears only.

*And that was the kicker - Tony had fallen in love. This time he was older and wiser, and he knew he’d picked the right partner.*
He had a stupid number badge on his bloody jacket. Why in hell had he said he’d go along with this moronic plan? Oh yeah, he was here because House had dragged him. He still wasn’t sure why House supporting his mate, Dr. Wilson, meant he had to be here too. Personally, Chase just figured House wanted misery to have company.

He was stuck here, it didn’t mean he could he couldn’t complain. “This is stupid.”

“You would say that,” House remarked. “You’re pretty, women won’t care what comes out of your mouth.”

Chase pouted because that was unfair. He hated being judged for his looks. “Nah, women see more than that and I don’t think you did your research.”

“What makes you say that?” House asked, knowing something was greatly amusing his duckling.

Chase was grinning now, this was going to be great. He knew House wasn’t aware of what this place was, after all. He wished there was popcorn to go with his beer because this was going to be golden. “Well, you do know this is a mixed speed dating night, female or male choices?”

House groaned, understanding Chase’s amusement now. “Why can you not read, Jimmy?”

Chase noted that in reality, only Jimmy looked uncomfortable. Huh, interesting. He was feeling more confident about tonight. In truth, after Cameron, he’d prefered his dates to be of the male variety anyway. “Let’s make this more fun.” He finished with a wicked grin. It had been too long since he’d been able to let his larrikin side out to play. He loved a lot about Americans but to be honest, generally, their sense of humour was so linear and left a lot to be desired.

Now House had perked up once more with the promise of mischief. “And what do you suggest, my little wombat?”

Chase smirked. “We’ll each be a stereotype. Then see who gets the most numbers.”

House smirked. “Well, I will be a bastard, Jimmy here can be kind-hearted and you can be a pretty boy.”

Dr. Wilson groaned. “House - he didn’t say be yourself.”

Chase laughed into his beer. “Let’s just make the night go away. And man, Dr. Wilson I really hope you find someone so I don’t get dragged here on another evening.”

He’d agreed to be House’s assistant because the hospital upped his pay. He didn’t think in his contract there was a line about being pulled out of your evening plans to watch your boss and his
The buzzer sounded. Chase played up the vacant, pretty boy act and he thought it was going well. So far, he’d been a model; an unemployed gamer; a mama’s boy; a fallen on hard times sugar baby. The list was endless and he was just letting his imagination reign free.

Until buzzer five when he sat down and his eyes were pinned by a green, amused gaze. Chase had never felt an immediate connection with anyone. This was crazy. He was a doctor, an immediate connection didn’t happen. It was just chemicals and neurons.

“You okay there?” Green eyes asked.

Chase nods and sighs. “Damn it, now I’m going to lose the bloody bet!”

Green eyes laughs, not at all upset by his comment. “Most numbers?”

Chase nods, chuckling ruefully. “See the guy with the cane, and the one on the next table?”

He gets a nod.

“Well, that’s my boss, Dr. House, and Dr; Wilson, his best friend.”

Green eyes shook his head in bemusement. “So you have a bastard boss who yanks your chain whenever he pleases. Sounds familiar, only mine is an investigator and is an ex-marine sniper.”

Chase cocks his head to the side. “Cop or Detective?”

Green eyes shrugs. “That is the sixty-four million dollar question.”

Chase chuckled. “I’m Robert Chase but find it out when people call me by my first name.” Again there was a wry grin. He sensed green eyes would understand given his own profession.

“Agent Anthony DiNozzo - Tony, and too bad. In my head, I was calling you cute doc.”

“Green eyes.” Chase retorted.

For once, Chase was only too happy to lose a bet. He didn’t have any interest in talking to anyone else. Nor, if he was honest, did he want Tony talking to anyone else. “Okay, let’s get out of here. First I need to settle a bet.”


House saw Tony standing in the background and he just smirked. “Have fun, my little wombat. I am so proud of you picking up strangers in a bar.”

Tony stepped forward. “Oh, you know what they say, Dr. House. You should talk to a cop if you are worried about a stranger. Bye for now.”

Chase grinned as Tony slipped a hand in his back pocket. “I did, didn’t I?”

House wanted to bash his head against a table - Jimmy better find someone to get him out of his funk. His chance to wind up Chase had disappeared. The lucky wombat had even scored - maybe he shouldn’t have been so mean to the hot cop. Oh, well. That ship had sailed.
Tony woke up to a blonde face grinning at him. A lazy smile crossed his own face. “You look way more relaxed than when you sat down at my table.”

Chase hummed as he kissed Tony back. “Oh, I am. I may even, thanks to you, go to work with a smile on my face.”

Tony smirked. “Oh, your boss will love that.”

Chase chuckled because he was picturing House’s face. “Yeah, I’m wondering if I can shock him silent. What are you planning today?”

Tony sat up, uncaring at the fact the sheet fell down. There was no point in being shy considering what they had got up to the night before. “Well, I have a meeting with an old friend. He wants to offer me a job and if so, then there will be big changes ahead.”

Chase perked up. He wanted to play it cool but he was glad to hear it. “So you’re not just disappearing back to DC?”

Tony shrugged. “That all depends on Anders.”

Chase raked his memory for an Anders. “Bloody hell! You mean Mayor Anders?”

Tony smirked but stood up, picking his suit up off the back of the door. “Yeah. He’s an old frat buddy of mine and he has a job he apparently only trusts me to do.”

Chase knew he probably should think more about this than he did. Still, it wasn’t rational but then again, love wasn’t rational. “If you finish before dinner, care to brave hospital canteen food and tell me all about it?”

Tony had changed rapidly, a skill born of being undercover. He stepped back towards the bed, he could tell as well that this wasn’t a one night stand. He wanted more, that was for damn sure. His suit was his favourite bit of armour. “Sure thing, what was your floor? I can come find you and help make your boss’ head explode.”

Chase had a wicked grin because there were so few people willing to stand up to House. He was always willing to deal in mischief. “I wouldn’t say no and I’m based in diagnostics.”

Tony decided to be impish. “Kiss for good luck.”

Chase stood up, careful not to crease the suit and gave him a light kiss. “You want the real one, go get your job, the one you want.”

“Yes, Sir.”

House was annoyed. Thirteen and Taub were in awe - Chase was unruffled this morning. House had been at his worst and all his teasing was focussed on Chase. He’d stood tall and completely calm. It was most disconcerting - after all, only last week he’d punched House for a crack about Cameron.

House sighed. “Was he that good?”
“Oh, I have never had a complaint, Dr. House.” Tony purred leaning against the door. “You ready?”

Chase grinned seeing the jealous looks. He wasn’t sure if it was because of how good looking Tony was, or how good the food he was carrying smelled. “You decided you didn’t want canteen food?”

Tony huffed. “Please, I want you to enjoy what you eat so how about lasagne from Porcello’s?”

Chase should have known Tony would be outrageous. “That sounds perfect and I get to pick our next date.”

*House groaned because only pretty boy could go speed dating, find someone prettier and then actually find a lasting relationship.*

*Oh well, there was a bright side, he’d snap a candid shot of the couple and send it Cameron. House was sure she would be overjoyed to find out about Chase’s new lover.*
Boytoy fun and age gaps (Rupert Giles)

Chapter Notes

The age gap would be fourteen years in reality so too the actors ages to be the basis - rounded up slightly.

Then

Tony was running, he was running in circles and not just literally. He loved running and he’d kept it up with the aim of increasing his lung function. It had been on the advice of Brad Pitt, his Doctor. Tony had gotten away from a heavy duty training regime since his football days. Still, asthma sufferers ran marathons and it really was a case of building up strength and stamina.

It had been suggested about six months ago and he was glad of it. He could think about all the things that bugged him at work. There was Ziva, it was mainly her, she had taken Kate’s place and it still bugged him. It wasn’t an ego thing, it was common sense. The woman was Mossad for crying out loud - she had no right to be handing American secrets.

Then there was the way Gibbs attitude toward him was changing. It was like the addition of Ziva had changed the hierarchy - and it was stopping him from doing his work.

He turned the block and as he kept a focus on his lungs, he pushed everything to the side. This road was a quick shortcut back to his apartment. He stopped short seeing a man going flying across the street.

“Stop. Federal Agent.”

The guy got up and was coughing obviously from the impact, as he slammed against the lamppost.

“A gun will do you no good, Agent.”

Tony raced across the street, yes, he may have been tired from his five-mile run but adrenaline was a marvellous thing. “What will?”

“A wooden stake to the bitch’s heart.”

Tony chuckled because his silver fox was feisty. “You think she’s a vampire?”

Any other comments were stopped when Tony watched the woman’s face morph into a grotHalloweenloween mask. “Huh, I’d switch back to your other face, you will never get a drink with this face.”

“I am going to drain you dry.”

Tony saw the wooden crates by the side of the trash. He just needed one, he may hate Gibbs right now but he was thankful for what he was taught. “Cutie, get me the wood.”

Silver fox startled and threw it to him and the women seemed to realise he was serious. He parried
her first attack. He had a grin on his face, he knew how to unbalance an opponent with snark. “Sweetheart, I don’t want a date. He is more my type.”

She sneered. “In that case, I will drain the Slayer’s Watcher and keep you as a pet.”

Tony was unruffled as he calculated the odds of his next attack working. As he was faced with the unbelievable - that yes, Vampires were real - he had to hope that a stake to the heart wasn’t a crock of shit. “Yeah, I already have one master and I don’t think he’d tolerate competition.”

_Tony wondered what Gibbs would say if he knew he’d just been compared to a Vampire master - he’d probably get a kick out of it._

“I’m two hundred years old and you think he can compete.” She hissed.

Tony rolled his eyes. “Are we going to talk all day or fight?”

It just so happened it was fight. Tony got her with a smack straight to the chest - and poof, she was gone. “What the hell just happened?”

Silver fox looked bemused and was cleaning his glasses, “You are not related to a Buffy Summers are you? You have a remarkable predilection to joke at everything in the face of danger.”

“Would she be this slayer?” Tony asked, his mind making natural deductions for him.

Silver fox was staring at him in surprise, Tony shrugged it off. “What? Should I be freaking out? I’m Tony DiNozzo, NCIS.”

“Dr. Rupert Giles.” He paused. “You are taking this remarkably well.”

Tony smirked. “Not well, just know how to handle myself. My place is around the corner, you can freshen up and maybe I can get you a coffee.”

**Now**

Buffy was curious. Her mentor was happy. She knew this type of happy - it was the ‘cookie’ type of happy. Her mind raced to think of just who might have made with the happies. She couldn’t think of a single woman who’d stuck around consistently to put that much of a smile on Giles’ face.

“Who is it?” She asked shrewdly.

Giles looked up from his desk, he hated Travers even more now that he was forced to run the council. “Who is whom, Buffy?” He would play clueless for as long as possible. He could guess what she was referring to but he’d rather liked having a secret just for him.

“The person putting a smile on your face.” Buffy said knowingly.

Giles sighed as he put his phone away. “What makes you think there is anyone? It is not like we have a lot of free time at the moment.” He added bemused.

She could nod to that as that was so true. Let’s just say she’d not had enough happies of her own. “I know that, G-Man, I run this place with you ... But you have a happy smile on your face. Face it,
you’re getting some. You know the others will catch on.”

The old man smirked, letting slip a little. After all, Buffy was like his surrogate daughter. “It has yet to happen.”

She shrugged her shoulders because it was clear as day to her. “Look, all I want to know is are you happy?”

Giles cleaned his glasses, “Yes, inexplicably so.”

Buffy squealed with joy, jumping into the seat in front of his desk. “Tell me more.”

Giles knew there was no way he was going to be able to deny that pout. He had known Buffy for over ten years now and had yet to master it. “He is a Federal Agent, Buffy.”

Buffy smirked and for a moment looked a lot like Faith. “Gun kink?”

Giles had many thoughts race around his head. Tony was such a complicated and layered individual who was constantly surprising him. All he said to Buffy was. “All I will say is that he wears a shoulder holster.”

Buffy cooed and curiosity reigned supreme. She already had more questions. “Older or younger?”

“Well, why do you assume that he is not the same age?” He asked a little aggrieved but not too much as she wasn’t wrong.

Buffy just rolled her eyes, “You are being evasive so younger. Come on Giles, You know I will never judge an age gap, two of my boyfriends were over a century older.”

“You’re word, not a comment.” He said resolute. He was more than capable of handling it but this weekend was rather important as he was going to propose to Tony, once he’d met the team. Tony knew already about the supernatural.

Buffy crossed a heart. “Promise.”

“Fifteen years younger.” Giles said quickly.

“Is there a picture of this boytoy?”

Giles smiled. “Better, turnaround and say hello to Anthony, Buffy.”

Buffy wanted to pout because she really needed to find a man of her own. This guy was yummy, it was like he’d walked off the pages of a photo shoot. “You’re the one putting a smile on my G-man’s face?”

Tony stepped forward to hug Giles, neither was keen on public displays of affection. The hug lingered though, as this was their first chance to meet face to face this month and it was the twenty-third of the month. “So glad to get here, work has been crazy.”

Buffy muttered, “amen.” This month had had a stupid amount of potential apocalypses. “You should take Giles out for lunch. I’ll keep the hordes from finding you.”

Tony startled. “Not to say I am not grateful but I know Rupert hates not spending time with his surrogate daughter. I won’t be offended if you come with us.”
Buffy knew right there and then that Tony was going to stick around. She hadn’t seen that look on Giles’ face since Ms. Calendar. “You don’t get to spend a lot of time together, I’m guessing. I can monopolize his time on a different day.”

Tony had a crooked grin. “I’m taking him to Carluccio’s so feel free to drop by if you change your mind or want to hide from the hordes.”

_Buffy watched the two men walk away with a smile on her face. Damn it, even Giles had his love life in order - she really needed to get her act together. Maybe she would give that soldier a call again, Steve was cool, and had strength like her to burn._
Tony was caught and stuck in an abandoned hotel top floor room. The bastard goons had nabbed him when he was going back to John’s place. They also hadn’t left him alone during his unplanned stay with them. They were working him over with their fists and knuckle dusters. It was stupid though because he’d done his training and he’d long ago learned to disassociate himself from pain. Unfortunately, he’d had to deal with it too many times for him not to be well practised by now.

His kidnappers had made a fatal mistake though, they hadn’t incapacitated John. It was just a waiting game really and then a question of how big the show would be. Tony got his answer when an explosion rocked the hotel.

“What the fuck?” His shitty interrogator screamed.

Tony grinned through his bleeding lips. He gave his best non-committal answer. “Johnny’s coming!”

“There is no one person that can get through all of my men.” The leader pronounced. He sounded so sure and smug and Tony couldn’t wait to watch his face as John brought him to his knees. In fact, Tony’s grin grew wider even though it hurt him. “You’ve not met my boyfriend. He’s kinda awesome at making noise ... and pain.”

“We’ll get him too.” The goon promised.

Tony chuckled and it was raspy, damn it, they must have got a hit on his lungs. Dr. Pitt was going to be cross with him but it was not like it was his fault. That is if he could survive John’s disappointed face.

Goon Leader shouted. “Well, get out there and take him out. He’s just one fucking man.”

Tony spat out some blood. “You know, Symmonds, you could confess and make this mess at least somewhat useful.”

“What the fuck would you know?” Symonds retorted with a sneer. And that was when Tony caught a clue.

Oh, this was going to be sweet.

Tony snorted, choosing to wind him up. “Did you do your research?”

“You’re just the machine’s bit on the side.”

Tony laughed sarcastically at that comment because it did show that no, he didn’t know anything about him. “Yep. Sure I am.” And as much as Tony wanted to tell him, it would be the last thing he’d do. It was too dangerous to leave him alive once it was out.

The radio was filled with shouts from the men who were guarding the building. And by the sound of it, they were not lasting very long against John in a mood. Then again, to be fair to the men, not many people could last against John in a mood. John stormed through the door and Tony just let out a massive sigh of relief. “About time.”

John in full stride was so damn hot to watch. He never was explosive or full of artsy kung-fu moves. He just calmly and efficiently made sure his opponents were down on the floor. Tony was grateful for his arrival but it didn’t mean he was passive. He threw his wooden chair backwards,
splintering it. And for his next trick; getting his arms in front of him. It was not his smoothest look but he could still wield a chair like a baseball bat.

When everyone was knocked out or cuffed, John finally greeted him with a kiss. Tony gratefully accepted and deepened said kiss. It was just a little awkward with the cuffs, he figured out a way by slipped his cuffed hands around John’s neck.

John gave him that soft smile, “Hey,” as he unhooked the cuffs and started to free Tony from them.

Tony didn’t mind teasing him now. “I don’t mind being your captive.”

“I know.” And John did. He wanted to explain what happened. “Sorry - traffic was bad on the freeway.”

Tony grinned. “That’s okay, babe, you’re here now though. Can I arrest them, please?”

John looked through Symmonds. John’s glare was impressive, it could cut through you. “I’d rather shoot them.”

Tony snorted. “Well, I’m not opposed to the idea but you know your boss gets upset with unnecessary violence.” It was the best way to allude to Harold without using his actual name.

Tony didn’t even have to guess why John had handcuffs. “I suppose so. Did you find his crooked friends?”

Tony had a smug smile. “You know how you complain that my shirts have too many buttons.”

“Yeah.”

Tony smirked, “Well, this one had a camera too, showed every one of Symmonds friends who came to visit.”

“That’s interesting. For what he’s done to Carter and Fusco ... they deserve it.”

Tony nodded because he couldn’t agree more. “And just think what will happen to crooked cops, who are also cop killers. Now there’s a mix that’s not going to end well.”

John had a matching smirk. “No, I don’t think it is.” There was a knock at the door and much to Symmonds disappointment it was not his cavalry but rather John’s friend - Detective Fusco.

“You have a special delivery for me.”

Tony stood to the side. “This piece of shit kidnapped me and threatened me, all to get at my boyfriend.”

“He kidnapped a Federal Agent?” Fusco said, playing along, pretending to be outraged.

Tony sighed. “He did and I don’t get it, I mean my boyfriend is a finance manager for god’s sake. What has he got to do with the police?”

John certainly did not look like one of his cover identities right now, which is what made the comment even funnier.

They watched as Fusco dragged Symmonds back in cuffs. It was a fitting end for a crooked bastard. Tony was starting to lean even heavier against John, he was tired and his beating was
starting to take its toll on him.

John seeing this. “Come on, let’s get you checked out back at mine. You need rest.”

Tony huffed. “Rest was the last thing I wanted this weekend.”

John smirked. “Well, we have time.”

~*~

Sadly, there were no more fun times that weekend and Tony was making his way back to his day job. Vance was waiting for him the second he stepped off the elevator. “Congratulations on doing a damn fine job even when you’re on holiday.”

“Thank you, Director.” Tony managed to say without feeling like he was part of the twilight zone. He had a feeling that Finch was responsible for this - still, he wouldn’t complain.

“What did you do?” Ziva demanded to know.

Tony chuckled. “I just went to my lover’s place. Chill. He knows you’re a ninja assassin.”

“Your love, not a nick on the bedstick?” She asked in her snitty way.

Tony snorted. “It’s a notch on the bedpost, Ziva.”

“You’re not denying it.”

Tony grinned but stayed calm - he knew that this was way more fun. It also had the added bonus of annoying Ziva. He text John a quick message to say he was at the office and he should feel free to pick him up for lunch.

This was a red letter day - he was done hiding. Plus, he had the added image of imagining what John would do to Ziva if she pulled her Mossad shit. The thought was endlessly amusing.

For the record - it was even better than he imagined. That though, that happened on a different day.
Sea is the Real Mistress (Capt Tom Chandler)

Chapter Notes

Tom Chandler is played by Eric Dane, and Mike Slattery - Adam Baldwin.

The premise of the last ship involves the world suffering a global virus catastrophe. If this is a trigger or the idea of mass-scale death is a potential trigger please avoid.

Tony DiNozzo never expected to be made an Agent Afloat of the Nathan James. In fact, he was initially down for the Seahawk. Tony smelled a rat and he was done being used by his bosses. The last time nearly saw his life end and he wasn’t about to not ask questions. This assignment had been changed by SecNav himself and even Vance didn’t know why.

This is how he ended up being in a meeting with SecNav and no one else. And he was still frustrated by vague answers. He was a man who liked a mystery but this was stupid.

“Why? Is the Captain on the up?” Tony asked boldly as he was so not a fan of walking into a situation blindly. He’d done that once with Shepard and gotten burned spectacularly. Once bitten, twice shy and all that.

Davenport shook his head, understanding the agent’s question and he wanted to dispel that idea. “No, Tom Chandler is one of our best and brightest. He runs a tight ship.”

Tony figured he could be forgiven his look of confusion. “Sir, it’s a relief to know you don’t agree with Director Vance’s opinion of me but I’m confused. You want me to stay frosty as there is a situation developing but you are not at liberty to say.”

Davenport smirked as even with his obtuse answers - DiNozzo had picked up on his exact request. “Exactly. Look, you are a smart man and a fantastic agent. Shepard put you in between a rock and a hard place and we both know that. Plus, when you get back we’re going to be talking about your new role. You’ve outgrown the MCRT and it is time for you to step from out of Gibbs’ shadow.”

Tony was powerless to say anything on top of that so he just shook hands with SecNav. “I thank you for your faith, Mister Secretary. I will see you in four months and I won’t let you down.”

Davenport watched the man go. “Godspeed.”

He hoped that he would be there when DiNozzo got back but he’d seen the projections of the viral outbreak and thought it overly optimistic. He knew the State Department had gotten their way with getting the two CDC scientists on board the Nathan James. He agreed with the mission to the Arctic because if this went sideways like he thought it might then at least he had one warship that would be ready to do battle.

Only he wasn’t sure what anyone could do against a virus that kills indiscriminately and that so far no one had been able to stop.

~*~
Mike Slattery was the best XO in the fleet and as a reward for good service had been offered his choice of assignments. He’d been tempted by the desk job in Miami but he couldn’t leave Tom alone. The man had just divorced his wife and was going to struggle with not being married. He knew his good friend could indeed survive without him but it was only a four-month tour and Mike figured he hadn’t been to the Arctic yet.

Only now he was thinking about the cold and the snow and the lack of anything but ice and water for miles around. It must have shown on his face as his old friend, and his Captain, reminded him.

“You could have gone to Miami.”

Mike shook his head and with a smirk added, “And miss out on all the snow?”

Tom noticed the grouchy scientists boarding his ship as well as his latest crew member, an agent afloat. “Ah. Our new recruit. Should be fun to see how the men react to an agent afloat.”

In truth, Tom had not reacted all too well himself but had been told by SecNav and SecDef not to make waves as he would be useful in the weeks to come. Of course, neither man chose to explain just how or why that might be.

Mike looked at the man coming up the gangway and he knew how much looks could be deceiving. He’d gone over DiNozzo’s service record and it was interesting seeing the person behind the record. “He is a tough son of a bitch.”

Tom grinned just knowing that his XO had also looked into their newest crew member. “He can shoot too, trained by LJ Gibbs himself.”

“No shit.” Mike looked at him with a curious look before explaining. “I just meant he survived the pneumonic plague.”

Tom cocked his head to the side, his appreciation was running a little more to the physical but he could now he was a free man. There was only one way to find some answers and that was to start talking to the man himself so he made a decision. “We’ll invite him to dinner.”

Mike got a glint in his eye as he carefully teased his friend. “Should I come?”

“And what is that supposed to mean?” Tom demanded.

Mike was the only one who could talk to him like that. And his old friend didn’t look cowed. “Just that you have a look like you want him to be dinner - or at least dessert.”

Tom rolled his eyes although, tellingly, he didn’t deny it. “I want to know why he is on my ship.”

Mike snorted. “That’s not all you want.”

Tony had gotten the lay of the land very quickly on board the Nathan James. He’d left the meeting with SecNav with the duty roster and their personnel files. He was there for a reason and if there was a problem he wanted to get a feel for the people.

Tony trusted his gut but information to back up his thoughts always helped. Plus, he had a feeling that whatever reason he was here - it was going to move quickly and he needed to be focussed to do so.
“Welcome aboard.” The Captain greeted him cordially.

Tony nodded, in thanks, knowing that he’d probably not been as keen a while ago upon hearing of his imminent arrival. Still, Tony knew how to play nice with the locals. “Great to be here even if I am about to freeze.”

Chandler smirked and Tony sighed internally because the Navy man was hitting just about every one of his kinks. This could be a long tour of duty. He kept reminding himself that SecNav had promised him his pick of assignments and that meant, finally, he could ask for Hawaii. The warmth and the land of Magnum PI appealed to him.

“Join me in my quarters for dinner? 1900 hours.” The Captain requested.

Tony nodded, knowing that whilst phrased as a request, one did not turn down the Captain of his own ship. “Happily. I’ll go stow my gear then get settled. See you at 1900.”

~*~

Mike was already there and snickering at Tom, he didn’t know it yet but he was smitten. He was acting the same way as he had before his first date with Darien. He did his best to be supportive in his own way. “Chill. It’s not like he can go anywhere - we’re not quite in the middle of the sea but we’re on the way.”

Tom just gave him a look as if to say ‘you’re not funny’. However, any further conversation was interrupted by the man of the hour, or at least the mystery. “Agent DiNozzo, welcome.”

The man blushed. “Please, call me Tony.”

All three of them sat at the table as one of the mess crew delivered their meals. “So how do you like the sea so far?” They’d both noticed their new agent stopping a few times during the course of the afternoon to gaze at the horizon with a contemplative look in his expression.

Tony got a faraway glint as he tried to put into words what he was feeling. “It’s something else, she’s like the ultimate mistress.”

Mike and Tom both laughed. Tom was the one to grin, feeling the easing of tension. Slattery tapped him on the back. “We’ll make a seaman out of you yet. We all love the sea but we know that if there is a fight, she will win every time.”

Tony found himself at a crossroads and took a gamble. “So I am going to be honest and say I have no clue why I am here. I was told to come here by SecNav but here is where it gets spooky.”

Mike groaned because there was an ill omen if ever he’d heard of. “We don’t like spooky. It upsets the running of a ship.”

Tom nodded, having similar superstitions and not to mention life experiences. “I’m with him, why?”

Tony shrugged as he had no idea how to answer but he did his best. “He told me I would be needed and I should stay observant. So why do I need to stay frosty for missile tests?” He didn’t bother to hide his confusion, he was hoping that by being transparent and honest, they might solve the mystery quicker.
Chandler had no idea but he resented the implication that SecNav thought there was a need for an Agent Afloat. “I don’t know. I run a tight ship.”

Tony nodded his agreement and moved quickly to alleviate that concern. “You do, and SecNav agrees. He wouldn’t tell me why I should be here. Just that it was on orders of the President that he wasn’t able to reveal the truth of the whole matter.”

Tom huffed. “Well, that isn’t annoyingly vague. I also have two scientists I’m babysitting. They obviously expect trouble or I wouldn’t have the Naval warfare unit, not that they’ve told me. I think our scientists are into something a bit more important than looking at birds.”

Tony started to make his connections like he would normally. He asked a question but he was pretty sure of the answer he was going to get. “When did you get confirmation they were coming?”

“Four days ago.”

Tony pursed his lips. “Want to bet when my assignment was changed from the Seahawk to here?”

Slattery sighed and put his cutlery down. “Four days?”

“Got it in one.”

Captain Chandler just sighed. “Well, that can’t be good. So what do you say to dinner tomorrow and we can discuss any new theories? I assume you are going to quietly investigate the reasons I have scientists aboard.”

Tony nodded. “Got it in one.”

~*~

Tony never thought about the fact that the XO begged off joining their dinners after the first week, or that the man might have an ulterior motive. To be honest, he enjoyed the dinners and the conversations with the Captain. Tom knew how to handle a conversation and Tony hadn’t smiled and laughed quite like this for a long time.

“So, anything I should be aware of?” Tom asked him.

Tony quirked an eyebrow. “Like you aren’t already aware of it?”

Chandler smirked. “You might surprise me.”

Tony’s mind went to a dirty place but he stayed professional. Just. “Well, your new Commander of your Naval Mountain Warfare unit is perhaps a little too close to the pretty comm officer.”

Tom snorted because he’d already clocked that one. It was quite cute that they thought they were being subtle. “If he isn’t then he hasn’t got the game his men brag about.”

Tony did laugh at that. “Agreed. Me, I think we’re in the Arctic and there is not a lot to do. I would rather people be finding a physical release then doing crazy shit.”

“Amen.”

Chandler opened his bottle of beer. “Captain’s privilege.”
Tony nodded his thanks and figured he could do conversation. “So why this assignment for you? ... I mean, your record suggests you should be able to pick your assignment.”

Tom preened a little, he was only human after all. “Thanks but you already can guess.”

Tony shrugged but didn’t apologise. “Hey, it’s the job. I notice that there was a wedding ring and now there isn’t but the tan line remains. It tells me you’ve been to the Middle East on your last posting or at least somewhere with a lot of sun. It tells me you were married but not who or why you’re not now. That’s up to you to share when you’re ready.”

Tom nodded. “I appreciate that and it’s a common tale. I saw the sea more than my ex-wife and she got tired of that.”

“I’m sorry.”

Tom raised his glass and that was the end of it.

~*~

Tony watched Dr Scott as he continued his conversation with Slattery on golf. Tony knew there was more to the scientists being on board than just studying birds. It didn’t make sense. They wouldn’t need a warship guarding them if their mission was so simple.

“You interested in Scott?”

Tony rolled his eyes as he said boldly. “You know where my interest lies, or should I take your sudden non-appearance to mean you don’t like me, instead of you playing Yenta.”

Slattery snorted because that was why he liked DiNozzo - he was always a fan of straight speaking. “The only one who isn’t obvious is the Captain.”

Tony pouted because - truer words and all that. “Don’t remind me.”

Slattery clapped him on the back. “Buck up and if all else fails, you could just make a move.”

Tony blushed because, in his head, he was already making plans for doing just that. “Can we not talk about this in the middle of the Mess Hall? Actually. I have a better question - who is authorised to have communication equipment?”

“Comm Centre and authorised areas. Why?” Slattery asked, knowing that Tony was unlikely to ask the question without a reason.

Tony sighed but answered as he was right there. “Dr Scott has in her possession a sat phone, which I have heard her use. Odd considering we’re supposed to be in radio silence.”

Slattery rolled his eyes, “I’ll tell the Captain and no doubt he’ll demand answers from her.”

~*~

The XO was spot on, Tom had gone down and had that showdown and as a result, his mind was reeling. He couldn’t comprehend what he was being told. The world was sick and no one had a cure. It was like one of those crazy TV programme plots.
Tony had taken one look at him and dragged him back to his room. Tom was glad that he didn’t have duty until second shift. “Talk to me, Captain. You look like you’ve seen a ghost.”

“You know the crew will talk if they see you dragging me to my quarters.”

Tony rolled his eyes because that was a weak response. “Purlease, if they say anything. I will say I finally got have my wicked way with you. Besides, they don’t want to mix with me and your Captain. Now talk.”

“I know why we were sent here.”

Tony raised an eyebrow as a question. “What is it, Captain?”

“I think you should call me Tom for this conversation. It is that horrific.” The man confessed.

Tony sat down seeing just how devastated the man looked. This was a man who’d made war on behalf of the United States for years. If he was bewildered - then there was nothing good that could come from that conversation.

“Spit it out.”

Tom used the same words that had been given to him not thirty minutes before. “The world is sick, like pandemic levels.”

Tony sighed, no stranger thanks to his own run-in with the plague. “What stage? What’s the virus? And how many infected?”

Tom raised an eyebrow but the calm reaction, whilst not expected, was appreciated. He needed to get his own thoughts in order to deal with new orders and staffing issues. “You’re calm.”

Tony was anything but, but he’d lived through exposure to a terrifying highly fatal plague once already. “I know something about it having survived a bout of Y-Pestis.”

“How? You never said. Was it the antibiotics?” Tom asked, knowing that this virus couldn’t be cured with such a thing.

Tony shook his head. “Oh no, engineered strain to be resistant. Revenge by a biologist. I’m just one of the lucky 15%. ” Tony then groaned as the puzzle pieces started to fall together. “SecNav knew. He all but implied there was something going on but he wasn’t allowed to say.”

“What gain is there in having us in the Arctic?” Chandler had to ask.

Tony shrugged. “The world’s going to go to hell in a handbasket quick. A virus won’t care about a country’s allegiances or enemies. It won’t care about race or creed - it will just kill indiscriminately. However, we’re in the Arctic for a reason. Dr Scott is not scouting on the ice for nothing.”

Chandler rolled his eyes. “Oh, I am more than aware. How do I fight the virus?”

Tony asked the only logical question. “So ... if you wanted to go to war - what would you do?”

“Seek orders.”
Tony smirked, knowing this would be the easiest advice he could give. “So - go get some orders.”

Tom chuckled because it was really was that simple. He’d been overthinking it, the situation so foreign and like nothing he’d been trained for. Tony really was a gift from up on high - he hoped he got a chance to thank SecNav in person.

~*~

It was worse than they knew.

So many people dead, the functioning government of America and so many different countries were gone. They’d got through to someone only to find out the President was dead, the Speaker of the House was the new President. Only Tony could see she was sick as well so she wouldn't last long either.

By the end of it, the ship was in a brave new world. Dr Scott had indeed got the makings of a cure provided the ship could get her some very specialised equipment.

It soon became apparent that the seas were back to operating on mercenary rules. Well, that was too bad for anyone who wanted to attack the Nathan James. The Nathan James crew was the best and they had adapted to their new circumstances at least professionally, mentally was taking longer but the crew were supporting each other.

Tony had watched in awe at the way the crew hadn’t blinked at the Captain’s orders to stay at sea - to do anything at all costs to produce the cure.

It was a miracle, the holy grail. The idea that on their ship they may have the ability to end the whole pandemic. It had been a bonding and unifying force that kept the crew together.

The changes on board the ship were numerous. Captain Chandler had relaxed the fraternisation rules so that those not directly in a chain of command could have a relationship. He wasn’t a naive man. There were a lot of adults that for all and intent purposes could be the last people they knew. They were going to start forming connections - better they did it safely than feel like they would be prohibited.

Tony was talking to Tom, he helped to be a sounding board and a confidant. He wasn’t part of the ships rankings but had effectively been elected its sheriff. In fact, he’d heard a few of the crew refer to him as the Captain’s Sheriff.

“Tom?”

“Come in.”

Tony looked at the nervous Captain and frowned. There was nothing so far that he’d seen make Tom act so anxious. Not even when they’d shot the three Russian attack helicopters out the sky.

“What’s the matter? Is Dr Scott okay? I thought she and Mike were on a date.”

Tom chuckled because that had been one of the odder pairings that had developed in the last two months but they worked. “Everyone is fine. I thought you might like a chance to unwind and enjoy the last bottle of good booze with me.”

Tom was off duty and the watch guard was their third in command. Tony wasn’t one to refuse good booze and sat beside him on the bed and they watched a football game.
Tony was relaxed as he could be in this new and dangerous world. He always felt safe on the Nathan James, no matter what had been thrown at them. Part of that was the man at his side, he’d never felt like this with anyone, not even with Gibbs.

“You know you’ve kept me sane these past few months.”

Tony frowned because it wasn’t he that had spoken those words. That was Tom. Could he feel the same way? This was a risk but if there was one thing that this new world had taught them - you had to chase what you wanted with both hands. Death was always around the corner these days.

“Funny I was thinking how glad I was to meet you.”

Tom faced him. “You sure? You seemed disgruntled not to be the on the Seahawk. You sure you didn’t want Captain Owens?”

Tony shook his head. “Nah, it’s not any Navy Captain. Just one.”

“Is that right?”

Tony leaned in closer. “Can I offer evidence?”

Tom’s face was so close he could feel the ghost of his breath. “Go right ahead.”

The kiss was everything they’d hoped and fantasised about. Tony only reluctantly broke the kiss when oxygen became an issue.

The world was still in chaos. They needed to find a cure but Tony knew they would. Tony had happily promised Tom that he would go with him back to the mainland at their first opportunity to find his children - it was what came after that would test them all.
To have one's back (Sam Seaborn)

Tony had gone to a bar that catered to the rich, somewhere he knew he wouldn’t run into his ‘team’. He was miserable and felt that he deserved his weight in Scotch as old as he was. He’d kept his true wealth from his team as he hadn’t trusted them with the information.

The bar was a positive who’s who of the Washington movers and shakers. Tony had broken more than a few cases using the contacts he’d gained in having a membership here.

There was a lone figure at the end of the bar that Tony recognised from TV. “Wow. You look like you are having as bad a day as me. I must insist you have a proper drink.”

Seaborn looked at the bottle of scotch and whistled. “That is expensive to share with someone you don’t know.”

Tony snorted. “Hey, you’re probably the only other one here working for Uncle Sam, and you look miserable. You’d be doing me a favour.”

Sam took the glass, not being stupid. You don’t turn down a $150 glass of whiskey from a gorgeous man. “Well, if I am doing you a favour.”

Tony grinned. “You are. Agent Anthony DiNozzo.”

“Deputy Communications Director Sam Seaborn.” Sam returned the introduction, even though he was sure the agent recognised him.

“So care to tell me why you’re so miserable? Here, have another glass.”

Sam snorted but it was full of dark humour. “Oh, more than.”

Tony grinned and raised his glass. “Well fuck them on their high horse they rode off on. And to Gibbs who ran away to Mexico on his boat because he couldn’t manage a horse.”

Sam snickered. “To high horses.”

Tony grinned, and his grin turned sly. “Would the Press Secretary kill you if we went somewhere discreetly.”

Sam smirked. “Right now, I am thinking about me. They can clear up my mess if it becomes one. What about you?”
Tony shrugged. “I know how to avoid getting my face on cameras.”

“That’s mysterious.”

Tony knew just what to say. “Is it sexy?”

~*~

Sam woke up the next morning next to someone and aching in all the right places. “Damn, I hit the jackpot.”

Tony opened an eye, just one, “Is that the best you can do, Mr Speechwriter?”

Sam snorted. “Go on, Mr Smooth. What would you say?”

Tony rolled them so he was on top. “I’d say you were as fine as the whiskey we were drinking last night.”

Sam chuckled at the line, it was a good one. “I gotta go clear up White House messes.”

Tony let him out of bed and enjoyed watching him pick his suit off the floor. “Won’t people say anything about you going in the same suit - and a wrinkled one at that?”

Sam shrugged, “Don’t have a choice.”

Tony took pity and pulled out a shirt. “At least take this?”

Sam’s eyes bugged out at the label. “You’re just handing me your Versace shirt?”

Tony pecked him on the cheek as he passed to start the coffee maker. “All part of my master plan. You will have to return to give it back to me.”

Sam’s eyes widened but the smile was one of delight. “You want to meet up again.”

Tony nodded, biting his lip but going with honesty. “I know that last night was the first time I’ve laughed in a while. I think we’re good together and should at least go on a second date.”

Sam was liking the idea more and more. “You won’t get pissy about my insane work schedule?”

Tony smirked. “Well, I can hardly argue about the President of the United States needing you. Besides, my schedule’s pretty insane too”

Sam smirked. “OK, and I won’t get pissy at you doing your duty.”

Tony stepped forward, sealing their deal with a kiss. “See, we’re already making progress.”

Sam bit his lip. “I will need to tell CJ about us, are you okay with that?”

Tony sat at his kitchen table. “Okay, she won’t share it until we’re ready?”

Sam nodded. “She’s a mother hen but she should be aware. She’ll stay quiet until it needs to come
“I get to pull off my spy moves. This’ll be so cool.”

“I gotta jet. How do I get out of this place?”

“It is a gated building but high security. So there is that. The lift will take you down to the lobby.”

In the bullpen, Tony was mentally plotting how he could murder his work colleagues. They tended to annoy him on a daily basis but with Gibbs’ disappearance they seemed to have reverted back to full-on schoolchildren and he was no teacher.

“What is your problem?”

“You are bossing us around like you are Gibbs.”

“Are you serious? I am the leader of the MCRT and I can boss you around, or should I say lead you as that is in the job description. If you don’t like that ... find another team.”

She seemed shocked by his suggestion. “Ziva, I don’t think you understand me. I seek Justice on behalf of those who can’t ... If you get in my way of that aim, you’re no good to me.”

She looked shaken. “This is just an act. You are like PodTony. You will revert back to type soon enough.”

Tony thought about the magnificent night he’d spent with Sam the night before. If Ziva was shocked by him being serious, he was kind of wondering how she would react to knowing he liked guys just as much as women. “Not this time, my little ninja.”

Tony watched with a smirk as she stormed away. Balboa was standing next to him all of a sudden.

“What was that about?”

“Daddy’s little girl finding out that she is not going to get everything her own way.”

Balboa snorted. “I don’t envy you your job right now, Gibbs bred two insubordinate little twerps. You need help, just ask.”

Tony smiled because it was good to know that he still had friends in the building. What with Gibbs leaving and the rest of the team going into mourning and ragging on him for not being Gibbs.

“Thanks - you’re a gentleman, Rick. Don’t let anyone tell you any differently.”

Tony and Sam had been figuring out what was between them for a while. A month and there had been no Gibbs return and work was not improving but at least he could vent to Sam. Tony was always there for Sam to vent about whatever politician had upset him that day.

Tony would listen, hand him a glass of wine, and let him vent. They had to be careful and chose places that were unobtrusive. No visits to Sam’s place or public dinners for now. Tony had the
benefit of living in a wealthy apartment complex with a lot of people. So even if Sam was spotted being a frequent visitor it would still take some narrowing down.

Tony never expected to see this Sam, he looked like a drowned rat and utterly defeated. Tony pulled him in and started to strip him of his wet clothes. Sam might not have his lung problems but it wouldn’t do him any good. “Babe. What’s up?”

Sam shuddered. “No matter what, I have always had faith and it has been broken. What do I do?” He put on the clothes handed to him.

Tony’s mind was racing because there must have been something big going down. He suddenly took a deep breath. “Can you tell me anything? You know I will understand if you can’t. I’m here no matter what.”

Sam smiled softly. “I know you are. I think I would have gone crazy this last month if I hadn’t met you.”

Tony pulled him in for a hug. “So would I. So what’s going on?”

Sam knew it would break in the morning and he trusted Tony to keep it a secret for the evening. “The President has had MS from before he took office.”

“Holy shit.”

Sam snorted. “Yeah, don’t suppose you have some more of that excellent whiskey.”

Tony was always going to keep that brand of whiskey in the house. However, he was well aware that using alcohol was not a good idea. “I thought we agreed orgasms were better stress relief?”

Sam chuckled. “Yeah, we did. How do I write a speech for this?”

Tony took a moment to consider all the angles. He was an investigator. “Will this go to impeachment?”

Sam shrugged. “That will be up to others, I know I can write a fair few briefs that would sway most but I feel so betrayed and angry that I can’t think straight.”

Tony sighed. “You are coming to bed with me right now, you are going to sleep and you need to come to a decision.”

“And what is that?” Sam asked him curiously.

“Is he still ‘the man’ you believe can change things, or, are you going to accept one of those ridiculously good contracts the law firms ask of you.”

Sam snorted. “You’d end up being my kept man if I took one of those contracts.”

Tony snickered, even as they settled into bed. “What? I’m pretty enough but as I am independently wealthy ... we will just have to settle for being a devastatingly attractive couple that everyone will hate for breathing.”

Sam drifted off saying. “That doesn’t seem so bad.”
Tony snorted but did nothing more than turn the lights off and follow his partner into slumber.

~*~

Sam woke up slowly, and all the events of the day before hit him at once. Only this time, he could handle it with a strength he didn’t feel the day before. “I decided.”

Tony asked him, voice still full of sleep. “On what?”

Sam spoke with conviction. “He is still a good man. He did the wrong thing but he still can make a difference.”

Tony put paper and a pencil in front of him and got up to put a pot of coffee on. “So go into the White House with the speech in your hand. Don’t let them dismiss your feelings but help fix the mess. It is what we’re good at.”

Sam chuckled as truer words and all that. He hated the way the senior staff treated him like a child. It was ridiculous, just because he believed in doing the right thing it didn’t mean he was naive. He’d been a lawyer and a damn good one before he joined the campaign. “Thank you... for everything.”

Tony kissed his lips lightly but walked off to change. “Hey, you’re my partner. You come first that is just how I roll.”

Sam called out to him. “And I am damn lucky.”

~*~

Sam walked into the White House well aware that today was going to be a shit show, and a very long, hard day. What he also knew was he could make it through the day. Tony had reminded him that he could argue with the best of them and even if he was no longer working for Gage & Whitney, he was still their blue-eyed boy.

CJ looked at him warily. “Look, I know you’re mad.”

Sam quirked a sole eyebrow. “Mad? No, CJ, the answer was betrayed. We were lied to and kept from doing our jobs.”

She paled, thinking there was no way she could put Sam in front of a camera. “That was not the intention.”

Sam snorted. “You don’t sound like you believe it. Should you be going in front of the camera?”

CJ flushed, not used to being put under the microscope by Sam. “You going all lawyer on me, Sparky?”

Sam put the speech down on her desk. “Show that to Toby, if you’re lucky it will avoid impeachment hearings.”

CJ looked up in shock. “Why?”
Sam smirked. “Remember when you gave me shit about my life choices, asking why I would be willing to skulk in the dark?”

She nodded as that had been a memorable conversation that was for damn sure. “Yeah.”

Sam felt free. “Well, I went to Tony last night and he reminded me, that I have my own power and voice and I can do what I want with it.”

She read the first few paragraphs. They were spell-binding words. This was all Sam but brilliantly, he’d managed to rap it up in the cadences that Bartlett was known for. “This is some voice.”

Sam smiled briefly. “I’ll be in my office, can someone ask if I am still wanted as a member of the Senior Staff? Otherwise, I intend to become one half of a devastatingly but disgustingly wealthy power couple. So let me know if I should say yes to Powers & Boothe. Their offer was the best.”

It felt good. Sam didn’t hear Leo McGarry step out of the side room to CJ’s office.

“So that went well.”

CJ snorted and didn’t see a suitable retort. “Yeah, in who’s opinion? That boy is seriously pissed and not without reason although you should give that the President. I’d say give it Toby but he’d only mope.”

Leo took care to read the words and he was swayed by the conviction. “Wow. So who’s Tony?”

CJ smirked. “Feel free to ask Sam, I am not getting involved.”

Leo didn’t know whether to kiss or strangle this Tony. He’d helped Sam out of his funk but also lit a fire in his soul that the others would find difficult to squash.

~*~

Tony was home late, and Sam had a beer waiting and already had a meal ready for him. Tony, seeing it, smiled softly. “Wow, you are just perfect.”

Sam grinned crookedly. “I wanted to thank you with actions.”

Tony settled onto his chair. “You didn’t need to but I do appreciate it.”

Sam pulled the salmon out of the steamer and plated the veg he’d prepared. “So how was your day?”

“My boss approached me about an undercover operation.”

Sam put his fork down. “Oh, what did you say?”

Tony smiled softly. “That I thanked her for the opportunity but I had a special someone who meant more to me. I couldn’t pretend to be this Doctor’s boyfriend.”

Sam moved closer. “Well, your actual boyfriend is glad to hear it.”

Tony pulled him into a hug. There was still tension in him as he couldn’t shake the idea that there
was something wrong. The way he’d been approached about the job, how she’d been outwardly calm but Tony could see the fury in her eyes. He was reaching out to a few contacts to see what the Benoit connection was to Shepard. It seemed their director had picked up a few things from Gibbs, including his Ahab impression.

Sam knew it. “You know I love snuggling with you but you are as stiff as a board. The offer you gave me is open to you.”

Tony snorted but he needed a sounding board. He wasn’t talking about cases per say and really, it was just his general suspicions. “The boss is trying to run this off books and that’s bad.”

“Why?”

Tony sucked in a breath. “We need the interagency cooperation. Say I have a CI who is vital and the FBI scoop him up, I am pissed and causing trouble.”

“So you think that might be the case?”

Tony shook his head. “No, I think it’s worse than that. I think she’s trying to run an unsanctioned operation and she wants to use a gullible bastard. All the actions recently make sense, she hasn’t allowed me to sanction Ziva or Tim. She’s wanted me to confide in her. It’s isolation 101.”

Sam was curious about something. “So why didn’t it work?”

Tony chuckled. “Well - you, the masters in psychology helped too and I’m too experienced not to know if an operation stinks.”

Sam couldn’t help but recognise the irony. “So just like me, you have two choices. Do you stay and deal with the issue at hand ... or walk away from something potentially dangerous. I may be staying but that doesn’t mean you have to as well.”

Tony had never thought about leaving as much as he had in the last few days. “If I stay ... I need proof, I need to be careful and I need to get in contact with Vance.”

Sam smiled softly as he heard the determination in his partner’s voice. “Sounds like you know the right path.”

Tony huffed. “Why can’t it be the easy path?”

Sam snickered. “Would we know what to do with easy?”

~*~

The answer had been no. Jenny, the bitch, had caught wind of his intentions so leaked his relationship with Sam. That had been the wrong move. Once she had the White House’s attention it was game over.

The audit came down, with Vance ordered to conduct it. He was still in shock from all he’d heard. DiNozzo was the only one who’d come out of the fiasco looking like a professional.

So much so that when Vance took over, he made DiNozzo take the Assistant Director role that he’d vacated not too long ago.
Sam and Tony attended the first Washington party of the year and proved that they were just as they hoped - a devastatingly attractive couple that others hated. Not that they cared. Even with all the little ups and downs, their respective lives threw at them they knew that having each weathered their individual storms that they could weather anything life threw at them. *Together.*
Jackson Oz is a character in the show Zoo, based on the book by James Patterson. It is a fantastic premise and well worth reading.

Warning: Implied character death off-screen in the final paragraph. Think “requiem” with no Tony around.

The animals, the fucking animals were going crazy and no one had an answer. Well, not a reasonable one. The experts all agree there must have been a mutation but they didn’t know what or how. It didn’t matter over the last few days, the big animal population had exploded and the teams were being called out over animal attacks.

Tony was grumbling at the screen showing a scientists interview. “Then maybe you should do a genetic screening and figure it out.”

McGee frowned, surprised by the insightful answer. “Since when do you throw those words around?”

Tony whirled around and seemed annoyed to have been caught. As a result, Tony went on the sarcastic offensive hoping to distract the junior agent. “Since forever, McClueless. What can I do for you?”

McGee was looking at him with a curious look on his face. “All teams have been attacked.”

Tony didn’t tense but he was on guard. “So?”

“Ours hasn’t been.” McGee reminded him.

Tony shrugged because sometimes they deserved luck to be on their side. “What can I say? Even the animals have recognised Gibbs is the ultimate Alpha Predator.”

It seemed like a reasonable explanation even as ridiculous as it sounded. Only he knew it wasn’t true as the teams had reported harassment on the way home. Tony hadn’t though, and it was starting to freak him out. He really wished Jackson was on this continent. In fact, he sent a message to his ex-boyfriend asking for contact.

~*~

Jackson was sitting on a crazy technology advanced plane and wondering how this was his life. He sat next to the others on his team and thought about all the things they needed to do in order to solve the riddle.

The message surprised him. Huh. How did Tony even get his number? They were flying to DC for some meeting they were ordered to have with the pharmaceutical company that was helping them, they’d let Pandora out of the box so they should help with the cleanup.
“Hey, Tony. It’s been a long time.”

Tony snorted because that was the understatement of the century. “Oh, you have some explaining to do. Wait a minute ... I need to go somewhere private.”

Jackson waited and was confused. They’d split up when they’d finished their post-grads due to conflicting career goals. It had been as amicable as break-up could be. “Christ ... It's just like when we’re together.”

Tony snorted. “Quiet, Jackie, you I’m still pissed with, well, not you but definitely your father.”

Jackson winced, as it seemed wherever he went he was still apologising for his Dad. “Why?”

Tony sounded calm, but very pissed at the same time. It was impressively menacing for many but not a man that went toe-to-toe with lions. “Yeah, so wanna tell me what the fuck your Dad did to me and why the animals are leaving me alone?”

Now that had Jackson’s attention. “You’re sure.”

Tony sighed. “As of yesterday, our team was the only one not to have had an encounter. That changed yesterday where two of us were attacked but not me or my partner. The only difference is she has reported contact with animals travelling home.”

Jackson’s mind was racing because this was huge and may have some answers answer to what they needed to do in order to get the cure. “Tony - how pissed are you if I said I have a team I’d like to bring to you, you may just have a cure in whatever fucked up thing my Dad did. I will apologise into next century but you may be a very slim hope for us all.”

Tony sat down. “I asked Abs, our scientist to run a genetic screening for me. She doesn’t know it is mine.”

Oz sucked in a breath because he was the one of the very few who knew Toy had a genuine passion for genetics but it was a hobby for him as he wanted to help people. “What did it show, Tony? Come on, talk to me.”

Tony sighed because how the hell did you explain what he now knows. “Jack, you need to get here and explain why I have a third strand in my helix. She thinks it is a screwed up sample.” Jackson knew Tony well enough to know he wasn’t messing around.

It him all at once the implication, and he dropped his phone in shock for a second. “I’m here, Tony. I’m sorry, where are you?”

“Navy Yard.”

“We’re coming to you.” Jackson said, feeling like there just might be some hope. If Tony was able to repel the animals did that mean his Dad had done the same thing to him? It was worth exploring.

As soon as he finished his phone call, he hollered. “Abe, turn this plane around and Mitch, I need you to run a genetic screening on me.”

Their geneticist frowned as that seemed a little contrary to their original plan. “Why?”
Jackson sighed because Mitch could be as stubborn as Chloe when he wanted to be. Still, it was clear that just as competent as Chloe was when it came to gathering intelligence so was Mitch at finding out of the box cures. So Jackson decided to offer very little. “Confirm a theory I have and if so my family reunion is going to be a doozy.”

“Care to share?” Mitch paused.

Jackson shook his head because yes he did want to share but he couldn’t. “No. I don’t want to influence the result.”

Mitch looked his typical grouchy self. “That’s not vague at all.”

Jackson looked sheepish but did offer. “The Navy yard has an old friend who has an interesting lead for us.”

Abe, his best fried and fellow animal behaviour specialist, had to come to find him and knew him too well. “Who is the old friend?”

Jackson sucked in a breath because this was going to open up a can of worms. “Tony.”

Abe tilted his head to the side. “You talked to him.”

Jackson nodded and let some of his anger go. “It’s funny you know, when we were together we used to have a competition about whose father was the biggest bastard.”

“And?”

“Tony’s was an abusive drunk but eventually cut him off which was the best thing ... mine was a controlling bastard, who could never shake off the accident on my mom and, if we’re right, is an even bigger bastard than I ever expected.”

An hour later and Jackson punched a wall. “You took the blood.”

Mitch growled. “I know that but this is just not normal.”

Jackson chuckled hollowly. “Yeah, if you don’t have a father called Robert Oz who seems to think he is a fucking god.”

Mitch and Jackson were the only ones in the room. “How did you know?”

“Tony did, he has the same issue.”

Mitch just sat back comprehending that fact. “So how did he think there might be something to look for?”

Jackson was glad it was just the two of them as he wasn’t ready to fully admit this yet. “The animals won’t attack him, in fact, he suggested they’re leaving him alone. He is the only one yet not to have faced any type of animal encounter.”

Mitch looked intrigued. “So why have they attacked you?”
Jackson shrugged. “Tony, despite what he likes people to think, is a big geek. We just need to steal him.”

Chloe stepped up. “So you want him seconded?”

Jackson nodded. “He’d be a great help, trained investigator with a background in biology and he went to military school.”

“You have an interesting choice in boyfriends.”

Jackson blushed. “Yeah, I did. Tony is someone I thought was out of my league and now I get to see him all over again and my dad seems to have screwed him up.”

Chloe shrugged. “The world might be ending so I would say sort your priorities.”

Jackson never thought he’d have a friend as close as Ab, it seemed as though Chloe was like the surrogate sister he never had.

~*~

Tony saw Jackson for the first time in ten years and he forgot masks and bullshit. Today’s world wasn’t one where it could be allowed. He was about to say something but instead, he hugged him. “Man, it’s good to see you.”

Jackson sunk into the hug, it was just like old times. “Hey, so think you can take some leave to help me save the world?”

Tony snorted. “You’re such a dick.”

Jackson knew both his team and Tony’s team were watching their interaction but right now he didn’t care. “Hey, you called me man, you must pining for me.”

Tony smirked. “Maybe I am, but I adore the way you can casually throw around grandiose statements like save the world ... You don’t look like a cheerleader.”

“Tony, you should introduce us.” Ziva said tartly.

Tony rolled his eyes, right now he had more to worry about than his team’s feelings. “So team, this is an old friend of mine, Dr Jackson Oz. I called him as I noticed something and I know he can help. And now I need to go talk to the director with Jackson - alone.”

Jackson looked at his own team who didn’t seem too happy with the idea. “We’ll be five minutes, make sure we’re ready to go.”

~*~

Tony looked at the Director and knew he had to say something. “I need to preferably be seconded to their team.”

“Why?”

Tony thought about it and hedged his bets. “The research they’ve conducted is something Jackson
and I helped with when Dr Robert Oz was starting. They have a plan to save the animals.”

She quirked an eyebrow. “This have anything to do with the fact you are the only agent not to file an animal attack.”

Tony looked at her and changed tack. “Yes, probably. We have a theory but if we can work with it we might be able to reverse things.”

“Go. Take what you need. Go find a cure for us all.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

~*~

Jackson was grinning and so was Tony - they were about to embark on the ultimate mystery and puzzle and they were doing it together. Okay, so there were the other members of Jackson’s team but Tony and Jackson were together again.

Ziva was on his back as soon as he got back to his desk. He was taking his personal effects with him. “Why are you packing?”

Tony rolled his eyes. “Come on, little Ninja, you can figure out that clue.”

“You’re leaving.” McGee said in disbelief.

“Not permanently but there is a problem and this team is working on it - I can help so the Director has agreed to a secondment.”

“Why?”

Jackson snorted. “Do they know you?”

Tony shrugged. “In their defence I never let them see the real me.”

“Come on. You need to see the clues under a microscope, not a photo lens.”

Tony grinned crookedly. “Hey, it is just a matter of magnification.”

Ziva watched a bantering Tony leave the bullpen. Her anger multiplied, he had the luck of the devil. “Let’s find out who the hell Jackson Oz is and how he knows Tony. We need to have something for when Gibbs gets back.”

Only Gibbs never got back as he’d ended up in a block of water and he had no SFA to pull his ass out of the fire, or water in this case. Tony would only find out after he’d returned to Washington to a hero’s welcome having figured out the cure with the team. He was sad for his mentor but he was being pulled in a new direction now - and assumed the Deputy Director role of the newly formed IADG group.

Jackson found it hilarious that his big bad fiancé - now was forced to have protection on the orders of the President.
Derek and Mark were sitting in a bar. “She was sleeping with an intern.”

Mark felt nothing but relief in that he’d avoided the trap of sleeping with Addison. Sure she was hot, and a stunning woman but she was also Derek’s wife. He might like sex but they were some boundaries that he wouldn’t cross.

“What do you want to do?”

Derek snorted as he knocked back his whiskey. “Run and hide!”

Mark rolled his eyes. “Like slink off to DC for a weekend ... or find a new job in a new city?”

Derek snorted at the causal way Mark would roll with whatever he needed. “Let’s start in DC - maybe if I’m away from New York I’ll feel like I can breathe.”

Mark booked them tickets. He’d sent a quick message to an old friend because if they needed a bar then Tony would know the one to go to.

~*~

Tony was curious about the message and to be honest a bar sounded perfect. He sent Mark the coordinates for the best bar in the area for rich people. He’d finished work and to be honest he was pissed off with the world.

“What’s going on?” Tony asked because the last time he’d spoke to Mark, his friends were not planning to return to DC this month.

Mark honestly didn’t know where to begin with that statement. “Remember Derek?”

Tony snorted because he’d heard more than a few stories. “Your brother from another mother.”

“Yeah, that’s the one. He’s sad and his heart hurts so I want to help him.”

Tony understood what was going on. He was familiar with Mark’s method for curing all ills. “Well, I could do with a drink or three.”

“Come join us then.” Mark announced grandiosely.

~*~

Tony’s eyes adjusted to the low lit room. He could see Mark and the guy who he was guessing was
Derek waiting for him. “Timmy, can we have the Macallan 35 please?”

The bartender, who knew Tony from the last few months, snorted. “Sure thing.”

Tony frowned. “You two are way too hot to be this sad.”

Mark grinned, slinging his arm around Tony. Wow. He must be three sheets to the wind. Mark only became that openly affectionate with alcohol in him. Tony and he had become friends over their issues, and it let them break their masks down a little bit.

Tony held his hand out. “Nice to meet you, Dr Shepard. Mark’s told me a lot about you.”

Derek winced. “All good things I hope.”

Tony smiled at him and Derek was already charmed. “I’m told if I damage my head or nerves, yours are the only hands I should trust.”

Derek smirked because whilst his personal life might be going to shit, he was a rock star in his professional life. “I do okay but tell me about yourself, you cannot want to talk all about medicine and I could use the distraction.”

Tony shrugged because after a run in with the plague he could say he had a whole new appreciation for the medical profession. “I work for NCIS, so essentially a Federal Agent who solves Navy crimes.”

Derek wondered how it was that Mark always found smart, successful, hot people that weren’t raging bitches. It was the last part that he needed to work on. “So is it work or your personal life you want to drink away?”

Tony quirked an eyebrow. “Both?”

“You?”

Derek threw the rest of the glass down his neck. “Cheating wife.”

Tony just went. “Ah, Timmy. This needs tequila.”

Mark snickered at the horrified look on Derek’s face. His best friend really wasn’t a drinker. “Well, you’ll definitely forget your problems for a night.”

Derek forgot his problems but Mark ended up in a relationship. They weren’t quite quite sure how it happened but neither was complaining.

~*~

“Christ. Of all the places you could pick ... you pick Seattle.” Mark started to bitch to Derek.

Derek snorted at his best friend who was wearing shades to hide his lack of sleep. He’d delayed leaving Washington and Tony until the last possible second. “I like it here.”

“If you wanted bad weather you could have picked DC.” Mark pointed out aiming for reasonable.
Derek patted him on the shoulder. “You will make more advancements here than you would in DC especially if you’re not thinking with your little brain.” Tony could distract Mark simply by being in the same room as him.

Mark looked offended by the suggestion. “Just you wait until your divorce is finalised. I am going to get you mingling ... mainly so you won’t judge my mingling.”

Derek chuckled because Mark, for all his man-whoring past, had started to settle. There’d been less one-night stands and more drinks with Derek or staying the weekend with Tony. He didn’t dare say anything to Mark about Tony but he couldn’t help but think that happiness was a good look on him.

~*~

Mark had been sheepish when he’d explained to Tony that the contract he’d signed had been longer than six months and actually two years. “So I have to go to Seattle if I want to see you.”

Mark let out a breath of air in obvious relief. It let Tony know that he was serious about them. “Or, I will be flying to you.”

Tony considered his life. He’d run the MCRT for six months and kept the solve rate up, even if he’d had to come in extra early to keep it up. He knew Gibbs’ reappearance to help Ziva meant he’d be relegated back to sidekick. It wasn’t what he wanted anymore. He didn’t need to be the Deputy and even the most loyal St Bernard will eventually ignore someone who abandons them.

He’d wrestled with the idea of quitting NCIS. He’d done six years at the agency and it was three times longer than he’d stayed at any other workplace. He’d thought he’d found his true place and people he could love as family. It hadn’t worked out like that and he was tired. So tired.

He’d taken on a role to ease members into the team, only he’d played the role for so long people were forgetting it was a mask. He’d been sorry for Derek’s divorce but Mark and Derek had been his lifeline in the craziness that his life had descended into the last year. “You got a room in that palace of yours for me?”

Mark huffed. “My room, of course. Why?”

Tony was grinning, knowing that Mark hadn’t expected him to do this but sometimes you just had to roll the dice. “I got make some calls.”

~*~

Fornell listened in disbelief. “You’re wanting to switch?”

Tony rolled his eyes. “I want to work in an office where I can respect the people I am with, and will respect me in turn. Also, I’d like to move with my partner, who has just moved to Seattle.”

“Partner?”

Tony snorted but knew Fornell deserved the truth if he was going to help him escape NCIS. “Despite the rumours, I am capable of a serious relationship.”
“Who is the lucky woman?” Fornell asked, curious as to who could be the one to tame DiNozzo.

“Dr Mark Sloane.” Tony answered, expecting the silence he got as a result. He was going to convince Mark that it was okay to want Derek as well. “You okay, Tobias?”

“Can I please be there when you tell the clueless trio?”

Tony actually laughed because he just knew that Tobias was serious. “Sure, wanna help me pack?”

Fornell actually cackled. “The only way this could be sweeter is if you invited your paramour to help you exit the building.”

Well, that was too fantastic an idea to not go for.

~*~

Mark listened to his lover and tried to reign in his excitement. “Any objection to Derek tagging along? We could really confuse them. Plus, I can’t leave him alone. He’s still really down and might do something dumb like sleep with an intern.”

Tony snickered. “Wouldn’t the chief kill him?”

Mark sighed. “Yes. Yes, he would and this weekend would be a bad idea as he’s just signed the papers.”

“Ah, well, what better people to help me move.”

Mark snickered. “Babe, we’re rich. We’ll go to our favourite bar and let others pack for us.”

Tony knew his lover was a genius. “And the dense ones won’t know it’s my favourite bar.”

“Exactly. Now, how ostentatious should we make the car? Is it we’re stupendously rich? or I have more class in my finger and there is no hope of seducing my boyfriend away from me.”

Tony had to laugh. “Which car is which?”

“Well, the Lamborghini was a splurge and screams it, or, I can bring the Aston. I know you love the Aston.”

Tony was sitting back on his couch wishing Mark was next to him. “You know you’re awesome and the stupid bitch has no chance with me. Why would I want her toxic self when I have you? Plus, the only who could seduce me would be Derek.”

Mark snickered. “Understandable - he is pretty dreamy according to the nurses.”

Tony laughed just imagining the heart eyes they had a for the Doctor as he walked passed them. “Oh yeah, and what do they call you?”

“I’m apparently steamy or something. Too hot to handle.”

Tony sipped his whiskey. “Just you wait - you’ll be McDreamy and McSteamy within days.”
Mark groaned. “As long as you come to work so I can show off that you are mine, I’m okay with that.”

~*~

Tony was sitting at his desk when an unlikely but favourite trio of his walked into the bullpen. “Hey, DiNozzo, I think these belong to you?”

Tony had a massive grin on his face. “Yeah, well Mark more than Derek but yeah. And is it done?”

Tobias chucked him an FBI badge and handed him a new gun. Tony quickly and efficiently stripped off his current gun and badge handing them to Gibbs. “It’s been a ride, Gibbs, but I’m getting off that train now.” He left the word ‘crazy’ out but it was implied and all of them caught that and Ziva and McGee suddenly came alive.

“This is a jape, yes?”

Tony shook his head. “Nope, no joke. I am done. I asked Tobias if there were any jobs in Seattle as I was looking to relocate to be with my partner. I was fortunate there were.”

Mark, with a lecherous grin, added. “You could have been my kept man.”

Derek rolled his eyes. “His trust funds would have made it a toss up with who was keeping whom.”

Tony smiled. “Says the rockstar neurosurgeon.”

Mark pouted. “And what am I? Chopped liver?”

Tony snorted. “Relax, Darlin, you’re the god of plastic surgeons but I don’t need new boobs so I’m good.”

The MCRT looked like they’d seen a ghost. Well, not quite. There was no ghost - they were just seeing the real Tony DiNozzo.

Fornell looked Mark up and down. “You know what I can’t decide who is the pretty one out of you and Dr Sloane.”

Tony snickered as Mark slid an arm around his waist. “We’re in agreement that it’s Derek and the nurses all agree too. He’s too dreamy for words.”

Gibbs growled. “What the hell is going on, DiNozzo?”

Tony had a stunning smile that would have definitely put him at the top of the pretty pile. “I am quitting. I can’t stay here when Mark is in Seattle. I deserve my happy ending and Ziva before you say a word, I am not joking and you never had a chance. I mean - you’re not Mark.”

“You’re a womaniser!”

Derek actually laughed at that. “So was Mark but you should see them together, they are too sweet for words and if they weren’t such great people it would be sickening.”
Mark and Tony had matching grins. “Ah, we love you too, Derek. Now, I am leaving. It is done. The Director accepted the transfer and it’s a done deal.”

“That’s it?” McGee asked.

Tony shook his head. “No, McClueless, I should have said have a nice life but don’t contact me to bail you out of trouble. I am ditching the phone, to give you a clue.”

In fact, Tony left the phone on the table. He already had a new cell that was functioning and the one the bureau knew about. “Tobias, thank you for everything. And if you’re in Seattle look me up.”

~*~

A day later, Mark and Derek were in the canteen eating and laughing at the antics of the interns. Tony broke up their gossiping. “Hey, your eyes better not be straying from me.”

Mark whirled around and kissed him. “Purlease, you’re too distracting.”

“And he has a gun.” Derek added.

Mark nodded. “Yes, he does. Sexy too, so the whole package.”

Tony chuckled. “Let’s eat. I’ve got an afternoon of paperwork and meetings.”

Mark shuddered. “I have surgeries so am a happy man.”

Tony whispered something. “Happy life.”

He was living his best life and ... man, he couldn’t believe it was someone else’s affair that started it.
Hiding in the Hamptons (Dr Hank Lawson)

The Gardeners were trying to take everything from Hank. They had run him out of New York, stopped him finding a job, ensured he’d lost all his money and his fiancée was now gone as well. To say he hated the family of billionaires was an understatement. All because he’d saved a street kid rather than a member of their family because the kid had a better shot at living.

He was an ER doctor and he had to make those judgement calls every day. The resources were finite but the patients endless and sometimes he was called on to make a hard choice. He’d done just that and received zero backing from his hospital administrator. The family had not been content with just his firing - they’d blackballed him from every major hospital too.

He knew he’d been in a funk but when your whole life has been ripped away from you what do you do?

It seemed like his little brother had the perfect answer, or at least in his worldview. He’d decided what Hank really needed was a weekend in the Hamptons with Evan playing his fun conductor.

~*~

The Hamptons was something else. It was like living on a TV set. The rich were rich and they partied hard. It meant that his services were definitely needed. It was not the ER but at least he was practising medicine again. Evan, his brother, had somehow managed to finagle them an invite to a rich party and he was standing there feeling like a weird fraud.

“Who is that?” Hank asked, nodding at the hot guy in the corner.

His brother snorted. “That is Tony DiNozzo, the ultimate rich rebel.”

Hank took a deep breath. He’d been determined to hate every moment of being here but this guy hit every one of his buttons. He decided to deflect his brother’s attention. “How do you know that when we have only been here an hour?”

His brother just gave him a look questioning his intelligence levels. “Do I ask you if you’ve sutured correctly?”

That was true. Hank had enough smarts not to go down that route. “So how is he a rebel?”

Evan grinned, happy to share his newly found gossip. “He works as a Federal Agent.”

“FBI?”

Evan shook his head. “Nope. That, my brother, is apparently a Navy cop. Although, the way you’re looking at him suggests that you want to cut him out of that suit.”

Hank managed a short punch to the stomach that suckered his little brother. After all these years you’d think he’d learned to see them coming but he never did. He decided there was no time like the present. He went over to talk to the hot guy.

“If you decide to shoot someone I will be able to save them.” Hank said, cheekily.

Tony snorted at the eager way it was suggested to him. He didn’t need to be a good investigator to pick up those verbal clues. “You’re not a fan of these parties?”
Hank looked sheepish but saw no reason to deny the truth. “First one, and that feels like one too many. You seem to hate it just as much.”

Tony cocked his head to the side. “You’re awfully intuitive for a doctor.”

“Touché. Just like you figured out I was a doctor.”

Tony had a wicked grin. “It was that or a really bad pick-up line.”

Hank was feeling brave, or it might have been the one glass of champagne he’d allowed himself. “Can it be both?”

Tony found himself laughing. “Special Agent Anthony DiNozzo. I’m also Boris’ neighbour.”

“Dr Henry Lawson, although I prefer Hank.”

Tony found himself giving Hank a look up and down, a flirty smile on his face. “Nice to meet you, Hank.”

Yes, he’d recently ended an engagement but this guy couldn’t be further away from Nikki if he tried. They wandered into the gardens to talk the night away. Hank found himself explaining how he was fighting to save his career. Tony shared his past and the fact that apart from his boss and director - no one knew just how wealthy he was.

~*~

Tony adored Hank. He was a breath of fresh air in the Hamptons. He loved the fact he cared about the poorer patients just as much as the rich. It spoke to his character in a very positive way. The guy had only been here a day and a half and he was already worked into the rich circle’s gossip.

Hank was running along his path so decided to step out to start his run at the same time. “Hey, stranger. In a better mood?”

Hank stopped abruptly, recognising Tony from the night before. “Yeah. I have a job offer and I was running to clear my head.”

Tony smiled, knowing from the night before having saved one of Boris’ partygoers that would be the case. “How about I run with you ... and we can chat at a great spot I know.”

Hank was glad for the company and they fell into step, running in sync. They came to a quiet idyllic area, a hidden little spot on the beach. “So. You got any advice?”

Tony smiled softly, knowing that there was only one question that mattered. “Do you want to be a doctor?”

“Of course I do.”

Tony just looked at him. “Then accept the job. Take on other clients, help the rich and the poor alike. They could do with a champion.”

Hank tilted his head to the side. “So where do you fit in?”

Tony smirked, knowing what he was asking in a subtle way. “They see the job as an eccentricity. I am a second generation Hamptonite. My mother was the one to buy the place and no matter which city I live in, I can’t sell the place and I keep gravitating back to it.”
His father hated that his mother had deeded him the place and entailed it away from Senior. He took a deep breath and then finished the last of the explanation. “As for the job - I love the puzzles, the investigations and helping people seek justice - just as much as you do with good health.”

Tony paused for a second. “And when I’m down in the Hamptons, we can maybe get a coffee?”

Hank knew Evan would be saying a thousand things about why this was a bad idea. To him though, it felt right, and he really wanted to explore their connection.

“I’d like that.” He replied with a smile.

~*~

Tony had hated the Pacci case. It was senseless and a colleague was dead because a cowardly thief hadn’t wanted their secret exposed. Tony knew he wanted to escape from NCIS and DC for a bit. He sent a text to Hank to ask if he was free.

<Always for you.>

Tony couldn’t play nicely with the team anymore. “Boss, I’m going out of town for the weekend. Be back Monday.”

McGee and Todd looked up in shock, not having heard the SFA speak like that to Gibbs. Interesting though was the fact that Gibbs just let him go.

Tony hadn’t noticed the looks, nor had he cared. He was heading to the Hamptons. He wanted a weekend with people who had no worries in the world. Even better, the Hamptons was where Hank was and that sounded perfect right now.

Tony knew they were serious that day because Hank took one look at him, guided Tony to his bed and just lay with him. There was nothing sexual about it but it was intimate and a perfect balm to Tony’s soul.

... The fun came the day after.

Tony was making breakfast in jeans, his gun was on his belt when he heard a scream. He didn’t turn around but did greet the man he was assuming was Hank’s brother. “You okay Evan?”

“You’re here.” He stuttered in shock.

Tony nodded, knowing he should stop teasing but it was too easy. “I am and if you’re not going to faint I’ll go to finish the pancakes.”

“Pancakes?”

Tony smirked. “Yeah, Hank and I are hungry. You want some?”

Evan was confused. “You’re here. Hank is ... What is going on?

Hank slipped into the room, looking just and relaxed and happy. “Well, brother. You see when you love someone, and they stay the night, you usually end up very hungry at the end of it.”

Evan threw his hands in his ears. He loved Hank and his older brother had practically raised him but he did not need to think about the man’s love life. “La, la, la.”

Hank and Tony snickered - it was too funny. Tony asked obviously finding it funny. “I thought
you said your brother is a CFO.”

“He is.” Hank added. “He’s just shocked.”

“Oh.” Tony slid closer to pull him into a hug. “What about?”

Hank smirked. “That we’re together still.”

Tony frowned. “You’re a keeper. You don’t mind my crazy.”

Hank chuckled. “Well, you put up with mine.”

Evan just groaned. “I can’t deal with this sugariness. I am going to find Divya, and we can talk about anything.”

And they kept on seeing each other - their schedules were insanely busy but thanks to Tony’s money (and access to a private jet) they would make time for each other. Their relationship was going from strength much to the disappointment of the Hamptonites who wanted both men for themselves.

~*~

Tony’s day had been going so well until he’d got a message from his neighbour. Boris was annoyed his new concierge doctor could be stolen from him. Tony was aggravated that someone was trying to bully his lover. Thankfully he was rich enough to return the favour - let’s see if the Gardeners wanted to play when they got met with an unstoppable force, Unlike his boss, Tony had no particular hatred for lawyers. In fact, his was a close friend. She had stopped his wastrel of a father claiming any of Tony’s inheritances or trust funds.

He slipped into the hallway to make a call to his lawyer. “Hey, Angie.”

“What can I do for you today? You know for a Fed, you seem to need a lawyer a lot.”

Tony chuckled. “You should be pleased. Luckily I’m rich and I want you to go to New York and make the Gardeners regret looking at my lover, let alone trying to sue him.”

Angie was a fantastic shark of a lawyer. “You give me the best of presents. Hank is a Doctor and a good one. They are prosecuting him out of twisted bitterness. He’s staying in the Hamptons, at Shadow Pond, right?”

Tony chuckled. “He’s working for Boris. You know the man, he likes his doctors close and not in a hospital.”

“Boris seems a little shady for you.”

Tony shrugged even though he couldn’t be seen. “Boris and I have an understanding. He’s not in my sphere of influence and as long as he doesn’t do anything stupid, I don’t arrest him.”

Tony preferred to think of it as the selective blindness of the stupidly rich. It was a neat talent of the rich. “Look, Boris has already sent two lawyers, but me - I know things are about presentation. I want you and six of your best baby sharks to bury them in enough red tape to make them regret their life choices.”

Angie snorted. “Wow, this doctor must be hot.”

“He is pretty great, and I want him to keep doing what he’s best at.”
Tony, thanks to prudent investments, has an apartment in New York as well as DC. He knew that even though it wasn’t too far, Hank was most likely going to be staying in New York.

“DiNozzo, you okay?” Gibbs asked him, knowing that a quiet, pensive Tony usually meant chaos.

“Just calculating flight time between here and New York.” Tony answered honestly.

Gibbs quirked an eyebrow. Unlike the others in NCIS, he was aware of the fortune sitting at the back of Tony. He’d never come into the profession for the money. In fact, Gibbs was sure the salary Tony drew was given to the injured agent fund. “Hank?”

Tony nodded. This was one of the times he hated a long distance relationship. He knew what being a doctor meant to Hank and he’d be going out of his mind thinking he might lose his license.

“Go before McGee and Kate get back. I don’t want to have to deal with their whining.”

Tony wanted to say something but he wasn’t the type to kick a gift horse in the mouth. “Thanks, Gibbs.”

“Be back here on Monday.”

Tony offered him a salute as he scurried away before Gibbs could change his mind. He had other things on his mind.

Tony touched down in New York and because he didn’t want to worry about lines and waiting he’d scheduled an executive flight from his private jet. So that it would be speedy, he took a car from the airport. He hated being that guy but as always he was aware that appearances mattered. He was wearing his best-tailored suit, cufflinks and his whole outfit screamed ‘more money than you could only dream’.

He waited for the elevator to get him to the floor and sure enough, he saw Hank pacing outside the room. “Hey, babe.”

Hank just raced straight into Tony’s arms. “I’m so glad you’re here.” Tony thought was what was mumbled but it was difficult to hear in his shoulder.

“Gibbs let me go. How’s it going?” Tony asked.

Hank managed a weak grin. “The Gardeners were all bright and cheerful until they saw Boris’ lawyer ... and then when she informed them she was waiting for Angie? I thought they might cry.”

Tony chuckled. “Angie is Queen Shark and wants to make mincemeat out of them. I just provided her with a legitimate way to start.”

“You’re all heart.” Hank managed, finding the funny side. At least now he felt like he wasn’t about to lose his livelihood.

Tony pulled him to a chair. “Come on, tell me what the Hamptons are like as a resident. The longer I have to work with the dense duo ... the more I am thinking I should just embrace my inheritance and make tons of money. I could then channel it into the charity I want to set up.”

Hank snorted, knowing Tony was talking about the two junior agents he worked with who caused...
him daily aggravation. “They still haven’t figured it out?”

“Which bit? That I’m gay, or I am rich to the 10th power?” Tony queried.

“Any of it?”

Tony shook his head. “Nope, I am the wealthy man whore, who skates through work much to their frustration.”

Hank let his head rest on Tony’s shoulder. “I hope I’m there when they realise their mistake.”

Tony chuckled, imagining their faces. “I’m going nowhere.”

Hank’s lawyer team left first and Angie came up to hug Tony. She announced magnanimously, “I love the fact I earned money to verbally eviscerate those asshats.”

Tony smirked. “Oh, I was happy to spend every penny.”

Angie didn’t keep them hanging. “You’re free to practice medicine as you please.”

Hank let out a whoop of joy. He’d been terrified all week that he’d lose his license. He winced as the other problem he had were the lawsuits - they’d eaten into his money for a while. “And the lawsuits?”

She quirked an eyebrow. “What lawsuits? They didn’t want to pursue any further actions. They thought the interviews where they were painted in a bad light would be bad for business. And I have an excellent spin doctor on file.”

Tony snickered but reminded her. “I should charge you a commission. I was the one to introduce you.”

Hank and Tony didn't stay long after that because there was no reason. Tony pulled him close and whispered. “So here, the Hamptons or DC?”

Hank thought about it. “Let’s go back to DC,” then remembered cheekily, “I can take the jet back home.”

Tony snorted. “Course you can, the pilot will be glad to fly more than for my whims.”

Hank rolled his eyes, knowing how his lover worked. He’d rather have his mother back than the wealth she’d amassed. “If you say so.”

Tony had a twinkle in his eye that suggested mischief. “Yeah. Let’s go DC.”

~*~

Tony and Hank touched down on the tarmac and moved quickly through the security area. Perks of a Federal badge and executive travel. “So what’re you planning?”

“Let’s go for a drink.” Tony suggested.

Hank had to ask. “Rich and swanky, or, down and dirty?”

Tony smirked. “And what would you prefer?”

Hank thought through his options. “I vote ... rich and swanky leading to a down and dirty.”
Tony’s grin turned to a smirk. “I love the way you think.”

They were walking down the street. Close together but not hand in hand as they were not a demonstrative couple in public. A new voice broke through their happy bubble of celebration. “Tony?”

Tony groaned, cursing his unique luck. He whispered to Hank. “If we ignore them do you think they’ll go away?”

Hank snickered. “Does it ever work with Mrs Newburg?”

“Nope.” Tony replied, knowing that he just needed to man up and face Kate. He turned around. “Hey, Kate. How’s your evening?”

She sighed, showing the annoyance she felt. She’d been frustrated hoping to find a place on Saturday night. “Trying to find somewhere with Duane to eat.”

Tony shook the guy's hand. “Nice to meet you, Kate has told me a lot about you.”

Kate was tense, wondering just what Tony would say. She was shocked to see him smile, Tony didn’t make a smart comment but rather introduced his friend. “Kate this is my partner, Dr Hank Lawson. We’re just about to eat so we’ll have to dash, sorry.”

Her eyes bugged out in shock but knew she couldn’t say anything. Her mind was racing up to assimilate this new information. How could he be a skirt chaser if he was with Hank? Her shocks weren’t over. Tony waltzed into the exclusive Italian restaurant that they didn’t even try to get into as it was more than she made in a week to eat there. She noticed how Tony was immediately seated.

“How rich do you have to be to get in there?” Kate asked.

Duane shrugged. “Like Hamptonite rich.”

“Huh.”

It just goes to show - she shouldn’t judge a book by its cover. The worst of it was Tony didn’t care enough to accept her apology. He was happy, secure and pleased with his life. The wedding in the Hamptons was a different matter.
Rusty Ryan had never been able to turn down a job that Danny suggested. Some may call it a weakness but in reality - it was just good business sense. At least in his mind.

His best friend always saw him make money. Danny was a world-class thief and yes, okay, he’d been pinched but that was because he’d let his heart get in the way. Rusty figured Danny would have learned his lesson with five years cooling his heels inside.

Still, all was good now as Danny was back and hungry for a job. He’d worked with serious amateurs and plain crazies in the interim and that was just not good for his health. After all, he wouldn’t be trying to teach stars how to play poker if things had been going well with his less than legitimate jobs.

The crazy thing was - Rusty actually liked Tony even if he’d been a Fed. It just hadn’t been a good fit - a thief and an agent. Too much like Romeo and Juliet for his liking. He figured they were lucky it didn’t end like the play.

The dinner was fairly empty and, being a good friend, Rusty treated Danny to his first proper, cooked meal in a long time. He could see the hunger in Danny’s eyes and knew that whatever he’d done inside - he’d planned something good to celebrate his return to the land of the free.

Rusty had to ask, trying to gain a clue. “So we’re going to Vegas?”

Danny had a massive grin, knowing he should tease his friend but instead offered. “Or DC? You pick, my old friend.”

Rusty was looking nervous. “Why do I feel like this is a trap?”

Danny snickered. “No trap. Just different angles. Vegas offers more money but more danger and DC offers a big prize but higher security and . . .”

Rusty knew that a pause was never good. “And what?”

“Potential complications.” Danny offered as a mysterious answer.

In Rusty’s experience, potential complications when pulling off high-value heists is the last thing you want to hear. “Let’s go to Vegas, I like to live dangerously.”
Rusty should have known better with the big smug grin he could see on Danny’s face. He was always thinking of the right question too late.

~*~

Tony looked around his apartment and sighed. Yet again, he’d ended a relationship because they couldn’t match a ghost. He’d wanted to hate him for so long. He’d not been enough. The lure of a crime being greater than Tony’s love, or, at least that was how he was interpreting it. It pissed him off that as a man he still couldn’t let go and it had been five years. He’d dated a variety of men and women although some were more secretive than others. It just never seemed to work out well.

An alert pinged on his phone of a probationary release. It just added to how pissed off he was today. “Oh, that is just perfect.”

Tony knew he needed a drink, wait - no, several drinks. This was so bad. He didn’t know what to do. His heart and his mind were in perfect conflict. Danny was never going to change. At heart, he was a conman. He was just also a suave, confident, caring, gorgeous man who’d been one of the first people who made Tony feel like he was cared for. It was one of the reasons his arrest had hurt Tony.

~*~

Tony’s week did not improve at all - in fact, it got worse. He’d been ordered to use up some of his leave. “Wait - you want me to leave McGee and Todd with Gibbs ... on their own?”

Morrow snorted although he did understand the question. “You’ve given them time to adapt to being with the man. If they can’t handle it they don’t deserve to be on the MCRT.”

Tony flushed because he recognised that fact. He did but he spent so much of his time deflecting Gibbs’ moods that it had become second nature.

Morrow just bulldozed on. “Agent DiNozzo, I want the agent I saw before you started to cater to the whims of the team. You have the potential to not just be good but exceptional and if they can’t handle that ... more fool them. You will take the two weeks holidays which I might add is a fraction of the built-up holiday time. You will then return not hiding your talents. Is that clear?”

Tony sighed but he was not stupid enough to defy an order from his director. This was definitely going to change things, that was for sure. Still, hiding in Vegas for a week while he tried to figure out the Danny situation. There was a plus side to his parole - he had to stay in state so there was no way he’d be in Vegas.

Right?

~*~

They’d done it, they’d convinced the eleven men they would need to convince that they should try to rob not one, not two but actually three of the casinos in Vegas. Okay, this was definitely not without risk - all three casinos belonged to the same man, Terry Benedict. In a unique twist that Benedict would come to hate, the man fed all the money from all three casinos into one highly secure vault.

The recon to make sure that the job would work was taking place. Rusty wasn’t sure whether he
wanted to kill the brothers or not but they did manage to see everything and be ignored.

Linus whistled. “He wears a suit better than you ... and seems close to Benedict. Haven’t caught his name though.”

Rusty groaned because this was the complication. “I’m gonna kill him.”

Linus was freaking out, bless his young pickpocket heart. “Who?”

Rusty smiled sweetly as he considered just how he would do it. “Danny.”

Linus wasn’t getting a direct answer but he’d figure it out with his phone call. “Did you know he was here?”

“Know who was here?”

Rusty snorted. “Danny, Tony is here. Please don’t tell me you’re running a job within a job here.”

“Tony’s in DC.”

Rusty actually rolled his eyes. “No, Tony is here and seems to be best buds with Benedict.”

“Fuck.” Danny said, and Rusty realised that Danny hadn’t planned for him. Rusty was kind of pissed because he knew that Benedict’s current squeeze was one of Danny’s Ex-girlfriends ... and that would have been easier.

Linus was pale. “Why is this a fuck?”

Rusty flipped his phone back into his suit. “Tony is like Kryptonite ... at least where Danny’s concerned.”

Linus moved quickly to catch up with Rusty’s quick movements.

~*~

Rusty slammed the door of their hotel room. “Tell me to my face that you did not know Tony was here.”

Danny was pacing, trying to get his thoughts in order. “I didn’t know. I’m not stupid. I broke his heart and he knows I’m on probation ... I wasn’t supposed to leave the state, remember?”

Linus could see the two friends tense and struggling not to say something they’d all regret. “Who is Tony?”

Rusty was the one to answer. “Agent Anthony DiNozzo, NCIS. Also, he’s one of Danny’s ex’s. *The Ex.*”

Linus’ eyes widened just imaging the pair together. It certainly made quite the picture. “And how does he know Benedict?”

“Friend of his father’s ... Tony is rather rich in his own right.” Danny finally said.
The rest of the team were now in the room, having picked up over the comms that something was wrong. Basher looked like he wanted to blow something up. “So - what does this means.”

Danny sucked in a breath. “This means that certain jobs get rearranged and you need to limit your visible contact with me in public to a minimum.”

“Why?” Rusty said warily.

“I will capture Tony’s attention. He’s a Navy cop essentially so this probably won’t bother him too much. He is a good investigator and has a legitimate axe to grind against me.”

Danny’s tone suggested that not even torturing him would make him open up regarding the issues between him and Tony.

To his relief, the lure of the big pay off kept the crew on the job. Although, Danny was sure that for a few of them they just wanted to see if Tony would shoot Danny. It was a fifty-fifty split in the betting pool.

~*~

The crew had left but Rusty was not letting his friend off that easy. The others had not been around for the doomed romance like he had. “You think this is a good idea?”

Danny sighed. “No idea.”

“And if he plays true to being a good agent and arrests you immediately for breaking probation? He certainly has enough reasons.” Rusty reminded him bluntly, hoping to get Danny to see sense.

Danny winced as he wasn’t unaware of the predicament he was in. He’d honestly picked Vegas hoping he wouldn’t see Tony. He could handle Tessa, Tony was the one he’d wished he’d handled differently. “I’m hoping he’ll at least let me explain - and if nothing else it will provide an excellent distraction while you pull off the robbery.”

Rusty actually cackled seeing the angle. “My god, it is the perfect alibi. You’re going to get rearrested having a domestic with your ex-boyfriend. And who would believe that you’d helped pull off the heist of the century.”

Danny shrugged. “I can handle six months for a pay-off of eleven million.”

Rusty tilted his head to the side. “And if Tony doesn’t report you to the authorities?”

Danny had a smug smile. “Then I will wait the six months ‘til I’m officially a free man to propose.”

Rusty rolled his eyes. “You’re still trying to pull him to our side, aren’t you?”

Danny pouted. “The man infiltrated the mob and they didn’t kill him. In fact, the Don who he put in prison wants him back, says he doesn’t mind if he has a male husband either.”

Rusty shook the image of Danny as a gangster moll. Too disturbing. “He’s that good?”
Danny sighed wistfully. “Better. He could slip inside any group get what he needed and slip out again before they even knew what was happening. He’s a gifted con artist who learned from his old man as a kid. Sadly, unlike our delightful puppy, Linus, he was put off the life and went to the bosses most offensive way he could find to stick it to his old man.”

Rusty snorted as he knocked back a whiskey. “I can see that ... you know it would be a hell of a cover identity to pull off the more audacious heists. Who would believe the Fed? He could pull the heist and then investigate it.”

It was musings but Danny had thought about it. He didn’t want Tony to change his ideals, just be flexible enough to accept that Danny wasn’t going to change his own. “Actually, for Tony, it would be even more perfect as his Agency is responsible for a very narrow focus. He has the respectability but not the spotlight that say someone at the FBI or CIA would.”

“You’ve thought about this?”

Danny nodded, he’d been preparing the speech for five years. He could actually tell you the days since he’d perfected it but he was keeping that bit to himself. He wanted to keep his dignity - plus, that was for Tony’s ears and no one else’s. “Yeah, I have.”

The only trouble was for all his skills in planning criminal heists - he’d never been able to predict Tony’s choices. It was why they worked so well.

~*~

Danny was strolling down a slot row when Terry’s goons picked him up. The dragged him to a hidden room but not before taking him past the high rollers area. Tony had definitely seen him with how big his eyes went.

Danny managed a sheepish smile but couldn’t say anything. Tony’s interest was piqued so what would he do?

Tony knew Danny was up to something - he had no idea of the scale of it. What he did know was that Terry Benedict didn’t play - he would kill Danny just to send a message to any other person who got the idea that it would be a good idea.

Jesus, Danny was supposed to stay in New Jersey as that was part of his parole deal. He’d checked it out as soon as he had the alert on Danny’s release - so what was he doing here?

Tony looked around hoping he could see Rusty and see if this was audacious or plain stupid. Tony couldn’t see Rusty which didn’t mean he wasn’t around - in fact he was certain he was here.

He had a choice but Danny was probably going to be pissed with him. Still, Danny would be alive even if he had to serve another three to six months at Uncle Sam’s pleasure. He put a phone call into the PD and then headed to that corridor. The one he’d just seen Danny dragged through.

The corridor was empty which meant no one could hear the groans Terry’s goons forced out of Danny. Tony wasn’t sure who he wanted to shoot. No, that wasn’t true - always the bad guy but Danny knew how to be infuriating.

Tony figured being Vegas - boldness was to be admired so he knocked on the door. “Sir?”

Tony used his best commanding voice. “Open up, Mr Benedict ordered me to speak with the thief.”
The door unlocked, and Danny was there tied to the chair. Tony cocked his head to the side. “You know a few dreams started this way.”

Danny smirked but winced through a split lip. “You always were kinky.”

Goon One and Goon Two looked too confused - this was not one of the boss's henchmen. “Who are you?”

Tony smiled sweetly. “Agent Anthony DiNozzo of NCIS. You have a man pertinent to my enquiries. You should know I informed the local PD he’s broken parole so they will be here to arrest him soon. I should imagine if you were in the middle of rearranging his face for non-legitimate reasons they would take you in as well.”

“But?”

Tony rolled his eyes. “I am going to make this simple for you ... I am arresting him and you have no say in this.”

The second goon went to raise his gun but Tony beat him to the punch. “You see, the minute I see your finger twitch. I will put a bullet in you, then your friend and I will walk out with my collar. Or, you can save me time and hand over my man.”

Danny wasn’t too sure what mood Tony was in. He was wisely for the moment staying quietly. He really hoped that Rusty had held up his end of the bargain by running the heist with this distraction.

The second goon. “But Mr Benedict....”

“Needs to understand that despite his money, he is not God and still is subject to United States law.” Tony finished primly.

The goons handed over Ocean, not liking the crazed look in the Agent’s eyes. They had no idea what was going on but they were not earning a bullet for no one. It was the beauty of Tony’s play - they assumed Tony would shoot them because that is what they would do in his place.

They were out in the corridor.

“I can explain.”

Tony glared. “Shut up, Danny.”

Danny huffed. “I am about to go back to jail ... I deserve to have a few words of freedom.”

Tony snorted. “How much?”

Danny knew he could lie but there was no point. Any fragile chance they had of succeeding required the truth to play a part of their relationship. “Eleven.”

Danny smiled weakly. “I had to.”

Tony shook his head. “You didn’t and what if I wasn’t here? Terry doesn’t play ... he kills for sport. I was just never able to prove it.”
Danny despite himself was impressed - there were not many people who could boast that they had eluded Tony’s attention since he started his law career. “So does that you mean still care?”

“Ask me in three to six months.” Tony finished with a wry smile, as the blue lights came into view.

Danny whirled around, awkward as his hands were still in cuffs. “You mean that?”

Tony smirked. “You are an excellent thief, Danny, and you took something I haven’t been able to recover.”

Danny’s mind whirled hearing the unspoken words - he would take it.

“OCEAN!”

Danny was in cuffs and with Tony and the law officers standing by his side - there was very little that Benedict could actually do. “Yes, Terry?”

“Did you have anything to do with it?”

Danny sighed looking aggravated. “Look, I have my own problems. My ex-fiance just made sure I got sent back to prison so I can’t help you fix your problems.”

Tony saw the narrowed eyed-look. Terry wasn’t stupid, he’d avoided his father's schemes after all. Still, Tony was feeling charitable enough that he would confirm Danny’s part - he wouldn’t be mentioning any of Danny’s questions.

“It’s true, I did. I was feeling better. He thought his last heist was more important than me ... and he broke parole so I reported him. He can try to convince me he was stupid in three to six months.”

Terry Benedict was caught out - he couldn’t say anything as he didn’t want to admit that he’d been robbed. It would ruin his reputation. He couldn’t threaten Ocean with Tony while the local PD was in earshot. He had to settle for a death glare which did not feel satisfying - at all.

Three to Six Months Later

Rusty was leaning against a Mustang. “You bought a muscle car?”

Rusty smirked. “It’s on loan. I hope you were the groom.”

It was quite the statement piece to leave a state penitentiary in a full black tux, with the tie hanging loose. Danny could carry it off but it was still a bit much.

Danny sighed. “Low blow. Why you gotta be mean?”

Rusty smiled looking too angelic for his own good. “I will leave that to him.”

Danny looked at the back seat to see Tony sitting there looking relaxed. “Is that right?”

“Get in.” Tony said calmly not letting any of his thoughts go. “You have a lot to make up to me.”
“How about a lifetime?”

“I accept.”

~*~

And they did figure it out - in between Tony’s role becoming more grey than he would have expected, shutting down a Benedict revenge sequel and, in a strange twist, finding Rusty his own girl who was an Interpol Agent.

Life was good - although Danny never did give Tony back his heart. So the only thing Tony could do was steal Danny’s in return.

Chapter End Notes

So this could have ended up in the shades of grey but because I couldn't decide how grey Tony would be and left it for the sequel to decide (which more than likely will end up in that collection.)
Happy holidays, and thanks to the awesome edronhia for beta'ing on xmas day!

The Grimm of Portland, Nick Burkhardt, and the Portland Police Department as a whole, were concerned. In fact, they were pretty sure there was an apocalypse on the horizon. It was the only thing that made sense. After all, why would Captain Renard be smiling?

Hank, Nick's work partner, was finally in the know about the supernatural. "He's been like this all morning. Is there anything Grimmy to explain this?"

Nick frowned at him using the word Grimmy. "No, in fact, there have been no plots. By all accounts, the prince is happy."

Hank frowned. He was the only one in the office to know that Renard held dual titles in Portland. To the human world, he was Captain Sean Renard. In the Grimm world, he was the Prince, the unofficial ruler of the area, or canton, as the supernatural creatures would refer to it.

"Huh."

Wu was sliding up to them and shuddered. “It’s not natural.”

Nick snickered, knowing as the Captain’s aide he was subject to the Captain’s moods more than anyone else. Renard was a hard task master but fair. Still he could strike fear in the hearts of everyone and people were never to sure if Renard worked for the mayor, or if the mayor worked for him. “What’s not natural?”

“He’s smiling but I see no blood or a mortal enemy in taters.” Wu confided.

Nick inwardly hoped that wasn’t the case as he didn’t want to have to go full on Grimm. “You know he might just be happy?”

The look he got from Wu and Hank suggested they thought he was a naive unicorn.

Hank shrugged. “You lot are looking for plots and I think it’s obvious. He is a man - he’s getting some.”

Wu and Nick frowned because the Captain dated casually. Nick now knew it was a bit trickier for him to settle down considering his position within the canton.

Wu smirked. “One night stands count as dating?”

Hank, whose own romantic history was known, wisely stayed quiet. A chuckle from behind them had all of them jumping. What had surprised them was the man had crept on them. That was quite the feat considering they were trained law officers, and one of them was a supernaturally enhanced hunter too.
“I think we’ve had more than one night of dates.”

Wu stepped forward, remembering his job role. “Excuse me, how can I help you?”

The man smirked. “You could point me the way of my husband’s office.”

Nick gulped because this man was exuding sensuality on a level that a hexenbiest would be jealous of. “Sorry, Sergeant Wu is usually more socialised. Can I ask who that is exactly?”

“You call him Captain I believe.”

All three froze, and several things became obvious. Wow, so Renard was now married. Things had just gotten intriguing and several times more complicated. Wu practically fell over himself to go and introduce the mystery husband. The fact he would gain gossip as a result, was only a useful secondary goal.

~*~

“You know, if you’re here to steal a case we’re going to fall out.” Renard said without looking up from his paperwork.

The man snorted. “Darling, don’t be rude. Not here as a Fed but as your husband.”

Renard shot up. “Tony. What are you doing here?”

“You’re now looking at the Agent in Charge of Portland.” He said, brushing imaginary lint off his shoulder. “Surprise.”

Renard was grabbing his jacket. “Wu, we’re going to dinner. Clear my schedule.”

“Yes, boss.”

Wu watched as his captain went off with the mystery man. Frustratingly, all he knew was he was a Fed and called Tony, or at least a variation. He was smart enough to do his duty before he went to share his news.

~*~

Nick was the one to ask him, simply being quicker to the punch than Hank. “So who is he?”

Wu shrugged. “All I know is he is a Fed, called Tony and apparently answers to Renard’s husband.”

Nick looked at their retreating forms. “Huh.”

There was little that he could do and if Renard was loved up then he might have an easier time with his Grimm duties. “We will just have to watch and find out.”

~*~

Tony had never planned to be a Zauberbiest but his ex-fiance had been a vindictive bitch. One zaubertrank later and Tony had switched species. He’d gone to DC at the behest of Gibbs and started to research his new found powers at the same time. He could have done without being a
male witch. He could have also done without the instinctive knowledge of potions that he seemed to have gained.

What was done was done, and all his research hadn’t found him any answers on how to change back. So he’d adapted. It was just his way.

Meeting Sean had been a revelation. It was someone he had a lot in common with and that helped. Sean was complicated in the best possible ways and as a result, Tony wanted to peel away each layer. The trouble was as he peeled away each layer, he wanted to do the same with Sean’s exquisite suit.

To his great fortune - Sean had felt the same way with him. He hadn’t realised just how much their relationship had developed until Sean had gone back to Portland after his vacation and Tony pined for him. It wasn’t as cliche as it sounded for a Zauberbiest, they could literally wither away.

~*~

Renard looked up at his Detectives. “Burkhardt, a word.”

Nick walked forward because as far as he knew he hadn’t done anything as a grimm or a detective that would required being screwed at by his superior “What can I do for you, Captain?”

“My cousin is coming in from Europe. Eric is the crown prince and he is uncivilised.”

Ah, Nick understood what he was saying. The Royals, for the most part, controlled the Wesen in any area. The Captain was technically a royal bastard but one who was accepted by the Wesen. “Does he know about your marriage?”

Renard nodded. “He does but it is both my marriage and you living in this Canton that bothers him. I have a legitimacy that most of the Royals would beg for and that type of power bothers them.”

Nick had a sharkish grin. “Well, ain’t that a shame.”

Renard smirked. “Yes, it is. However Eric doesn’t care about things like permission and if can’t buy what he wants he tends to just take it.”

“He puts his hands anywhere near me, I will chop them off.” Nick promised.

Tony shivered as he slipped into the office. “You must be talking about Eric.”

Nick calmed down a little and was a bit sheepish. After all, they were still in the middle of work and he was meant to be an officer of the law. He shouldn’t be threatening people. “I am so glad it is you, I don’t think we’ve met.”

Tony offered his hand. “Agent Anthony DiNozzo, NCIS. Agent in Charge of the Portland office.”

Nick smirked. “So a marriage of a fed and a cop.”

Tony grinned crookedly. “It works for us and we like Portland just the way it is. We’d be grateful if you could help us send a message to Sean’s family that they should get lost.”

Nick chuckled because he couldn’t believe, considering how his grimm reveal had started, that he
would consider this as a possibility. He'd come to realise that the Wessen world was shades of grey and his captain was not the worst thing in the world. “Well since you asked so nicely. Let me call it a belated wedding gift.”

And what a gift it was...

*No one in his father’s family would mention Eric’s name after his disastrous trip, nor would anyone find out why Sean Renard went from bastard-barely-acknowledged to the named crown prince. It was an annoyance that Sean hadn’t wanted but between himself, Tony and Nick - no one went into Portland to cause trouble anymore.*
Sam Winchester was at Stanford and it had been his choice. He didn’t regret aiming for normal but he was starting to see that it wasn’t an option for him. Oh, the irony. He had his interview for his law degree on Monday and if he got it, then it would make his career. He was proud of what he’d achieved but it would be great if he could share the news with his brother.

Try as he might, he’d tried to ignore the supernatural but it was all around him. He couldn’t ignore it and even last weekend he’d salted and burned the bones of a malevolent spirit in their apartment block.

It didn’t matter though because tonight was Halloween and for partying. He had to smile seeing his lover waltz up to him like he was the best thing in the room. In Sam’s biased opinion, Tony was the best thing to happen to him.

“So, here’s to Halloween and awesome LSAT scores.” Tony offered Sam his own shot so they could toast their celebration. Tony’s lips looked so inviting that Sam decided to test how much liquor was still there.

His mate, Jaimie, just shook his head at their liplock. “You know it’s not a costume if it’s the day uniform.”

Tony shrugged at his patrol uniform. “What can I say? Shift change makes uniforms awkward. The plan was to grab this one and give him a personal celebration for his awesome test score.”

Plus, he was grateful that this was his last day in uniform. On Monday, he would be reporting as a junior-grade detective. Sam pouted. “I was going to reward you for becoming a Detective.”

Jamie shook his head. “What would you do without Tony?”

“Crash and burn,” Tony answered, “But hey, he pulled me out of a funk and got me back on track so I returned the favour.”

Jamie had a thought that amused him. “So wait - you’ll arrest them, and then you’ll prosecute them?”

Sam and Tony snickered. “Something like that. Now, we’re going to cut out.”

“You’re like a boring old married couple.”

Sam shook his head and Tony was the one to say it. “Nah, our sex-life is way too awesome for that.”

Jamie choked on his beer. “I did not need to know that about you pair.”
Tony had no shame and shrugged. “Say bye for now.”

Sam simply drained his pint and repeated the words. “Bye for now.”

~*~

Sam had not expected Tony. In fact, before he’d struck out from his family he’d never expected to ever have a relationship with another man. He wasn’t closeted or homophobic, he was just smart enough not to raise it around John Winchester.

Tony had been a fresh cop, just out of college himself when they’d met. The age difference was only four years and Sam was precocious enough to chase what he wanted. That was a year ago and he and Tony had not looked back. He trusted Tony second only to Dean and a measure of how much he trusted Tony was that he knew all about his childhood - the whole unvarnished truth.

Tony had respected his desire for an apple pie life but he had insisted that their apartment was warded and Sam had to keep up his shooting skills. Tony had also asked to be taught the basics of hunting in case it was needed. It wasn’t like with Tony’s profession that he might not gain enemies that could come looking for Sam so it was only prudent to be aware of each other’s skill sets.

The couple had fallen asleep together but woke at the noise in the apartment. Tony reached for his sidearm and Sam went for a knife. They took a second to slip on underwear because fighting butt naked was never a good idea if it could be avoided. They moved together silently, together to face whatever was stupid enough to wake them up.

Sam flicked the light on and Tony cocked his gun. “You have ten seconds to give me a reason not to shoot you.”

“Hey, Jerk. Guess, you’re not as rusty as I thought.” Dean greeted his brother like it was completely okay to break into his apartment.

Tony figured out who it was from the description. “You do know it is really dumb idea to break into a cop’s apartment.”

The guy whirled around. “Why on earth are you with my brother? You are out of his league.”

Sam chose to avoid making a comment in return. “Why are you here, Dean?”

“Is that all I get after two years?” His brother asked.

Sam rolled his eyes. “It is. Yeah, especially after you break in at three in the morning.”

Dean looked sheepish. “Look, I need your help and as awesome as your boyfriend is, we should probably talk alone.”

Sam stood tall and stubborn and Dean could tell that the time apart had done nothing for his stubbornness. “Dad’s gone on a hunting trip and hasn’t returned a call in three weeks.”

Tony groaned but knew that for all Sam said he was done with family, he understood loyalty and the desire to check better than anyone else. He could give Sam the impetus to make sure he didn’t have any regrets further down the line. “Go, Sam, do what you gotta do but you better be back in here on Monday. I don’t care what demon, creature of the night or John ‘Goddamn’ Winchester wants. They do not get to screw up your dreams.”
His piece said Tony went back to bed. It was too early to deal with that much family drama and he wanted to be at the station early. You only had one shot at making a good first impression.

Dean watched the man go back to bed, wearing just black boxers. Sam really had found himself a great guy, and wow, movie stars would kill to have the cop’s looks. He might chase ass, as much as he did women, but he had eyes. “You have way too much luck.”

Sam smirked as he watched Tony go back to bed. “No rabbit foot, just persistence. Look, I will help you find Dad but then I need to come back.”

Dean snorted. “Yeah, I can see that.”

“Don’t be a little bitch, Dean. I love Tony.”

“I know, little brother.” Dean said, getting it. He might be jealous but there was no way he was going to stand in the way of his brother’s happiness.

~*~

The trip had gone as well as expected. Dad wasn’t missing but had deliberately fallen off the grid to hide from the boys. Sam and Dean tried to be pissed but it had happened one too many times for them to muster the energy.

Dean had been fairly good at not being nosey but figured they had the trip home to find out about his little brother’s life. “So how did you and Tony meet?”

Sam smiled at the memory. “At a bar. I kept staring and my mate, Jaimie, challenged me to stop just looking and go talk to the guy.”

“It was pretty brave considering he was a cop.”

Sam snorted because what Dean wanted to say was it was a dumb move especially considering their family’s run-in with the law. Still, when you know something you should chase it with all your heart or at least that was how Sam saw it. “He was the hottest person at the bar.”

Dean sighed because they’d pulled up outside Sam’s apartment. “Look, I get that we’ve had a bad few years but can we talk sooner than another two years?”

Sam rolled his eyes. “I was mad at Dad, Dean not you.”

“It sure didn’t feel that way.” Dean replied honestly, looking as sad as he felt.

Sam pulled him in for a hug. “Well, I mean it. Come upstairs, one drink for the road. Yeah?”

Dean knew it would be more painful to pull away and go back to being alone so he seized the opportunity to stay a little longer.

When Sam opened the door, he could have predicted a million things. This wasn’t one of them. There was a demon pacing around a devil’s trap and cursing Tony for all he was worth. However, it seemed Tony was unruffled by every single insult.

“Hey, babe.” Tony greeted him.
Sam actually started laughing. Of course, Tony would capture a demon whilst he was on a hunting trip. “Hey, Darlin. You have a friend over, I see.”

“No friend of mine. Bastard breaks in, splintering our door, raving that I was making their boy king weak and needed to die to keep him on his path.” Tony said, showing his aggravation.

Dean frowned because that was interesting wording and he’d come across it before in his Dad’s journal. “Guests should always bring a gift.”

Tony snorted, remembering his first meeting with Dean only a few days before. “Well, when my silver bullets barely dented him. I threw him into the devil’s trap. He has been very reticent to talk, only keeps spitting out the fact I should be burning on a ceiling and how dare I get in the way of fate.”

“Fuck that fate, you do whatever you need to stay alive.” Sam said fiercely. He couldn’t imagine what he would have done if he’d found Tony dead the same way his mother had died. There was a nasty symmetry there and it seemed this demon had fixated on him for reasons that he had no idea about … yet.

Dean took the pad offered to him by Tony. “What is this?”

“All the things I have found out about Azazel I think you call him yellow eyes. Apparently, it’s this one’s father. Now, I have no clue what the hell to do with a demon so I am going to leave the room and pretend that I know nothing.”

The demon’s eyes were black as coal. He zeroed in on Sam as his new target. “You were never meant to choose a cop.”

Sam frowned, wondering why the demons cared who he was dating. “Tony is none of your business.”

“Oh, but it is. You see my father has plans for you and no one can be allowed to interfere.” The Demon said, smug and annoying.

Tony reappeared in the living room, not having disappeared like the demon assumed. “Found it.”

Sam looked bemused. “Oh. That is perfect. Your Italian is better than mine.” He replied, handing the book back to his partner.

Tony rolled his eyes. “If it wasn’t, my Nonna would come back and haunt my ass. Belief and protection are key, right?”

Sam nodded, this was not what he’d wanted but Tony had never been the type to shy away from something because it was difficult. “I didn’t want this for you.”

Tony kissed him softly, making the demon flinch at the emotion. “Too bad. I love you and I will protect your ass against anyone that dares harm you.”

The Italian and Latin tripped off his tongue like it was his native language. The demon growled, spewing all types of crap. Tony didn’t listen to it and phased him out just like he used to phase Senior out at his worse. Too bad he was just a waste of a father and not a man possessed. He’d checked for science.
The demon looked at Tony. “You will die, choking on your own lungs.”

Tony shrugged. “Empty threats don’t bother me.”

“It is your future.”

Tony rolled his eyes. “Yeah? Well, you know what? You won’t be there to see it.” He finished the exorcism.

Dean stared in awe. “Sam.”

“Yeah.”

Dean was feeling elation. They now knew the demon’s name and a way that could see them banished back to hell. This was the closest they’d got to avenging their mother in twenty years.

“Don’t take this the wrong way but I love your boyfriend.”

Sam chuckled. “He is pretty great but get your own.”

Dean didn’t know where he was going to find someone like Tony until he moved to DC and was introduced to a certain Goth. Oh, and the demon was a lying bastard as Tony survived the plague.

Chapter End Notes

And to all my awesome readers, I hope you all have a great New Years and never fear I expect there will be lots of more posts on Tony's Black book in the upcoming year.
Tony was putting Sam to bed, the little girl was definitely the only woman in Tony’s heart. He still couldn’t believe he’d ended up with a family. It was not the one he’d thought he would have but it was better for it. He’d never been brave enough to have a relationship with a man until Luke.

“Is Daddy coming back, Papà?” She asked sleepily.

Tony chuckled. “Yeah, his mission is over for now.”

Sort of. He didn’t know what the hell had happened in Brazil but he was going to find out. It was like he wanted to play with his food. There must be some reason he was basically giving the criminals a twenty-four-hour head start. It wasn’t like Luke so he knew the reason must be a doozy.

“Did he get the bad guy?”

Tony snorted. “Of course. Does your Daddy ever miss?”

“Nope.” She giggled. “He’d not miss even against the terminator.”

It was said with the faith of a kid whose Dad was her hero. Still, there was an element of truth in it too. He was built like a tank and would bulldoze anyone who was remotely homophobic.

Luke had been forced on a mission and as a result, Tony had been the one to look after his daughter. He had zero problems doing that as she was a great kid. They’d gone the movies, and then to Gibbs’ house. It did him good to see Sam, and she was fascinated with his boat.

“Go to sleep, Ms Sammy, and when you wake up Daddy should be back with us.”

She had a sleepy smile on her face. “Good. You’ll cook though, right Papà?”

Tony chuckled. “Yeah, your Daddy is awesome but we will not let him near the pancakes.”

~*~

Tony was asleep when he felt the bed dip. It woke him immediately. “You took your sweet time.”

Hobbs snorted, slipping down to his boxers. He missed the days when he could sleep naked with Tony but when they had Sam they always kept boxers on. “I had to square a few things.”

Tony snorted. “Yeah. In the morning, you can tell me why you gave your prey twenty-four hours.”

Luke smirked at him referring to his bounties as prey. It was not his fault that he was all about the mission when he was on one. Trouble was, his focus narrowed. Reyes had hurt his men, killed
good men and women and all so he could get a stupid chip from Toretto. He was more than happy to join up with Toretto’s merry band of men until they fucked up and got caught. It was not so much a loss of his prey as letting them enjoy their freedom for a little longer. He could be kind for giving them his vengeance. Although all bets were off the next time he saw them.

Tony walked into the bullpen feeling as relaxed as he could. The time with his family had helped settle the nerves that the duplicitous duo had been fraying. Luke had offered to lay a beat down on both of them. Tony had kissed him for the offer but could handle his own smackdown if needed.

“See your girl off?”

Tony smiled fondly. “Oh yeah, I cooked breakfast at her request.”

They saw McGee and Ziva’s ears prickle up but Tony didn’t engage with them. He’d come to some realisations, thanks to Luke. He had work colleagues - not friends or family. So he should treat them like it - they might catch a clue or they might not. It didn’t matter as long as Tony protected his heart.

That was one of the biggest changes in this relationship. After all, Tony had always been a protector. They were equals but Luke demanded and protected him, just as much as Tony tried to protect Luke.

Tim tried to ask. “Who’s the girl, or do you not even bother with names anymore?”

Tony had a full smirk now. “Her name is Sammy and she is the sweetest little thing in my life. You say a bad word about her and we’re going to have words. Do you hear what I am saying, McFootinMouth?”

Tony let his sharper glaze fall on Tim. He usually reserved it for killers and low life scum but there isn’t a single person he’d allow to come near Samantha and harm her.

Gibbs sat down in his chair. “You shouldn’t get intense before your caffeine. It messes with your head.”

“Sorry, boss.”

And just like the moment was dispersed and forgotten. Gibbs looked at his second and wondered why he was willing to show a glimpse of the real him. He sipped his coffee. Maybe Luke had managed to get him to show his true colours. If the headslaps hadn’t done it, he had to wonder what would? Thinking about it, it was probably best not to ask.

Six months later, and Tony’s behaviour hadn’t changed. He worked well in the office, was still polite and professional, and then went home. He didn’t engage in comments or anything that could be construed as inappropriate or even friendly. The only one who even showed a hint of humour to was Gibbs - and he just smirked.

Ziva sneered. “It must be that Samantha girl.”

Abby shook her head. “Nope.” And that was all she said, she wasn’t willing to risk her wake up call. She knew with Tony. She had one more chance and she wasn’t going to ruin it. Tim and Ziva
would have to figure out how they messed up on their own.

“So why are we frozen out? He used to share everything, why are we not good enough all of a sudden?

Abby looked sad. “Well, we were kind of harsh. You especially. What was he supposed to do? Sit around and wait for scraps?”

Tim narrowed his eyes. “Gibbs has talked to you.”

She shrugged. “Maybe he has, Timmy. You need to ask Tony. It’s his business, not mine.”

~*~

There was a fierce man in their bullpen. Ziva didn’t like feeling threatened by anyone but the raw physicality of this man was such that even she didn’t want to tangle with in a hurry. He was dressed in a custom suit but it was a lie, there was nothing office-like about this man.

Tim poked her, asking silently if she knew the man. He shook his head. Tony though, he surprised them all. His face just lit up. “Hey, Luke. What are you doing here?”

He looked sheepish. “I have to go to London and I need Sammy cared for.”

Tony looked vexed. “Done. I have no problem looking after our daughter. She will be relieved I’m doing the cooking.”

Luke snorted. “I might be a week or two. It’s Shaw.”

Tony understood, knowing what the man had done. “Go. Go get your collar. And we’ll be here when you get back.”

Tony never thought he’d be at this point. He was secure and happy enough to show his relationship in front of everyone. “Go.”

Luke, not caring about protocol, kissed him goodbye. He dared anyone to make a comment. He knew Tony could handle himself but if they did anything dickish he had no problem coming back.

“You have a daughter?”


Tim frowned. “No. You didn’t.”

Tony smirked. “Sure I did. You didn’t just put it together, McCueless.”

Ziva had her arms crossed in front of her, defensive and clearly in shock. “You expect us to believe you’re gay?”

Tony did something that they didn’t expect. He laughed raucously. “You misunderstand. I don’t care. You don’t get to have an opinion. We’re work colleagues and you made it clear that is all you wanted. I respected that. Now we have work to do so off you go. You have paperwork due.”

They flushed, not realising just how far the chasm had developed. It was finally hitting them that
they’d been left out in the cold. If they weren’t it was confirmed. “Bring Sam with you this evening. The girl should have a good steak.”

“You know she’ll be there. I can’t get in between Sammy and her Uncle Gibbs.” Tony said with a fond grin. “I guess I’ll have to factor in girl time with Abby too. Think I can get away with bowling instead of shopping?”

“Have you learned to resist her eyes yet?”

Tony snorted. “Have you?”

Gibbs shrugged. “Nope, but it is my prerogative to spoil my niece.”

Ziva and Tim shared a look, they had no idea what to say or think. They had some serious thinking to do.

~*~

London was so long ago. Tony had heard though of a contract on Hobbs’ life. The minute he had the info he’d asked Gibbs for permission to go to his fiance.

“Go.”

He was heading straight to Hobbs’ office, knowing that he was taking care of the paperwork on Friday night. He always did so they could enjoy their weekend with Sam. Elena was the only partner that Hobbs had managed to keep and Tony was fond of her. She was a spitfire. It was too bad she wasn’t a redhead or he’d have introduced her to Gibbs.

He ran, hearing the glass break. He had a feeling he’d not got there in time, it seemed big brother Shaw was going after the bigger threats first.

The office was in pieces as you might expect, and Deckard Shaw was standing over his fiance. The man was so focussed on his objective he didn’t see Tony. He saw Elena register his presence and he put his hand over his mouth as he picked up the fire extinguisher and he kept his knife in the other.

Deckard sneered. “Look at ya. You ain’t so big and mighty are ya?”

Hobbs started to chuckle. “You’re right I didn’t expect you.”

“No one does. I am the one sent to deal with monsters.”

Luke needed his arm set but he was going to enjoy this. “Yeah but even monsters don’t expect a wildcard.”

“What the heck are you talking about?”

Tony knew an entrance when he saw one. “Me.” He made it memorable by ramming the fire extinguisher over his head. It would probably give the elder Shaw a concussion but that was so not his problem. The bastard shouldn’t have tried to attack Luke.

Tony waited for him to crumple. He’d landed the perfect blow thanks to Luke’s distraction. He didn’t wait to call for back up until he’d handcuffed Shaw and dragged him to the radiator and tied him to what was left of the wall.
He walked over to Hobbs, calling into his phone as he did. “Hey, babe. The cavalry is on the way.”

Luke coughed up something nasty. He was pretty sure it was concrete. “Hey, Darlin. I just need to say I fucking love you.”

Tony snorted. “Hey, the deal is we rescue you each other. I was just upholding my end of the bargain. You’ve already done it for me. Plus, you know Sammy would pout.”

Luke was starting to lose consciousness. “Love you, make sure he stays caught.”

Tony smirked. “Well, he is on NCIS’s wall. I figure they can keep an eye on him while we sort your head out.”

Hobbs must have a concussion because he agreed. “Where are we on that medical evac?”

Elena grinned crookedly. “You have the best timing ... Ever.”

Tony had a weak grin as he was coming off the adrenaline spike. “You know me, I like to make an entrance.”

~*~

Of course, any chance of Tony reconciling with Ziva and Tim disappeared when they managed to lose their prisoner. Tony was going to deal with them, or what was left of them, once he got back from assisting in another of Luke’s ops. It was a good job he loved Hobbs’ ass or he would leave him to deal with this mess on his own.
Jack hated one part of his job and that was lying about it to everyone who wasn’t in the CIA. It sucked. He was a Marine, with the scars to show for it and yet he was supposed to sell the lie that he worked in logistics.

Why the hell did agree to come to Joe Mueller’s party? He was surrounded by all his old colleagues who still made a stupid amount of money and now looked down on him for doing his duty.

“Here - have a drink.”

Jack accepted the drink. He took in the rich suit, nice Armani cut so the man had money and fashion sense. He also looked like a model and, knowing Joe’s client base, that wouldn’t be too far of a stretch. “So, do you work for Joe?”

The man shook his head. “Nope. Uncle Sam, just like you.”

Jack frowned because he didn’t recognise the man. “Have we met?”

“Nope, I just heard Joe call you Jack and that is it.”

Jack held out his hand, not holding a bottle. “Dr Jack Ryan.”

“Nice to meet you, Doc. I’m Special Agent Anthony DiNozzo, but I prefer Tony.”

They hadn’t let go of each other’s hand. Jack blushed seeing he hadn’t let go, and damn, why did have to go awkward at the most inopportune times. He should be smooth. He’d love to be smooth, just once.

“So which Agency?”

Tony sighed. “NCIS. It stands for ...”

“Naval Criminal Investigative Services.”

The man blinked, impressed. Jack could guess that he often had problems with having to explain just who he worked for. “That’s right.”

Jack looked sheepish. “I was a marine.”

“My boss would say - once a marine, always a marine.” Tony countered.
And Jack started to relax. This was so odd. He hadn’t planned to meet someone who he liked, or could talk to but he was willing to take advantage of the situation. “He’d be right but right now I work for the state department running logistics for the northern hemisphere.”

Tony snorted, sipping his beer. “Sure you do, Darlin.”

Jack pouted but it was his cover story. He didn’t want to lie nor could he say much of anything. Still, he had brains so he could figure out the right thing to say. “It is the party line I’m ordered to say.”

“I know.” Tony did understand the false line. He’d heard some doozies from agents and case officers in the past. “Relax. Let’s pretend I believe you and go back to flirting - but no party lines.”

It was a subtle line. It was also a relief. Tony had just admitted that he was enjoying the connection between them too. Tony had also said that he knew Jack was lying but would allow it to stand for now. “I can do that.”

Tony smiled but it was lazy and leaning more toward a smirk. This just might become a fun party after all. “Relax, Doc. You look like I’m going to eat you for breakfast.”

“Will you?” Jack found himself asking, then blushing. He wished to god he had a brain-to-mouth filter some days.

Tony snorted, having made the mistake of taking a drink at the wrong time. “Sure but I think I should take you on a date first.”

Jack flushed. “Okay, er ... phone number?”

They swapped phone numbers and it was a good thing as a helicopter landed on Joe’s lawn, shocking all the guests. Tony had to laugh at Jack’s gobsmacked expression when the coastguard agents asked for him by name. Tony just took his beer. “Go run logistics.”

~*~

Yemen had calmed down, sort of. He was bruised and beat up but he’d survived the crazy attack on the black site. He’d received a knife wound to the gut for the privilege and his new boss now looked at him as more than a talking computer.

He just wished he hadn’t put his back at risk. He figured now was the time to talk about Tony. “So I met a fellow Agent ... Permission to ditch the stupid cover story?”

“Who has caught your attention?”

Jack squirmed but if he could deal with a psycho terrorist then he could admit to a potential relationship. “Anthony DiNozzo. He’s NCIS.”

Greer actually laughed. “Wait, the lady killer, DiNozzo, was flirting with you? You must be something else, Ryan.”

Jack rolled his eyes. He didn’t get it. Bisexuality wasn’t a new concept. “Yeah, only he chose to flirt with me instead of Joe Mueller’s daughter.”

Greer snorted, typed a few commands to check something. “Fuck me. You’re good to go. He
actually has a higher security clearance than you, Rainman.”

Jack chose to retreat to his cubicle. Also, he had to wonder just what DiNozzo did for NCIS. It would be interesting for him to actually go on a date with someone he didn’t have to lie to for eighty percent of the time. He also didn’t want to continue this painfully awkward conversation. “I’m going to see if I can find a trace of the Suleman’s.”

“You do that.”

The rest of the day had been an exhausting endless set of computer screens and files. Suleman had never been in any of the American databases. As it got late, he found himself tiring and needing to relax. He knew there was no way he’d be able to sleep right now. If he did, it would be of nothing good. He had no desire to relive the helicopter crash nor did he fancy rowing this early.

He found himself toying with his phone. There was no point in wondering about something. If he wanted it, then he had to seize the opportunity.

“Hey, Tony. I know it’s late but I was wondering if you wanted to go out for a drink?”

“Love to. How about Mac’s?”

Jack snorted as there was no way they’d bump into any of their colleagues there. It was of a significantly higher income bracket than their government colleagues could afford. He might have left Wall Street but that didn’t mean he didn’t keep his stocks and investments.

Jack was grinning like a loon. “See you there.”

~*~

The magic of Mac’s was it was an exclusive bar for people in Washington in the know. You had to be rich, powerful or connected to gain membership to the place. If you were really lucky, then you were all three.

Tony made his way through the crowd and grinned seeing Jack at the bar. He nodded at a few of the senators and businessman he recognised. “Hey, so you have the same hideout as me, huh?”

Jack nodded but the smile lit up his face. He was definitely glad for the company. “Yeah, been a member since my second year of working with Joe.”

Tony could understand that logic. “Yeah, I’ve always had a membership. You kept it though after your switch to public service.”

Jack quirked a lip in bemusement because Tony was always a member so he wasn’t the only oddity here. “So how do you be both a Federal Agent and a trust fund kid?”

Tony sipped his whiskey and with a sexy smirk answered. “I’m complicated.”

“Only when you want to be.” Jack couldn’t help but observe and it was the truth.

“True but I suspect you’re just the same.” Tony zinged back. “So now we’ve both decided we’re enigmas that we’re looking forward to figuring out. How about sports?”

Jack chuckled. “How do you feel about baseball?”
Tony shrugged. “I was hoping for basketball or football but we can work with that.”

“Oh we can, can we?” Jack wondered if Tony knew his boss. They both had the marvellous ability to make him feel like he didn’t know whether he was coming or going. There was a key difference though - he didn’t want to sleep with his boss.

They talk for an hour even though it was stupidly late and they both needed to be in the office in the morning. Jack sighed. “Well, I need to figure out a crazy smart terrorist’s password for his phone.”

Tony snorted. “Think about what you know and make a weird leap. There will be a clue somewhere, there always is. In how they look, how do they act? The smartest people are the easier ones to figure out as they think they’re so much smarter than they are.”

Jack didn’t think about his next action, it was perhaps his most impulsive option. He kissed Tony. “You’re a genius. I’ve figured it out.”

Tony chuckled. “Happy to help. Take me to dinner once you get this figured out.”

“Will do, and thanks.”

~*~

“He’s done time. Not here though.”

His boss looked at him in bemusement. “Okay, prove it to me.”

Jack replayed the tape. ”Look at how he moves his hand. This is a guy who has done time. I ran him through both American and Interpol national databases. Nothing.”

“So check the French authorities.”

Jack looked sheepish. “I did, and I got it.”

He threw the file on the desk. “We are looking at Muhammed Al-Suleman, and his devout little brother. They were in the Beka Valley when it was bombed, that’s where their scars come from.”

Greer pinched his nose. “This is some good work. You get a bead on location?”

Jack nodded. “I’ve ordered teams to work on specific areas based off where they’ve lived.”

Greer smirked. “So where did this intuitive leap come from?”

“Drinks with a friend.” Jack offered.

Greer snorted. “You mean you got the idea on a date with DiNozzo?”

Jack rolled his eyes because this job took up a stupid amount of time and he deserved to have a private life. “He told me to think about what I know and make a weird leap. Oh, and the smartest people are the easier ones to figure out as they think they are the smartest person in the room.”

“Do you often find people smarter than you in a room?”
Jack frowned, not sure if that was a question he was supposed to answer or not. “What do you want to do next?”

Greer thought about it. “Let’s head to Paris. And I feel like I should get DiNozzo a fruit basket or something.”

*By the end of the Suleman case - Greer had upgraded it to a cask of best bourbon. It was totally worth it, all things considered. Oh, and despite really wanting to he didn’t tease the couple. He was too grateful that they’d helped break what could have been one of the biggest home-terrorism cases and he wasn’t going to mess with a winning combination.*
Mick Rory had not been this amused since they had stolen the Van Gogh from the museum in New York. For once, there was no fire at the heart of his fun. It was definitely a weird day.

The reason for his mirth?

He couldn’t recall ever seeing Leonard, his best friend, at a loss for words or being a man without a plan. Well, not since their time in juvie where they’d relied more on Mick’s bulk than Leonard’s brain. Their friendship relied on them playing to their strengths - Leonard’s charm and Mick’s brawn.

And this?

This was definitely not part of the plan. They had definitely not meant to steal a Federal Agent but there had been a car about to explode and a situation. And Snart had reacted on instinct pulling the guy away from the car at the last possible second. Mick had just given him a look as if to say really? It was obvious to him that hanging around all the do-gooders on the time ship was not having a good influence on his friend. He would never have saved someone at the expense of not completing a job in the past. Did this mean they were going soft in their old age? He didn’t like it.

~*~

Leonard shrugged at the look because sue him, the guy was as beautiful as the art he stole. And Leonard was an art thief - what was he supposed to do? Ignore his instincts? Plus, he was not fond of unnecessary death or violence - it made things messy and tended to see the law chase you that bit harder.

“So what are going to do with him?” Mick asked, wanting to know if there was a plan.

Leonard winced because there had been a plan - grab the artefact, the additional art and then make it back to the Waverider hoping Captain Prissy didn’t notice. He needed to think about this and do it quickly. It was a good job he was adaptable in most circumstances - he could figure this out.

Of course, Mick wasn’t in the mood not too tease. “Or are you keeping him in the cuffs?”

Leonard had to bite back the groan because that idea definitely appealed to him. Still, he was not in the mood to take that without the other parties consent. “I think I should introduce myself first, don’t you?”

“You’re confusing,” was all Mick was willing to say on the subject.

Leonard snorted because it wasn’t the first time he’d been described as such. In fact, he delighted in that label. “Maybe I am. Now shut up, I’m trying to think and I can’t with your yapping.”

“You know the ship will snitch on you the second we go back.”

Leonard sighed because Gideon, the ship’s AI, was both amazing and an added complication. He knew there would be more than one lecture in his future but he still didn’t regret his actions. This man was not meant to die today because of some coward with a bomb. “Who knows? Maybe she will agree with me that he was meant to be saved.”

Mick grunted. “I want beer for putting up with this shit.”
Len just clapped his shoulder. “Of course, your favourite ones.”

“Good.”

~*~

Tony woke up with a cottony taste in his mouth but thankfully no throbbing pain on the back of his head. He knew what that meant - chloroform. His ears were still ringing from the flash grenade they had used to flip his vehicle. He’d told Jenny that close surveillance was a bad idea and that he would be in danger. She’d threatened to fire him if he didn’t follow her orders.

Tony had to clear his mind. He needed to stow his anger toward his boss for the moment and use his own training. He didn’t move too much, planning to listen to as much as he could before they realised he was awake.

“You nearly got caught?” came the gruff voice.

The other voice, full of sass replied. “That was not on the cards, now help me sell this to trenchcoat.”

Tony could have cursed his luck. He’d been nabbed by a terminator like dude, and his gorgeous partner who he’d not even seen as part of Benoit’s outfit. So it begged the question - who the hell were these people?

“Why him? He is pretty enough, I suppose.” The gruff one asked.

Tony filed that away for later use. He guessed he could play honeytrap after all - gender had never been an issue for him. The only problem was he still had no idea what was going on. He’d been taken on the orders of the non-terminator, it was clear at least that he was the one who called the shots. They’d both been skilled at takedowns and had clearly grabbed something from the museum. Tony might have cared but he was too busy being threatened by his fake girlfriend's father.

“You gonna man up and pretend you’re not asleep, princess?”

Tony opened his eyes and smirked, not showing his worries. Confidence was the key to most awkward meetings. “You got a name or should I keep calling you Terminator.”

The other guy, who Tony was trying not to notice, snickered. “Don’t give him any ideas ... He usually answers to Mick or Heatwave.”

“And do you answer to Moriarity?” Tony asked his rescuer. He was respectful, given that the man had rescued him.

Len smirked. “No, but I might change my name to that. I prefer Len.”

Tony would have shrugged it off but he was still cuffed. “So what are you going to do with me?”

“Well, I don't want to obliterate you like Benoit.” He offered reasonably.

Tony sighed. “He didn’t like the fact I was a Federal Agent. It messed with his drug dealing plans.”

“I can see how that would throw a kink in the works.” Len agreed.

Mick grunted. “Still, you wanna kill someone do it upfront.”
Tony had to smile at that because it was the way of most criminals. They might break the law but they had codes that they lived by. “I’m with you.”

Len had driven back to what looked like a blank field but Tony got the impression it wasn’t as empty as it appeared. He had no idea how that might be the case but he couldn’t wait to find out. “Right, handsome. I am going to need you to do your best fainted-princess act and stay quiet no matter what you hear.”

Mick snorted. “You’re gonna take him there?”

“Yes, now help as he is supposed to be unconscious.”

And that was how Tony was first introduced to the Waverider, pretending to be unconscious.

~*~

Tony may have been pretending to be unconscious but that didn’t mean his ears were asleep. What he was learning was quite frankly mind-bending. *Time travel? Anachronisms? Fixed fates?* It sounded like the stuff of science fiction - only he was now learning that wasn’t quite the case.

“You know criminals don’t usually rescue cops?” An amused feminine voice pointed out.

Len groaned. “What do you want me to say?”

“Why?”

Len and Mick shared a look, they knew Tony was only faking it so there was no way Len would give a straight answer. “When I figure it out, I will let you let you know. Is Captain Tightpants still ranting?”

“Yes.” Sara confirmed. It was comforting that he was upset at someone else.

Len sucked in a breath. “Perfect. Why? You know in particular it might help me formulate my argument.”

Sarah giggled. “You, my dear, have just given him a huge headache.”

Len frowned because it was hardly the first time since he’d been recruited to Rip’s crusade and he doubted it will be the last time. “How?”

“He is a time mystery.” She said gleefully. For once, they’d not broken time. It was cool.

Tony sat up. “What the hell do you mean *I am a time mystery?*”

She smirked at Len, “You have a type.”

He shrugged. Sue him, he liked beautiful things. “You were going to tell Tony why he is a time mystery.”

“According to Gideon and the records, you disappeared when there was a car bombing ... only they never find your body or a trace of your DNA. If it’s any comfort right about now in your year they are knocking on the director’s door to remove her from office.”
Tony was adjusting. “So my life in that time is over?”

Mick snorted. “You get used to it, pretty boy.”

Tony sighed. “Is that going to be a thing?”

Mick smirked. “Yes.”

“Okay, Arnie.” Tony replied, playing it cool.

Mick frowned. “My name is Mick.”

Tony shook his head. “Nope. I’m calling you Arnie, for Arnold Schwarzenegger, as you have a definite terminator vibe going on. You know, if we are going down the nickname route.”

Mick pursed his lips in annoyance. “Touche.”

Len started to snicker. “You are delightful.”

Tony shook his head. “No, I am exceptional. Now, I’m done hiding so what is Captain Tightpants’ actual name?”

Len smirked. “You should call him that - it fits.”

Tony pinched his nose. “Look, if this is his ship and I’m an unwelcome guest I want him to like me.”

It was funny how no matter where he went some of the issues stayed the same.

“You will find I prefer Rip, or Captain Hunter, Agent DiNozzo.”

Tony spun around and faced the Captain. “So what are you going to do with me?” It was best to get the difficult questions out of the way first.

Rip smirked. “Well, I have a mystery and you are an investigator. How do you feel about catching a criminal who can not just hide in space but time also?”

Tony grinned. “Well, I will need to be brought up to speed about how to deal with time records and all that, but I love a challenge.”

Len put a hand on his shoulder. “See, I did a good thing. Admit it.”

Rip rolled his eyes. “More through luck than judgement. Do try to allow him to investigate in between trying to seduce him.”

Rip, with his piece said, had and walked away - only to have Len shout. “No promises.”

Vandal Savage never stood a chance. Then again, neither did Tony’s heart. It just goes to show that even in the worst moments of your life the best things can happen.
Tony was wondering how does one logically explain that a freaky scientist made an android replica of his wife, or clone (no one was too sure which) and that the real Susan Perkins is alive and well and kicking. So could she have the death notice reversed, please?

He was distracted from his paperwork by a question. “You okay, babe?”

Tony whirled around with a grin, not expecting Jack back for another hour. “The paperwork is even crazier here.”

“That it is.” Jack agreed with him. The forms had been bad as a Federal Agent but here it was like the triplicate had a triplicate. He hoped he never get used to it but that it got easier. It helped to see his soon-to-be-husband sitting there with his glasses on looking so sexy.

The House piped up, and that was another thing they were getting used to - the talking house. She was so proud as she said. “The food you prepared is ready, Doctor DiNozzo.”

Tony grinned, looking completely at ease now they were settled into their new place. “Thanks, Sarah. You’re a doll. And it’s Tony.”

The house warmed for a moment along with the lights brightening. “I will remember that salutation for the future.”

Jack was non-plussed and wondered how this was his life. “Have you been flirting with the house?”

Tony snorted as he got up from the desk to kiss his fiance. “No, I just talked to her like any lady and listened. It’s the secret to my success with witnesses.”

Jack kissed him back. “Hey, shouldn’t you be dealing with warring nerds at GD?”

Tony just gave him a look. “In the building, yes. Out of it, they are all yours.”

“That is just not right.” Jack complained, his day had seemed to be full of bickering.

Tony laughed as he pulled Jack down onto the couch. “D’aww, are they being mean?”

Jack knew he was being mocked but at least it was in good humour. He couldn’t put into words how glad he was that Tony was with him in this town. Tony was like that beacon of normality
where he could check that yep, he’d just witnessed a law of physics being broken and the like. “Not so much but they can take vindictiveness to a whole new level.”

Tony chuckled because it was the truth. Anger plus brains usually led to a potentially lethal mix. “Oh, I know that. I have had to force the overseers at GD to assign separate labs to Jenkins and Anderson.”

“How much?”

Tony looked pained. “Their latest prank war nearly saw a black hole forming in the lab.”

Tony had to laugh because he figured it was a **better to laugh than cry** situation. He was using humour to keep his sanity a lot while he was on the job. They sat down to the Italian food and Jack groaned with satisfaction. “Your cooking is going to see me get fat.”

Tony smirked, “Oh, it’s to keep your energy levels up for when I show you just how hot you look in that uniform.”

Jack was more than on board with that plan. In fact, he pulled Tony closer to him.

Sarah interrupted them. “Ms Carter is at the door.”

Both men pulled apart with a look of longing, and a promise to return to this later. Jack had to ask, “The younger or the older one?”

“Your daughter, Sheriff Carter.”

Tony snorted. “Let her in, Sarah. It’s seriously cold outside.”

She ran down the downstairs and then stopped in surprise taking in her surroundings. “This place is awesome.” She exclaimed in the way only an excited teenager could manage.

Tony took the rushed excitable hug. “And it’s so cool that Tony’s here with you. Still, why the hell did you leave me with mom?”

Jack was taking in the sight of his two favourite people hugging. It left him feeling warm and fuzzy until the mention of his ex-wife and then he crashed back down to earth. “Yeah, talking about your mother. Does she know you’re here?”

Zoe looked sheepish. “She might once she pulls herself away from Lucas.”

You could hear the hurt in his daughter’s voice and it made Tony and Jack mad as hell. “Hey, baby girl. You’re welcome here and you know it but the custody agreement says you’re meant to be with her.”

She huffs. “But she doesn’t care about me, and think what an amazing education I will get here.”

There was nothing Zoe said that didn’t make sense. “You know I would love you here, kiddo.”

Tony was nodding because he adored Zoe too.

She was smirking. “Look, if I go back to mom, I’m just going to keep running away back here, to you.”

Jack was pleased to hear that, in a twisted way, because at least she was running to someplace safe.
“You better, I hate having to chase you down. Still, stay here this weekend and we’ll figure something out.”

“We have a room that can be Zoe’s room, Sheriff Carter.” Sarah informed him.

Jack chuckled because the whole smart house thing really was made of win. “Look, if you’re calling Tony by his name. Can you please call me Jack?”

“I sure can.”

Tony looked at him smugly as he said the house would loosen up to them. Jack though couldn’t resist teasing his fiance. “Yeah, kiddo, you can help Tony with wedding decisions.”

She looked pleased as punch. “Yeah, you two might be cool but you are still men. You need a woman’s touch if this is going to be successful.”

Tony grabbed her bag, “Right, considering how far you’ve travelled, and we’ll sort out how you did it tomorrow, but you need sleep.”

~*~

Tony came back downstairs to see how Jack was doing. He knew how painful the custody issue was for his partner. They always made sure that Zoe felt loved whenever she spent time with them.

“You okay?”

Jack looked up. “How could she ignore Zoe?”

Tony shrugged. “I have no idea. They say love makes you do stupid things.”

“It shouldn’t make you ignore your own daughter.” Jack retorted, his anger visible.

Tony agreed, he’d had his mother die young and his father be a bastard, who he preferred to leave him alone. “I don’t know. I know we need sleep and we can figure it out in the morning.”

~*~

“So where are we going?” Zoe asked.

“Vincent’s. Do you remember that from our weekend sojourn?” Jack reminded his daughter.

She nodded. “Cool.”

“Well, he cooks as well as Tony does and he gets sad if we don’t eat there.” What Jack didn’t explain was that it was a good idea for Tony and him to eat there as it gave them a pulse of the town.

Tony rolled his eyes. “I only like to cook Italian, like my Nonna showed me how.”

Zoe chuckled. “To be fair it is really good food.”

Tony looked pleased but said nothing else, he was basking in the praise. “I need coffee before I deal with any craziness.”
Jack looked at him darkly. “Like we’ll get a chance. Why did you jinx us?”

Tony snorted. “Sit down and enjoy breakfast with Zoe while we figure out a plan.”

A few members of the town drifted over to them. Alison had no choice when Kevin ran over to Zoe and Jack. Jack smiled. “Hey, Archimedes.”

“Hey, Wednesday.” Kevin responded.

Jack smiled softly. “That’s right. How goes the equations?”

“They work.” He said simply. Allison had been about to say something but stopped when she saw Kevin interact with the newbies in town. It was astounding. He barely communicated with her, and yet the Sheriff and his daughter seemed to pull him out of his shell.

Agent DiNozzo smiled softly. “They have that effect on most people. I call it the Carter effect.”

She had a rueful grin. “It seems that way. How are you settling into Eureka?” She asked, trying to remember that she did have manners.

“We’ve settled into SARAH, and as you can see we have an unexpected visit from Zoe.”

Allison smiled. “Well, she has a way with Kevin. He doesn’t talk to barely anyone - mostly myself and Nathan.”

Jack smiled softly. “He is a great kid, and anyone who doesn’t get that is an idiot.”

“And yet my kid seems to think it is okay to run away from me!”

Wow. Abby always did have a way of killing the warmth in any situation. Jack wasn’t willing to have this air in the public cafe, especially when the proprietor was one of the biggest gossips in town.

Tony must be in perfect agreement as he stood up. “Which is why we contacted you last night to let you know Zoe had turned up safe and sound. Now, why don’t we go back to the bunker.”

Zoe pouted. “I wanted to see the school. Please?”

Jack checked his watch, he technically had an hour before his shift. “Let’s go back to the bunker and we will sort this out. Try us, and you can forget helping Tony and I plan, and it will be the most masculine guy wedding we can think of.”

“There’s no need to blackmail me.” Zoe retorted with a shudder. She was determined to make their day special. They both deserved it and even when she was at her most bratty they still would drop everything and show that they cared about her.

Tony snickered. “I think it’s called bargaining.”

“I suppose you should come along.” Abby remarked glaring at Tony.

“If you think I’m not going to be there you have another thing coming. Besides, you know it’s my house and everything.”

Zoe smiled sweetly. “Mom, I’d be nice to Tony if I were you. SARAH won’t tolerate you being
mean to Tony or Dad.”

Any further speech was saved until they returned to the bunker. Zoe had joined them in the Sheriff’s jeep. She felt awkward around her mom, and it annoyed her because she shouldn’t but she did.

Her Dad must have seen it on her face, how nervous she felt. “Kiddo, I will do my best but know this, no matter where you live, we love you and will be there for you.”

Tony nodded. “Hell yeah.”

Zoe smiled weakly. “I wish I could stay with you guys. This is going to suck, isn’t it?”

Tony sighed. “Your mom will be hurt, there’s no doubt about that but if you do want to stay we can fight the custody agreement.”

She blinked up in shock. Tony snorted. “I’m wealthy and it’s not like we’re going to be able to spend a lot in Eureka.”

That was true. It was weird how the economy seemed to work around the scientific town. “You shouldn’t have to spend it on me.”

Tony caught her chin so she could see how serious he was. “I can think of nothing better than spending it on seeing your wishes come true. Still, before we do that let’s see if we can’t resolve this like adults. You’re going to need to be honest with your mom even if it hurts. She deserves that.”

Zoe huffed but knew if she wanted to make her reality happen then she needed to face up to the truth. If she couldn’t say it then did she really believe it? It would be a question that would bug her otherwise.

~*~

Her mom had seen all of this in her car, and her lips got tighter as a result. She’d not managed to have that type of conversation with Zoe in a long time. It felt like everything was a battle. It was a little sad that as a psychologist she was having difficulty communicating with her own daughter.

“Why did you run away?” Abby asked her as she sat down on the one couch.

Zoe sat down on the opposite couch, her Dad and Tony took up position standing behind her. It was silently supportive without overshadowing her.

“I hate it in LA.”

“Me?”

Zoe shook her head. “I don’t hate you, mom, but you’re so busy with work and Lucas. You don’t have time for me. Eureka is special, mom, and the idiot of the class here goes to Yale instead of Harvard. I could do something special here, and I want that opportunity. I love you but this could be massive for my future.”

She bit her lip because she knew in that one conversation that she’d obviously been thinking about this for a while. This was a reasoned argument, not that of an impulsive teenager who’d run away.
Abby gasped in shock. “Were you that unhappy?”

Zoe looked miserable as she admitted. “Yeah, I kind of was. Please mom, I will come and visit in the summer but let me do this.”

Abby looked at the two men. She’d loved Jack but his job had come first. How ironic that her own daughter was now using that argument against her. She also looked at her husband’s fiance. He was clearly protective of Zoe, and Zoe had bonded with him in a way she’d never managed to do with Lucas.

She wanted her baby close but that wasn’t the best thing for her. She tried not to have the tears in her eyes. “Okay, I’ll talk to the lawyers and get them to redraft the custody arrangement. If you want to go to school here, then I won’t stop you.” She had to stop for a second to keep a break from her voice. “I just wish you’d said something.”

Zoe looked rueful but as soon as her mom had agreed she’d launched over the couch to hug her fiercely. “Thank you, thank you, thank you. I thought you’d hate me.”

“Never, baby girl. You’re my daughter and I love you.”

She looked at the two men. “You better look after her.”

Tony nodded. “We have a cold war bunker that functions as a house. SARAH will tell us if she comes home with pollen not native to Eureka.”

Abby chuckled, guessing that Zoe’s more hellion days would be behind her. It was great to see the maturing in her, she just wished it wasn’t going to take her so far away. “Well, that will be handy. You better make Jack and Zoe happy. Or I will find a way to make you regret being born.”

Jack had definitely not expected to get his ex-wife’s blessing but this was turning into a weird day. “Thanks, Abby.”

She shook her head. “You win, Jack. Sorry if I don’t stick around but I think I need to go back to LA.”

~*~

The day was not even at midday yet the small family unit had been put through the wringer. Jack looked sheepish as his beeper went off. “It’s Jo.”

Tony rolled his eyes. “Go see what your Deputy needs. We’ll head to the school.”

Jack smiled. “Have fun.” He kissed his daughter’s head, revelling in the fact that he could do that for a lot longer. He then kissed Tony but that was on his lips.

He was so damn grateful that he’d met Tony. He wasn’t sure how his life would have gone but he doubted he would be this happy. He couldn’t wait to marry the man.

*He still couldn’t even if they had to battle an invisibility disease that gripped the town on their wedding day - it made the wedding photos a doozy. That was for damn sure.*

Yes - this will get a sequel but probably in the author fav's collection.
Choices. Life always boiled down to a series of choices. Turning left instead of right, choosing to go instead of stay, deciding to keep the status quo or effect the change. The ability to pick the right one was the trick.

Jonas had faced an impossible choice, down in the bowels of the sea. He’d been on a wrecked nuclear submarine and had rescued ten souls. Once his way back to the lifeboat, he’d seen the hull being caved in by something he’d had no clue what. He just knew that if they didn’t release from the sub, all of them would die in an implosion.

The choice would see the remaining souls, including two of his own crew, die. It was soul destroying but he’d kept his earpiece in and talked with them through to the end - they’d deserved that much.

The only trouble was when he’d hit dry land, no one had believed him. They said he’d panicked, words like ‘coward’ were thrown around. It had seen him thrown out of the Navy with a dishonourable discharge to boot.

He’d decided to stay in Thailand. No one knew him and they lived a way of life he could relate to. Oh, and the beer was cheap enough to wallow in if he’d wanted to.

It had been a perfect plan until he’d met - of all the ironies - a Navy Federal Agent. Tony DiNozzo had bulldozed his way into Jonas’ life and unlike all the others he’d managed to push away, Tony had laughed at him, cajoled him back into living and somewhere along the line they’d stumbled into a relationship that neither one wanted to end.

Tony hadn’t regretted taking the promotion available to him. Gibbs had come back from Mexico a monumental ass and Tony had found that he’d come to like being in charge. He didn’t take too kindly to being dumped back to his desk unceremoniously. Gibbs had wanted to take it a step further by giving him rookie jobs to remind him of his place.

So when the job came up as NCIS Agent in Charge of the South Pacific he took it. It was a promotion, a challenge and a fresh start all wrapped up in one. So he seized the opportunity because he’d done some introspection and not liked where he was heading in DC. Tony had come to realise that he was allowing himself to believe the mask and that was a dangerous path.

He stepped off his boat ready to surprise his lover to be greeted by an angry fisherman shouting at Jonas.

“‘You drink too much.’"
So of course, Jonas’ response was, “You’re only saying that because I have a beer in my hand.”

Tony laughed at his pouting lover. “No Jonas, he is saying that because you _always_ have one in your hand.”

“And yet you love me anyway.” His cheeky lover announced.

Tony shrugged. “It’s true, I do. I was distracted by your awesome abs.”

“Don’t objectify me.” He replied with faux outrage.

“You mean the same way you do when I wear a suit?” Tony countered.

Jonas huffed. “You are the only man I know that can wear a suit in this heat and not look like a dick.”

Tony laughed as he kissed his cheek, glad to be there for the week. The fisherman stormed off knowing that he would get nowhere now Tony was here. Tony just smirked, “You do have a way of making friends.”

Jonas caught sight of the helicopter. “Is that yours?”

Tony shook his head. “I took a boat.”

Jonas sighed, just knowing that was going to be potential trouble on their horizon. He had an instinct for trouble, finely honed. Only now he was content to listen to it and damn the consequences. Now he no longer worked for the government he could do that. It was the one advantage of the whole mess. “Perfect. Let’s go and see who I am going to tell to fuck off today.”

~*~

The chopper had brought two people from a Marine base. Jonas knew Mac, the station manager, from his Navy days. He was a good guy, and had still spoken to him after his discharge. He only knew the other man, a Dr Zhang, from his reputation and books he’d published on marine biology.

Jonas was polite even if they were imposing on his time with Tony. “Mac, great to see ya. Have a beer.”

Mac looked uncomfortable and his colleague more so. Tony had guessed they were used to labs and the sea, not the dwellings on land in this area. Mac tried to explain. “Let me ...”

Jonas was two steps ahead of him, the Navy may have decided that he was in the wrong but he still loved the sea. “It’s an honour to meet you, Dr Zhang. I’m just sorry that you wasted your time here today.”

Tony groaned and turned away from the scene. He could hear a second chance being offered and trust his boyfriend to be too stubborn to take it.

“And what’s that supposed to mean?”

Mac was grinning as Tony whirled around and talked to his lover. “Try not to be a complete asshole and listen to them first.”
“Why? They’re going to tell me there is an emergency. I am going to refuse because diving completely destroyed me and then you’re going to help distract me.”

Tony was impressed at how someone could be so matter of fact and lewd at the same time. It was quite the feat. “Anytime, Darlin, but listen first.”

Mac seized the opening the other guy had given him, not knowing Tony himself. “Thanks, Jonas this was taken this morning.”

The recording was grim and the start of one too many horror movies. You could hear the creaking of something under water. You could hear the panicked voices as the realisation that they were stuck 11,000 feet underwater with an unknown threat prowling outside.

The final ominous line had Tony and Jonas sharing a look. “Mac, Jonas was right. He was right.”

The voice belonged to Lori, his ex-wife. A voice Jonas was kind of hoping he wouldn’t have to hear again. He’d closed that chapter in his life and was hoping to look forwards. So far it had been working pretty well for him but that was then, and now the past had coming knocking once more.

It was funny, his ex-wife had been an eco-warrior and hadn’t that been difficult for him to explain. Then he’d ended up in a relationship with a Naval cop, where he was now the difficult one to explain.

He couldn’t change the past but he could control his future. He still hadn’t gotten back to diving - there were some things best left in the past.

Tony looked at Jonas and knew he could prod him into accepting what he’d inevitably accept on his own. “Don’t start with me, Jo’. You know what’ll happen. First will come the offer, then the money, maybe an appeal to your better nature. After that, you’ll be gruff but in the end, you and I both know you will go.”

Jonas sighed. “Why is that?”

Tony smirked. “Just think of how satisfying the I told you so will be to Lori if you rescue her.”

Mac actually laughed at the one. It was gold. It was a tactic he would have to remember for the future. “So are you on board?”

“Sure, Tony’s coming along with me.” Jonas answered, liking the situation the more he thought about it.

Tony frowned as deep sea diving wasn’t amongst his skill set. In fact, with his lungs, he’d avoided diving altogether as it would damage them. “I am?”

Jonas nodded with a slightly manic grin on his face. “Oh yeah, I need my boo to stop me punching someone.”

“Is that a risk?” Zhang asked, slightly alarmed. Having met the man, he could imagine just what damage a punch might do.

Tony, Mac and Jonas all answered as one. “Yes.”

Tony knew better than to argue about this. In fact, he was glad he had a week’s leave as this was
going to be a big deal for Jonas and he wanted to be there for his lover. “I have a week before I have to be back at NCIS.”

Mac was curious. “What do you do?”

Tony replied. “I’m Agent in Charge of the South Pacific. NCIS. It’s way more interesting down here than DC, that’s for sure.”

Mac nodded - at least the man wasn’t a complete novice around the sea and boats. He’d love to find out just how Jonas and Tony had met.

~*~

Jonas spent most of the chopper ride over to the marine one base going over the details. It would be great if he had hours to prep but emergency rescue diving worked on time constraints by the very nature of the job.

“So what tracking do you have?”

Zhang answered. “We have the beacon, the equipment and the last video recording. Unfortunately one of the collisions took out the satellite feed so we now have no way to connect to them but we do have their personal vital records.”

Jonas was all business. “What’s the time frame?”

“My engineer reckons the window is six hours providing nothing new happens to the sub.” Mac answered him.

Jonas thought about it. He needed something that could either a) take out a massive shark or b) distract it long enough to grab the stranded crew and get the hell out of dodge.

Tony just looked at Jonas. “You know when you promised to show me a good time during my break? This was not what I had in mind.”

Jonas smirked at him. “Hey, you know me. I am always original. Look, we rescue the sub, I get to say I told you so and we take this money and have a proper vacation in Bali.”

Tony grinned because that was their next vacation and he loved the fact they were thinking long term and making plans. It showed just how much they’d grown as people and as a couple. It was also incredible to him that he was willing to be so open about someone so important. “You know it.”

~*~

The chopper landed and Tony caught the sight of the billionaire who had no doubt funded this whole thing. “Er, your daughter decided to take a glider and rescue it herself.”

Tony caught the expletive-laden curse and snorted. “I don’t think that is biologically possible, Dr Zhang.”

He blushed, not used to the foreigners he worked with actually understanding Mandarin. “Perhaps not, but you can’t deny it’s a truth.”
Tony smirked. “Agreed.”

The people on the platform were confused but Tony didn’t see the point in educating them. If they wanted to know they should learn Mandarin or, you know, watch Firefly. Jonas was all business. “Take me to the sub.”

Mac shook his head. “Nope, Tony will take your stuff and get you all packed away while you’re going to talk to Dr Taylor.”

“Not that wanker!”

Tony sighed because he knew that name. It was that doctor’s testimony that had been critical in seeing Jonas discharged. “If it’s who I think it is I should probably come with you.”

Mac remembered the bit where Jonas had suggested that Tony might have a calming influence on him. “Yeah, that might be a good idea.”

~*~

Tony stood like a silent sentinel waiting to see what the physical results would be. He had no doubt that Jonas would pass the physical requirements because despite his slight alcohol dependency, Jonas hadn’t been idle working as an engineer to make ends meet.

“He is fit physically.” The Doctor confirmed.

Tony saw Jonas glare at the emphasis on the word *physically*. Jonas, though, was having none of it. He didn’t have to put up with the man’s bullshit any longer. “You know we’re in international waters so I can beat the ever loving shit out of you. The best bit ... no one can charge me.”

Dr Heller looked to Mac but Tony was the one to confirm Jonas’ statement. “As a Federal Agent I can confirm that to be true.”

Jonas’ smiled suggested he was just waiting for a reason. “So can I now go see the submarine and rescue your crew please?”

Tony walked with him, he’d made the others back off seeing how tense Jonas was the closer they got to the bay. Mac had understood and given them space. “You know I fully intend to marry you so don’t die before I get a chance to ask.”

Jonas had a cocky grin on his face as he pulled Tony closer for a kiss. “Who’s to say I won’t ask first?”
In truth, Jonas had been carrying a ring around for about four weeks. He was waiting until he could plan a perfect proposal as Tony deserved the best.

Tony broke off the kiss. “I’ll be waiting, you magnificent bastard. Now go and show them why you are the only one who can successfully pull off this mission.”

~*~

Tony was in the control room watching the feed. He saw Jonas have his momentary freak-out and stepped in, grabbing a radio from Mac. “How you going to be able to say *I told you so* if you don’t start.”
“Right you are, Darlin.” Jonas said and pushed the red button to initiate the dive sequence.

Tony had never hated and loved watching a video feed more. He had to listen as Heller warned him to slow down but Jonas just gave him a middle finger and went faster. It was such a Jonas thing to do that Tony couldn’t help but snort.

He just had to hold on to the thought that one of them would get to propose. He wasn’t too fussed which one of them beat the other as long as Jonas was around for the whole thing. He knew, though, that this was important to his lover. Diving had been such a huge part of his life that he needed to make peace with the whole thing.

“IT’S A MEG.”

Tony frowned. “A Meg?”

The female scientist confirmed it. “It’s a Megalodon, must be seventy-five feet long.”

Jonas was glaring at the camera. “Nice to know I’m not crazy, Heller, hey?”

Heller blushed but Tony didn’t care. Jonas may have his validation but Tony didn’t want it at the expense to his life. Tony spoke calmly even if he didn’t feel it. “You know, told you so’s are much better in person. Stop pissing about and get back up here.”

“How can you be a nag before we’re even married?” Jonas asked bemused, even as he blew flares off to distract the prehistoric creature.

Tony didn’t even care about the others listening in. His main concern was Jonas so he kept him distracted. “You still haven’t asked me the question.”

The rescue was completed but only thanks to the sacrifice of one of the stranded crew. Tony sighed knowing that his death would weigh on Jonas’ mind. He bustled his way to the front of the reception party. He’d seen the anger on the female scientist’s face and intercepted her. “You know he would have rescued Hoshi if he could have and he doesn’t deserve your anger.”

She blushed, shocked by how perceptive the agent was.

Tony had a wry grin. “You know that it is my job, right?”

She nods. “Yes. Sorry.”

Tony shrugged. “Don’t be. Jonas is okay and most of the crew are back with you. Take the win.”

Jonas’ greeting wasn’t standard but Tony adored it. He was swept into a kiss, and the sneaky man slipped a ring on his finger at the same time. He chuckled. “Aren’t you supposed to ask me a question?”

“I should but we both know you’ll say yes. I am irresistible.”

Tony had to laugh because he was so happy. “You’re right. You are.”

*And it was a good job too as Tony ended up having to figure out how to track a Megalodon before it ate its way through South-East Asia. It sure was a hell of a vacation. They were going to a city-
based break for their honeymoon. Tony had had his fill of the sea for a bit.
Tony hadn’t cared that he was in a crazy town. He’d accepted the posting and the transfer to the DOD so he could be closer to his fiance. It was weird that most of the people in town now called him Dr DiNozzo instead of Agent DiNozzo, even though he could and would answer to both.

He’d settled into Eureka and solved problems that beset the town on a regular basis. He could honestly say as oversight for Eureka that this place did not let it be just a desk job. He, Nathan and Jack, the town’s sheriff, were often called upon to figure out how to solve the latest inadvertent catastrophe.

“You really want to marry him?”

Tony looked up, and of course, his day was going to start with Nathan’s passive-aggressive ex-wife. “Yes, Dr Blake. You should understand, after all, you’ve done the same in the past.”

She flushed as it was still a bit of a sore point for her. Nathan and she had divorced over Eureka when he’d refused to come there when she moved back nearly a decade ago.

And yet, here he was once more and with Tony, running GD, and engaged to marry. Tony personally didn’t really get what annoyed her so much. She was dating Sheriff Carter, who was able to put up with her highly strung ways, much to the amusement of Nathan and him.

She chuckled in surrender. “I will give you that. I know why you want to - just be careful.”

Tony paused, he’d not expected the gift on his desk that appeared from behind her. “Thank you.”

She chuckled at his reticence. “Relax, Agent DiNozzo, you are about to become Kevin’s step-parent officially and my son adores you. I would like you for that alone, even if you are marrying my ex.”

Tony smiled at the mention of Kevin. “He is awesome and awe-inspiringly clever. I just know he’s going to give Nathan a run for his money when his education catches up.”

She smiled softly because not many people could look past his autism that made communication difficult. “Look, I haven’t been the friendliest, and for that, I can only apologise. Fresh start.” She asked, holding her hand out for a handshake.

Tony knew how important Kevin was in Nathan’s life so there was no way he wasn’t going to accept the offer. “Hi, I’m Dr Anthony DiNozzo. DOD liaison.”
She smiled wryly. “Dr Allison Blake. Medical Director.”

“Nice to meet ya. Tell you what ... We should get a coffee?”

Blake snorted seeing the mischievous grin on his face. “You want to freak the town out, don’t you.”

Tony shrugged. “It’s good to keep people on their toes. It stops them from getting complacent and considering what they work with, it doesn’t hurt. Plus, should we bet on how quickly Jack and Nathan turn up once they hear we’re conversing amiably?”

In all honesty, he had a point. “Sure. I could use a coffee. I give it five minutes.”

“Deal.”

~*~

They walked into Cafe Diem laughing at a story from the bickering scientists on section 3. She had to laugh. “It’s one of the things I don’t miss about the job.”

Tony chuckled. “Yeah, they didn’t put that in the job description.”

She snorted. “I wanted someone to take the job. I was hardly going to put ‘squabbling genius scientists must be dealt with on a daily basis’.”

Tony had to give her that one. As they sat down, Vincent brought them over their drink of choice, walking as tentatively as a soldier over a minefield. Tony had to smirk at the nervous cook and shared a conspiratorial grin with Allison. “How are you today, Vincent?”

“Fine. Fine. Will the Sheriff and Dr Stark be joining us?” He asked, wondering just what was going on as this was not a scene he expected to be so calm. By all accounts, according to gossip, the only time Dr Blake was civil was if she was in the company of the Sheriff.

Tony rolled his eyes. “We’re capable of talking without referees. Now, how about you cook us a surprise?”

The cook took the option to disappear. Zoe, Jack’s daughter, came over. “You know you shouldn’t mess with their heads. Genius’ can be fragile.”

Allison snorted. “I know your IQ and they should all be happy we buried the hatchet.”

Zoe grinned. “It’s made my day.” She slid down into a seat. “Now. How are the wedding plans coming along?”

Tony sighed because he thought marrying the love of his life should be simple. “ Apparently we have to make it a song and dance with how senior our positions are in the town.”

Zoe snickered at the pouting man. She had to roll her eyes at the way two of the female GD workers sighed. “What would you have preferred? Spaceballs?”

Tony shrugged but not before adding with a roguish grin. “It was that or do a Han Solo. I kind of like both ideas”
Allison’s eyes widened in alarm but this was not her wedding. Still, she could be magnanimous and it was clear that perhaps they might need a feminine touch. “If you need any help come to us, not Beverley.”

Tony nodded fervently. “The help will be appreciated and avoiding Barlowe too.”

The town’s psychologist and the resident innkeeper was a tad freaky for Tony. She was a redhead maneater. It was fine and Tony didn’t judge her tastes. It was just it was well-known that he and Nathan were engaged and she still kept flirting with him. It pissed him off.

Zoe grinned. “So she’s not going to be a bridesmaid, then?”

Tony shook his head. “Nope.”

~*~

Nathan made it first by a fraction of a second. He did not expect to hear his ex-wife and his fiance listing wedding ideas together.

Jack clapped him on the back. “Huh. You should be relieved. Most men dread the whole missus and the ex thing.”

Nathan let out a breath. “Yeah, but they’re now working together. This could be so much more dangerous.”

Jack’s eyes widened at the implication. He was glad that Nathan had come back to town with a fiance as it had left him free to pursue Allison. It also meant the two men had been able to strike up a friendship that he doubted would have occurred if Allison had still been in the picture.

~*~

A month later, Eureka was a flutter of excitement except not everyone was on board with the no crazy plans.

Jack saw Tony walk into Cafe Diem looking way too chipper. “Okay, that is not fair.”

“What’s that, sheriff?”

Jack just gave him a look. “There is no way you should be still standing if you went drinking with Taggart last night.”

Tony snorted. “Purlease, I belonged to a frat house. I’d be drummed out of the alumni if I couldn’t hold my beer.”

Well, when he put it like that it seemed silly. Jack was still pouting. “My head is throbbing in a way it shouldn’t.”

“Here you go, old man.” Tony handed him a weird looking drink. “The DiNozzo defibrillator. Drink up. I need you standing so that you can hand Nathan his ring.”

Jack snorted. “So not to see my misery end.”

Zoe rolled her eyes as she handed Tony a pot of his coffee made just the way he liked it. “He is getting married today, Dad. Cut him some slack.”
“Thanks, Ms Zoe. You’ve been a godsend with the plans.”

She smirked. “It was fun. Plus, you know my dress rocks and I will be the envy of the town. Oh, and Dr Stark helped me with my science fair project. It’s guaranteed to beat the annoying twins.”

Jack had to shake his head in bemusement at his daughter. He was so glad to have found Eureka if for no other reason than his close relationship with his daughter. The fact that the challenges here had lit her passion for learning was a happy bonus. “Just don’t cause SARAH to fritz and we’re okay.”

The Carters and Allison shudder at that one memorable night where SARAH reverted to her base programming. Zoe nodded fervently. “He’s helping me with bioorganic computing.” She explained.

Tony smiled softly knowing what had brought them together on such a thing. It was a good thing for both of them and he approved. He’d love to help but his doctorate was in psychology so not as useful.

A boom rocked the cafe and Tony sighed. “NOT EVEN A DAMN TIME LOOP WILL STOP MY WEDDING!!!”

Allison and Jack shared an amused look that only couples could get. “I never thought you would be that person.”

Tony growled. “Oh, I will make Godzilla look like a friendly kitten.”

The couple hadn’t seen much of that but his demeanour had changed. They didn’t doubt it. “Well, if any scientist does something stupid enough to earn your wrath on your wedding day, they deserve it.”

Tony smirked even as he and Jack raced out of the cafe.

~*-~

It was worse than they feared. Thankfully the explosion had meant they knew a problem was developing. The trouble with that was knowing that a problem was developing wasn’t the same as fixing it.

“Time is breaking down?” Jack said as if he really hoped he’d misunderstood.

Nathan nodded. “The damn fool has tried to create a teleporter and tore a hole in the space-time continuum.”

“You know, I kind of wish this was Star Trek.” Tony said morosely.

Nathan didn’t bite his head off for the comment, in fact, he grinned at the levity. “We’re still getting married today.”

“Damn straight.” Tony agreed. “Now. What do you need to fix this mess.”

Nathan could have a wry grin at the irony. “Time and Henry.”

“You’ll have both.”
Jack hated to be the one that said it. “And if time loops?”

Tony shrugged. “We better hope that one of us can remember ala groundhog day and can convince the rest of us.”

**Day 2**

Jack had freaked out falling in the shower *again*. SARAH’s morning update reminded him that it was Dr Stark and Agent DiNozzo’s wedding today.

That didn’t seem right. No, it felt wrong. He got dressed though and headed to cafe diem. He couldn’t shake his sense of deja-vu. It was solidified when at the cafe, the ground shook.

Tony, who was usually so calm and collecting, shouting. “*NOT EVEN A DAMN TIME LOOP WILL STOP MY WEDDING!!!!*”

Allison’s response was to be expected to, and Jack knew what Tony was about to say in response and finished his sentence.

Tony growled. “*Oh, I will make Godzilla ...*”

Jack groaned. ... “Look like a friendly kitten, we know. We need to go to Weinbrenner’s lab. Now.”

Tony sighed. “I’ll call Nathan on the way.”

~*~

Jack had stopped any arguments by the 5th loop by writing the equations that were necessary straight up on the board. He’d gotten some funny looks from Nathan, Henry and Weinbrenner and he just rolled his eyes. “What? I don’t know what it means but I have an excellent memory for details. I would have sucked as a marshall otherwise.”

Tony snorted. “You’ll break their egos if you’d have said otherwise.”

Jack rolled his eyes. “You’re the one marrying one of them.”

Tony had a fond grin in his eyes. “What can I say, I adore the magnificent bastard.”

Nathan returned the soppy grin even as he scribbled down a new line of differential equations.

~*~

On the sixth loop, they came to an answer. Only it was not perfect - someone would have to go into the chamber to set the fix off in order to fix the looping of time. Nathan, Tony and Jack looked at each other, and you could see the silent arguments being had. It was a case of who would gain the short straw and make the ultimate sacrifice.

Weinbrenner though used the distraction of when the argument turned from silent to verbal to launch himself into the chamber. He didn’t look sorry but offered an explanation so the men didn’t blame themselves. This was his choice. “Sorry, you two are getting married. And I am too scared of Dr Blake to see you perish, Sheriff Carter.”
All three men looked sad but respected the scientist's decision. “You’re a good man, Leo.” Nathan said softly.

“Thank you.” Tony offered.

Jack looked sad. “Godspeed.”

The three men watched as the fix took hold. For a second, they thought they might have avoided the molecular breakdown. No such luck, they watched as he slowly disintegrated into dust. It was a sad ending for a scientist but at least his sacrifice had seen the world be saved.

~*~

The wedding was poignant in that Tony knew they might have never got to this point. He was so grateful for having met Nathan. His life would have been very different, he probably still would have been suffering at NCIS.

“Do you, Anthony DiNozzo, take this man to be your wedded husband?”

Tony grinned crookedly. “I really do.”

“And do you, Nathan Stark, take this man to be your wedded husband?” Henry asked the pair.

“I surely do.”

“Then by the power blessed in me by the state of Oregon, I now pronounce you husband and husband.”

The only thing the couple could do was kiss each other senseless. Life would carry on but best of all, they would carry on together and that was all they could ask for.

A lifetime of love, discoveries and adventure wasn’t bad by anyone’s measure.
Chapter Summary

Kort wants Gibbs to call off his attack dog ... He has no idea just how close to reality is with his sarcastic comment.

Chapter Notes

Author’s Notes: Canon is seriously at my whim. Loosely set during NCIS S13E24 and pre 3rd Harry Potter book.

“Are you going to call your attack dog off?” Kort asked. He was staring uneasily into DiNozzo’s face. This was not the same puppy that had followed Gibbs to NCIS. He wouldn’t admit it but he was worried, even as he tried to play it off with sarcasm.

Gibbs looked amused and clearly wasn’t buying it. To Trent’s annoyance, he didn’t say a word to his SFA. “Nope. You made your bed, Kort, now you can lie in it.”

Tony smirked and may have flashed a little fang for effect. He was too in control to actually wolf out in the middle of the bullpen no matter the temptation. If he was going to eat Kort, he’d wait until there were no witnesses.

Kort glared at him but there was no way Tony was going to back down in front of idiot prey. Kort’s type was the worst, they thought they were clever so became too arrogant.

“Sorry, did I hurt a nerve with your girlfriend?”

Tony didn’t care anymore, plus, he wasn’t ashamed of Remus. “There is nothing girly about my lover.”

Kort’s eyes bugged out in shock and, knowing he’d lost this round of verbal sparring, he decided to exit stage left and sharply. “Wow. So I’ll ask around and see what I can find out.”

~*~

Tony turned around having reigned in his instincts to attack. All he got was shocked looks from McGee and Bishop. He was so not in the mood. “What?” He growled out, perhaps not having fully reigned in his instincts.

McGee was the one to say it. His brain was struggling to comprehend what he’d just heard. “You have a lover? As in permanent and for more than one night?”

Tony rolled his eyes at the tone from the junior agent. “Don’t sound so surprised, McJudgy.”

Tim flushed and looked away, not equal to staring Tony in the eyes.
Bishop though, she was keener and wanted to find out more. She asked Tony eagerly. “What’s he like?”

“Refined and stunning,” Tony replied with a fond grin showing just how much he cared. In Tony's mind, it was too difficult to encapsulate Remus in a few words. He’d overcome so many difficulties and struggles and yet never lost his caring or compassionate nature. It was a credit to his strong character.

Tim looked up and was about to say something acerbic but stopped seeing the look on Tony’s face. He changed his mind at the last second, clearly deciding that discretion was the better part of valour. “I’m happy for you, Tony.”

Tony smiled at the thought. “Thanks, now back to work. We need to know why they were looking for Ziva.”

He kept getting looks from both McGee and Gibbs through the evening. He couldn’t explain that any feelings he had for the woman disappeared when he’d ended up as a werewolf thanks to her vendetta. He thought he might lose his mind before he’d met Remus. The man had been backpacking across Europe seemingly living out of his suitcase. Although Tony learnt it functioned as more than just a suitcase - it was like a TARDIS inside, only Remus was a wizard not an alien.

Tony had learnt about magic after his run-in with the bastard Greyback. The aftermath of the attack had left with more than scars, or a bullet wound - he was not a werewolf. He was lucky no one had seen him at NCIS with his shirt off in recent months. It wouldn’t be easy to explain claw marks away.

Tony was so proud of himself. He got through the day with perseverance and not growling at a single person. Although, there were a few close calls as everyone seemed to think that he had an express line direct to Ziva. She’d been his work partner and nothing more, and after ditching him during the wolf attack - less than that. There were some events that even someone as loyal as Tony couldn’t forgive.

He was so relieved when he got to leave at the end of the day. He couldn’t remember the drive home as his mind was such a whirl of thoughts. The drive had been a good way to get order his thoughts. He used his key to open his door and he was glad Remus was already home.

“Tony?”

Tony snorted at his dorky lover as he threw down his keys. “You know it’s me, Remy.”

The man quirked an eyebrow as he dropped his book down. America had been a fresh start and one that he’d relished. He had no idea there were no restrictive laws here, like in the UK. He could even teach and go home at the end of the day. Ilvermony did not insist on boarding students much to Remus’ great pleasure. The fact that day in day out he would be unable to escape the students at any point in the day was kind of any teacher’s worst nightmare.

Remus pulled his mate down onto the sofa. He wanted to scent mark him after a day’s separation and he knew that Tony was more likely to speak the truth with skin contact. “And how was your day?”

“Well, I showed my inner wolf to that bastard Kort.” Tony explained and he wasn’t the least bit repentant. The bastard deserved more than just him showing his fangs.
Remus was bemused but knew that Tony was talking about his spirit, not his literal wolf. “Why?”

“He made a crack about Ziva being my girlfriend and I lost my temper. Here was the best part ... he asked Gibbs if he was going to control his attack dog?”

Remus was silently laughing and Tony could feel it as he lay back on his chest. “You should be careful to avoid temptation.” He warned his mate, as he didn’t want Tony to have that type of attack on his conscience.

“Nah, Gibbs is like immersion therapy. If he hasn’t set off my anger, no one will.”

Remus wondered about Tony’s team leader. He sounded like the muggle version of Mad-Eye Moody. He was all about justice at the expense of being civil - it certainly wouldn’t win him any friends. “I suppose you have a point.”

Tony sighed. “I’m scared, Remy.”

“You’d be foolish to ignore your instincts. Why in particular today?”

Tony couldn’t quite put it into words yet but he would try. It was more than likely because of Ziva’s name being brought up today. He’d moved on from the attack or so he thought. It seemed perhaps that he still had some unresolved feelings. “People are looking for Ziva and that has never ended well for me.”

Truer words and all that.

“Well, stay alert and you better bite the bitch before you let her harm you.” He replied.

Tony snorted in shock and disbelief. He didn’t think he could ever imagine the words coming from his lover’s mouth. He rolled them over, uncaring that they fell on the floor. “Your mouth both shocks and delights me, professor.”

Remus grinned as he flipped them back over. Tony may be the trained agent but he was the experienced werewolf. “Is that so?”

And proceeded to distract his mate from any dark thoughts by replacing them with sexy ones. It was a tough job but someone had to do it. Sirius would have laughed himself into his animagus form if Remus told him.

~*~

Tony was at NCIS when he noticed Orli come in clutching the hand of a very young girl. He knew immediately this was Ziva’s pup. “Hey, little one. You’re just like your mother, aren’t you?”

Orli stiffened and Tony just kept a grin on his face when he looked at the little girl. “Is it as bad as news as I suspect?”

She nodded her head not quite sure how to break the news to the little angel that her mother had passed. “Yes, an attack on her home left the place decimated.”

Tony just tucked a hair behind her cute little ear. It was ironic to think that someone so innocent could have come from someone like Ziva. She was so angry at the world it is hard to imagine how she would have been as a mother.
“And who has Ziva listed as guardian?” He asked managing to keep his tone fairly even. He wondered but somehow he knew what Orli was going to say before she confirmed it.

“You’ve been listed as her father.”

Tony felt his legs buckle. The girl wasn’t his because when she’d been conceived was right around the time he was fighting to retain his humanity. Still, he looked in the little girl’s eyes and couldn’t condemn her for her mother’s choices. “Oh boy, I need to have a chat to Remy.”

The girl held out her arms and while he could resist Abby and her eyes, he was powerless to resist this little girl. “Oh you are dangerous, aren’t you?”

She just grinned at him crookedly. This little girl would unwittingly have a stupid number of enemies being Ziva David’s little girl. Tony though, he had magic on his side and money. He figured without that mix they might be able to figure out a solution.

~*~

Gibbs had watched a gentleman make his way through the bullpen. He was noticeable in that he looked more like a professor than an agent. In truth, Gibbs was in shock at the news of Ziva’s death.

The man spoke, revealing he was a Brit. “I am looking for Agent DiNozzo.”

Gibbs growled. “Who are you?”

“You know, don’t you?” The man countered, staring him in the eyes. He was calm despite the outward show of anger.

Gibbs sighed, wondering just what might ruffle the man. “You’re Tony’s.”

“Yes, I am.” Remus didn’t even bother to deny the statement because it was true. “Now, where is he exactly?”

~*~

Tony had commandeered the conference room space while Orli and Vance argued over some details. He kept wondering if he could do this, what was Remus going to say? This was not how he’d envisioned this case going.

The little poppet kept drawing with the crayons. He wasn’t sure the pattern was too clear but no doubt he could put it in a gallery and it would sell for thousands. “Wow. That is awesome.”

She pointed at the grass. “Abba.”

Tony froze because he wasn’t too sure about that right now. The last thing he wanted to do was give the child false hope. “English, kiddo.”

She pouted and went back to scribbling but her crayon was pressed down extra hard - just like her mother.

The door opening had Tony reflexively moving to cover the little one. Remus knew all he needed to know, Tony was reacting to the girl like she was his own. “So what’s our daughter’s name?”
Tony froze but let out a shaky grin. “Tali. Last Name to be determined.”

Remus smiled softly, always being at ease with children. “Hey, little one.”

She waved at him, smile as big as the moon. “We will need a minder for full moon’s.” Remus reminded his lover.

“Are you really okay with this?” Tony asked, as this was too big a decision to make just on his own. It didn’t matter to him that he really wanted to be a father if it would put his relationship at risk.

Remus countered. “Are you? If this one has enemies it might be best to come to Ilvermony.”

Tony shrugged. “My mother was a squib but I’m not. You know this. It was why she was allowed to disappear into the muggle world. I can survive in both worlds. Plus, you know, magical creature.”

“You’ve always been magical to me.” Remus replied, tongue-in-cheek, wanting to lighten the mood.

Tony shook his head, relaxing to the idea. “Tali, your Av is silly isn’t he?”

Remus froze as the little one made eye contact. It was impressive for one so young, it was like she was trying to understand him. “Av?”

Remus held his hands, wanting his wolf to know the scent of their pup. “Yeah, Tali. Av.”

She jumped into his arms and Tony didn’t think he could love Remus anymore than he already did but he did in that moment. Remus asked him softly. “If I am Av, what are you?”

“Abba, I’m Tali’s Abba.”

She pulled Tony into the one-armed hug. “Abba?”

“Yeah, Tali I am.”

The family unit remained strong even when Dumbledore tried to manipulate Remus. It was a lot harder with Tony as his mate and Tali to keep him strong. It was a bad move for more than one reason but that is another story and they ended fostering another child only this one was significantly more famous and older. Tony had refused to let a bumbling goat destroy a child’s life for any reason - Gibbs would have been so proud of the chaos he caused.
Set Post SWAK (NCIS) and Post ITSOTWGM for West Wing.

Plot deals with assassination plots, and shootings. If those are triggers then please avoid.

Bang.

He woke up with a cold sweat. It was the same damn thing every time he closed his eyes. He should be able to get past it. He hated this. He’d survived, for crying out loud and it was a miracle, as everyone kept telling him.

Josh didn’t feel like a miracle. He felt like a truck had hit him and every moment was a battle. He used to think there wasn’t a fight he couldn’t win, or engage in. It was just this one, rehabilitation, that was a hard one.

He heard the door barge in but it wasn’t one of the West Wing crew. He’d have expected one of them as they were stubborn. It didn’t matter that he wasn’t talking - they kept trying to draw him out of his shell. He figured he’d been shot so they could cut him slack.

He’d been about to shout at his intruder but he took one look and his comment died on his lips. “Wow, you look like crap and I’m the one that’s been shot.” Josh said in his typically blunt way.

The man looked sheepish. “Sorry, I thought this was my room.”

Josh shook his head. “Nope. And where’s the Secret Service gone? I thought I had a guard.”

Tony snorted but showed the badge he was wearing around his neck. “Relax, they like me. I’m a Federal Agent and there was the whole dying of the plague thing.”

“You got the plague in DC??!!” Josh shouted with alarm. He was sure he should have heard about that in a briefing or something.

Tony managed a wry smile. “Your problem with what I just said was location and not the time frame?”

Josh shrugged but winced for his trouble. “You have bad luck.”

“You said the man shot.”

Josh pouted. “You should be nicer to me. I was shot.”

Tony snorted and started to cough. He had to remember that his lungs were not up to strength yet. It was sobering to realise they were never going to be what they were before the plague. “Yeah, buddy. So have I. It hurts like a bitch but they will heal.”
“What about the memories?” Josh asked, hoping fervently there was a quick fix, or at least a coping mechanism.

Tony looked at him with something like a dawning understanding. “Right. So the healthy advice I should give you is to talk to a professional.”

Josh screwed his face up. He didn’t like that option even if he knew that logically it was the smartest option. “And the second option?”

“Take up a hobby that you can pour your frustration into and a friend to bitch to.”

Josh thought about it. This was crazy. He didn’t know this guy and for all he knew, he could turn around and sell his story to The Press. He may be injured but Josh still trusted his instincts.

“Every time I shut my eyes I hear the bang,” Josh whispered.

Tony remembered the feeling vividly. “Did you have a chance to think about your life? Or, is that the bit you’re pissed about?”

Josh was stunned by the insightful question. “No, no thoughts. Just pain.”

Tony sat on the visitor’s chair knowing that he was needed right where he was. “Well, there you are then. It wasn’t your time. I get it, I’m not making fun of ya. One of the treatments they used this week were these blue lights. It was vivid and I just walked down the corridor and froze seeing blue light.”

Josh sighed and couldn’t help but find the irony in this situation. “We make quite the pair.”

Tony smiled softly and made a suggestion that he hoped would help. “Tell you what. Sleep. I’ll stay here.”

Josh frowned. “You need rest too and I’m being stupid.”

Tony shook his head. “I can charm the nurses into bringing me something to rest on but you deserve to sleep. I’m trained and expect to be shot at but you, as Deputy Chief of Staff, would not. I may not have my gun but I can still throw a knife with deadly accuracy.”

Josh shook his head in disbelief at the man with him but he was exhausted. Crazy as it sounded, he did feel more relaxed and it couldn’t hurt to try. He started to close his eyes. “Night night, crazy.”

~*~

Tony saw the nurse slip in and stop in surprise at the door. He whispered. “I convinced him to sleep.”

“Wow. Okay, you can stay but you’re also recovering!” She finished sternly but the effect was diminished by the whispering.

Tony looked sheepish but he was willing to stand his ground. If Josh could be brave then so could he. “Look. In that room, all I can think of is nearly dying and he needs someone close that he can trust.”

She looked unsure as it went against convention. “This is not standard protocol.”
Tony shrugged as his entire life wasn’t following standard protocol. “Nurse, I had the plague and he stepped in front of a bullet meant for the President.”

She could see he wasn’t going to budge and in truth, he had a point. “Okay.” If it got them both to actually truly rest then she would more than happily take the flack.

Tony smiled at her and she stopped for a second as it was blinding. His other half was a lucky person. She couldn’t know that it would soon be the other occupant of the room.

~*~

Sam stepped into the room, surprised to see another person. “Er, hello.” He didn’t think Josh would have a roommate. He doubted the man would be there without Josh’s permission which seemed at odds with his general attitude during recovery.

Tony was bleary-eyed but woke with the sound of the door opening. He recognised the man from some talk-show visits. He was pretty sure this was Josh’s best friend. “Ah, Seaborn right?”

Sam nodded but he was uncertain about who he was talking to. He was impressed Josh was sleeping as it wasn’t easy since the shooting in Rosslyn. “Call me, Sam, especially if you got Josh to sleep.”

Tony rolled his eyes. “He just needed to know someone was listening.”

Sam frowned and was indignant at what he perceived as an insult. “We’ve been doing that but he ignores us.”

Tony inched himself up so he was sitting. He explained it as delicately as he could. Josh was worried about upsetting his friends but Tony didn’t have that hang-up. He just wanted to protect Josh while he recovered. “Yeah. Speaking from experience - getting shot sucks. He feels like you don’t understand it and he doesn’t want to scare you with the memory.”

Sam tilted his head to the side. “Are you a cop, or a Federal Agent?”

“Special Agent Anthony DiNozzo. NCIS. Tony for friends.”

Sam held his hand out. “Nice to meet you, Tony.”

Tony held his hand out in return. Josh scowled. “You’re my friend.”

Tony snickered at his pout. “Relax, Sam was just introducing himself.”

Josh looked sheepish. “Sorry, I’ve been a bastard.”

Sam shook his head. “You’ve been you, Josh. We hover because we care but we just want to help.”

Josh understood, he did. He just couldn’t articulate that he didn’t want to share his damage. They all had enough on their plates with being the senior staff at the White House. “Look, I survived. I’m not going to let the bastard win but I need to rearrange my headspace.”

“Can we help?” Sam asked because for all his intellect - he didn’t know what to do in this situation.
Josh shrugged. “I have no idea. I figured I’d walk out of here first. Small steps, you know?’”

Sam nodded. He came over to Josh. “I am glad you’re not dead, you know.”

“Me too, buddy. Now, you can see I have company so go and do important things like run speeches for the president.”

Sam nodded and wondered just what was going on with the two men. He didn’t think they knew to be honest. He might not be the most observant but he could see they were good together.

~*~

Josh looked at Tony like he was mad. “You have a place in the Hamptons, and you think we should recuperate there?”

Tony nodded. “It was left to me by my mother. Good clean sea air and no one from DC. We’ll be back in fighting form ready to take on politicians and criminals before we know it.”

Josh was thinking about it and the idea appealed to him. “Yeah. Okay, let’s go.”

Tony was shocked because he figured it would take more of a fight. “Yeah?”

Josh let out a huff of breath as he let the idea settle in his gut. “Yeah, let’s go. I can’t guarantee I’ll be nice if there is a Republican senator there though.” He warned because Tony and he had become fast friends in the last week but he couldn’t change his personality.

Tony rolled his eyes. “I want you to rest, not see your blood pressure explode.”

~*~

Josh stood on the beach letting the wind whistle around him. He’d always worked, never took time to just stand. There was always the next candidate, or the next bill to pass. Something. It was crazy, now he came to think about it.

If work got hectic, no, when it got hectic he was going to remember this moment. The absolute peace and tranquillity felt like it was seeping into his very bones.

“It’s pretty great here, huh?”

Josh looked at the amazing man, who despite having his own recovery, saw something in him. Tony had pulled him out of his head and back into the world. Josh couldn’t put into words how grateful he was in words. “Yeah, it is. It might be the private beach, mind you.”

Tony smirked because it was pretty great whenever he got a chance to get up here. Sadly, since heading to NCIS those times were few and far between. “I’d set it up as a convalescence home if it wouldn’t cause my neighbours to freak out.”

“Well, it is Senator Rafferty. And Sammy is a good lawyer and hates him. I’m sure he’d help you. For free.” Josh finished with glee. The idea was appealing and hilarious all at the same time.

Tony nodded. “But what about if we need to escape the rat race from time to time.”

Josh froze for a second. He could tell where this was going. He’d always known his sexuality was on the flexible side. He’d put the whole liking men thing in a box - knowing that if he wanted a
career in politics then it would be needed.

However having survived been shot. He was reevaluating a few things - why should he deny himself something? It wasn’t right and he’d nearly died. Tony was stupidly attractive and had already seen him at his worst.

“You’re right, I don’t like sharing.”

Tony arched an eyebrow. “You’ve shared with me.”

“True but I like you.” Josh responded. a twinkle in his eye letting Tony know he was teasing.

Tony stepped closer. “Only like?”

“You do remember the bit where the law is still ridiculously homophobic?” Josh had to remind him.

Tony shrugged. “I know how to shoot, use Eskrima and nearly died of the plague. I’m reevaluating what I want out of life.”

“And you want me?”

Tony nodded, looking at Josh’s lips. “Yeah. I do. You’re fierce, intelligent, a little mean and brave. What’s not to like?”

Josh didn’t think of himself as any of those things. Yet, standing here with Tony he could believe every one of them just by looking into Tony’s eyes. It was crazy. “You’re still crazy.”

Tony nodded in perfect agreement. “Oh yeah, but are you ready to go down the rabbit hole with me? I can fight, and you can cut people to their core with your words. I think we make a great team.”

Josh decided to be brave and with a lighter heart than he’d had before Rosslyn, he reeled Tony in for a kiss.

It was a giddy experience. It was new and fresh. A little awkward and fumbling. There was laughter and a lightness as they’d acknowledged what was between them. Josh could get used to this - and he was more than willing to fight for it.

This wasn’t an end - this was a beginning.
Divine Assistance (Castiel)

Chapter Notes

So this is based off internet research and angelic lore of the Supernatural TV verse.

Set Supernatural season 5 and throughout NCIS

Jegudiel was bored of stupid mortal pettiness right now. He’d enjoyed the new challenge of NCIS but he wasn’t blind to the bigger cosmic plane. He was having to deal with petulant co-workers bemoaning the fact their leader had checked out to Mexico just as heaven decided to kick off once more.

Chess pieces were being moved that he didn’t like. This was bad, oh so very bad.

The Winchesters were taking up more and more of the comic radio. He may have hidden from view but he knew better than to not listen in. It was the best way to stay a step ahead without having to hide as one of the tricksters like Gabriel was currently doing.

“Tony. Are you even listening to me?”

Jegudiel broke away from his musings. “No, not really. What were you saying, McDrone?”

“I was talking about the cold case - saying it’s futile,” the junior agent replied, looking frustrated. He hated having to review cold cases - as far as he was concerned, there was a reason why they were classified as a cold case.

Tony grinned manically, looking at the file over his shoulder. “Au contraire, look at the financials.”

McGee frowned. “They’re clean.”

Tony rolled his eyes because he’d seriously hoped he’d broken him of looking only surface deep. He was trying to prepare the team for the eventuality he was found by his brother and sisters. Or, if as he suspected, Crazy-Zacky decided the apocalypse should start as it sounded like a swell time.

He knew Dad wouldn’t be too mad. After all, the little nutter was too busy sunning himself on Earth - only he was a writer/prophet. They’d run into each other on a case and come to an agreement to pretend not to notice the other celestial being was hanging around Earth. It wasn’t the healthiest family dynamic but it worked for them.

“No, McGee, they’re not. What was their job?” Tony asked, guiding the agent to seeing the light.

“Accountant.” McGee replied.

Tony nodded and could tell he still wasn’t getting the point he was trying to make. “So what should they be pulling in?”

“Probably at least 2 to 3 thousand.” McGee answered thinking of average wages.
Tony nodded. “So why is this one only declaring one thousand?”

Mcgee’s face showed a dawning realisation, and then he flushed in embarrassment of his mistake. Tony clapped him on his back. “Don’t worry, McGee ... the original team missed it.”

“You didn’t.”

Tony shrugged. “If there’s one thing I have, it’s the experience of lots of cases.”

He’d been around since the dawn of creation in some form or another. He’d become so frustrated with his brother and sisters he figured he’d work for justice on Earth and see just what his father saw in his creations. He got it now. He did, even if some of them were annoying, like his team at the moment.

He’d been so distracted by his mundane day that he hadn’t noticed the danger. He only realised what danger he was in when he sat down in his car and felt the pressure trigger activate. **Fuck. It** might not be angelic but it was the only word that summed up how he felt. He was going to have to let the damn thing explode and fake being thrown into the air and have a miraculous escape.

It all happened in microseconds. It happened so quickly that heaven’s youngest angel managed to catch the scent of his power as he flew out of the blast radius but still stayed slightly singed.

Tony groaned at seeing Castiel flutter onto the street. What was the baby of the flock doing out on his own? He should have kept a better reign on his power - he hadn’t slipped like that in a century.

The widening of Castiel’s eyes was funny as it was a potential headache. He’d tampered down on his power extra hard - he didn’t want any more strays finding him.

The game was up and he saw no reason in denying it. “Help me up, Cassie.”

The angel scowled even as he did so. “What are you doing here, Jegudiel?”

Tony shrugged because that was a good question with a seriously complicated answer. “Hey look, I will answer your questions but right now I’m pretending to be human. Tony DiNozzo is the name I am answering to so play along.”

The look of horror on Castiel’s face was absolutely hilarious. He may have been spending more time around humans if the angelic gossip was right but he was slow to acclimatise.

“Tony!”

“DiNozzo.”

Tony coughed and felt annoyed that he couldn’t heal his body. He had no host with him - he was a freaking archangel. He built his own body. “I’m still here, thanks to Jimmy.”

Gibbs looked the bewildered man once over. “Thank you for your assistance. Agent DiNozzo will need to seek medical help.”

Tony scowled in a way that was unfitting for an archangel. Castiel didn’t understand anything right now. “I hope you get better.” He was sure he’d heard Dean use that platitude once or twice with Sam.

Tony smirked where none of the others could see.
Tony had gotten back to his apartment. It was weird the things he was willing to do in order to keep his cover. He decided to use the human way to contact an angel, in a great twist of irony. He prayed.

*Oh Castiel, I seek your guidance on how to survive my Thursday.*

Castiel popped into the apartment, looking no different to yesterday. “You’ve been gone a long time, Jegudiel and you're not funny.”

Tony shrugged because he wasn’t big on denial. He’d made a choice and he would see it through to the end. “Not sorry. All of you were being dicks.”

Castiel smiled, he sounded just like Dean. He was resistant to their brothers’ plans too. “You sound like the righteous man.”

Jegudiel had very strong feelings regarding Dean Winchester. “He deserved to be saved. Hell wasn’t right for what he did. Our whole family has twisted that boy up so he doesn’t know left from right.”

Castiel agreed hesitantly. “I am not Uriel’s hammer, Jegudiel, but I need help to oppose their plans.”

Now he was paying attention. He’d have spat out his whiskey if it wasn’t the good stuff. “You’re opposing the end of days? And you’re too cute to be a hammer even if you are a little badass. I found it hysterical when you punched out Baltazar.”

Castiel smirked. “He stopped calling me a precious unicorn afterwards.”

Tony adored the stubbornness being displayed, it was an incredible show of free will that he’d thought Father would have never allowed. “You know they’ve been planning the end of days from before Dad even thought of creating you.”

Castiel pouted, which didn’t stop him looking adorable. “You could help me.”

“Stop the end of days?”

“Yes.” Castiel said resolutely, as if it was that simple. If it was just a matter of faith he’d have stopped it in his tracks.

Tony tilted his head to the side. Castiel was displaying free will, at least he thought so, so he had to check. “What convinced you?”

“Dean did.”

Tony quirked an eyebrow and he grew more impressed with the righteous man. Still, his impact was huge if he could make an angel consider rebellion. Little Castiel had grown up into one glorious little badass. He spoke softly. “Dean must be pretty special for you to consider rebelling.”

It was the truth too, the first thing you would always say to describe Castiel was that he was loyal to the host.

Castiel looked pained and Jegudiel knew this was probably the key part of his turmoil. “I can’t
imagine this is Father’s plan.”

Jegudiel chuckled and patted the spot on the sofa by him. “Come sit, talk me through your thoughts. No one in heaven or hell can hear us.”

Castiel nodded and talked for ages. He explained his task, how he raised Dean Winchester from perdition. His confusion with Dean not understanding that he should be saved. The confusion that leaving his grace behind had caused. Jegudiel suspected it was that small thread that had caused Castiel to end up a fully fledged doubter. He was clever little sod though as he still had access to his grace so the plotters didn’t suspect him yet.

“You’ve had quite the year haven’t you, Cassie.” Tony said in exasperation. Wow, when the angel decided to put his support behind someone - he did it with his whole being.

“It has been quite trying,” Castiel agreed. He shuddered when he was pulled into a hug. He could feel his wing being petted and it was so needed. He’d been starved of contact since heading down to the front lines of the attack on perdition. His wings were so tatty. He blushed. He shouldn’t sully an archangel with these wings.

Jegudiel tutted. “Don’t even think it. You got this when you fought in perdition. It doesn’t make you unclean, it makes you a warrior.”

Castiel nodded but said nothing. To stroke an angel’s wing was akin to announcing your interest in them. He didn’t understand why Jegudiel would be intrigued by him. He was no one special.

Castiel shuddered. “That is ...”

“So good.” Jegudiel smirked. He’d always seen pleasure as a reward for endeavours. It might not be the most angelic philosophy but it was his - and it worked. As his Dad hadn’t clipped his wings, he figured the old man agreed with him.

“Yes,” Castiel arched into the sensation.

Jegudiel had to temper his own reaction. Castiel was just learning who he was on his own, he wouldn’t influence him unduly. He would be no better than those red-eyed bastards. “You shouldn’t wait so long.”

Cass groaned out. “Don’t trust the others and the rest think I’m impetuous.”

Yeah, Jegudiel could see how they would think that but he thought it was Castiel’s best quality. “Their loss but my gain.”

It was the start of a beautiful courtship.

~*~

Jegudiel blinked upon hearing wings land in his apartment. “Hey there, what brings you to my humble abode?”

“Human interactions are infinitely complex.” Cas groused.

Tony chuckled. “Well, yeah. They can’t see the soul beneath, Cassie, you know this.”

Castiel sighed. “They don’t believe they deserved to be saved.”
“Well, human guilt is a powerful emotion for them.”

Castiel sighed. “It can be too strong at times.”

Tony chuckled pulling him close in a hug. “And that is why we have perseverance and a safe space to vent and rant. I’m not coming up to heaven any time soon but you know you’re welcome here whenever you wish.”

“Will you ever show your face to our other brothers and sisters?” Castiel asked. There was no judgement in his voice. He’d explained his reasons previously and to be honest, Castiel was in secret rebellion against heavens plan’s so he couldn’t say much either.

Tony shook his head. “If they come after you, I will flatten them so do your best to avoid that.”

Castiel looked sheepish. “I’m working with the Winchesters.”

Tony snorted. “Fine, give me your phone. We can keep in contact the human way. It will be a novel experience.”

Castiel accepted the phone number. “I will do my best to stay alive.”

It was an honest promise. Tony kissed his cheek. “And that is all I can ask. I must confess that I am keeping a track of your signature.”

Castiel sighed. “Don’t reveal yourself for me.”

Tony growled. “You’re important to me. You know this, so you don’t get to make that choice. Just try not to put me in that position. I may not have picked up my sword in recent years but I can still flatten any opponent.”

“That is sweet of you to say.”

Jegudiel figured threatening to destroy your enemies wasn’t normally considered a romantic declaration. However, when the object of your affection was a garrison soldier of heaven - then it was sweet.

~*~

Castiel was frowning at his phone, Jegudiel was not having a good day and there was nothing he could do to help. He could tell that Dean and Sam were confused with his actions. It freaked the brothers out because they didn’t think the angel knew anyone else on this Earth.

“You okay there, Cas?” Dean asked cautiously because his friend had the power to flatten towns when pissy.

The angel sighed. “Yes, a friend is being stubborn.”

“Who’s the friend?” Dean asked, intrigued by the idea of his favourite angel making connections with people. He’d felt so bad at the idea of him forsaking heaven to fight with them.

Castiel knew it was a half-truth. “His name is Tony, he is a Federal Agent.” It wasn’t a lie, Jegudiel did call himself that and identified by the name.
“How did you meet?” Sam asked. The brothers would always be nervous at the mention of law enforcement.

“His car blew up.”

The conversation was derailed by a certain trickster showing up and planting them in a fake reality. Castiel had to hope that Jegudiel was paying attention to their nascent bond like he promised. He would fight through the realities to make sure the Winchesters were safe. Then, he was asking Jegudiel to go on a hunt with him.

~*~

Dean hated tricksters. No, he detested them with a passion. They were bigger dicks than the angels. He was keeping a check on his temper - barely.

“Where is Castiel?” Dean demanded to know.

The Trickster smirked at him. “He is being kept busy. You haven’t been paying attention.” He chided, sounding like a vexed teacher, not a trickster.

“Oh I have ... you want us to play our parts but why should we?” Dean replied. He hated the way all of the supernatural world had seemingly decided the parts he and Sam were supposed to play - only Dean was never fond of following a script.

Loki rolled his eyes at the defiance. “You plan to interfere in plans that are a millennia old. That is pretty arrogant, boy.”

A new voice interrupted their little tete-a-tete. Dean didn’t know the new player but he sounded pissed.

“You know, Gabriel, that is really fucking hypocritical. I could abide your little norse games but where the fuck did you put my Castiel.”

The Trickster paled as this was not in his plan. He thought he was alone of the archangels. “Jeg’ it is not like that ... I wouldn’t harm little Castiel.”

The new guy’s glare was pretty fierce as he warned. “He is precious to me. I will dip each and every of your twelve wings in holy oil and pluck them out with tweezers if you’ve fucked with him.”

Loki /Gabriel and Dean tilted their head to the side as if they were trying to imagine how that would work. Dean had learnt his angelic lore pretty rapidly. He was pretty sure that hot man in Zegna was Jegudiel, one of the seven big archangels. Best bit? He didn’t seem a dick. He seemed almost human which was odd.

“You’ve bonded with the littlest Seraph?” Gabriel asked, not even bothering to pretend he wasn’t shocked.

Jegudiel’s arms were folded in front of his chest showing how unimpressed he was with that statement. “You fucked around with Kali for a millenia. You hardly have stones to throw, brother.”

Gabriel smirked. “She is so passionate and fiery. It was fate.”

He clicked his fingers and Castiel appeared by Jegudiel’s side. Then much to the bemusement of
everyone, clutched Jegudiel’s hand. He looked straight at Gabriel and shouted. “You’re a dick, Gabriel!”

Jegudiel rolled his eyes. “You lot are lucky I am playing Agent Afloat right now. So what in Father’s name is going on? Why have you revealed yourself now, Gabriel? Dad and I were content to leave you to your trickster games as you were happy.”

All three whipped their heads around that. “You know where God is?”

Jegudiel nodded. “Well, my ex-boss would like to think he has the title but you’ve met him.”

Castiel was frowning because he’d have remembered seeing God. He was thinking about all their ‘dates’ and never once had God come up in the discussion.

Gabriel snorted with derision. “You missed the memo. He left the building. It is why Luci and Mikey are gearing up for round two of the worst sibling fight in the history of ever.”

Tony snickered because that was one way to describe it. “You’d be partially right. He is bumming around writing for a living. He was always a creator, Gabe, he just chose stories as his medium this last thirty years.”

Dean was the quickest to the conclusion. “Chuck? The drunk-ass prophet is actually God?”

Castiel glared at Jegudiel. “Why didn’t you tell me?”

“A divine agreement to pretend the other didn’t know the other one is around,” was all he could offer as an answer. He wasn’t sorry. He’d enjoyed his time on Earth and meeting Castiel once more was a revelation.

Dean looked at his best friend and asked tentatively. “Er, Cas? Is this Tony the boyfriend?”

Castiel rolled his eyes. “Yes, Dean. He is. It is more than just a boyfriend but that is not the point right now.”

Gabriel was pondering things. “Could we convince Dad to throw them into time out?”

Jegudiel shrugged because for all his power and experience - this wasn’t something he could predict. The Fates also hated him, so tended not to answer any of his questions. “We won’t know if we don’t try.”

The two archangels looked at each other and had a silent conversation and disappeared.

Dean looked at his best-friend. “You just might have got your boyfriend to solve the apocalypse and you won’t even crack a smile.”

Castiel shrugged, “He said he was bored on the ship.”

Dean shook his head. “You really need to explain how an archangel ended up pretending to be an NCIS agent. He passes as human, Cas.”

“I know. Jegudiel has always been the one to work on hard labours so if he commits to a role, he does it with his whole being.”
“Your boyfriend is badass. So what’s the story behind you two?”

Castiel sighed. “This is not the place.”

Dean wasn’t going to be deterred. “So zap me and Sam to some place that is and then share the gossip with us.”

*It was quite the story but the Winchester’s listened to it eagerly, relieved that the end of the apocalypse just might be on its way. Of course, when two of the other archangels set about pursuing them - well, their life didn’t exactly calm down. As for Jegudiel and Castiel - let’s just say it was a good thing their endurance and stamina were beyond human levels.*
Tony had entered his apartment, tired and annoyed as fuck. He couldn’t believe the stupid games Ziva was playing with the team. Worst of all, he seemed to be the only one who could see the mind games which was quite frankly terrible.

He straightened and grimaced at his arm. Stupid ninja, thinking she could shoot in a metal box. She may be able to kill him two hundred ways but he’d prefer to keep his wits. “Owen?”

The man stood in their kitchen and Tony just took a moment to take in the sight of his fiance. “I’m here.”

Tony asked carefully trying to keep his hope in. “For how long?”

“Three months leave, minimum.”

That was all that was said before Tony was jumping into Owen’s arms and wrapping his legs around him. It was like Tony was hoping if he ensnared him he would have to stay. Of course, his wound made him regret his action slightly and of course, Owen had picked up his discomfort and gently placed him on the couch.

Tony pouted. “This is not the fun sexy times our reunion should be.”

Owen just glared at him. “You were shot?”

Tony sighed. “According to the bitchy Mossad Agent it’s just a scratch.”

“There is an exit wound!”

Tony pouted. “That’s good, right?

Owen growled. “You’re unbelievable, you know that?”

Tony smirked. “I know. You’re gonna make this a big deal, aren’t you?”

He fell back against the settee as Owen grabbed his phone. This was going to cause friction at work but to be honest, he didn’t care. He wouldn’t mind if Owen was here.

Owen had grabbed Tony’s phone and input the code. It wasn’t difficult - it was Owen’s army ID. “Hello, Dr Mallard. Yes, it’s Dr Hunt here.”

The man was one of a select few who knew about Tony and him. “Tony needs to be off for a week. You all missed that the supposed scratch was a through and through bullet wound that he let the paramedic stitch up.”

Whatever explosion of words that information caused - Tony couldn’t quite hear. He didn’t want to - he wanted Owen to come back to the couch and finish what he started.

“You know I won’t let him get away with anything, Ducky.” Owen assured the man.

Tony sighed because that meant Owen would tie him to the bed, and not in a fun way, if he acted like a brat. He shouted down the phone. “He’s right, and he has a wicked poker face.”
The next day at NCIS Ziva looked smug seeing Tony absent from his desk. “Where is DiNozzo?” She asked, affecting an annoyed look like she couldn’t believe he wasn’t at his desk on time.

Gibbs looked up from his own desk and his glare caught her off guard. “Off for two weeks. Seems his scratch was a little deeper than you thought.”

She flushed because his tone was almost menacing towards her. “I don’t know what you’re implying.”

“Don’t they teach you observational awareness in Mossad?”

Now there was a glint of anger. She figured Tony’s own medical phobia would stop him from seeking true help. He’d already proved that at the scene - so what had changed? This wasn’t going to help her paint the image of him being lazy if they were sympathetic to an injury.

“They do.” She assured him, looking for the trap she knew he was building.

Gibbs looked at her assessingly. “Do they teach you to keep calm?”

“Yes.” She said curtly. This was turning into a review of her position. She’d assumed having set up Ari that she was in for good. She got the feeling that wasn’t the case. Had she misjudged the connection between Gibbs and DiNozzo?

“So shooting inside a metal box to the point your partner ends up with a bullet through his arm ... is standard practice?” Gibbs demanded to know.

She blushed and cast her eyes to the floor. “No, of course not.”

Gibbs glared. “Make sure it doesn’t become one here.”

Ziva sighed and tried to show she was penitent. “I should take him something.”

Gibbs shook his head. “Nope, he’ll be back to work in two weeks.”

McGee, who’d stood watching the verbal by-play, was confused. “Why?”

Gibbs quirked an eyebrow. “Did I stutter? He’s on medical leave for two weeks and isn’t to be disturbed.”

“There is no way he will take two weeks. He didn’t take that long when he had the plague.” McGee said and Gibbs wondered if he realised what he’d just said.

He smirked though because he did know better. “Oh, he has his reasons.”

McGee and Ziva were confused by the surety in Gibb’s voice. It was clear they were missing something - they just weren’t sure what it was.

Tony never liked leave when Owen wasn’t home. It just made him miss his fiance even more. Today though, he’d take the medical leave so he could spend some precious time with the man he loved.
In fact, the two men were entwined in bed with Tony lying on top to give space to his arm.

“So you punched out an insurgent?” Tony asked, half aghast half amused.

Owen scowled because his fellow senior surgeons had given him shit too. They had to remember he was both a soldier and a surgeon making him a curious dichotomy. “His behaviour was scaring the patients and he was threatening the lives of my nurses. What was I supposed to do?”

Tony pulled him in for a kiss. “Nothing else. You were pure badass I’m sure.”

Owen just sighed, realising Tony was teasing him. “You making fun of me?”

“Now would I do that?”

Owen snorted, knowing that innocent tone was anything but. “Yes, in a heartbeat. It is how you show you care.”

~*~

It was the first day of Tony’s return to work after his medical leave and Owen was going to be reporting back to base half way through the shift. Tony was reluctant to leave him before he had to but knew the Agency would be stupid about it if he asked for the extra day.

Owen stood calmly against the Mustang. “Let me drive you to work.”

Tony had always resisted being public with his relationship. However his brush with the plague had made him reevaluate his decisions. He was done hiding. His inability to share his relationship had meant Owen wouldn’t have been informed when he was injured, and that never sat right with him.

“Sure.”

Owen smirked at his lover. He was transparent but Tony wasn’t calling him on it.

The drive up the Navy Yard was easy enough, especially with their ID’s. Tony signalled to where they should pull in. He found himself dragging his feet to exit the car.

“How long before your next leave?”

Owen kissed him softly. “I have time in service next month, and I will be looking for a new position.”

Tony perked up at that news. “Well, I’ll see you soon and remember that I love you.”

~*~

Tony couldn’t believe that he was willingly stepping into Seattle. It was so damn damp here and yet he was willing to do so for Owen. Owen’s message had said he was touching down ready to demonstrate the techniques for the Seattle Surgical team.

Tony had been shocked by the fact Owen was willing to leave the Army but was willing to roll with it. It would have been nicer if there was a job closer to DC but he had no problem in moving. It might be good for a fresh start, especially with how much of a dick the team were being.

Owen was being courted for a Trauma Attending role in a major research hospital so it would suit
him down to the ground.

As he stepped through the doors of the hospital the security guard went to stop him. Tony wasn’t even going to get in an argument. “Federal Agent and I will not leave my side-piece anywhere but with me.”

The Guard backed away clearly happy with just seeing his ID.

*It would prove to be the best possible choice.*

~*~

Shepard had asked about the black ring. Hunt had smirked. “Gift for my fiance, he can be a possessive bastard.”

The only shock Derek betrayed was through his eyes widening. “That’s cool, and does he wear one?”

Hunt nodded his head. “He is too charming for his own good. I made his a little *blingier* so that it’s more noticable.” Tony wasn’t the only possessive one - it was how they worked so well.

“When do we get to meet the other half?”

Owen looked at the clock on the wall. “Should be in the hospital about now. His plane touched down and he would have finished off the paperwork on his case.”

Derek wanted to ask more questions because a *case* was ambiguous. He wondered just who the fiance might be - his guess was the other half might be a lawyer. His musings were broken as he started his descent into the skull cap - these things required your full attention.

“Stop what you’re doing!”

Owen looked up to see a man holding a gun and he cursed. The whole operating room had frozen, which was to be expected. “Why?”

The man didn’t expect to be challenged. “He deserves to die.”

Owen looked him in the eye, keeping the man’s focus solely on him. “Are you God?”

“Of course not but I am the one holding the fucking gun.”

Owen ground his teeth, *typical coward*. He was full of bravado when he was the one holding the gun. “Yeah, but I took an oath to preserve life.”

The gangster wannabe growled. “You do that and all you will do is end your life.”

Owen took a deep breath, finding irony in the fact he’d served in war zones and it was Seattle where he might end up shot.

“You should know that if you shoot my fiance not even God will be able to rescue you.” The sound of a gun cocking let the OR staff know that they weren’t alone.

The gangster was confused. “Who’s your fiance?”
Tony rolled his eyes but never let his gun waver even a fraction. “The doc whose life you threatened to end. You should know I’m a Federal Agent and I will not hesitate to put you down.”

The gangster was hesitating but Owen knew this would need to be resolved quickly or the patient’s life would be gone. “He’s marine trained too.”

Tony nodded in confirmation. “So what’s it going to be, because the way I see it you have five seconds before we get to see just how talented these surgeons are in their attempt to put you back together.”

“You won’t shoot me.”

Tony stared solemnly. “5, 4, 3, 2 ...”

The gangster didn’t want to risk it. His hands flipped out into an ‘I surrender’ gesture. Tony advanced forward, still with his gun trained on the guy. He needed someone to back him up. “Owen, can the other Doc take over?”

Derek had nodded even as he let his adrenaline calm from the excitement. He was too experienced to cut with the adrenaline coursing.

The staff watched as the newest potential surgeon took the handcuffs from his fiance.

Tony just reminded the gangster wannabe. “You so much as scratch him and I will end you, remember.”

It was more chilling for how calmly the line was delivered. Owen cuffed the reluctantly cooperative man. “Here you go.”

“Thanks, Darlin, now you go back to cutting and I’ll see that this scumbag meets justice.”

Tony knew the environment wasn’t perfectly sterile which was less than ideal. However the patient now had a fighting chance rather than a bullet in his heart. Owen had operated in worse and come out on top.

~*~

Owen had made it back to the hotel nearly twenty four hours after the gun incident. He'd been involved in saving the patients life and knew that Tony had been swept into a meeting with the mayor after his debrief re the incident. What he really wanted to do was collapse asleep but Tony was sitting on the bed. He was so tempting that he would fight exhaustion.

Tony had to ask a question. “Do you want this?”

Owen bit his lip. “Honestly, yes. I could do some groundbreaking work here. What did the Mayor ask to see you for?”

Tony snorted because he still couldn’t quite believe it. “Did I want a job as the Assistant Chief who was responsible for Homeland/Special ops has just taken a promotion.”

Owen pulled him close and kissed him thoroughly. “Have I told you I love you today?”

Tony answered his kisses, “No, remind me. You should do that every day from now on.”
Owen was more than happy to work on that promise - he was sure Seattle would be good for the couple.
Benoit had kidnapped the agent on his way home. He’d done it knowing it would upset Jenny Shepard. She wanted to come at him and his spies had told him that much. She should be smarter if she wanted to succeed. Or, at least keep better track of her agents.

The agent had been more aware of his surroundings than most but he’d sent his best. He’d been knocked unconscious by a dart before he could do any serious damage to his team. Although given how many weapons he’d pulled off the agent - he wouldn’t have needed long and it now seemed a prudent precaution. His security advisor had suggested it was overkill.

As Benoit perused the weapons taken off him - he was starting to think it was just enough. Kort had whistled at some of the blades, and where he’d managed to hide them in plain sight.

“You’re sure he knows?” Benoit asked Kort.

Kort nodded his head. “He’s the go-to guy when you need something done.”

Tony groaned deciding that he may as well stop faking unconsciousness. He wouldn’t learn anything unless they started the interrogation. “What the hell?”

Trent smirked at the lack of fear. Gibbs had picked right with this one at least. “My employer wants to ask you a few questions.”

“Thanks for leaving my boxers on.” Was all DiNozzo said as a reply. It was like he didn’t care.

“Why? Worried for your virtue?” Kort asked, hoping to catch him off-guard with the needling.

Tony’s smirk was glacial. “Nah, just didn’t want to make you feel insignificant.” He braced for the smack and didn’t mind it. It was worth it.

“I can’t answer questions if you break my jaw now, can I?” Tony said with a wicked smirk.

It was like the little psycho was enjoying this. Kort was wondering where the hell Gibbs had found his little protege.

Benoit was snarling, not in the mood to play games. “What does your Director want with me?”

Tony shrugged, looking at ease. “How the fuck should I know? I have enough trying to deal with the cretinous mutinous duo I’ve been left to deal with.”

Kort tilted his head to the side. “You don’t rate McGee and David?”
Tony snorted. “They’re okay but I know how to use a computer and don’t need twenty ways to kill you with a paperclip ... I have a gun and a knife. What more do I need?”

What he didn’t say was he also had a terribly possessive, excellent lover who he was waiting on. Sadly, Tony had to keep them on their toes until night fell. Well, *challenge accepted.*

Benoit seemed vexed by his response. “She hasn’t approached you for anything extra?”

Tony chuckled darkly like there was a joke but only he knew the punchline. “You have no clue, do you?”

Benoit and Kort shared a look. This was not going how they expected and withdrew from their makeshift cell. They needed more information if they were going to be successful. It was more than obvious to them that they were missing something critical.

~*~

Tony figured he’d be monitored and knew there was no way he’d get out of here on his own. When he did he was going back to NCIS and intended to bring his boss’ world to its knees. He was stuck nearly naked in cuffs, and not for fun like with Eric.

The thing was, unlike so many who’d grown fearful about the vampire, Tony hadn’t. He’d treated the reveal with a shrug. He treated his vampire friends like any other of his friends, he was just mindful of their extreme sun allergy.

Eric had been unexpected. He’d been in New Orleans for a case when he’d been approached by the hottest blonde he’d ever seen. The man was the living (or maybe not) embodiment of sex. Tony wanted to see just how much fun they could have.

In the moment, with his passion running high, he’d even let Eric share his blood. He’d known there was a risk of a blood bond but assumed there would need to be intimacy for such a thing to grow.

It was true to a certain extent. They’d started with a night of passion but Eric had continued to pursue him. Tony was courted in the old-fashioned way that Vikings had encouraged. Tony had thought it cool even if his work colleagues had freaked. He didn’t really give a shit about what they thought anyway.

It had been two years ago and long distance wasn’t so difficult when your other half could fly all on his own. After the plague they’d got serious, they’d bonded to the point where whilst Tony remained human - their life forces were linked. It was the other reason why he needed to stay alive - he had a duty to his bonded to stay alive.

Eric would so take advantage of this situation and Tony would let him. Tony spent the time he was kept chained with his fantasies. There was no harm in passing the time and knew his lover had already got the message that he needed an extraction. Eric would make his way to him as soon as he could.

Tony shivered at just the memory of what he and Eric had gotten up to last night. It meant he’d only had three hours sleep but it had been totally worth it.

~*~

Tony had felt the sun go down and started to relax. The snick of the door opening meant he was
soon going to be enduring the shitty hospitality of Benoit.

“So why does Jenny hate you?” Tony asked trying to gain some context to the situation.

Benoit sneered. “You’d have thought she would have started sleeping with the employees.”

Kort shrugged as it wasn’t his problem. He didn’t judge - just not on his dime. “She likes to use men up, it’s in her profile.”

Tony wrinkled his nose. “Hey, I have taste thank you very much.”

“You mean you wouldn’t sleep with a mark?” Kort asked because he’d read the full file for DiNozzo and the man impressed him. He’d have preferred the boss make an alternate strategy - like bring him into the business.

Tony had a wicked grin. “You mean would I lie back and think of NCIS?”

Kort nodded. “Curious minds.”

“Me thinks you’re a pervert and would get a shock or two if you knew my romantic history.” DiNozzo replied.

Benoit snorted. “She is stalking me and I will not be ignored.”

Tony had to snark back - it was too golden. “Have you thought about complaining to the FBI? They’d probably need to know if the concern is an agency Director. I mean it might be awkward considering you’re an arms dealer but Kort will lend you a sliver of legitimacy for your complaint.”

Kort snickered. “I am sure it will go down like a lead balloon.”

Tony sighed wistfully. “Well, I tried. Look - Jenny might have a hard-on for you but I had nothing to do with it. She also wouldn’t include me in the plans because my bonded would kick my ass to and from Valhalla for such a stunt.”

Kort froze. The use of the word bonded was used for vampire-human relations. His use of the Viking word suggested that the vampire in question had been alive for many years - and thus very powerful. He cursed. “Where is he?”

Tony smirked at the doorbell. “There.”

All that could be heard was carnage. Tony didn’t feel guilty because every single bastard on Benoit’s security team had enough weaponry to take over a small country and they were scum sucking terrorists. He would have preferred to arrest them but he could hardly fault Eric for acting true to his nature.

Benoit pointed a gun at Tony. Tony sighed. “How droll. You think your reactions are faster than a vampire’s?”

Kort face-palmed. “Boss, we leave and leave now. The Vampire can kill us and the law won’t convict him if they’ve bonded.”

Tony looked smug as he informed them. “Nine months today.”
The carnage was slowing so Tony guessed he’d managed to dispatch the team. Benoit paled seeing the massive Nordic vampire standing in front of him.

Eric still looked hot even with the blood across his white shirt. “Hey, lover. I thought I was the only one who could tie you up.”

Tony smirked. “You know I will do it for you whenever you ask. Although I prefer if we lose the audience.”

Kort had his hands up in mock surrender. “Look, Sir. We had a misunderstanding. We had no idea he was your bonded and would not have intruded if we had known.”

Tony didn’t know he could be this entertained. Eric had Trent Kort being uber polite, practically begging him to behave. If his hands weren’t cuffed to his back - he’d want popcorn.

Eric spoke low and menacing. “So I should let you go?”

“I am sure once all tempers have cooled that you can message my boss and negotiate reparations that you’re happy with.” Kort tried to persuade him.

“I have money but if I just let him go with no action, then I will look weak.”

Kort reasoned. “You’ve just killed his entire staff, surely that could be your reaction?”

It made sense and Eric looked at Tony because this affected him too. Tony answered him, looking directly into his eyes.

“I just want you to take me back to our apartment and show me why I like cuffs.” Tony answered, biting his lip. He wasn’t shy about sex but the intimacy was for them alone.

~*~

Eric was a planner though. He took his bonded back to their apartment and when Tony was in a sated sleep - he slipped back out into the city lights. He followed the scent of his bonded’s kidnapper. The two men had planned to harm his Tony for no other reasons than they could. He could appreciate the hedonistic tendency but not with his lover. Tony was special and would not be allowed to come to any harm.

He slipped back into bed.

Tony whispered. “Will we find anything?”

Eric snorted. “They tried to harm you.”

Tony rolled over so his arm was slung over his lover. “Sorry. Love you.”

Eric had been so sure that he didn’t understand that word before he’d met Tony. He’d switched off his feelings, preferring to revel in life instead. It had worked for a millennia and then Tony had raced into Fangtasia and he hadn’t looked back. He’d not expected to find his true equal partner in a human but that was what Anthony DiNozzo Junior was and he’d bite anyone who tried to argue.
The One Likeable Feeb (Stiles Stilinski)

Chapter Notes

Warning: Timeline and canon are seriously at my whim here.

Oh, and in honour of every time, I did this for a Teen Wolf story ...

Tags: Stiles pushed out of pack, BAMF Stiles, BAMF Tony, Not Scott kind, Spark Stiles

The One Likeable Feeb

Tony didn’t know how he’d ended up with Stiles but he wouldn’t change a thing. They’d met at some cross-federal training and after having gone through the course at the same time the doe-eyed bastard had ensnared him with his wit and genius. He’d sworn to himself that he would keep his bisexual tendencies to himself having experienced some less than favourable experiences in his first city district.

There was something about Stiles though that made him brave. He wanted to know everything about the younger man but was willing to wait for the skittish trainee. He’d wondered if it was in reaction to Wendy and that whole incident but it wasn’t.

Stiles had been so sure he’d not be able to say his name - which was what he’d staked accepting their first date on. Tony had gone down the Polish bakery, explained his conundrum. The baker had laughed at Tony’s lovelorn issue, tutored him in the pronunciation and even threw in a few Polish pastries to sweeten the deal.

Stiles had been astounded when the cute naval agent came back to him with his favourite sweet pastry and presented it with a flourish and said his real name correctly. He’d taken the pastry and kissed the hot guy senseless. There was only so much temptation Stiles could resist and over time Stiles found out, much to his surprise, that this wasn’t a fling. A day became a week, that became a month and was now nearing a year.

There were times though when Stiles wondered if dating a Federal Agent was a smart thing to do. Okay, granted, he was an FBI agent too and Tony was hot like fire burning, intelligent and fun loving. He made Stiles feel safe and like he could do and explore things without being branded weird.

Tony might not have been as furry or chiselled as Derek but he was just as handsome and Stiles did have to wonder how he managed to attract such types.

The only thing that had yet to come up in a discussion for the couple was there growing up period. They knew obviously that the other person had not grown fully formed from Fed training. It just seemed like they understood it was painful and tacitly decided that they wouldn’t speak about it.

~*~
Fast forward to today and this is why it is a problem. Stiles had opened the door to their apartment and been attacked from behind. He rolled with the blow to face his attacker and wanted to groan because he had seriously shitty luck.

“Oh, look, the ickle wolf-lover is playing at being a Feeb!” Goon Hunter One shouted as he threw a punch.

Stiles took the insult for what it was - and threw the bastard through a table as he got close enough to use the cop move. It was vicious perhaps, but satisfying and necessary. Luckily - he and Tony had discussed throwing away that particular table. He couldn’t resist winding up the rogue hunters by playing clueless. “Tony is a Navy cop, not a wolf, you jackass.”

“Oh, you were one. Once one, always one - that’s what I say.” Goon hunter spouted like some twisted wisdom.

Stiles dearly wished he could shoot the bastards, sadly, it wouldn’t end well. There was no room to manoeuvre so it was going to have to be a good old fashioned fist fight.

Stiles wasn’t going to go down without a fight. What he didn’t understand was why they had come after him now? He was living in DC, for crying out loud. He was so far away from Beacon Hills and his cases were delightfully mundane. He’d had his fill of Scooby Doo growing up and when the pack pushed him away as being too breakable, he left and didn’t look back.

“You screwed over Gerard Argent. We’re returning the favour.”

Stiles lost it and saw red. That disgusting bastard had attacked him when he was strung up at sixteen, all so he could be a message. Stiles had taken the beating and not told a soul. He was no one’s message.

What he hadn’t accounted for was Tony coming home. Tony hadn’t stopped to ask questions. He’d seen two men attacking his fiance and put a bullet in both of them. He’d gone for the legs because you don’t get answers from the dead. It was one of the things he’d trained into Gibbs.

“Please give me a reason.”

Stiles prayed that he managed to keep his relationship past this night. If Gerard Argent was responsible for him losing something else in his life, he was going to learn Necromancy just so he could have his revenge. It might take him a while but he was willing to put in the hard work.

The two hunters glared. “You’re going back to Beacon Hills to help the wolves. We can’t let you help the mongrels survive.”

Tony glared at Stiles guessing there was something here he should know. He rolled with it for now, not willing to give the perps an avenue to exploit. “Well, you know. He didn’t mention that to me. I don’t see a badge like we have. You know, the one that gives you the right to pursue justice.”

Goon Two, as Stiles had mentally christened him, responded. “We remove the scourge of the planet to keep even you safe.”

Tony looked at the goons like they were seriously warped. “And who might that be?”

“Werewolves.”
Stiles interjected because the mention of Beacon Hills and werewolves had his pulse racing. He might not have left on good terms with Scott but his Dad still lived there. “Why the hell would I go there? I am not on good terms with the McCall pack.”

There, he said it.

Tony sighed because he’d just had indirect confirmation that the supernatural was real. “Yeah, it’s not like we don’t have enough work in DC.”

“They need a spark or so goes the rumour.” Goon Two replied, hissing as his wound started to ache and sting now his initial adrenaline had worn off.

Stiles wanted to rant and vent about his feelings. He only ever seemed to be good enough for Scott when his ex-best friend wanted something. He didn’t bother, though, as it would serve no purpose. “I’m an FBI agent, not someone they call on when they please. I wouldn’t have even known something was going on without your hospitality call.”

Tony looked pissed. “They can pay for the damage to the apartment.”

“You shot us! We need medical attention.”

Tony smiled meanly. “I will call it in. Soon. I have sound-proofing so don’t get hopeful of the neighbours calling in it. What do you think the sentence will be for attempting to kill an FBI agent?”

Stiles shrugged. “Depends on the judge for me but they all adore you. You always make sure the cases are airtight.”

“He threw me through the table and you expect us to pay for it?!?!?”

Tony kind of wondered what planet they were living on but got the sense they were serious nutcases, with extreme bigoted views. “Yeah, and you know what? I didn’t like the damn table but I love him so I’m kind of pissed right now.”

Stiles didn’t realise he’d been holding his breath until Tony said that because it helped ease a few of his fears. “They’re freaks whose moral compasses have been twisted so badly they think up is down and down is up.”

Tony rolled his eyes because he’d not met a supernatural version. “Hey Fornell, I need a clean up at my apartment. As long as Sacks isn’t on duty. I need it to be discrete.”

Tony didn’t respond to what was said. “I don’t care what people think of me, but you know Stiles is one of the only Feeb’s I like. I don’t want him to have a hard time.”

There was a pause and then Tony cackled. “Please, he’d thrown one assailant through a table but they still insisted on attacking Agent Stilinski. I didn’t want them to succeed so shot both of them in the leg.”

~*~

It had taken hours for Fornell to come and drag away their assailants. Tony and Stiles had told them a truth that avoided any mentioning of the supernatural.

Tony had made it clear they’d keep their cellphones on but the two perps had intimated that Stiles’
father was at risk.

Stiles couldn’t believe he was about to say this because, damn it, he swore he’d never go back but there was no way he was leaving his Dad alone if the pack had pissed off the Fae.

“It’s a good job that you love me as we need to go to Beacon Hills. You’re the only one I want backing me up.”

Tony chuckled. “Not even werewolves can tear me away but just how much of a wizard are you?”

Stiles threw a pillow at him. “Those bitches need a wand ... I just need to think it.”

“Well, you have all the way to Beacon Hills to explain.”

“Fornell cleared it?” Stiles was surprised because all things considered they should be staying in town whilst this was investigated.

Tony shrugged. “I was persuasive.”

~*~

Stiles was grateful for Tony paying for first class. It turns out a red eye was empty so they got lucky. and Stiles spent the flight explaining.

“I don’t want to be back here.”

Tony kept up skin contact. “Why? You know I will never judge”

Stiles did know that and it was the reason he could speak out. “I was the human, quick-witted but breakable human. I was useful but then put back in box. Things went down and they decided I needed to get out of Beacon Hills for my own good. Only it wasn’t so much my choice as a high-handed, well meaning attempt that I wanted agency in.”

Tony pulled him fully onto his lap. “I can’t say I’m totally sorry. And you’re a badass FBI agent now. In fact, don’t tell Fornell but you’re my favourite Feeb.”

Stiles kissed him softly. “I better be.”

Tony returned the kiss. “I don’t look ridiculous in front of bakers for anyone.” He reminded Stiles, lighten the mood with a reminder of how they met.

Stiles had to smile. “Can you remind me of that if I get sucked in?”

“Always.” Tony promised.

~*~

It turns out that Stiles’ unique power was needed. He did it - not for the pack but for his father. Scott tried to welcome him back but Stiles saw Tony waiting at the door and he knew where he needed to go.

*Lydia’s acerbic voice was the last thing he heard as he left her and his father. “Oh honey, that man is rich and hot like fire burning. He also looks at Stiles like he hangs the moon - your little puppy trick just can’t compare.*
Making Magic (Sheriff Stilinski 2)

Tony closed the door and was relieved to let his glamour drop. The ability to maintain a sickly pallor was draining him. He also knew enemies were swirling around so he had no intention of being drained at the current time.

How the hell Gibbs managed to attract the nut jobs he didn’t know but one was gunning straight for him. He was half-Fae through his mother’s side. It turns out they were not blue-blood British but rather silver-blooded royalty. He was stuck on medical leave and couldn’t exactly return too quickly or it would raise suspicion.

Tony respected the law but he also understood implicitly that the supernatural was like the movie Fight Club with Brad Pitt in. You don’t talk about flight club unless you are part of it.

“Hello, darling.”

Tony jumped in surprise which was rare but he still greeted his impromptu guest. “Hello, Nana. You look stunning as usual. What brings you to the mortal plane?”

She smiled sweetly. “Why, to see my favourite grandson, of course. You really should pop in and see me more often.”

Tony didn’t roll his eyes because Gibbs had nothing on his Grandmother. She was the Queen Mab of folklore, only they’d probably underplayed how vicious she could be when the mood took her. “You agreed I should have a mortal life first.”

She hadn’t so much as said it but it was one of the things Tony had argued if he was going to take on the role of Crown Prince that should have been his mother’s role. “You did but I need a favour and your mundane job is giving you a break.”

Tony snorted at that simplification. “I had the human plague, grandmother. I am not supposed to bounce back from it, hence the stupid glamour.”

She had a wicked grin. It was nice to hear the grandkids growing up right even if they insisted on playing mortal games. “Your power to manipulate your surroundings hasn’t faded, Tonio.”

“Nor will it.” He assured her. It was so vital if he was to be successful at his job. Okay, so unless he got unlucky the bad guys didn’t tend to have iron weapons. Therefore, he wouldn’t die but it still stung like a bitch and he had to slow his healing to avoid suspicion. That sucked too.

“So where and why, exactly, do I have to go?” Tony asked, knowing that he would end up going anyway.

“Beacon Hills. A cousin of yours is coming into his powers and threats are circling him. I figure I send you or the Wild Hunt.”

Tony shivered because sending the Wild Hunt was the supernatural equivalent of a nuclear bomb. They could potentially raze the town and everyone in it if it suited their mood and they wouldn’t feel bad about it. “Okay, calm down. Who is it?”

“Claudine’s little one.”
Tony snorted because Claudine was his Nana’s niece who had fallen in love with a mortal man and renounced her heritage. Sadly, it had not been an epic love story but rather a tragedy. They had ten good years before her lack of magic usage had ultimately destroyed her body. Her death had been felt acutely in the Fae realm. “So little Myc’ is awakening.”

She grinned. “Oh yes, and he is one of us. The only trouble is there is a Druid there who is on my hit list. He is putting Myc’ in the path of a Nogitsune and that just pisses me off. I am trusting you to express my displeasure.”

Stunned, Tony sat back in his chair. “Wow, how fucking stupid do you have to be?”

“Oh there is nothing stupid about the man, he walks and breathes deception. He has manipulated the chess pieces for years. I only started to monitor him after Claudine’s fading. If he had anything to do with that I expect nothing left that even a talented necromancer could work with.”

She said it calmly but you could see ice crystals in her eyes. She was pissed and that never ended well. To be fair, Tony was feeling pretty homicidal at the idea that someone had manipulated one of their own. “I’m on my way - consider your will done.”

~*~

Tony entered Beacon Hills and as soon as he saw the Welcome to Beacon Hills sign he started to stretch his magical senses. He very rarely did it in DC but there was no way he was getting caught unaware in such a volatile situation.

He could sense the local puppies. Huh. That was a menagerie of a pack. Oh, and interestingly enough, just on the outskirts of the town, he could sense a group of Alphas. There was a threat but it wasn’t the one his grandmother mentioned. He expanded his senses further to get a feel for the land and shivered - someone had harmed a Nemeton. The bastards had cut it down. No wonder a Nogitsune was hiding under it.

The office of Sheriff was close. He figured he might as well stop and introduce himself to Myc’s father. He pulled into the carpark and headed into the station. “Hi, I’m looking for the Sheriff.”

He was regarded with suspicion but he smiled and showed his badge. “Special Agent Anthony DiNozzo. NCIS.”

“I didn’t think Harris warranted an NCIS agent.” The front desk woman commented, trying to see what Tony’s angle was about.

Tony shrugged, not denying or confirming the woman’s suspicion. “You know how it is, ma’am.”

She sighed because in recent months they had not had a good experience with Federal Agents but it was up to the Sheriff. “Sheriff, you have a visitor.”

Noah got up to shake his hand and frowned. “How can I help you?”

Tony shook his head. “You can’t. I’m here to help you, at least I hope I can.”

“You know anything about murders?” The man checked because if he didn’t, there wasn’t much help he could give him.

Tony would have smirked but it was an inappropriate moment considering the conversation.
“Detective in three states and an investigator for NCIS. I came looking for a cousin of mine but I am happy to help.” It was true too, he couldn’t resist a good mystery. He suspected that the murders would be more supernatural in origin and thus not so easy for the human sheriff to solve no matter how good he was at his job.

“You’re a relative of Claudia’s, aren’t you?” The Sheriff asked him astutely. This new guy seemed to have the same aura as his late wife.

Tony saw no reason to lie. “Distant cousin but my grandmother asked me to check on him and I am powerless to resist a request from my matriarch.” Well, Queen but there was no point to excite people for no reason.

“Yeah, my mother is still fierce.” Noah agreed. He had so many questions he wasn’t sure where to begin. He was grateful for the man giving him a minute to process what he’d already figured out.

Tony smiled in agreement and it was easy to relax with this guy. He was a good Sheriff and Tony could see how he’d work well here. It seemed he’d figured out what he wanted to say as he asked. “Can you tell me what foolhardy crap is going on in my town?”

Tony nodded but felt he should warn the man. “I can but you might not like what you hear.”

“We rarely do but tell me anyway.” Noah remarked as he stood up. “Just let me close the door and you can bring me up to speed. I am sick of playing defence.”

Tony had to admire his strength of character. He’d practically told the man he wasn’t going to like what he was going to hear and yet his only request was to close the door so as to let them have some privacy. He’d hear what was going on and then choose how or if he was going to be breaking it to his rookie deputies.

“So how many cases would you have been able to solve if you’d known the supernatural was real?” Tony asked boldly. He figured the man was smart and working in hypotheticals was as good a start as any.

“There have been certain spikes on a full moon but that is not usual in certain areas.” The Sheriff replied pointedly.

Tony knew that sometimes ripping the band-aid off was easier. He had his mortal visage and his Fae visage. His Fae appearance was much like he was human one, only he literally shone with a silver tint and his eyes took on an emerald green glow. He wasn’t quite on a Twilight level but definitely some sparkle. “I am going to drop a standard glamour to give you an idea of just what magic can do and why you need to be prepared.”

Noah sucked in a breath because the man was handsome before but now he was stunning. He felt a punch in his gut that he hadn’t felt in a long time. “I would never think someone would use magic to make themselves uglier. I take it you’re Fae?” The Sheriff could swear he saw an imprint of wings but he couldn’t be certain. His mind was already reeling with the revelations. Still this had more important implications - Stiles

Tony nodded. “Yes, and so is your son. He is part of the bloodline and he is waking up. I need your help to guide him.”

“So my Claudia was Fae too?” Noah had to ask, seeking to understand everything.
Tony didn’t see the point in denying the truth. “She made a choice to fall in love with you and it was respected.”

His mind was racing. “She never used magic at all in front of me.”

Tony sighed because this was going to suck but he knew a lie, even one of omission, would jeopardize their chance to work together. “She made a choice and it was a bad one. She wasn’t bound but she choose to live fully as a mortal and her body couldn’t handle that.”

The man looked up grief-stricken for a moment. “Why would she do that?”

Tony touched his hand out of sympathy. “The only one who could answer that was your wife, Sheriff.”

“Noah. If you’re about to act as my son’s Yoda. You should call me Noah. Now why did you need my help? I’m a man with a gun, something you also have.”

Tony smirked because that was true. Still - power in areas still played a part even within mortal realms. “Your power here is more recognised and your son’s friends are in a lot of trouble. I can act but it might cause tensions. I’d rather have your permission than beg forgiveness. If I am going to help Stiles then you need to trust me.”

Noah heard only the part where Tony had said his son was in danger and he was grabbing his coat and keys. He would settle his questions regarding the supernatural once Stiles was safe. “You talk and I’ll drive.”

Tony replaced his glamour as the door opened and followed Noah to the Sheriff’s cruiser. Looked like he was going to see more of the town than he planned.

Tony found himself in the passenger seat giving a crash course on wolves and their hierarchies and how Stiles might have ended up running with them.

Noah shook his head. He knew exactly who was in the pack. He also knew Stiles had kept this from him. He just didn’t know if it was to protect the identity of the kids or to protect him. “I’m going to be having a long chat with my son.” Noah said firmly.

Tony shivered, he was powerful in his own right and he didn’t feel like crossing Noah. “Yikes. I can find a hotel while you do that.”

Noah shook his head. It didn’t make much sense to him but he wanted Tony as close as possible to them. Plus, there was the part where he wasn’t going to make a man pay to help him. “If you’re going to be helping Stiles, you should stay with us while you’re here.”

“Are you sure?” Tony asked. “It’s your home. You have a right to a refuge that’s just for your son and yourself. As you can guess, homes have a power to them.”

Noah chuckled darkly but was working on the find-the-humour-in-a-situation-so-you-don’t-go-mad principle. “I have no idea what is going on right now. I’ve just got my instincts which say I should trust you - besides, I welcome more eyes on my kid. I guess with your magic he won’t be able to run rings around you like he can my deputies.”

Tony chuckled at that reasoning. It was sound and devious, impressive for the sheriff. Damn it. It
made him more attractive. Tony was so glad that the man wasn’t a werewolf as he’d have smelled his arousal and that would be awkward. The man was clearly still in love with Claudine despite her fading away. He could respect that type of loyalty.

He didn’t say anything about his inner turmoil. “I’ll help where I can. Listen - at the moment I’m on medical leave and once that runs out I’ll use my unused leave time. I won’t leave until Stiles is aware of his powers and can control them.” For Tony to promise that as a Fae was as good as a fully binding written contract signed in triplicate.

Noah couldn’t help but be relieved to hear it. “Thank you. I’m not sure how I will ever be able to repay you.”

Tony shook his head. “The kid is family and you’ll find that we’re bloodthirsty in our protection. Stick with me. I’m about to insult a whole group of wolves with more power than sense. I should remind you that I do have the power to back up my sass so try not to freak out.”

~*~

Stiles knew he was in trouble - the Alpha pack was bearing down on his friends, his pack. They were hopelessly outmatched and not even his wit could get them out of this. He needed a miracle or something.

“You know, you mongrels aren’t very smart.”

Stiles heart stopped for like a full minute. Or at least that is how it felt to him. His Dad was here. There was about to be a supernatural battle and his Dad was there! He also seemed to know what was going on and there was a cute guy standing next to him in a Zegna suit. He didn’t seem freaked by the fur. He also felt powerful in a way that had Stiles freaked out. He didn’t understand why the others couldn’t sense it - if they had they wouldn’t be growling at him.

The man spoke once more and it was clear he was goading the Alpha pack. “Do you know what I am oh, Alpha of Alpha?”

“A Fairy.” Deucalion sneered.

Cute guy snorted and Stiles noted how close he was standing to his Dad. He seemed to know his Dad and he really should concentrate on what was being said. “No, I’m Fae and not the fluffy court either. You’re trespassing and about to harm the pack of the Queen’s favoured nephew. Do you think that is smart?”

“You’re Winter Court? An UnSeelie?” The other Alpha started to act more cautiously.

Tony flecked dust off his collar. “Crown Prince and let me tell you something, Deucalion. My Queen is pissed with you. So much so she told me to come and sort it or she’d set the Wild Hunt loose.”

“We had no idea this was so, we believed him a Spark.” He replied, and it was obvious to all that he was considering all the angles.

Tony smirked but it lacked warmth and his skin started to glow silver. It never hurt to show a bit of power. “That is because we didn’t want you to know. Plus, you really should seek better advice than the just skirting the line between Druid and something else.” Tony said no more there as he had a mission and he was okay with that being a full-on vendetta if needed. He wouldn’t tip off the
others by using the word Darach yet.

Stiles smiled in victory because he’d been complaining about Deaton for ages but no one was listening to him. Scott was frowning and Peter and Derek had a dawning look of understanding.

Deucalion, who had been such a nightmare for the Hale pack, was now weary as fuck of their new arrival. Peter didn’t care who he was - he was grateful. He listened as the so-called Demon Wolf and Alpha of Alphas desperately tried to backtrack and keep his life.

“We will, of course, withdraw as clearly the Pack is not without support.” Deucalion offered.

The man shook his head. “No, it’s not and by the way, I will be around for quite a while as I have interests in town.”

The pack withdrew quickly. Tony smirked. “Right now, I just have to find the demented Darach and purify that tree. It’s making my skin crawl.”

The would-be emissary creeped out of the shadow. “Who might you be exactly?”

“Stiles’ cousin. I did just announce that, didn’t I?”

Noah snorted. “You did.”

Tony shrugged, ignoring the man. He wanted to further investigate him before he dealt out justice there. “Now, puppies, you’re all safe even from the zombie one and the glaring one.”

Stiles was in tears of laughter. This was epic. “Oh wow, so you need to teach me everything and you shut creeperwolf and zombiewolf up. You have to teach me your ways.”

Tony smiled fondly at the excitable teen. “Of course I will and your ADHD should lessen once your body starts to adapt.”

The Sheriff, who’d been a silent sentinel up to this point, spoke up. “Tony and I will be having a discussion with my son in private at my home. Tomorrow though, I expect all of you for dinner.”

Peter shuddered as that sounded disgustingly domestic. The Sheriff cut him off before he could even issue a refusal. “All of you - no refusals.”

The werewolves just nodded one by one and scuttled away. The only three left were the Stilinski’s and Tony.

“So who’s your friend, Dad?” Stiles asked tentatively. He was still impressed with the fact the man had made the Alpha Pack disappear with just words.

“Agent Tony DiNozzo and a cousin of your mother’s.”

Tony had to smirk at that as it was true. He kept his name shortened deliberately as it stopped people using his pure name.

Noah could tell his son was nervous. “Okay kiddo, listen. I already thought you were special and now we just know how.”

Stiles threw his arms around his Dad. “I am so sorry. I didn’t know what to say. It wasn’t my secret to tell. Then it got dangerous and I just couldn’t lose you like Mom.”
Tony watched as the Sheriff hugged his son close. It was a touching scene and it felt healing in a way that the pair needed. He stayed silent and watchful.

“Meh, We’re Stilinski’s. You’re giving me a crash course over the weekend and I want some silver bullets.”

Tony and Stiles smiled. “Wolfsbane. Silver is a myth borne of a stupid translator.”

Noah shrugged it off. As long as he could protect his son and the people of this town he didn’t care what it was that did the job.

Tony liked the Sheriff, a lot. His infatuation was growing with every second. He was steadfast and loyal and liked to shoot straight from the hip. He still grieved for Claudine but Tony could be patient and play the long game, especially if the pay-off was spectacular.

_He just wasn’t sure how his grandmother would take the news of his potential mate._
Derek was not a man used to failure. He’d succeeded at Medical School and had been top of his class. He’d done well in training and was now the Head of Neurology at Mt Sinai. Life was good. He’d even managed to succeed in his personal life. A balance that so many surgeons had failed to find in their lives.

Or so he thought.

No. Not a failure. This was a betrayal. He watched as his best friend, the man he thought of as a brother, kissed and did a hell of a lot more with his wife. His wife.

The two were frozen, staring at him. He knew they’d be unable to move for anatomical reasons.

“Real classy, Mark.”

Addison shouted. “Derek.”

“I’m leaving and you better not find me until I am ready.” Derek said coldly but figured he shouldn’t have to be polite in the face of adultery. She could give him that much, he thought. He didn’t stop to grab anything more than his wallet and his coat.

~*~

Tony was in New York drinking away his sorrows. His team had cut his radio and all he could feel right now was a betrayal. He knew Gibbs would downplay it and Vance would probably feel they were justified in doing it! The thought had been sobering and after his voice had returned his first speech had been to request leave time. He could do a lot with six weeks, like figure out what he wanted in his future.

He was sitting in LaGuardia Airport trying to decide what to do next. The guy sat next to him, looked like a drowned rat and was drinking more than he was. He felt for the guy as he was twirling his wedding ring around on the table.

“Rough day?” Tony found himself asking.

The man snorted. “Started off great. Proved some groundbreaking research in neurology. Then the day went to shit.”

Tony raised his glass. “That’s funny. Mine too.”

“Did your best-friend sleep with your wife?” Derek asked, somehow getting competitive about who had the worst day.

“Nope, two co-workers who I thought of as family did something that could have seen me dead and no one gives a shit.” He sighed. “It was a shitty realisation so here I am, nursing a drink while I figure out what to do while on leave.”

“I just want to get out of here, go to the other side of the country preferably.” The man answered him.

Tony knew that running away didn’t solve a damn thing but it did provide space to think. So why
not? Tony looked at the departures gate and impulsively said. “Well, the next flight pacific side is Seattle. Shall we?”

“You’d go with me?”

Tony nodded, liking this plan more and more even if it was a little crazy. He grinned. “Yeah. We’re hot and miserable and you know what they say - misery loves company.”

~*~

Derek and Tony landed in Seattle to the sun shining down on them. Derek looked at Tony and smirked. “Huh! It’s never sunny here.”

“Take it as an omen. Come on, Dr Shepherd, you were going to show me around.”

Derek did just that and like his companion, he didn’t feel like breaking away from his new friend. It wasn’t said aloud but there seemed to be an implicit understanding. Derek showed him the river area and Tony smelled some good food.

“Let’s go there.” He said eagerly.

Derek was amused. “Why?”

“That smells like good pasta. Trust me - it’s in my blood.”

Derek shrugged and, feeling lighter than he had since he’d returned home, agreed. “So I need a distraction.”

“You’re a workaholic like me, huh?” Tony said with no judgement like Derek would have seen from Addison.

“Guilty.”

Tony sipped on his white wine. “So - with the wife’s affair. Do you want to stay in New York or seek a new adventure here or elsewhere?”

Derek thought about it. He didn’t bite the guy’s head off because how could he? He’d kept him company followed him across the country so he didn’t do something dumb. He gave the question honest thinking time as it was the crux of the whole thing.

“The thought of going back to New York and her makes me sick.” Derek answered vehemently. “I keep seeing them in my bed.”

Tony grimaced because that was just so cliched and he felt for Derek. “Look. You’re a top-class surgeon and you can go anywhere. What are the hospitals like here?”

Derek really thought about it. “I know the Chief of Surgery here. He’d give me a job. It’s top five but would need work to raise it to challenge the top two.”

Tony tilted his head to the side. “Sounds like a good challenge to distract you if you ask me.”

Derek knew that whenever he booked into a hotel he’d be looking up his old mentor. He wanted to be there and listen to his new friend and hope to help him just like he had Derek. “And what will be a distraction for you?”
Tony sighed and shrugged. “I need to decide if I can stay at NCIS before I make any decisions.”

“And what has kept you there?”

Tony chuckled darkly. “Misplaced loyalty, it seems.”

Derek frowned not liking the idea of anyone using his new friend. “Do you have any need to stay?”

Tony shook his head. “No. I have options and standing invites from most of the alphabets.”

It dawned on him then what had gone wrong. He’d allowed himself to become the mask. It had meant to be just a way to let the younger agents relax but any time he’d tried to break free of it he’d get shot down.

A new start might be needed for both of them. If he was going to stay in Seattle, and here was as good as place as any to settle, he guessed he was calling Fornell.

~*~

Tony and Derek had settled in a big suite at the Four Seasons. As they’d both discovered they were rich - they could afford it and didn’t feel like splitting up. They were getting things in order. Derek came back from the hospital to see Tony sitting on his bed a little in shock. He was a doctor he recognised the signs by now.

“You okay?”

“I spoke to the Deputy Director of the FBI today.”

Derek wasn’t understanding the shock factor there but rolled with it. “Okay. And?”

“He made me Agent in Charge.”

“It’s about time you have your own team.” Derek said fiercely.

Tony shook his head. “Not team, whole office.”

Ah. Derek got the shock and he’d love to meet Tony’s former team and lash out at them. “That is excellent news and you deserve it. Come on, let’s go celebrate.”

~*~

They ended up at Joe’s and Tony could approve. They enjoyed a night of drinking and dart playing. “So this is where the hospital staff hang out?”

Derek nodded. “Decent beer, and darts. Just don’t touch the coffee.”

Tony understood it must be bad if that was the case. There was something developing between him and Derek and he was willing to see where it went. Right now they were both focussing on healing from the past.

If it was meant to be it could wait for the right time. They were in no hurry and besides, Tony was more than aware that officially Derek was still married in the eyes of the law, if not his heart. He would not cross the line of adultery and Derek kind of adored him more for it.
“So you must be the intern that is fucking my husband.”

Meredith frowned because wow, who the hell was this lady. She’d found a mentor in him but she wasn’t a cliche. She also couldn't help but attack back. “No, that is really presumptuous. If you’re such a great wife, why is here and not wearing a ring?”

Tony had made his way to the hospital to have dinner with Derek. So this was the wife in person. He could have been classy but it seemed after having an affair she was now trying to make Derek the bad guy and that was not okay in his mind.

“Well, I’m not a busty intern but I am trying to sleep with your husband.” He answered calmly making Derek smirk.

She gasped. “And who are you?”

“FBI Agent in Charge of the Seattle Office, Anthony DiNozzo. How can I help you?” Tony finished looking calm and collected.

Derek had to chuckle. “He would have succeeded to but he is painfully honourable so he said that until I divorce your adulterous ass he won’t sleep with me. Now you’ve finished airing our dirty laundry around the hospital let’s go and settle this like adults in my office.”

Meredith looked at the hot guy. “I think he is trading up.”

Tony snickered. “Thanks, I guess dinner is out.”

Meredith watched the pair walk away. “I don't know... He might need you around. Let me show you the canteen.”

Tony took the offer and chatted happily away to her. He laughed as she explained the life of an intern. Also her frustrations about being a blueblood and judged about being Ellis Grey’s daughter.

Tony teased her. “So E.R got it wrong?”

She shrugged. “Guess it’s like cop shows, huh?”

He nodded in agreement and trailed off. “Keep going, Grey. If anyone hates you for your parents - screw em, we’re our own people.”

“Thanks, McHandsome.”

Tony knew the nicknames were her way of being friendly. He was curious. “What's Derek's?”

She manages to look both sheepish and unapologetic while was quite a feat. “McDreamy is his hospital nickname.”

Tony was looking at Derek as he walked back toward them. “Yeah, he is. See you around, Grey.”

Derek was standing nervously at the side. He couldn't believe Tony had waited for him. Addison had a way of making even the hardest people duck and look for cover.
He’d contemplated, for a second, a reconciliation. It was his nature not to accept failure but then there was Tony. A man who'd supported him every step of the way when he was in pain. A man who even though he was dealing with his own issues kept him company. He flirted with him but never let it cross a line. Tony had respected him even when he hadn't respected himself.

“She’s going back to New York ... I told her that she doesn't get to play the martyr.”

Tony grinned and relaxed. He hadn't regretted setting up shop in Seattle even though Brad Pitt had a few choice words. “In that case, I expect you to take me to dinner and I’ll help you get over your divorce.”

Derek pulled him into a hug. “You're too good for me. I think I might have done something stupid if I'd never met you.”

Tony kissed him softly on the lips and it was electric. “Hey, we saved each other so I say we keep doing it.”

“Sounds good to me.”

And they did through all the drama and emergencies the city faced. Mark even came down to regain his ‘brother’. It took awhile but in the end, Derek had a new family and Addison ended up moving to LA to start again. Now if he could just get Mark and Meredith to realise they were more than just friends with benefits he could relax.
Chris was beginning to think they should never have come back to Beacon Hills. It was a cursed land. He was sure of that and his sister may be crazy but she had a point. Their family had been around for 400 years and yet since returning to this place - it was now down to him, his daughter and possibly his father.

Allison was staring at him aghast. “He is dead.”

Chris shrugged because he wasn’t sure what to say to his daughter. “We’ve learnt that death is relative here.”

She snorted. “Maybe but grandfather is dangerous and he goes against our code.”

She wasn’t wrong. Chris had struggled after the death of his wife - but not in the way people suspected. He wasn’t grieving over a loved one but rather for a life that could have been. He wouldn’t regret Allison - he couldn’t. He did regret never being able to follow his true love.

Tony had always been braver than he had.

He was one of the Paddington family in the UK. Gerard had fostered a friendship between him and Chris as it served his purpose. The only trouble was when they got too close - he’d married Chris off and threatened to kill Tony if Chris didn’t play along.

“Dad, you okay?”

He chuckled. “I was thinking about an old friend.”

“Who were they?”

“He goes by two names, Tony Paddington in the UK and he goes by his father’s name here, Tony DiNozzo. We lost contact just before I married your mother.”

Ally was too smart not to connect the dots. “Was he another thing grandfather took from you?”

Chris snorted. “It was a tough situation. I might not have agreed with the marriage but I did adore you from the first minute and you always come first in my life.”

Allison sat by him on the sofa. “I know that you and mom weren’t on the best of terms ... you deserve to be happy.” She was on her phone. She grinned from ear to ear. “He is in DC, he’s a Fed. He works for NCIS, his name was in the paper - no photo.” She finished apologetically.
Chris tilted his head as he thought through the angles. It would be a useful cover, he’d be able to move through the country and not arouse suspicion if he was hunting. Did he have the right to contact him now?

Ally punched his shoulder. “Don’t play the martyr. The town is crazy right now what with an Alpha Pack and some crazy druid running around. You don’t have the time to just sit on the fence.”

It was a pearl of wisdom that he couldn’t deny the truth of. “When did you get so wise?”

“When I followed my father’s advice to listen to my heart and trust my instincts.”

~*~

Tony was in DC and starting to lose his temper. First of all, Gibbs had gone fucking Ahab and was making some questionable choices. Second, Kate had died and then to top off his seriously whacked week the person responsible for profiling the team was now sitting at Kate’s desk. She sat there with her smug superiority complex and shitty attitude.

Tony was a Paddington. He didn’t bow to anyone and he was no one’s bitch. If she put a hand on him, he was putting her down and fuck what anyone thought. He was so close to quitting NCIS at the moment it was unreal.

An email pinged that surprised him. A.Argent@ArgentFirearms.net. He knew Chris had had a daughter called Allison. She was a sweet kid and was treated like a Princess if the hunting community was believed.

Tony knew he needed a hunt but sadly there had been no rogues in the DC area for the last month. His real name had leaked out and thus many supernaturals had decided the capitol was just too expensive and dangerous to live in.

He’d checked in with Uncle Clive and the David family may be rude and arrogant but alas not a drop of supernatural blood. Tony sighed because he’d been betting on Banshee blood at the very least. He was still holding out hope - still he opened the email and the young one impressed him.

It was an innocuous email to anyone who read over his shoulder but he read the SOS inside it and a mention of her Dad missing him. Tony had to bite back a pang of longing there which was ridiculous considering it was eighteen years ago but Christopher was the one who’d got away and he hoped Gerard Argent was rotting in hell - the black-hearted bastard.

Tony thought a break sounded good. He brought up the files for leave - it was not like he didn’t have time saved.

Gibbs glared at him. “Leave?”

Tony nodded. “I’ve just had an email and I have a family emergency.”

“You hate your father.” Gibbs said flatly. It was clear he didn’t believe the reasoning but Tony didn’t care.

Tony could have brought him to task for discussing his family history in front of the others. He didn’t, he serenely moved past it with a, “Yep, I surely do ... my mother’s family, however, I am on great terms with. I’ll be back in a week, or I can quit. The choice is yours.”
“Go and make sure you come back with your head on straight.” Gibbs growled.

“Yes, Gibbs.” Tony replied, grabbing his jacket.

The man’s head whipped around and he realised then that there was a gulf and he wasn’t sure when it had developed. McGee looked at Gibbs wondering what he would do in reply. He was unequal to the glare and flushed before looking straight back to his computer screen.

~*~

Tony was on a plane and he used the Paddington card on the grounds he was going to help a hunter. He expected the call from his Uncle who didn’t beat around the bush.

“So Christopher calls and you go running.”

Tony rolled his eyes. “Actually his daughter contacted me, so I can’t say for sure. What I do know though, Uncle is that they need help.”

“I nearly went to war with Gerard over his threat to you.” Clive reminded him.

Tony had to smile because his Uncle may be an English Lord but he was not the lazy, rich type. If he’d have gone to war on Gerard Argent then the man would not have survived. His uncle would have taken everything from the man and enjoyed it. “I know and I love you for it, Uncle. Chris chose his familial duty and as much as I hated it ... I had to respect his choice.”

“The bitch of a wife is dead.”

Tony shook his head in disbelief. “I’m aware.”

“If you’re going to merge two of the most ancient families I expect a warning. We’ll need to change a few of the antiquated laws for it be truly effective.”

Tony closed down the conversation without saying much more. He didn’t know what to say but it was things like this Uncle’s willingness to change the constitutional law of the lands so he could marry that made him adore the man.

~*~

Chris knew better. He did. It’s just everyone has a weakness and his rapidly dwindling family was his Achilles heel. He knew it but he couldn’t fix it. He might need years of therapy before he could get there - and it wasn’t like he could talk to a psychiatrist without ending up committed to Eichen House.

He was down in the sewers with Gerard chasing a way to supposedly restore his good health. He didn’t particularly like his father and wanted him far away from Beacon Hills and Allison as quickly as possible. The trouble was his father knew his weakness and was more than willing to exploit it.

“When it comes to my own survival, I’d kill my own son.” Gerard boasted to the creature.

Chris reacted on instinct and whipped his gun around to face his father. Although, the man really didn’t deserve the title. Allison was definitely hanging around Stiles and Peter as he reverted to sarcasm. “You’re such a great father, Dad.”
Gerard shrugged but didn’t let his gun waiver from his son’s face. “It’s not personal, Christopher. I just have work that needs to be done and I need to live in order for it to happen.”

If you were going to make an entrance - everyone knew it was always a matter of timing. Tony cocked his gun. “You know - I thought my Dad was an abusive bastard but you just reached new depths.”

Chris couldn’t react the way he wanted to at the new arrival. His old friend had impeccable timing. He suspected he had Ally to thank for Tony’s timely entrance.

Tony didn’t react yet - he was keeping his eyes on the biggest threat in the room. Still, he was a wildcard option. As much as he wanted to kill Gerard it would be awkward to say the least but there was nothing stopping him outsourcing his revenge.

“So you’re back to sniff around my Christopher. I should have killed you as a teen.”

Tony smirked because that wasn’t the insult he was aiming for. “You probably should have but then Uncle Clive would have ruined you. You may be an Argent but us Paddington’s have more power. And you know it.”

“He won’t forgive you if you kill me.” Gerard remarked with a shit-eating grin. “It’s why he hasn’t pulled the trigger. He cares.”

Tony shrugged. “You might be right but you are pointing a gun on him. Plus, there was the whole threatening to kill me thing.”

“It doesn’t change anything.” Gerard sneered.

Tony smirked. “You’re right but then I checked in with little Ally and asked who deserved to take revenge on you. The whole pack, and wow, that must burn. A granddaughter running with a pack of wolves. They all agreed it was Peter Hale. So I picked him up to give me a tour of the sewers as I really wanted to some backup down here.”

The glowing blue eyes had Gerard backing away. He kept his gun out but now it was three against one and he didn’t know who to shoot. He wouldn’t be quick enough anyway. The man had waited a long time to repay him for all the pain and misery.

Peter looked at the two hunters. Peter had vowed never to like hunters but he was willing to make an exception for this Paddington. He dressed well and was giving him permission to kill Gerard. He was smart enough to make his following offer. “You two love birds should catch up. It’s best you’re not here to witness what comes next.”

Christopher could have stopped this but he knew that his father was too dangerous to let live. The amount of pain and death the man had caused due to his bigoted, arrogant views was immense. He took the path that he could live with and said to Tony, “Let’s go and officially introduce you to my daughter.”

~*~

Back at the Hale House, Ally was pacing and constantly checking her watch. She was regretting letting the hunter go and get her Dad alone. “He should be here.”

Stiles quirked an eyebrow and she reminded him. “Tony, remember?”
“Wait. The guy who grabbed everyone’s favourite UncleCreeper?” He asked, checking they were talking about the same person.

Ally sighed as she tried to explain what was going on. Well, at least give some context to the whole thing. “He and my Dad have been friends for years. Gerard interfered.”

Stiles shuddered because he was more than aware just how badly psycho grandpa could interfere with their lives if he was in the mood.

There was a knock on the door and Allison raced ahead. Her arms thrown out so she could hug the life out of her Dad. “I was so worried.”

Chris smiled softly even as he whirled his daughter around in a massive bear hug. “Hey, you sent me Tony. I was always safe.”

Tony breezed in. “Which one of you is the Alpha?” He looked sheepish as he hadn’t asked the first time as he’d been focussed on rescuing Christopher.

Derek stepped forward. “That would be me.”

Tony bowed his head. “Then I formally ask permission to stay in your land. I am here to reestablish an old friendship but I have no intention of hunting unless life is threatened.”

“You are welcome here, Hunter Paddington.” Derek said formally. He bit his lip unsure of how to ask. “You left with my uncle?”

“I did,” Tony replied. “But he and Gerard Argent are catching up to mediate their disputes.”

“By mediate... you mean to kill his ass.” The one kid asked.

Tony shrugged as there really was no way to say for sure. “He suggested that we should go and catch up, and he would catch up later. So I dragged Christopher away.”

Stiles’ smile was beautific and Tony was guessing he was looking at the future Alpha’s Mate. “You’re alright for a hunter.”

Tony smirked. “Thanks.”

Allison bit her lip, having so many questions but was relieved she’d taken up Stiles’ suggestion to email him. “You need to tell us how you two became friends.”

Chris looked into the eyes of his first love. “You know what, I will tell you later. It’s pack night and you should stay here ... I will explain all later.”

The older hunter couple left to a very curious pack but they needed to figure themselves out before they shared their story.

After all, it wasn’t over yet and was about to get even more complicated.
Trouble Ahead for Sure. (Sheriff Stilinski 3)

Chapter Summary

Stiles is adjusting to having a Fae Prince Yoda, who is also a Federal Agent that has hots for his Dad.

Chapter Notes

Rare double post day but I didn't want to leave readers with nothing if they hadn't watched Endgame.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tony had made a phone call to NCIS. He knew it wouldn’t be the last of it but he didn’t have to work there and to be honest, he didn’t want to. The plague had highlighted the issues with his duality - and quite frankly, he was done playing by human rules. The new Director had been brusque and said she’d process him out on medical grounds.

Tony could have been sad as that chapter in his life closed down but he wasn’t. He was excited about the future. He had the privilege of guiding a newly awakening Fae. He was on a supernatural Beacon that meant he wouldn't be bored as it brought more and more supernatural creatures to their backyard.

He was sitting in the living room of the Stilinski home, and knew in his heart and listened to his instincts that he should be here.

Stiles looked up from his research. “Your Director sounded like a real bitch.”

Tony snorted. “Ex-bitch.” He corrected gently. “And yeah, probably, but I am now officially retired on grounds of ill-health so you’re stuck with me.”

Stiles grinned crookedly because he loved the way Tony didn’t try and smooth away his rougher comments. He was also eager to learn new things. “So what are we doing today?”

“Teaching you to mask your abilities.” Tony replied, knowing that if Stiles was going to run with a wolf pack it would be a vital skill. He’d promised Noah it would be one of the first things that he'd ensure Stiles could do competently.

“How?” Stiles asked curiously. It was a quirk of his to always look for more information.

Tony smirked at his young charge. “You’re stubborn, right?”

“Well, yeah.” Stiles replied because he wasn’t unaware of his character. “I haven’t met a challenge I didn’t answer. Okay, sometimes not successfully. Simply because I thought I was just a skinny 147 pound human with only sarcasm as a defence.”
Tony thought his rambling was too cute for words. He cut him off though before he started to feel bad. “So believe that you’re human and that is how you will present yourself.”

Stiles looked at him with a frown, his brain was racing a mile a minute. “I just have to believe it?”

Tony nodded but knowing how important context was for Stiles. “We’re not Druids who need the Earth. We’re not witches or warlocks who require a sacrifice. We’re Fae.” He dropped his glamour to make the point visually. “Magick is in our blood and is our birthright. We manipulate our world using the ambient magic around us.”

Stiles thought about it and a stray thought struck him. “Is this my human form?”

Tony rolled his eyes. “Kiddo, look in the mirror.” He guided Stiles to the one by the kitchen wall.

Stiles eyes went wide as saucers, seeing his reflection. “I’m sparkling.”

“Yeah, welcome to Team Edward.” Tony snarked, “Just don’t stalk Derek so your Dad doesn’t have to arrest you. It would be awkward.”

Stiles blushed so hard. He thought he was doing well hiding his crush for the Alpha, using his well known infamous crush on Lydia as a smoke screen. He was a quick study though as he used a glamour to hide it. “Huh. So that is neat.”

Tony snickered just knowing he was going to use it for mischief. “Just not around your Dad. I will break any weaves around him.”

Stiles shook his head. “Not gonna try. Since you’ve arrived we’ve been good, speaking honestly. I don’t want to break it.” He loved the fact he could now speak honestly to his Dad. It was one of the hardest parts of running with the pack.

“Your Dad is a good man.” Tony replied softly.

“The best.” Stiles finished. “It is about time someone recognises it.”

Tony got the sense the shoe was now on the other foot. He liked his young cousin. “Out with it, Mischief.”

“Do you like my Dad?” Stiles asked his cousin.

Tony thought about the answer, knowing he would need to answer carefully. He also weaved a ward around them to keep their conversation private. “Honestly, I am keen on him in a way that makes me think big things. Would be that okay with you?”

Stiles was shocked that was even a question. “Why wouldn’t it be?”

“Well, some might find the fact I am distantly related to your Mom be too weird.”


Tony started to laugh with him. It had been his life for a lot longer and he could see the funnier side. He’d have gone mad as a kid if his Nana hadn’t grabbed him. His time at RIMA wasn’t as lonely as it could have been as he spent time in the Fae Realm. His Nana was always kind enough
to leave a life-like golem whenever he skipped over to the palace for a weekend.

It was how he’d left RIMA both proficient in Fae Magick as well as human studies. Still, living a life straddling two worlds was always difficult for the dual-natured. He wasn’t a bitten werewolf - he was a Fae and not using his magick would be like asking him not to breathe.

~*~

Tony was in the Sheriff’s office when a panicked Scott came into the front desk. “Dr Deaton has disappeared.”

Noah just looked at his dinner guest. “Is that right? When was he last seen?”

“The day of the Alpha pack. It’s been so hectic and I went for my shift and Maddie, the nurse, said he’d not been seen over the weekend.”

Noah nodded and recorded notes like he should. He had his suspicions about what happened but he wasn’t going to say anything in front of the teen. The kid, for all his werewolf ways, still saw the world in black and white. He should have been a were-unicorn instead of a wolf, in Noah’s opinion.

“Just how many Darach’s did you deal with?”

Tony smirked at the Sheriff. “Guess.”

“Did he?”

Tony looked at the Sheriff. “Do you want the answer here? Know that I will never lie to you and justice on behalf of the UnSeelie court has been taken. He deserves every bit of our hospitality.”

Noah thought about all the things he’d learned since Tony had walked into his office. “You know what, Druids believe in Karma, right?”

Tony nodded. “She’s actually a real bitch. Her and Nana get along like a house on fire.”

Noah just shook his head. “I’ll take your word for it. If I haven’t said it, thank you for everything you’ve done for Beacon Hills.”

Tony nodded his head in acceptance. “I will say you’re welcome but if you and Stiles weren’t here then I wouldn’t be here.”

Noah had previously been blind to the flirtations of Tony but now he was receptive. “I am out of practice but I figure when my kid is having pack night we should go on a date.”

Tony stood up grinning. “That sounds like an excellent plan. In that case, I’m going to go and purify the damn Nemeton so we don’t get interrupted.”

Tony liked to plan ahead. If Stiles was with the pack and trying to bring the puppies together he would be distracted. Scott was too busy fighting his nature to cause trouble at the moment. The Nemeton was the biggest issue as it was unbalanced so he needed to get that fixed ASAP.

Noah spoke as he left. “You know if Deaton was to use his cards in say, San Francisco, he wouldn’t be a missing person - just a guy who split town.”
Mab popped in to see her grandson as she wanted something confirmed. She’d heard something disturbing from the Fate Sisters and she had to go and seek the truth of the matter. She figured going straight to the source would be a good fit.

“You’re in LOVE! What is this man Fae-bait?”

Tony whirled around, glad that Noah was still at the station. “Yes, I am. Thank you. No his aftershave is perfectly mundane” He finished calmly.

“That’s just terrible news.” She said, collapsing on a couch she conjured for herself.

Tony knew that it wasn’t quite meant the way it was said. You couldn’t take offence like she was human as she was not. “No, it’s great news. You should be glad, I am closer to my powers than I have been in years. In fact, I’ve stopped pretending to be a human in DC. You should be ecstatic!”

She sniffed. “Well, that is something I suppose.”

“Oh come off it, grandma.” Tony knew the old woman well enough to know when she was mad. This wasn’t it. “You love grandpa with all your heart.”

“Yes, well. He loves me despite my worst parts.”

Tony chuckled at what she would consider a romantic statement. “Oh, you mean he is just as twisted as you. I think you remind me more of Benedict and Beatrice than who Shakespeare styled you after.”

She smirked. “I can see the comparison but I didn’t need to be tricked into the marriage. I chased him.”

“Which is what I intend to do, you should approve of him.” Tony explained softly. He couldn’t believe that he was thinking in such long-term thoughts. He’d not, for most of his thirties, even contemplated the idea. Once he’d thought through his heritage - he figured it wouldn’t be ideal to tie himself to someone who couldn’t handle.

“He is mortal.”

“He’s raised a Fae son, he lives and works in a Nemeton cursed area and has survived for five years. Give him a chance - you might like him. Plus, you upset Noah and Stiles will never forgive you.”

“Well, I will talk to him and I won’t twist him up with magick. Will that allay your fears, young one?”

Tony grinned. “It’s a start.”

~*~

Stiles had raced out of the door shouting he’d be back once the Pack had done their moonlight run. Tony and Noah had discussed it and decided they didn’t fancy tempting fate. They were going to stay in and watch a game with a beer. It might not be the most romantic date but it suited them down to the ground.
Noah looked at Tony who’d dropped his glamour in their home. “You’re stunning and I don’t get what you see in me.”

“You face every challenge with dignity and your love of Stiles is humbling. I wish my father had been so good to me.”

Noah sighed. “I haven’t always got it right.”

Tony shook his head. “You owned every one of your faults and worked to correct them and that too is something that can be admired.”

Noah had to smile fondly at someone fiercely defending him. It was usually only Stiles, “Okay, you win.”

Tony was leaning in closer. “Do I? And what is my reward.”

“One tired old Sheriff with a half-fae son.”

Tony had a predatory grin. “Perfect for me then. If I kiss you, are you going to freak out?”

Noah shook his head. “Freak out isn’t the word I would use.”

Tony closed the gap and their first kiss was as electric as he hoped. Tony managed to straddle him without breaking their kiss. It was leisurely and exploratory and a promise for the future.

He broke the kiss reluctantly. “I could get used to that.”

Noah chuckled. “I have to work and the uniform leaves nothing to the imagination.”

“Hey, I love you in uniform.” Tony informed him unashamedly.

“I’ll have to remember that.”

Any further conversation was broken by someone charging through their door. It was Stiles and he was frantic. “Tony, Dad, we need your help. That bitch has stolen my Alpha.”

Tony just leant his forehead against Noah’s. “And we were having such a nice evening.”

*Someone was going to die - Tony had made so much progress in his chase of the Sheriff. He was not amused to be interrupted and he was about to throw a temper tantrum that would make his Nana proud.*

Chapter End Notes

Oh, and this will definitely be the next story after Twist of Genetics. It is in plotting due to be 9 chapters and three are already written.
Tony was staring out into space. He didn’t mean that metaphorically. He was literally on a spaceship. His life was nuts and yet it had made more sense in the month he’d been with the SGC than it had in the last five years.

The *spacedeck* as it was dubbed was basically the meditation area. Caldwell had only started taking advantage of it after he’d been de-snaked. It was a hell he’d not wish on his own worst enemy.

He was surprised to find someone else in this space. The young Homeland Agent who was a little too hot for his crew. Well, at least if he was the type to listen to gossip. He could agree with the sentiment as he was a man who knew the power of a good suit. Still the man didn’t need him pawing over him, “You okay there, Agent DiNozzo?”

The man smiled softly. “Space is great for contemplation.”

“It is also a good place to sleep.” Caldwell prompted gently. The Atlantis crew cycle tended to try and keep their shift patterns to what the days on Lantea are like.

“Too many thoughts racing up in my mind.” Tony replied. He knew that something terrible had happened to the Colonel and everyone was giving him a wide berth. While it might be easier for them - it isolated the Colonel and he was too cute to be lonely, at least in Tony’s opinion.

“Yeah. I know what that’s like.” Caldwell agreed.

And then the pair just sat on the same bench, sharing a companionable silence.

~*~

Day Two and Tony was getting frustrated. It wasn’t like he didn’t want to sleep but he was still so angry by the events at NCIS. He’d defended his life against a traitor and they’d nearly shipped him off to face ‘justice’. All so Mossad could save face over a rogue agent. He’d never expected Gibbs to go along with Vance’s plan.

*Thank god for his bloodwork and Tom Morrow.*

He’d tried running along the pathway that was highlighted. That was another good thing about being part of the SGC - no more damaged lungs.

He still found himself drifting to the spacedeck like the day before. Sure enough, the Captain of the ship was there. He turned around and Tony didn’t want to feel like he was intruding. “I can go.”

Caldwell shook his head, his gaze lingering just a little on the Agent’s sweat-soaked body. He was pretty sure Novak would have tripped out of an airlock to be him right now. Still a lifetime of not saying anything was hard to break even if it was okay now. “No, you deserve the peace too. Run didn’t help?”

Tony looked sheepish. “No, it was worth a shot. I had to try out my new lung function.”

A quirked eyebrow as you might expect was all he got in return. He figured he was right about the Captain being quite lonely on the ship. “I got the plague thanks to a pissed off mother in DC. Nasty
strain too, as it was resistant to antibiotics.”

Caldwell shook his head in disbelief. It sounded like some of the stories coming from SG1 in O’Neill’s heyday. It showed that he’d adapt just fine to the SGC though. “No wonder you’ve been so calm about the SGC.”

Tony chuckled because there was adapting and then there was learning that Star Trek was a little more real than people knew. “Okay, I had an inner fanboy moment when I realised how sci-fi my life was about to become. Then, of course, I got distracted. I had to learn the protocols, train, etcetera. It kept me busy.”

Caldwell understood the idea of throwing yourself fully into a mission. DiNozzo was one of the ones he was sure would survive well. “And now you’re just waiting. For what?”

“My restlessness has returned. I have shot targets, stared into space and now tried running myself into sleep.” Tony listed, the frustration in his voice leaking through. “Any ideas?”

Caldwell snorted and he had an idea or two. The man really shouldn’t offer him such opportunities, he was just waiting perhaps for some more flirting, or a sign of interest of more than friendship. “If you figure it out let me know.”

Tony slid onto the floor choosing to stare at the Colonel rather than into Space. The black was good for trying to forget but it didn’t help you process. He also couldn’t shake the feeling he wasn’t the only one with things they needed to process.

“So when you’re not ferrying people across the galaxy what do you do?”

Caldwell thought about it. “I have a ranch back near Austin, and I ride out onto the range and watch the sunset. It’s such a sight, the sunset on the peak. It lets you forget about the ugliness of the world.”

Tony had to hide his thoughts there for a second. The Colonel was a very sexy man and hearing him talk about riding out in Texas - well, it wouldn’t have been just Tony’s mind wandering to bad places.

“Nice. I play the piano to relax but sadly my consignment of space wasn’t big enough.” Tony said wistfully. He’d had his mother’s piano was put in safe storage under her name so no one would think to grab it out of spite.

Caldwell could see how much a piano meant to the younger agent. The fact he was talented with his hands probably would affect a few of his dreams. “You’re in luck. There is one on Atlantis.”

“What’s it like?” Tony asked, biting his lip. He’d read the reports and seen videos of the city. However, if there was one thing he’d learnt in his life that eye-witnesses were the best source of info.

“Do you have the gene?”

Tony nodded. “Yeah, I do.”

Caldwell smirked wickedly and used Sheppard’s explanation. “Then it’s apparently like riding at 200 mph if you have a strong gene. She’ll look after you and ensure that you never want for anything.”
Tony chuckled darkly. “I don’t know if I’m used to that.”

It was telling and Steven was too nice to dig deeper. They still had their understanding from the night before.

~*~

Night three and they found themselves back in the same spots. Steven had a wicked smirk and couldn’t decide if he was disappointed that DiNozzo had apparently showered first before coming here. “You know the crew will start to talk.”

Tony shrugged it off and was more than willing to indulge the flicker of interest he’d seen. “You’re a hot silver fox and I have no problem with that rumour. Of course, I can go as I don’t want to make your position difficult.” It wasn’t what he wanted but Tony was not naive and he had no intention of making the man’s command more difficult than it had to be.

Caldwell shook his head and was bold enough to offer up information just like Tony had the day before. “I recently got de-snaked and the crew didn’t hold that against me. Apparently, I have a more pleasant disposition when possessed.” He was attempting to say the last part with humour but it came out brittle.

“If that’s the case then why are you here with me instead of sleeping?” Tony asked boldly. He figured the man had helped him out the last few nights. He wanted to do the same - it was the least he could do.

Caldwell shrugged. “Too many thoughts. Plus, the view is not bad.”

“And too much anger?” Tony ventured. If there was one thing he’d learned was bottling up your anger wasn’t healthy - it either destroyed your liver, or your life with a sloppy mistake. It would pain him if Steven went either way.

Caldwell looked at him bemused but Tony liked the twinkle in his eye. “I thought you were an Agent, not a shrink.”

Tony chuckled. “I’m a friend and I’m guessing you don’t talk to shrinks. I’m an undercover specialist so I can fulfill that role for you and you wouldn’t notice.”

Caldwell snorted because he usually didn’t have the hots for his shrink. All that digging around in your skull just killed any passion. He wished Tony hadn’t teased him with that last sentence - it was getting harder not to pursue the man. He didn’t know how much he’d avoided people until Tony had suddenly pulled him back outside of duty. “You got that right about shrinks,” then he sighed. “I shouldn’t be mad.”

Tony frowned but didn’t like the way he was dismissing his feelings. He’d done that too often in his own life and look where it had lead him. “Why not?” He had to ask.

Caldwell didn’t expect that response. He didn’t get why he couldn’t ever predict what the handsome agent would say next. “I was freed.”

“Told you that report.” Tony replied honestly. “How long were you possessed?”
Caldwell sighed. “Six damn months.”

Tony nodded and didn’t try for any empty platitude. He instead went for a question he was guessing no one would dare ask him. “Right. So how have you celebrated your freedom?”

“I smashed the bastard snake to pieces.” Steven confessed, “O’Neill left it as a present for me.” He explained but what surprised him was he didn’t feel like he needed to justify himself.

Tony nodded in understanding. “Sounds therapeutic. Was it?”

Steven shook his head. “No, although I do know it can’t get me again so that’s something.”

“Well, there is some comfort in that but you know ... if you keep yourself isolated there will be no one else who can comfort you, Captain.”

Steven chuckled because he was pretty sure Tony was only on board who would have the guts to say that to his face. “Steven. I think if you’re acting as my ...”

“Person.” Tony cut in. “It was a show. Never mind which one, anyway, the character is in a dark and twisty place, and they need a person. I will be it.”

Steven smiled at him and Tony grinned back. “Sounds good to me.”

The pair said very little else as Tony miraculously sprang some cards out of nowhere. It was like they had a silent understanding of when they’d reached their talking limit and didn’t push any further.

~*~

Captain Marks noted that the Colonel seemed in a better mood this morning. He didn’t know what was the cause but he’d thank whoever it was in person. Morning briefing would be conducted without them feeling like they were walking on eggshells which had been a theme in this voyage.

He watched the way the Captain checked on the crew. He felt bad once more that he’d not noticed the possession.

The Agent on board breezed into the bridge room. “You’re needed, Colonel Caldwell.”

Caldwell pinched his nose with frustration. “If it’s an Atlantis Marine, I’m putting them in a 302 with supplies and not letting them out until we get there.”

Some of the bridge crew winced at that because it would be a tight fit. Tony shrugged it off. “It’s more of a not understanding of the new UCMJ issue with one of the new crew.”

Caldwell tilted his head to the side, and then there was a smirk. “Lead the way Agent. Marks, you have control.”

Marks was glad that he wasn’t the stupid airman. Although it seemed there was something between the Agent and the Colonel. This could be fun.

~*~

Caldwell glared, listening to his airman spew bigoted crap out of his mouth. He looked at Tony and saw the same anger. He finally snapped. “Shut your goddamn trap, airman, before I keel haul
DiNozzo was smirking and more than willing to run with it. “I’m sure we can make it look like a tragic transporter accident. At least that’s what my investigation could say.”

The Airman blanched. He was used to the other airman agreeing with him. “But you think it is okay?”

Caldwell pinched his nose. “I think you swore an oath and we’re all expected to follow the UCMJ, you know the rules regarding DADT have been repealed.”

“They can’t fight as well as we can, Sir.”

Christ, there was a level of stupidity here that he didn’t think he’d ever be able to battle through. “Is that right”?

Tony frowned. “You know my ability to shoot, or defend myself has nothing to do with the fact I am an equal opportunity lover, right? You should know when it comes to federal medals I pretty much own them all. The only reason I never once hinted about it at work was I was worried that some bigoted asshole like you on my team might just be a little too slow to respond. Or, I get bashed by a crew wanting to keep their team all masculine.”

“It’s different, you’re not armed forces.”

Tony had a mean grin and knew this would mess with his head. “You know I passed the marine entrance exams. In fact, I was undercover in a platoon for two weeks and no one suspected a thing.”

Steven snorted. “I never got any jarheads as cute as you.”

The airman’s eyes almost exploded out of his eye sockets. The two MP’s snickered at it but wisely went straight-faced at the twin glares. He’d had enough of trying to put the fear of God in the airman. You just can’t cure stupid. “Get him out of here, and feel free to gag him if he utters any more horseshit.”

“Yes, Sir.” The two neat salutes showed absolute respect. He needed to see that more than he knew.

He waited until it was just him and Tony in the room. He let some of the tension slip out of him. “Well, that was different.”

Tony was smirking at him. “So you think I am cute and I think you are a hot silver fox. So should we do something about it?”

“You bring drinks and I’ll bring food to the spacedeck this evening.” Caldwell half suggested, half ordered.

~*~

In the evening, the two men ended up back in their new favourite place on the ship. This time, though, they were thinking of it as a tentative date.

Tony was wearing those snug jeans and a crisp white shirt. He had a bottle of something in his
hands. “So today was fun?”

Caldwell snorted but gestured to the picnic he’d secured from the chef. “I’m not allowed to keelhaul bigots. I checked with O’Neill.”

Tony grinned, knowing that the General was a good man and would find a way to make them miserable. “True but McMurdo needs a crew rotation. At least that’s what he told me.”

Caldwell sighed. “It’s ridiculous and the rule was antiquated. The Government expects us to sacrifice our lives and we’re supposed to report on where people sleep?”

Tony agreed with him as he settled on the makeshift blanket right next to Steven. He relished the body contact as the only one who’d touched him in recent weeks was the person to clean him up after the fight with Rivkin. “You know law enforcement has its moments so I have never willingly been out in the workplace. In fact, today was the first time I suspect we both mentioned it.”

Steven was keen not to dwell on the past. He was ready to be brave enough to chase what he wanted. “So I’m a silver fox?”

Tony nodded. “Yep. In fact, I have no shame and if you were amenable, which I think you are. I would chase you all over the ship.”

“I am not the type to run from what I want. You could have anyone you want.” Caldwell wasn’t going to say anything else. He might have understood Tony’s attraction to him but he wasn’t going to dismiss the man’s feelings.

Tony’s smirk grew slightly wicked. “You mean a good man, who has sat up with me through my bouts of insomnia. You mean there is someone better than a hot colonel who makes the airforce flight suits look good.”

Caldwell snorted because he should ban Tony’s jeans while he was on duty. “How are we going to make this work?” He wasn’t the type to have a fling, and he got the sense neither was DiNozzo. It made things difficult because right now they in a bubble. The journey would end and he would be depositing Tony on Atlantis and he would leave once more.

Tony slid closer, in fact, he put himself on Steven’s lap. He started to play with the man’s collar wanting to feel skin. He whispered low as he focussed on his little mission. “Well, we have two weeks to explore us, and we’re both old enough to handle a long-distance relationship if we want it.”

Steven chuckled because he was sure life shouldn’t be this easy. Tony shook his head. “We can make it as easy or as difficult as want. Haven’t we suffered through enough difficulties?”

“You make a compelling argument.” Steven replied, glancing down at Tony’s lips. He’d denied himself the opportunity, not wanting to think about it previously. And now, the possibilities were endless and he was letting go of his anger, replacing with something far more hopeful.

Tony seized the moment. “No, this is a compelling argument.” He initiated the kiss but damn, Steven took control and Tony was lost.

It only broke with oxygen becoming an issue. Steven whispered. “I’m convinced.”

Tony’s grin grew sly. “In that case, I should stop.”
Steven growled, pulling him closer. “Maybe not that convinced.” Although given how hard they both were - it was obvious they were both convinced.

Tony chuckled. “Well, I will fix that.”

And he did ... the couple grew in their own time, letting their relationship develop. Tony never looked at anyone on Atlantis even though there were plenty of offers. Although Tony couldn’t wait for the ball where he was sure it would break a few minds and Rodney’s bitching would be epic when he finally revealed who he was in a relationship with.
Thinking outside the Box (Castiel 2)

Chapter Notes

Warnings: Spoilers for potential plot points in season 14 but nothing explicit.

Sequel to: Divine Assistance (Castiel)

Dean had championed Team Free Will but he'd never believed it would do much more than slow the End of Days.

That was until his best friend pulled an archangel boyfriend and one of his brothers out of a hat. They were strange, the new brothers. Gabriel had been masquerading as a trickster god, Loki. The bastard was good at it and ensnared him and Sam at one point. He might have liked it more if he wasn’t killed a hundred times to prove a point.

Sam looked at him with a look of curiosity. In truth, he was still trying to process that Castiel had a boyfriend, who was also an archangel of God. It meant their chance to stop the apocalypse had just significantly improved. “Did you know about this?”

Dean gave a half shrug. “Sort of, he said he had a friend, Tony, who was a Fed.”

Sam snorted. “I’m still trying to wrap my head around the fact there is an archangel who was whiling away time as a Navy Cop.”

The two brothers started to snicker. “Is it any stranger than the fact angels and demons are conspiring for the fight of the ages but want their leaders to wear us to the Prom.”

Sam snickered. “That’s being a Winchester.”

Dean raised his beer. “To being a Winchester.”

~*~

Tony was back on the ship for a second and he had to put up with Gabriel frowning at him. “Dad’s not here.”

Tony rolled his eyes because way to state the obvious. “I know that, Gabe. I need to make a decision and it is an important one for me.”

Gabriel rolled his eyes. “Bro, it is time to stop playing mortal especially if we’re going to put a stop to Revelations.”

Jegudiel pouted because he knew his brother was right. It sucked. He liked just being Tony. It was soothing and he only had a few people being annoying and pesky, not the entire Choir. However, he needed to remember he was a big boy and call people to task.
“So what do you recommend?”

Gabriel grinned. “You want my advice?”

Jeg nodded his head. “I might regret saying this but sure.”

Gabriel looked at some of the clothes. “Why not leave your clothes at the end of the ship? You will become a mystery but one that would let you slip back into the identity if needed.”

Tony tilted his head to the side. “That would work. Okay, so I’m going to go look into the horizon and fly off the edge.”

Gabriel smirked. “Atta boy, remember how to use those wings?”

Tony’s response was to use his fourth wing to knock Gabriel on his ass. “You tell me.”

Gabriel chuckled because he deserved that one. “Okay, fair point. Where shall we meet?”

Tony smirked. “Lebanon, Kansas.”

He may be the Archangel Jegudiel but he was also Anthony DiNozzo and the human mask wasn’t one he intended to shed any time soon. It was basically him without access to his divine powers.

~*~

Jegudiel landed with ease and this was one thing he was glad he could now do. Humans took too much time travelling from place to place.

“You’re still hiding your presence?” Gabriel asked, bemused.

Jeg could hear the question in Gabe’s voice. “Yep,” he dug something out of his pocket. “Catch.”

The Enochian was mixed in with ancient Sumerian and the hex bag was full of things that had died out in the modern world. “So I can use my full powers. Nice!”

It was a neat trick. “Thanks, bro. So why are we here?”

Tony looked at the door to what looked like a bunker. “Welcome to a Men of Letters bunker, US style.”

Gabriel was confused as this was a non-sequitur. “That’s nice - and how does that help?”

Jegudiel rolled his eyes. “Well, the Winchester’s grandfather was a part of the organisation but the wards are locked down tight. Turns out they’d need someone with a lot of power to open them.”

“So there are wards? And powerful ones?”

He nodded. “So we won’t need to add too many to have a forward base while we figure out how to tear down the plan.”

“You’re not asking Dad?”

Tony shook his head. God was being an asshole right now, and to be honest he wasn’t sure what
his help would entail - or even if it would be good. “No, he’s in mega asshole mode at the moment.”

“Like lock *Luci* in a box, or, demand I wipe out all Nephilim because one was having a tantrum?”

The look he gave his brother spoke volumes. “Right, and we didn’t say that in front of the others because...?”

Tony looked sheepish. “You know how much the others look up to him like he is this perfect being, Cassie included. I don’t want to tear down that hope until we absolutely have to.”

Gabriel chuckled and shook his head. “You’re really halo over wings for him, aren’t you?”

Tony snorted at the butchered euphemism. “Yeah, I am.”

Gabriel was impressed with Castiel because he’d definitely grown since meeting up with the Winchesters. Jegudiel was the serious one of the flock. He always favoured his labours above having fun. He saw it as his duty to see God’s orders followed. He knew Dad leaving had screwed with everyone but Jeg’s level of disillusion was too great to have been just that. He would love to find out just what had happened.

“Let’s get to work.”

~*~

Tony and Gabriel popped into the motel they were hanging out in with massive grins and bigger lollipops in their mouths.

“I don’t see God,” Sam said expectantly.

“What can you do?” Gabriel replied with a shrug. He conjured a lollipop, sucking on it for the hell of it. “He bailed but me and Jeg have a plan.”

A plan would be nice. It gave people hope - something they’d been running on fumes for far too long. Dean had been feeling empty since he’d been pulled out of hell. Sam was building up for a bitch fit, he knew that face since Sam had hit puberty. “So what is it?”

“You need to hang on to someone with wings.” Gabriel announced.

Castiel noted that Sam took his hand and Gabriel had grabbed Dean’s - interesting. He would have to talk to Jegudiel when they were alone.

Dean looked around at the hill. “Okay, and where have we landed?”

“Lebanon, Kansas. This is your birthright as Winchester men.” Tony informed them.

Dean knew he was an Archangel but he didn’t act like one. It helped because in his head most angels were dicks and he didn’t have the greatest reaction towards most of them. He liked Cass and that was it so far. “Huh. Let’s take a look.”

Dean grimaced as Tony and Gabriel had to use some of their blood. It was like the tv show - everything with the supernatural would always come down to blood. He stepped inside and lost his capacity to speak. “Okay, Gabe, I forgive you for being a dick at the mystery spot.”
Gabe grinned because he could do a lot with that - and bless Jeg as he didn’t explain who’d done the research.

“So what the plan for Lucifer because Sam and I are no one's meat suit for the fucked up apocalypse prom.” Dean finished as he sat down at the table where the others had all gravitated to. Castiel’s boyfriend had a maniacal look. “You're going to help us build a Ma’lak room in one of the bunker rooms.”

“For what purpose,”

Gabriel had a grin. “Well, a Ma’lak box once built and closed with the proper wards supplied by me and Jeg’ would seal anything inside it for eternity. Now we need Michael and Lucifer to have a reality check.”

“You think it’ll work?”

The archangel brothers shared a pained look. Gabriel was the one to answer. “Honestly, no. Mikey has always been a mule-headed stubborn son of a bitch, and Luci was too quick to temper even as a toddler.”

Dean didn’t say anything about the parallels with them as he didn’t want to think about the whole births being manipulated by heaven and hell. “So a wicked example of time out, I thought it was coffin?”

Sam whipped his head around because his brother usually chose to hide his smarts under his gruff mannerisms. Then again, the looks his brother was sending the way of the other archangel weren’t subtle. *Huh.*

Gabriel tilted his head to the side in a very obviously appraising way. “It is handsome but between our power levels and your stubbornness - I’m sure we can figure it out.”

Sam saw where this was going. “And if it fails, we can lock the bunker down once more and they’ll never see the light of day.”

Jegudiel nodded. “Exactly. It isn’t our desired outcome. After all, for better or worse they’re our siblings. You might fight with Dean but you would never leave him to rot but if it was the choice between the world and him you would make the hard choice. It was what you were raised to do.”

Sam tried to make a comment but he couldn’t because ultimately he was right. He had a lot to think about. This whole apocalypse had highlighted a few things to him. Dean was going to make a move on Gabriel soon. He knew his brother and knew the signs of a crush, he needed to find someone for himself. He wondered if there was an archangel that favoured a female form?

Jegudiel smirked at him. “Raphael but she can be kind of a dick.”

Sam flushed. “I...?”

Jeg shook his head. “You’re entitled to your thoughts.”

Castiel frowned, having missed the context of the conversation. “What’s so relevant about Raphael?”
The angel spared Sam’s blushes. “He was wondering if any of the archangels favoured female forms.”

Castiel had a look of dawning understanding. “I can understand the desire for companionship but no one deserves to have Raph’ inflicted upon them.”

Sam snorted because wow - if Castiel was disapproving of them they must be terrible. “Ignore me. I’m just being morose.”

Gabriel suddenly perked up. “I can find where that hot chick, Sarah, is. She could handle your life. She does, in fact, in multiple timelines.”

Sam was taken aback at the idea of a multiverse, whilst he knew his brother would geek out about it. “Er - let me think about it. Let’s sort out Lucifer first.”

Gabriel shrugged. “That’s cool. Just please don’t be a cockblock while I try and seduce your brother.”

Sam whimpered because this should not be his life. He walked to the library saying that Dean and Gabriel deserve each other.

Castiel and Jegudiel were standing to the side just watching, amused. Castiel whispered. “Should we do something?”

Jeg shook his head. “Nope, this is something they need to figure out just like we did.”

Castiel smiled softly and kissed his lover’s cheek. “Well, we’ve figured it out so let’s go find somewhere to be alone.”

Jegudiel laughed softly as his lover grabbed his hand and led him down the hallways to somewhere he deemed private. Castiel was muttering about plans to worship him. He was so on board with those plans.

So many things were changing for Team Free Will. Dean and Sam now had gained not one archangel but two of them. There was a plan to avoid the apocalypse and amazingly, there was a chance for happiness.
Tony had accepted a lot in his life.

He’d accepted the fact his mother’s family didn’t believe he was good enough because his father was mortal.
He’d accepted breaking his knee and losing his shot at the NFL.
He’d accepted that he was magical and what he could do.
He’d accepted the fact that despite his hard work - the only thing his former colleagues would only see were his masks.
He’d accepted the fact that due to a useless vendetta - he was now a werewolf. Although he got Remus and Talia out of that one so he wasn’t as vexed by that one.

Although today he’d reached his limit.

~*~

“You, you stupid meddling goat, are deluded if you think I’ll accept what you’re suggesting,” Tony replied to the Headmaster.

Remus choked on his mate's comment but didn’t rush to his former professor’s aide. After all, he could still hear Prongs’s cub breathing through the bruised ribs. He had to focus on Harry or go on a murder spree, which was his back-up plan.

“It’s for the greater good.” Dumbledore insisted.

Tony sneered at the ridiculous notion. “You know the last time I did that, Greyback took a chunk out of me. Thankfully, I’m American and rich thanks to Voldemort’s stupidity. I’m going to devote my time in ruining you if you don’t leave Harry with us.”

Albus frowned. “I don’t follow.”

“I’m the Paddington Lord. And I am the last of my line.” Tony finished with a smirk. You would have thought someone of Dumbledore’s influence would learn of such things.

“You didn’t train at Hogwarts.”

Tony shook his head as he hadn’t. His mother parents were ashamed so he’d trained at Ilvermorney before deciding to pursue a no-magic existence. “No, but I can be your worst nightmare. I am rich, entitled, vicious and perfectly aware of how to turn public opinion against you.”

“They would never accept your lycanthropy.” Dumbledore said, suddenly unsure of the man in front of him. He would have to rely on old prejudices.

Tony’s grin was positively feral. “You see, that’s where you’re wrong. I am a special snowflake, Albus, and will be devoting my time to reversing such crap towards Remus. We’re just looking to see Tali a little older.”
“Harry has a lot of enemies.”

Tony rolled his eyes. “Well, who better than a vicious godfather.”

“Remus is one of the most even-tempered wizards I know.” Albus responded, letting Tony know just why he was trying this crap.

Tony snorted. “He is. I meant me. So we’ll take our godson and just maybe he’ll appear at 11 if we feel Hogwarts is safe and intellectually stimulating enough for him.”

“It will be the first time he will have practised his magic.”

Tony rolled his eyes. “It’s only the UK who starts so late. The cub will be enrolled in classes from next year. Plus, you know the whole dark wizard thing. We won’t leave him unprepared.”

“Voldemort is deceased.” Dumbledore reminded them.

Tony snickered because even Dumbledore didn’t believe what he was saying. “The fools who believe in your greater good may swallow that but I don’t.”

“What ever do you mean?”

Tony showed a glint of the wolf in his eyes, wanting Dumbledore to know just what thin ice he was on. “If he was, you wouldn’t be so invested in Harry. You want him ready to fit some picture of the future.”

Dumbledore was impressed and also glad that young Anthony had set up shop with Remus in Ilvermorny. He wasn’t sure the Wizengamot was ready for him. He thought about it and decided to share the prophecy.

Tony listened and looked at the small boy who was asleep on their sofa. He looked younger than Tali even though he was older. The bloody British expected this kid to fight the evil they couldn’t. He’d never been a fan of cowardice and stupidity was even worse in his book. “He will be staying, Headmaster.”

Albus could have fought the decision but looking into the eyes of the young Lord he suspected that he might lose. He wondered if it was a sign he was getting old. He would monitor young Harry and how the Lupin-Paddington Household interacted with the world.

_The Wizarding world was about to enter some interesting times._

~*~

Tali had been found to have magic, whether it was through the blood adoption or her biological parent, no one was sure - but it didn’t matter. She loved practising spells with her brother.

Tony bellowed, “Talia and Harry, get out here.”

They knew with their father’s current tone was such that they shouldn’t be slow to appear. Harry was the one who could face their father’s anger. “In our defence, we didn’t do it.”

He watched as Papa flitted through the entrance to their quarters. “What have you two rapscallions
done now?” He asked as he threw off his teaching robe. Remus was the teacher of the pair and Tony ran the security of the school.

Tony was the one to answer them. “Oh, ask them how they will keep us company on a full moon.”

Remus stopped in shock. “Are you serious?”

Tony nodded. “I figured out what was bothering us about their magical signatures - they’re animagii, love.”

Harry was ten now and had in the last year managed to gain some of his natural weight and height. It meant that he looked like Tali’s big brother. “It’s true. In our defence, we were just reading but as we thought through the steps we just sort of did it.”

Remus just looked exasperated. “You two are too precocious sometimes. I am not sure if I should hug you or shout at you.”

Tony snorted because that was exactly his quandry. “I was going with proud, so very proud after I’d yelled a lot for scaring the crap out of me.”

Tali giggled and cheekily asked. “Can we skip to the proud bit as we know it was dumb-ass move?”

Remus winced at the butchering of their language, still, children were children. “Oh, I think a research project into why it was a bad idea would work out nicely.”

Harry groaned as he knew the catch. “How long?”

Tony smirked. “Ten inches and no broom until it gets an E to Papa’s standards. It goes for both of you. You scared us way more than any dark wizard. You’re too important to us.”

The kids looked sorry but streamed forward for hugs. “We’re sorry but we don’t want to leave Papa alone for the full moons.”

Remus’s heart grew and he couldn’t believe how lucky he got to have this life. He’d met Tony when he was becoming accustomed to living with his curse. His husband was special though as he wasn’t bound by the moon and merely by his desire. “I am so lucky to have this family. So what do you turn into?”

He should be cross but it was done now and all he could do was be proud of the accomplishment. The other excellent bit was they were American citizens, Tony had ensured it not wanting to let the British play games they weren’t willing to engage in it. The handy part was they could register with MACUSA and not have to say a damn thing in England until they moved there permanently.

“A Gryphon,” Harry said with a grin. His guardians had always referred to him as a little Gryffindor - too brave for his own good.

Tali was more excited. “I can fly like a hawk, papa.”

Remus was impressed. “Well, we can have some fun, I’m sure, but no transformations unless your father and I are around. Clear?”

They nodded in understanding - they were smart children and knew what they achieved while
momentous could also be troubling.

~*~

Tony slid into bed next to his husband. “So today was interesting.”

Remus chuckled kissing his husband’s neck. “I’ll bet.”

Tony groaned at the feather light touches. Remus always had known how to drive Tony wild. “Are you trying to distract me?”

Remus kissed a trail down his side, dipping lower. “Is it working?”

Tony rolled them over letting his own eyes flash. “Yes, very much so.”

Any chance to take it any further than that was stopped by an owl on their window. Tony growled and if you didn’t how badly he hated their private time being interrupted you’d think he was slipping to his wolven form.

“Dumbledore is inviting Harry to Hogwarts.”

Tony grimaced because he knew it would happen but now the moment was there - he wasn’t so sure. “We work well here.”

It was a truth they couldn’t deny. Remus had flourished as the defence teacher, and MACUSA had written notes of thanks to him for sending them less bait and more aurors - in their words. “We do but Harry has a history in England that will catch up to us.”

Tony groaned. “But they’re complete dicks to you and that makes me mad.”

Remus smirked. “Then you can channel your inner Gibbs and make them regret coming at our pack.”

“That’s a promise.”

~*~

Tony liked to live his life by his promises.

He’d promised to follow Remus, and later to love him.
He’d promised to himself that he’d raise Tali as his own.
He’d promised that he’d raise Harry so he could protect himself.
He’d promised he’d rip the fangs right from Greyback’s jaw.
He’d promised he’d reverse anti-lycanthropy sentiment in the UK.
He’d promised Harry that he’d live long enough to see his adoptive son marry the wizard or witch of his choice.

And he’d take on everyone who’d stop him delivering on those promises. He was getting quite the list - Voldemort, Dumbledore, Malfoy Senior to name but a few.

They should all know, though, that Anthony Dante DiNozzo Paddington-Lupin was a stubborn wildcard that didn’t like the word impossible.
Too Grimm, or not to Grimm (Nick Burkhardt)

Chapter Notes

Set in season 4 during the storyline of Nick losing his Grimm powers.

For people, who are not familiar with the TV Series. It follows a Detective, Nick Burkhardt (David Giuntoli), who comes into his Grimm powers. They are guardians who should keep the balance between humanity and Wessen/supernatural creatures. Although, along the way some of Nick's ancestors and family may have played fast and loose with their mission, and turned Grimm into something like the bogeyman.

Nick Burkhardt was not living up to his reputation right now. There was no outstanding Detective or fierce warrior.

Nope.

He was out of action and instead Nick felt like sitting on his sofa, wrapped up in his duvet and not facing his day. He was feeling lost without being able to access his Grimm powers that let him interact and battle evil supernatural forces.

It was the perfect plan - sit and veg. He figured he’d not pulled a sickie in a long time and Hank could catch up on his paperwork.

He couldn’t help but pout at the stern look his fiance was giving him.

“I’m useless.” Nick groused, feeling depressed as the reality of his circumstances set in. He’d never wanted to be a Grimm but now he felt unmoored without his powers. He hated that he couldn’t access all his senses. He also couldn’t shake his sixth sense. He felt deep in his gut that he’d be attacked by a Wessen whilst he was defenceless. Right now, it was open season and he couldn’t defend himself or any of his closest friends and family.

He wasn’t talking to himself but rather his fiance, Tony. It was Tony’s presence in his life that had kept him sane as he adapted to his Grimmhood. Only now, all his circumstances had changed once more without his permission - and he hated it.

~*~

Tony quirked an eyebrow at his lover. He was not used to hearing that defeated tone from Nick. He hated how sad Nick looked and if he could just give Nick back his powers he would in a heartbeat. Still, it was a vain hope but he wasn’t going to let him get lost in his negative thoughts. “Oh, really? Useless you say.”

“Well, how am I supposed to deal without my Grimm powers?” Nick asked sharply, more out of frustration than anything else. There was some progress as he’d let go of the duvet wrapping him up.

Tony got it. He did. He’d lived through similar sentiments twice in his life; once when he’d broken his leg and a second time when he’d faced his mortality after the plague. You need someone who
cared enough to say that yeah life sucks but you have so many other things you can do. It is like his coach had said; *dreams don’t die - sometimes they just need an adjustment.*

“So you can’t find things?” Tony asked, being deliberately obtuse.

Nick glared at him because that was a low blow. “I’d be a shitty Detective if I couldn’t.”

Tony smirked in victory as Nick had just made his point for him. “Well, I know the city doesn’t think that. Or didn’t you end up with an award last month?”

Nick snorted because Tony knew he had been given an award. Tony had been the one to pin the medal on his chest. It was also the night where they’d officially outed their relationship. Oh, they’d been seen out and about but never denied or confirmed anything about themselves. “I know what you’re doing.”

Tony sat down next to him and reeled him in for a kiss. “Do you?”

Nick closed the distance and kissed him back, messing up Tony’s tie in the process. “Yes, I do but it worked so thank you.”

Tony smiled fondly at Nick but wanted to make a few things clear. “Listen. I don’t care whether you’re a Grimm, a Detective, hell - you could choose to be a Feeb and I would still love Nick Burkhardt. They’re parts of you but not the whole.”

Nick knew his fiance had to go to work. He kissed him lightly. “Have fun keeping the terrorists at bay. I will stop wallowing and get my ass to work in the hour.”

Tony returned the chaste kiss. “Oh, I always knew you would.” He got off Nick’s lap and picked up his coffee, sauntering out of the door.

Nick would love to know how Tony always managed to look put together and large and in charge - no matter what chaos was surrounding him. He wished he could pick that trick up to try and fool his Captain. *Just once.*

~*~

Hank knew that his partner, Nick, had been down in the dumps. They’d worked together for too long for him not have picked up on it. He also knew the reason why Nick was morose due to struggling with his loss of powers.

So, of course, he was surprised to see him almost preppy today as he walked through the doors for the start of his shift. There was only one reason for his change in mood to be that abrupt.

Hank didn’t bother with more than asking. “Is Tony in town?”

Nick nodded, trying to hide his grin. Tony had come to Portland tracking a terrorist that was causing Homeland a headache. He was now the Special Operations Assistant Director of Homeland Security. Translation, he was Tom Morrow’s go-to guy for fixing whatever mess was developing. Or he was the one Morrow sent when inter-agency cooperation was needed, apart from NCIS, as he didn’t want to stress Tony out.

“Yeah, his week in Washington is done.” Nick explained.
Hank shook his head in bemusement. The man must be heaven sent - he’d tried all week to help his grumpy partner and failed miserably. Tony had been back one day and had fixed his mood. “So he’s pulled your head out of your ass?”

Nick glared at his partner and was then sheepish. “Have I been that bad?”

Hank clapped him on the shoulder. “Honestly? Worse.”

Any further chat on the matter had been interrupted by being given a case. Renard, his Captain, told them that a group who owned a scrapyard were suspected of shady dealings. It was impressive in so much as they were suspected of drug pushing, racketeering and modern slavery. Nick and Hank were always going to seek justice for those who couldn’t even if they felt like crap.

Nick should have stayed in bed and ignored Tony’s disapproving face because when he’d thought everything had gone to crap - it got worse.

~*~

It turns out that Nick’s best friend, Monroe, a Blutbaden came in handy. Hank just gave him a look. “Why do we need Monroe?”

Nick just gave his partner a look. He was not fond of a civilian riding with them on a case. Still, as Nick pointed out reasonably even though he hated it, he couldn’t ID a Wesen creature without his powers so they need one who could. The advantage of Monroe was that even if he was following a ‘vegan’ lifestyle he was capable of defending himself.

They’d made it the Junkyard which was where the criminal gang ran their empire. They’d got evidence that a sacrifice ritual in order to gain power was taking place that night. The luck, if there was such a thing, in this case, was that it needed to be at midnight exactly - meaning they had a few hours to shut the operation down.

Hank looked at his partner. “Are we good?”

Nick just gave him a look. “I may use my gun instead of a staff but the end result will still be the same.”

Hank snorted. “If you see this Phan-guy’s tongue you shoot or cut it off.”

Nick sighed because what he wouldn’t give for his powers to be back. Renard had given him a case where the Wesen was a psycho who wanted pure Wesen and liked to sacrifice victims to Kali in threes every day three years. He should have taken that aspirin back at the precinct because he couldn’t shake his headache. He was pushing back the pain because he wasn’t willing to sit on his ass whilst someone got sacrificed but it was getting to the stage where it was becoming painful rather than annoying.

Monroe must have caught on. “You okay, buddy?”

Nick managed a weak smile. “Getting there.”

They reached the yard and saw the fire pits already dug which was not promising. Monroe hung back and left it to the professionals. However, in the face of the psycho criminal gang they were up against, it did no good.

They were overwhelmed quickly by sheer numbers and Nick’s last conscious thought was seeing
Hank and Monroe being dragged away to a pit.

~*~

Nick groaned as he regained consciousness. It was just his luck - or Renard hated his guts. He was not too sure which one it was but he was currently being held captive by a Wesen. Well, he was ninety percent certain - it wasn’t like he could confirm with a visual ID. That would require his powers! He had a stray thought - would he see the tongue that would shoot out to strangle him without his powers?

Nick couldn’t break free of the two henchmen that were holding him in place so the leader could crow.

The leader sneered. “You are not so high and mighty now, are you?”

Nick’s headache was back with a new and fierce intensity. It was like there was an invisible pressure pressing against his skull. It was so strong that he couldn’t believe the three around him couldn’t feel it.

He hated everything about this situation. “What have you done with my friends?”

“Oh, they are in a pit, ready to be buried and offered up to Kali.”

If Nick could have, he would have sagged with relief because that meant they were still alive. The sacrifices were no good if the victims were dead before the ritual. Almost as if to confirm the leader was telling the truth he could hear them screaming for him.

Nick needed a miracle. All he had was a pain in his head and a rapidly worsening situation. What he needed was a capable backup but as far as he knew there was no one coming. He tried to look around the area to see if he could somehow make his own luck.

It was only his experience that stopped him giving the surprise away. He didn’t know why Tony was here but he was sure glad for the backup.

Tony entered the fray with the immortal line of, “Hey, get the hell off my fiance!”

Nick used the distraction to kick out and get out of the henchmen’s hold. Tony helped greatly by disabling the two by shooting them in their legs. The pain reached a crescendo as he broke free and if he wasn’t in a battle of life and death - he might’ve fist pumped with joy.

He was back! He could feel his Grimm powers flow once more through his veins.

The pain subsided and he felt energised. Tony was fighting at his back but this wasn’t going to be a long fight. He’d been longing for a good fight and now he had a group of despicable Wesen who would happily kill civilians in front of him.

“Oh, I’m back.”

Tony laughed in the midst of the chaos, understanding what Nick meant. “You were never gone.”

The small silver lining of Hank and Monroe being in the pits meant that everyone up top was a bad guy so could be taken out quickly. Nick had gained a staff in the ensuing fight and it felt oh so right in his hands.

Tony had two knives that he was using like they were extensions to his hands. He may have left
NCIS on bad terms but he’d never forgotten the lessons Gibbs had taught him. Tony parried an attack with a slash and then used the one guy’s own sword to impale him. “How many are there?”

“Not as many,” he panted, “as we started with.” Nick finished, feeling this workout and his blood was singing. He could admit it to himself he missed this part of him. He was a Grimm and he wouldn’t run from it any longer.

Tony was breathing hard as the fight wound down. All the bad guys were incapacitated or dead. He thought he should remind Nick of something. “Haven’t you got friends to find?”

Nick looked sheepish. “Hank!”

“Over here,” a voice to the right shouted.

Tony looked at his fiance and smirked, “I’m glad that your powers have been restored.”

Nick nodded. “Yeah. Thanks for putting up with me.”

Tony snorted because he’d accept the apology but he’d do it all over again. “I’m just glad my terrorist hunt drew me here. I have no doubt you could have saved your own ass but I was happy to lend a hand.”

Nick kissed him quickly and he’d agree to disagree. The odds were not in his favour before Tony appeared. They both wanted much more, and the adrenaline was still pumping through their veins. A quick squeeze of the hand promised to pick this back up when they eventually got home.

Tony chuckled softly at his fiance’s pout. There had been a few times where a sexy night was the effect of a massive Grimm fight. “Let’s go and get your partner.”

“Nick. Nick! Are you okay?” Hank was still screaming as they got closer to the pit keeping them out of the fight.

Nick peeked his head over the edge of the pit to see his two frantic friends. “Yeah, look who helped me out while you were taking a rest in the pit?”

Tony’s head popped over the side. “Well, let’s not laze about, Hank.”

Hank collapsed back on to Monroe with relief. He’d hated hearing the fight above him and not being able to back Nick up. He was glad Tony was there to support him. He managed to find the humour in the situation now the danger had passed. “Well, I suppose you have a vested interest.”

Tony snorted. “You betcha ass I do.”

~*~

The Captain looked at Nick, surprised as he stepped through the door of the precinct. He had a pep in his step and a Grimm aura once more. Of course, as they were still at the precinct he could hardly discuss the supernatural so Renard chose to settle for a neutral. “I hear you had aid from Homeland.”

“What can I say? Agent DiNozzo has a vested interest in saving my ass.” Nick replied cheekily.
“You seem to have sorted out everything?”

Nick smirked. “I am back in full fighting shape, Captain.”

Renard seemed to be pleased but there was a tenseness he didn’t understand. “Good.” Then turned and headed towards his office.

Hank frowned after the captain’s back. “What was that about?”

Nick shrugged, guessing that the Captain wasn’t as happy about a Grimm being back in the canton after all. Too bad. “Who knows? Probably worrying about power.”

Hank chuckled. “Only you, buddy.”

Nick smirked. “It’s all good. I got you and Tony, and Monroe.”

“Damn straight.”

Nick figured with that type of support he could take anyone. He had to prove it quite a few times in the future but never failed to come home to his husband.
“You have got to be fucking kidding me!” Tony exploded as he read something on the computer screen. He’d planned to just finish off some paperwork for their company but the alert caught him by surprise.

Methos raised an eyebrow at the behaviour of his companion. After all, his husband didn’t often swear. “What’s got your panties in a twist?” It was the British idiom, rather than an expression of a kink of Tony’s. Although he didn’t mind wearing some lingerie if the situation called for it.

Tony didn’t look amused at his husband’s question. “The stupid bitch has ignored her warning.”

Now, in a lifetime as long as Methos’ or Tony’s that wasn’t specific enough to know who they were talking about so Methos was drawing a blank. “You need to give me more than that.”

“Ziva bloody David is back in the US!”

Methos sighed because he’d been so sure Tony had finally given up his DiNozzo identity. It had taken nearly five years but the masks he’d used were finally starting to disappear. It was ironic the identity was seemingly disappearing as his British accent reappeared. “The little Mossad twit? So what?”

Tony just glared at him. His glare was almost asking Methos how he could be so stupid. “So you don’t think she’ll go after Gibbs now she thinks he won’t be looking for her?”

Methos snorted because that wasn’t a good bet to take. “No, revenge is in her DNA and she would hate to lose at anything. Daddy has no doubt used the failure to wind her up like a corkscrew and then pointed her at his enemies.”

It wasn’t like they didn’t have experience of every type of person. They didn’t need profiling degrees - they had life experiences of observing pretty much every type of individual there could be. “She has too high an opinion of herself.”

Tony flicked through files that he shouldn’t have access to anymore but he’d learned a few tricks from the hackers he’d arrested in the past. “She does. She is already implicated in the death of an ICE agent so Gibbs will have started a hunt for her, and her partner in crime.”

Adam listened patiently and handed Tony his own glass of refined whiskey. If they were going to plot and scheme then he insisted on them having a good drink. He had to say it. “Agent Anthony DiNozzo would have that problem but I have to remind you that he is dead. Quite nastily too.”

Tony sighed because he wasn’t unaware of the fact. As immortals locked into their cycle of never-ending life and challenges they had to live a certain way. Tony and Methos had already broken the rules by refusing to challenge each other. It was an unwritten rule of all immortals. There could only be one.

As a result, when immortals crossed each other’s paths they would challenge them to a sword fight to the death. It was all very archaic but the rules had been around since Methos used to run around as one of the four horsemen.

Tony collapsed into his lover’s side as he dragged them to their couch. “I know that Anthony Pearson has nothing to do with Ziva David - but it’s Gibbs.”
Methos would have loved to understand the relationship between his husband and the older man. He’d learned of what Tony had gotten up to during their time apart. His husband always did fall into the most interesting identities but this last one was a doozy.

He still couldn’t be sure if Tony adored or hated Gibbs. It seemed to change with each story to the point where he’d lost track.

~*~

Ziva was cursing her father. She was well aware she was being used as Michael’s leash. She had at one time loved him, that was until she’d realised just how much of a puppet he was for her father’s whims.

She’d been so sure she could use the Ari incident in her favour to secure herself a favourable life in the US. It hadn’t worked, he’d been too dysfunctional to even manage a true assassination.

Michael knocked back the last of the wine he’d ordered with his lunch. “Why the long face, love?”

If only they were the honeymooners they were pretending to be. She wouldn’t be so weary or on edge. She was neither in love nor comfortable with having Michael on this mission. This was a disaster in the making.

“You’re not being responsible.” She managed to scold him with and still keep her cover. If it would take playing the bitter newlywed - then it was hardly going to take any effort to play as right now she was furious.

He sighed as he put his glass down but was signalling a passing waiter to refill it. “You need to loosen up, he was one man and all will be well.”

She snorted because this was what happened with burn out. The person got into a spiral, they used drinking, or drugs, or both to help cope with the missions. They didn’t have enough downtime so needed to increase their fix and then ended up screwing up. If you ran the kind of missions that Mossad did - then you ended up dead.

~*~

Gibbs listened as Cassie Yates tried to run herd on Todd and McGee. It wasn’t an easy task but she had a low tolerance to bullshit and didn’t tolerate insubordination. He was glad to have found a stable SFA after Tony’s passing but he wished right now that Tony was here with his natural intuition.

Kate frowned as the case was explained. “Why is the ICE agent’s death being passed to us?”

Gibbs flashed up Ziva David’s picture. “This is Officer Ziva David of Mossad. We’ve crossed paths a time or two.”

Yates frowned looking through the record in front of her. “She is banned from entering the US. According to this, you made it so ... So why is she here?”

Gibbs shrugged because if he knew that then there wouldn’t be a case. “When we catch up to her ... We can ask.”
“Are they seriously going to attack Vance’s home?” McGee sounded like he couldn’t believe anyone would have the temerity.

“Not attack - burgle. Although she won’t care about collateral.” Gibbs explained as he was well aware this was her finishing business off from last time.

The only trouble was the last time she was around he lost Tony. Okay, even if it wasn’t permanently dead but he was never going to return to the US permanently in his lifetime. “Vance is having a private dinner with SecNav on Sunday... They’ll attack while it’s on.”

“I thought you said it will be a burglary?” Kate asked.

Gibbs shook his head. “She’ll want it to be ... He’s the one who killed the agent and I’ve reached out to some contacts. Right now, he’s burning a little too close to the sun.”

~*~

Tony laid luxuriously across the seat/recliner in the plane. There was travelling across the Atlantic in coach, and then there was how Tony and his husband travelled. They had money, and having a rich identity was perfect as it explained away eccentricities so easily.

“You know there is nothing short of full worship that can make up for having to come back here. It was actually sunny in London.” Methos complained.

Tony kissed him softly. “Oh, I will worship you anytime you like.”

Methos smirked at that comment. “You’re just saying that.”

Tony shook his head, trailing a path of kisses down the side of his face and opening his shirt. “You know me, Darlin. I always say actions speak louder than words.”

Methos groaned as Tony did exactly as was asked of him. He supposed Tony was entitled in settling a vendetta or two. It was not like he could throw stones after his whole Death phase.

~*~

The plan to stake out and capture them at the house failed miserably. Gibbs was going to make sure they put all agents into a boot camp. He didn’t care how good Mossad trained their agents - NCIS had twenty-five agents on the ground.

It did no good.

If he survived this fight he was going to find the mother-fucking mole. David and her paramour knew their plans too well. He was the only one left defending the panic room with Vance, Davenport and the Navy prototype inside it.

“I need back up at the SecNav’s location,” Gibbs demanded through his radio. He might have been asked further questions but the sounds of fighting kind of answered why for him.

Wait.

What he was hearing made no sense. He could hear actual fighting. As far as he knew he was facing David, and her little pet. So who was fighting if friendlies were inbound but still five minutes away. He had no clue but he would take any hail-mary he could get.
He heard a snide voice shout down a corridor. “You stupid chit, you have no idea about Death.”

Then an oh so familiar voice piped up. “He should know - he was Death.”

Gibbs had to snort at the retort of, “Well, I don’t like to brag and people look at me funny in modern times.”

Ziva screamed at Tony’s appearance. “You’re dead.”

“You should know, it’s funny how often I hear that.” Followed by a gunshot. Then there was a second one.

All the noise had stopped so Gibbs had cautiously moved forward toward the end of the corridor. He saw the couple once more, breathing hard and trying to come done from the adrenaline surge Gibbs was also breathing hard. “You’re a sight for sore eyes but what are you doing here?”

Tony rolled his eyes as his sword disappeared beneath his jacket and made Gibbs catch his weapon. “What do you mean? We were never here. Great shot by the way. I still prefer my sword though.”

Methos shook his head. “Nah, I miss my mace. You could win anything with one of those ugly bastards.”

Gibbs didn’t quite know what to say to that comment. In fact, he was sure there was no right answer but he was aware that Tony and his husband had once more saved his ass. They were making a habit of it and he definitely owed them. He wasn’t sure how he’d ever be able to repay the immortal couple but if it was within his power - it was theirs.

“Go. I’ll come up with a story. Try not to be strangers.”

Anthony had a radiant smile. “You should take a vacation and visit. It is actually warm for once in the UK.”

He saw Pearson’s face and guessed this was a long-running annoyance. It spoke of a long partnership and it gave him a pang for Shannon. “I’ll figure it out. Handy that the cameras got took out.”

“I know, right? One might consider it fate.” And just like that - they disappeared.

God he missed Tony. Gibbs was glad to know that his protege was still doing well in the world even if their paths were no longer on the same route. He knew Tony was older than dirt but it didn’t matter - he still considered him a son.
Vance was at a loss. NCIS had captured Deckard Shaw, DiNozzo had managed to take him down in defence of a DSS agent. He was still trying to get his head around the fact DiNozzo was actually dating said DSS agent. His high of claiming a huge fish was dashed not three hours later. *How quickly a day could turn.*

So he was in his office six hours later, listening to Agents McGee and David explain what had happened. He was not impressed but then again neither was the leader of his premier team.

“You’re telling me that he got the drop on you.” Gibbs asked with surprise.

Ziva flushed as she was embarrassed by the whole thing. Worse, it was only her and McGee accompanying Deckard. It should have been a *biscuit* walk. And yet, they were made to look like idiots and worst of all, everyone knew. All she could offer by way of defence was, “He was powerful.”

Gibbs was glaring at her. “There were two of you, with guns, and DiNozzo had secured him with a firehose. Why did you redo the plastic zip ties he left him in?”

She winced inwardly because she had chosen to go with metal cuffs thinking the plastic ties were a bad idea.

McGee spoke up. “We both felt the plastic ties would be used as a distraction.”

Vance rolled his eyes as it was practically *transport prisoner 101*. “They’re used because unless you were careless enough to leave a knife with you they’re more secure. You just have to watch the hands and feet for blood circulation.”

Gibbs spoke up. “Did you resecure the legs?”

McGee shook his head. “No, we were in a car. It would have been inhumane.”

Gibbs stared at him as if he was stupid. He wasn’t but he felt small. Gibbs wasn’t done. “You can’t be serious - Did you read this guy’s rap sheet?”

McGee shook his head. “We were told by Tony to see him back to Washington as he was going to the hospital with his *boyfriend*. He couldn’t help but add snidely. He knew in his head that it wasn’t a smart choice but here he was being reprimanded and Tony was sunning himself.

“Careful what you say about Agent Hobbs.” Gibbs warned.

McGee flushed and went silent. He suddenly found himself looking at his shoes. He hated this whole thing. It was not his fault that he’d been knocked unconscious by a tank. Deckard Shaw was not human with the way he moved. He didn’t get how Tony had managed to take him down.

There must have been something showing on his face. “Spit it out, Agent McGee.”
McGee went to open his mouth but seeing the glare from Vance and Gibbs, the retort died on his lips.

“So what was the lapse of judgement that allowed Deckard to break free?” Gibbs asked with a deadly tone. They knew the wrong answer here could have a serious impact on their futures.

Ziva and Tim stayed silent.

Vance growled. “Spit it out!”

“The music.”

Vance looked at them as if to see if they were actually telling the truth. Vance pinched his nose. He couldn’t dismiss them out of hand, mainly because he’d touted them as good agents with promising futures. He was already going to look bad but he needed to play this right. “You will both be sent back to FLETC to repeat basic operating procedures like a nugget.”

“We’re not trainees.” Ziva protested.

“Then don’t act like one.” Vance sneered. “Don’t look at Gibbs, he agrees with me.”

Ziva wasn’t willing to let this go. “What about DiNozzo?”

“What about him? He’s the hospital looking after his fiance and stepdaughter.” Vance replied. And that was telling because it was well-known that Vance was not Tony’s biggest fan but it seemed that was now not the case.

Gibbs wasn’t willing to entertain the conversation any further. “Get out of our sight now, or, you can go tell Hobbs that the man is free once more.”

“We need to get him into protective custody.” Tim exclaimed like he was just figuring out the repercussions of his actions.

Gibbs didn’t know whether to laugh or despair. “He is his own security and he has Tony. It’s not like I can trust you pair to run it.”

The two left knowing that whilst this was bad - it could have been so much worse. They could have been fired.

~*~

Hobbs was waking up to see a worried Tony and Sam sitting curled up together in a chair by his bed. “Did you get the name of that tank that hit me?”

Tony shook his head. “Yeah, Deckard Shaw. Slippery bas...fish slipped away too.”

When Gibbs had told Tony he’d wanted to cuss up a storm. It was only the presence of his stepdaughter that had stopped him. He’d been surprised by the fact Ziva and Tim had faced serious consequences but it was needed.
“How?” Hobbs hissed as he turned wrong.

“Agents David and McGee allowed Deckard to get the better of them.” Tony figured was a fair response.

Hobbs took a deep breath because he was mindful of a) the cast around his hand and b) his daughter being in close proximity. “I want to express my feelings in a profound way.”

Tony smirked, knowing Luke’s idea of profound was the mother of all beatings. “Well, then you will have to get better and ensure that you offer to guest lecture at FLETC.”

“Oh really?”

Tony nodded. “Didn’t you say you were offered but you were chasing a suspect through Europe?”

“It was true.” Hobbs pouted. “I was really looking forward to gloating to his sorry ass.”

Tony shrugged, careful not to dislodge Sam. “I know. We’ll get a chance but you need to heal.”

“I’d kiss you but I don’t want to wake Sammy.” Luke responded, sounding morose about the fact. Elena’s head popped around the doorframe mischievously announcing. “There is an agent demanding to see his SFA.”

Tony rolled his eyes. “It’s Gibbs. He gets possessive but he is a good idea. If Little Miss was awake she’d call him Uncle Jethro.”

Tony was sure there was a maximum visitor allowance but no one was enforcing it in Luke’s room. “Hey Gibbs.”

Gibbs nodded and said softly with regard to a sleeping Sam. “We’re back to partners.”

Tony shrugged. “Excellent, although we need others as well. We’ll pick TAD’s.”

Gibbs just smirked as he was remembering the time back when that used to be the case. Truth be told, he’d reflected a lot on the flight. He wasn’t the type to say sorry but he could move forward in the right direction. It sounded good to go back to a two-man team.

“Sounds good to me.” Gibbs saw the young girl waking up.

She jumped up in surprise. “Uncle Jethro! You’re here.”

He grinned. “Yeah, I wanted to check on your Daddy and Papa.”

She sighed. “Dad got hurt and Papa hit the bad guy with a fire extinguisher!”

Gibbs smirked. “I don’t know where your Papa gets that craziness from.”

Tony and Hobbs both said in sync. “You.”

Gibbs smirked back and Sammy whirled around. “Daddy - you’re awake.”

She jumped off Gibbs and tentatively walked up to her Dad. She didn’t want to make his hurts worse but she really wanted a hug. He must have known because he ushered her forward. “Come
give me a hug, baby girl.”

Sam carefully hugged Luke and Tony’s heart just swelled. It was such a sweet moment after the stress of the attack on headquarters. He took a snap and no one would believe the big bad Luke Hobbs, the scourge of all criminals could look like a teddy bear cuddled with his daughter sporting a massive cast to protect his injured arm.

Gibbs stayed as silent support. They were all aware that Deckard could choose to come back and finish the job.

“How do we trap him?”

Tony whispered it, still watching his partner and their girl. “You set a trap using the brother.”

Gibbs was surprised because that was a level of ruthlessness he rarely saw from his second. “He is devoted to Owen.”

Tony shrugged. “So am I to my family.”

Gibbs patted him on the shoulder. “Take the time to watch over them in hospital and we’ll brainstorm it out.”

Tony managed a weak grin. He was glad Gibbs wasn’t trying to stop him. He needed to get Deckard in prison again - he knew it was important for the future of the family that he and Luke had built. “I like that plan - a lot.”

“We’ll protect your family, Tony.”

Tony let out a breath of air he hadn’t known he’d been holding. It had been a worry for longer than he realised which was incredible as he hadn’t even known it. He was well aware that Luke could take care of himself but he loved the man stupid and had come scarily close to seeing Luke check out on them.

“Good.”

~*~

It was the evening when a bald-headed man strolled in. “If you are about to threaten Hobbs you can turn right around and go screw yourself.”

“I want to get Shaw.” The gruff man explained. “I need Hobbs.”

“He is injured but that doesn’t mean I won’t go,” Tony offered, knowing Toretto didn't know him.

Dom didn't know the grey haired one, he looked annoyed. He didn't answer one question for Dom. “Are you seriously going to go off with Dominic Toretto, DiNozzo?”

Tony snorted. “Gibbs, Micky Malculusco called me son. He still does despite knowing I’m a cop. I can more than play in this world but still know where the line is.”

Hobbs had opened one eye. “If I have to chase your ass down I will spank you.”

Tony smirked, kissing him lightly. “Don’t threaten me with a good time while you’re holding our
daughter. You rest and let me get this one.”

“Come back soon, you hear me?”

Tony kissed him one last time. “Of course I will. I feel the same. We really should sort out getting married when I get back.”

Knowing he had the best last line he left the room with swagger and his purpose clear in his mind. Gibbs kept pace, having already called Fornell to arrange more protection. “You’ll need a sniper.”

Dom nodded. “The more the fucking merrier. I just want his head on a spike.”

“You shouldn’t say that to Federal Agents.” Tony reminded him. “By the way, I’m Special Agent Anthony DiNozzo, and this is Special Agent Jethro Gibbs.”

“Dom.”

Tony might have said something about being a man of few words but he’d worked with Gibbs for way too long.

_Deckard really had no idea what was coming after him - and he thought he could handle a wildcard team._
Don't Mess with my Man (Daniel Jackson 2)

This is set in the same universe as the Too Hot for Words expanded story. If you haven't read it this should still make sense but spoiler alert there is a familial relationship uncovered at the end that links to this one.

Tony didn’t think his life would go this way. A year ago he’d had a plan and it involved waiting for Gibbs to retire and taking over the MCRT at NCIS. It wasn’t the most original but it had worked for him. He was still willing to go down that path after all the crap with Ziva because he was committed to his goals for the future.

It all changed with a holiday to Italy.

He definitely hadn’t expected to find the love of his life on an Italian beach. He had definitely not expected to end up with aliens being part of his day job, although his new job was really cool. Spaceships, aliens and technology galore to explore.

He definitely hadn’t expected to find out the pathetic excuse of a man who’d masqueraded as his father was not his Dad. His biological father, Jack, was a General in the Air-Force and best of all, a good man.

So all in all, life was pretty good. Today, his plan was to finish off his paperwork and once Danny had gotten back from DC he was taking his fiance out to dinner.

He should have known better than to tempt fate with SG1’s luck.

~*~

The General had called SG1 up from their separate workspaces along with Tony. It was not a good sign because the General calling the briefing wasn’t Landry but rather O’Neill.

Tony had taken one look at his father’s face and knew just what was wrong. After all, something bad had to have happened as he was down from DC, and his anger exploded. He and Sam were in the room so it left only one other person who could get his father furious in that way. “Who?”

“That will be your job to find out, kiddo.” Jack replied. There was nothing in their threat profile apart from the standard ones. His best-friend had learned how to look after himself but he was still so goddamn jeopardy friendly. He was thinking of assigning Danny a bloody marine bodyguard.

“When will they learn not to fuck with my goddamn fiance?” Tony asked darkly.

The rest of the team looked at him in surprise. Tony was the one to clue in the rest of SG1. “Daniel was in DC for a meeting with the IOA. Why would the General be here if something hadn’t happened to him? I knew I should have gone with him. I ignored my instinct.”

“I should warn you to be careful and not go off half-cocked.” Jack said to his former team but he knew better. He’d been part of that team and when you worked at places like the SGC you were all in, all of the time, and an attack on one of them was an attack on them all.
Landry was the one to ask. “But?”

“It’s Danny.” O’Neill replied as if it was that obvious. “You bring down whoever took our *space-monkey* and we’ll clean up the mess afterwards.” Jack said simply.

Tony started to order his mind and think through the angles that would be needed. A kidnapping he could work, and for now, he stowed his anger and focussed on the facts. Anger wouldn’t get Danny back, after all.

~*~

Mitchell could lead a search and rescue but that was once intel had done its job. He was smart enough to seek the advice of Tony, the one with experience in such matters. “Okay, how do we find Jackson?”

Tony thought through the resources they had available. They were a lot he’d have given his first born for half of them when he was a cop. “First we go to intelligence and see what they can tell us about Danny’s monitoring signal.”

Sam nodded in agreement. “With a time frame, we can start a satellite trace to track his movements.”

“That’s the idea. If we can get an idea on who the kidnappers are then we can go after associates too.” Tony was all for the shake every branch loose to see what he might find. However, whoever had taken Danny was going down. He wasn’t interested in just the kidnappers but rather the whole organisation.

Sam started to key into the computer the necessary passwords to access the satellite they used to track the Stargate Personnel. It might seem excessive but those people had saved the world so it wasn’t an excessive cost.

“It was triggered at 16:45 at these coordinates.” Sam explained, pointing at the monitor.

Tony sucked in a breath. “Wow, that is a perfect place to make a snatch and grab. Danny figured it out. Watch.”

This satellite actually had video playback. It wasn't swamped in memory issues because it only started to actively record when a monitoring signal was interfered with.

Tony asked to take over at the monitor as, while he had no doubt of Carter’s intelligence, this was his speciality. He was way better at computer work than McGee or Abby actually suspected. He had gained the snapshots of the four-man team that had snatched Danny. His situational awareness hadn’t been at fault and Danny got in a few licks and even better, dragged the mask down of the two who took point on capturing him.

Tony had every single database possible running the faces. “Anyone recognise these bastards?”

Sam pointed at one of the men. “He has ties to Kinsey, I think?”

Tony pinched his nose. “I want every single file on the Trust.”

“That’s a lot.”

Tony smirked. “Good job I’m an investigator then, oh, and used to it.”
“What are you planning?” Sam asked carefully. She knew that look all too well. It was the type Jack used when he was about to reach for semtex or say something sarcastic to a bad guy.

Tony looked at every one of them. “I am going to run down the leads to find Danny, and then ... then I intend to find the entire organisation and build a case against them to take them down. No one messes with Danny.”

She smiled at that plan. She had no doubt that he could achieve what he set out to do. “Cameron and I can help with the reading. Tell us what to look for?”

And that was that - the team started to run through everything they could find. The computer was sending out hits as they recognised the perpetrators. Tony wasn’t done though, he was going to tie up the whole organisation and bring it down. It could be like a Christmas present to his Dad as he knew how much he detested them. He’d get ahold of Ba’al as well if he could.

It took two very long hours to get a fix on where they’d taken Danny. Still, Tony hadn’t been idle. He’d cracked on with the Trust hierarchy. Once he had the organisational hierarchy he would dig deeper into the evidence and make as many links as he could. He was aware that they had a Feeb on the payroll and RICO would be their friend in this case.

*The Trust was ending and soon - if Tony had his way.*

~*~

Danny groaned as he woke. He had the cottony taste in his mouth which he recognised as chloroform. “Wasn’t a taser and chloroform overkill for an archaeologist?”

“You weren’t going to pretend to sleep and archaeologists don’t carry two guns and three knives.” Goon one said with a quirked eyebrow.

Danny took a deep breath and didn’t react because they’d missed one knife. He had to figure out quickly who had him and for what agenda. He had no doubt that the SGC would be chasing down leads and Tony would be his usual efficient self.

“I watched too much Indiana Jones as a kid.”

Goon Two rolled his eyes. “You will find that playing the defenceless archaeologist won’t work with us. The three you took down were highly trained and we know about Project Bluebook.”

Danny looked bemused. “You know what I do so that makes me wonder who are you? Trust, IOA or Ba’al?”

The expression when he said Trust told him he had his winner. He figured since they were in a talkative mood try to steer the conversation to his favour. “How long have I been out? I just can’t handle a taser and chloroform. I know Jack has told me I’m a lightweight.”

“Ninety Minutes.”

Daniel steeled himself, he was guessing he would have about an hour before Tony and co beat the door down. “So why am I here?”

“We need something from you.”
Daniel didn’t roll his eyes as he was trying to keep his sarcasm to a minimum whilst tied to anything. He didn’t need to add to the bruises he was inevitably going to accrue when he didn’t give in to their demands. “Like?”
He figured he could be polite and hear their demand before refusing. It might come in handy for the debriefing.

“We have this sarcophagus we need translating and the goa’uld who was in our custody expired when he revealed he didn’t know the variant of Egyptian.”

Danny sighed. “I take it he didn’t die of natural causes?”

Goon One shook his head. “No, we are under a deadline. The pressure is on us to deliver so we needed the best.”

“You know I think my consultancy rates are very reasonable. You didn’t need to kidnap me.”

Goon one snorted. “We may not be able to translate obscure Egyptian but we’re not stupid.”

Daniel was so proud of the fact that he bit back on his sarcastic retort as they were so very stupid. Still, some people couldn’t be taught - they needed to learn through life experiences.

He was curious as to what the sarcophagus was - and why the Trust would be interested in it. He’d thought to refuse but it may benefit him for once to play along. If the Trust had a new angle then the SGC would need to know in order to combat it.

“So what is it?”

Goon one was suspicious, showing he wasn’t completely stupid. “Just like that?”

Daniel sighed acting most put upon, which in truth, wasn’t difficult considering he’d been kidnapped. If he wasn’t part of SG1 that fact might have bothered him but he’d suffered it one too many times. It was now just part and parcel of his day. “Well, I am not going anywhere. I guess I move or do anything you don’t like violence will ensue.”

“You would be right.” Goon two promised like he was actually threatening.

Danny couldn’t find it in himself to be scared. He carried on with his explanation. “So I figure I may as stimulate my academic interest about what was so important you felt the need to kidnap me.”

His words were persuasive as he was being hauled up by goon two who looked more like a WWE wrestler.

“Get your hands off him.” A new voice that Danny recognised intimately.

~*~

Tony, Sam and Cameron were using a mic to listen in on the radio to assess what was going on inside the place they were holding Danny. The minute they’d heard Daniel being moved they were breaching, Tony had lead here, their desperation was such to make the situation too volatile to risk leaving it.

He saw his Danny in the hands of a wrestler wannabe. “Get your hands off him.”
“Or what?”

Tony knew the rest of the team were fanning out. He was in his element though, this wasn’t his first Mexican stand-off. “I will shoot you in the head and take him from you.”

“You don’t have the stones.” Goon Two goaded.

Tony rolled his eyes and hit him with a bullet dead centre in the eyes. He winced as Danny dropped but he covered the ground quickly over to his fiance. He knew goon one was being secured to interrogate. He wanted to make sure that he had the whole organisation and he’d be useful to cross-reference his list. “You are not going anywhere without me or one of the team. Dad and I decided.”

Danny rolled his eyes. “Just untie me.”

“That’s not what you usually say,” Tony whispered.

Danny chuckled. “I do in mixed company and my best friend.”

Tony pouted but he was just overwhelmingly relieved that Danny was okay. It didn’t mean he wasn’t going to take down the Trust piece by piece, and he fully intended to hunt down every financial transaction too. There was a pretty scientist who was over from Atlantis that promised she’d have them tracked by the time he came back with Danny. He didn’t doubt it as she’d hacked the entire planet to hide the battle over the Antarctic. “I will give you that but you got kidnapped again.”

Daniel sighed because he was well aware that neither Tony nor Jack was going to let go of the fact anytime soon. “I want that sarcophagus! It was worth snatching me and I don’t want it to stay with the Trust I am petty like that.”

Tony snickered. “You’re getting a beam up to the Prometheus and a check up. I promise to make sure that anything of use comes with us.”

Tony could see the unanswered question. “I am not leaving a Trust around to kidnap you. This is what I do. I’ll be back before you get through with your checkup.”

“See you soon.” Danny said softly. The emotion was how he conveyed the words he wanted while still managing to keep a professional facade.

“I promise.”

And Tony did as promised but he also collected every scrap of evidence he needed from the place too. It turns out the warehouse was a regional zone for the Trust so they were pretty stupid.

Jack loved Tony’s 12 days of Christmas that year - as he took down every sector of the Trust. It was a gift without compare - plus he saved Kinsey for Christmas Day.
News to Me (Will McAvoy)

Chapter Notes

The TV Show Newsroom was by Aaron Sorkin and Will McAvoy is played by the fantastic Jeff Daniels in the show.

- Will was listening to his old friend. “You want to say that again.”

He wasn’t hard of hearing - it was just he couldn’t believe that he would ever pull such a stunt.

Charlie though clearly had done it as he had no shame in repeating his first sentence. “I have brought McKenzie McHale back to produce. It’s going to be great.”

Will showing all his famed maturity bashed his head against the desk. “I should have moved full time to DC and just prosecute, I’d be closer to Tony.”

Charlie was leaning against the doorframe snorted at the stunt. He moved over to the good whiskey. “You’re not worried about your boyfriend are you?”

Will just gave him a pointed stare. “Try not to say that with such derision, Charlie.”

Charlie held his hands up in surrender. “I’m not being funny. The man carries a gun.”

“Well, he is a Federal Agent so he is allowed.” Will couldn’t resist reminding Charlie. “Why?”

“It is about time we produce the news!” Charlie shouted, causing a few people in the bullpen area to stop what they were doing. It was only momentarily as Skinner was a well-known eccentric who did things his way.

Will was shocked. “What about the audience share!”

“We’ll get it back if we do this right.” Charlie said assuredly.

“I’m in a relationship with a man who could do with obscurity.” Will had to try and reason for the sake of his relationship. He’d been adrift before he’d struck up the relationship with Tony.

Charlie sighed. “Take the weekend, I will do the meet and greet with Mac. Go and square things with the boyfriend.”

“I prefer lover, on the grounds, you know, I am not twelve.” Will replied with sarcasm.

Tony had headed back to his apartment block. He was glad he’d chosen to access his fund to purchase an apartment in the Cedar Grove new build. It was stupidly expensive but it was discrete, only the super-rich lived there and offered top class security.

As he opened the door, he heard the low trad country tone of his partner belting out Country Roads. “Will? I thought you were in Seattle wowing everyone.”
The guitar stopped. “I was and then Charlie hired my ex as EP and I got pissy about it. His words, not mine.”

Tony stepped into the apartment and secured his gun. “You mean Mac?”

“Yeah.” Will said with a sigh. He knew they could work together but it had been a difficult time the closing of their relationship. He’d been ready to marry her, and she’d cheated on him.

Tony snuggled with his head on Will’s lap. It was a great place to be content and it also had the added benefit of getting Will to talk. “So can you work with her?”

“Yes, Charlie wants us to do the news again.” Will explained in a tone that was half hopeful, and half scared.

Tony snorted because he knew Will too well. “No one wants to listen to the news it is a scary place. You get the listeners and keep debates open on issues that matter.”

Will was passionate though on informed choice. “I’d love to do the news. So many don’t vote, so many don’t read or have informed choices. You know a sorority girl asked me a question about what makes America great. She really wouldn’t have like my response if I’d give my true feelings.”

Tony looked up bemused. “You know if you keep all these things inside you’re going to explode on air.”

Will found himself pouting at the observation. He only felt safe enough around Tony to let this looser side out. “I don’t keep them inside, I talk to you about them.”

Tony’s heart swelled at the comment. “And I’m glad to be here.”

Will was thinking about the lure of doing the news. It was why he’d gotten into journalism in the first place. He’d worked hard to move on the first time, spending a stupid amount of time in therapy. Although he’d worked through more shit since meeting Tony on a plane.

“If I do this, you might be found.” Will had to say. He wasn’t naive and the choice he made would affect Tony. He couldn’t in good conscience make such choices unilaterally.

“You’re going to say unpopular things?” Tony asked with a smirk, knowing full well the answer.

Will snorted. “I’m going to unbias the news. It’s going to offend somebody.”

Tony looked up. “Do I need to be in Seattle?”

“I can’t ask that of you.” Although Will loved him for even just offering.

Tony rolled his eyes. “You’re not asking that, I’m offering. It is what you do in a relationship. You compromise.”

Will pulled him into a kiss, and it was a spark that saw them both horizontal on the couch. They moved to the bed after the first round for comfort and space to truly explore each other.

In the evening light with a glorious afterglow Tony whispered, “I don’t know what says love you like joining the damn FBI.”
Will kissed him. “Love you too, Darlin.”

~*~

Tony waltzed into NCIS with a light step. This was going to be his last two weeks there, after all, so he could stomach it. He didn’t know he needed to make the choice until he’d written the resignation letter.

He didn’t see the point in delaying it any longer than necessary. It wasn’t a case of regretting his choice but making the full commitment to a choice. “Hey Gibbs, I need to give you this.”

Gibbs took the white letter. “What is it?”

“My resignation.” Tony said like it should have been obvious.

“Your what?”

Tony could have sworn he said it simply enough. “I’m relocating to Seattle and have decided to take Fornell up on his offer.”

Kate was the one to find her voice first. “You hate the FBI.”

Tony shrugged because in the past he hadn’t been fond of the politics in the DC office. “I am not fond but that’ll change and I am fond of my partner who needs me in Seattle so it is a done deal.”

Tim frowned, having caught the partner comment. “Since when did you have a steady partner?”

“Since before you were part of the team.” Tony snapped back.

There was absolute silence. Tony rolled his eyes. It was not his job to educate them in basic human perception. He had reports to close out as he wasn’t the type to leave with a job half done.

~*~

Tony had settled into the field office and Fornell had forgotten to mention he was the Deputy Agent in charge of the whole office!

Anyway, life was good even if Will was enjoying having a news channel where he got to preach every opinion he chose. Sadly, the new show was being met with a mixed reception. Tony listened to it without fail if he could and wow, he was going to get death threats.

Adams, his assistant, snorted at Will’s comments about the Tea Party group. Tony though just bashed his head against the desk. It was like he was having a competition about who could have the worst enemy list. He groaned, knowing that this was going to get crazy.

“Boss?”

Tony held a hand up to silence Adams and dialled the first number on his speed dial. “You crazy motherfucker. You accept a bodyguard and you do what he says or I will never sleep with you again.”

The other voice was sheepish. “That’s a bit harsh.”

“No, sweetheart. It’s not the threat you think. I won’t be able to sleep with you because you will be
dead.” Tony assured Will. He never wanted his partner to change his ways but he would be damned if he’d let himself get killed.

~*~

The only time Will McAvoy was without a guard was when he was with Tony. A news reporter had asked about it and Will has just given him an evil look that had Tony snickering.

It was about to get answered, though, in spectacular fashion. Their dinner had been calm and because they’d thrown money at it they had a private booth. They didn’t do it often but they wanted fine cuisine and no nosey public.

Will was giving a rundown about a few of his doozy threats and his favourite comments. “I think my favourite was I should be buried face down as I know which way to go.”

Tony snickered seeing the dark humour for it was - a way to cope. “Well, I want you face down on the bed so I can do terribly debauched things to you.” He calmly finished his drink and smirked wickedly at the hitch in Will’s voice. “Does that count?”

“Hell yes.”

They slipped out onto the street only to face a guy shouting horrific abuse. That was nothing new, Tony reacted more to the knife being brandished. He stepped in front of Will and took the attacker’s attention onto him. “Oh, you brought a knife to the party.” Tony stayed calm and shrugged. “Let me get mine.”

Only Tony didn’t pull his knife - he pulled his gun and shot him in the leg in one fluid motion. He watched as he fell back on the floor. “Fool bringing a knife to a gun fight.”

Will was usually vehemently opposed to guns but watching Tony he wasn’t too upset. “That was hot.”

Tony was cuffing the attacker and calling an ambulance for him. “All part of my plan to seduce you tonight.”

“Then you succeeded.”

Tony may have traded NCIS but life was never boring in Seattle. After all, Will was too fond of talking about the news. It wouldn’t be the first time or the last time that he would have to defend Will’s life from a nut job but he did promise Will in sickness or health; better or worse so it was all cool.
Tony was confused as hell. He was risking a hell of a lot but then again so was his partner. It was a good job that he knew how to be discrete.

Aaron was a senior advisor to President Richmond so he needed to be discrete. His boss was aware and whilst he couldn’t order him, it had been made clear that he would not be kept on board if he was discovered.

And yet Tony was worth it.

“You sure you want to stay here this evening, Aaron?”

Aaron smiled. “Yes, Sir. You need someone here while you wow the country.”

Richmond clapped him on the back. “You’re a good man.”

Aaron smiled politely as that was what you did with the Leader of the Free World. In reality, he was well aware that Richmond wanted his face on TV as little as possible so the media didn’t pay attention to him. Richmond figured it was a punishment but it would protect his lover so he was more than okay with it. “Thank you, Sir.”

~*~

Tony was at work, running a case where a Naval Commander had been killed and it was messy. It looked like a sex game had gone wrong with a dominatrix. The tricky part was the wife didn’t know he was visiting one.

He wanted to go home but it was the state of the union so there was no point. Aaron would no doubt be at the White House. It did make him laugh that his partner loved politics but hated working for the current administration.

All that changed in less than ten seconds.

The State of the Union disappeared from the screen. It might have been a technical glitch but they felt a concussive ripple. Tony had his phone in his hands ringing number 2 on his speed dial. “Pick up, you bastard.”

Gibbs looked at him and they knew immediately what they were facing. Tony found himself shouting the orders from just his bosses look. “I want a roll call. Every base, ship, and office. Call in now.”

“What’s happening?”

Tony looked grim but explained it to McGee who hadn’t put the elements together yet. “There is
only one reason the State of the Union goes off the air. Or, you know, feel free to look out the window. Pick up.”

Tony nearly fell off his chair with relief when he got an answer. “Tell me you are in the White House!”

“I am.” Aaron confirmed. “He didn’t want me there, the homophobic git.”

Tony let out a silent prayer. “Right now, I’m grateful. Babe, it’s bad. You better be prepared to swear in the Designated Survivor.”

“Fuck. It’s Kirkman.” Aaron swore. His mind racing through all the contingency plans he’d learned as the Deputy Chief of Staff. Richmond didn’t like him but none could argue with Aaron’s ability to read a political situation or his contact book. It was more a case of, they wanted Aaron working for them rather than against them.

Tony chuckled knowing what a potential headache his lover was about to face. “Well, he is a straight shooter so have fun with that. I gotta go and find out who did it. Try to keep the country functioning. I love you.”

Aaron clung to those words, knowing just like Tony there was no way he’d be able to get home any time soon. “Te Amo.”

Tony needed to hear those words as well. He couldn’t believe he was saying the words. “Well, I’ll see you whenever. Just don’t fucking die.”

Aaron, being him and all, sassed him straight back. “I should be saying that you.”

“We’ll get through this. Go and sort the country while I start finding the bastards.”

~*~

McGee and Todd were looking askance at him. “You just made a personal call when the President has just been attacked.”

Tony rolled his eyes as they both needed to learn not to see things only surface deep. He was done hiding and knew Aaron felt the same. “No, I just checked that my lover was okay and not at the Union as he works for Richmond. It’s confirmed. POTUS is dead and the Designated Survivor is on his way to the White House to be sworn in.”

Gibbs had known all about Aaron. “Who is it?”

“Tom Kirkman, the HUD Secretary. He’s just got the quickest and most unwanted job promotion in the world.”

“You don’t think Aaron feels the same?”

Tony shrugged. “He’ll be in his element but he’ll have his work cut out for him. Kirkman is a straight shooter and the entire government has been taken out in one fell swoop.”

“It’s our job to figure out who.” Gibbs reminded him.

Kate whispered. “Aaron.”
Tony rolled his eyes. “POTUS has just been killed. I want to find out why - not delve into my romantic history.”

She held her hands up in surrender but you could tell from Tony that this was not a discussion that was over. Just delayed. They’d all have work to do in the coming days and gossiping about himself was so not on his agenda.

~*~

Tony watched Congressman MacLeish get pulled from the rubble of the Capitol Building. People around him were cheering and he had a sinking feeling. MacLeish was weak and feeble as one might suspect but there were microexpressions of smugness. “Something’s wrong.”

Gibbs pulled his protege to the side. “Explain it to me.”

Tony pulled Gibbs to the elevator. He needed to pace and think through the problem but was well aware of how highly charged things were at the moment - it should be in private. “Too neat and tidy.”

“How?”

“So a set of bombs are activated in such a way that caused maximum devastation but the good congressman miraculously survives? I am not fond of higher powers and bombs don’t deliver miracles ... just pain and suffering.” Tony pointed out.

“So he knew or was prepared for it? Where did he go?” Gibbs asked. “You know you’re going to need proof if we’re going to accuse the hero they’re going to make him out to be.”

Tony sighed because he was well aware of just how the media were going to paint him. Aaron had been confirmed as Chief of Staff that morning as he’d messaged Tony. He needed to have a conversation with Aaron and discretely. First of all, he needed proof of his theory.

“Yo, McGeek - pull up the State of the Union - all angles.”

McGee frowned but didn’t question the order for once. The probie didn’t know it but he responded to the natural authority Tony exuded. What he didn’t realise was Tony was done playing a role to make the new team members feel better - there was too much at stake for him to play a clown.

“Who am I focusing in on?”

“MacLeish.” Tony replied with an even tone.

“Why?”

Tony smirked. “Call it a hunch. Focus on the minute before the explosion.”

Tim did as he was told more out of curiosity for what Tony suspected. About thirty seconds before the explosion on the timestamp they could see MacLeish look at his phone and conveniently start to move. “Hey, McSuperstar, any way to find out what that message was about?”

McGee was biting his lip and his fingers were flying over the keys. He was too eager to solve the
mystery. “What was it?”

Tony sighed, looking at Gibbs who had swiftly joined them. “My guess, a message to get safe.”

“This is a goddamn conspiracy. We need to find all of his friends.”

Tony already had his cellphone dialling Aaron. “I need to speak to whoever is in charge of the detail. He can’t let MacLeish near the President.”

“What!”

Tony hated to be the bearer of bad news but this was too risky and he refused to let a threat get that close to the President. “MacLeish is caught on camera moving away from the blast zone after a message on his phone 30 seconds before the explosion. It’s too suspicious, my team will quietly dig for the evidence but you can’t let the President go near him.”

Tony heard a curse and he could hear Aaron practically running somewhere. “This is Ritter.”

“Hey Agent Ritter, listen - I am going to ask you to look at the footage package I will send you. It puts Congressman MacLeish under suspicion.”

“How credible?”

Tony snorted. “Look at the video I’ve just sent you and make your own mind up. I’ll stay on the line.”

“Son of a bitch.”

Tony rolled his eyes at Gibbs. “Look. We will get you the firm evidence but I couldn’t risk Aaron, or the President.”

The call closed not long after, Gibbs couldn't help but comment. “Interesting priority list.”

Tony shrugged because right now he didn’t give a fuck. “I love Aaron and he is always standing close to the President so protecting the President protects Aaron.”

You couldn’t fault that logic.

~*~

Kirkman had listened as the two NCIS agents briefed him on the facts that had been uncovered. And, Jesus Christ, everyone had assumed that it was foreign terrorists and it wasn’t even close. It was a disaffected CEO who’d grown disillusioned with what he felt was a pansy-ass government.

“The Light of the Shining Dawn?”

Gibbs nodded. “Yes, Mr President. After Agent DiNozzo followed up on his hunch we ran his connections to the ground. We have all the leading people in the organisation. This is a guy we need to find though - he took a rather large swipe at the NSA servers.”

Tom was looking at Agent DiNozzo, he was well aware of who the man was in connection with his Chief of Staff. “What made you suspicious of MacLeish in the first place?”
“It was too neat and tidy, and frankly bombs don’t make exceptions for anyone unless they’re in a bomb-proof area.”

“Which the bastard built,” Aaron growled.

DiNozzo shrugged. “He did but we caught him and he didn’t get anywhere near the vice-presidency.”

“I dread to think what might have happened if you hadn’t raised your suspicions.”

Tony didn’t know how to handle the praise. He knew Vance had been shocked to find out it was his lead in the beginning. “I was invested.”

“Well I am for one am grateful, and long may your relationship continue.”

Tony had assumed that his relationship would never ever be endorsed by the President of the United States, especially with his Mexican-American boyfriend. Still, he would take the wins where he could get them. “Thank you, Mr President.”

What Gibbs and Tony didn’t know was the price of doing your job and doing it well - was it got you noticed. Tom waited until they’d left the room and looked to his trusted confidant. “Sound them out for promotions.”

Emily smirked. “Aaron is going to kill you.”

Tom Kirkman shrugged. “Not if I put his lover in charge of the Secret Service. It would be too awkward.”

And he was right, the terrorist attack made one hell of a power couple in Aaron Shore and Tony DiNozzo and that was before Aaron ascended to the Vice presidency and then the Presidency.
Partick had an eclectic bunch of friends. Lisbon had always known this and they both exasperated her and were appreciated by her in equal measure.

“You know someone who Malculso will talk to?”

Patrick nodded because the old man was still fond of Tony. “It’s better than my Plan B, which is to ask to go under in the prison and try to extract the information by bugging it out of them.”

Cho snorted. “You know you are too pretty for prison.”

Jane grinned because he knew what he looked like. “You should see my friend. He is worse but can take care of himself.”

“Well? Who it is? Don’t leave us in suspense.”

“Special Agent Anthony DiNozzo. NCIS.”

The CBI team looked at him like he was nuts. Lisbon was the one to say it. “You think he’ll talk to a Fed?”

Jane snorted and could only offer as an explanation. “They have a tortured and twisted relationship. Tony was undercover and is the one responsible for seeing him in jail.”

“And he’s still breathing?”

Jane nodded, knowing that it was too unusual considering that most times it ended in a pair of concrete boots and a swim. “Tony rose to a level where the Don called him a son. He doesn’t want Tony dead - he wants him to run the organisation.”

Lisbon grinned. “So he might be willing to venture the information if it would get him in DiNozzo’s good books?”

“It’s worth a shot.”

Lisbon would take any lead she could get. “I’ll set up a conference call with DiNozzo and see what we can arrange.”

~*~

Tony had granted the video conference on grounds of curiosity. He’d been old friends with Patrick since they’d met at OSU. In fact, he’d been in the same fraternity. They’d grown apart after Red John had struck at Jane’s family. They still talked but Jane had done his best to push everyone away after his wife and daughter were murdered.

“Hey, Pat. Long time no speak. I heard you were at CBI.”

Jane smirked. “I wanted to see what all the fuss was and you were stuck in DC.”
Lisbon muscled Jane out of the way. “Apologies for interrupting the reunion but we need to talk about Don Malculso.”

“He is a psychopath. Why speak to DiNozzo?” Kate asked the room.

Tony sighed because so much for hiding. “We’re old acquaintances.”

“Russo’s kid is dead and we want to get them.” Jane said, letting Tony know the angle and why he would need to talk to the old man.

Tony sighed and whined a little. “You know how much I hate talking to him.”

Jane smirked. “I do. Still, take heart - he still likes you and calls you his heir.”

“That’s because his sons are wet fishes who don’t have the heart to do the dirty work.” Tony explained with frustration. What was left unsaid but picked up on by the room was that Tony was willing to do it.

Kate and Tim had no idea they had fallen down the rabbit hole. Tony had to ask. “What was your plan B?”

“I get sent under to try and get the info.”

Tony hissed at that because it was a stupid idea. “Fuck that, you’re too pretty for prison. We’re going but you will let me do the talking.”

Lisbon wanted to interject as Jane was not an officer but knew this was probably going to be the best offer she got. She really didn’t fancy putting Jane undercover into the prison because his charms ultimately might not work in his favour in this case. “Would you be willing to see Malculso?”

“Depends. Is he in Pennsylvania? He swore to kill me if I ever set foot in the state unless I was willing to take control of the family.” Tony explained like it was a perfectly standard thing to have a standing contract on your life.

“You can take over a Mob family whenever you like?”

Tony nodded at McGee. “Yeah, it was why the FBI are dicks to me. The fact I haven’t should tell them that I understand where the line is.”

Kate and McGee fell silent because they’d remembered the case around Malculso - it had all hinged on one undercover officer, whose name had never been released. It was stunning to realise that the UC was Tony.

Jane had a crooked grin. “Well, you need to let the Don try and convince you as we need to know who did it.”

Gibbs rolled his eyes. “Well what are you waiting for DiNozzo? Go get on a plane.”

~*~

Tony landed in California enjoying the sun and rays for a second. It was a refreshing change to the grey skies of DC. “You know you could stay here.”
“Don’t tempt me Pat.” Tony saw the reaction to him calling Jane by his first name. He rolled his eyes because they better get used to it.

A brunette stepped forward. “Hi, I’m Agent Lisbon. Thank you for agreeing to help with this.”

Tony took the offered hand. “Tony DiNozzo.”

The rest of the CBI team introduced themselves but you could tell Tony had a fondness for Jane. He stood by him and it was close enough to invade personal space. “So I need all the details.”

Lisbon handed Tony the file. “We can escort you to the prison and answer any questions.”

Tony nodded and watched as most of the team filed into the one SUV with Tony and Jane taking the backseat of their car to figure out a gameplan.

“You need a battle strategy for this man?”

Tony snorted. “Oh yeah. You don’t want to have even a discussion with father without your wits. He’s devious and ruthless when threatened but he is a sly, clever bastard so he will get you to confess you have wronged him first. You know he once made one of his victims apologise for their transgressions before he killed them.”

“What was the point of apologising then?” She asked in confusion.

Tony snorted as it was a small distinction but huge at the same time. “He shot him instead of cutting into a vein and hanging him upside down.”

Lisbon shuddered. “Did he spare families?”

Tony nodded in the mirror. “Oh, he was old school. You don’t touch the wives or the children - they are the innocents.”

Lisbon wanted to shake her head but knew the mob families loved a different way. “You respect him?”

Tony snorted as it wasn’t so difficult to believe if you’d lived his life. “I lived in the man’s house for a year, Detective, and he called me son. I’m just lucky he does care or I would be dead!”

“What does your own family think?”

She saw a dark look shared between Tony and Jane. The agent did eventually give her an answer. “The sad thing is, Agent Lisbon, a ruthless Mafia Don is an improvement on my own father.”

She suspected that might be a problem. It was yet to be seen how much of one.

~*~

Lisbon explained the situation to both of them. “We have had the warden arrange for a private meeting room.”

Tony was glad for it as he wouldn’t have to pull off more of an act. He did want to make one thing clear before it all began. The last thing he needed was for Lisbon to get cold feet hearing their
discussions.

“Jane and I are going to playing fast and loose. You need to trust that we know what we are doing and keep your mouth shut.”

Lisbon sighed because that was the crux of the whole thing. “I can trust you know what you are doing but I am concerned about the consequences of doing this.”

Tony actually smiled at her. “Good, then that makes two of us. Feel free to take the observation mirror if it will help you relax.”

They’d arrived at the prison. It just so happened that the Justice Department had decided to house Malculso in California on the grounds of him not having many connections in the area. “He knows he is having a visitor but he doesn’t know who.”

~*~

Tony and Jane walked through the prison population and Tony got a few jeers. It was to be expected but Tony muttered softly. “Anyone touches us, I will chop their fingers off and feed them to them one by one.”

He’d hidden his badge and followed up his comment with a stare. He’d picked the nastiest bastard in the block and when he backed down - the others followed suit. Jane had a crooked grin, adding lightly. “I thought you said DeMarco had reformed his ways.”

The whispers that ran around the block were wild. Tony had earned quite a reputation when he was under in the Malculso outfit.

Tony stepped into the room to be faced with the Don. He actually lit up seeing Tony which was a promising start.

“Little Tonio, you are here to see me. Have you finally given up on that silly federal life?” His old acquaintance had to ask.

Jane snickered at the way he compared law enforcement to silly rebellions. He leaned forward to confess to the Don. “He is tempted and I want him to help me hunt down Red John.”

“Why?” The Don asked. He looked in the blonde man’s ice blue eyes and saw a cold vengeance that only happened when a person had been truly wronged.

“The bastard killed my wife and child. I want justice.”

Malculso sneered. “That coward deserves everything he gets.” He focussed on Tony then. “Tonio, when you find him don’t be civilised about it.”

Tony sighed and for once answered with his heart and not as a Federal Agent. “I would bathe in his blood, Pops, but I am being watched. Gibbs is too canny not to keep an eye on me and Jane here is working as a consultant.”

Malculso threw his hands up in the air. “You should work for the family then, shouldn’t you, boy. You would have your vengeance, Mr Jane.”

Jane, in truth, liked the sound of it. Tony knew he would and he didn’t blame Patrick for it. He’d
known how deeply Patrick loved his family. “I know I would do well but my friend, she is in the CBI and she watches me like a hawk. I think she worries I will become a villain, you know.”

Tony saw the eager-eyed look of the Don. Tony knew he’d encourage their friendship and anything more. It was one of the most alluring things about Patrick. He was so fresh and out there, he would do what his instincts told him to do and damn the consequences. “You could give me some insight if you’re willing, Pops.”

“What do you need, son?”

Tony leaned closer. “Eddie Russo’s son is dead. Badly. He was too stupid to have pissed off us but I didn’t know who he has.”

Salvatore Malcuso sat back laughing. “What did you say to the men who propositioned you as you walked through here?”

“That I would chop off their fingers and feed them to them one by one.” Tony replied but what the others could see now was that he wasn’t joking. Tony understood what few did - if you were going to play in the underworld you had to speak their language and mean it.

Salvatore smirked. “Yes, you always did have inventive methods.” He sat back and looking smug and content. “So what would you do if they had targeted your friend?”

Tony knew what he would have done if he was Antoni DeMarco, named heir of Salvatore Malcuso. It would have not been pretty. “I would have practised Linchi and found some rats.”

“Russo Junior was fond of sampling forbidden fruit who would have taken matters into their own hands.” Salvatore explained.

Tony got it. “Thank you, father.” And because he understood the world and wanted to keep this line of communication. “What do you want in return?”

“I need you to pop in to see Maria. She is lonely with me here. She misses you and Danny is a disappointment to her.”

Tony sighed because Maria was the mother he never had. “She doesn’t want to kill me?”

Salvatore shook his head. “No, she told me it was my fault for being blind. She is just sad that you don’t visit.”

Tony rolled his eyes and counted to ten. “You know the bit where there is a contract on my life if I go back to Philly?”

Salvatore just pished, waving his hand in the air. “I took the contract away and you will be contacted by Vicenzo if something goes wrong.”

Tony groaned. “How can I run the family and be a Federal Agent?”

Salvatore smirked. “Oh, son. You know we have no interest in the armed forces. However, if you took on the family, you could legitimise the business and I wouldn’t be able to interfere for five years.”

Tony tilted his head to the side pondering the possibility. “And if I did? What about when you get
Salvatore rolled his eyes. “I have put my Maria through enough. If the business is in safe hands then I see no reason why I can’t retire.”

Tony sat back stunned, he’d figured he’d be going to try and wrestle the information out of the old man. “It’s good seeing you.”

“Don’t be a stranger.”

~*~

Lisbon didn’t know if she should thank the Agent or arrest him. She was surprised by him preemptsing her. “Look, the Feebs regularly give me grief. You should be happy - you have your lead and I need an evening to get over that mindfuck.”

Jane offered. “We should go out for a meal.”

Tony smiled softly. “It would be good to catch up.”

And what an evening they had - they caught up on so many things. Patrick could say he felt as relaxed as he had in years. “I am sorry I pushed you away.”

Tony shook his head. “You were grieving and life got in the way. I’m just thankful that the Don let us reconnect.”

Patrick was trying to resist those eyes so took the safe option. “So how are you handling today?”

“I have no idea. You know what the hardest part was?”

And Jane did. “Sending down a man you thought of as a father. It wasn’t just respect, was it?”

Tony whispered. “No.”

Jane held his hand, reacting to the vulnerability. “So what do you want to do?”

Tony chuckled. “I want to stay here and help you hunt Red John. I want to tell NCIS to stick their job but don’t know what I would be without a job.”

Jane understood tiredness and needing a mental rest. “So why not check out for a while? Take some vacation time. You can crash with me, and you can figure out what you want.”

The I still am was left unsaid.

~*~

Tony had taken the advice of Jane, knowing that just one night in California had helped him feel better than he had for years. It was two weeks later and Tony had a decision to make that evening. So he was going down to the CBI offices to grab Jane for a chat about next steps.

He’d told Gibbs he was taking two weeks to start and he’d make a choice. He knew Gibbs wasn’t keen with his answer but Tony wasn’t too keen on him. There had been a fracture in the team ever since the serial killer case, where he’d been handcuffed to the psycho for the last days of his life.
“Hey Pat, chance to steal you for lunch?”

Lisbon seemed to get over her distrust. “Go take him before he threatens anyone else.”

Tony snorted. “We’ll be at Luigi’s if you want him.”

The lunch was going well. “So what’s your plan?”

Tony thought about it. “The last two weeks have been something else. I don’t feel like I’m crawling out of my skin.”

Jane flushed, looking pleased. “You want to know what I think you should do?”

Tony was about to say something when he saw Lisbon storming to their table. “Hey. What’s up?”

“A body has been delivered to our steps. The note claims it’s Red John - a gift to free you from your obsession. Typed note, no prints.”

Tony was quick to defend his old friend. “Jane has been with you, or with me in this restaurant.”

She sighed. “I know but I can’t ignore the free him from his obsession.”

Tony stared at her, wondering if she would be bold enough to actually say aloud what she was thinking. “I have no knowledge of it but you’re welcome to ask the Don if he gave Pat a present.”

She threw her hands up in the air and stormed out. He didn’t care. Patrick was Tony’s concern. “Hey, is he really dead?”

Tony shrugged and spoke softly. “It seems that way. Do you want to see?”

Jane nodded. “I didn’t do it.”

“I know but that's the thing about Karma. He came up against a bigger monster.”

Jane squeezed Tony’s hand in acknowledgement. He didn’t want to get his hopes up but his family’s killer might be dead. It was heartwarming in many ways. He wouldn’t be able to hurt anyone else. “Do I need a lawyer?”

“Let me get mine.”

Tony was tempted to ask Vicenzo because he refused to let Patrick be made a scapegoat. Any half-decent lawyer would be able to get Jane off even if he was guilty. “Let’s go.”

Jane didn’t let go of his hand. Tony had been there through his darkest moments and was still by his side. There was a lot to be said about that loyalty. It was as hot as it was humbling. If this was Red John then Patrick could look to his future and not focus on the past.

“Probably not the Consigliere.”

Tony snorted. “I may be pretty but I’m not stupid. Shame - because he’s the biggest bastard I know when it comes to being a lawyer. We’ll get through this.”
Patrick knew it and whispered. “Together - sure, and when it is put to rest can you tell me what I should get an incarcerated Don for a gift.”

Tony chuckled weakly as he knew this had the Don’s sticky fingers all over it. He knew the man was too smart to be tied to it but it was on his orders. He couldn’t find it in him to be mad. “I guess I better go to Philly and you can come with me.”

The future was uncertain and they were making plans without saying the most important words. That was the crazy thing - they didn’t need the words although they would be said when Jane was ready. Tony would not push the man. This whole thing he was ready to fight for would unfold on Patrick’s timeframe.

*This pair would take on the whole world, the Mafia, the homophobes, the Fed’s and hell, even a wedding that made the Red Wedding look like just a wild party.*

Chapter End Notes

And we reach the end of the third TLBB collection but never fear we still have two collections in the second phase and four in phase three before I will feel like the collection is truly complete.

As per usual, if this collection is readable then a massive thanks goes to Edronhia for patient betaing work.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!