### Monsters & Murders

**Rating:** Teen And Up Audiences  
**Archive Warning:** No Archive Warnings Apply  
**Category:** M/M  
**Fandom:** Criminal Minds, Supernatural, NCIS  
**Relationship:** Anthony DiNozzo/Aaron Hotchner, Spencer Reid/Sam Winchester  
**Character:** Aaron Hotchner, Anthony DiNozzo, Spencer Reid, David Rossi, Derek Morgan, Penelope Garcia, Jennifer “JJ” Jareau, Will LaMontagne, Kate Callahan, Sam Winchester, Dean Winchester  
**Additional Tags:** Tony is a Winchester, Case type Character Death, canon level violence, Alternate Universe, Non-Canon Compliant: Criminal Minds, Non-Canon Compliant: Supernatural, Non-Canon Compliant: NCIS, No Mention of NCIS, Tony Never Worked at NCIS, Morgan Being an Ass, John Winchester's A+ Parenting, Bad Parent John Winchester, References to Child Abuse and Neglect - John Winchester  
**Series:** Part 1 of Bangs and RBB Fics  
**Collections:** Criminal Minds Bang 2017  
**Stats:** Published: 2017-05-24 Chapters: 7/7 Words: 18808

---

**Monsters & Murders**  
by [SpencnerTibbsLuvr (KliqzAngel)](http://archiveofourown.org/users/SpencnerTibbsLuvr)

**Summary**

Aaron Hotchner's team is crumbling under the weight of their current case. A series of murders in Cape May, New Jersey is frustrating everyone, especially when the facts of the case just don't add up to anything rational. Ongoing issues with his SIC Derek Morgan aren't helping anyone's nerves. The Unit Chief suspects that it's because their Unsub is more of the non-human variety than they normally would expect. Fortunately, all things that go bump in the night have become more widely accepted over the last few years. Enough so that Section chief Cruz has allowed him to call in Three Guys Paranormal, led by Aaron's lover and former NCIS agent Tony DiNozzo. Together the BAU, and Tony's crew, which includes the infamous Winchester brothers, will find out what is plaguing the small New Jersey town.

**Notes**

Thanks go to my Alpha Readers Rivermoon1970 and Gypsy and Beta Reader Rivermoon1970. Also, thanks go out to DarkJediQueen for putting this whole thing together. It's been fun! HUGE thanks go out to Pickingupellen for the awesome banner that fits beautifully with the story.
Chapter One: A Case and Chaos

Aaron was standing in the conference room that the BAU had been assigned to, listening as the team broke down their case for what seemed to be the thousandth time since they got there. The problem was that there was little evidence, and the facts didn’t add up. He’d been debating something in his head for a few days, and listening to the team was only making his hunch stronger.

Their breaking down of the case was beginning to lean closer to breaking down each other, and that was something that Aaron could not allow to continue. He already had permission from Section Chief Cruz to bring in his consultants. When he had gotten back to the hotel the night before, he’d immediately called Mateo, and been very frank with him about their situation. At first, his boss had been understandably reluctant. He was also aware, though, that supernatural explanations were becoming a much more accepted avenue of investigation. Aaron just wished that he could count on his team being as open minded.

After their case involving Emily Prentiss’ old friend Matthew, Aaron could feel confident that Dave and Garcia would be open to the possibility that he would be presenting. Reid would see it as an educational experience, and JJ could always be counted on to follow his lead, as long as Spencer was on board.

Derek though would be closed to even the thought that there may be a non-human explanation to
this. Since Kate hadn’t been on the team at the time of the previous case, Aaron had no idea how she would react. When Spencer finally snapped under the weight of scorn that he’d been getting from Morgan, though, and told him to ‘shut the fuck up’, Aaron knew he had to step in.

Morgan, in general, was an entirely separate problem that Aaron was beginning to believe wasn’t one he could solve. The Unit Chief was pretty sure that his longtime Second in Command had already mentally moved onto a job that he didn’t have yet, and in the process was proving that the cautions Aaron had thrown out at Cruz were just and true.

Aaron was aware that Cruz notified Morgan he was being considered for his own team once more, and that there had been nothing since. Aaron voiced his concerns about Derek’s ability to control his temper and knew that it was a sticking point in the consideration. While he recognized that the frustration was hard to deal with, all Derek’s current actions were proving was that the concerns were valid. He certainly couldn’t let the man release his anger on the team.

“Enough!” Aaron barked, scowling at the group. It was time to divide and conquer, and hopefully, Derek would for once not argue his instructions. If he did, then Aaron was going to have to take a step that he could no longer justify putting off.

“Dave and Morgan, I want you two to check out the first and the last crime scenes. JJ and Kate…”

“Come on, Hotch! We’ve done this three times already! We’re not gonna find anything new!” Derek snapped throwing the room into silence. There it was. The insubordination that Aaron could not allow to go on any longer. There was no more leeway to give the out of bounds agent.

Narrowing his eyes, Aaron glared at the man, who was not backing down at all. The frustration he could understand, but repeatedly challenging his orders Aaron couldn’t even consider allowing. This was not the first time that Derek had pushed things in front of the team, challenging his authority. He’d already had Dave talk to him, and had pulled him into his office himself to speak with the stubborn agent due to his actions on the last case.

“Dave, take JJ with you to the first and final scenes. Kate and I will visit the middle three. Garcia and Reid, please review the unsolved cases in town going back as far as they have records for. This time we aren’t looking for the normal or the acceptable. I want you to look for things that don’t fit. Things that stand out as unusual or even extraordinary. Garcia and Reid, you are specifically looking for unsolved cases that have unusual elements that can’t be explained. It’s obvious that the normal isn’t going to help us solve this case. So, I am calling in some consultants to assist us. We’ll meet back here when we’re done and see what has popped out at us.”

“Are you benching me? And, what is this crap about the unusual? Tell me you aren’t seriously considering this supernatural mumbo-jumbo bullshit!” Derek snapped, standing and taking an angry step toward Hotch.

“SSA Morgan, stand down NOW! You are out of line! Yes, you are being benched. You have proven that your head is not in this case, and have run through every ounce of goodwill the members of this team are willing to afford you. Your personal bullshit is not our problem, and I will not allow you to continue to be verbally abusive to this team.” Hotch confirmed. His cold, hard, Unit Chief persona was firmly in place. His personal last tiny bit of sympathy and suspicion that something else was going on were honestly the only things keeping Derek from being immediately suspended and sent home. Unfortunately for Derek, this most recent incident would most likely be the nail that closed his promotion coffin for good.
“In the two hours that you’ve been here this morning, you have verbally attacked both Reid and Kate. You have yelled at everyone here, and you are currently being insubordinate to your direct supervisor. Of which, I can assure you, will be documented, and passed along to Section Chief Cruz. You’ve been warned twice to get your shit together, and ignored them both. In the last two weeks, you have attacked everyone in this room, including Garcia. If you keep pushing this right now, I will suspend you indefinitely.”

Hotch paused, keeping his eagle-eyed glare on Morgan, but the man refused to back down. “You have been out of control, and out of line all week. I think that you need to take the day, and make some decisions, SSA Morgan. You won’t be welcomed back to this case, period. At this point, you’ve proven you are incapable of being unprejudiced.”

“Fuck you! If this team had a real leader, this shit would be solved by now,” Derek spat, and Aaron’s jaw was clenched so tight, that he could feel the muscles twitching.

“Consider yourself suspended, and your promotion offer is off the table. Go to the hotel, pack your shit, and go home. You won’t be welcomed back to the team anytime soon. I will have Cruz decide your punishment but don’t expect this to just be pushed under the rug. Frankly, SSA Morgan, it’s your close minded bullshit that is holding this case back. Reid and Rossi have been suggesting that there may be a supernatural or paranormal element outside of our area of expertise since yesterday. You’ve made Garcia afraid to even speak. Go to the hotel and pack your bags. The information on your flight home will be emailed to you. You will absolutely not be using the jet to get home. I am beyond disappointed in you, and maybe even beyond disgusted. Get your shit together, or you’ll find yourself off the team completely if you haven’t already.”

Angrily, Derek slammed his chair into the table and stormed out of the office. Hotch had no idea what was going on with the man, but it was obvious that something was up. At that point, though, he meant it when he said Morgan had used up the entire team’s goodwill. He had more than ample opportunity to speak up if he had something serious going on, but had stubbornly remained quiet. If this was truly just about the promotion, well then he would definitely be off the team. He just couldn’t allow that level of insubordination to go unchecked.

Taking a deep breath, Aaron looked at the team who still were not speaking. “OK, I know it’s been rough, and we all feel like we’ve been put through the meat grinder. However, we still have dead bodies out there. So, let’s check those scenes. Kate, I need to make some calls before we leave. Garcia, do you feel comfortable booking Derek’s flight home, or would you rather I do it? I will completely understand if you would rather I book his flight home.”

“I can do it, sir, but can I send you the information to email to him? I don’t feel… I don’t want to have any contact with him right now.” She said quietly and timidly. When Reid put an arm around her shoulders and squeezed, Aaron let out a deep breath. Spencer initiating contact with someone was a sure sign that they were not in Kansas anymore, Toto.

Nodding to the team he offered a supportive smile. “OK, then. Let’s get to work. I am proud of how you all have made it thus far. Keep it up.”
Aaron sat in one of the conference rooms and hit the first available favorite in his contacts on his cell phone. As he listened to the phone ring, a smile crossed his face as he thought about the man who was his lover and husband. Loosening his tie and unbuttoning the top button of his shirt, Aaron pulled a chain out from underneath that held his wedding ring. Slipping the chain off, he undid the back and slid the ring into his palm, leaving the chain to lay on the table. Looking at it for a moment, he smiled and then put it on his finger just as the call connected.

“Three Men and a Medium. You see ‘em, we clean ‘em.”

Aaron chuckled at the greeting. It changed regularly, as Sam and Dean often took turns coming up with new jingles. He was often easily able to tell who came up with that week’s version.

“Dean picked the greeting this week, huh? I don’t think it’s quite up to his usual work.”

On the other end of the line, he heard a snort. “Hey, Hotch! Yeah, he’s moping because Candy dumped him. My guess is though that he’ll have a new fish on the hook by the end of the week. I’m thinking a guy this time. He’s had a few women in a row now. How’s the case going? Tony is just getting up.”

“Good Afternoon, Sam. How did the case go? Did you get things wrapped up, or do you need to go back, again?”

“Nah, it was pretty straight forward like we thought, and that demon pissing off Tony helped
matters along. We got the house cleaned and exorcised last night, and then he and I did another sweep. He didn’t feel anything, but the grandmother that they don’t want to get rid of. Will’s gonna touch base with them in a month, but we think things are good now.”

Aaron smiled as he took a sip of his coffee. Three Guys and a Medium was created by his husband Tony, formerly DiNozzo, Jr and now Hotchner, and his two siblings, Sam and Dean Winchester. Later, they’d added JJ’s husband Will LaMontagne. After the man’s brush with death and having a second partner killed, the former PR Liaison confessed to him that Will was wanting to move out of the PD. Aaron knew his husband, at the time boyfriend, was wanting to add a fourth member to their team, specifically someone with some law enforcement background to help with research on hauntings, and help him deal with law enforcement when he was called in to assist for various reasons.

Tony hadn’t grown up with Sam and Dean, in fact, he hadn’t even known that they existed until he was in college. Tony had intended to play professional ball, either football or basketball, but had an injury in football his senior year that ended both dreams. After he’d recovered, he had been walking past a house when he realized that it was on fire. Rushing in, he’d found two siblings, a boy, and a girl, but had only been able to carry the boy initially. He’d intended to rush back in and save the girl, but the fire had been too bad by that point. Instead, he’d been forced to listen to her screams as she burned to death.

That moment was a huge impact on Tony’s life. He’d always known he was different from other people. He’d once told Aaron that he couldn’t remember a time in his life when he didn’t see or hear the dead.

He considered himself a Physical and Mental Medium, but most called him a psychic or psychic medium. He wasn’t as crazy about the latter two, but he generally accepted them without much fuss. His most frequently used mental mediumship was clairaudience or hearing the dead speak to him, although he was more often than not able to use clairvoyance or seeing the dead. He never used clairsentience, which was feeling the dead and didn’t like allowing the spirit to jump or possess him to get its message across. He told Aaron, early on in their getting to know each other stage that, at least for him, he believed allowing it caused more problems than it solved.

Tony’s mother, Elizabeth, was aware of his abilities prior to her death and had both supported and believed his claims of talking to spirits. While it was true that Tony had been incredibly attached to his mother before her death, as an adult looking back he’d recognized her alcoholism for what it is. He speculated that his mother had some abilities like he had himself, only unlike him she’d never accepted them. Instead, she chose to use booze to dull her abilities keeping them at bay.

His father, though, had no such tolerance for what he called foolishly, made up nonsense. Tony and the man he’d always believed to be his father, Anthony DiNozzo Senior, had always had a rocky relationship due to the senior being a horrible man and parent. When Tony’s mother died when he was a child, he found himself left with only his non-believer father. At that point, he forced himself to pretend it didn’t exist, just so that he could survive.

After he’d had to listen to the little girl burn, though, he had found himself struggling to move on. Late one night, he found himself standing outside the home, and being too tired from weeks of sleepless nights, hadn’t been able to fight his instincts. Approaching the shell of the former home, he had spotted the girl standing outside crying and afraid.

He’d told Aaron that after helping her to calm down and move on, he’d walked back to his frat house mentally laying out his new path in life. Interestingly enough, he’d gotten more support from his frat brothers than he expected. While sure there had been doubters and assholes, the supportive
believers gave him the courage to stop hiding and finally just be himself.

Of course, when his father found out, he’d finally gone through when the threats he’d been making since Tony’s mother died, and legally disowned him telling him to, “Go find that Winchester bastard that spawned you.” The man obviously hadn’t considered the fact that the money Tony’s mother and his Paddington Grandfather left him in their wills would go with him. By the time he realized it, and the courts agreed the money was Tony’s, reconciliation was out of the realm of possibilities.

It hadn’t been easy because apparently, his real father had been mostly living off the grid, but eventually, he managed to track down John Winchester as well as half-brothers Dean and Sam. It hadn’t taken him long to realize that his real father wasn’t much better than his step-father.

John Winchester had been sure that Tony was infected by some kind of demon like his youngest son. Only, Tony was big enough to fight back when John became abusive. It quickly ended the bullshit that his younger brothers had to suffer through. Eventually, the brothers separated themselves from John, mostly due to Tony’s influence. When Sam wanted to go to Stanford, Tony and Dean followed hunting on the West Coast where they could be close to him.

When Sam’s girlfriend was killed by the same demon that got his mother, the brothers tracked it down, and eventually took it out. John had suddenly decided that his oldest son could be useful, but by then that ship had sailed. Dean still kept in touch with the man occasionally, but Sam and Tony had both almost completely written the man out of their lives. Tony had lived enough of his life with verbally abusive drunken fathers, and Sam couldn’t get over all the years of abuse and neglect he’d suffered through while being told that being himself wasn’t good enough.

The three brothers moved to the east coast in early 2005 and became Professional Investigators. Thankfully, through a series of unexpected events, the paranormal became more widely accepted within a year of that. The three brothers found themselves at the forefront of the new industry, with some help from a few of Tony’s influential frat brothers. One was now a US congressman, and another was a high priced defense attorney married to a popular DC psychiatrist.

Aaron liked Tony’s brothers. They filled those voids in each other’s lives that they had all been missing, and Aaron didn’t want to think about what the younger two would have had to go through had Tony not entered their lives.

“Hello, gorgeous. How’s the case coming? Have you figured anything out yet?”

Blinking, Aaron was pulled back out of his head, not even having heard Sam hand the phone to Tony. It had been a long case, with not enough sleep for various reasons. If nothing else, his husband’s presence should help him rest better at night.

“Only that this is outside our realm of experience. There’s no way that these deaths are being caused by something human. When you put it together with Derek’s nonsense, the team is like a big powder keg ready to blow.”

Rubbing his hand over his forehead, he heard his husband make a noise of sympathy on the other end of the line. “He’s still giving you trouble? Maybe it’s time you took a more firm action. I know you believe that something else is going on, but you said he’s hurting everyone on the team, including his best friends. That isn’t good for any of you.”

“We’re past that point, babe,” Aaron admitted, feeling equal amounts of regret and frustration over the whole situation. “Not only is he off this case. I had to suspend him, and send him home.”
“Shit!” Tony exclaimed, and Aaron knew he was aware of what that would mean. “So, his promotion is off the table then? How is the team going to handle that?”

“I don’t honestly know, babe. I am not sure I can let him stay on the team after this. I can tell that Garcia is afraid of him, despite her protests otherwise prior to this morning. Reid told him to fuck off today. I should have done something sooner.”

“Stop that,” Tony ordered sternly. “You’re doing the best that you can. There was no good or easy answer to this mess that Derek created. Your team is like family, and that calls for a different disciplinary structure. It isn’t like you just flat out did nothing before now.

“You spoke with everyone individually prior to this, and they all insisted that they were handling it, including Garcia and Reid. You’ve also kept the Section Chief up to date, and he could have demanded action be taken before now at any time, but he didn’t. Do what you have to do, and those people will be behind you. What are you going to do about your case?”

“Actually,” Hotch started, turning his mind away from Derek and toward the case. “I need to talk to you about that. I know that you guys are coming off of a case, but I need to know if you have room for a new one?”

“You’re bringing us in?” Tony asked not sounding as surprised as he maybe should. It just showed how attuned to him that his husband was.

“You don’t sound surprised,” Aaron pointed out. When Tony laughed he just smiled.

“Sam’s been watching airfare prices to the Cape May, NJ area,” Tony admitted making Aaron snort. “We’re really doing this then? We’re telling your team?”

Aaron didn’t even need to think about his decision before answering. “It’s time. I will tell them about us after we all get back from our scenes. I think without Derek it will go ok. They’re going to be confused of course, and maybe a little upset. Although knowing my team, they’ve all guessed something, and will hardly be surprised at all. Whichever it is, I think that things will be fairly settled by the time you guys get here. Bobby will be ok watching the kids?”

After the boys had settled on the east coast, Bobby Singer had moved from South Dakota to a small town just outside the Alexandria, VA area where they all lived. When both the BAU team and Three guys and a Medium had to be out of town, the older man acted as a babysitter. Jack and Henry loved spending time with their Grampa Bobby.

“Yup! He and the boys are working on some new car that Bobby got at the yard. You know how much Jack and Henry love that place. They’re in heaven. We’ll get our flights booked, and should be there sometime tomorrow. That will give your team time to settle down tonight from the news.”

“OK, Tone, I will see you then. Love you, and thank you.”

Tony returned his love, and after the call ended, Aaron got up to go find Kate. It was time to see how his newest agent felt about all things paranormal.
Chapter Three: Confessions

After instructing Garcia to text him Derek’s flight information as soon as she got it, Aaron set off with Kate to investigate the furthest out of the three scenes he’d assigned the two of them. He wanted to test her thoughts on their new line of investigation, and hopefully, they’d have enough time for the conversation. The site furthest out was the third of the five total scenes, and it would take between 30 and 40 minutes to get there.

“Tell me how you feel about the paranormal, Kate.” Aaron requested, and when he was met with only silence, he snuck a quick glance at the passenger side seat. She appeared to be watching him quietly, and he quickly turned his eyes back to the road after arching an eyebrow at her.

“My grandmother would paddle my behind if I didn’t believe that there were non-human beings in this world, or that things didn’t linger after their mortal vessel’s died. Considering she died when I was 10, and the last time I talked to her was the day before we left for this case, I would call myself a firm believer.”

“You’re a medium?” Hotch asked surprised. “Physical, mental, or trance? What mediumships do you prefer using?” When he got to a stop sign, Aaron snuck another glance to see this time it was Kate with the arched eyebrow as she looked at him. Resuming the drive, Aaron listened to her explanation.

“No, that’s my cousin Melinda. She’s a Clairaudient and Clairvoyant Mental Medium. I just happen to live in my grandmother’s house, and she never moved on. So, she visits me every so often. Are you thinking this is some kind of non-human entity or a spirit causing the crimes? And,
how do you know so much about mediums?"

“Yes, I honestly believe that it’s something inhuman, either living or dead. I know not a lot, but a little about the paranormal in general, and more about mediums. Although, answering the second question is a little more complicated. How’s your ability to act surprised?”

He heard Kate laugh, and glancing at her saw the twinkle in her eyes as she answered. “I can fake it with the best of them. No sweat, Hotch.”

“I plan on telling the rest of the team what I’m about to tell you at dinner tonight. But, I don’t want more hurt feelings than there will already be. So, pretend it’s new to you, ok?”

“I am married.” Lifting his hand from the steering wheel, he showed her the wedding band he’d put on earlier.

“I noticed that before we left the station. I figured you’d explain when you were ready. That being revealed tonight, also?”

Aaron nodded smiling. “Yes, it's long past time. It was only kept a secret for safety concerns and partially out of fear on our parts. Mine that Tony would be hurt because of my job, and his that I’d lose credibility over being involved with, and later married to, what some would call a freak.”

“I don’t think they’ll be all that shocked. In fact, I am guessing that Reid is going to be really happy about the revelation.”

“They have a pool going?” Aaron guessed shaking his head, as he heard her laugh, again.

“Yes, several in fact, and it sounds like the good doctor is going to win them all. Spencer chose you were married for the relationship pool, and that it was a man as a kicker to his bet. He guessed the man was some kind of non-law enforcement investigator and made sure to include paranormal. He then guessed that you’d fess up sometime after the Derek situation got some kind of resolution, which I am guessing is all but official.”

“One of these days the team will learn not to bet him for any reason. Reid always wins. You don’t have to answer this if you don’t want. Are they upset about the secrets?”

“Not from anything I’ve heard,” Kate offered quickly. “It isn’t like we spend a lot of time talking about your private life, but except Derek, who I haven’t really been able to get to know well, the others all seem to just be glad that you’re happy. I think they understand, after what happened to your wife, about wanting some extra privacy and wanting to take extra precautions. JJ knows, doesn’t she?”

Aaron nodded, as he turned on his turn signal, then waited on traffic to clear before making his turn as the GPS voice directed.

“Will works with Tony. Chances are good that she and Reid are working together, and he got his information from her. Are her guesses way off?”

Kate nodded laughing once more. “I should have known. Those two are sneaky!”

“I’m telling you, Callahan, never ever bet Reid on anything. What he doesn’t just know, he always finds a way to figure out. Reid and JJ are as close as brother and sister, and they tell each other pretty much everything. What one knows, you should always assume the other knows, too. So, do you only have experience with spirits? Or, do you have experience with non-human entities, also? Tony and his brothers spent a lot of time as hunters of the paranormal before they started Two
Guys and a Medium, which they renamed to Three Guys and a Medium after Will got hired on.”

“Melinda can only sense human spirits, but I know that some mediums can sense non-human entities as well. Is your… is Tony the second? I assume Tony is your husband?”

“Yes, Anthony DiNozzo Jr now Anthony Hotchner, but he goes by Tony. We’ve been married for 14 months.”

“The skiing trip you took this last winter was to celebrate your 1 yr anniversary?” She guessed, and Hotch nodded smiling.

“We didn’t really get a honeymoon,” Hotch explained. “Things on the team were just too chaotic, and honestly it was kind of a spur of the moment thing. We just went down to city hall. The plan is to renew our vows sometime where both teams and our families can be present. The original ceremony was something that we needed for us, but we also want to have one that we can celebrate with our friends and family.”

“Does his family know?” She asked as he pulled the SUV off into the drive leading back to the wooded area where the body was found. It had been lying near a river that leads to the nearby bay the town sat on.

Putting the car in park and shutting the vehicle off, Hotch nodded then glanced at her. “They do, although they weren’t at the wedding either. There was a big upheaval at the time between him and his brother Dean with the youngest brother Sam trying to stay out of it. Every once and awhile their father pops up and causes problems. Fortunately, once they resolved this last instance, I think, or maybe I should say I hope, that this is the last time. Ready to walk the scene?”

Kate nodded smiling and got out, with Hotch following. The two made their way down to the scene. Now that they had ruled out the human element, Hotch hoped that they could look at things with a different perspective. He was looking around the spot where they found the body, while Kate was downstream a little looking at the riverbank.

“Hotch! Come here.”

Carefully moving away from the area he was at, he crossed the distance between then, stopped next to where she was taking a picture of what appeared to be a hoofprint in the mud. From the looks of it, it had been left recently.

“Kate?”

“Well, I was just thinking… If we’re going outside the box, maybe this isn’t a whatever this is… horse? Goat? I’m not a zoologist.”

Hotch arched an eyebrow, as she stood to look at him. Straight faced he advised, “Tony promised me that Unicorns weren’t real.”

Kate laughed rolling her eyes. “My niece will be broken hearted to hear that. Seriously, there are shapeshifters. I know from Melinda that those things really exist.”

Hotch nodded, pulling out his phone. “Good call, Kate. Tony’s had cases with those things, also. I’ll call Dave and tell him to keep an eye out for any animal tracks. I think just maybe we’re finally getting somewhere.”
Later that evening, he found himself in the private party room of The Mad Batter Restaurant and Bar. He thought that the team needed a night off to get their bearings, and maybe the fun atmosphere would help the discussion that he needed to have with them.

Everyone had ordered a cocktail, even Reid which reinforced how much this night was needed, and they were sharing appetizers. “Do you want serious conversation now or after dinner?” Hotch asked, deciding to leave things up to them. While he was nervous about what was about to come out, a big part of him wanted to just get it out of the way.

“Now please, I think,” Reid requested finishing his ‘Taste of Paris’ pushing the glass to the middle of the table. Aaron knew it would be water or pop for the rest of the evening. When the rest of the team agreed, he began the difficult conversation.

“I have several things to advise you of, but let’s start with Derek. I talked to Cruz just before we left to come here. He informed me that Derek arrived at headquarters almost immediately after his plane landed. He was suspended indefinitely, and advised Mateo that he would most likely be requesting a transfer out of the Unit.”

“What about his promotion?” Garcia asked hesitantly. “Is he that mad at us?”

Hotch watched JJ take Penelope’s hand, and was glad to see the team coming together, again. “His promotion is off of the table, and Cruz indicated that his decision isn’t about us. Derek requested that he be allowed to talk to us as a whole when we get back, but he did say Morgan confessed that there was something else big going on that he had been struggling with. I know that these last several weeks to almost a month and a half has been really difficult. I want to say again though how proud I am of how you all handled it. Now… for the rest…”

“Are you going to explain the accessory on your finger, Aaron?” Dave asked interrupting, and Aaron glared as the others snickered.

“If you would wait for two seconds, David, I was about to get into that. My last two items are actually related. First off, I think you all know where this case is going, but just to make it official we are turning our eyes toward a non-human unsub. That is why I asked you to keep an eye out for animal prints. I have a feeling that the hoof prints that we found at all of the scenes will be an important clue.”

“Excuse the interruption,” Rossi interjected gaining himself another stink eye, “but none of us are experienced in that sort of thing.”

“Well, again, if you’d be patient, David… Now hush. Kate if he talks again, have my permission to put a hand over his mouth.”

When the others got done laughing, Aaron continued. “Because we are experienced only with live human perpetrators, I have called in some experts. A Paranormal Investigative team has been called in. A group called Three Guys and A Medium will be here sometime very early in the morning. They’re taking a red eye from their previous case location to get here by breakfast. Kate…”

The woman grinned and stood to move behind Rossi, who had his mouth open to interrupt again. Wrapping a hand around his face, she covered his mouth grinning. “Licking my hand won’t solve anything, Rossi, but it will confirm my belief that you’re a kinky fucker.”

The others laughed again, only this time Aaron joined thinking how close to the truth she was. “Now, there are many groups out there, and I recognize that not all are as reputable as others. I did
talk to Cruz about this, though, and after he agreed with the new line of investigation, had the group vetted. If this turns out to be a successful line of investigation, they will be signed on as formal consultants to our team specifically. I wasn’t aware that last part was being considered, but apparently, AD Evans has a strong belief in the paranormal. Reid, please speak before your head explodes.”

“I didn’t want someone touching my mouth!” Reid protested making JJ giggle, as he went on. “Three Guys and a Medium are a highly successful and reputable group connected not only to Senator Jackson Caan out of Indiana but the high priced DC defense lawyer John Abrahams and his wife Eloise who is a popular psychiatrist in the area. Their Medium was the first Professionally licensed Medium in the country, and has helped solve over a dozen missing/murdered child cases across the country, with the most famous being the Lila Archer case in Los Angeles when her daughter Diana went missing and the police couldn’t get a lead, although at the time it was just Two Guys and a Medium. I don't know where the third guy came from.”

“I didn’t know you and Lila kept in contact,” Garcia said sounding surprised, and Reid nodded tucking a bit of hair behind his ear.

"We talk every once and awhile, and Diana is named after my mother. We decided that we wanted to try and be friends. When her daughter went missing, she called to see if I could do anything. When her agent recommended the group, she called me to get my thoughts. She really liked them and speaks very highly of the Medium. Of course, that could be because she thought he was, I think the word was yummilicious. She did say she liked all three brothers, though. You have a look on your face, Hotch."

Aaron's lips twitched, and he held up his hand with his ring putting that finger forward slightly. “The so-called 'yummilicious' brother is my husband Tony, and I do believe the third guy comes from JJ's house every morning."

"That's Wills new job that you've been so secretive about? Hey! you totally rigged the betting pool! I call foul! And, why does Kate's surprise seem a little exaggerated?" Penelope frowned as Rossi snorted, removing Kate's hand from his mouth.

"Penelope, if you haven’t figured out that Reid and JJ are sneaky cheaters that always collude on their bets you deserve to lose. But, I agree. Kate, your surprise doesn’t seem all that genuine."

Kate grinned and moved to sit again. "I guess it works better on pre-teenagers, Hotch. Sorry."

Aaron smirked and shrugged. "I'm not surprised. Kate just found out this afternoon while we were on our way to the first scene. Since she's the newest and wasn't here when we investigated Emily's friend Matthew's death, I wanted to see how she would react. Let's get this all cleared up now. I'm sorry that I didn't tell you all before. We wanted to, but..."

"Do you not trust us?" Reid asked sounding little unsure, and this time it was Penelope who took his hand.

"I know it may look that way, but that wasn’t it at all. On my part, I was hesitant after what happened to Haley to open Tony up to public knowledge. As much as I trust you all, I couldn’t take the chance with his safety, if one of you slipped and told the wrong person.

“I love Tony as much or more than I did Haley. Neither Jack nor I would survive losing him. On the other side of it, Tony was worried how knowledge of his presence in my life would affect my career. While he gets more support than most, due to his successful frat brothers, he still gets quite a bit of shit about what he does. 
"When we got married we were both having a rough moment outside of our relationship and decided that we needed to do something for ourselves. If it helps, we had already planned to have a wedding where you all could be there. Not even his brothers were at our first one. Dave, we were hoping we could use your back yard."

"My house is your house," Dave replied, and Aaron held up his beer in a salute of thanks.

"JJ, why didn’t you tell us?" Garcia asked, and JJ sighed.

"It wasn't my place, and I didn't know until Will took the job with them. There was no way to tell you where he was working without revealing Aaron and Tony's secret. After what happened with Will and Henry, I totally get what they wanted, and I felt like they have a right to their privacy. They needed something for themselves and I knew they’d tell us when they were ready."

Penelope nodded after taking a sip of her Basil Sour. “We believe in you, mon Capitan. I am excited to meet this yummielicious specimen of male flesh, and I can’t wait for the wedding. If you need help, you know I am more than happy to assist with the planning.”

Aaron smiled at her. “Thank you, Garcia. I believe though Tony has been secretly planning. I know I have some thoughts on the event myself. Haley pretty much insisted on doing everything for my first wedding, so I am looking forward to voicing my opinion on some of the details. Reid? You’re awfully quiet.”

“You’re not leaving too, are you?” He asked biting his lip, and Aaron quickly shook his head.

“Absolutely not,” he insisted before going on to comment further. “When Tony and I first got together, one of the first things I told him was how important my job was to me. I made it clear that if me being in this position was going to be an issue, then we needed to call it off right away. Fortunately for me, he understands. His job is just as important to him. He helps people just like we do and travels all around the country just like we do. He’s amazing at what he does, and some of the people he helps have been waiting decades for someone to just believe them.”

“How many cases do you really think they’ll be able to help us on though beyond this one?”

“Probably more than you’d think,” Reid interjected before Aaron could reply. “I would guess that even in cases where we know that the unsub is a human there may be times when there is a paranormal answer. We know from Matthew’s case that demon possession is a real thing. Historically speaking there were three major points in history when the belief in magic decreased, mostly due to changing religious views.

“The first major event would be when the Catholic Church decided that magic was a sin or the suspicions that it adopted after the Inquisition, changing its stance to the current belief that it just doesn’t exist in the late medieval period. The second major decrease was during what was labeled as the Enlightenment Period when the church and Christians, in general, began warring with scientific thought. Since magic was disdained by both sides, it was pushed further out of the realm of acceptability. The final blow though came after the occultist and spiritualist ideas adopted during World War II began to fade.

“However the notion that magic exists and is a force in the world and universe is an ideology that is older than any religion and it’s only recent events that have made suggestions that maybe there is a non-scientific explanation for things more acceptable. People have begun to move toward the notion that neither science nor religion are always right, and possibly if the idea of a God that can’t be proven is acceptable, then along the same vein other things that can’t be proven should and are therefore also acceptable.”
When Reid stopped talking, finally, Aaron looked at Dave with his lips twitching. “What he said.”

The table was filled with snickers again, and thankfully their dinner salads or soups were delivered just then. Kate carefully turned the conversation toward opinions on the paranormal in general, and Aaron felt himself relax. He wasn’t sure he deserved how easily it had gone, but he was immensely thankful for his team. When everyone’s bill was mysteriously covered at the end of the evening, they all just smiled and left things be as they wandered back to their hotel.
Late Night Arrivals

Chapter Four: Late Night Arrivals

It was about two in the morning when Aaron heard a knock on his hotel door. Bleary eyed, he was glad that he’d slept in his boxers, and just barely remembering to grab his gun from the desk where he’d tossed it for the night before he went to see who it was.

Crossing to the door, he opened it up and stood there blinking for several seconds at the sight presented to him sure that it was a dream. Hearing a sleepy squeal down the hall, he turned his head to see a half asleep, but no less jubilant JJ, with her arms around Will’s neck, and her legs around his waist. He could hear Kate giving Will shit, and turning back smiled at the vision of his own. “You’re early.”

Tony laughed and Aaron stepped forward pulling his husband into his arms. There in the middle of the hallway, he kissed him gaining a wolf whistle from down the hall. When Tony started laughing, Aaron pulled back and gave an obviously unrepentant Dave the evil eye. Quickly, he pulled his husband back into their hotel room and pressed him against the door for a moment as he pressed their foreheads together.

“Aaron, I love the thought, but you know how I feel about hotel sex,” Tony whined as Aaron felt arms tighten around his shoulders.

“I know,” Aaron assured smiling somewhat amuse. “No, having sex where people either died, or dead people can and often do come watch you any second.”
“It’s disturbing, Aaron,” Tony complained, and the Unit Chief just felt happy. His husband was odd. He was a handful. He was more than a little confusing, but he was all his.

Pulling back, Aaron took Tony’s hand and tugged the man in, only barely recognizing the luggage being left at the door. It was a sign how asleep he was when he tried to pull his husband into bed fully clothed.

“Aaron, I have to undress, babe,” Tony pointed out chuckling, and Aaron whined, but let go of the man’s hand.

Climbing under the covers, he watched as his husband undressed, carefully folding his dress slacks and shirt, and rolled up his tie. It never failed to amuse him at how meticulous the man was with his clothing. A number of clothes his husband owned were second only to his massive movie collection. Even when he was on the road, he carried quite a wide variety with him. There were suits for meeting the client, and to wear if he had to meet LEO's or Federal Agents. There were nice jeans with sweaters or button down shirts for going to the client's house. Lounging around the house on their off days was old sweats and OSU t-shirts or sweatshirts depending on the weather.

The movie collection literally had everything you could possibly want. There were even two shelves specifically for Jack and Henry. The boys knew they could watch anything on them, but weren't to touch the other shelves. He had one filled with their favorites, and one that he rotated other films on and off of that he thought they'd like and were appropriate for their age. The two boys absolutely loved it feeling like they had their own movie rental place.

Finally, the man came to bed, climbing under the covers, and then rolling to lay his head on Aaron's shoulder. Taking the hint, he began running his fingers through Tony's hair knowing how it relaxed him. Soon, he heard his breathing even out signaling he'd fallen asleep. Not that Aaron was surprised. Cases always took extra out of him, as did flying. Not bothering to restrain a yawn, Aaron closed his eyes, and let himself be pulled back down into dreamland himself. Tomorrow would come soon enough.

When he woke up the next morning, he found them both on their sides, with his arm wrapped around Tony's waist. His husband was holding his hand, but from the rhythm of his breathing, he was awake.

"I thought I'd have to bribe you into getting up this morning," Aaron said quietly. His voice husky from just waking up.

"A visitor woke me up," Tony commented sleepily, and Aaron lifted his head.

"Is he or she still here?"

"No, she left when you spoke." His husband assured rolling over to lay facing him.

"I'm sorry," Aaron apologized. "Were you getting anything useful from her?"

Tony shook his head, and Aaron saw his eyes close, but he spoke anyway. "I couldn't understand what she was saying. It was garbled. I am guessing it's one of the victims from your case. Is there a girl with long curly red hair and bright blue eyes?"

"The most recent victim, Meghan Flannery," Hotch offered quietly. "Do you think she'll try again?"

They couldn't necessarily use testimony from a ghost in court, but he had a feeling this case wouldn't be solved in the normal route. If this was a creature, then the Paranormal Investigators were authorized to deal with it, especially if lives were in danger.
"I am guessing she will if I go to the site," Tony murmured sleepily. "Which means that our normal
division of non-human cases may need to be changed. I'll have to talk with the guys over breakfast
to decide. Do we have time to go back to sleep before we have to get up? I better be getting
breakfast, since I didn't get much sleep. Flannery... Irish or Scottish?"

"Scottish. Her parents have a replica of the Flannery Clan Tartan on the wall in their living room,
and her father had a discussion with Reid about their clan history."

"Does Reid speak Gaelic?" Tony asked sounding more awake.

"I believe it is one of the languages he speaks, why?"

Tony didn't answer right away, and soon Aaron heard his breathing even out. Opening his eyes, he
saw his husband had fallen back to sleep. Placing a gentle kiss on his forehead, Aaron closed his
own eyes again, and let sleep pull him back under.

The next time Aaron woke up, Tony was still sleeping but was still snuggled up as close to him as
he could get. He wasn't terribly surprised. His husband seemed to need Aaron's touch or even
general presence more when he was first coming home from a case. Since he figured that he did
the same with Tony when he was coming off his own cases, Aaron figured that it made sense.
Enjoying the opportunity to watch his husband sleep, he brushed some hair out of his face. He
often changed up his hair styles, and currently was wearing it longer than normal on top and
brushed back loosely. As long as he didn't break out the hair gel and slick it back completely too
often, Aaron didn't mind.

Tony had come into his life at maybe the worst moment of his adult life, but somehow when
everything settled, and Aaron felt more like himself again, he turned out to be the best thing that
could have happened to him. When Haley died, Aaron had felt somewhat lost. Their marriage had
ended more than a year previously. While he hadn't wanted to get back together with her, there was
a part of him that would always love her. Between the circumstances surrounding her death, and
the way their marriage had ended, he hadn't been sure he'd ever be able to trust enough to love
again. Tony changed all of that, though.

Here was a man who genuinely understood Aaron's broken past, having suffered himself at the
hands of Anthony DiNozzo, Sr, and watching how John Winchester treated his younger two sons.
Because he was a Paranormal Investigator, and considered one of the most respected Mediums in
the country, he also understood Aaron's connection to both his job and his team. There was no guilt
tripping going on about not being home, and moments they could get together were treasured. In
his opinion, his relationship with Tony was stronger and healthier than his marriage to Haley had
ever been, despite the amount of time they spent apart. The sealer was how much Jack adored his
Papà Tony.

Despite the man's uncomfortable reaction to children, he always gave Jack his best and showed the
boy genuine love and affection. Not to mention that he'd given his son the kind of extended family
life that Aaron himself would never be able to provide. Jack absolutely adored both his Grampa
Bobby as well as his Uncles Dean and Sam. It had been an interesting journey watching how each
man brought his own little niche into Jack's life. They were relationships that he'd never get
anywhere else with both of Aaron's parents being dead, and his relationship with Sean being rocky
at best.

Aaron could tell the moment that Tony began waking up. His nose always scrunched up reminding
him of a bunny rabbit and causing the nickname Bugs that Aaron had given him. The next thing he
always did was turn his face toward darkness with this little grunt of annoyance as if seeking to
prolong his sleep as much as possible and irritated that the sun had the nerve to rise.
Leaning down, Aaron placed a kiss on his temple and the corner of his mouth, before putting his lips over his husband's ear. "Wakie wakie."

"There better be eggs and bacon," Tony whined trying to hide under Aaron somehow making him chuckle at his sleepy husband.

"Probably down in the dining room. I missed you." Aaron offered softly kissing Tony's temple again until finally the man opened his eyes and lifted his head.

"I missed you, too," Tony murmured demanding a kiss, before rolling onto his back. "We need a vacation soon, please."

Aaron nodded agreeing. One of their rules was to let each other know when they were feeling they'd been apart too much. They also agreed that they would spend time with Jack and just the two of them putting equal emphasis on themselves and their little family unit. They hadn't gotten away for awhile, and with this Morgan issue, the Unit Chief knew that he needed time away from everything also.

"Just us or Jack, too?" Aaron asked trying to come up with ideas in his head, as he felt Tony take his hand.

"I was thinking a long weekend with Jack somewhere. Say a Friday to Monday. Then he can stay with Bobby while we take some grownup time. We need to plan something fun for his summer vacation, though. I was thinking maybe Disney World and the Universal area with the three of us and my brothers? We could consider taking Henry and giving JJ and Will a break. Will and I have been talking about the possibilities. He and JJ are taking Henry to New Orleans for a long week or week and a half before school starts, and they want to take Jack too. I told him that I'd talk to you, but I think it will be a good experience for him, and he and Henry are together so much they consider each other more like brothers." 

"Hmm, I like these ideas," Aaron offered, smiling before stealing another kiss. "You know Reid is going to ask you a million questions today, right?"

Tony nodded seeming unconcerned about it and then rolled away getting out of bed. "I don't mind and I need to talk to him preferably before anyone gets to the station. Can you make sure he's at breakfast, please? I'm gonna get my shower, and get a quick meditation session in."

Without waiting his husband walked naked to the bathroom, and soon Aaron heard the water turn on. Smiling he sat up and ran a hand over his face. He had never really seen his husband in action on a case. This would be interesting. Grabbing his phone off the nightstand, he shot off a quick message to Rossi knowing he had roomed with the genius and was happy to hear they were still at the buffet the hotel offered. Dave promised they would wait down there for them, and that Sam and Dean were already there.

When Tony came out, Aaron relayed that Spencer would be waiting for them at breakfast, and then headed to take his own shower, as his husband folded himself into position for his quick meditation session. Aaron knew that had they been at home it would have been tai chi, but when he was on the road his partner found meditation easier.

By the time he was done with his shower, Tony was unfolding himself to begin getting dressed. A part of Aaron was sad that he'd missed the naked meditation. The Unit Chief in him though thought that it was probably for the best, because had he been present for naked meditation they would not be getting to breakfast anytime soon. His husband's hedonistic tendencies were something he truly missed when they were apart.
When they got down to the breakfast buffet, both filled their plates, and then made their way over to where the two teams were clustered together. He noticed that Will and JJ had arrived, and guessed that Will must have taken care of introductions because Dean was sitting next to Kate. It sounded like they were debating Oprah versus Dr. Phil, which was a little odd, but Aaron wasn't going to ask and risk getting pulled into the debate. Sam was sitting next to Spencer, and from the sparkle in the profiler's eyes, Aaron guessed that whatever the two geniuses were talking about would go over all of their heads. Happy to see two seats open at the table with the two highly intelligent younger men, Aaron headed that way. As he and Tony sat, the group quieted. Aaron wanted to roll his eyes at them but knew it was to be expected.

"Everyone, this is my husband, Tony Hotchner formerly DiNozzo, and Garcia if you run a background check on him you're grounded. That goes for the rest of you as well."

Tony snorted as he sat down, and Aaron knew he was rolling his eyes. "Now, Aaron, I'm not a delicate blossom. I don't have anything to hide. I will only say that I have absolutely no contact with either of my fathers, so if you hold me responsible for one being a crook and the other being an asshole, you need a reality check. I promise you being the child of either of them was no picnic."

"Either? You have two?" Penelope asked hesitantly, and Tony nodded.

"There is a man who... lent me his last name until I was 22 when he legally disowned me because I wanted to help people using my gifts. Then there is the man who helped create me. He is a special cupcake, and we don't talk much. Dean does, though, so I would appreciate discretion where it comes to John Winchester. Other than that I have nothing to hide, and I'm not ashamed of my past. You will either believe I am what I say I am or you won't. I can't do anything about it, and I learned long ago that it is just a waste of time and stress to try and change people's minds. On a happier note, it's nice to finally meet all of you. Aaron and Will have told us quite a lot about each of you."

"Unfortunately, we can't say the same, but I think we all understand," Rossi offered. "If you can help us figure this mess of a case out, though, all will be forgiven."

Aaron put some scrambled egg on his toast and bit into it as he listened to his husband interact with his team as if he'd known them for years. Tony was a master at social situations, and not for the first time he wondered if it was just him or a part of his gifts.

"Speaking of... Will, Dean, and Sam I am thinking we are going to have to rework our normal non-human case pairings. I had a visitor this morning."

"Someone came visiting you this morning, already?" Will asked sounding surprised. "That's quick. You haven't even been to any of the scenes yet. Do you know who it is?"

Tony nodded and finished chewing the waffle he'd put in his mouth before speaking. "Woke me up, about an hour ago. Aaron thinks it is the last victim Meghan Flannery. I couldn't understand much from her, which is to be expected. Dr. Reid, do you speak Gaelic?"

Spencer nodded quickly looking suddenly even more interested. Aaron knew that the man would take this whole experience as a chance to learn something he wouldn't normally be able to. Mentally he reworked the pairings so that the youngest team member was able to spend as much time with Tony as possible. He knew his husband would be happy to explain anything Reid asked, and Spencer was the most likely to pick up things that could be carried to another case. Kate was the second most likely, and Aaron thought pairing her with Will and Dean would be a good idea.

"I read it better than I speak it. I have trouble getting the words to roll off my tongue correctly.
What do you mean by it is to be expected?"

"Learning to communicate in death is like anything else. The understanding of how to do it doesn't just come automatically. Also, since she didn't die in my hotel room I hope, being away from where ever she's anchored to makes communication more difficult. To be honest, I'm surprised she even knew to come look for me. It isn't unusual that a spirit searches me out, but it is unusual for one that should still be figuring things out. Dr. Reid, what does the word capall mean? It was the only thing that I could really understand from her."

"It means horse, which is interesting considering..." Spencer was cut off suddenly as Sam's hand quickly settled over his mouth.

"Sorry, Dr. Reid," Tony said smiling. "I know you don't like to be touched, but Sam had to stop you from saying something that could influence me. While Aaron has told me some things, I'd like to not get any more information at this point until I can walk the scenes. Normally I would go in more or less blind, but this is an unusual circumstance."

"It's ok," Spencer said blushing once Sam had taken his hand off the man's mouth. "I forgot. Sam warned us not to give too many case details."

"No harm done," Tony offered gently. "It's new to all of you. I'd like to pair up Sam and myself and then Dean and Will, if that's OK with the three of you?"

"Sounds like the most reasonable decision," Will agreed, then turned his eyes Aaron's direction.

"Had you given a thought to who you'd send out in the field with us?"

Aaron smiled and nodded swallowing the food in his mouth before answering. "Actually I had. I thought that Reid and I would go with Tony and Sam. Then, JJ and Kate can go with Will and Dean. Dave, that leaves you at the station with Garcia in case anything new comes up. I'd like for the team to be able to learn as much about this if it's needed in the future. I think Spencer and Kate are our best chances there. Does anyone object to JJ going with Will, and me going with Tony?"

The profilers shook their heads, and Dave was the one who spoke up. "Given that they're just consultants there aren't any issues because you're married, and there's another agent there to ensure that nothing funny happens."

Aaron looked around the group, and when he saw everyone nodding their agreement let his concern go. "Ok then people, let's get our breakfasts wrapped up so that we can get out to the scenes. I want some headway made on this case today."
Tony wanted to get to the girl who visited him as soon as possible, so Aaron sent Kate’s group to start at the first scene while they started at the last one. They’d intersect at some point, but that couldn’t be helped. Will advised if they got to a scene and Tony’s group was already there they’d just wait in their SUV. Aaron accepted that and promised if they would do the same if Will’s group got there first.

They’d just arrived at the last scene, which was Meghan Flannery’s kill site. Aaron and Spencer were hanging back and letting Tony and Sam do their thing, which he appreciated. He knew that this was all new, but Tony needed time with just himself and Sam.

He was trying to forget that this was the first time his husband had really watched him work so that his nerves didn’t interfere with what he needed to do. It was hard, though. The only time Aaron had seen Tony’s gifts at work, was in a relatively controlled setting of their home or occasionally out in public somewhere. This was a whole other ballgame. A part of him worried that his partner would realize how weird that he was, and it would hurt their relationship. He knew it was silly. He knew Aaron loved him, and that he accepted his gifts. He just… worried.

Tony was approaching the riverbank rambling a bit with Sam asking questions here and there when he felt something off to his left. Not questioning it, as he long ago learned not to think too much about the needs of the spirits he encountered, Tony headed in that direction.
“I feel something over here, Sam. It feels similar to this morning, only stronger. I think we’ve found our girl.”

“Can you see her, or are you just sensing her presence at this point?” Sam asked gently. It was his job to make sure that they documented as much as possible, and that all angles were covered.

“Just sensing,” Tony replied absently, and when the girl popped up, he stopped knowing Sam would stop behind him.

“I see her now. It is the same girl. She has long curly red hair that comes below her shoulders, and the bluest eyes I have ever seen. She’s wearing a red and white checkered dress that looks too thin for this time of year with a red sweater on. She feels sad but way more aware of her circumstances than I’d expect.”

Tony moved forward until he was standing just in front of the girl, who was now watching him with wide eyes. “I’m sorry I couldn’t understand you this morning.”

The girl nodded biting her lip. “I was too far away. My seanmháthair didn’t tell me that there was a distance limit. I just saw your light, and knew you would be able to help me.”

“I’m sorry, I don’t know that word. It’s Gaelic right?” Tony said aloud and saw Sam moving slightly to get a better angle of his face.

“What’s she saying, Tony?” Sam asked quietly needing to know her part of the conversation since Tony was the only one who could hear her.

“She said that her seanmháthair didn’t tell her there was a distance limitation for communicating. I was about to explain and asked what that word meant.”

He saw the girl’s eyes flick to Sam, and Tony smiled kindly. “Don’t worry about Sam. He’s about as big of a teddy bear as there is. He gives the best hugs, too. He just needs to know what you’re saying since he can’t hear you.”

“You’re a Paranormal Investigator?” She asked sounding somewhat excited. “I wanted to do that, before the Kelpie. Seanmháthair means grandmother in Gaelic. She taught me about the supernatural.”

“The distance thing is primarily because you’re newly dead, although to be honest, most don’t travel far from their anchor points,” Tony explained kindly then looked to Sam.

“She explained that seanmháthair is grandmother. She was teaching her about the supernatural because she wanted to be a Paranormal Investigator like us. She mentioned Kelpies, Sam.”

“Is that what killed her?” Sam asked, and Tony shrugged then turned his attention back to the girl.

“I’m sorry. I’ve been so rude. My name is Tony. Are you Meghan Flannery? You mentioned Kelpie. Is that what killed you?”

The girl nodded sniffling. “Yes, I’m Meghan, and it was a Kelpie. My seanmháthair told me many stories about them from when she was a girl in Scotland. I knew better, but… he was so beautiful. I’d never seen a horse so beautiful. When he changed, he was stunningly handsome. I should have known better. I should have run, but he was so enchanting. My seanmháthair will be so disappointed in me.”

“Meghan, no,” Tony disagreed. He wished that he could reach out and hug her, but it wasn’t
possible. Physical contact with a spirit only resulted in one thing, and as much as he liked her, he was not letting this dead girl ride his body.

“This isn’t your fault, and I am sure your grandmother loves you. When this case is solved, I will see if I can get her to come here with me so that you can say goodbye. Would that help? Is there anyone else you wish to speak with?”

Meghan shook her head looking terribly sad. “No, my parents are dead, and I had no siblings. It was just my seanmháthair and seanathair and I. I was supposed to take care of them. What will happen to them now?”

Tony felt the girl’s pain, and wanted to make it right, but knew he couldn’t. As much as he wanted to fix every hurt for the spirits that he encountered, he just couldn’t. He’d do what he could, and just hope that it was enough. Before he could speak again, the girl disappeared, and Tony knew it would be a day or two before she’d surface again.

Taking a deep breath, he turned and looked at Sam. “She said it was definitely a Kelpie. She saw it first in horse shape and thought it was beautiful. When it changed, she knew she should run, but said that he was enchanting. She said that she feels like her grandmother will be disappointed in her, and she’s worried what will happen to them. She was all they had. I told her when the case was wrapped up that I would try and get her grandparents here so that they could say goodbye. Jesus, I hate this part, Sam.”

Shaking his head sadly, Tony turned and headed to where Aaron and Spencer were waiting. They had questions, and he had some answers for them. Although he’d insist on seeing the other scenes to be sure, at least they had a starting point now.

It was lunch time, and both teams were squeezed into the conference room that they’d taken over in the Cape May PD building. The teams were discussing the things they found with mostly Tony’s team explaining what they found and what it meant, and the BAU team asking questions to try and figure out how they knew that. The only two not participating were Sam, who was trying to find as much information on Kelpie lore as he could, and Garcia who was trying to get him to turn his searching over to her.

Aaron was sitting next to Tony at the table, and feeling his husband’s gaze on him he turned to look to see what he wanted, although he already had a pretty good idea. The gentle tug of war going on between Sam and Garcia was being echoed by certain members of each team overall. It wasn’t anything demeaning, but the fact was the BAU team wasn’t used to not being the experts when they were on a case. While they said that they were just there to help the local law enforcement, they still expected them to do as the team wished. Only now that the shoe was on the other foot, a few were struggling to adapt.

Fortunately, Tony had anticipated this, and on the flight over instructed his team to make sure they didn’t react negatively and show as much as patience as they could. He’d promised that he’d let them handle situations their own way unless someone stepped over the line. At that point, he’d need to take the reins. He felt fortunate that his first official case with the FBI was with Aaron’s team because he had a feeling that his husband wouldn’t be so willing to share leadership normally. So, when Aaron lifted his eyebrow, Tony knew what he was asking.

Shaking his head ever so slightly, Tony responded to the unspoken question of should Aaron step in and tell Garcia to back off by advising that Sam would take care of it. The quick nod he got back advised him that Aaron understood, and would follow Tony’s lead for now. In response, Tony offered a half smile and tilted his head to one side to indicate that should things escalate after Sam did his thing, then Tony would let Aaron take care of it. The hand covering his briefly under the
table said thank you.

“Really, Mr. Winchester, it would be much faster if you would just let me handle that. I am the Goddess of the All Knowing,” she teased. From the way, Sam’s hand tightened on his coffee cup, and his eyes flicking to Tony, the group leader knew that one Penelope Garcia was about to be schooled Sammy style. Which meant generally gentle and understanding, but firm and ready to kick your ass verbally if he had to, then a hug to make things better afterward.

“We don’t throw around words like Goddess lightly, Ms. Garcia,” Sam started keeping his eyes focused on the laptop. Looking down the table, Tony saw Dean stop his discussion bordering on argument with Rossi, who was insisting that a BAU member be the one to take care of this creature and Will cover JJ’s hand with his own. Connecting his eyes to Dean’s, Tony again shook his head no, and fortunately, his younger brother nodded. He wasn’t foolish enough though to think that it would last if things escalated, but one could hope the team as a whole would learn a lesson here shortly.

“You never know what beings you are going to find on a case, and you would be surprised how many creatures or Gods of ancient myths can be found in some form.”

“Well, maybe you have your very own real life Goddess next to you then,” she replied trying to flirt her way into getting her way. “ Seriously, I think you’ll get your answers much faster if you would just let me…”

“What’s the difference between a Werewolf, a Shapeshifter, and a Skinwalker?” Sam asked cutting her off.

“Wha… Werewolves? Skin… They’re all the same thing, but werewolves aren’t real.” She insisted as Sam continued to search for the information that he needed.

“Shapeshifters are creatures that can mimic any human they’ve come in contact with. Skinwalkers can take the form of any creature, but the most common is a dog. Werewolves are a type of Skinwalker that take wolf forms. There are also a handful of other types of subspecies of Skinwalkers that only take the form of one particular animal. Can a vampire survive on the blood of a non-human? What happens if they go out into the sunlight? What happens to their souls after vampires die?”

“Vam… I don’t…”

“Vampire packs can live on the blood of animals like cows as opposed to drinking human blood, although they must drink the blood of a human to complete their transformation. They can enter your house without being asked, and sunlight doesn’t affect them in the slightest. When they die their souls go to purgatory. What about Ghosts or human spirits? What is the legal way to move on a spirit, and what is the easiest way? If they are different can you ever use the easier way? Where does a Paranormal Investigator need to go to get information they can use in an investigation? Can they just kill anything they find? Can you ever throw a non-human into jail? Can they get life in prison? If so, what does that mean for something that can live hundreds or even thousands of years?”

This time she just blinked at him wide eyed and looking more than a little lost. Finally, Sam did stop his research to look at her. “Legally as a Paranormal Investigator you can only use exorcisms, smudging, saging, and other methods that won’t disrupt a sacred burial space. The fastest way is to dig up their body and salt and burn the bones. Generally, that is not allowed, but in extreme cases, if you have a highly violent malicious entity and have confirmation from a Medium Level 5 or Pinnacle Level like Tony, then you can salt and burn the bones provided there are no living family
members who object within 4 generations of that spirit’s birth.

“A Paranormal Investigator must be able to prove that all lore and mythology used was gotten from an approved site online or literary source. Every page checked and book read must be logged to be submitted after the case is finalized by the Board of Paranormal Affairs. If a new source is found that is believed to be accurate, it must be submitted to the board for review. If they agree they will add it to the list, and ensure that a copy is available online.

“A being can only be killed if they are determined by a Level 5 or Pinnacle Medium that they are beyond rehabilitation. The kill must be done in the swiftest way possible. You may not for any reason torture a non-human entity to get information. However if they are considered to be a non-human terrorist entity then more extreme interrogation methods can be used by licensed interrogators like Dean, which would be similar to the interrogation of a human terrorist.

“A non-human entity can be thrown into prison, and there are six facilities currently in the United States that house these creatures. They can be sentenced to ‘life’ but that is considered to be 100 years per conviction. The courts can also rule with a death penalty, in which case they will call in a group like ours to carry out the sentencing. If any of these rules are not followed, then we can be fined, Tony can lose his license, and we can even be thrown in jail, along with the violent entity being released back into the public.”

As Garcia just gaped at him, the rest of the room just stayed silent. Tony hoped that in general the BAU team understood the seriousness of what they did.

“I know you mean well, Ms. Garcia, but in this instance, you are not the best option to get the information that we need to stop this Kelpie. Also, a word of warning, I wouldn’t let the wrong being hear you calling yourself a Goddess. I wasn’t kidding earlier. Some of those mythological Gods and Goddesses are real, and in our experience, they don’t take kindly to a mere mortal masquerading as one of them. I would hate to have something bad happen to you because of a former God or Goddess, who is now merely immortal, takes offense because no one believes in them any longer and they’re bitter about it. Your team needs you too much for the things that you are an expert in, and the world could use your kind of happiness.”

“I…,” Garcia started then half stood and threw her arms around Sam. “I’m sorry! I didn’t know. I just… I thought…”

“I know that we’re used to being the experts, and the kings of campus,” Aaron said softly. Tony let his free hand rest on his husband’s leg. The Unit Chief had done as Tony asked, and let Sam take care of it. It was understandable that he’d want to put his own emphasis on things and make sure that his team understood he agreed with Sam’s point.

“That isn’t the case here. If I thought that we could have handled it, I would have simply suggested the paranormal unsub possibility, and not called in the consulting team. The fact is that we aren’t trained, we don’t qualify for the training, and we have no business telling trained and highly respected Paranormal Investigators how to do their job. In this instance, we really are here just to advise them. If they tell us to jump, then it’s our job to say how high. This is a test for us. Can we set aside our egos to get this case closed?”

Dave sighed and leaned back in his chair holding up his hands in a surrender gesture. “By all means, I probably have the biggest ego in this room. But, that said, I am more than willing to set aside my big head if it means that innocent people stop dying.”

The others quickly nodded, and Tony saw Aaron’s shoulders relax slightly. Smiling, he began a discussion about how they could combine both areas of expertise to catch this creature.
Chapter Six: *Monsters, Murders, and Explanations*

Four days and one more body later, both teams were getting frustrated. The BAU team was learning how very frustrating paranormal cases could be. In a case like their current one where the creature could masquerade as a human, finding the unsub was that much more difficult. They were all in new territory. The BAU team had never tried to apply their profiles to a non-human entity, and the paranormal team had never tried to apply a profile to one of their hunts.

To make things even more confusing, the latest victim hadn’t been found by a body of water. The young man had been found in an alley behind a local restaurant bar. The paranormal team had been thrown briefly, but after going back over their evidence determined that it was more a sign of desperation than it was having the wrong non-human entity.
Tony and Aaron had a discussion in private and decided to divide the team up into three units. They needed to try something new because everything that they’d done so far wasn’t working. So far they’d been trying to stake out places along the various waterways. The problem was there were too many spots to watch, and then the body shows up inland.

Will was taking JJ and Dave back to a secluded beach that they’d found signs of the creature at, but so far hadn’t had kill at. Dean and Kate were going to a popular bar that had a pool, and lots of twenty-somethings. Aaron, Tony, Sam and Spencer were going to a beachside bar with a live band set near one of the piers in town.

Tony and Aaron were hanging out together on the back deck of the bar, while Sam and Spencer had split up inside. The married couple was standing off to one side watching the crowd out back while keeping their eyes on the beach.

“Hey guys, I don’t see Spencer, and he hasn’t spoken in a while. I’m not an expert at these things, but shouldn’t we be able to hear him?”

“Yes,” Aaron said standing up straighter as he and Tony each scanned the area they were monitoring. “Spencer? Are you still on?”

When he didn’t answer right away, Garcia broke in. “Hotch, his earpiece is still active, but it appears to be on standby. For Tony and Sam who don’t use these, that generally means he’s taken it out. This particular unit transmits data when it’s placed in the ear, but if it’s taken out it goes into standby status.”

“I don’t see him inside,” Sam said sounding increasingly concerned. The youngest Winchester and the youngest profiler had been spending quite a bit of time together both on and off the clock. For once both Tony and Dean both were behind Sam’s latest romantic interest, and that almost never happened.

“Last time I saw him he was talking to a man about my height with long dreads and glasses. He had on a loose white shirt and looked to have a couple necklaces on. One might have been beads, and then I saw something white flash off the lights. It could have been some kind of bone or ivory. I think he had on black jeans or slacks, and I didn’t see his shoes. Shit!”

“This isn’t your fault, Sam,” Aaron assured as Tony pulled away from him. “I think you need to come out, Sam. I think Tony’s getting something. He’s pulled away from me and he’s looking toward the pier.”
“On my way! Whatever you do, don’t touch him, or let someone else touch him. Especially if he’s trying to track Spencer.”

“Hotch? Did we lose my Junior G-man? I didn’t even see he wasn’t transmitting! Oh my God! Did I get Spencer hurt?”

“Garcia,” Aaron cut on calmly. “This isn’t your fault. We knew that you would be stretched thin with three separate teams and four new people. Let the other teams know what is going on, but to hold their positions for the moment.”

“Yes, sir. Oh! Now Sam’s has gone to standby!”

Just that moment, Sam stepped up to Aaron looking worried holding an earpiece in his hand. “Can you tell Ms. Garcia that I took my ear thing out? I can’t listen to her and Tony, too. I found this on the table that Spence was at, Hotch.” The younger man put Spencer’s ear piece in Aaron’s hand, making the worry in the man’s stomach grow.

Aaron watched Tony slowly move through the crowd to stand in the sand, still looking toward the pier. Quickly, Aaron moved to follow them as he noticed the pair move toward the underside of the pier. “Garcia, I need you to put Dean or Will through to my earpiece. I need to know what to expect.”

“Will do mon Capitan,” Garcia replied and soon continued. “I have Dean in your ear. Tony has him listed as the go to tonight if he wasn’t available.”

“Hotch? What’s happened? Is Sammy ok?”

“Dean,” Aaron replied following the pair across the sand. “We have a situation, and I need to know what the best thing for me to do is. Spencer has gone missing. He took his earpiece out and we don’t know where he went. After Tony found out, he started staring at the pier, and now he and Sam are headed toward the underside. It’s possible we’ve found our non-human unsub. What can and can’t I do?”

“Follow behind them, but let Tony and Sam handle it if possible. Do NOT for any reason take a shot unless Spencer’s life is in danger and Sam and Tony are say knocked out or not responding to you for some reason. If you do take a shot in that instance, you better fucking be sure that it’s
justified. Otherwise, wait for Tony’s decision as to first if it is the creature, and second if this is a jail or kill situation. You can then take a shot if Tony authorizes it. We’ve registered the team as temporary consultants so you’re all covered under our license for the duration of us working with you. So, you fuck up and Tony goes to jail.”

“Got it,” Hotch replied, forcing himself to stop thinking about his husband walking toward a possible killer monster, and instead think about what Unit Chief Hotchner would do. “Garcia, no chatter from this point out. Turn my team’s earpieces to hear only.”

Glad that he’d loaded the silver bullets into his gun, Aaron took his primary piece out. Taking a deep breath he continued forward and hoped that this would come out without any more deaths.

The second he heard Spencer was missing, Tony knew that the Kelpie was there. Pulling away from Aaron, he scanned the people on the back patio and quickly ruled them all out. He barely recognized that he’d moved out into the sand. There was something underneath the pier that was pulling at him.

Because he’d never felt a Kelpie, he could only go on his instincts and the information he was getting from his guides. Tony had three guides that spoke to him the most often. One was a thirty-five-ish-year-old woman named Anuaka who described herself as a gypsy and died during the Great Depression. The second was a sixty-three-year-old former slave named Malcum, who had worked as a doctor on the plantation he’d lived on.

The last and the one who talked to him the most was a former gangster, who had been born in Italy and came to America with his family in the early 1900’s and worked for Lucky Luciano, named Salvatore or Sal for short. Sal’s grandmother had been a healer and taught him all about a wide range of religions and beliefs. She’d been born in Ireland and moved to Italy when she’d met his grandfather one summer when he’d come to her small town. Sal had admitted that she would have been disappointed in him, and he hoped that by helping Tony that he was making up for the bad things that he’d done while he was alive.

The former gangster was insistent that he had to get underneath the pier if he wanted to save the G-man as he called the BAU team members. “He’s gonna gut him with them sharp teeth a’his if you don’t get ta moving!”

“Tony?” Sam called quietly, and briefly, he flicked his gaze toward Sam. Soon, though, he focused back on the underside of the pier.

“Sal says the Kelpie has Spencer, and if we don’t get to moving that he’s gonna gut him with his
“Sal your guide?” Sam questioned, and Tony knew that he was trying to make sure he had the identity on tape. Information from Spirit Guides could be used in a limited fashion if they’d backed up the information some other way. Since they had physical evidence that pointed toward or at least suggested, a Kelpie was involved, then they could, in this instance, use his advice.

“What can you feel?” Sam prompted.

“There is something non-human underneath the pier that I haven’t felt before,” Tony said as he continued to move toward the area.

“Can you feel Spencer?” Sam asked quietly using his phone to tape his brother.

“Yes,” Tony said but frowned as he continued to move forward. “He feels weird, though. Like… He feels like when something takes over someone, and they aren’t thinking for themselves.”

“Like a Spirit?” Sam asked, needing clarification. Mental manipulation could be done various ways by non-human entities, and each felt differently. A Medium rated as Pinnacle Level like Tony was could easily differentiate between them.

“Nooooooooo,” Tony said shaking his head, and Sam could see him making a face. “More like… like that witch that kept threatening to turn Dean into a toad.”

“So, it’s a magical manipulation?” Sam clarified, and this time his older brother nodded big.

“Yes, yes yup! Definitely magical. This thing…. He’s not right. Killer… he’s definitely a killer. Sal says he’s got the taste of blood in his veins and likes it a little too much. It’s a shame… such a shame.”

“Why do you say that? Why say that it’s a shame? Did he have a choice?”

Again Tony nodded big, and they were now within ten foot of the bridge. “Yup! He had a chance, but… but I think someone took it away from him. Someone stole his chance. Stole all of his sharp teeth.”
chances. Such a shame.”

Sam stayed quiet at that. Had this not been his brother, and had it not been Spencer underneath the pier with that monster, he might be amused. He could never predict how Tony would react when he was under the influence of guides. Sometimes he was mostly normal like he’d been a few days back when they’d first talked to Meghan Flannery. Other times like tonight, he was a little… odd.

As they stepped into the dark underside of the pier, Sam was glad they had at least a little light on his cellphone to see where they were going. Fortunately, the moon, while not full, seemed unusually bright that night, providing extra light through the breaks in the wood above them. It allowed them quickly to spot Spencer and the man that he’d seen him talking to inside.

This was the part that he hated. Someone had to film what was going on. They had to have a visual record of this, especially when Tony doing was his Medium thing. Glancing over his shoulder, he was relieved to see Aaron hurrying toward them. Trying to keep an eye on Tony, Sam tried to motion the Unit Chief over to him. Luckily, the older man not only understood but obeyed.

“I need you to take my phone, and keep recording,” Sam ordered. “It would be better all around if I take the shot should Tony authorize it. Just pretend that you’re trying to get information from a victim’s family who saw something, but is slightly traumatized. You need to get the information from him about the Kelpie, and you need him to decide if he can be saved or if he has to die. You cannot though influence him one way or the other. It HAS to be Tony’s call. You also have to be careful not to pull him out of his headspace.”

When the Unit Chief nodded, Sam handed over the cellphone, then broke off to hide in the shadows to await his brother’s decision. He was pretty sure that he’d only have one shot at this massive beast.

“Tony,” Aaron started quietly trying to imitate what he’d seen and heard Sam doing thus far. “Can you feel the creature here?”

“Oh yeah,” Tony said stopping in a strip of moonlight. Aaron could see Spencer thrashing in the water with a tall man who seemed to be changing before his eyes, or at least partially.

“Sal says that the Kelpie is there with the G-man. He’s bad. Not right, such a shame. Gotta save him. Gotta…. The G-man won’t survive if we don’t save him.”
“What about the Kelpie? Can he be saved?” Aaron prompted as he watched the human head transform into that of a horse. For some reason, though, Spencer wasn’t fighting. Sam had suggested while doing his research that the Kelpie might be capable of enchanting his victims, and Meghan had apparently backed that up.

“Noooooo,” Tony said shaking his head from side to side. Aaron couldn’t help but frown wondering what was wrong with his husband. He’d never heard him act so… odd. As if he were drunk or… almost like he was someone else. It was a little disconcerting, but quickly he shoved the thought aside. This was not only the love of his life but a man who saved hundreds of people every year. If this momentary oddness was what it took, then it was something Aaron could live with.

“Can’t be saved. Nope, nope, nope.” Tony said stepping forward drawing the creature’s attention. Hotch couldn’t help but shiver at the strange sound that was half scream and half neighing that came from the Kelpie.

“Let him go! Go! Let him go!” Tony called continuing forward until he was standing in the water.

“If he moves any closer he’ll cut off my shot,” Hotch heard Sam call. “Touch his back gently, and he’ll stop.”

Nodding that he understood, Hotch reached forward and placed a hand on Tony’s back, glad when the Medium stopped.

The creature was obviously unhappy at the intrusion because it let out an angry sound as it yanked Spencer momentarily closer before throwing him into the water. As he watched stunned, the creature quickly finished his transformation, drawing Aaron’s attention away from Tony. Unfortunately, the medium, still listening to his guide Sal, took another step forward.

“Down!” Sam shouted as the Kelpie reared up on its hind legs.

Not knowing what else to do, Hotch reached out and yanked Tony back causing them both to land on their backs. Fortunately, the water was shallow enough that he was able to keep the phone out of the tide. Quickly he moved the screen back to the creature just before Sam took the shot.

He’d never seen anything like it in his life. The creature reared back. Screaming in something that sounded like it was half anger, and half pain, it flung its front legs back as they transformed back into arms. By the time the creature hit the water dead, it hand turned back into a man. The white
shirt it was wearing as quickly turning red as blood oozed out of the hole in the center of its chest. What was once a monster, now looked like nothing more than any other man.

When someone took the cell from his hand, Hotch was surprised when he realized it was Tony. Hearing Spencer cry out, Hotch looked over to see Sam helping the younger man out of the water and up into the sand. Vaguely he could hear Tony talking to Garcia, but he could only hear Tony’s side of the conversation.

“Come on, babe,” Tony said now crouched down next to him. “Let’s get out of the water, ok?”

“The Cell?” Aaron said realizing he wasn’t holding it, but Tony smiled softly as he helped him stand.

“I already took it and put it in an evidence bag to make sure it doesn’t get wet before we get the video off. I believe Garcia is working on that for me right now. I think you lost your earpiece when you grabbed me, babe, because she says your doohickey is listing as inactive.”

Lifting his hand, Aaron realized that it wasn’t in his ear any longer, and frowned. He couldn’t take his eyes off the man creature in the water. “What happens to him now?”

“Same as with a human death,” Tony advised drawing him out of the water and back to the sand. “The ME will come, and then if he isn’t certified for a non-human autopsy, one will come in to do the post mortem. Afterward, if he has a family, his body will be released for whatever their death ritual is. If he doesn’t, they’ll call in a local team to build a pyre and burn the body. There are a few teams in the New Jersey/New York area that are certified for such things.”

Aaron’s view of the body was cut off when his husband walked into his line of vision. “Hi.”

Taking a deep breath, Aaron ran a hand through his hair. “Hey, Sorry. I just… It shouldn’t be so… I mean I’ve seen hundreds of unsubs die I just…”

“You’ve never seen a man kidnap a coworker, drag him into the ocean, turn into a half man half horse so he could eat his innards, then get pissed, finish turning into a horse until he’s shot, and then turn back into a man as he dies? Gee, I can’t fathom why you would be thrown.” Tony snarked, and Aaron huffed before rolling his eyes.
Turning he looked for Spencer, and saw that he was talking quietly to Sam. “Will Spencer be ok?”

“Yeah,” Tony replied quickly. “There shouldn’t be any lingering issues. I’d recommend some down time like you would anytime an agent is put in danger, but… mentally there won’t be any lasting effects. Congratulations, Unit Chief Hotchner, you’ve caught your first Non-Human Unsub.”

Taking a deep breath, Aaron nodded and pulled his husband in for a hug. Closing his eyes, he tried to find his calm place again, but he had one thought looping in his head. It was the fact that there was no way his team would ever be able to catch something like this on their own. Maybe Cruz had the right idea with the permanent consultant slot for the Three Men and a Medium group.

The next afternoon, he stood near the banks of scene number five where Meghan Flannery had been found. Spencer was standing next to him with his arms wrapped around his middle. Near the water stood Tony, Sam, and Meghan’s grandparents. This time, no camera was needed, but Tony explained that he always felt more comfortable when he had Sam anchoring him. He did suggest though that with time and practice it was something that Aaron might also be able to one day help him do. Neither Aaron nor Spencer had been too keen on coming, but both Sam and Tony asked them too. Both men felt like it would help them to see this side of what they did.

They were standing far enough away to not intrude on their conversation, but when the direction the wind was blowing, they could still easily hear the conversation. Haley had already passed to the other side when Tony walked his house, so this was something he’d never experienced for himself. He honestly wasn’t sure if he was happy that he hadn’t had a moment like this with his former wife or not. One thing was for sure, though. It was very clear to see how much this chance to say goodbye meant to The Flannery’s. He wasn’t sure if this made the other acceptable, but it definitely helped. Tony had been right. He and Spencer witnessing this was necessary.

Aaron knew it was over when his husband stepped forward and kissed both of the elder couple’s cheeks, and then walked toward him and Spencer with Sam following chatting to him softly. When the brothers stopped in front of them, Spencer moved first, stepping toward Sam and quietly saying that he had some questions. The youngest Winchester nodded and led the team genius back toward the SUV listening intently.

“If those two don’t end up together, I’ll eat all my ties,” Aaron said as he turned his gaze away from the younger men.

“I’d say your ties are safe, babe,” Tony said with a soft chuckle evident in his tone. “So, did that help?”
Aaron nodded smiling as he took Tony’s hand and pulled him toward their vehicle. “Of course it did. Just like you knew it would. It doesn’t make me feel all warm and fuzzy about the other, but… it helps. One thing is for sure. We’ll never be able to do what you all do.”

Reaching the vehicle, they parted momentarily as they climbed into the front seats, with Aaron driving. Sam and Spencer were already sitting in the first row behind them. “And, we will never be able to do what the BAU does,” Tony said frankly. “So? No one should expect you to be able to do our job. We have literally decades of experience, babe. You need us again, you know how to reach me.”

Aaron nodded smiling, as he pulled out onto the road. “That I do. Let’s go home.”

Two weeks later, Aaron was coming back from a meeting with Cruz and AD Evans. Three Men and a Medium were now officially listed as a permanent consulting team for the BAU. If the union of the two teams continued to work, the FBI was going to consider creating a specialized team to be added to Aaron’s Unit. The job would be the Winchester Brothers’ and Will’s if they wanted it.

He was just stepping through the glass doors into his unit’s area when he saw Garcia pacing. “Penelope?”

“Derek is in the conference room. He says that he wants to talk to us all, sir.”

Aaron nodded shortly, not needing much thought. “Call the team to the room. Not that they’ll be surprised since even Dave seems to be out of his office staring at the room. Let’s find out what’s going on.”

As the dust settled from the case, and the team no longer had the newness of a Non-Human Unsub to distract them, they all turned their thoughts back to their absent teammate. As much as they all cared about him, and even missed him, it became evident as the days passed that Morgan’s time with the BAU was over, even if that wasn’t what Derek wanted. However, the last time Aaron met with Section Chief Cruz, he got the feeling that it would be a mutual decision.

Stopping at his office, Aaron dropped off the papers from his meeting that included the forms Tony’s team would need to fill out on his desk, and then headed to the conference room. Seeing that he was the last to arrive, Aaron shut the door and took his normal seat next to Spencer.

“Derek, the floor is yours.”
His former agent was standing in front of the screen they normally showed evidence on with his hands in his pockets. Despite the no profiling each other rule, it would be nearly impossible not to see the nerves and guilt on the man’s face.

“Hey guys,” the nervous man started. “I appreciate you hearing me out. I know that I don’t deserve it, but… I wanted to explain what’s going on. It doesn’t excuse my behavior but…”

Aaron watched as the younger man took a hand out of his pocket and ran it over the top of his head. “I umm… you all know I was up for a promotion, and that I was leaning toward accepting it. Some of you know that at first, I wasn’t honestly sure if I wanted it or not. I knew Hotch didn’t think I was ready, and while it bugged me, I’ve always trusted his opinion.”

When the younger man looked to him, Aaron nodded and tried to give an encouraging smile. He knew this was hard, and he’d worked out a couple ideas of what could have been going on. None of them being good.

“What you don’t know is that a week after I was told I was in the running for the new spot my sister called me to tell me that mama is sick. She has stage 3 breast cancer. My sisters want me to come home, and I just…” Derek sighed and snorted.

“I got mad. I know that shocks you all, but suddenly I was furious that I was going to be torn between this job I wasn’t sure I wanted and my mamma. I mean don’t get me wrong. I love my mama to death and back. What makes it all stupid is that there isn’t even a question of what my decision is. I just… Instead of being an adult and telling you all, I was an asshole and took my anger out on you. That’s inexcusable, and I’m sorry. When I confessed to Mamma she kicked my ass around Chicago about three times. I know I hurt you all, but I can only hope that someday you’ll forgive me for being a jerk.”

“Oh, you!” Garcia wailed as she stood and crossed the short distance to Derek throwing her arms around his neck. Quickly, Spencer followed, and the rest of the group watched as the three friends sniffled and cried together.

Eventually, they all got a chance to talk to Derek to say goodbye. By the time the younger man got to Aaron though, they were the only two left in the room. “Hotch,” Derek started, but Aaron just stood and held out a hand.

“It’s been an honor, Derek,” Aaron said. Only when the man took his hand, Hotch pulled him in
for a hug. “Someday, you are going to make one hell of a team leader. You need to work on your temper, and you need to open yourself to possibilities that don’t fit your belief system. I’m sorry to hear about your mother. Tony and I will keep her in our thoughts.”

“Tony?” The former profiler asked pulling back, with a small smile.

Aaron nodded showing his ring, then taking his cell out, showed Morgan the wallpaper, which was a picture Garcia had taken on the Kelpie case of the two of them together laughing. “My husband. I told the team on the case.”

“The uh… Kelpie?” Morgan clarified looking embarrassed. “Yeah, Cruz pointed out to me how much I fucked that up. I can’t say as I am fully convinced, but I’ll try to keep an open mind about it all. I’m happy for you man. You deserve someone who looks at you like that. I hope I find it for myself someday.”

“I have faith,” Aaron advised smiling. “You’re a good man, Derek. You just have some rough edges that you need to smooth down. After Haley left me, I never imagined that I’d fall in love again. I can honestly say though that Tony is the best thing that has ever happened to me. If there is ever anything I can do for you Derek, we’re just a call away. Learn from this. Grow from this, and someday you’ll have that lead spot you want.”

“Thanks, man,” Derek said giving him another hug, before turning and leaving the room.

Sitting down at the table, Aaron took a deep breath and let it out slowly. Derek leaving may have been the ending he knew was needed, but it didn’t make it any easier. Somehow, a part of him felt like he’d failed, just like he did with Elle and Jason and Prentiss. Shaking his head, he forced himself to turn his thoughts to the future. Monsters and murders. Unsubs both human and non-human. He knew that there would always be turnover on the team, but he honestly looked forward to seeing what changes this new avenue in investigating would bring them.
Three years later, Aaron stood at the back of a conference room in Chicago, IL watching Tony and Derek trade friendly insults. The team, which now included the Three Men and a Medium unit along with a videographer named Ash as a full-time part of the unit, had been called in to investigate a series of deaths where the bodies were found fully drained of their blood. The main unit quickly recognized the signs of a Non-Human Unsub and called in their secondary Paranormal Unit.

The FBI had quickly recognized the benefit of opening themselves to helping with Non-Human cases, and now had more than 2 dozen paranormal units scattered around in offices across the country. Serial cases though always went through the BAU Paranormal Unit. Hearing Spencer’s laugh, Aaron looked to see that the genius, and currently Aaron’s Second in Command, was laughing with his husband Sam and brother-in-law Dean.

When they’d first gotten to Chicago, Aaron had been concerned how Derek would react to the case, but it quickly became apparent that he’d taken the advice given to him. One night while the two of them were patrolling the streets talking to the homeless and the prostitutes to see if anyone knew anything, Derek admitted that he’d hooked up with a local paranormal group Spencer recommended so he could find out the truth about it all. He admitted that it had been a real eye-
opener for him, and his mother had been none too shy about saying she told him so.

Kate had just returned to the team after taking a year off following the birth of her son, Adam. She could often be found with JJ these days sharing baby tips. JJ had only been back from the birth of her second son Michael for six months, and Grampa Bobby was enjoying having a baby around his home.

Lately, Penelope had been trying to convince both he and Tony as well as Sam and Spencer that one of them needed a baby, but Hotch knew it would never happen. Tony loved Jack to death but admitted that he had no interest in a baby in his life. Being Papa Tony was good enough for him. Sam and Spencer flat out told her that there was no chance they were having children. Because of their childhoods, neither man wanted to take the risk of making their father’s mistakes.

Aaron highly doubted that either of them would become William Reid or John Winchester, but he respected their decision. He’d asked Rossi to tell Garcia to stop and hoped the older man would do so when they got back to DC.

When one of the locals came in with a folder and handed it to Aaron, he thanked the man before reviewing the information hoping that finally, they had the lead they needed. “OK, guys! Those results came in we’ve been waiting for. Let’s focus, and maybe we can catch this bloodsucker.”

Quickly the teams turned back to work and moved to their spots around the large table to listen to the results. Glancing back at the folder he read off the findings as a sense of happiness and peace settled around him. He knew these people. He believed in these people, and together they would ensure neither human nor non-human unsubs escaped justice.

The End!

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!