# Dead Air Leads to Never-ending Possibilities

**by SpencnerTibbsLuvr (KliqzAngel)**

**Summary**

The events of Dead Air have unexpected consequences. What seems to be the worst thing that could possibly happen turns into the best possible outcome. Tony moves on from NCIS, and finds a real family with his pseudo father replacement in David Rossi at the BAU. With it

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<td>Character:</td>
<td>Anthony DiNozzo, Spencer Reid, Brian O'Conner, Jethro Gibbs, David Rossi, Aaron Hotchner, Derek Morgan, Penelope Garcia, Emily Prentiss, Jennifer &quot;JJ&quot; Jareau, William LaMontagne Jr., Abby Sciuto, Ziva David, Leon Vance, SecNav, Taylor Kitsch, Dwayne &quot;King&quot; Pride, Jimmy Palmer, Ducky Mallard, Christopher LaSalle, G Callen, Sam Hanna, Diana Reid</td>
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<td>Additional Tags:</td>
<td>Grey Asexual/Demisexual/Asexual Character, Threesome - M/M/M, Angst, Episode: s08e05 Dead Air, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Emily Doesn't Leave, Minor Character Death, Character Bashing, Anti-Abby, Anti-Ziva, Father-Son Relationship, Rossi-Father/Tony-Son Type Relationship, Senior Being an asshole, Timeline on crack, Big Brother!Gibbs/Little Brother!Tony type relationship, Some possible Out of Character, Language, Angry Words, Voyeurism, non-linear timeline, Voyeur!Spencer, Background NCIS Character Death, Plague Aftermath Medical Issues, Delayed Beta, Mentions of Child Abuse and Neglect, Displays of Anger, Anti-JJ, Father-Hotch/Son-Reid Type Relationship, Hatred, Bullying, possible mental illness, Mention of Injury Resulting in a Disability, Poorly written Cajun accent, Mild torture, Ethnic slurs, Child Abuse, Child Neglect, Molestation</td>
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comes new love, the return of old love, new friends, and the possibility of forever. Of course there is also new co-workers who can't accept him, the long reach of the grim reaper, and Senior making his presence known no matter how impossible it should be.

Notes

The cannon divergence isn't just for Tony. I pretty much have played with the time lines of both shows. Brian O'Connor's history is almost completely AU. A snippet of this was posted for Evil Author Day as Spencer and BAU!Tony. The character death is for mostly off screen NCIS people. It is NOT Tony, Brian, or any of the Criminal Minds people. Emily DOES NOT LEAVE the BAU in this. The Derek Morgan current season events don't happen. The tags and relationship may change. The timeline jumps around like a frog on speed and acid... so beware. Facts may not be entirely accurate. It's written that way on purpose though. So, just go with it. K? I have tried to make the time periods as clear as possible. While there is more Spencer and Tony at first, Brian is an important part of the story. He just isn't in it as heavily at first.

I have 9 of 15 chapters of this done. I will be posting one chapter a week - ish. My Beta and I are both participating in Rough Trade. So updates will NOT be more frequent until after that is done. After that it will depend on if I have this story done or not. The chapters will be updated once they are beta'd, but I have no clue when that will happen. I will most likely not announce when it happens either. I will finish writing this after RT is done, if it doesn't get done while I am doing RT.
“God I love you.”

Spencer opened his eyes and glanced up at hazel orbs, which were currently showing more green than brown. He hoped that there would not be a day when those words felt routine. Every time he heard them, he felt like it was the first time - disbelieving, hopeful, and more than a little bit in awe. Spencer knew his strengths and weaknesses well. He understood that some people saw him as pretty, although he himself did not see it and frankly thought they were a little insane. His social awkwardness was a huge hurdle that he knew would never be completely overcome, and honestly he didn’t think he’d ever understand how people could function in highly social situations. Of course
that only made his relationship with Tony all that much more amazing. If there was anyone who could be considered an expert at highly social situations it was his partner.

He also understood that his brain pushed away many more people than it drew in. Those that were attracted to it were usually other scholarly types, not someone like this man above him who could easily have passed for one of the Greek or Roman Gods of old. Neither Zeus nor Apollo had anything on this man. Not only was the man gorgeous, but he was funny, witty, and while maybe not in Spencer’s league brain wise, certainly was no dummy himself. This was a man that should have been well outside of Spencer’s league, and yet here he was 5 years into their relationship still getting flutters in his tummy when he heard those four words.

“I love you, too.” Spencer gave back, softly and hesitantly afraid somewhat of intruding on a moment that might always overwhelm him, even if it was just a little bit. Emotions were still not one of his strong points. Another thing though that his partner did well. The other man’s patience with Spencer’s insecurities, and what Reid perceived as his social inadequacies was amazing. He never failed to take it in stride. There was never a moment where Spencer felt that he’d embarrassed or upset him for some inevitable social faux pas. Of course Tony always insisted that Spencer had never made one, so there was nothing to be upset about.

He saw the head dipping and, closing his eyes, was rewarded when he felt the weight of the other man’s lips on his. A tiny sigh of relief escaped, as his brain stuttered, and thought ceased while he got lost in the kiss. He loved this kissing thing. It was maybe one of his favorite things to do in the entire world. For once his mind slowed enough that he could force the thoughts away, and stop thinking about anything other than how wonderful this moment was. It was maybe the only time he got true peace and quiet inside of his head.

He wasn’t sure how long the kiss lasted, but as always it wasn’t long enough before the beeping of his alarm broke the moment drawing a groan from the other man. “I hate that thing.” He heard uttered softly in his ear, and wordlessly nodded his agreement. Alarms that broke up perfect morning kisses should be considered illegal in every state. “Do you mind if I hop into the shower first? I need to meet Derek in 45 minutes so we can go interview Mr. Hayes. His shift at the factory ends at 7AM. Mor’s hoping that we’ll be able to get something out of him when he’s half asleep.”

Spencer shook his head, and after getting another quick kiss burrowed under the covers to get at least another hour of sleep before he had to be at the station himself. Vaguely he felt the kiss on his forehead, but that was all he comprehended before his partner left the room.

At 8:30 sharp, Spencer stepped into the Charlotte, North Carolina PD station. His morning coffee in one hand. His other held a tray with two more coffees and a bag with breakfast goodies. He knew he’d be fooling no one, but the teasing he’d get was well worth the smile he’d get in thanks. Never let it be said Dr. Spencer Reid could not be bribed with an amazing smile.

He’d barely stepped into the conference room they were using as their office, when he saw that devastating grin directed at him. His knees grew slightly weak at the force of it, but he stubbornly ignored the snickers of the others as he let himself enjoy the moment. After all, what was the point of all the scrutiny they lived under if he couldn’t enjoy simple moments like this? While a relationship between team members was frowned upon, certain allowances had been made for their situation considering one of them wasn’t technically employed with the FBI.

“Special Agent DiNozzo, I brought you a coffee and breakfast burrito with hash browns. I thought you might not have had a chance with your early morning meeting.” Those hazel eyes he loved so much twinkled at him as Tony took the offered coffee and food. His partner showed way too much amusement in Spencer’s insistence on the formal way he addressed Tony when they were out in the
field. He suspected it had something to do with the way the locals seemed to always interpret it as some sign of ill will between them. In one of his rare moments of true animosity, Spencer snarked to himself that it was a sign of why he was a profiler with the elite BAU team, and they were cops. He would never express that statement out loud though, because Tony and Derek were prime examples of how great cops could be. JJ’s husband Will was another stellar illustration of that point.

“Hey! What about me, Pretty Boy? I was at that damned oh dark hundred meeting too.” Spencer turned and scowled at his best friend and waved his hand at the other coffee and food. “It’s right there, Morgan.”

“I’m hurt, Pretty Boy. Where’s my sugar?” Spencer sniffed as the others watched with varying degrees of amusement. “I don’t know, Derek. While I do have an eidetic memory I can’t seem to remember what her name is this week. Was it Candy or Charlene?”

“Ouch!” Derek cried out playfully, as the other, including Hotch gave in and laughed at their antics. Turning his eyes back to Tony, Spencer felt his body hum with happiness as his love grinned at him, winking and tugging on his earlobe in their very own I love you message. Blushing Spencer rubbed his nose, sending his own message of love back, and watched as that smile he adored grew even bigger.

It had been five years with Special Agent Tony DiNozzo, Jr., and Spencer had loved every moment of it.

~~*NCIS Late October 2010*~~ * ~~The Worst of Yesterday*~~

Tony walked into the bullpen with Ziva trailing after him. Her sharp tongued snipes only serving to fuel his anger further. Throwing his bag down in the general direction of his filing cabinet, Tony turned and stepped into the irritating woman’s space. “Probationary Agent David, you will sit down at your desk and fill out your report! I do not want to hear another sound out of you unless either Special Agent in Charge Gibbs or myself addresses you directly. Is that clear?”

When the woman’s face twisted in anger, and she opened her mouth, Tony cut her off before she could speak. “Anything other than yes, Special Agent DiNozzo is going to get you written up for insubordination.”

Ziva screeched, and looked at Gibbs who just shrugged, hiding his worry behind a blank mask with some difficulty. “I’d listen to him if I were you, Probationary Agent David. I’d also keep in mind that your probationary status can be terminated for such actions.”

Gritting her teeth, Ziva glared at Gibbs who just shrugged, hiding his worry behind a blank mask with some difficulty. “I’d listen to him if I were you, Probationary Agent David. I’d also keep in mind that your probationary status can be terminated for such actions.”

Gritting her teeth, Ziva glared angrily at Gibbs then turned to direct an equally angry glare at Tony. “Yes, Special Agent DiNozzo.” Stomping to her desk, Ziva started banging drawers, and quickly Gibbs spoke up again. “Any more of that, and I will write you up myself. Knock it the hell off, right this second, or take your ass home. I’m not gonna put up with a temper tantrum. Act like an adult or remove yourself from my space. I don’t employ pre-schoolers on my team.”

Leaving Ziva to Gibbs, Tony sat and quickly filled out the statement report for the interview he’d just come back from. Once that was done, Tony quickly filled out an immediate vacation request for the remainder of the day, and the next two days, which would take him to the weekend. Hitting print on those, and pulling a file out of his locked cabinet drawer, Tony opened his inner-office messenger, and started a conversation with his boss.
T. DiNozzo: I’m done, Gibbs. I can’t take it anymore. I am officially filing a complaint about what happened with the coms, and I am submitting for the rest of the week off.

L.J. Gibbs: What happened? You know I support you with the formal complaint. I told you I would back you and I do. Consider your time off request approved.

T. DiNozzo: She corrected me several times in front of the witness. She gave the woman attitude, and wrong information. Then, despite all that I almost had the woman willing to officially come forward when Ziva threatened her. Not only did Mrs. Callahan throw us out of her house, but she told us not to come back. She is officially unwilling to help, and says and I quote “I suddenly don’t remember shit”.

L. J. Gibbs: Jesus. What about McGee? Is he improving?

T. DiNozzo: The inventory requisition forms you told me to have him do for the van were put back on my desk with a note saying, “I told you I’m not doing your work.”

L. J. Gibbs: For fuck sake! Do what you need to do, Tony. You know my door is open this weekend if you need to talk. I assume you’re going to Angelo’s house?

T. DiNozzo: That’s the plan, boss. I’m sorry about this I just…

L.J. Gibbs: Rule 6, DiNozzo, and in this case you have absolutely nothing to apologize for. Hell, Tony, I should be apologizing to you. I should have cut this crap off a long time ago.

T. DiNozzo: Jesus, boss, please don’t! I’m upset enough. You apologize, and I’m really gonna freak out. I will see you Monday, if not sooner.

Hearing an amused snort from Gibbs’ direction, Tony closed the NCIS messenger window, and shut down his computer. He then grabbed the papers he needed from the printer dropping them and the file he’d been holding off on Gibbs’ desk. Picking up his bag, Tony ignored the curious look from McGee, and the disbelief from Ziva before leaving.

Pulling out his phone, he texted his mentor finding his location as he waited for the elevator. Finding out the older man was in town, Tony advised he’d be waiting at the house when he got home asking if he could stay a few days. The response he got back was to stop being an idiot, and he’d see him there when he got off work.

Once he reached the house, which was more like a mansion but he’d allow the older man his delusions, Tony headed toward the front door. Unlocking it, he hurried to the kitchen where he entered the code into the security pad. Almost the second the beeping stopped, his control broke. Screaming, he flung his bag as hard as he could hitting various items on the counter. Angry he grabbed whatever he could put his hands on… Rossi’s bowl he kept fruit in, the block he kept his knives in, the coffee pot Dave had paid way too much for, and tossed them as hard and as far as he could. Screaming in frustration when he couldn’t find anything else within reach to break, Tony let his knees buckle, as the sobs came letting out all the pain and anguish that he’d been holding in.

Pulling forward he slammed his body backward as hard as he could screaming, but only knocked the wind out of himself making him fall to one side gasping for breath. Pulling his legs to his chest, Tony let the sobbing continue as he thought of all that he was sure he was losing. Ziva was… well Ziva was no big loss. He’d never trusted her, and certainly didn’t forgive her for her part in Kate’s death.

McGee though, McGee he’d taken under his wing, something he’d not done before. McGee he’d
tried to teach all the little things that had helped Tony succeed. McGee he’d cared for, and
considered something of a little brother. Ironically, the younger man had acted the role perfectly.
Only a son born of Anthony Dante DiNozzo, Sr. would stab his family in the back.

Abby… Abby was supposed to have been his best friend. Abby was supposed to have been the one
person he could be completely honest with. Abby had been the one that had doctored the recording
to try and cover up what McGee and Ziva had done. Fortunately, Tony had gotten into the system,
and made a copy before she’d thought to do it.

She didn’t know that they knew. She wasn’t very good at investigation, or concealing secrets no
matter what she liked to tell everyone. Knowing how to do something, and being good at it were
definitely not the same thing. If he hadn’t already known she was guilty, her little not so subtle
questions would have clued him in. Of course by then there would have been no proof, had he not
decided to keep a copy as insurance. When he’d done it he’d been worried about McGee or possibly
Director Vance trying to cover things up. He’d never imagined his supposed best friend would be the
Benedict Arnold. He hated her for that. He had stopped going to her lab a week ago, and Gibbs had
to resort to threats to keep her away from his Senior Field Agent.

He felt like… well he felt worse than he had maybe since his mother died, and Senior told him to
stop his damned sniffling. He didn’t know how long he’d laid on the cold kitchen floor, but came
back to himself when he felt Rossi shaking him. “Tony! Tony! Talk to me!”

Sitting up, Tony ran his hands through his hair taking a shuddering breath. “Rossi? Time s’it?”

“Jesus, Tony, what happened? It looks like there was a brawl in here!” Confused at Rossi’s words,
Tony looked around and vaguely remembered losing his temper.

“Fuck, Angelo… I’ll replace it all. I’m gonna go broke buying a new coffee machine.”

“Forget the damned coffee machine. What happened?”

Tony sighed ashamed and afraid to look at his mentor. “I think I lost my temper. I don’t… I don’t
fully remember. I just… I was putting in the code for the alarm, and the damned beeps were
annoying me and it just… it all hit me, and I just…” Tony waved his arm toward the damage. “That
happened.”

Rossi frowned concerned. “You haven’t gotten that angry since you were a kid, Figlio.”

Taking a deep breath Tony nodded and shrugged. “I guess I haven’t had anything to BE this angry
about since I was a kid, Angelo. I just… I never thought I would feel this betrayed by them. I mean I
knew things weren’t perfect, but I didn’t think they were this bad.”

“Everyone has their limits kiddo. Why don’t you get up off the cold tile, and go take a shower. Your
stuff is still in your room where it always is. I will be waiting in the library for you when you’re
ready to talk.” Nodding Tony got up off the floor and headed off to follow Dave’s orders, head hung
and lost in thought again.

An hour later, he sat in his comfiest OSU sweats, and an old Philly PD t-shirt staring at the whiskey
in the tumbler he was holding. “It’s too much, Dave, I can’t come back from this. I’ve tried to give it
time, but I just can’t forget what they did. How the hell am I supposed to trust them now?”

“You’re not,” David Rossi frowned holding his own now empty tumbler. “Hell I would have quit
two weeks ago when I found out. You held out a lot longer than anyone should have expected you
to. Maybe it’s time you took me up on my offer, kiddo.”
Tony frowned watching the whiskey swirl in the glass contemplating his options. “The FBI hasn’t exactly been kind to me, Dave. The only way I’d consider it is if you can guarantee I can work with you.”

Dave nodded and smirked knowing he’d finally won. “I am aware, and I can. All you need to do is put in the application, and I will take care of the rest. I promise Agent Sacks will come nowhere near you. Hell, if you want I’ll make sure you have a chance at rubbing it in his face.”

Tony huffed with amusement, and took a sip from his tumbler, before setting it aside. Letting his head drop backward to rest on the chair back, Tony allowed his mind to run free through the possibilities, and the consequences both positive and negative. “Gibbs will freak out.”

Rossi huffed, and weighed whether or not he wanted to be completely honest about Gibbs. The former Marine was definitely a subject Tony was touchy about. Even when he was angriest with the man, he didn’t take insults to him well. It was one of those “I can bitch about my family, but no one else had better try” rules. Rossi may have taken the role of honorary father years ago, but Gibbs was a shoe in for the honorary big brother position.

“If Gibbs really sees you as part of his family, he will understand. Maybe you need to lay everything out for him. Be 100% honest, and don’t hold back. Hell if he cares about you at all he’ll be damned proud. I’m not suggesting that you become some low level FBI flunky, Figlio. I am offering you a spot on the premiere BAU team. That’s a helluva honor.”

Tony snorted amused and lifted his head to study the man that was more of a father to him than Senior ever would be. “And, what is Hotch going to say about this? Does he even know you’re making me this offer?”

“Why are you worrying about these minor details?” Dave huffed, then sighed when Tony just arched an eyebrow at him. “If it will ease your mind, yes. Have I discussed it recently? No. Have we discussed it previously? Yes. As a matter of a fact we discussed it when we were stuck on that god awful case in the cold in Alaska. Hotch and I shared a room.”

Tony’s lips twitched as he remembered the stories Dave had told him about that trip. “That’s the one where Reid got his own room because Derek refused to room with him right?”

Dave nodded chuckling. “I wouldn’t put it past Reid to have set it up that way. Kid’s too smart for his own good, and Derek tends to out think himself when it comes to Spencer. I never did find out why he was throwing such a fit about rooming with the kid.”

Tony shook his head at Dave’s attempt to distract him from his doubts. Finally Dave decided blunt was the way to go. “Look, kid, it’s like this. Are you happy where you are at?”

After a moment Tony shook his head no, and Dave continued. “Don’t think, just answer… Do you honestly have any hope or faith that it will change at any time in the future?” When Tony again shook his head no, Dave just arched an eyebrow at him. “Then what the fuck are you still doing there, Figlio? Come give us a chance. I’m not going to tell you that it will be perfect, or that tempers will never flare. At the end of the day though, it’s a family. It’s a real family, not that fake shit you’re putting up with now.

“Trust me to work it out, kiddo. It’s not about me getting you the job, or you not deserving it if that’s a hang up. I will make sure that Aaron sees your full uncensored file including your masters in Criminal Justice, and minor in Psychology along with the major in Physical Education. I wouldn’t ask you to join the team, Tony, if I didn’t believe in my heart that you won’t be a huge asset to us. You’ve trusted me since you were eight years old. Have faith a little longer, huh?”
Tony huffed slouching down in his chair, and swallowing the whiskey in one gulp. “You don’t fight fair, Angelo. Alright, you’re most likely right like always anyway. I’m in. What do I need to do?”

Chapter End Notes

Figlio = Son
Angelo = Angel- showing gratefulness according to Google. I am going with it.
Rocky Starts, Choppy Endings, and Reassurances

Chapter Summary

Things don't start off at the BAU as smoothly as Tony would like. His exit from NCIS is full of honesty and surprises sending people on unexpected paths. Then in current day, a return from a case brings some all around comforting.

Chapter Notes

This chapter introduces the dynamics of our threesome. To say I am nervous about that section is an understatement. Please keep in mind all relationships are unique, and the Spencer/Tony/Brian dynamic is no different. Derek isn't reflected in the best light in this chapter. Please keep in mind the current scene in the last chapter. They obviously work through things.

Chapter one has been updated with the beta'd version if you are interested. This chapter has also been beta read by the ever so loverly rivermoon1970. Huge kudos go out for taking the time to do this for me while working on Rough Trade. Time jumps people... I wasn't kidding about the frog on speed and crack. The section headers are dated to try and give you some kind of timeline on what is happening when.

Chapter Two: Rocky Starts, Choppy Endings, and Reassurances
Tony stood leaning against the corner across from Hotch’s office in the semi darkness watching a certain genius work. Tony’s head was leaning against the wall, his arms were crossed across his chest, and his legs were crossed at the ankle. He knew that he shouldn’t have chosen that particular spot to stop, but Hotch’s door was closed. Spencer had looked so … amazing that he just hadn’t been able to resist.

Tony had been with the BAU for six weeks, and it had turned out to be probably the best decision he’d ever made in his life. Dave was right. They were so much closer to being what Tony had always imagined a family was. One agent in particular, a certain Dr. Spencer Reid, had really caught his eye.

Tony didn’t really understand it, but he’d never been one to fight his attractions. Tony had been comfortable with his sexuality from a young age. Maybe it was all those years locked in military schools with only other boys to mess around with, but who was he to deny himself the fancy of any flesh. Spencer Reid was certainly an amazingly beautiful reflection of man.

It didn’t hurt things that Tony was incredibly turned on by the younger man’s huge brain. After McGee, Tony was a little hesitant around the young genius. At first he found himself always waiting for Spencer’s intelligence, and Tony’s assumed lack thereof, to be thrown into Tony’s face. Only that had never happened. Instead, Spencer acted like his incredible brain was no big thing. Hell, in Tony’s opinion, McGee hadn’t been half as smart as Reid, but somehow never let Tony forget that he thought he was much more intelligent than his Senior Field Agent. So, needless to say, it hadn’t taken long for Tony to develop a fetish for Spencer’s random spewing of facts that seriously no living person should be able to remember.
And his hands.

Seriously, Tony could not forget those damned hands… fingers to be specific. Tony was pretty sure that someone would take away his gay card if he DIDN’T have a fetish for Spencer’s fingers. My God, he could only imagine the things the man could do with those things.

Currently the object of his hopefully secret obsession was bent over his desk, flipping back and forth between pages of whatever file he was reading and some other file or document that he’d printed out. Seriously…. Those fucking fingers.

“Whatcha doin’ playa?” Tony heard in his ear, and barely suppressed a very unmasculine squeal.

Pulling back so that he was out of Spencer’s sight, Tony looked wide eyed at none other than Derek Morgan, Dr. Reid’s best friend and personal watchdog. ‘Crap,’ he thought to himself. ‘You’ve stuck your foot in it this time, DiNozzo.’

“So,” Derek started after sitting behind the desk, and waving his hand toward one of the empty chairs. “You have a thing for Pretty Boy, huh? I know your reputation, DiNozzo. Spencer isn’t a plaything.”

Tony clenched his jaw momentarily, trying to lock in the first fuck you that wanted to come out. While he was loving his transition to the BAU that didn’t mean that he and all his co-workers were lock armed, and singing Kumbaya.

Frankly, he was a little leery of just giving out trust, and they were a little leery of this guy that seemed to have gotten his job based on Rossi throwing his weight around. Tony understood that Spencer was Derek’s boy, and he was just trying to protect his friend. While it hurt that it meant Tony was being treated like a man whore, he appreciated the loyalty. Mostly anyway, but after the way Tony’s stint on the MCRT had ended, his ego and feelings were maybe a little more bruised than even Tony wanted to admit.

“Reputation isn’t reality, SSA Morgan, and I would think that a seasoned profiler would base his opinion of someone on facts and observations, not reputation. Maybe I’m wrong though.” OK, so apparently Tony needed to work on the whole not pissing off the bulldog thing.

Derek just snorted, and sat back in his chair. “You want my profile on you, playa? Alright. I think you are way out of Spencer’s league. You are a traditionally good looking former two sport college athlete, who excelled at both sports. You ooze charm, and have some almost prodigal social ability. You can walk into any room and have them in the palm of your hand purely on your whim. You have no interest in settling down, most likely because of the issues with your father, and the loss of your mother when you were a child. You got your job here through some pity party Rossi threw you, after you fucked something up at NCIS. I honestly don’t care what happened, so far you’ve been… adequate. Fortunately, I don’t have to like you to work with you.

“Spencer on the other hand is an awkward genius, who isn’t even comfortable in his own skin. He has no clue how to manage a social situation. If you throw him in a room of strangers, he’ll end up talking Star Trek with one of the catering staff. Thanks to his upbringing, and the fact that his mother was schizophrenic his whole life, he’ll never be able to come even close to your comfort level with society. He’s incredibly intelligent, and looks like some kind of pretty boy, male model, who got stuck in some weird college professor role play. He’s a little too feminine in his features to attract
someone like you for very long though. He’s my boy, and I will be damned if I’ll let some Italian gigolo play games with him.”

Tony felt the tick in his jaw began as he rapidly lost control over his temper. He’d taken so much shit at NCIS, he just didn’t seem to have the ability to take anymore. Especially from someone who was supposed to be in a command position. Not to mention, he should be better able to read someone better than he apparently was. The fact that he was so incredibly negative about his admitted “boy” made Tony question what kind of human being Derek Morgan really is.

“You know what, SSA Morgan, how about you go fuck yourself on that dildo you have hidden in your drawer.” Tony bit out standing up from the chair. ‘Or, I can just pretend like I’m a Rottweiler even though I feel like an irate Chihuahua. Maybe he’ll just eat me, ’cause getting fired is gonna suck.’ “If this is your idea of being someone’s ‘Boy’ I can only hope that you don’t ever decide to be my friend you misogynistic, in the closet, prick. How about you take your smooth talkin’ playa bullshit, and write it on the mirror the next time you’re staring at your own reflection. Do you even remember the number of women you’ve fucked in the last month, or know even half of their names?

“You know jack shit about me, and while my reputation may have been carefully cultivated, it has nothing to do with who I am, or what my intentions are toward Spencer. Frankly your idea of what Spencer deserves is pathetic.

“I will agree that in no way we’re in the same class, but it’s because Spencer is so fucking far better than me I can’t even see the bottom of his fucking feet. He’s fucking gorgeous, smarter than I ever imagined possible, more humble than people half as intelligent as him, and why the flying donkey fuck do I care how he can navigate a room of strangers.

“The best fucking friends I had as a child, SSA Morgan, were the fucking help. Just because they’re filling your goddamned drink doesn’t mean they’re somehow beneath you. Why the fuck would I be spending my fucking time with the kind of stuck up snobs that would look down on Spencer if I, by some goddamned miracle, had him in my fucking LIFE? You are a pathetic asshole, and apparently a really fucking CRAPPY profiler, if that’s all you have gotten on me in the six motherfucking weeks that I have been here.

“Why don’t you go jack yourself off while you dream about some fucking dude that you’ll tell everyone is some stacked blonde, because you’re too goddamned chicken shit to admit who the fuck you are. Then you run your mouth about me and who I am. Fuck the hell out of you. You are seriously one of the most pathetic people I have met in a while. Don’t worry. I'll talk to Hotch about a transfer in the morning. I have had enough of judgmental assholes like you when I was at NCIS. I certainly am not spending any more time with them.”

Storming toward the door, Tony jerked it open ignoring the anger on the other man’s face, and cut him off before he could speak. “Go fuck yourself, Derek, with the biggest goddamned dildo you can find. Maybe it’ll get some of the asshole out of you.” Turning quickly to leave, he almost cursed again seeing Hotch standing there with an open mouthed Rossi. “Excuse me, Hotch… Rossi. I’m gonna just go clean off my desk. I will have the transfer request on your desk first thing in the morning.” Before any of the men could speak, Tony sped off leaving two stunned, and one more than slightly embarrassed agents behind.

“So,” Hotch began looking from where Tony had stormed off, back to Derek. “You decided to ignore Dave’s advice, and confronted Tony, after all then? Instead of letting him handle it like you were ordered. How’d that work out for you? I hope that you’ve decided what you’re gonna tell Reid when the first real crush he’s had in years leaves?”

Derek winced, and rubbed the back of his neck, looking behind Hotch to Rossi, who was glaring at
him. “What in the ever-loving Sam Hill were you thinking?” Rossi snapped angrily. “I told you I would take care of it. I told you that it was harmless, and to let it develop on its own. I told you that he would understand Spencer, and his quirks. I told you that the two of them would work it out between them, if things advanced that far. What in the blue fuck did you say to him, Derek?”

Derek winced again, and looked to Hotch, but his boss appeared to be spectacularly unsympathetic. “I may have called him a player, insinuated that Spencer wasn’t in his class, made fun of Spencer’s social awkwardness, and insinuated that the only reason he got the job was because of some nepotism on Rossi’s part.”

When the other men stared at him slack jawed, he rushed on to explain. “I wasn’t serious! I was just ya know… mostly testing him. I caught him mooning at Spencer at the corner. I wanted to yank his chain a little!”

“You… I…. you…” Rossi started so agitated that he couldn’t even finish his thought.

Aaron meanwhile just blinked, and shook his head dumbfounded before speaking. “Derek, that has got to be the dumbest thing you have done since you started working with me, and trust me, you have done a lot of really dumb things. So, that is really saying something. If I had made a list of all the things NOT to say to Tony, I wouldn’t have been able to do better than the stunt you just pulled. You literally hit on all the things that you absolutely should never say to him, and tore open every one of his old wounds. I can’t even imagine how in the world you’re going to make this better. Seriously, this has to be the fuck up of all fuck ups. I don’t think it’s humanly possible to be more disappointed in you than I am right now.”

Derek winced as he realized that he had nothing to say that would get him out of this predicament. “Rossi, man, tell me you can fix this? Please?”

“I don’t even…” Rossi turned and walked away, then came back. “If we weren’t at work right now I would punch you in the fucking throat Derek Morgan. Jesus Christ! I just…” Throwing his hands up in the air, Rossi turned again and stomped off. Hotch just gave Derek another disappointed glare, and turned to follow. Sighing, Morgan sat heavily in his chair wondering how this was gonna be fixed.

Having left Hotch and Rossi behind to talk to Derek, Tony stomped down the ramp to his desk where he yanked out the box he had underneath, and started randomly throwing his shit inside. While he was doing this, he was not so quietly cursing one SSA Derek Morgan, not taking into consideration who else was in the bullpen still.

“Tony?” Spencer’s somewhat quiet, slightly nervous voice came from somewhere behind him causing Tony to freeze. “What… what are you doing? What… what did Derek do now?”

Spinning around so fast that he almost knocked his box of crap off of his desk, Tony shouted without thinking about who he was shouting at. “I wouldn’t treat you like some fucking kind of temporary bed-mate! You’re not beneath me, and I’m not a fucking playboy!”

Spencer opened his mouth, closed it, and took a deep breath as he blushed bright red, and then tried again. “What did Derek do this time?”

Snorting, Tony wiped angry tears off his face that he would never admit to. He was pretty sure that somewhere between NCIS and the BAU he’d picked up some damned female mask for all the tears he’s shed since those damned coms had been turned off. Even if they were tears of anger mostly, he was beginning to question his own masculinity.

“I wouldn’t fuck with you, and, no offense, but your best friend is a raging asshole, and a crappy
profiler.” Tony ranted in lieu of answering the question, wiping his hands over his face, again. When he looked, Spencer was watching him with a thoughtful expression, chewing on his lip as he nodded.

“He also has a horrible habit of not being able to mind his own business. I blame Garcia for that. I love her dearly, but between the two of them it’s nearly impossible to keep personal things well… personal. Not to mention he seems to be under the misconception that I am some kind of damsel in distress.” Spencer paused, and tried to reign in his temper. He could only imagine what kind of bullshit Derek pulled this time in an attempt to ‘protect’ poor helpless Spencer. Never mind the fact that he didn’t need protecting from Tony. Never mind the fact that Rossi had known him for years. Apparently though that wasn’t enough. So, now he was going to have to jump into something that he wasn’t ready for, and he guessed Tony wasn’t ready for. If he didn’t though, Tony mostly likely back off their friendship, and maybe disappear from their team forever. Sometimes Spencer really got tired of fixing Derek’s ‘in the heat of the moment’ reactions.

“He seems to forget that I had years alone in high school and college as a child with people much older than me. While it wasn’t the most fun experience of my life, I survived. I am more than capable of handling my own affairs, both literally and generally speaking. Like say knowing when to tell the new agent on the team that I think he’s incredibly hot, and when I need to wait and let him settle in before trying to see if he kisses as well as I fantasize that he does.”

While Tony just gaped at Spencer like a fish, the younger man stood watching him with his hands in his pockets. He was the stereotypical image of awkward, and yet there was a spine of steel that Tony realized others either overlooked or just straight up ignored.

“I’m starving. Would you mind going with me to have dinner? I get tired of eating alone, and I like that you don’t treat me as if I’m some helpless child. I would like to ask you some questions I have about cars. I have come to realize I need to replace mine, but I don’t want to get something boring. Rossi tells me that you are the one to go to.”

Spencer rocked back and forth on his feet waiting for an answer. When Tony just nodded somewhat dazed, Reid quickly shut down his computer, and headed off with Tony following as he whispered his questions to the other man. Rossi was watching after all, and the veteran profiler needed something to distract him from killing Morgan. That right belonged solely to one Dr. Spencer Reid.

Aaron stopped just behind Rossi watching as the two men headed out of the bullpen, their heads bend together lost to anyone else present. “Derek is gonna be impossible to live with.”

Rossi literally growled at the sound of Derek’s name. “If he even thinks about taking credit for this, I really am punching him in the damned throat. This was all Spencer, baby.” Rossi headed toward his office, taking his own turn at cursing out Derek Morgan not so quietly, as Hotch watched more than a little amused.
Tony sat in the chair in front of the director’s desk. He was a little confused on why he’d been called in. Overall, he was so at peace with his decision that he wasn’t very concerned with whatever Vance had to say. He sat with one leg folded over the other, and his fingers locked together over the top knee. “I am sure you are curious why I called you in, DiNozzo. I know you have been offered a place with the BAU. As much as I would like to argue with you, I honestly can’t blame you for going after such an amazing opportunity.”

Tony shrugged and tilted his head to one side. “If the circumstances weren’t what they are, I would have never thought twice about leaving NCIS.” Tony paused struggling to contain emotions that he didn’t feel comfortable laying out for Director Vance. “Team Gibbs was my fucking family.”

Tony paused again, jaw clenched, and eyes burning from having to hold in angry tears. “I know that I’m not always the best agent. I know that I get hyper. I know that my training methods are… outside of the box. I thought though that the people I worked for believed in me as much as I believed in them. I thought that we were family. I see that was a mistake though. Gibbs…”

Tony hung his head, and took a deep breath letting it out slowly in hopes to calm his agitation. “Gibbs and I have made peace. Maybe I’m just a glutton, but I don’t know if I would survive losing his… importance in my life. I don’t have many people in my life that want to stick around. Hell my father murdered my mother because she wouldn’t agree to send me to boarding school. My guardian lived across the ocean, and was happy to leave me in the very boarding schools my mother didn’t want me thrown into and forgotten about. If it wasn’t for David Rossi, I would have no concept of what family means.

“Gibbs is… Gibbs is the closest thing that I will ever have to a big brother. I may not be able to be on his team any longer, but I can’t lose his faith in me. If I stay here… If I stay with NCIS I will become someone neither of us will be able to respect. I thought that Tim was like a kid brother. I thought Ziva was… well…”

Tony sighs again, and looks up at Vance. “Ziva is complicated. I forced myself to trust her, because Gibbs wanted me to trust her. I ignored my own gut, and look where it led me. I can promise you that won’t happen again. Abby was… Abby was a mistake. I should have realized that…”

Trailing off again Tony just shook his head. “I don’t want to talk about Abby. I’ll just say that we aren’t friends, and will never be friends again. She made her choice, and I am not letting her skip out on the consequences. She picked a side, and I am not going to be giving her an opportunity to jump back over the fence. She has been warned, and it won’t be my problem if she doesn’t listen. I can tell you I will absolutely NOT hesitate to get the cops involved if she doesn’t pay attention.

“To be completely honest, Director Vance, Abby is a big reason why I am leaving. I could have taken McGee’s betrayal. I definitely could have lived with Ziva’s. Hell there was a time when I was expecting her to stab me in the back. I am sure that had Benedict Sciuto not decided to play the part of Marcus Antony in this rendition of Caesar this conversation might never have been needed. I thought I’d be with NCIS until I retired. I never wanted to leave here, but surely you can see that I can’t stay.”

Director Vance nodded pulling the toothpick out of his mouth, and throwing it in the trash can beside his desk. “I know you and I haven’t always seen eye to eye, DiNozzo, but I honestly can see the difficult position you are in. I can also say with complete honesty that NCIS doesn’t want to lose you. Just because I don’t always understand or agree with your methods, doesn’t mean I can’t recognize their effectiveness, or appreciate the results. I’m not the only one either. SecNav was most unhappy when he heard that you were leaving us.”

Leaning back in his chair, Tony fought to keep the surprise and disbelief off of his face. Frankly he
didn’t even know that SecNav knew who he was, let alone knew him well enough to have an opinion on him leaving.

Director Vance grabbed another toothpick and shoved it in his mouth before continuing. “His words were and I quote ‘Get it the hell worked out, Leon. We are not losing one of our top agents because of Eli David’s little brat, and some computer nerd. Find a compromise.’ So, when FBI Assistant Director Evans called me, we worked out a compromise. I realize that you don’t have to take this. I know you have a job waiting for you with the FBI, but I am hoping you’ll at least hear me out.”

Tony snorted and crossed his arms scooting his butt forward to recline backward in the stiff backed chair. “If I may drop the niceties, Director?” When Vance nodded Tony continued. “You more or less hate me. You shipped me off to a fuckin’ ship as soon as you could, and, if Gibbs hadn’t been such a pain in the ass, I’d still be there. You have made it clear that McGee is your idea of what an NCIS agent should be. I can’t even BEGIN to say how ironic that is considering what just happened. You are barely civil to me, and now you expect me to believe that you just can’t STAND to lose me? I call bullshit, Director Vance sir.”

Tony watched Vance study him with his normal constipated look, until dropping his head and snorting before laughing. Tony frowned further as Vance leaned back in his chair studying the ceiling. “Jesus Christ, DiNozzo, you have got to be the biggest pain in my ass ever. I have no idea what the hell we’re gonna do without you.”

Tony blinks confused at the conflicting statements watching as the Director sat up and looked at him half annoyed, and half amused. “I will admit that I let the end result of your trip to LA with Director Shepard color my view of you. Jenny was my direct boss, and a friend. I didn’t want to admit that she’d effectively committed suicide. I didn’t want to admit that a strong, intelligent, powerful woman such as her had made so many horrible decisions at the end of her life. I certainly didn’t want to look at myself, and wonder if I should have noticed things weren’t quite right.”

Director Vance sighed and took his toothpick out throwing it away before continuing. “I also admit that I let my… aggravation with Gibbs rub off onto my feelings about you. I assumed that because you’d worked under him for so long that you were him. I have learned over the last few years though that while your methods may not be my way, they work for you. That really is all that should be important. I also know what an asset that you are to Gibbs. He has made it clear what a hardship losing you is going to make for him. While I’d like to say I knew as much when I started as I thought I did, obviously that isn’t the case.

“I will also admit that this fiasco with McGee and David has been an eye opener. You had every right to cause a huge uproar over this, and cause a huge PR headache for NCIS. Instead you have handled it with class. I cannot begin to tell you how much I appreciate that. I am ashamed to learn that my prototype agent understood or cared so little about the rules that he would leave his partner without backup for hours. I am ashamed to learn that he is such a coward, and is so intent on being one of the ‘cool kids’ that he would go along with something so incredibly against agency policy just to ‘get one over’ on a co-worker.”

Director Vance hangs his head shaking it, and Tony watched confused as he bit his lip. “I honestly don’t know what we will do without you, but that is our problem to solve. As I said I will understand if you don’t want to take out offer, but I hope that you will consider it. Essentially we would be creating a liaison position for NCIS with the Behavioral Analysis Unit out of Quantico. You would be reporting directly to Agent Aaron Hotchner Unit Chief over the premiere Behavioral Analysis Unit. You would be taking your orders directly from him.

“There may be the occasion where NCIS would request to use you for an undercover assignment,
but the contract we have worked out with the FBI guarantees that Unit Chief Hotchner would have the final say in your being allowed to participate. He would also have to be able to be kept apprised of the mission, and his Technical Analyst Penelope Garcia would be allowed to electronically monitor you at all times. My understanding is that they work cold cases just as we do. They have agreed to let you pull NCIS cases if you wish. We’d hate to lose all the good work you do getting justice for those that have been waiting too long for it.

“You would be bumped up a pay scale by NCIS so that you effectively on our end would be considered in a supervisory role. Assistant Director Evans has indicated they are seeing an upswing in cases with military members. We have agreed that in those instances you will act as the Second in Command. SSA Hotchner has already spoken with his current 2IC and he has agreed to this being reasonable.

“McGee and David will be fired. All the paperwork isn’t finished yet, but SecNav has made it clear that is what he wants done. The punishment for Sciuto is… less clear. We’re waiting in IA’s recommendation before we make a final decision there. I know you have been screwed over. We’d like to hope that at some point in the future we will have a chance at winning back your trust, Special Agent DiNozzo.”

Tony sat quietly chewing on the inside of his cheek turning over the possibilities in his mind. He knew that he should take time to mull the offer over, but if he was honest with himself he was tired of the whole process, and just wanted it to be done. “I will report to Agent Hotchner? That can’t be changed at some point in the future when SecNav or someone else gets a burr up their ass?”

Vance quickly shook his head sensing that he might actually have a shot at pulling this off. “It’s in writing. You will also have a contract with the FBI, but I believe that SSA Hotchner is going to go over that paperwork with you when you meet with him next.”

Before he could talk himself out of it, Tony nodded and held his hand out to Director Vance. “I accept your offer, sir. I’ve had a lot of good years at NCIS. I’d like to think that I wasn’t just flushing them all down the toilet.”

Leon nodded understanding. After shaking Tony’s hand he held out two thick manila envelopes. “This is your new NCIS contract. Take it home tonight and read it. I suspect you’ll want to share it and what we have discussed with Gibbs. I am fine with that. I’d appreciate if you would hold off on talking to anyone else within NCIS until we are done with the IA investigations. My understanding is that SSA Hotchner has kept SSA Rossi appraised, but you would want to verify that with him. I cannot tell you how much we appreciate this, Tony. Bring the top one with the signed documents back tomorrow. If you have any questions give me a call.”

Nodding Tony stood and left the office hoping he’d made the correct decision. He was glad he and Gibbs were both on leave. He didn’t want to have to wait to talk to his now former boss about all that had transpired.

About an hour later he pulled up outside of Gibb’s home, turning off the engine he just sat there momentarily thinking about everything and nothing at the same time. He was a little afraid to believe that things were really going to work out. Somehow he was going to get to stay with NCIS, and he was still going to be working with his Angelo as a part of the BAU.

He was more than a little afraid to go inside the house, and hear what Gibbs had to say. So far the older man had been nothing but supportive. That in itself was freaking Tony out. He might not like it better, but he was pretty sure that he’d be able to handle it better if the boss was being an asshole. ‘Former boss, DiNozzo, Gibbs is now your former boss.’ He thought to himself. Shaking his head, Tony decided that it was time to man up and he got out of the car, locking it with the remote as he
headed up the sidewalk.

Making his way inside then through the house, Tony found himself quickly in the basement where he settled on a stool he hadn’t seen before. “Thought you’d need something better to sit on.” Gibbs explained, and Tony found himself grinning. He was fairly certain he hadn’t spoken out loud. If someday he found out telepaths existed, he knew who he’d suspect first.

“They’re creating a liaison position just for me. So, that way I can still work for the BAU, and not leave NCIS, too.”

Gibbs grunted and arched an eyebrow. “They give you a new contract?”

Nodding Tony looked around and wished that he’d grabbed a bottle of water from the fridge. “I get a pay raise, and basically a promotion. I will be sharing the Second in Command duties with Agent Hotchner’s current 2IC Derek Morgan. When there’s not military involvement he will be the 2IC. When there is, it’ll be me. They put in their agreement with the FBI that if NCIS wants to use me for undercover, Agent Hotchner has to be kept informed, and their technical analyst has to be able to track me. Hotchner can also deny them using me. Rossi told me last night my FBI contract will guarantee a spot on whatever team Rossi’s on. If I’m still there when he retires it will be my decision to stay with the BAU team, return to NCIS, or go to another team at the FBI.”

Gibbs nodded satisfied. “Did he say anything about the terror trio?”

Tony nodded looking down at his hands. “McGee and Ziva will be fired most likely. IA isn’t done, but that’s what SecNav wants. Abby they don’t know what to do with.” Tony scowls. “I told him I didn’t wanna discuss Benedict Sciuto. What about you, boss? I feel a little bad that you’re gonna have to create a whole new team.”

“Don’t,” Gibbs muttered then shrugged. “Got an offer from Vance for a different position. Basically he’s forming a team to work solely on terrorist cases both domestic and abroad. I’d be doing more work in MTAC helping him with missions on top of that. I haven’t made up my mind yet, but I’m considerin’ it. I expect you to still come around, DiNozzo. You disappear on me, and I’m gonna come kick your ass.”

Tony smiled shyly looking up from his hands. “Really boss?”

Gibbs snorted amused. “Ain’t your boss, DiNozzo.”

Tony made a face and shrugged hoping for nonchalant. “You’ll always be my boss, Boss.” When Gibbs just snorted with amusement again, Tony smiled and settled in to watch his friend and former boss work. It was nice to know at least this would still be there when he needed it.

~~*BAU Late 2015*~~*~~*Reassurances*~~

Tony and Spencer walked into the house that they shared, exhausted but mostly satisfied with the outcome of their case in Charleston, SC. The unsub turned out to be Mr. Hayes’ best friend since the third grade. He’d known something was off about his friend, but hadn’t put things together until
Tony and Derek had questioned him that morning. His brain had been too tired to try and protect him from the truth. The man was understandably horrified that he’d had the answer all along, but just didn’t want to admit it to himself.

Tony was standing in the room he shared with Spencer, when he felt arms go around his waist. Smiling he leaned back slightly, letting his head fall back to get a kiss. “Bri, what are you doing home?” Tony asked happily as his lover chuckled.

“Case broke earlier than expected. I swear criminals are getting dumber,” Brian O’Connor bitched and Tony snorted. Turning in the other man’s arms, Tony smiled getting a deeper kiss, only stopping when he felt Spencer’s presence. Brian pulled back, and grinned at the younger man. “Hey Spence. How’d the case go?”

Spencer waved happily at his boyfriend’s lover. “It went good. We got the bad guy, so he can’t kill anyone else. I know Tony is happy to see you home.”

“Just Tony?” Brian purred as he turned to look at the Italian who was already undressing. Spencer hurried to curl into the chair in the corner to watch what was about to happen.

Spencer supposed that if his BAU friends could see this, they most likely wouldn’t understand. Heck, he was pretty sure they didn’t understand anything about his relationship, but this… For Spencer it was like watching a good movie, or the ballet. He enjoyed it, but had no interest in participating. He couldn’t deny though that the two of them were very beautiful together. Right now for instance, Brian’s blonde curls, were an incredible contrast against Tony’s tanned chest as it appeared he was biting his flesh. Tony was making these wonderful noises that sounded like they were coming from the depths of his soul.

Their hands were clutched together on one side of the bed, along with the sheet that somehow had gotten twisted up in their hands. Tony’s feet were planted on the bed flat with his knees bent in the air. Brian’s left hand was trailing up one of his thighs, pausing to play with one of his balls before moving on to casually stroke Tony’s cock.

Spencer didn’t watch every time, but after 5 years he’d seen this happen enough times that he didn’t understand how it wasn’t mundane by now. It wasn’t like he could ask someone either. He had some pride after all, and he most likely would die of embarrassment before the question got out. As he watched Brian stretching Tony, Spencer mentally wondered what Derek would say if he asked him his questions. He just barely suppressed a giggle before it came out.

There weren’t many rules the guys had laid down for him. Not giggling at whatever random weird thought that came into his head while they were having intercourse was high on that list though. As he watched Brian slipping inside of Tony, he imagined Derek would say that his memory was completely wasted in this instance. Spencer disagreed though.

While he may not get sexual pleasure out of this, it didn’t mean it didn’t make him happy. When he had his worst days, when he had that case that just didn’t seem to want to end, when he had to watch that horrible act that he’d never forget… Spencer thought of this.

He thought of the way Tony begged and whimpered for Brian to speed up. He remembered how it sounded when Brian praised Tony’s beauty in that tone Spencer only heard in the bedroom. He thought of the way Tony and Brian’s eyes locked as they neared the finish every single time.

He thought of the way Brian’s name was the last thing across Tony’s lips before he came.

He thought of the way his own name was the first thing across Tony’s lips after he came.
He may not get pleasure in ways that others could understand, but Spencer needed this moment just the same as the two on the bed did. He just needed it for different reasons than most did. Fortunately for him, both his boyfriend, and Tony’s lover accepted it, and loved him for it.
A Reality Check, A First Kiss, The End of a Friendship, and a Light in the Darkness

Chapter Summary

Tony has a final say with both Ziva and Abby ending their part in his life. He and Spencer discuss the possibility of a relationship that wouldn't involve sex between them, and later they share intimacy their way.

Chapter Notes

OK, so I think I need to explain how the jumping timeline in this story is going to work better. I love all the comments, and I greatly appreciate them. While the timeline is jumping, it is also revisiting aspects of the story multiple times until it is done. This means that you won't get all of the answers to a part of the story in one shot in most cases, but I will come back to most things until I am satisfied that something has been resolved in my mind.

Something else I want to stress is that this isn't a story about the NCIS cast. While most of them do make appearances, there won't be any insight into how Gibbs feels about something, or what is going through Abby's mind in this chapter for instance. The story is about Tony first, and then about the Tony/Spencer/Brian relationship. The only POVs you will other than Tony's are Spencer and Brian's mostly unless I think its necessary to explain something. This part is again unbeta'd, I will update the corrections once my lovely beta has time. Because she is also doing RT with me though, I am absolutely not bugging her to get it done.

Lastly, my DiNozzo is a huge potty mouth when he gets mad. I am sorry for that, but I doubt that it will change. Also, I am sorry I am not better at responding to comments promptly. With Rough Trade going on, I just don't have the time.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter Three: A Reality Check, A First Kiss, The End of a Friendship, and a Light in the Darkness
Tony stared at Ziva angrily through the plexiglass separating them. The woman was glaring at him like she thought that he would be intimidated by her somehow. It would have been comical if Tony wasn’t so torn up inside by this decision to get in one final say. If he hadn’t been intimidated by Ziva when there was nothing between them but air, why in the hell would he be afraid of her now that she was safely behind bars? “This isn’t about you, and I have no interest in what you have to say. So you might as well keep your mouth shut.” Tony advised watching the angry woman gritting her teeth at him. When she went to speak, he made sure to cut her off. He truly had no need to hear anything that would come out of her mouth.

“You know, I would love to say I don’t hate you, but it would be a huge lie. I am not sure I have ever hated anyone more than I hate you. But, along with that I pity you. I pity you because while my father just didn’t give a fuck about my existence, yours sees you as a fucking tool. You can throw in my face the whole part about Senior being a murdering asshole, but let’s be honest. Yours doesn’t have any room to talk in that area either.

“Honestly, this has nothing to do with your father, or mine. We’re both grownups. We’re both capable of making choices on our own. Yeah, maybe we had fucked up childhoods, but I certainly am not willing to blame my weak points on that. I think the big difference between us, Ziva, is that frankly I give a shit about people in general. You on the other hand… I don’t think you even care about yourself, and you certainly don’t care about anyone else.

“You are so goddamned cold hearted that you haven’t the first clue on how to REALLY emotionally connect to another human being. You think you’re some kind of femme fatale. You seem to have thrived the last few years on the impression that I am deeply madly in love with you. I’d rather kiss a carp. The truth is you’re just a cold fish who’s about as attractive as a dead trout that’s been laying in the sun for two days. Physically you may be beautiful. Hell, I suppose that at one time I thought you were sexy, but your personality makes you so fucking ugly. You’re like that thing that scares little kids on sight.”

Tony sat back in his chair, and watched the rage on her face. He supposed that at one time he would
have cared that she was upset. It was telling though that he no longer felt anything. No fear of retribution, no return anger, no pleasure at her circumstances. It was just the emptiness of knowing you’d finally gotten past a horrible situation.

“You’re fucking pathetic. You had so many opportunities to learn and grow, not just as an agent, but as a human being. Instead you threw them all away by sticking your head in the sand insisting that your precious Mossad was the be all that end all. You’re so goddamned miserable that you gain joy in ruining other people’s lives, and that has got to be one of the most pathetic things in existence. I hate to break it to you, but normal people, well adjusted people don’t do that.

“You took a team that was a happy family suffering through the death of a loved one, and you destroyed it just because you could. You act like you’re some hot shit, but the fact is you are about the worst NCIS agent in the history of the business. As far as I am concerned you are as guilty of Kate’s death as your brother was. You may not have pulled the trigger, but you gave him those files. You told him who was more vulnerable. You left him to do his bidding instead of having him sent back home when he got out of control. You didn’t kill him to save Gibbs. You killed him because you saw a chance to get in with Gibbs. Ari was as good as dead anyway. It was just a matter of who was gonna do the deed.

“You act like my years as a cop are meaningless, and your years as a fucking assassin are all that count. Yet the job we do every fucking day isn’t about killing people. It’s about saving them. It’s about the mother who lost her son, the daughter who lost her father, or the man who lost his fiancée. You have no fucking clue how to relate to real, normal people. You have no idea how to sympathize with someone who is experiencing the worst possible moment of their life, because you you can’t see past yourself. You don’t care about their pain, so you can’t possibly empathize with it.

“You think you’re fucking privileged, and that the rules shouldn’t apply to you. You acted like I was some buffoon, like I wasn’t worthy to even kiss your goddamned feet. You acted like you were somehow superior to me, and that your ways were so much better than mine. Well Princess, here you sit, you worthless bitch, in a cell waiting to be sentenced for treason among other things. You’re not only going to jail, but you’re going to die there. That is if you aren’t killed for your actions.

“You know I am not a religious person. I’ve seen and experienced too much crap in my life to believe that some mythical God exists, but for you… for you I hope it does. I hope that all that shit that gets spewed on Sunday is true, because if it is… you’re gonna BURN for all eternity. You’re a horrible person, and I hope every sentence they wrote in the bible is true because I want you to suffer not only for the rest of your life, but for all of your afterlife as well.

“Fuck you, Ziva. Fuck you to hell, and I hope from here on out it’s a damned painful journey.” Hanging up his receiver before she could speak, Tony stood and walked out of the room. Invisible wounds in his heart were reopened and bleeding at the thought that Kate was dead, and that… thing back there was alive.

~~*BAU New Year’s Eve 2010*~~ *~~*A First Kiss*~~*

Tony was walking around his apartment making sure everything was in place. Spencer was coming over for a private New Year’s Eve party for two. Tony had the steaks marinating on the counter. The shrimp was peeled and deveined, and ready for the boil. He had crusty bread, and the stuff for chop salad rounds all ready to go. A hash brown casserole was in the freezer, and waiting to pop into the oven. A bottle of Prisoner was chilling, and desert was in the refrigerator. A triple chocolate cheesecake that he hoped Spencer loved.
He’d picked out the perfect movies for a romantic evening at home, and had them sitting ready by the DVR. The couch had several fluffy pillows, and a patchwork quilt that he’d gotten from Jackson Gibbs was thrown over the back to snuggle under later. The air popcorn maker was ready to go when they wanted a snack, and the bed had fresh sheets. While they may not be having sex that didn’t mean that they weren’t going to cuddle together as they slept.

And kiss…

Spencer had been very clear that he was looking forward to kissing. Tony was absolutely not going to disappoint him. He was still trying to figure out this no-sex, but not really platonic relationship thing. So, whatever Spencer wanted, Spencer was going to get until Tony felt like he was standing on comfortable ground again. Not to mention that Tony loved kissing himself, so it was truly no hardship.

When he heard a knock on the door, Tony hurried over, and opening it was happy to see Spencer on the other side. When the other man lifted a hand and waved, Tony couldn’t help but grin and chuckle. “Seriously, I love it when you do that,” Tony admitted reaching out, and when Spencer gave him his hand, he pulled him into the apartment, and his arms.

“Hello, Doctor Reid. It was nice you could join me for an exclusive New Year’s Eve Festivity.”

Spencer smiled shyly, and tucked some hair behind his ear. “Umm, hello. Thank you for inviting me. I am looking forward to this evening. Will we be kissing finally? I have very much been looking forward to that.”

“We can kiss anytime you would like when we aren’t at work,” Tony promised. No sooner had the words passed his lips, then he found the genius diving in eagerly.

Deciding that it would work out best if he led, Tony took charge of the situation, putting one hand on the small of Spencer’s back, and the other on the back of his neck pulling him as close as possible. Tilting his head to one side, Tony let himself relax and deepened the kiss when Spencer’s arms crept around him and tightened.

When Spencer finally pulled back, Tony couldn’t help but grin, and didn’t let him go far. Resting his forehead on Spencer’s, Tony let himself relax and deepened the kiss when Spencer’s arms crept around him and tightened.

When Spencer finally pulled back, Tony couldn’t help but grin, and didn’t let him go far. Resting his forehead on Spencer’s, Tony let a hand run up and down Reid’s back, as he listened to the genius breathe heavily while he tried to catch his breath. “That was… enjoyable. I believe I would like to do that again. Although I do not believe that it changed my opinion on anything beyond that. I still do not have an interest in participating in sexual intercourse.”

Smiling, Tony kissed the tip of Spencer’s nose then pulled back out of the embrace. Making sure they still held hands though, Tony lead him through to the couch so that they could sit and talk. “We don’t ever have to do more than kissing if you want. I have cuddling on the list tonight. I thought you might be agreeable to that, although we don’t have to if you don’t want to. This isn’t some twisted ‘I can change his mind’ scheme on my part. I enjoy being with you. Frankly so far I feel closer to you than I have anyone other than… well one other person whom I don’t want to ruin the evening by discussing.”

When Spencer nodded chewing on his lip, Tony began running his thumbs up and down on their clasped hands. “If you change your mind at some point, Spence, it’s cool. I don’t expect you to, and I am not holding out some secret dark hope that you’ll change your mind. Our relationship is ours, and no one else’s. I am not interested in conforming our lives to anyone’s. But, I understand if JJ is changing your mind.”

Spencer’s eyes got big, but he shook his hand. “How did you… Never mind that is a stupid question.
Of course you would guess. You are a very good investigator, and she isn’t exactly subtle. JJ is my best friend, but… I am not going to let her ruin this for me. I am holding out hope that she will come around, but… if she doesn’t then I suppose it is her loss.”

When Spencer’s tummy rumbled, Tony laughed and stood. “Let’s get dinner started before you starve.” When Spencer nodded eagerly, Tony gave him another quick peck, then led him to the kitchen to begin cooking.

Later the two lay wrapped together on the couch watching Le Notti Bianche, a 1957 black and white classic from Italy. He had been thrilled that he could share his Italian Romances with his boyfriend. They’d settled on the word boyfriend over dinner. They’d both agreed it was the option that best fit at that moment.

Tony was lying stretched out along the back of the couch on his side, with Spencer bundled up in front of him. Tony’s arms were wrapped around the slighter man with one around his waist, and the other across his shoulders from underneath. Reid had twisted their legs together. Every so often, Tony found himself pressing a kiss into his hair, or Reid would rub his cheek against Tony’s arm. He couldn’t help but find the action as anything but cute.

When the movie ended, Tony looked at the clock to see that it was about a quarter after midnight. “We missed midnight.”

Spencer shrugged and rolled over to look at Tony. “Fifteen minutes and thirty seven seconds ago. The movie was just getting to the good part! I didn’t want to stop it for something that we will experience again.”

When Tony grinned big and beautiful at him. Spencer knew he’d said something right. “Happy New Year, Tony. I… I look forward to spending the next year with you, Anthony DiNozzo.”

Closing his eyes, Tony rested his forehead against Spencer’s breathing in his scent for a moment. “Happy New Year, Doctor Reid. I look forward to spending much, much longer than that with you.” Smiling happily, Spencer closed his eyes, resting his cheek against the other man’s chest thinking this was the best New Year’s Eve party ever.

~~*NCIS/BAU January 2011*~~ * ~~*The End of a Friendship*~~

Tony stood in front of his building staring at the irate woman in front of him. He tried to remember what he’d loved about her, but it seemed like nothing was left of that woman. For just about 3 months he’d been trying to ignore the emails, the phone calls, the text messages that had grown more and more harassing and disturbing. When she’d sent information about him to the police chief of the case they were on in an attempt to discredit him, he’d been forced to admit to what was going on.

Hotch had tried to be understanding, most of the team really had been. He could tell they were upset he’d not told them before. He’d tried to explain, but Abby was… Abby was the poster girl for everything that he thought he’d had, when it seemed in reality he’d had nothing. After that incident, he’d been forced to come come completely clean about everything that happened, and everything that she was doing to him.

Hotch had helped him get a restraining order. He’d even made sure it was permanent, and that it
covered all forms of communication. Garcia had worked her magic to clean up the electronic mess she’d made of his life, and actively monitored his phone, and work and home computers to make sure there were no further attempts at communication. He knew he should have expected this. He hoped that the buttons he’d hit on his phone in his pants pocket had been Hotch or Rossi or Will LaMontagne. Unlike his wife. Will was actually decent to Tony, and had been incredibly empathetic about the whole situation. JJ’s response had been to suggest to Emily that he’d done something to deserve it. Of course Tony hadn’t supposed to have heard, or maybe he had. JJ was definitely a former Mean Girl.

A part of him was sad about what he was about to do, but the majority of him knew that it was time. This person in front of him wasn’t his friend, and never would be again. Unfortunately for her, there was enough anger built up in him that she was going to be treated to some Truths by DiNozzo. “I hate you, Abby.” Tony paused a moment after forcing those words out, wishing that someone would wake him up from the nightmare he was stuck in.

“I hate you because you made me believe in you. You made me trust you in ways that I’d only ever trusted one other human being. You made me trust you, and then you fucking betrayed that trust just for your own selfish purposes. You yammer on for hours about your nuns, and yet it seems you have learned nothing from them. I am so fucking disappointed in you, and I will never ever forgive you. The crocodile tears had started to stream down her face. Tony was pretty sure that she wasn’t the only one crying, but hers were the only ones that were fake. “You can stand there crying your crocodile tears expecting me to feel sorry for you, or fall for your bullshit act, but it’s not going to happen. I am onto you.” When she screeched and stomped her foot, he knew he’d been right.

“If you want the complete truth, Ms. Sciuto, I don’t care anymore if your feelings are hurt or not. I don’t care if you’re upset that you’re losing your family. I don’t care if you are afraid of change. I just don’t care about you one little bit. You deserve all that is coming to you. Something has happened to you. Something is not right in your head. The Abby I used to know was a strong, amazingly loving, incredibly loyal person. The Abby that I used to know genuinely cared about others. You’ve stalked me. You hacked my credit report, and almost cost me my house. You embarrassed me while I was on a case trying to catch a fucking pedophile who was murdering his victims, and could have cost lives had the Police Chief decided to send us away. Hell, not even Gibbs wants to speak to you. That really should have been your reality check, but for some reason it wasn’t.

“You are losing your job, Abby. You’re probably going to be going to jail. You had everything you could possibly want, and you threw it away. You tossed my faith in you in the freaking trash can, and shit on it, and for what?? For a cold hearted killer who infiltrated our family so she could steal secrets and betray us? For the woman who MURDERED Kate. She may not have pulled the trigger, but she gave Ari all the fucking tools to do it. You’re going to have nothing. Gibbs has already told you he’s done with you. Ducky has washed his hands of you, and I am just here to say fuck you, Abby.”

Tony shook his head sadly. The sounds of sirens were faint in the distance, and he could only hope that they were coming to him. He wasn’t sure that he could do much more of this. Ziva had been hard enough, but Abby… Abby might as well be tearing his heart right out of his chest with this bullshit.

“I despise you. Of the three of you, I think that I hate you the most. You were supposed to be my best friend, my sister in every way that counts, but instead you are just another backstabbing bitch. Good luck with life. It’s really going to suck from here on out, and you’ve lost all your safety nets. That cold hard floor is gonna hurt like a bitch when you hit it. When you that time comes? Just remember I will be laughing my ass off.”
The a cop car and an unmarked vehicle pulled up from opposite directions. Tony was thankful that Will was the one to step out of the unmarked sedan. At Abby’s scream of outrage, Tony just snorted at her cluelessness. “I called Will the second I saw you when I was in my car, and report that you broke the restraining order you worthless, needy, attention hungry, bitch. Do you get it now?” Tony shook his head, then smiled faintly at Will who had come over to put a supporting hand on his shoulder. “You have nothing, and you have only yourself to blame. Goodbye, Abby, and don’t ever come near me again.”

~~*BAU Mid to Late December 2010*~~ * ~~*A Light in the Darkness*~~

“Would you consider a relationship with someone if sex with that person was off the table?”

The question had Tony out of his own head, and focused back on Spencer. He was seated in Gibbs’ diner with Spencer. It was their first official date. They had spent the day at the Smithsonian. Spencer had argued that Tony didn’t need to something so incredibly intellectual, until Tony informed him that he had a membership. When he also admitted that he was looking forward to listening to Spencer ramble all day, the younger man had been won over.

They’d spent their day alternating between their favorite exhibits, stopping only briefly to eat quickly at lunch, before diving back in. The diner had been a risk. First off, it wasn’t near the Smithsonian, so they’d had to take somewhat of a longer drive to get there, and second well… it was just a diner. It felt right to Tony though, so he’d gone with his impulse. He was glad he did. If the grin on his companion’s face, and the last 20 minutes of facts on diners in the United States was any indication.

“I’m sorry if I’m boring you,” Spencer said somewhat hesitantly, and Tony shook his head.

“You aren’t,” Tony denied frowning. “I was reflecting on how much fun I’ve had today. Sometimes my thoughts get away from me. My brain tends to focus on several things at once, and sometimes one of them just… takes over. Did you just ask if I’d have a relationship with someone without sex?”

Spencer fidgeted. “That depends on your answer?”

Tony huffed out a laugh, and studied the man for a few moments before smiling softly. “Dr. Reid,” Tony started teasingly, “I have loved every moment of today. Now is not the time to start holding back information on me. Tell me what you mean.”

Spencer tapped his fingers together as he worked up the nerve to go on. “At the risk of sounding like Morgan, I realize that you are a highly sexual being. Some people are. I suppose the world would probably label you as
Bisexual, but that probably isn’t a fair representation of how you feel. Labels are…”

“Spencer,” Tony interrupted before reaching out and taking his free hand. “Tell me about Spencer Sexual.”

“I don’t want to have sex. I mean… I am curious. Just once though maybe, as a purely exploratory exercise to make sure I am not wrong, although I don’t think that I am. Sex just… Sex just don’t interest me, which isn’t to mean that I don’t want intimacy or don’t want to be close to someone or don’t get lonely or…”

“I want to be with someone I am attracted to, I just… I just want them to be more than pretty. I want them to be smart, and I want to feel comfortable in my skin around them. I want to be able to say… ramble all day about stupid random facts, and know that they aren’t getting irritated. I want to snuggle up under blankets when I don’t feel good and feel them laying with me. I want to be able to get lost in books, and know they won’t be mad. I want to… I want to watch the beauty of them… being with someone they care about… sort of? I mean… I want them to care about me too, and I want them to be with me forever, but…”

“You want a one-sided open relationship?” Tony suggested frowning, and Spencer sighed.

“Maybe? I mean as weird as it sounds, I think I would prefer that they had someone they… cared about? Just… I want them to care about me too. I mean… this is stupid. I’m messing this up.”

“No,” Tony immediately denied squeezing Spencer’s hand. “You are absolutely not messing this up. If I am understanding it’s not a one sided open relationship, more like… a three person relationship with two, two person sets. One being you and… me? Our relationship would be built on friendship, love, and non-sexual intimacy. The other relationship would be me and… someone else. That one would be… sexual in nature, but yet permanent too. Do you want to have any contact with this… other person I’d be… having sex with? Other than watching I mean. Don’t think I missed that, Dr. Reid.”

Spencer blushed, and silently blessed the arrival of the waitress as it gave him time to think. “Yes? I mean it would be nice if I and this other person could at least be friends. I don’t want you to feel like you’re being pulled in two. I know though that this is quite an unusual proposition I am asking…”

Tony chuckled softly. “I won’t lie. I never thought I would be having this conversation, but… to answer your question, Dr. Reid, yes. I could picture myself in that type of relationship.”

When Spencer looked up at him surprised, Tony expanded his thought. “Look, Spencer, it’s like this. I have been basically entertaining for people most of my life. My mother’s biggest use for me was watching movies with her, or entertaining her friends in various little outfits as they got drunk. In boarding school I learned that sports and being the clown would keep me from getting my ass kicked. As an adult I’ve mostly been useful to people by acting like an empty headed jock or clown or… making their toes curl as I fucked them into next week.”

Tony chuckles humorlessly. “I know how to be entertaining, Spencer. I know how to keep people amused. I know how to keep their minds off their troubles, by focusing on me either negatively or positively. What I don’t know? I don’t know what it’s like for someone else to want me NOT for my entertainment value.

“I won’t lie. I don’t just like sex, I love it. Could I give it up? Probably. Would it make me happy? Probably not. Do I know anyone who would be crazy enough to do this with us? Actually, maybe. Would I want to do this with you? Abso-fucking-lutely, Dr. Spencer Reid. I would be honored to let you just be you, and me be me, and well… let someone else be… themselves, and to do it all
Tony smiles and squeezes Spencer’s hand once more. “So, to answer your question, yes. I would love to be in a relationship with you where we weren’t going to have sex except for maybe once to rule out any miscalculations on your part. We must be scientific about this after all.”

When Spencer grinned happily, Tony couldn’t help but laugh at the other man’s obvious joy. He wasn’t sure if this would work, but he really damned well hoped so. It would definitely be different though. He had to admit he was quite looking forward to it.

Chapter End Notes

I am sorry if some are not happy about or don't understand Spencer's sexuality in this. It won't change though. I would highly recommend googling A-Sexuality or Grey-A sexuality if you have questions. Spencer is who Spencer is. I thank those that are curious and open minded and willing to keep going on with the story.
Tony gains another ally within the BAU. A flip to the present time finds Tony at odds with the new SecNav who wants his help. The flip back to the past gives us some insight into what’s going on with JJ.

Chapter Notes

You people are completely awesome! Seriously, thank you for all the awesome comments. I LOVE LOVE LOVE how much you are accepting Spencer. There is a lot of myself in his sexual views so, it warms my heart that you are all so accepting of him. If I could give reader kudos you’d all give some. I hope you all like this chapter as much as I do. This is the first one that I can say I am completely in love with. Happy Reading.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter Four: Another Friendly Face, Familiar Situations, and Jealousy

Tony was in an SUV with Emily Prentiss headed toward his first interview for the BAU. The guy they were interviewing was a retired Navy SEAL, and thus it fell under Tony’s prevue. He, also, got to drive since he was more familiar with where they were going, and he was the Senior Agent. He
found it a little weird to not have to battle for the keys. Prentiss had actually deferred the driving to him because he was the Senior Agent on the trip.

“So tell me about Tony DiNozzo. Long walks on the beach, or bump and grind at the club?” Came the quip from the passenger’s seat. Tony was so caught off guard that he couldn't help but laugh out loud. It felt nice to laugh again. He didn't realize ‘til that second how much he'd missed it.

“That would depend on the woman Ms. Prentiss.” Tony said with a grin.

“OK DiNozzo, pretend that you are trying to woo me. What would a DiNozzo experience contain? Impress me. I dare you.” Emily grinned back at Tony half turning to watch him as he seemed to grin back in delight. He let himself ponder what he’d noticed about Emily before answering.

“I'd pick you up at 5:45 pm and take you to the Silver Screens Theater on McCormick. Well get popcorn, Raisinets, and a coke to watch Key Largo. 1948 film with Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall. It's the last film featuring the pairing. There was a fifth movie planned, but Bogart died before it could happen. Johnny Rocco, played by Edward G Robinson, is holding the hotel owner Nora Temple, played by Bacall, her father in law, played by Lionel Barrymore, and ex GI Frank McCloud, played by Bogart hostage during a hurricane.

“McCloud is capable of taking out Rocco, but is suffering after returning from the war. It is considered a classic, and is my favorite of the Bogart and Bacall movies. Interesting note, Johnny Rocco was modeled after Al Capone who retired to Florida, and died there from complications from syphilis within a year. The screen writer says that he also included biographical details about Lucky Luciano as well.

“After the movie, we'd head around the corner for dinner. There's a small family owned return that serves authentic Italian. The mother was born in the old country, and all her recipes are generations old. Once we've filled up on good food and a glass of wine, we'd head out to catch the last set at the Drunken Crapaud.

“It's a small jazz club that has local performers on Friday nights. The last set is usually the best because you get to watch some undiscovered talent, and the crowd has thinned a little. After the set is done, I would drive you home having drank only coffee at the club. The owner is from New Orleans and makes the best coffee for his regulars.”

“And what happens when you get me home, DiNozzo?” Emily asked not able to stop her grin.

Laughing softly Tony flashes her a flirtatious grin before turning back to the road. “Well, that depends on you, and how much you have had to drink Madame Prentiss.” Tony replies, and Emily gives in and laughs.

“OK I will admit that I am impressed. That sounds absolutely perfect. In fact I am going to hold you to that, without the whole wooing thing. You had me at Bogart and Bacall. How did you know all that information about the movie from memory?”

Tony blushes and grins somewhat shyly. “Movies are my thing,” Tony admitted softly biting his lip before deciding that it would be nice to have another person on the team on his side. God, he was tired of thinking of his life as “sides”. “When I was a kid, my parents for the most part didn’t have much to do with me. My mother was an alcoholic, and my father was an abusive workaholic and an alcoholic on top of it who was highly disappointed in his only son. My mother liked to dress me up in cute little sailor outfits and parade me around to her friends, but at least she loved me. On Thursday’s she’d take me into town to the movie theater where they showed old black and whites. We’d watch movies all day.”
“She sounds amazing,” Emily offered softly, and Tony nods. “She was. Amazing that is, and beautiful, too. When I was a child I thought she was the most beautiful woman in the world.”

“Just as a child?” Emily teased softly, and Tony blushed shrugging slightly. “As an adult you understand the significance of your mother drinking your sea monkeys, but… No, not just as a child. Maybe not the most beautiful but…” Tony shrugs helplessly, and Emily decides to let him off the hook.

“Tell me more about Tony DiNozzo. Were you really a two sport athlete?”

Tony nods happy to be back to a safer, and less emotional topic. “Yes, basketball, and football. I went to the Final Four as a starter in basketball, and the National Championship in football with OSU both in my junior year. I was planning to go pro in one of them, but Brad Pitt broke my leg and tore the hell out of the ligaments in my knee. Back then that was a game stopper. So, instead of going to the NFL or NBA, I ended up in the police academy in Peoria, Illinois.”

“Wait… backup, DiNozzo. Brad Pitt… broke your leg?” Emily questioned sounding doubtful, and Tony flashed a big grin at her.

“Yup, he was a bastard Wolverine linebacker at the time. I was a poor helpless Quarterback. I suppose he made up for it though, since he saved my life years later.”

“OK, funny pants, I am calling bullshit. Not only did Brad Pitt break your leg, but he saved your life? Pull the other one, smarty pants.”

Tony laughed happily as he took the exit for the penitentiary they were visiting. “Yes ma’am. Commander Doctor Brad Pitt, no relation to the actor by the way. He works at Walter Reed National Military Center in Bethesda, Maryland as a Pneumologist. I contracted the Y-Pestis a few years back when a mother with a brain tumor wanted to settle a grudge before she died. I don’t blame her, but turned out her daughter lied, so… that kinda sucked.”

Emily opened her mouth then shut it, before opening it again. “You got the PLAGUE?”

Tony looked at her frowning and nodded. “Yeah, NCIS likes to send me to investigate when they get outbreaks. I’m gonna miss all the extra vacation time from those trips.”

“You… they… vacation time? I… You’re being serious, aren’t you? You got the plague, while working a case. A doctor you played football with in college saved you, and NCIS likes to send you out to investigate outbreaks so you can… get more vacation time?”

“Hey! I take kickass vacations, man.” Tony defended as he slowed to pull into the driveway of their destination.

“Man, DiNozzo, you are one crazy fucker.” Emily cursed, then grinned big. “I can tell we’re gonna get along just fine.” Tony was still laughing as he rolled down the window at the guard station.

~~*NCIS January 2016*~~ * ~~*Familiar Situations*~~

“This has got to be the dumbest goddamn team I have ever seen.” Tony swore, and Brian’s lips quirked as he tried not to smile. “How the fuck do you put together a team that basically spends all their goddamned time chasing terrorists, and not put a single fucking person on it with any
motherfucking experience in actually you know… CHASING TERRORISTS!”

“I don’t think you can say that to your other boss,” Reid pointed out, and Tony scoffs. “Of course I can, besides he just heard. Apparently Vance has been taking Gibbs lessons, because he’s lurking just behind the half-closed door. Only he sucks at it because I can see his damned shoes.”

Vance opened the door and stepped in scowling to cover up his embarrassment. He forgot how completely aggravating this man was. It seemed his time at the FBI had only made him worse. “You’re not here to critique my team building skills, Special Agent, DiNozzo.”

“Well maybe I should be! You shouldn’t fucking need Brian and I to come here to do undercover work! How the hell do you have a Terrorism Investigation Unit, and not have at least one fucking undercover specialist on it?”

“Tony,” Gibbs started stepping in behind Vance and around the man to stand next to Brian. He found himself cut off by the Secretary of the Navy who had made her way into the room as well, stopping just inside the doorway. In all honesty, he agreed with Tony anyway, and any protest would have been halfhearted at best.

“So, Special Agent DiNozzo, Liaison to the BAU, what would you do with this team?” Tony turned, and frowned at the new voice. Before he could snap out a smart retort, he felt a slight pressure on the middle of his back. Clamping his jaw together, he turned to see Spencer watching him worried. Turning his head back to Brian, he studied the other man, and waited until he nodded to continue.

“Before I answer that question, I would like to know who you are, ma’am. I know that I’ve been gone awhile, but I don’t remember you.”

The red-headed woman smiled coldly, and vaguely Tony wondered if Gibbs had slept with her yet. “Sarah Porter. Secretary of the Navy. I keep hearing from Director Vance, and Special Agent Gibbs that you’re one of the best agents we have. Frankly, I expected you to be a little more… appreciative that NCIS has kept you around. I expect when we need you to work on a case that you do so. I didn’t bring you here to get your… opinion on how the teams are built. You will be working undercover on this case.

“I don’t know why you brought some bleach blond surfer boy, and a college professor with you, but they can leave, or stay and be quiet. I don’t honestly care which. We need to discuss what you’ll be doing, and get started.” The woman shut the door behind her, as she tried to portray her air of power. Tony tried not to laugh in her face.

The room was so silent that you probably could hear a mouse fart. Eventually, Tony opened his mouth to reply, but snapped his jaw shut again, when this time Spencer’s hand clamped around his wrist. Tony watched Brain move around the table to stand on his other side, and Tony felt something shift once more inside of him. This… this was exactly he’d been afraid would happen if either Jarvis or Vance moved on. Taking out his phone, Tony sent a text to Hotch ignoring the stupid woman in front of him who was trying to make her unhappiness known with a glare that was weak at best.

T. DiNozzo: This clusterfuck is not gonna work. Coming back. I would like to exercise the hiring clause in my contract. I know it means I will have to take a demotion.

A. Hotchner: No demotion needed. You will be hired in equal to Morgan’s pay grade, and position. Nothing else will change. What happened? Do you need me there?

T. DiNozzo: Start the paperwork. I am gonna get this… cleared up. Permission to speak to this bitch
frankly, sir.

A. Hotchner: Tony, your NCIS is showing, again. I’m not your commanding officer, but permission granted. I have your back. I’ve known you for long enough, and watched you play the political game enough times to know that if you feel it’s needed then it is.


T. DiNozzo: Not yet. Thanks, Boss. Spencer or I will keep you updated.

Tony smiled brightly at the irritating woman, and then openly laughed when both Vance and Gibbs winced. “Did you read any of my file, ma’am?” Tony asked brightly. Beside him he could feel Brian shift. His hands were put in his pockets, shoulders slouched, head tilted to one side, all so that it appeared he was relaxed and uninterested. Tony knew that in all reality, his lover was ready to spring to his defense, but was more than happy to play up this politician’s view of him if it would suit their needs.

“I read enough,” She shot back clearly unimpressed. “I know that your father is a conman and a murderer. I know that you are some… jock from Ohio State with a worthless PE degree who can’t seem to stay in one place. I know that former Director Jenny Shepard used you for an undercover assignment that you botched, and eventually you got her murdered. I don’t know why Jarvis kept you on, but I am guessing the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree. Whatever you had on him won’t get you very far with me. Frankly, I am sure there must be a better agent somewhere in NCIS for this, but Vance and Gibbs insisted that you were the one we need. Gibbs has an elite team. It’s exactly what Director Vance and I want to it be. Now…”

“I am curious,” Tony interrupted still smiling brightly. “If I suck so badly, and Gibbs’ team of high tech nerds is so great… why do you need me to save your asses? You really should have read my file, ma’am.”

“Now listen here, Special Agent…”

Tony snorted at her making a face. The act was in full swing, and Tony had to admit he was having more than a little of fun. Even if the annoyance in this situation was quite real. “Shut the fuck up already. Jesus, Gibbs, please tell me you’re not fucking this cold blooded weasel. I mean… seriously. How the fuck did you let them put you in this goddamned position?”

Gibbs opened his mouth to reply, but eventually just shut it and half huffed half chuckled. “The hell if I know, Tony.”

When SecNav Porter started to speak again, Tony just glared at the irritating woman and held up his hand. “Shut it! I will get to you when I am ready for you.” Looking at Vance, Tony glared. “I thought you pulled your head out of your ass! Didn’t we have this discussion already?”

Vance snorted. “Apparently, I didn’t pay attention good enough the first time. In my defense, I do have to do what she says. I don’t have a job secure and waiting for me in the wings. I would be happy to get your recommendation on the additional team members needed. As far as the current situation goes though regardless of what we should have done, we do need your help to get this man caught.”

“We are not changing this team on the recommendation of some…”

“Secretary Porter, please…”

“I quit,” Tony threw out happily making Vance and Gibbs wince, as Secretary Porter snorted with
distaste.

“Of course you do,” She spat. “You got a director murdered, you destroyed an undercover investigation, and now you quit when you’re needed to stop a terrorist. I can guarantee that you will never work in this town again.”

Tony just lifted an eyebrow at her, and didn’t dare look at Brian. He knew that if he did that he’d lose his restraint. Unfortunately he didn’t count on Spencer. “Are you completely stupid?” Tony was so shocked he almost choked on his laugh. Brian didn’t fare any better, and Tony was pretty sure that Gibbs was hiding his laugh in the coffee cup suddenly glued to his lips.

“Now you listen here, I don’t even know why you’re here. You will address me…”

“It is a very reasonable question given our current circumstances. Seriously, are you stupid?” Spencer asked, again, frowning, and this time it was Vance who cracked, even if it was only a twitch of his lips.

“I am going to report you. Who do you work for? You will treat me…”

“Supervisory Special Agent Dr. Spencer Reid of the Behavioral Analysis Unit out of Quantico, Virginia. I have an IQ of 187. I read 20,000 words per minute. I got my first degree when I was sixteen, and my first doctorate at seventeen. What exactly were you doing at seventeen besides screwing your boyfriend in the back of a car?

“I have three PHD’s, Mathematics, Chemistry, and Engineering, and three BA’s, Psychology, Sociology, and Philosophy. I do all of the geographical profiling for the team without a computer. I started working for the BAU when I was 22 years old, and was personally recruited by Jason Gideon who helped found the BAU. If you would like to call someone to complain, Associate Director John Evans can be reached at (555) 102-3344. It’s two o’clock on a Tuesday, so he is probably in his weekly meeting with Director Sherman, but I am sure he’ll answer for you. By all means… complain. I have to be honest though, it isn’t going to get you anywhere. Director Sherman loves Tony by the way. He makes a weekly attempt at trying to get Tony to join us full time, instead of in a liaison position.

“By now Unit Chief Aaron Hotchner will have Tony’s paperwork completed to officially become a member of the FBI started. My guess is he will keep his current supervisory position as second in command to Hotch, but most likely he and SSA Morgan will take turns being second in command rather than their current military involvement and non-military involvement rotation. My recommendation is, if you’re going to pull someone into a meeting and shit on them as you tell them how wonderful you are while throwing your weight around, maybe you should do at least some research. It prevents you from appearing to be a complete imbecile.

“For instance, in Tony’s case you would have learned that he was recruited to the BAU unit by David Rossi, the other founding member of the BAU. You’d know that Tony’s father was an abusive despicable human being, and by the number of commendations in his file, you’d know Tony is anything but.

“You’d also learn that Tony in addition to his PE degree has a masters in Criminal Justice, and minor in psychology, which he is going to work into a masters if I have to drag him to the university my damned self. You’d learn that he was begged to stay with NCIS, because he was the only person who was willing to put up with Gibbs’ crap for 10 years, and they correctly realized he is one of those people who was born to do this shit. You’d also learn that before quitting, his previous partners left him without backup because they turned off his com. One of them committed treason. The Forensic Scientist was arrested for tampering with evidence, and also was guilty of improper use of
NCIS equipment when she used it for her personal use by tracking Special Agent DiNozzo, and hacking his life. In addition to that she has a permanent restraining order against her because she began stalking SSA DiNozzo using said NCIS resources to assist her.

“You’d also know that Director Shepard ordered Tony and that… woman to leave her to go by herself. You’d know that the investigation into La Grenouille was completely unauthorized and unsanctioned. It was nothing more than a personal vendetta using an innocent woman who had no notion that her father was a murdering arms dealer. It completely destroyed the years of work the FBI and the CIA had been doing on the bastard. But, you’re a know-it-all politician, so by all means you are smarter than the rest of us. GOD FORBID you actually KNOW what in the ever loving hell you are spewing before you enter a meeting where you plan on demeaning someone and sullying their reputation and good character.

“If you were actually a trained federal agent, or even someone with a fucking military background then you’d understand that a terrorism unit might want people who can go out in the field and say… INVESTIGATE TERRORISM AND MAYBE KNOW WHAT THE HELL THEY’RE LOOKING FOR! The fact that you’re so arrogant that you think you know everything in the world, and don’t need to check into basic FACTS is why you are completely incompetent. BY ALL MEANS call John. If you’d like I can dial for you.”

Getting out his phone, Spencer selected John’s number, hit dial then speakerphone, and holding it out to her they listened to the phone ring. SecNav stared at him in disbelief, as she heard a man answer. “Spencer, it’s nice to hear from you. I am guessing you are still with Secretary Porter. Could you let Tony know that we have his papers all ready to sign when he gets back to the building?”

“Abso-fucking-lutely,” Spencer answered back, and they heard Associate Director Evans chuckle on the other end. “So, it’s going well then. Did you need me for something? Secretary Porter, I have to say we are most pleased that NCIS has lost Special Agent… well… now Supervisory Special Agent DiNozzo to us. I see big things for him in his future with us. People are going to be knocking down Unit Chief Hotchner’s door to get to Tony. But, I guess you are used to that sort of thing.”

When Secretary Porter just stared at the phone, Spencer huffed. “I think she’s forgotten how to speak, John. We’re coming back. They’re gonna have to kiss a lot of ass before we come back to this poorly run shithole. Tell Hotch we’ll see him in his office in an hour max. I feel like driving… fast.”

John’s chuckles could be heard on the other end as Spencer hit disconnect. “Frankly ma’am, I have met a lot of people high on the totem pole in my years with the BAU. My brain seems to attract people who want to use me for things… I have to say… you are certainly the dumbest.

“We are leaving now. Director Vance, consider Tony’s employment with your agency DONE! Please keep in mind, you’re STILL going to need our help to get your fucking case solved. That means that you, Secretary Porter, are going to have to kiss MOUNTAINS of ass before we come back. And, by we, I mean the ENTIRE Behavioral Analysis Unit, and Agent O’Connor who if I have my way will be on our team by the end of the day. I suggest that you get your shit together, Ma’am.”

“Tony, Brian, we’re leaving.” Without waiting, Spencer stormed out of the conference room they’d been standing in letting the door slam back to hit the wall behind it.

The room remained quiet for a few seconds, before Tony finally spoke. “Umm… what he said.” Tony grinned cheekily, as Brian snorted with amusement beside him. Tony watched his lover leave, before addressing the three in front of him.
“Vance, consider this my resignation. I will email you something in writing when I get back to the BAU, along with my team recommendation. Gibbs, I will see you later. Secretary Porter…” Tony snorted and turned to leave pausing at the door. “Good luck ma’am. You should know that what Spencer wants… Spencer gets. I hope you have some Chapstick in your purse.”

Tony left quietly shutting the door behind him, and silence returned to the room, until Gibbs snorted. “Well, Madame Secretary, you really could not have messed that up any more than you did. Congratulations. Call me when you figure out how we’re gonna catch this SOB without anyone trained to do so available to us.”

When the woman just stared after Gibbs looking confused, Vance sighed and shoved a toothpick in his mouth. He was positive that he wasn’t getting paid enough for this shit.

~~*BAU February 2011*~~ * ~~*Jealousy*~~

Reid was sitting in the backyard of his godson and best friend’s home, watching Henry play. It was a mild winter, which was the only reason he was sitting outside in February. JJ was sitting next to him trying to subtly pump him for information on Tony, while giving him all the reasons the older man wasn’t good enough for him. It was both aggravating, and amusing. Spencer and Tony had been on three dates. They had recently agreed that they could officially be considered boyfriends. Spencer was over the moon. He’d hoped that his best friend would be equally as happy for him, but this just wasn’t the case.

He wasn’t sure if he was more aggravated, or amused by her current line of reasoning as to why Tony was just using him. In her words, it was just for the sex. “I’m just saying that maybe you need to think twice about this… whatever you have going on, Spence. He’s left a clear trail of women behind him. My contact at NCIS says that there wasn’t a woman between the age of 20 and 50 that he hadn’t slept with, or tried to sleep with. He’s clearly a Casanova, and possibly has some deep rooted sexual dysfunction.”

Reid frowned at that, trying to figure out how someone who got around as much as Tony could have a sexual dysfunction. Of course JJ took the frown as a sign that he was finally getting on board with her line of thinking, and latched onto it like a toddler with a sucker. “I’m serious, Spencer, I mean look I will give that he can’t be a serial rapist, or something. I mean Rossi has known him since he was a kid, but that doesn’t mean that he isn’t dangerous. Look at what his father did. Rossi’s judgment is clearly clouded by his sympathy from what happened when Tony was a kid, and possibly he’s even substituting him for his own son. Really, if that’s the case I don’t know how we could even trust Rossi’s judgment at all on this.”

Shaking his head in confusion, Spencer turned his attention away from the boys, and onto to JJ. He wondered if there was some kind of test he wasn’t aware of to tell if someone had been replaced with a pod person by aliens. “Do you believe anything that is coming out of your mouth right now? Or are you just throwing crap on the wall to see if it sticks? I am actually wondering right now if you aren’t the one with some kind of dysfunction. How magnanimous of you to admit he’s not a freakin’ RAPIST. Are you kidding me?”

“Everything ok out here?” Will asked coming up behind them. The worry evident in his voice.

“Other than your wife has lost her MIND, everything is peachy. She’s generously agreed that Tony isn’t some kind of rapist, but does believe that he’s both a Casanova, AND has a sexual
dysfunction.”

“Jesus, JJ, I thought you were gonna drop this,” Will sighed running a hand through his hair. “I told you that Tony was a good guy. I did the check that you asked for, and didn’t find anything. Just like Garcia did the check that you asked for, and didn’t find anything. Isn’t it time to give this up. There’s nothing out there.”

“Someone has to watch out for him, Will! This DiNozzo character is taking advantage of Spencer. It’s up to me to make sure that he is exposed. It’s bad enough that he’s clearly charmed Spencer somehow into making him lose all of his common sense.” JJ crossed her arms over her chest defensively, and Spencer shook his head exasperated.

Spencer had never discussed his sex life with any of the team, not even JJ or Derek. He felt that it was frankly none of their business, and since he had really no interest in having sex, he’d always been able to play off his… relationships as friendships. He supposed in most people’s eyes that’s what they were anyway. “I’m curious, JJ, what you would say if you found out I was the one with the dysfunction. I mean, my guess is that you would label it as such.”

“Spencer, if you have a problem, we can get you help. You don’t need to turn to…”

“I have no interest in sex. Well, I take that back, as a purely educational experience I would like to possibly have it once, but for the most part… no. No sex, and it isn’t a dysfunction. Not in my eyes, not in Tony’s eyes, but apparently it is in your eyes.”

Will swore, and shook his head before patting Spencer on the back. “Not in my eyes either, homme. I’m gonna keep Henry an’ his friends occupied.”

“Spencer that isn’t fair…”

“Life isn’t fair, JJ. Get the hell over it. It isn’t fair the way you’ve been treating Tony either. Yet here we are having another session of you bashing a co-worker that you’ve made no attempt to get to know. If you want to know the truth. I am pretty sure that all this hatred of yours has less to do with me, and more to do with you. See I know that Tony has one VERY firm rule, and you… you are one of THOSE woman.

“You know the kind who love to tell people how much you hate people assuming you got where you were because of your looks. God forbid though that someone not fawn all over you, and make it known they find you attractive. Yet Tony… he hasn’t even so much as flirted with you. Of course it’s because you break the cardinal rule…”

“Oh, and what’s that? I’m smarter than he is? I’m a better agent than he is? I’m not high enough on the totem pole, so he can’t use me to advance his position?” JJ spat angrily.

Standing, Spencer waved to Henry promising that they could do something fun just the two of them soon, before looking down at the boy’s mother. “No, JJ. It isn’t about your looks, or your position, or your… usefulness. You’re married. Tony may have an active social life when he isn’t in a relationship, and a healthy sex drive, but his one rule for hitting on women is NEVER with someone who is married. The only exception to this is if he’s working a case and trying to get information. See, his father was a chronic philanderer. He was always cheating on his mother, and making no attempt to hide it. He refuses to hurt some other child the way he was as a small child. Maybe you need to take a good look at yourself. Maybe you need to ask yourself why you’re so upset another man won’t flirt with you.”

Turning, Spencer left and decided that he’d go surprise his boyfriend. He could use some cuddling
time, and Tony’s cuddles were awesome.

Chapter End Notes

For anyone interested Crapaud - Toad in French. I was thinking of Remy LeBeau when I wrote it. So, it amused me.
Chapter Summary

We slip backwards slightly in current time to get a peek at when Aaron informed Tony that NCIS wanted to use him for an undercover operation. Spencer looks to add another person to Tony's circle, and seeks out Angelo for advise. Tony suffers an unexpected loss, and Brian finds out that the affects of the plague will never really be over.

Chapter Notes

I am not sure how to warn for the third section without spoiling things too much. I did my best. There is character death in the Unexpected Loss section. It is not someone I conciser vital to this story, which is why I labeled it as background. You will not see anyone else's reaction to this section. Please keep in mind previous warnings that this story is not about the NCIS cast. It's about Tony first and the Tony/Spencer/Brian relationship second. Everything else is unimportant. I am sorry if it detracts from your reading pleasure for some of you, but it won't change. This is the story I am telling, and it is being told the way that is true to me. This will be the last author's note that I address it for those wonderfully amazing readers who are accepting the story as it is being shared.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter Five: Heading into Unknown Danger, Finding Necessary Comfort, Unexpected Loss, and Breathing Ain't Easy
Tony walked into Hotch’s office, and closed the door frowning as he tried to figure out what he’d done. “Why do you always think that you’re in trouble when I call you in here?” He heard his boss ask, and looking up blushed as he shrugged his shoulders before sitting.

“Years of experience?” Tony suggested, and Hotch just huffed rolling his eyes.

“Well you aren’t in trouble. NCIS has requested your assistance with a case, and I wanted to talk to you about it before you go over. To be honest, I have a bad feeling about this.”

Turning serious, Tony straightened up in the chair and nodded. “How so?”

“First off, Director Vance made sure to distance himself as much as possible from this. He made it very clear that the demand was coming on the orders of the new SecNav, but conceded that your assistance was admittedly needed. He also made sure that I understood he felt you shouldn’t be sent alone.”

“That’s,” Tony paused closing his mouth, and cocking his head to one side. “That’s troubling.” Tony admitted shaking his head. “Do you know what they want me for? Have you approved the request?”

“I haven’t yet approved it, but I don’t really have a good reason to say no. I do know that you’d be working with Gibbs’ team, and that they want you to work undercover. I did confirm to Vance that if you came I was unwilling to send you alone. SecNav seems to want only you, but I stressed that we would be unwilling to comply with that request. I also reminded them that the agreement signed by Jarvis gives us that right, and that his death does not negate that contract.”

Tony frowned further, and looked out the blinds to Spencer who was at his desk in the bullpen. When Tony left, Spencer was plowing through his pile of consults. He expected the man would work on some of Tony’s cold cases, as well. He didn’t like the idea of going undercover with NCIS. Hell he didn’t even do it much for the FBI, just a brief stint of a couple hours for a BAU case here and there. There was no way though that was what NCIS was asking. Gibbs’ new team, now called the Terrorism Investigative Unit, didn’t do mundane, ordinary cases. Only things with ties to terrorist
activity got kicked to them. The fact was that Tony wasn’t used to doing that kind of undercover work any longer, and frankly didn’t want to get used to it again.

If the BAU had taught him nothing else, it was that he didn’t have to be someone else to be loved and accepted. Tony had spent most of his life playing the part of someone else. Usually whatever someone the people around him wanted. The BAU though only wanted Tony DiNozzo sans all the masks and personas. Because of that, he no longer felt comfortable spending long periods of time in someone else’s skin. “I’m not really comfortable doing the kind of undercover they want anymore, Hotch.”

Hotch nodded in sympathy. “I tried to explain that. The higher ups though would like you to at least go and find out more information before we make a decision. I consulted John, and he says that the final call us up to you. He also advised that he’s more than ok with you taking Brian with you as backup.”

Tony nodded carefully looking out to the bullpen at Reid again. “I’d want Reid, too. They’ll be expecting Rossi, but I don’t want to give them that… leverage. Call it prideful, but I don’t want to hand them ammunition to use against me. Someone would accuse me of hiding behind his coat tails. Besides, I can point Spencer in the direction of recent terrorist activities, and he’ll know more by the time we get there than maybe Gibbs’ team has with whatever research they’ve been doing.”

Aaron snorted amused knowing that it was the truth. “I know we’re putting you in a bad position, Tony. If you really don’t wanna go, just say the word, and I will find a way to work it out.”

Sighing, Tony shook his head and stood. “No, I’ll do it. I’ll at least go, and see what they want. Just make sure Brian’s gonna be clear to stay however long we need him.”

Hotch nodded, and smiled as if he knew something Tony didn’t. “John advised me that Brian was assigned to us for however long this case takes. I have a feeling someone has been making waves, again, about getting him on the team.”

Tony grinned and headed to the door looking back at Hotch with a twinkle in his eye. “You know what they say… What Spencer wants…”

“Spencer gets,” Aaron finished with a chuckle and waved Tony off. “Keep me up to date, DiNozzo. And, no getting homesick! I am not giving you back now! You are BAU now. They wasted good, we sure as hell are gonna benefit from it. Rule number five isn’t it?”

“Aye, Aye, Captain! Rule number five is correct!” Tony shot back grinning, and left to find his boyfriend and his lover. Behind him he left a bemused boss who was thankful that NCIS didn’t know what they had ‘til he was nearly gone. Their loss had definitely been the BAU’s gain.

~~*BAU Mid-March 2011*~~ * ~~*Finding Necessary Comfort*~~

It had been a hard few months for Tony. Even someone who was occasionally as emotionally clueless as Spencer realized this. He’d been ambushed outside his apartment by Abby, and had a run in with Agent Sacks that hadn’t gone well. He’d gone to see Ziva for closure, and ended up opening up old wounds that were once again trying to heal. Tony hadn’t exactly been a chatter box since he’d joined the BAU, but today he was so quiet that it was a little eerie.

His relationship with Tony was developing slowly. It had been almost a month since Derek had his
dumbass attack and decided to grill Tony. Reid and Tony were learning each other without the sex stuff, which was amazing for Spencer. He was worried about Tony though. He'd told Tony that he didn't mind if he saw someone for his sexual needs. So far he hadn't though. Spencer didn't quite understand it himself, but he suspected that Tony was trying to prove that this relationship was different. That he was different, or maybe that he was more than everyone said he was. This was all despite the fact that Spencer didn’t need anything to be proven, and understood that their relationship was not a typical one, therefore the normal rules and practices didn’t apply.

Either way, Spencer was more than happy to let Tony set the pace. He knew that if at any time he wanted something all he had to do was ask. Tony had turned out to be an extremely attentive, and romantic partner. His worry though stemmed from Tony denying himself something that was a part of his coping mechanism. He knew from their frank conversations that Tony’s sex drive was much higher than not just his own, but that of the average person. He was somewhat concerned that this was going to be a problem in the future. Right now though, he was worried about more than what the no sex thing would do to their relationship. He was worried about how the lack of intimacy was affecting Tony’s well-being.

This last few weeks Spencer had become more than a little worried about his own ability to offer the comfort that the other man needed. Somewhat because he felt like Tony needed something that Spencer just couldn’t offer, beyond the whole not fucking like bunnies part. He needed a reminder that things weren’t always bad from the ‘Before the BAU’ days. He needed someone to come back into his life that he had the right connection to.

Lately they’d been talking a lot about their pasts. They’d each become comfortable enough in their relationship that they both seemed to feel it was ok to start opening their closets and pulling things out. For Spencer it was pulling out Ethan, Jason Gideon, and Tobias Hankel. Tony had shared Jeffrey White, stories about Gibbs, and his Frat Brothers. There was a certain person that kept cropping up on Tony’s side during the OSU years, and Spencer had finally decided to track him down.

Heading up to Rossi’s office, Reid knocked on the open door, the when he was given permission to enter, walked in closing it behind him. “This looks serious.” Rossi commented sitting back in his chair. He wasn't usually the one the genius consulted for closed door issues. That was normally Derek or Aaron depending on the issue. Which told Dave that this had something to do with Tony.

“So, what's up with Tony?”

“You know Rossi that is more than a little creepy.” Spencer commented as he settled in. “I need to ask you about someone Tony keeps mentioning. I need to know if he would be someone positive to re-enter into Tony's life.”

Rossi nodded more than a little intrigued. To be honest he’d been worried about how things would shape up. Tony was becoming emotionally thin, and while he had the utmost respect for Spencer, he wasn’t sure he could handle the fallout that was coming.

“Who do you have in mind?” Rossi asked, a name coming to him almost immediately, but the older man was unsure Tony would have shared this person with a new partner.

Playing with the bottom of his sweater vest, Spencer studied his hands while answering. “He's been talking lately about a Brian O'Connor? What do you know about him?”

Quirking an eyebrow when the name he’d had in mind came from Spencer’s lips, Dave replied honestly. “He was a good kid, and became an even better man. Joined the FBI after college. He came up here to say hi when he transferred to the area.”
“Wait… he’s here?” Reid asked surprised and excited. “Does Tony know this? Why don't they talk anymore? I get the feeling they were really close. Is that true?”

Dave nodded smirking slightly in his amusement at the younger man’s enthusiasm. “They were very close.” Dave studied Spencer, and the younger man could tell he was debating something. “Intimately in fact. Is that going to bother you?”

Spencer sat up straight. “Really? You're saying they had regular intercourse? That is amazing!”

Dave arched an eyebrow at Spencer’s obvious happiness at the detail. Spencer unaware that this normally should not be so exciting barreled on as he was prone to do, much to Rossi’s bemusement. “I have been hoping to find someone that Tony could have sex with!”

Dave could feel his mouth drop open. He wanted to ask questions, but he was pretty sure that his brain had come to a screeching halt. “You want to find someone to have sex with Tony? Someone that isn’t you?”

Spencer nodded enthusiastically. “Yes, I am concerned about what a lack of sex is doing on top of his emotional upheaval at the moment. Unlike me it is a great release for him. I’m concerned that he is missing out on something he needs to keep himself mentally healthy in order to try and prove something to me or himself that is unneeded.”

Rossi found himself nodding, while remaining incredibly confused. “So,” Dave started then stopped, and tried to focus before continuing. “I was under the impression that you and Tony are dating. Is that not true?”

Spencer frowned and cocked his head to one side trying to figure out why the veteran profiler seemed confused. “Oh, yes, we are. That’s why I am here.”

Dave opened his mouth, but ended up shutting it without speaking. Fortunately Reid didn’t notice or understand and just barreled on. “I am looking for Brian O’Connor. I was hoping that he and Tony could renew their friendship, so that Tony remembered things weren’t always bad before here. If they had intercourse previously, and Brian was interested in resuming that relationship, though, that would be wonderful!”

Spencer bit his lip a moment as his brain sorted through the possibilities. “Of course there is always a chance that he would object to my place in Tony’s life. Tony assured me though that he considered what we have as real as any other relationship that includes sex.”

Dave took a deep breath, and decided to just plunge into the deep end of this pool of confusion he was lost in. “Spencer, do you not want to have sex with Tony?”

Shaking his head, Reid found himself studying the hem on the bottom of his sweater vest intently, again. “Not particularly. I am curious about it, and would like to attempt it once maybe at some point in the future possible. Although I am not sure, and Tony says it isn’t really needed. He has assured me that someday if I would like he would be happy to do that for me though. I always assumed that I would be alone for the rest of my life. While I had some encounters in college that satisfied my needs without having to include intercourse, I never believe I would find that in the real world. Tony is… confusing.”

Finally Dave felt like he was getting the pieces of the puzzle he needed. “Tony does have the ability to do exactly what you do not expect him to do. Spencer, forgive me for asking such a personal question, but… are you A-Sexual?”
Spencer sighs and nods. “I don’t really believe in labelling sexuality any more than I do intelligence, but… I suppose that fits.”

Dave nodded relaxing back into his chair again, not realizing he’s tensed up previously. “If you don’t want to answer one of these questions just let me know. I assume that Tony doesn’t know that you are trying to hook him up?”

Spencer fidgeted uncertain suddenly that he was making the correct decision. “Do you think that Tony will be mad?” Dave smiled and cocked his head to one side as he considered the question.

“As long as you two have been honest with each other, no. Normally it would seem as if you were trying to pimp him out or something. As long as you’ve both been open with each other, I don’t anticipate a problem. I would not wait too long to tell him what you are doing. Tony doesn’t really like surprises like this. I also would let him initiate contact with Brian. Without breaking confidences I know that their separation was hard on them both. Brian’s a pretty laid back kid, but this explanation might come better from Tony.

“Brian was good for Tony. They were incredibly tight until life kind of broke them apart. I think a reunion would be good for them. You’re doing a good thing, Spencer. Just… don’t underestimate your place in Tony’s life. He will still need you for comfort, and support. Even with Brian in the picture.”

Spencer nodded biting his lip, and stood. “I am trying to work though how to do that. It isn’t easy when I don’t always feel the need myself in similar situations. Thank you for the advice. I know how important that you are to Tony. I don’t want to mess this up. I understand what kind of chance I am being offered with your son.”

Rossi smiles fondly at the younger man in front of him. “Everyone makes mistakes, Reid, but you, to be honest, are doing an amazing job at this. Keep working at it, and you’ll do just fine. Communication is one of the most important details to any relationship. I have faith that you and Tony will be just fine as long as you never stop sharing.”

Nodding Spencer left Rossi’s office and headed to Garcia to get Brian O’Connor’s contact information. This was going to be just what Tony needed. Spencer hoped that maybe he’d get lucky, and find something that he needed as well.

~~*BAU May 2012*~~ * ~~*Unexpected Loss*~~

“Tony come with me. I need to talk to you.”

Tony looked up and scowled at the sight of Tobias Fornell. “Whoever’s murder you’re trying to frame me for, I didn’t do it.” When the older man paled slightly, Tony felt a pit start to form in his stomach.

“No one’s accusing you of… Just come with me, Tony, please? Let’s go up to Dave’s office.”

“Agent Rossi has been in Hotch’s office for one hour twenty seven minutes and forty nine seconds.”
Spencer inserted helpfully from his nearby desk, curious about what was going on.

“That’s… C’mon Tony, please. Just come with me. We’ll go up to Hotch’s office then. That might actually be better.”

Nodding, Tony stood and followed Fornell up the ramp and to Hotch’s door. The veteran agent barely knocked, before opening it without waiting for a response.

“Come in, DiNozzo. Sit by Dave, please. I have something to tell you.” Tobias ordered directing Tony toward the empty chair in front of Hotch’s desk.

Tony knew this wasn’t something small. His brain may not be Spencer’s but it was pretty good at running possibilities and scenarios. There wasn’t a big list of things that this could be. The needed presence of Dave before Hotch said personal, and bad, very bad. “Is it Gibbs? Goddamnit, Tobias. Is it Gibbs?”

Quickly Fornell shook his head as Tony moved further into the room. Quickly he closed the door to try and keep the others out. “No, Tony, I swear on Emily it isn’t Gibbs… just… please…”

Hotch frowned having stood when Tobias came in without permission. He could tell whatever this was, it wasn’t good. He’d had that look on his own face more than one. It usually came when delivering the worse news a federal agent could give. When Tobias finally looked at him in the eye, Aaron’s heart cracked in sympathy for whatever his agent was about to learn. Technically the younger man may still work for NCIS, but Aaron considered Tony DiNozzo his.

“I’m sorry to barge in but… I think this needs to be done here. I don’t… I didn’t want it to be out in the bullpen where it’d be public.” Tobias ran a hand over his head, and Aaron knew his suspicion was as much as confirmed.

Hotch nodded sitting back down, and watched as Tony carefully sat in the empty chair. “Just tell me, Tobias. Who the fuck is it? What happened?”

Aaron could see the pain in Tobias’ eyes. This wasn’t just some random person. It was someone that both Tobias and Tony cared about. After the fallout that led to Tony’s leaving that list was pretty damned short. “It’s… Jesus, Tony. It’s McGee. He’s… He’s dead Tony. He was murdered today at his home. We don’t know what happened, but… Jesus I’m sorry.”

“Probie?” Tony opened his mouth to respond, but nothing would come out. All he could feel was regret and tears. He may have hated the man at the end, but Goddamnit… Of the three of them, Tim was the one Tony had been holding out hope that it could… somehow… be resolved.

“Tell me you’re lying, Fornell! Goddamnit!”

“Jesus, DiNozzo, I am… I’m sorry kid.”

“NOOOOOOOOOOO! PROBIE!”

~~* BAU April 2013 *~* ~* Breathing Ain’t Easy *~
Spencer was away at a conference presenting a paper he’d written when it happened. The thing that scared Brian the most was that it came out of nowhere. When they’d gone to bed, Tony had been fine. Yet, when Brian woke up at 2:13AM he was alone in the bed, but could hear his partner coughing down the hall. This wasn’t a normal cold like cough. This was a hard hacking cough that wasn’t stopping, and it scared Brian more than he would readily admit. He was ready to jump out of bed, and run to Tony right away, but he knew how Tony was. As long as he’d known him, Tony had been prickly about being treated as if he wasn’t able to take care of himself. It was a fine line you had to walk between what you considered reasonable, and what Tony considered smothering.

Finally he just said screw it and rushed into the bathroom. The sight that greeted him made him swear that the next time Tony would just have to deal with being smothered. The stubborn man was sitting on the floor, propped up against the tub, and his face was beat red. There was a definite hint of desperation in his eyes.

As Brian entered the small room, his lover pointed up toward the medicine cabinet. Quickly he slid one mirror to the side to get to where they kept their frequently used drugs. Almost immediately, his eyes landed on the inhaler that Tony had shown him how to use not long after he’d moved into the penthouse. Grabbing the device, Brian knelt down, and put the lifesaving contraption in Tony’s hands. Once he was convinced his lover wouldn’t drop it, Brian climbed up behind Tony, who scooted forward slightly allowing him to slip in behind.

For the next twenty minutes they sat on the cold floor, Tony struggling to breath, and Brian asking Karma not to let his lover die here in the floor. His arms were wrapped around Tony’s middle, and the other man’s free hand was clutching his fingers as if he were afraid one of them was going to disappear. As they sat there, wishing this would go away, Brian remembered Tony’s painful retell of his bout with pneumonic plague. He couldn’t prevent the tears from filling his eyes, and stubbornly clenched them shut not willing to let them fall. It just wasn’t fair. It wasn’t fair that Tony had to suffer through this because some girl was too chicken shit to tell her mother she liked kinky bedroom games.

When Tony could breathe enough to talk he choked out, “Windows, air conditioner, pollen.”

It took a moment, but finally Brian got it. Quickly he maneuvered himself from behind his lover to get things closed up. It had been a weird spring. Cool and almost winter like one day, and mid-summer the next. The allergy symptoms and pollen count were all over the place. Tony’d never had a problem before, but he knew that there had always been a possibility they would develop with his lover’s compromised lungs.

Sprinting through the bedroom, he picked up his phone to check weather.com, while he was dancing around trying to get his jeans on. Sure enough right there in orange was the pollen warning saying it would be in the very high range the next day. Cursing he hurried around the rest of the house, getting things closed up, and the air conditioner on. Hopefully he’d set the temp high enough it wouldn’t actually put out much cold air. The last thing Tony needed was to get a chill and end up sick for real.

Stuffing the phone in his pocket, Brian made his way back through the house, then moved back to the bathroom, where Tony was still propped up on the tub side. Climbing back into his position, Brian rested his chin on his lover’s shoulder once he was settled again. “Pollen count is mad high today. Maybe you should take the day off? I’m worried about you going out so soon after an attack. I know I’m being a mother hen right now, but you really scared the shit out of me, AJ.”

Tony turned his head at the nickname he hadn’t heard since college. Brian used it all the time back then when they’d lived out of each other’s pockets and been attached at the hip. “Miss that,” he admitted, and Brian smiled softly.
“I miss using it.” Brian admitted back.

Tony looked in the other man’s eyes and held out his hand. “Phone?”

Brian opened his mouth to argue, but Tony glared. Sighing Bri passed it over. It was a small battle, and he was winning the bigger war. Pressing a kiss to the back of the Italian’s neck, Brian listened to him explain to Aaron Hotchner about the allergy attack, and how he wasn’t sure it was safe to leave the house. Fortunately, Aaron Hotchner was a reasonable man who cared about his employees.

Once he had his phone back, Brian shot off a text to his own boss explaining that there was a family emergency, and he couldn’t come in that day. The man was a little less reasonable, but not a total asshole. So, Brian wasn’t worried about flack. Tucking the device away in the pocket of his jeans once more, Brian pulled Tony back against him as they sat in the bathroom listening to Tony wheeze.

Two hours later they had moved to the bedroom, settled in a similar position. Brian had his back propped up against the headboard of the bed. His knees were drawn up, and his lover was using them as arm rests. Tony was settled in front of him back to Brian’s chest. His head was resting against Brian’s shoulder with Brian’s arms wrapped around his waist holding them close together. The TV had on An Affair to Remember. If Tony was feeling better, Brian had no doubt that there would be all sorts of facts and interesting bits of details being shared. As it was his partner was too worn out from the attack to share much of anything. Brian didn’t really mind, because honestly the sound of his continued breathing, was at that moment the most beautiful song in the world.

“I didn’t know,” Tony offered softly, and hesitantly.

Turning his head, Brian lay his cheek against Tony’s and closed his eyes willing his panic and fear to subside. “I never thought that you did.” Brian assured meaning every word. There were things that his old team did to him that Brian could let go. Then there were the things that they did, which had added to Tony’s insecurities that Brian would like to collectively remove their heads for. He felt Tony turn his head toward him slightly and closing his eyes, Brian pressed a kiss to the corner of Tony’s mouth. “I’m not them, AJ. We’re not them. Your new team isn’t them.

“Things can’t be helped sometimes. You’re not a mind reader. I’m not mad. I am scared, but not because of some bullshit like thought that you aren’t taking care of yourself. You got sick and almost died once. You are a former college athlete, and you depend on your physical abilities when you’re out in the field. I’ve been in the gym with you. I’ve heard you come home from seeing Brad, and heard you share with Spencer and myself what he said. There’s a difference between being lax with your health, and not being psychic. You do everything possible to take care of yourself and not put your breathing in jeopardy.”

Taking a deep breath, Brian ran one hand up Tony’s chest to rest it over his lover’s heart. When the other hand moved one of his own hands to cover it, Brian entwined their fingers. “I love the fuck out of you, AJ. I feel like you and Spencer have handed me a whole world I never thought I would be invited into. My life could have gone so much worse without you two in it. You know how much I miss my mom; you understand how much I hate my father. You understand that at the same time I desperately wish that he would have been a real dad.

“Seeing you on that bathroom floor scared me, AJ. It scared me a lot. At no point though did I think you were to blame. We knew that at some point you were gonna have breathing problems because of allergies. I was in that kitchen when you repeated Brad’s warning more than a year ago. I also remember the agreement that the three of us came to when we decided that none of us wanted you taking medicine as a maybe it could possibly be needed sometime situation. I don’t believe in that. Spencer doesn’t believe in that, and your physician on record doesn’t believe in that.
“We already sent a message to Brad. Knowing that Wolverine he’ll be here sometime today with tests and medicine, and we’ll all have new routines. It’s all good, AJ. It’s our lives. You and I don’t take narcotics for pain medicine anymore. We love Spencer too much to bring that shit into the house. We don’t bring hard liquor into the house because it freaks me out. You and Spencer don’t freak out about that, and treat me like a pod person.”

“They were wrong, AJ,” Brian whispered softly, “Gibbs was wrong to put that fear and insecurity in your head.”

He heard AJ’s breathing hitch, and pause, then settle back down after a moment or two. “They put this idea into your head that every little health issue is your fault. They made you believe that any health emergency is because you were being reckless. It’s complete bullshit. Our lives aren’t 9 to 5. Investigations can’t stop for a fucking minor cold. We can’t live in Walgreens just in case we need some medicine for some cold/allergy/sinus infection that we didn’t anticipate. You do your best to stay healthy. We do our best to support you staying healthy. Shit, you have Spencer running every morning. If that isn’t a fucking miracle I don’t know what it is.

“You are neither a robot nor a bubble boy. You are going to get sick. With your lungs, sometimes that’s gonna land you in the hospital when it should be a simple cold. Spencer, myself, Rossi, and the rest of your team will be worried. None of us are going to take it out on you. We love you, and we understand that shit happens. You have my word that I will never utter the sentence ‘You need to take better care of yourself’, and I won’t keep quiet if anyone else says it within my hearing either.”

“I love you, so fucking much,” AJ whispered squeezing his eyes together. “I remember when I was stuck in that basement for days on end, hiding behind the boiler because it was the only warm spot. I dreamed about what my future would be like. There was never a scenario that didn’t include you. I love the hell out of Spencer, Brian. I love him because he’s one of the rare new people in my life who seemed to accept all of me immediately. It’s not possible to compare my love for you to my love for him.

“If something happened to Spencer, I know without a doubt that I would never be the same person again. There would always be this huge gaping hole in my soul. If I lost you, again, though I am not sure that I would survive. Am I being unfair to Spencer?”

Brian sighed and pressed his lips to Tony’s again. “It’s like you said, Tony. Our relationships aren’t the same. They are also not stagnant. You and I have… shit… over 30 years of history. Granted there are some huge gaps in there, but regardless… it’s a shitload of time. You and Spencer have what? Three years together? I’m not an expert on relationships, dude, but yeah… I think it’s reasonable that you’re gonna be more attached to me than Spence. It isn’t because you love him less. It’s just about history.

“Shit, AJ, none of us in this relationship have a wealth of knowledge about love or about any kind of relationship. We’re playing all this crap by ear. You have GOT to give yourself a break here, man. You can’t tear yourself up all the fucking time because JJ LaMontagne keeps putting this bullshit in your head making you feel like you don’t treat Spencer right. It’s bullshit, and we all know it. We do our best. We’re all committed to making this thing work. I know that for a fact.

“Right now you’re tired, you’re scared from your attack, and you’re missing Spencer. It’s ok. In a few hours we’ll call Reid. He’s just in Philly. He’ll freak out, and threaten to come home. We’ll tell him that we love him, and tell him to stay because it will be mostly over by then. He’ll end up skipping out on the last day where he doesn’t have a presentation to give, and we’ll cuddle up in bed all day with the three of us watching James Bond movies. JJ, and those NCIS fuckers you left behind can just go fuck themselves.”
Brian sat and let Tony study him, until finally his lover nodded, and settled in closing his eyes. Taking a deep settling breath, Brian ran his fingers through Tony’s hair until the man fell asleep. Eventually he fell asleep himself, curled around his lover, and holding onto him like he was the most precious thing in the world.

Chapter End Notes

I like McGee. I was actually pretty stunned and sad that I wasn’t going to get to repair that friendship in this story. Fortunately my Rough Trade story has a strong Tony & Tim friendship in it. So, I was able to make up for the things I couldn’t do with this story in that one.

I am really excited to share that story with you, but don’t anticipate it being posted before June, or may even July during the next round of Rough Trade. It is a monster story that isn’t finished, and will be the prequel to my story Loves Both Old and New. While I don’t plan on any more stories before or after this Dead Air fic, I anticipate many more for the RT fic, so I am taking my time. Again, thank you all for reading and those who are commenting. I hope to have more time to reply now that RT is over for this cycle.
Chapter Summary

Tony admits he's afraid of the most unlikely person on the team. Derek and Tony have a talk to clear the air. Then miscommunications between the trio reveals an old scar as they get onto the same page in their relationship.

Chapter Notes

Lots of angst and uncomfortable moments in this one. A few tissues may be needed.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter Six: Revealing a Weakness, the Apology, and Confessions Old & New

Tony was sitting at his desk staring at a cold case trying to figure out why it bothered him, when he heard a quiet, hesitant voice from the walkway above. “Why do you hate me?”

Looking up quickly, Tony saw Garcia standing there in all of her multicolored glory. So far he’d managed to mostly avoid her. He’d known that it wouldn’t last for long, and there was a part of him that felt bad about his actions. The truth was though that his heart just couldn’t handle letting the vibrant woman into his life just yet. He didn’t know how to explain it, so up to that point he’d been mostly doing his best to avoid the whole situation. It looked though like his time had run out. He just hoped that he could find words to explain without hurting someone who had never done him wrong.
“I don’t hate you, Garcia. I… If you must know the truth, and honestly I think you probably deserve to know the truth, you scare the shit out of me.”

Garcia opened her mouth to speak, and shut it again frowning. She then moved down off the walkway, and into the bullpen stopping just shy of his desk. “I don’t understand. How could you be scared of me? I’m like… I’m the least threatening person here. Hotch has that glare that could freeze hell. Rossi has that been there done that air about him. Prentiss is like an international super sleuth. Reid is smarter than all of us put together, and Derek is a super-hot, kick ass, luscious chocolate gladiator. I’m just… Garcia.”

Tony smiled sadly looking up at her as he leaned back in his chair. “You aren’t just anything, Miss Garcia. You’re awesome, and gorgeous. You can hack anything, and you are generous and loving to a fault. You strive to make the world around you a happier more loving place. You are everything… well… You scare me because of everyone here, I can see myself liking you the best after Spencer. I don’t think that my heart could take that.”

Tony stopped speaking, trying to swallow the lump in his throat. When he continued he was quieter, and more hoarse. “I used to know someone like you. Looks wise she is your polar opposite. Complete Goth with the black clothes and hair, and dark lipstick. She wears a collar every day, and has one for every occasion. She even sleeps in a coffin, which I always thought was taking it a little too far into the Bela Lugosi Dracula stage, but what do I know? She’s, also, one of the happiest people you’d ever meet.

“Once upon a time, she was the person I loved the most in the world without wanting to get them into my bed. She was the one I trusted with everything, and the one that I never believed would let me down. Then she turned into someone I didn’t recognize, and stabbed me in the back. I suppose it’s partly my fault.” Garcia watched Tony play with a random paperclip on his desk, and she knew when he looked down that it wasn’t the file that he was seeing.

“I probably gave her way too much leeway, and let her get away with things I shouldn’t have. Maybe I should have stood up to her more, or reported bad behavior a few times. I should have called her out when she hurt me, and apologize less for her crocodile tears that I knew she was using to manipulate me with. I didn’t though because she was the sister I’d longed for my whole life, and in my heart of hearts I never believed that there would be a second that she wouldn’t have my six. I don’t know much about family.

“I never really had one, and most of my life any friendship I had that could resemble one has been torn away from me. I trusted that because she came from a family who loved her, people that never treated her being adopted different from the son they birthed, that she knew more about family than me. I trusted that when she said this is what family does that it was the truth. Turns out her idea of family is closer to my father’s. I am pretty sure that’s not how it really is. I had… well I suppose everyone knows that Rossi is like a father to me. He’s done his best to teach me, but sometimes it’s still hard. There’s a lot of fucked up years to account for before he took me in.”

Tony looked up to see Garcia frown, wring her hands while fidgeting where she stood. He could tell that she wanted to step closer, but was afraid to. He appreciated her restraint. He was pretty sure that if she touched him he’d fall to pieces right there in the bullpen. “She hurt you? What did she do?” Garcia asked hesitantly biting on the inside of her lip. He appreciated that she moved the conversation back to Ab… Scuito. Despite the pain of it, he guessed that it was a safer topic than the things she’d chosen not to ask about. He wasn’t quite ready to share Rossi, his father, or Brian with these people. Not even Spencer quite yet.

“She altered an evidence tape of recordings that I’d gathered to find a suspected terrorist. She did it to
Garcia gasped and put her hands over her mouth. She then took a step forward only to take one back immediately when she realized what she’d done. “They… How could they do that? You could have been killed! Why…” Garcia stopped talking and frowned. “This is Abigail Sciuto?” Tony felt a pang of pain at the sound of her name, and just nodded because he wasn’t sure that he could speak yet.

“I don’t like her very much.” Garcia continued frowning, and Tony couldn’t help but think that she resembled an irritated kitten.

Her declaration surprised Tony so much he found his voice. “You’ve met?” He was trying not to picture all the ways that this could go wrong despite Penelope saying she didn’t like her.

“No,” Garcia denied shaking her head in emphasis. Tony found himself more than a little confused. How could she claim to dislike someone she’d never even met?

“Then how…” He started to ask, but the big hearted woman cut him off.

“She hurt you. She abused your trust. She made us happy loving people look bad. Therefore, I don’t like her. From now on you are Tonio, my Italian Stallion. I will be here to be your friend when you are ready, and I will be the most awesome amazing friend that you’ve ever had. I will put all other friends to shame. Excuse me now. I have something… against the rules to do.”

Tony couldn’t restrain the surprised snort of amusement as she walked away. He would be lying to himself if he didn’t admit that a large part of him couldn’t wait for that friendship to happen. Shaking his head he looked back down to the file he’d been studying please that the missing piece suddenly kicked in. Picking up his phone, he called some contacts to verify that what he suspected was true.

From her hiding spot, Penelope nodded pleased with herself, and headed back to her den. She had an NCIS analyst to plot revenge on.

~~*BAU Mid-January 2011 *~~ * *~~*the Apology*~~

Tony was in the gym at Quantico pounding on the heavy bag when he felt a presence at his left shoulder. Pausing, he looked slightly behind him to see Derek Morgan standing there watching him. “What can I do for you, Agent Morgan?” Tony asked, as he went back to what he was doing. It had been almost a month since the incident in Derek office. It was only the fact that Tony was used to working with people that he wasn’t particularly happy with that the team wasn’t affected. Whatever he expected out of the man, the words that came out weren’t it.

“I was an asshole. I'm sorry. Can we talk about this?”

Tony drove the hardest punch that he had in him into the bag, then turned panting to look at his co-worker. “So, talk. Why were you an asshole? What did I do to deserve your little fucking test?”

“Nothing,” Derek admitted regretfully. “Look when it comes to Spencer I get stupid. The whole 'he's my boy’ thing is real. I can't help it. I get protective, then I get stupid, and then I make bad choices. Rossi told me to let it alone, but I didn't listen. Hotch told me it was the dumbest thing that I'd ever done. Spencer made me feel like my mamma had lectured me.
“It may have taken a while, but… and it may have taken more than one thump to the head by multiple people before I came to my senses. I realize now though that I was a jackass, and way out of line. Hell I knew as soon as you walked off, and said that you were quitting I’d made the wrong play. I was just too proud and scared of losing face to do the right thing. I am sorry for that, too. None of this mess is on you. It’s all about me, my protective streak, and my ego.”

“It is because they brought me in, and gave me some of your responsibilities?” Tony asked quietly. That part had been eating at him. This had been, for all that he could find from people surrounding the team, a very close knit group. Tony couldn’t help but feel that his insertion and presence had destroyed something precious.

“Hell, no!” Morgan protested shaking his head in emphasis. “I will admit I’d like to know more about you, and why you left NCIS. That’s just because I’m nosy though, and I want to get to know you. This team is like a family, and it makes me sick that I’ve caused trouble. I know JJ feels the same.”

Tony chewed on the inside of his lip for a moment before replying. “Look, Derek, no offense intended, but JJ needs to handle her own shit. I am happy to accept your apology for yourself. You can’t truly know how she feels though. You want honesty? Fine, here’s your honesty. There’s no fucking way JJ apologized or expressed any sympathy toward even the tiniest bit of attitude she’s given me. I’d not stupid, and frankly I am really fucking good at reading the people around me.”

Frowning as he looked off across the gym, Tony began to pull off the gloves that he was wearing. “I spent the last eight years around a walking breathing mess of passive aggression. Thanks to McRepressed, I can spot that shit a mile away. I thought my Probie was the poster boy for passive aggressive behavior, but JJ… She must have a master’s degree in that crap. You wanna know who I am? You wanna know about my past? All you have to do is ask.” Frowning Tony stopped and studied his fellow profiler as he weighed his options in his head.

The fact was this was Spencer’s real best friend. While JJ was important to Reid, and the woman played all the right cards in from of Spencer, her actions said different. Tony’s gut said the JJ mess was a situation that wasn’t going to change. He knew that look in her eye. He’d seen it a million times, and knew countless women like her. Call it selfish, but he wasn’t going to give up Spencer, and destroy her marriage, just to get her to like him. Especially considering that wouldn’t work anyway. In the end she’d just blame him, and Tony would have wasted his time on someone he didn’t even like, while losing someone he already adored.

“If you think I am dumb enough to believe that JJ is sorry for anything… you might as well leave. If she’s sorry, it’s that Spencer has probably called her on her crap. She’s sorry that she got called to the principal’s office, and maybe said some pretty words that Spencer is way too smart to believe. So, let’s just leave her crap to her. As far as I’m concerned, she isn’t even worth my time and bother.”

Making a decision, Tony finished pulling off his gloves, and handed them to someone waiting for the bag.

“So, you wanna chance? Fine. Go get your wallet SSA Morgan. You’re taking me to lunch. I have a healthy appetite, so make sure you bring the card with plenty of room on it. When I get done with my shower we can leave.”

Derek lifted an eyebrow, then chuckled and nodded. “Alright, man, take your shower. I will get my stuff, and let Hotch know where we’ll be.”

Half an hour later, Tony found himself following Derek up an alley surrounded by several nondescript building with no signage on the outside. Arching his eyebrow, Tony followed Derek up a short staircase, and inside a bright red door where his jaw dropped. “This is a restaurant?” Derek turned and grinned at him after asking for a table for two away from others if possible. “I thought
you’d like this. Anyone who likes James Bond as much as you needs to come to the Safe House.”

“Ok,” Tony started sitting down and ordering some tea from the server as he studied the menu. “Ok, SSA Morgan, you get a point for this. I am a little impressed.”

“Just a point, QB1?” Derek asked grinning as he leaned back in his chair, and Tony nodded still studying his menu, but allowed his amusement to leak through in a smirk if it was somewhat small. “Yes, just a point. I may be a man whore, but I am not easy.” Looking up Tony arched his eyebrow daring Derek to respond, the other man though just raised his hands and grinned.

“Not touching that, man. So, tell me about Tony DiNozzo.” Derek asked and Tony, having decided on what he wanted to try, set the menu down. “You mean besides what Prentiss already repeated to you?” Derek opened his mouth, then promptly shut it looking unsure of how to answer.

After a few moments, Tony snorted, and flirted with the waitress as she dropped off their drinks. Once she’d left, he turned his attention back to Derek deciding to let him off of the hook. “I knew that she’d share, Derek. I’ve been in law enforcement since I left college, and the last 9 of it as a Fed. I know that our type gossips more than little old women sitting on a porch sipping lemonade. So, be specific. What do you want to know? This is your shot. If I don’t want to share something with you then I will let you know.”

Derek nodded cocking his head to one side, and considered the possibilities before settling on a question. “Why did you leave NCIS?”

“Starting off with the easy stuff I see,” Tony joked, then took another sip of his tea biding his time, but finally just jumped in feet first. “My partners shut off the coms while I was undercover getting voice prints to try and identify a possible terrorist cell we were chasing.”

Derek opened his mouth, but once again shut it without answering. There were certain things that a cop, a good law enforcement person just didn’t do. Hell, Derek had worked with more than one asshole that he didn’t like. It just came with the job, but never once had it even entered his mind to turn off communication with a partner he was backing up. Not even the racist asshole that wouldn’t call him anything but Boy. The fact that two highly trained NCIS agents on a premiere team like the Major Crime Response Team did so… “Jesus, DiNozzo.”

“Pretty much.” Tony agreed, and felt something inside of himself relax a little. Maybe they were empty words. Maybe Derek was just placating him. Maybe the sympathy that he heard in his voice was fake. Sometimes though you needed the little things before you could build up to something big. Trust had to grow from a seed before it could become a tree. Tony figured if anyone would understand the spot he’d been in it was another former cop.

He didn't want to fight about this anymore. Unlike JJ at least Derek was making an effort. So, Tony was going to make an effort back. “So, Mor, tell me how it feels to have Northwestern lose to OSU all the damned time?”

Derek grinned big. This he could do. This he understand. “Oh so that's how it is? I see you, QB1. It's on. It's so on. We're gonna kick your ass.”


Derek snorted and shook his head. “I’d like to debate that, but, yeah, I got nothin’. Tell me something else about Tony DiNozzo. What do you like besides movies? What does ol’ QB1 do when he needs to relax?”
“Music,” Tony admitted after a while, and Derek arched an eyebrow sensing something personal and real was being shared. “I play piano. Well, guitar, too, but piano more. When I need to get out of my head, I play piano.”

“That I did not expect,” Derek admitted nodding. “What do you play? What kind of music I mean?”

Tony looked at Derek and smiled shyly. “All kinds really. Classical, jazz, popular music, the blues and sometimes even original stuff when I have long enough to get a story done.”

Derek cocked his head to one side then smirked slowly. “Chicago Blues?”

Tony huffed. “As you know, Chicago Blues is more about guitar and harmonica although piano is one of the common accompanists. So, in general yes I have been known to play Chicago Blues. I like Earl Hooker and Little Walter best to listen to. Since I play piano more often than guitar though I probably lean more towards Delta Blues or New Orleans Jazz. I like people like Fats Domino, Willie “The Lion” Smith, and Little Willie Littlefield. Although I have to admit, as a kid I thought Jerry Lee Lewis was cool, and John Lee hooker is just bad ass. I saw Stevie Rey Vaughn once. That was completely awesome. For just sitting around and chilling out Blind Connie Williams is just incomparable, and Kenny Wayne Shepherd is a more recent player I like to listen to.”

Derek snorted and shook his head as the waiter brought their food. “Alright QB1, alright. I give. No more tests. I keep tryin, and keep failing.”

Tony smirked as he stole a fry from Derek’s plate. “There’s a lesson in there. Make sure you keep it close to heart.” Derek just laughed and tried to keep his fries out of Tony’s reach.

~~*BAU January 2013*~~ * ~~*Confessions Old & New*~~

“God, I fucking love you so much. I know that I shouldn’t say it but…”

Tony sat up in the bed, and frowned down at the blonde next to him. “Why shouldn’t you say it? I certainly love you.”

“Jesus don’t say that so loud! What if Spencer hears!” Brian yelped quietly as he tried to listen for Spencer.

Tony shook his head confused as he watched his blonde. “What if he… Brian, what do you think is going on here that you aren’t allowed to be in love with me, and I’m not allowed to be in love with you?”

Brian just shrugged his shoulders as he pulled his knees up to his chest. He wasn’t sure why Tony was so confused about all of this. “Some weird fuck buddies relationship where I’m not supposed to get attached?”

Tony’s jaw dropped open, as a ball of panic settled in his stomach. “You’re not… Fuck Brian! That’s not… I didn’t mean for you to think… Shit!” Throwing back the covers, Tony strode towards the door agitated.

Panicking, Brian moved to get out of bed to chase him. “Where are you going?”

Turning his head back around, Tony held his hand out in a stop gesture. “I’m just getting Spencer.
Don’t move…I mean it…Just….” Tony stuck his head out the bedroom door. “Spencer! Get in here! If you haven’t had coffee get that first! But get you sexy butt in here! We have a problem!”

Swearing and running his hands through his hair, Tony moved back to the bed. Sitting on the edge he rested his elbows on his knees. “Jesus I can’t believe that it’s been almost 2 years and you still think….Christ I am a horrible human being. I can’t believe I’ve done this to you.”

The smell of sweetened coffee announced Spencer’s presence before he could even speak. “What have you done to who, Tony? Brian? What’s going on? Why is he freaking out?”

Finding himself too confused to worry about the fallout, Brian decided to just be honest. He only hoped that he didn’t end up out on his ass. “I don’t know. I don’t… I don’t understand, I guess. I thought… I’m sorry Spencer, I just… I told him I love him. I know I’m not supposed to but…”

Cocking his head to one side, Spencer looked at “You… I don’t understand. Why would you think I would be upset if you loved Tony? That was the whole point. That was why I chose you, because the probability that if you were not still in love with him, that because it seemed as if you had previously been then those feelings would resurface when you got back together.”

Spencer frowned at the way Brian was staring at him dumbfounded. “Why is he looking at me like that, Tony? Did I not explain it right?”

Tony chuckles sadly. “Because he’s confused. Because apparently I suck? Because… apparently I am crap at this relationship crap? I just… I swear I thought that he… FUCK!”

Getting up Tony left the room. The sheet wrapped around his body, and Brian watching anxiously. “I didn’t mean to fuck this all up.”

Spencer frowned and fidgeted. He would never be a big fan of this emotion thing, but despite what people thought he did have them. He just didn’t much understand them. Usually it was Tony that handled these things, but Spencer knew his partner would be too busy raking himself over the coals to fix this mess. “You didn’t fuck anything up, Brian. You did exactly what I wanted and hoped that you would do when I decided to find you for Tony. I needed someone who was already a part of Tony’s life, to come back into it and remind him that it hadn’t always been bad. I also needed someone that he would feel comfortable with having sex with since I am not interested in it.

“We never wanted you to spend almost two years believing you weren’t allowed to love him. Hell, Brian, we didn’t want you to spend three minutes to think that.” Spencer frowned trying to work the problem out in his head. “It seems I miscalculated somewhere.”

Hearing a thump followed by a loud string of cursing, Spencer’s head whipped up, but Brian was already up and out the bedroom door. Running after him, they ran through the house, and stopped at the office door. Spencer just behind Brian as they listened and watched Tony cursing and crying as he gripped heavy law book in his hands. One similar to it was lying across the room from its normal resting spot on a shelf near Tony’s desk.

“Stay out here, Spencer. I mean it. Do not come in unless I say it's ok.”

Spencer frowned at him a few moments, before nodding understanding that Brian had more experience in this. When Spencer and Tony got together, Rossi had warned Spencer that these moments could happen, but… Spencer had never actually seen one. He wasn’t aware that Brian had either though.

“Tone! CODE RED DINOZZO!”
Spencer watched in amazement as Tony froze and turned angry, anguished eyes toward the blonde who was inching slowly into the room. “This is Not. Your. Fault. You didn’t mess this up. I am not broken. Set the book down on the ledge there, please. It’s ok, Tony. It’s safe. This is not your fault. Just set the book down. No, no don’t turn your eyes away from me, DiNozzo.

“Come on, that’s it. Thank you for putting the book down. This is not your fault. You weren’t bad. You didn’t fuck it up. I’m not broken, Tony. It’s ok. Come on, brother. Come on, love. Just... I’m coming over there alright? I’m coming over, and I’m going to touch you, ok?”

Spencer watched as Brian waited for Tony to acknowledge his question before he moved. Something was tingling in his brain, and he let it form as he watched the encounter before him. “I’m about to touch you, Tony. I’m going to take your hand and I am going to lead you over to the sofa. Once we get there we are gonna sit, and then Spencer is going to come in, and sit in the chair by the doorway. Once he is sitting then we will talk, alright?”

Spencer again watched as Brian waited for Tony’s agreement before proceeding. Moving the last bit of space that separated them, Brian stepped forward, then did as he had laid out. Once they were seated, Spencer only then went into the room, and sat on his favorite chair in the room. It had been placed there by Tony and Brian just for him.

“This isn’t your fault, Tony. It’s just a miscommunication.”

“Two motherfucking years, Bri. You’ve been tortured for two motherfucking years.”

“No! That is not this. I wasn’t hurt by this. A little upset, and obviously under a wrong impression yes, but this is not the same as what you went through. It’s not even close. You are not McSwirley.”

When Tony let out an anguished chuckle, Brian turned the other man’s face toward him. “You. Are. Not. Him! This is not that. Maybe you could have communicated better, but so could have Spencer. I could have asked sooner. I just made assumptions on what I thought you both were telling me, and that was wrong. I never clarified with you, because I was afraid that it would go away. I shouldn’t have done that. I should have known that you wouldn’t do that for this long. It’s not a fault, Tony, it’s a misunderstanding.”

“No, I...”

“No, you didn’t. Come on, Tony. Lay down here. You’re tired. Lay down here, and rest. Spencer and I will talk. He needs to know, Tone. So, I’m gonna fill him in while you’re sleeping.”

“No, Bri, he won’t...”

“He will still love you after, Tony. I swear on my life. It’s ok. Just rest.” Brian waited for the other man to close his eyes, and roll his body toward Brian, with his head on his lap before he began stroking his hair. The room stayed quiet, with Spencer watching Tony’s back as he waited for Brian to speak.

“I don’t know if Dave remembers me. I tend to think not. He only saw me the once, but... Dave’s mind is like a steel trap. So, you never know what he is thinking or what he knows. Most people think that Tony and I met in college. Mostly because that’s all Tony talks about. If he had his preferences his life prior to Ohio State University would cease to exist.

“While it is true that we were Frat Brothers at OSU with Alpha Chi Delta, we met before that. After Tony’s father was put in prison, and his Uncle Clive got custody of him, he was put in Rhode Island Military Academy. I had only been there for two weeks myself, so we bonded. My mother didn’t like my friend Roman Pearce, and my dad wasn’t always in the picture so... She decided that the
best thing for me was to be as far from Rome as possible. Considering he ended up in juvie for stealing cars, I suppose she may have been onto something.

“The headmaster there was a man named Byron McSweeney. All the kids though called him McSwirley ’cause he had these bright red curls that he kept smoothed back with that slick hair grease shit, but there was always one curl in the front that would escape. McSwirley was… not a good person. The problem was no one really wanted any of us. I mean, my mom cared enough I suppose, but… her health was bad. My dad didn’t give a crap. You know all about Senior. We were all castoffs and rejects and kids that someone somewhere along the line just didn’t want to deal with.

“Military schools in general are not a barrel of fun, and the headmasters are in my experience basically uptight pricks on a power trip. McSwirley though was… probably the worst of the worst. He wasn’t… You might say if all this happened today that he’d end up on the BAU’s round table as a case. The guy was a hothead, abusive in every way, and had some really archaic views on punishment. Tony was… well… Tony was what you’d expect of a kid whose mother was murdered by his father, and abandoned by his guardian. He was hurting, he was scared, and he was angry. Jesus was he angry.

“He was this quiet, sullen little thing, but when he lost his temper. Jesus Christ… That’s where the Code Red thing came from. For some reason Tony and I always… got along well. When he was lost in one of his tempers, I was the only one that could reach him. So, he and I worked out some codes.”

When Brian stopped talking. Spencer pulled his legs up to his chest, and rested his chin on them. Afraid to ask the question, that was needed, but knew it had to be done. “What did McSweeney do to him, Brian? What did he do to you?”

“Oh me? Not much. Some beatings, missed a few meals, but unlike most of the kids, I had a mom at least at the beginning who checked on me, and while he didn’t often remember I existed my dad was prone to just… appearing for a few days. So, he had to be careful with me. Tony though…”

Brian shook his head, and looked down at the man he’d loved maybe since they were kids too little to understand such things. Back when all they had to love was each other. “Tony he beat, starved, and shoved in closets, locked in this dungeon type basement thing he had. He called him names. He… he started fucking him about a week after we got there. Tony was… Tone was a pretty little boy, and well… McSwirley was a pervert.”

“How…” Spencer cleared his throat, trying to push past the lump lodged firmly in the center of it. “How did it stop?”

Brian looked up and snorted half smiling. “David Rossi saved him, again. Hell this time he saved us all. He showed up unexpected. He’d been doin’ the profiling thing with Gideon for a few years by then I suppose, and he had a case that reminded him of Tony. One of the other kids… died. I guess they called in Rossi, and Gideon to investigate. Tony had been locked in the dungeon for a week by then with almost nothing but bread and water. Somehow Rossi found out Tony was there, and demanded to see him and well… McSwirley was screwed. The pervert ended up in prison. I ended up with an aunt and uncle ‘til I could get into OSU, and Tony… well Rossi talked Uncle Clive into giving him rights to make decisions over Tony’s affairs. From what I understand every break, every summer vacation were spent at Rossi’s. Hell Tony has lasted longer in Rossi’s life that all his wives combined.”

“Why… Why did this make him think that he was like that man?” Spencer asked quietly dreading the answer, but knowing he needed it if they were all going to be on the same page.

“McSwirley was big on head games. He liked to fuck with us. Tell us one thing, then punish us
when we did it saying that he told us something completely different. He hated it when we showed emotion. He said emotions were dirty, and useless, and only the weak let them rule their life. He’d leave us hanging knowing he was gonna dish out punishment or… waiting for something we thought was gonna be a treat, only to have to go bad instead. It’s why we both have a low tolerance for people who are not straightforward, people who are fake. People who pull that passive aggressive bullshit that keeps you wondering if it’s all in your head, or if there is really something negative going on.”

“Like, JJ,” Spencer sighed shaking his head. It made more sense now why even after three years, the two of them just did not get along. Hotch was very careful not to ever team the two of them together. It just wasn’t good for anyone. While Spencer still cared for JJ, he’d lost some of his respect for her, and was honestly hoping that at some point she’d just… go away. At least from the BAU, so that they could get some peace, and the team would be under less constant stress.

Spencer knew Tony’d offered to move to a different team about a year after he’d joined the BAU. Rossi had thrown a fit at just the suggestion. Then his boyfriend had a closed door meeting with Hotch. Tony refused to say what it was about, but he hadn’t brought up leaving the team again, and stopped worrying about her actions.

“Like, JJ,” Brian agreed, and Spencer turned his thoughts back to Tony. “What… what do I need to do? Is… is there something that I need to do?”

Brian shrugged and sighed. “If I can be frank? Not really. Not in the way that I think you mean. He’s been through therapy. He knows all the techniques. 99% of the time he can stop it or contain it. Sometimes it just sneaks up on him, or like tonight he’s tired and doesn’t realize how angry he is before he snaps. He’s literally never hurt someone else when he was mad. He’s never beat someone up. It’s always things or self-focused. I know that doesn’t make it good, but he does the best that he can. As far as I know there are literally years between incidents.

“Stay out of the way when he has one of these… outbursts. You’re no match for Tony. At least I am his general size, and I am more physical than you. As I said, he’s never hurt someone before when he’s lost his temper. If you zigged when you should have zagged though, and got hurt he’d literally never forgive himself.”

Spencer considered the possibilities, then nodded. Brian was correct. He also had more experience with this. “I can do that. I want… I want you to know that… that Tony isn’t the only one who… cares… for you. I know I’m not… this isn’t… a normal relationship, but…”

“Reid, Spencer…” Brian smiled softly holding up a hand. “There is no such thing as a normal relationship. This… whatever this is… this is our normal. Is it unconventional? Yes. Does that make it abnormal? No. Not in my opinion it doesn’t. It’s what is best for the three of us. Should we have worked this out a long time ago? Probably. We didn’t though so… we’ll all try to remember to communicate better, and do our best. The one thing I know for sure, is that you and I are both committed to making sure that Tony doesn’t lose this. Frankly, that’s all I really care about. Everything else is… fixable and flexible, as long as he doesn’t get hurt. You and I can smooth out the rough edges.”

Thinking about everything he now knew his boyfriend had gone though, Spencer decided that he couldn’t agree more. Nodding he stood and left the room to go sit in his study and let his mind wander and figure this all out. He also needed to look up this McSweeney, and make sure he could never come near Tony again.
I couldn't remember if Luca was adopted too, or if he was her parent's birth son. Since it was a small bit I didn't feel it was worth the research time. Let's just say for this story Abby is adopted, and their mother gave birth to Luca, ok? Cool.
Disagreements and Making Up, Blast from the Past, and Pain from the Other Side

Chapter Summary

Tony and Spencer have their first fight. After getting advice from each of their chosen parental figure, things get worked out. Senior's reach is long, and even from prison he has the ability to cause his son trouble. Then Spencer finds himself on the other side of a situation he's experienced himself, although never from his current point of view. He finds he doesn't much like it, and it gives him insight into what others must go through when it happens to him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter Seven: Disagreements and Making Up, Blast from the Past, and Pain from the Other Side

~~*BAU Mid June 2011*~~ * ~~Disagreements and Making Up*~~

It was bound to happen. Every couple has their arguments. When you have two people with such deeply rooted insecurities, who hate talking about emotions, eventually a misunderstanding is bound to happen. Add to it a wealth of sensitive subjects in their past, and it’s almost a near certainty that eventually someone’s feelings are going to be hurt.

Tony wasn’t even sure how it happened. One second they were talking about their pasts, sharing secrets and old hurts. The next second, World War Three had broken out. Brian, the level headed calm one, was out on assignment, which left no one to cool them down when things got heated.
They’d had little minor arguments before, but nothing like this.

Tony had started to talk about his time at boarding school when Spencer had launched into a long winded and excited ramble about what a positive experience they should be if approached with an open mind. Of course, Tony’s own experience had been anything but that. He’d started to explain, but hadn’t gotten past, “I’m sorry, Dr. Reid, but in my experience you are wrong,” when things went to the crapper. If there was one sure way to put Spencer on the defensive, it was to tell him that he was wrong. Tony knew this, but in his haze of hurt and disbelief he hadn’t thought of that. In the moment he only knew that he wasn’t being heard, and his pain wasn’t being acknowledged, as per normal in his life.

Eventually, things got to the point that neither of them wanted to be near the other. Tony didn't know where Spencer went. He however grabbed his keys, and ran to Rossi, despite the fact that they were at his penthouse apartment. His heart was full of pain, confusion, and betrayal. His boyfriend had basically supported what he’s always considered one of his guardian’s worst betrayals, and what was one of the worst experiences of his life. Spencer seemed to indicate that it was basically Tony’s perception that was wrong, and not the slimy bastard that ran the place.

“Figlio, have you considered the possibility that you two were not on the same page? Because I know that I wasn't there, but what you're saying doesn't sound like Spencer. It sounds like he was referring to Hotch’s time at boarding school, referencing in his head his own time at college as a child, and making assumptions from there to speak in general terms. There is no way he would have said those things had he known what a creep your headmaster was.”

Tony sat heavily in his favorite chair, and sniffled quite unmanly. “I’m scared.” Tony admitted. “I’m feel like I have no idea what I am doing, and any second he's gonna realize that he can do so fucking much better than me. I'm afraid that he's gonna listen to his friends who hate me. I'm afraid that when he does wise up and leave me, that I won't survive, Angelo. I’m in too deep to get out of this unscathed, and we’ve barely been dating for 6 months. Then add Brian in on top of it, and all I can see is all the ways I am going to get hurt.”

“First off knock off this I'm not good enough for Spencer bullshit. He's goddamned lucky to have you. And before you argue with me, please remember I've known him longer than you.” Rossi huffed and stood to refill his drink. When he was back in his recliner, he started speaking again.

“If I could get away with it, your father would be a dead man. I'm not knocking Spencer when I say that he’s lucky to have you. He is so much happier, and so much more confident in his own skin since you’ve come into his life. You deserve this relationship. As far as the fight goes, you need to understand that Spencer’s time at college was, from his point of view, mostly wonderful. He had a horrible time in high school, and at least college had offered him some measure of safety. He also has heard numerous stories from Aaron about his time at boarding school, which I can tell you was almost a complete 180 from yours. We don’t get a lot of cases with kids where the problem or the unsub is in a position of authority at the school. So, he’s managed to remain somewhat naïve about what can happen to children in the wrong academic environment.”

Taking a sip of his drink, Dave tried not to let his frustration with JJ and the initial problems with Derek seep into his voice. “I know that you are scared to lose Reid. It's that fear that convinced me how serious about him you were. As for his friends… I will have you know Derek has come a long way. He will probably always be on Spencer’s side first, but I don't think he'd let Reid be unfair to you either. JJ is… well let's face it. She has made herself Spencer’s mother hen, and frankly no one will ever be good enough for him in her eyes. You I also both know that there is something more than that going on though. She’s got some bur up her ass about you, and while I am not certain I have a few ideas why that could be. I am frankly quite disappointed in Ms. Jereau.
“So, don’t take her crap as a knock against you. Stop letting her make you feel bad about shit that isn’t her business. If you keep assuming you’re gonna mess it up you will, eventually it will happen. If you keep assuming that it’s going to go bad, eventually you’ll make a mountain out of a molehill, and all your worst fears will come true.”

Setting his glass on the end table by his chair, Dave leaned forward resting his arms on his legs. “I know we don’t talk about this emotional crap much, but you couldn’t be more my son if I’d created you myself. You fucking deserve this, Figlio, so stop doubting this.

“Now go home and make this right. Spencer is most likely at Hotch’s. I believe Aaron was taking Jack somewhere this evening, so you have time to do an ‘I’m an asshole’ dinner before Hotch sends him back to you. So go home, turn on Frank, and make him some homemade lasagna. Say you’re sorry. He’ll say he’s sorry, and then you two can have whatever your equivalent of makeup sex is.”

Tony chuckled blushing. “Netflix in a blanket fort with caramel corn and wine.”

Rossi snorted. “Whatever floats your boat, kid. Get out of here and make me proud.”

Smiling Tony stood and kissed Rossi cheek. “Thank you, Angelo. Just so you know… you’re more my father than Senior ever will be.” Turning Tony left Rossi with a grin on his face.

Spencer walked through the door to the penthouse, a little worried about using the key he’d been given when Tony moved in. Hotch had assured him that it would be OK, but he wasn’t quite comfortable with the idea. Hotch had given him a stern talking to, and helped explain where he’d gone wrong. He hadn’t meant to get so excited and override Tony’s feelings. It just happened sometimes. He’d also explained that Tony’s insecurities may always be an issue, and that the three of them would need to keep that in mind. Emotions were hard.

His high IQ and his early home environment were not the best conductors to being emotionally intelligent. He hadn’t really been in the best emotional environment until he’d found the BAU family. College had been better than home, but he still often found himself falling behind emotionally. He didn’t have a lot of people that he could relate to, and his conservator had been, looking back now as an adult, a snake who was more interested in his own career path and less interested in Spencer’s well-being. The friends that he’d had were like him. Highly intelligent people who didn’t really understand emotions, and therefore avoided them at all costs.

Hotch suggested that, while Tony was working on remembering that his past was not an indicator of his future, Spencer work on his awareness of other’s emotions outside of case victims. He did pretty well at work with victims and their families, but probably never would be as sensitive as say JJ or Tony who were amazing with helping people who were hurting.

Inching through the penthouse, Spencer made his way to the kitchen and hovered in the doorway holding the pastry box in front of him like a shield. He wasn’t ashamed to admit that he was scared to death. It wasn’t until Hotch had helped him calm down and he’d explained the conversation that he’d understood what Tony may have been so upset about. The idea that a person of authority over children abusing that position still baffled Spencer, and he never quite expected it. His experiences had been, jealous conservator aside, life affirming.

Hotch though explained that he should not use Hotch’s stories from boarding school that he’d loved, or Spencer’s time at college as a child that he had also loved, to assume that had been everyone’s experience. They had both gotten away from home and loved their new environments. For them the escape had led to safe havens, leaving behind abusive or neglectful, even if it was unintentional on Spencer’s mother’s part, behind. He should also keep in mind that Aaron had for the most part cherry picked stories, and left all of the hard or hurtful stories securely locked in their closet where he kept
them and refused to think about them.

It was true that Tony had been sent away after one parent was murdered and the other sent to jail for the act, and that both parents had been at least somewhat abusive or neglectful. Both losses were highly traumatic acts. He also needed to remember that Tony adored his mother, and she had quite literally been his whole life by her design. The child he’d been did not most likely in any way resemble the man he was now. So, the little boy sent away to live with strangers had probably not been emotionally prepared for the sometimes harsh and cut throat environment that was boarding school. Spencer suspected that his mentor knew something more about Tony’s time at school than Spencer himself did. He recognized the flare of anger in his friend’s eyes that appeared at the mistreatment of a child. He wasn’t going to ask though. It was Tony’s tale to tell him, and if his boyfriend so chose he should get to do it in his own way and time.

Of all the things Spencer had encountered in his life abuse from an adult was not one of those things he considered having gone through. Most of his abuse in his opinion had been in the form of bullying from jealous children. He knew that Hotch and Rossi at least believed that there was some unintentional neglect between himself and his mother, but Spencer refused to think about it. His mother was his everything some days still, and he wasn’t going to throw around terms like neglect when he knew she’d been battling such a serious mental illness. She’d done her best for him, and Spencer was thankful for it every day.

“Are you going to come in? Or, are you just going to stand and tease me with whatever is in that pastry box?” He heard, and looked up to see Tony hadn’t turned from the counter where he was working on garlic bread. Two whole full sized loaves, and he’d even gotten the frozen pre-made kind that Spencer loved instead of making it from scratch! Maybe Aaron was right, and all was not lost. Surely he wouldn’t have bought the kind that he personally hated if he wasn’t going to forgive Spencer.

“I wasn’t sure I was still welcome after the way I behaved.” Spencer admitted softly and nervously shifting from one leg to the other continuously. “I wouldn’t blame you for not wanting me here any longer after the way I acted and made you feel.”

He watched Tony set the bread aside and turn to look at him appearing puzzled. “Why would you not be welcome? It was a fight, Spencer. While it was angrier than our normal squabbles about some philosophical issue, it was not the end of the world. You jumped to conclusions, I got my feelings hurt even though I knew you didn’t have all the information, and we ended up with a mess. You went… somewhere… Angelo said most likely Hotch. I went to Rossi, and we both probably got the same butt kicking followed by parental love and affection to soothe the open wounds before sending us back to do the right thing. I understand that it is the way the world works, or at least that is what people tell me.”

“We have things to talk about before dinner. Homemade pasta cannot be eaten over anger. There’s too much love put into it. It’s one of Angelo’s rules. So, let’s go sit on the couch, and talk this out.” After taking the pastry box from Spencer, and putting it on the counter, Tony moved back to him placing a kiss on his cheek. He then led the man to the living room where they could work things out.

Spencer wasn’t completely sure, but he thought maybe the kiss to the cheek was a good sign. When they got to the living room, they both sat on the couch. Tony talked briefly about boarding school and without going into detail explained that it hadn’t been a positive experience, especially at first. He’d been young, angry, and grieving for a mother that he’d adored. It hadn’t been positive, uplifting, or anything else. It had been sad, miserable, and painful. While he appreciated, and was glad to hear, that Aaron and Reid had better experiences in boarding school and for Reid in college,
it had hurt to hear what sounded like his boyfriend insinuating his childhood pain had been all in his head.

He then explained that he knew that Spencer didn’t have all the information, but sometimes he can’t help but getting defensive. There had been too many people in his past that either discounted his feelings, or acted like he shouldn’t have any right to an emotional reaction at all. His past was a large part of who he was, and while intellectually he knew that he shouldn’t let it affect the rest of his life, sometimes it still did. When he’d tried to stop Spencer and explain, the other man just kept on going and talking over him, and it felt like he didn’t care that he was hurting Tony.

Sometimes his feelings got hurt a lot quicker than people understood. His masks hid it well, but after the way his stint at NCIS ended, he was tired of all the masks. Tired down to the bottom of his soul. He needed to be able to be himself, and at the same time was fucking scared shitless of doing it. He told Spencer that he didn’t want to put that all on Brian, and he didn’t want to take the emotional things away from Spence just because he wasn’t as good at them. He needed to know that he could count on Spencer to shoulder Tony’s emotions and feelings, too.

When Tony fell silent, and started playing with the pillow that he’d pulled into his lap, Spencer nodded and took a deep breath. He explained that emotions were hard for him, and sometimes especially outside of work they were even harder to recognize and understand. He told him that he got excited about things, especially things he thought that he could relate to, and lost track of other people in his zeal to explain what he knew. Sometimes he got so caught up in his worth at work being about his brain that he forgot when he wasn’t working that sometimes his IQ wasn’t the most important factor.

Spencer admitted to Tony that he was scared too, because this relationship was made of things he’d only ever thought he’d be able to dream about. He didn’t and couldn’t lose this thing that they were building. He never meant to hurt Tony. He admitted that Hotch had helped him see where he’d ignored his partner’s feelings, which lead to the hurt. He admitted that he couldn’t stop replaying the fight in his head, and cringing at the moment he now recognized as being when he’d started the path that led to the anger and the hurt.

He was so in awe of the fact that people as beautiful and popular as Tony and Brian wanted to give a weird intellect like him a chance and do it on Spencer’s terms. He was petrified he was going to ruin this with his oddness. He admitted that he’d been terrified that his key wouldn’t work anymore when Aaron sent him back.

Tony winced, and pushing the pillow aside, took Spencer’s hands. “Doc, there was never a chance of that happening. This isn’t some little thing that we’re creating here. As far as I am concerned what the three of us are working on is a forever kind of thing. There are going to be growing pains related to that. I promise you that as long as you have that key it’s gonna work in that lock. I am hoping that someday this will be all of our home, and not just mine.”

Tony leaned forward and after letting go of Spencer’s face, cupped his cheeks pulling the genius closer toward him. He felt the slighter man relax, and hoped that he understood this was the part where everything was forgiven. By the eagerness and zeal the genius was putting into the kiss, he guessed that he did. Tony let himself fall backward slightly pulling the genius to lay on top of him, knowing he would feel more comfortable that way. He wasn’t sure that he’d ever been able to appreciate kissing until he met Spencer. When that was the furthest you could go to sexually express your love for someone, you learned to appreciate all that went into it.

When they were done, and both gasping for breath, Spencer curled up so that he could lay his head on Tony’s chest. Closing his eyes for a moment he felt Tony wrap his arms around him holding him
close. He was pretty sure that he’d never understand the need for sex, because to Spencer, this right here was all that he needed to know that he was cared for and loved. This moment right then laying on the couch on top of Tony listening to his heartbeat, was all that he needed to know all was forgiven, and just maybe all of their hopes and dreams for this relationship the three of them were building could come true.

~~*BAU August 2011*~~ * ~~*Blast from the Past*~~

One thing Tony had learned early in life was that, if he could find a way, Senior would try his best to fuck up Tony's life as best as he could. Even from prison he seemed to still be able to reach out, and insert his sticky fingers into whatever good was going on in his son’s life.

One afternoon Tony was sitting at his desk in the bullpen going over a cold case from NCIS. It was one of his own that he’d been watching forever. He was batting around the idea of having Reid or Emily look it over to see if a new point of view could catch something, but he was a little sketchy on if that was allowed.

He was staring at his monitor without actually seeing anything when the mail courier dropped an envelope on his desk. “You got a Prison Pen Pal, DiNozzo?” The mailbox quipped. Every muscle in Tony's body froze. He felt like he’d forgotten how to breathe, and as if a lead ball had settled into his stomach. He couldn’t stop the thought that he should have been safe here. He was supposed to have been safe here.

Things had been going so well lately. Derek and he were getting along really well. JJ was… well he’d written off anything other than being civil to the woman, so he didn’t really count her. Hell, he’d even managed to flirt with Garcia the other day. So, everything had been going great. He should have known that his father would find a way to change that. “DiNozzo? Hey, Tony, you OK? I was just teasin’ man, ya know? Tony? Hey, hey you, Bossman. I think you’re needed down here!”

Somewhere inside of Tony’s head he could hear the voice of the mailman Rick, but it was muted, like when you listened to a conversation underwater. “Tony? Tony, it’s Hotch. Can you answer me? Spencer go get Dave. Never mind, here he comes.”

All of his fucking life his father had been taking things away from him, and fucking things up. Sure he knew that they were already aware that his father was a murdering bastard, but seeing it sometimes made things worse, or more real. He wasn’t sure which. He’d fucked up Peoria. He’d unknowingly helped him take down one of the biggest mob families in Philadelphia history, but his reputation had been hurt. Afterwards when it was over he hadn’t been able to escape the questions of his own integrity, which forced him to move, again. He’d fucked up Baltimore. His partner had decided that it was perfectly fine to share his dirty deeds with his partner, who must be a chip off the old block. NCIS though… he hadn’t found him at NCIS. But, he’d found him here.

“Figlio? Ahh, hell, kid. No, Spencer don’t touch him. He’ll swing if you do. Just… everyone who isn’t on the field team clear the floor. Give us half an hour people. Consider it an unexpected coffee break.”

“You heard Dave. Clear the floor. Spencer go get him a bottle of juice out of the machine.”

“Good idea Aaron, and something sweet, too. Chocolate is best.”
What were they gonna think of him now? How were they gonna treat him now? How… How would Spencer treat him now? Brian knew about Senior. Brian had been there when the letter had been delivered to the frat house. Spencer, he’d never stay. He’d never love him again. He’d….

“Spencer, talk to him. Hotch, he needs to break the rule. I’m worried about what will happen if this goes on much longer.”

“A agreed. Talk to him, Spencer. We’ll step a little bit away, and give the two of you some privacy.”

“Spencer, every time his father has done one of these little appearances from prison, as Tony calls them, its fucked things up for him in some way. He’s probably scared shitless that it’s gonna change here too. More than that he’s afraid it’ll change he and you.”

“I understand, Dave.”

God he didn’t want to lose Spencer.

“Tony, it’s Reid. It’s… it’s just us now. The others are… Hotch corralled them up to the walkway outside of his office like a shepherd herding his flock of sheep. It was a little amusing to be honest. Tony I…

“I won’t claim that I know what you’re going through right now. I mean, my mother may be in a mental institution, but she’s not… she isn’t in jail. She didn’t kill someone I loved. But, Tony this… this isn’t gonna change things here. It’s not… We don’t care. I don’t care.”

Tony felt his head twitch as the voice penetrated his haze. It couldn’t be telling the truth though. Senior ruins everything. Senior has always ruined everything.

“I… I love you, Tony. You know what those words mean to me. You… I know it isn’t the same, but I understand how a parent can throw off your life. I… I never told anyone about my mother. People freak out. People don’t understand. They start treating you as if you’re the sick one, as if you’re some kind of ticking time bomb. So, I never told anyone about my mother until she almost got someone… There was a case, Tony. A man my mother knew in the… at Bennington. He, he was… he thought her stories about he were real. She…

“When she talks about me she doesn’t always remember reality. She had turned me into some kind of knight who could cure his illness. He’d… he’d been horribly burned saving his daughter, and she… she told him I was the keeper of the magical question that could heal all of his wounds. I had to bring her here to keep her safe. My schizophrenic mother was here during a huge case. It… I was so scared that they’d laugh at me. I was scared they’d mock me; that they’d take away my place on the team. But, do you know what really happened?

“They accepted me, Tony. They sympathized, and they… well OK Derek was kind of an ass…”

“Hey!”

“Derek shut up. He’s right you were kind of an ass.”

“They still loved me though in the end. I swear to you they will love you, too, Tony. I will love you. I do love you. Brian loves you. We’ll make sure he can’t reach you again. You should see the way Hotch can terrorize the mail room staff.”

“Hey!”

“Hotch, shut up. You do terrorize the mail room.”
“For God’s sake both of you shut the hell up! The kid’s finally making progress. Fuck this up and I’m punching you both in the throats!”

“Tony, please come back. It’s safe here too, I promise.”

Tony closed his eyes, as his hand twitched on the desk. “Spencer?”

~~*BAU Late March*~~ * ~~*Pain from the Other Side*~~

Spencer walked into the bullpen setting his satchel, on his desk, and frowned when he noticed that Tony’s desk was empty. Picking up his bag, Reid looked for the note that his new and double top secret boyfriend had taken to leaving him if he wasn’t going to be there in the morning. The older man was almost always there before Spencer, unless he’d come in overnight to work on a cold case, or a consultation that he’d gotten an idea about. The team had become aware of the quirk not too long after Tony had started.

Hotch had caught him in the locker-room one morning after their boss had finished a workout before work. Tony had just been coming out of the shower, as Hotch was getting undressed so that he could go into one. Surprised at his presence, and the fact that he looked like he hadn’t slept all night, the Unit Chief questioned his new agent concerned about an issue he was unaware of.

When Hotch found out that he’d been there since about 1AM when he’d gotten an idea on an old NCIS case he was reviewing, he immediately sent Tony home. He’d assured him that he wasn’t in trouble, but that he wanted him to get some sleep. In Hotch’s mind there was no need for his agents to be rundown and sleep deprived when not on a case.

The older man had called Gibbs, and after a lengthy decision, Hotch had come to a decision. Later that day, once Tony returned well rested, Aaron filled him in on how things were going to work from here on out. Hotch absolutely did not want his agents working more than 10 hour days when they weren’t on a case. If he had his preference, he’d not want it on a case either, but things happen in the field, and sometimes it was necessary. When not on a case though, Hotch saw no need for Tony to be rundown, and knew it would only lead to issues when they did need him to work a long night.

Gibbs had advised that it would be a bad idea to forbid Tony’s overnight hours. Hotch had learned that Tony and Reid had more in common with how their brains work than people would expect. It seemed that his newest agent’s mind didn’t ever really stop thinking, and often was focused on several different tasks at once. Often he would wake up in the middle of the night with an idea that would break a cold case wide open. Gibbs had been frank and admitted that he should have been more supportive of Tony’s late night needs. If they took away Tony’s ability to come into the office when he needed, the younger agent would simply do what he could from home, where they couldn’t monitor his hours.

Because of this, Hotch had decided to give Tony a more open schedule when they were in town. He could come in when he got an idea for a case or a consult, and work ‘til he’d exhausted his lead, or gotten out of his system. Hotch expected him to log the hours as he would any other. He also expected him to then leave, and come back after sleeping. Gibbs had advised that Tony didn’t usually need a full 8 hours, but that he was also well in tune with his body. Gibbs had assured Hotch that when Tony’s body told him it was time to take a weekend to relax and catch up that, if encouraged, then younger man would do so. So, that was the expectation that was set. So far it had
worked out marvelously.

Since they’d decided to explore their feelings with each other, Tony had taken to leaving Spencer a note when he had come in overnight, and left before Reid got in. That way the younger man would not worry about his absence. After thoroughly searching on and around his desk, and checking Tony’s desk to see nothing changed from when they’d left the night before, Spencer decided to call the other man to see if there was something wrong.

When that didn’t work, and he only got voicemail, Spencer decided to go talk to Hotch. With being Federal Agents, you never knew when someone’s past was going to come up and bite them in the ass. Heading to Hotch’s office, Spencer decided to try for casual, and leaned against the door jamb with his hands in his pockets. “Did Tony come in overnight?”

When Hotch looked up and frowned at him, then glanced out the window, Spencer knew that there was a problem. He watched as his boss got into his computer, Spencer expected his email, and saw the frown deepen. “I don’t have an email, and I don’t see anything in his time sheet.” Taking out his own cellphone, Hotch tried to call, but he also had no better luck than Reid. “No answer.”

Picking up his desk phone, Hotch called over to Rossi, and after a quick conversation, looked up at Reid. “Dave wants to know if you’d be willing to go check on him. He says that he’s a little concerned. He has a key and the code to Tony’s penthouse alarm. He and I have a meeting in 15 minutes, or one of us would go.” Nodding quickly Spencer hurried over to Dave’s office where he got the apartment keys, and was verbally given the alarm code. The he headed off to his desk where he got his gun, credentials, and satchel before hurrying off.

Stopping his car, Reid quickly headed into Tony’s building, nodded at the doorman, before hurrying over to the elevator, which would take him up to Tony’s penthouse apartment. Once there he unlocked the door with Rossi’s key, and hurried to the kitchen to turn off the alarm. The lack of light and sound had him pulling out his gun as a ball of trepidation formed in his stomach. Nothing seemed out of place. They had supposed to have had dinner the night before, but Tony had begged off. Spencer hadn't thought twice about it in the moment. Now he wished that he'd been more inquisitive about it.

Quietly he made his way through the house, and up the stairs checking the rooms ’til he came to the closed door. Remaining silent, Reid opened it, and slipped in not able to see in the total darkness of the room. Thinking Tony had just overslept, Spencer felt the wall next to the door, and flipped on the lights.

The pained half shriek/half moan had him immediately turning them back off. Spencer was very familiar with that sound. A migraine exposed to bright light. Feeling horrible, Spencer moved forward putting his gun back in its holster, and sat next to the lump on the bed laying his hand on what he thought was Tony’s shoulder.

“Do you have medicine?” Spencer asked quietly. An arm came out from under the blankets and pointed in the general direction of the bathroom.

Hurrying out of the room, Spencer hurried to the medicine cabinet. Finding the appropriate pills, he filled one of the paper cups with water, and hurried back to Tony. “Here are your pills. You're going to have to sit up. I'm sorry. I know it's going to hurt.”

Tony groaned and whimpered, but rolled over and sat up. Squinting at Spencer he took the pills and water. Swallowing both, he sighed, and rested his head back against the wall behind his headboard.

“This sucks,” Tony moaned closing his eyes. Spencer watched concerned. He wasn't used to being
on this side of things.

“Have you tried the shots? I hear they…”

“No shots!” Tony blurted cutting him off. “Plague. Hospital. Numerous shots, blood tests. No needles!”

Signing, Spencer nodded sympathetically. “OK,” He agreed. “No shots, and no needles. I wish I could do something. How’s your stomach?”

“I’m a little nauseous,” Tony conceded. “Actually some Sprite, and some oyster crackers would be awesome. I don't think I have any though.”

“I can go get some! Do you need some soup?” Tony sighed scooting back down to get under the covers. “Soup would be awesome, Reid. I don't know if I have any in the freezer though. If I do it'll be labeled. Feel free to check. I appreciate this.” Spencer watched as Tony closed his eyes, and went back to sleep.

On his way to the store, after verifying the soup-less state of the freezer, he contemplated the oddness of his situation. While he was used to dealing with his mother, and feeling helpless that he couldn't ease her fits, he wasn’t used to dealing with other people’s every day illnesses. He had never stopped to think about how those around him felt as they watched him suffer with his headaches. It wasn't an enjoyable position knowing someone that you loved was in pain, and you couldn't stop it.

It took him a few moments to realize the word he'd just thought in relationship to Tony.

Love.

Did he really love him already? Was it too soon? Was there really anything that he could do about it? Was there anything he should do about it?

Pausing to sit with his car door open, Spencer turned the possibilities over in his head. Was it really a big deal if he did love him already? Wasn't thus a good thing?

Pulling out his phone, Spencer dialed the first person he thought of when he needed advise on matters of the heart. “Is it too soon to be in love?”

“Hey to you too, Pretty Boy. Where are you?” Derek asked trying not to chuckle.

“I’m at the grocery getting Tony some things for his stomach. Answer my question, Morgan! Is it too soon to be in love?”

Derek smiled and leaned back in his chair holding up his finger to Hotch who had come into his office. “It's never too soon to be in love, Pretty Boy. If you feel it, then it's right. I hope this is QB1 were talkin' 'bout.”

“Of course it's Tony! Are you sure?” Spencer bit his lip afraid to hope that what he was feeling was really alright.

“Yes Spence I promise. It's OK if you love him. Tell the man how you feel. Nothing good ever came from holding shit like that in.” Derek recommended, and grinned as Hotch rolled his eyes, but smiled fondly.

“OK, thank you.” Spencer hung up the phone, and headed into the store suddenly feeling lighter.
In Derek office Hotch snorted as Derek hung up the phone. “Reid?” Hotch asked, and Derek nodded smiling.

“Yeah, I think you're gonna have to have that talk with them soon. The kid’s using the L word.”

Hotch lifted his eyebrow and nodded his agreement. “I will meet with them this week. I've already discussed it with Cruz. We'll monitor it, but I don't anticipate any problems. With Tony still part of NCIS there's no actual fraternization issue.”

Derek nodded and grinned. “Pretty boy’s growing up.” Hotch just shook his head, and left. “Meeting in my office in 15 minutes. Don't miss it because you're gossiping with Garcia.” Derek laugh followed him down the hall. Aaron was happy for the young genius he considered almost a son. Reid would do well with someone like Tony in his life who understood when to let him alone, and when to bring him out of his shell. Hotch resolved to do everything that he could on his part to make sure this relationship succeeded.

Chapter End Notes

Next week is what I refer to in my head as the JJ chapter. All the sections relate to her in some way, and that will explain her issues and basically wrap up her involvement in the story.

Brian starts to appear more after that. I know he's been kind of absent so far, but we will soon get more of a view into him and his side of the relationship. There's even a "Brian" chapter coming in chapter Eleven. There's also a future section (I can't remember what chapter) that features a 'what if' Brian had met Dominic Toretto when he was with Tony & Spencer that I am super psyched about.

Once again, I want to thank you all for your reviews. They are amazing, and sincerely appreciated.
Chapter Summary

JJ and Derek get busted gossiping about Tony by Spencer who has to decide if he's going to avoid the situation or confront it. Hotch then decides that he needs to have a talk with Tony about JJ before he loses someone important to his team. Which one of Tony and JJ that important agent is though, might be a surprise to the Very Special Agent. Rossi then throws a barbecue for the team, only JJ's actions come out to bite her. Things finally catch up with her, and she can't avoid the consequences. Will also finds out that he has more support than he imagined.

Chapter Notes

This is what I think of in my head as the JJ chapter. We get an insight into the things she's done. We get a glimpse of how Spencer and Hotch feel about it, and how it ends. We also see a glimpse of how Will is affected by her actions.

Also the tags will continue to be added to as they need to with the new sections.... So please make sure you check them for the new chapters. I don't think I have anything triggery planned, but I know triggers are different for anyone. They will always be added to for new elements that pop up.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter Eight: Worse than a Mad Hotch, Accepting your Place, and Time for an Exit

Reid walked up to the break room carrying not only his coffee cup, but also Tony’s and Prentiss’. The liaison was helping Emily with a consultation that she was stuck on, and Reid had offered to get them more caffeine. As he entered the room he saw JJ and Derek standing in front of the coffee machine, their backs mostly toward him. When he heard their conversation topic he almost turned around, and walked off. He wanted to do it so bad, but something inside of him wouldn’t let him.

Reid had spent most of his life fighting against and standing up to bullies. Sure most of the time he came out on the worse end of it, and sometimes he was scared shitless and crying. Sometimes his tactics may have been less along the lines of confrontational, and more closely resembling avoidance. He’d never actually just given in, and given up though.
This moment didn’t feel as one where avoidance would be appropriate. He tried to ignore the part where he’d just called his two closest friends bullies. It hurt his heart to think he’d trusted people who were so easily capable of such a thing. Mind made up he stayed where he was a moment. This thing between him and Tony was too important to walk away from bullying words. He also knew that if their roles were reversed, there was no way Tony would just walk away.

Especially when it seemed as if one of them was trying her best to wrangle the other into being on her side. He stood and listened to JJ’s spiel. She was giving Derek all of the reasons why Tony was a horrible person, and not to be trusted. Apparently she’d heard some rumor about Tony being seen out and about somewhere or other flirting with someone. It was baffling to Spencer how these things seemed to take on their own life, leaving most of the truth behind until even he had no idea what they were talking about.

Derek seemed to be waffling between weak hearted agreement, and even weaker defense of the man. Spencer was pretty sure he was worried that Rossi would finally follow through on his throat punching threat. Reid had never actually been punched in the throat, but he couldn’t imagine that it was a fun experience though. As a detractor he supposed it worked. While Spencer appreciated the older man’s feelings, it was somewhat disheartening that it was the threat of violence that was making him pause.

For the life of him, Spencer didn’t understand this almost vendetta that JJ seemed to have against the Italian. It was disappointing to say the least. He’d always considered her someone that he could depend on, someone who was a good person. Recent events however were making him question the things that he’d always believed about her. It was baffling how not just JJ, but Derek as well, seemed to carry this continued belief that he was completely clueless. Spencer knew he may not be the most socially apt person in the world, but he was a profiler in the elite Behavioral Analysis Unit. If he couldn’t read someone enough by now to know when he was being played, he had no business being on Hotch’s team.

Their poor hapless Spencer shtick was even more ironic considering technically he had been the one to approach Tony, not the other way around. Spencer was 98% certain that had he been left to his own resources, Tony would never have initiated anything between them. His old team had simply left too many scars from their betrayals, and then there was his pseudo brother Gibbs’ Rule #12 that had to take into consideration. If Tony’s insecurity wasn’t reason enough to stand up for his new relationship, then Spencer wasn’t sure one existed. Settling on his course of action, Spencer cleared his throat drawing their attention. He then walked between them and turned to stand on the other side and in front of JJ and Derek frowning at the two of them.

Their silence was sort of split in his head evenly between being amusing and irritating. While it was nice that they at least waited for their little bitch session until Tony was otherwise occupied, Spencer knew it could have as easily been the NCIS liaison who came to get the coffee though. That only fueled his irritation further at what he perceived their complete lack of care if they hurt the other man or not. The more he thought about it the more irritated he became by their continued theory that he was some naïve child who needed protected usually from himself.

“You two do realize that I am a grown man, right? While I appreciate your trying to protect me, I am a little aggravated that I am going to have to give you details of my relationship with Tony that frankly is none of either of your business.” Scowling, Spencer turned to fill up the three mugs he was carrying to each person’s preference.

“While it’s true that I was a child when I started college, I was there a long time with other genius’ my age. I had plenty of time to learn about all kinds of people. I, also, had plenty of time, and enough experiences to decide what I wanted and didn’t want out of a relationship. I am not some helpless
virginal princess stranded in a tower you know. Tony isn’t playing me.”

Turning with his three mugs made perfectly, Spencer scowled at his fellow profilers. “He isn’t taking advance of poor little Reid. If anything, I took advantage of him. I asked a highly sexual, emotional, and affectionate person, who was in a highly vulnerable point in his life, to conform to my lifestyle. Anything that Tony does is with my full knowledge and approval.

“I have heard the numerous rumors floating around, and ignored most of them because they are completely vague and without merit. Tony flirts with anything that breathes, the same I would like to point out as Derek does. I can assure you that Tony doesn’t fuck even a tiny fraction of those people. Derek I am not so sure about. Was there an incident where we went out, and he picked someone up? Yes. However, I was also there, and frankly that is all I am sharing with you about the experience, because frankly it’s none of your fucking business!” Scowling Spencer glared at them both noting that only Derek seemed to be ashamed of his actions. JJ just held onto her uppity ‘I know better than you’ expression that was rapidly beginning to make him understand Rossi’s obsession with Throat Punching.

“I love you both, although I will be honest your recent actions have made me question that feeling along with your place in my life. That being said stay the fuck out of my relationship!”

When Spencer realized that he was shouting, he took a deep breath, and passed back between the two, pausing in the doorway, and turned to look back at them again. “Maybe you should spend more time being a friend to Tony, whom you both have now hurt needlessly, and less time worrying about what is or is not going on in my bedroom.

“I don’t know how I got so lucky to have Tony like this in my life. I never thought that I would have a chance at someone that gorgeous, funny, intelligent, and amazing. He seems to not just like me, but want a future with me. If you two mess this up for me, I won’t ever forgive you. To be frank, even if you don’t mess this up for me, I am not sure I will forgive you. To be even more frank, your actions from this point forward will be a huge determining factor in whether we remain friends or become simple co-workers.”

“Pretty boy,” Derek started only to stop when the expression on Spencer’s face clearly showed he wasn’t interested in words.

“Unless the words ‘I am sorry I was a complete and total dickhead, and I plan on begging on my knees for Tony’s forgiveness’ are about to come out of your mouth, I don’t wanna hear your bullshit, Agent Morgan. You two are my best friends, or you were. Frankly you’re fucking this shit up. I am highly disappointed in you both. I expect one of you at least will let me down. It’s a shame, but I have found that pathetic bullies just don’t have a place in my life.”

Turning back around, Spencer nodded to Garcia as he moved back to his desk. The silence he left behind was thick. Finally Morgan swore, and ran a hand over the top of his head. “That was worse than any Hotch scolding I’ve ever gotten, and could possibly give my mamma a run for her money.” When Garcia just scowled at him, tapping her foot, Derek knew his misery was not going to end anytime soon.

“No shit,” JJ said shaking her head. “This is a mess. Spencer’s perception is so clouded that he has no clue the danger he’s in.” Garcia just gaped at the woman, then marching into the break room snatched Derek’s ear and pulled him toward her lair, while lecturing him on judging people he doesn’t even know. JJ stood watching them leave wondering when the BAU had gone mad, but knew that filthy Italian was to blame.
Hotch sat behind his desk in his home office, looking at his subordinate. He’d invited the younger man over under the guise of strengthening their work relationship by spending personal time together. He really though had wanted to address JJ, and knew that he couldn’t do it in the office where he ran the risk of being overheard.

The situation was completely juvenile, and unfortunately out of his hands, as JJ it seemed had some high powered people in her corner. They weren’t yet ready to call her on her behavior, insisting that she would come around. Although, after a year and a half of the situation, Hotch wasn’t sure what more there was to give hope. Fortunately, Tony had some equally high powered allies who wouldn’t let the situation continue forever. Hotch himself was trying to find a path for the irritating blonde off of his team, and possibly moved back to the State Department. This time with his full approval and good riddance.

“What I am about to say stays in this house.” Hotch warned and waited to continue until Tony nodded. “You and I both know JJ’s jealous mainly because you won’t try to get in her pants. This being despite the fact that she’d slap you into next week if you so much as tried. There is a secondary reason though that I believe you need to be made away of. If for no other reason, than for your own peace of mind. I refuse to lose you from this team because of her antics. Look at this picture.” Hotch pulled a photo out of a folder on his desk and showed it to Tony.

When Tony’s eyes got big, Hotch continued. “His name is Logan Cale. As you can see you could be his twin. Garcia found absolutely nothing to suggest you two are related. It appears that Mr. Cale is simply that mythical twin people say everyone has. Logan was JJ’s boyfriend for all four years of high school. From what Penelope tells me, they were nearly inseparable, and split up only because she was going to college. He was staying home to work the farm with his father. She was… less than impressed by that. Apparently she felt that he was too smart for such work, and that he should have taken one of the scholarships he was offered.

“I think, and this is just my opinion as a profiler, that she was hoping he’d get tired of the farm life, and go to school after a year or two. Only instead he had an accident her sophomore year during harvest season. This resulted in him ending up paralyzed from the waist down. The thing is that even then he wouldn’t leave the farm. Instead, he just kept on doing what he loved. He’s apparently come up with several ways to do chores that he normally wouldn’t be capable of. Instead of being proud, JJ just gave up. I’m not going to tell you that she doesn’t love Will, because I think that she does. However, I have found that feelings can’t always be turned off by ambition and small minds.”

Hotch sighed and took a drink of his tea before continuing. “This thing between you and JJ is not on you. Frankly, I am impressed that you’ve been so restrained. I would appreciate if you kept up your appearance of calmness as long as possible. I know it’s a lot to ask, but technically she’s done nothing that I can remove her from the team for at this time. Especially not when someone above me will simply overturn the decision, and possibly use that action as a reason to split the team up. That is something which I will avoid and prevent from happening at all costs.”

Tony waved a hand in the air. “Look, Hotch, no team is perfect. There’s always going to be someone that you don’t like or get along with. Yeah, she’s a class-A bitch. The difference between now and when I was at NCIS is… well, it’s you.”
When Hotch arched an eyebrow, Tony took a drink of his beer turning his attention to look out the window. “I know that Angelo thinks I am blind to Gibbs’ faults. I’m not though. I guess it would be closer to beggars can’t be choosers. As a boss, Gibbs sucks. As my friend though, as my big brother now that I don’t work under him, I can’t lose him. I’ve lost too goddamned much, Hotch. Every fucking person that’s important to me leaves. Gibbs never has when he was in his right mind. When the chips are down, and I really and truly need him, he’s always there. I don’t have a lot of that. I don’t have a ton of people I can say I’ve been able to count on for years.”

“While he’s a good friend and brother, he’s a really damned crappy boss. Despite being a marine, he seems to know next to nothing about command structure and order. He loves to pit his people against each other, and as his SFA I had little to no support when it came to making command decisions. Hell most of the time he didn’t even act like I was his SFA. You though…” Tony shook his head, still unable to believe the night and day difference between the two team leaders.

“You leave no doubt who you consider in charge when you aren’t there. You never pit your people against each other like some twisted human cock fight. The first time Prentiss deferred to me, when you and Derek weren’t in the room, I almost didn’t know how to act. The difference between me and JJ here, and me and say Ziva at NCIS, is that I know I have you backing me up. I never felt like my boss Gibbs backed my play with the team.” Tony sighed and turned his gaze back to Hotch.

“I like being here, Hotch. I need this to work. I’m getting too old to keep having to start over. If I may get personal for a second?” When Hotch nodded, Tony continued.

“I love Spencer more than I can imagine. I don’t know if I could make it not being able to see him every day. I know they say it isn’t good for people who are in a relationship to work together, but… it seems to work for us. I need him. I need the team. I need Angelo in my daily life. I need you to be my boss. I need… this sense that I actually finally belong, and I am appreciated.”

Tony hung his head and studied his hands. “I can’t go back to before, and I won’t let some fucking High School Mean Girl chase me away from this. I’ve earned it. I’ve bled and starved and suffered for this chance. I will be damned if Ms. Jennifer LaMontagne is going to chase me away from it. So, I can ignore her no sweat.”

Hotch nods smiling. “I appreciate that, and I won’t forget it. The good news is that eventually she’ll get offered a position that she won’t be able to pass up. Either that or she’ll say the wrong thing in front of the wrong person, and her house of cards will come tumbling down. Just keep your chin up, and remember I do have your back. Some cards just have to be played where no one can see them.”

Tony nodded understanding, and when Jack ran in excited waving a copy of the Sorcerer’s Apprentice, he launched into all the facts he knew about the Disney Classic for the young boy. Hotch leaned back in his chair and smiled listening wondering how NCIS could not have understood what they had in the man entertaining his son so patiently.

He was a true irreplaceable resource on the team. They’d only gotten better with his addition, and had never argued over the scrutiny that he and Spencer went through to keep their relationship going while on the team together. The man seemed to pull case breaking connections out of thin air with an ability Hotch had previously believed only someone of Spencer’s IQ capable of. JJ on the other hand had become a complete disappointment.

Hotch understood that everyone had that person that made us crazy, and we had a problem being open minded about. However, as a profiler it was critical that you be able to overlook your personal prejudice and see into the reality of the person.

The bigger issue that this whole fiasco had brought to light was the fact that if she could be this blind
to someone she saw every day, what was happening when on a case with people she’d only known for days or even moments? How were her poor decisions and people reading skills impacting the team, and case resolution speed? How many people were suffering and possibly dying because she had quickly made up her mind based on her own prejudice and refused to back down? That was something that was completely unacceptable. He hoped that the higher ups would recognize his concerns as not just hot air before she literally caused someone’s death.

In the meantime he was going to do everything within his power to make sure that her damage was limited, and Tony’s abilities were allowed to shine. It was his goddamned team, and he was going to run it as he saw fit. If someone didn’t like how did it, then they could just take his recommendations and move the biased woman off his team. He hoped that happened soon, but knowing how politics worked, he doubted it would.

~~*BAU June 2013*~~ * ~~*Time for an Exit*~~

Tony could feel his chest heaving. The arms wrapped around his chest were the only thing that was keeping him from attacking, and making a mistake that he would later regret. He was pretty sure that if it wasn’t his lover’s steadying presence behind him there would be no chance of holding himself back. He didn’t give a fuck anymore about man and woman, right and wrong, or putting on a good face.

JJ was no longer eligible for such protection. Her most recent antic had pushed her way over the line of protection women got in Tony’s brain that he like a good man understood as being the right thing to do. He’d never hit a woman in his life. Right then, after what she’d just admitted to doing, he wasn’t sure that he would be able to refrain from such an act if she made one more wrong move or spoke one more wrong word.

She’d gone too far this time. Contacting his father and revealing personal information about his relationship to the man. Giving him additional details of Tony’s current life was a betrayal that not even the worthless voids of humanity at NCIS had managed. Tony had spent his life in fear of when his father was going to strike next with good reason, and JJ had given Senior all the information the bastard needed to hurt the people that Tony loved the most.

He couldn’t help but wonder if she was the one that revealed his new job to the old man a couple years back when he got the letter at work. At the time he’d never suspected someone on the team, but now it appeared that it was likely that she was the culprit. This time he’d gotten one at not only his home, but at Angelo’s. It had been accompanied by both Spencer and Brian reporting seeing odd people lurking, and appearing in places they visited regularly, but hadn’t noticed before. To find out that one of his co-workers was behind it might be a worse betrayal than the coms incident back at NCIS.

“I hate you. You are a horrible person. I have never been anything but polite to you. You act like Spencer is a helpless child. You act like you are so fucking perfect, and morally superior to the rest of us. You act like I'm fucking forcing him into something. I FUCKING LOVE HIM!!”
“I PUT EVERYTHING I HAVE INTO THIS GODDAMN RELATIONSHIP. YOU DON’T KNOW JACK SHIT ABOUT ME, OR WHAT GOES ON IN OUR LIVES. SO, BACK THE FUCK OFF! Do you have ANY IDEA what kind of danger you have put him in by giving my father information about him and Brian? Do you know what kind of danger you’ve put the TEAM in by giving my father information about how I fit into their lives? How could you be on the premiere profiling team, and not understand what kind of monster Anthony DiNozzo, Senior is? He’s a convicted murderer for fuck sake! His mob and underworld ties are WELL documented! If you don’t believe me or Rossi, go visit one of the guys down in Organized Crime for fuck sake!”

Tony could tell he was falling apart, but he didn't think that he could hold it in any longer. He was trying so hard not to interfere in Spencer's relationship with JJ, or what little was left of it, if for no other reason than Will was awesome, and Henry was an amazing kid. He needed her to stop though. He was beginning to feel like he would never be good enough for anyone. “Enough,” Tony heard and felt the bottom of his stomach drop. This wasn't supposed to have been anything but fun. Somehow he'd managed to ruin it again. He just couldn't...

“JJ, that's enough. You've been warned more than once to keep your nose out of it.” She opened her mouth to protest at Hotch’s order, but was stopped by the quiet tone of her husband’s voice.

“Jennifer, stop. It’s enough, cher. You’ve damaged your relationship with Spencer enough don’ you think?” JJ blinked surprised at her husband’s words, and closing her mouth, bit her lip. Will walked around to stand in front of her looking sad and disappointed. When she opened her mouth to speak, Will just held up a hand. “Non, Cher.

“Dave graciously invited the team here t’get some relaxation time in t’gether. Now, look aroun’ you, Cher. Look aroun’ and tell me what you see. Since you seem to be unable to see Tony for who he really is, leave him for last. Look at the people you know first, an’ see how they feel ‘bout your actions.”

Her eyes landed first on Prentiss who was standing with Derek, and his guest and Will’s partner Taylor. No one was quite sure what was going on there, but JJ just knew somehow that DiNozzo creep was involved. The man had come to see Tony the day he’d appeared in their lives, and now they were stuck with him.

Emily was normally one of her favorite people on the team. She had a quick sarcastic wit that JJ enjoyed. Currently though her friend was glaring at her as if she’d committed a crime. Derek’s jaw was clenched, and his arms were around Taylor who was watching her appearing highly unimpressed. Pfft, what did he know anyway?

Next she turned her attention to Hotch and Rossi. Hotch had his hand on Rossi’s arm, and the senior profiler looked like he wanted her anywhere but his backyard. Hotch honestly didn’t look much happier. His look of unhappiness created a pit of unease in her stomach. She didn’t understand what in the world he saw in that playboy.

Rossi was obviously letting his personal feelings interfere with the good of the team. She was disappointed in him personally. She had previously thought that he was a better profiler than that, and questioned if he still deserved to be on the team. She made a mental note to bring it up with Mateo. Maybe he needed to be prodded back into retirement. It would be for the good of everyone.

She heard a snuffle, and looked to see Garcia dabbing her eyes with Kevin holding one of her hands. She was sure that it was that asshole that had upset her. “Garcia,” she called out only to have her friend turn her head, and wrap her arms around Kevin’s waist. “I don’t think she wants to speak to you at the moment, Agent Jareau.”
JJ opened her mouth to comment, but quickly closed it when she realized that she didn’t know what to say. Spencer walked up to stand next to ‘Tony holding Henry in his arms. Her son was hiding his face in his Spencer’s shoulder, and Reid was rubbing his back.

She was disappointed, but not surprised to see anger in his eyes. She wished that he could see that she was doing this for his own good. Everyone knew that he was too naive to understand a relationship like what DiNozzo had conned him into. It didn’t matter how many times or who told her the relationship had been initiated by Spencer. That didn’t matter. In the end, the point was that bastard DiNozzo had manipulated poor innocent Spencer into a relationship that he didn’t truly understand.

She turned her eyes to DiNozzo and his surfer boy disdainfully. The blonde’s eyes were filled with hatred and anger. If she cared what some misplaced beach bum thought of her, she might be upset. It was a little harder than she’d expected to ignore Tony. His eyes were clearly filled with equal parts anger, pain, and what appeared to be devastation. Righteously, she tried to tell herself that he was just playing the victim. Another part of her glared that she’d caused the little weasel pain. Finally, she’d hit a bullseye on the jerk. The Mean Girl in her hoped that he was suffering.

It was that thought that made her brain come to a stuttering halt. That wasn’t supposed to be the point to all of this. She wasn’t supposed to be that person anymore. She was supposed to have… she was supposed to be different. She was supposed to be kind. She was… fuck.

“I think you need to take that State Department Job, Jennifer that they keep asking you to return to. I think that you’ve lost yourself, and you’ve lost your friends. Th’way you’ve treated Tony is wrong. M’not asking. M’tellin y’to take at position M’also gonna insist on some counseling. You weren’t always this way, JJ. Somethin’ has happened, an’ you need to get past it. I won’t let your ugliness affect our son. I certainly won’t agree t’that second babe y’re wantin’ until I know your head is right. I think you’ll see that it’s the best for everyone this way.”

Wordlessly, JJ nodded and, after looking around the group seeing only disdain and hostility, headed toward the car not bothering to say goodbye. She was pretty sure they wouldn’t miss her anyway. To be honest, she wasn’t sure how much she would miss them. A small part of her sneered in her head that she’d be better off without that filthy broken Italian to cloud things around her. This would be better. Will would come around, and someday they’d regret when they threw her away. Someday they would regret letting that filth into their lives. Someday they’d see Logan wasn’t worth it.

Back in Rossi’s yard, Spencer lay his head on Tony’s shoulder. When Tony wrapped an arm around his waist, Spencer turned his head to look at him, letting Henry slip to the ground. “I think we need to get that suite in the penthouse finished.”

The other two were nodding as Will came over, pain clearly evident on his face. “DiNozzo… Tony, I….” He started, only to be cut off by the Italian.

“I’ve told you a million times, Will. This is not on you. You are a good decent man. I may hate your wife as much as the worst people I’ve experienced in my life, but her actions in my eyes only reflect on her. I hope for your sake that things work out. I want you to know though that if they don’t… you have a place with us. There will be room for you and Henry any time you need it, and for as long as you need it.”

Will blinked at them, the relief and gratitude clear on his face. “Th’room you’ve been workin’ on that you keep showin’ me? That’s… it’s for me an’ m’bebe? I don’t…” Shaking his head, Will stepped forward and gave Tony a hug, shuddering with relief when Brian and even Spencer joined in. “This means more than I can ever express. M’so far away from home, an’ I jus… I don’t have the resources here. I don’ wanna take Henry away from his mamma or Spence or his friens’, but I
can’t… I can’t do this forever. I have to give it one more shot, but…”

“We understand, Will,” Brian assured and Spencer nodded his agreement.

“If it comes to that, you’ve got a place for as long as you need it. As you’ve seen it's isolated enough that you and Henry will have your open space big enough that you will essentially be separate from us other than eating.”

“You’re our friend and brother, LaMontagne,” Tony pointed out, patting his friend on the back as they all straightened. “If you need we can keep Henry tonight. It… might be best that he not be there when you get home.”

Will nodded and after taking a shuddering breath. Sticking his hand out he shook Brian and Tony’s hands, giving Spencer a pat on the shoulder. “Y’re generosity will not be forgotten, mes amis.”

After watching him say his goodbyes to Hotch and Rossi, the three men watched Will leave, each feeling varying levels of relief and regret. They were relieved that this mess was finally over, but they regretted that for Will, the end wasn’t quite in sight yet. When it did come though, they were determined to support their brother.

**Chapter End Notes**

I know on the show Will doesn't have much of an accent. I felt that it would come out more if he was upset. The final section was definitely an emotional moment for Will, and it seemed right that his Cajun would come out more.

As you can see the chapter count has increased from 15 to 20. That isn't a mistake. I have finally given into the muse and added all the sections that have been poking at me as being needed to be added. I don't know how this will affect the posting schedule. I am participating in the July Rough Trade challenge, and I am determined to have this story fully written before that begins.

Other long stories I had planned on getting done will be pushed back as this is my priority. There may be other smaller stories posted, but this will be the only long fic I work on until it's done. Once I have the writing complete posting will pick up. Until that time though the weekly posting schedule may not happen. My apologies for that. This story will be finished. It's just turning out to be much longer than I had anticipated. I am estimating that it will be between 80K and 100K by the time it's finished. Considering I had only planned a small one shot for this monster it can at times get overwhelming. The good news is there is a lot of fun stuff coming up! (Spencer at Mardi Gras, anyone?)
The Best and the Worst of the Past, A Chance at another Beginning, and Moving on and Moving Up

Chapter Summary

Brian catches a ride on the BAU jet, and pays his way with a story from his and Tony's past. We go back in time and see Tony's interview with Hotch that got him his position with the BAU. Tony shows Jack the best medicine for a headache. Then, Spencer, Brian, and Tony get back from their trip to NCIS. We find out if Spencer will get his way, or if AD Evans will be unhappy with his agents' actions.

Chapter Notes

I absolutely love this first section. I keep coming back to it and rereading it when I need a feel good moment. It chokes me up every time, so there might be a sniffle or two. I think it is the perfect example of Tony and Brian's relationship.

The interview did not end the way I had expected. Since I share Tony's child phobia... I didn't expect a visit from Jack.

Be warned... I am ignoring the current season of NCIS. There is a person mentioned in the interview section that will not match how he was written on the show. Honestly I don't care. They have their version of him, and I have mine. There is also another character from this season whose cannon future will not match this story. So... just... let's forget season 13 happened ok?

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

**Chapter Nine: The Best and the Worst of the Past, A Chance at another Beginning, and Moving on and Moving Up**
Brian remembered the first time he saw Anthony D DiNozzo, Jr. At the time, could he have never in his wildest dreams imagined that that scared, angry, little boy would become an elite Federal Agent. “Tell me about when you met Tony,” he heard and rolling his head smiled at Emily who was seated next to him. He didn’t miss how Hotch and Garcia leaned forward slightly. Chuckling softly, Brian smiled as he leaned his head back closing his eyes. “I was just thinking about that.”

“Flyboy was this short, pretty, angry, and quiet kid. First time I met him he was standing in the headmaster’s office. His Uncle Clive’s representative was with him. The asshole was this stiff British dude that acted like he was gonna get germs if he so much as touched Tony.” Brian rolled his head and opened his eyes to look at Emily. “I know it sounds crazy, but I think that we were connected right from that second. I remember his eyes were so goddamned afraid, and at the same time… He seemed so fuckin’ resigned to whatever was going on. I’m positive that no one had ever loved him before that moment.”

“Why Flyboy?” Garcia asked softly, her sensitive heart breaking for the boy no one had loved.

Brian grinned big at that. “Fly, boy, fly.” He drawled in response making her quirk an eyebrow at him. Chuckling aloud, Brian turned his head to see Tony and Derek playing cards, with Spencer rambling on about something.

“It was practically the end of the year when they dropped him off, so he didn’t officially start school until August. Several of us stayed there year around though, and Tony was to be one of them. Once school was out, and the other kids were gone, we always moved rooms. Tony and I ended up together ‘cause we were the newest, and the others had been there forever. So, they already had their normal summer groupings.

“Since I had only been there two weeks myself, I hadn’t started school yet either. Tony basically stayed holed up somewhere until school ended. I got bored being inside though. So, I’d slip out, and go exploring. When we got put together in the same room, I realized how bad off Tony really was.
“He barely got any sleep. Every night seemed to be filled with these horrible nightmares where he’d wake up screaming like someone was trying to kill him. When he wasn’t having one of those, he’d lie there sobbing all night, calling out for his mamma in his sleep.” Brian frowns and closes his eyes again leaning his head back once more.

“It was probably the worst part of the whole thing. The whole… I couldn’t do shit, and it didn’t take long to figure out that no one at that place gave a crap about any of us. It was just this dumping ground for unwanted rich kids. There wasn’t a single decent caring adult in that whole place. We were just a paycheck to them, and it showed.

“I remember that we’d watched this black and white movie about pilots in World War I. Tony hadn’t slept in days. His temper was so close to the edge that you could practically see it. He was wandering around aimlessly, and seemed to have no idea where he was. You just knew though that pretty soon it was gonna get ugly. It had reached a point where I was willing to try anything to try and prevent it from all blowing up in our faces. So, I told him to come with me. Amazingly enough he did.”

Brian snorted and shrugged. “Turns out that Tony hates being inside. I mean, don’t get me wrong. He’s definitely not some outdoors lover who you’ll see wanting to rough it for a month in the Catskills or somethin’. But to just be outside playing ball or running around or whatever… he needs that. When we were kids though he’d literally NEVER go outside unless someone told him to. Didn’t matter if it was one of us kids, or an adult, but someone else had to initiate it. I think it had something to do with his father. I am almost positive that McSwirley wasn’t the first one to lock Tony in a small underground room.”

Brian gritted his teeth for a moment, and took deep breaths trying to calm his anger down. It didn’t matter how many years there were between himself and the memories. They never failed to piss him off. “You don’t have to continue,” Hotch offered. His voice soft and hard in that way that said he was really pissed off about something.

“It’s ok, Hotch, you all have known him long enough he won’t mind, just as long as he’s not the one who has to tell the tale. So, as I’d been exploring, I found that there was this clearing in the woods behind the school. It was a pretty good ways in, so you didn’t have to worry about being quiet, because there was no way anyone at the school could hear you. So, we get to this clearing and I stop at the edge. Tony comes up and looks at me, but he’s not speaking. He didn’t do a lot of that without prompting either.

“I remember looking around the clearing, then to Tony. All I said was…”

“Fly, boy, fly.” Tony’s wistful voice came over Brian’s shoulder. The group looked up to see a fond smile on Tony’s face. “That was probably the first happy memory I have as a child.” Holding out a water bottle for Brian, Tony gripped his shoulder before moving back to his seat.

Brian looked back at the group grinning. “Man he took off around that clearing like he’d been launched off a ship like a real fighter jet. His arms were stretched out like he was an airplane, screaming his head off. After a while I took off after him and we had this mock air battle like we’d seen on the show. When we finally wore ourselves out, we laid in the grass trying to catch our breath. Tony had the biggest goddamned smile on his face. I think that night was the first one that he’d slept without dreaming about his mother in some way, and waking up sobbing or screaming.”

Hotch nodded smiling slightly. “Why tell everyone that you met in college?”

Brian shrugs, and checks on Tony again before answering. “It’s not a lie. College Brian & Tony were different from boarding school Brian & Tony. We lost touch after boarding school. My father hated Tony for some reason, and wouldn’t let me use the address Mr. Rossi had given me to write
him. We ended up at the same college supposedly by coincidence. I have a feeling though that a certain veteran profiler had a hand in that. After college we lost touch, again. I am pretty sure my father had a hand in it the second time as well. Fortunately for the world in general he’s dead now. So, he can’t cause any more problems for Tony and I.”

Emily looked somewhat awed, and a little sad. Brian understood how she felt completely. Garcia though looked like she was gonna get up and hug him any second. “If you’re nice to him right now, Garcia, he will freak out.” He offered softly. Tony was never good with kindness, but there were certain moments like this where he just could not take it. The tenderhearted woman nodded stiffly, and pulled out her laptop.

Deciding it was time to change the topic, Brian turned his attention to Hotch. Beside him, out of the corner of his eye, he saw Emily putting in her ear buds. “Thanks for the lift.”

Hotch snorted amused. “It’s the least that we can do. You made your way to us, and helped with the case. How did your assignment go?”

Brian snorted. “Cover almost got blown, but we knew that would be a risk. San Bernardino is too close to where I was born. We thought maybe that since I hadn’t been back since mom shipped me out when I was a kid that I would be safe. Figures Rome would be there. They’ll send someone else in. Boss said that if I could make it to you guys, he didn’t mind if I hitched a ride with you.”

“You were worried about Tony,” Aaron observed, and Brian lifted an eyebrow.

“Sounds like I am not the only one.”

“Spencer told me the first victim was a dead ringer for his mother.” Hotch explained. It was one of those things he regretted, but knew that even if he’d known in advance there’d be nothing that he could have done differently. He would have been doing the team, and Tony a disservice if he had tried to leave him out of it.

Brian nodded understanding. “He sounded bad when I called. My boss knows all about Spencer and Tony. He’s very understanding. He seems to think I’m going to end up with you guys someday, which I find amusing.”

“You would make a good profiler, Brian. The disturbance at the high school football field?”

Brian laughed grinning big. “It was a good place to play fighter planes. Derek had a blast.”

Hotch snorted and pulled out a file from his briefcase. “I am sure it was. Next time, Agent O’Connor…?”

Brian tilted his chin up at the official Unit Chief Tone. He wasn’t about to apologize for doing what was best for his oldest friend. “Make sure you call me, too. I haven’t done that since I was a kid, and it sounds like a good way to relieve stress.”

Brian’s jaw dropped open, as Hotch smirked amused at his surprise. Eventually, Brian made his way over to the card game, and pulled out a $20 bill holding it out to Spencer. “I told you,” Reid said not looking up from his book as he stuffed the money in his satchel. “Hotch isn’t as uptight as he seems. Fighter planes would be totally awesome.”

Tony and Derek laughed at the look on Brian’s face, and across the aisle, Rossi’s lips twitched at the boy’s antics. He was relieved that his figlio had made such good friends in this place.
Tony was wearing his very best suit and shoes, sitting in the passenger seat of Rossi’s BMW, and wondering where in the hell they were going. One place he was certain they were hot headed was the FBI building at Quantico. “Just a tiny question, Angelo. Where are we going?”

>To your interview with Hotch. You look nice, Figlio. The Italian designer is a nice touch. I approve heartily.” Rossi said smirking, and Tony rolled his eyes.

“You would. My immense suit collection would be entirely your fault. #2 on the list for the new place is a huge closet. We are not headed toward Quantico, Angelo,” Tony pointed out as his mind turned toward his thoughts of the search for a new place to live that he was going to have to start. “I want a penthouse. Seriously, Angelo, why are we not going to Quantico? Have you finally snapped and decided to kill me deep in some Federal Park Reserve?”

David snorted and while they were at a stop light turned to look at his almost son and rolled his eyes. “Figlio, you are something else. No, I am not taking you to a Federal Park Reserve to kill you. I have not lost my mind. Aaron is at home today. Jack had a headache, and to be honest I thought this would go better away from the office anyway. You need some extra care right now, Tony. You need a little less stress and a little more of the personal touch than the normal interview process. Is an exception being made there because you’re basically my kid? Yes. Is that relationship getting you the job? Hell, no! The timing just seemed to work out right with Jack not feeling well, and I am not ashamed to say I took advantage of it.”

“I don’t want this job because of you. I don’t care if that makes me overly proud.” Tony declared quietly, and Rossi sighed. Checking the traffic around him, Rossi pulled into the parking lot of an abandoned building. After turning off the car, he turned to look at Tony.

“I know this is hard for you. Despite the façade you put on for others, confidence and security in your position both in people’s lives and on the job are issues for you. Understandably so. You’ve been dealt a harsh blow by the fates kiddo. It seems like every time you think you’re settled the bitch just sweeps the rug from underneath you again. So, I understand that you are feeling like they couldn’t want you for you. I swear on Caroline though, Figlio, that isn’t what this is.”

Rossi sighs and gathers his thoughts for a moment. “Did I pull a few favors to work through the fraternization tangle? Yes, I will cop to that. I swear though I am not getting you this interview, and I can’t get you a spot on the team. When I let Aaron know that you were looking for a new home, I will admit that I thought you would do well on the team. That recommendation though came as SSA Rossi who is one of the founding members of this thing. I can also tell you that Aaron Hotchner has known me his entire FBI career. There is no way in hell that he’s hiring someone just because I recommended them. I guarantee Garcia got him a file on you that would make the NSA jealous.”

When Tony snorted amused, Rossi felt his shoulders relax a little. It seemed that he was making headway. “I can also tell you that Mateo Cruz doesn’t know me from Jack the Ripper. All I am to him is some old fart who keeps coming back like a bad penny. The only person that I know he has ties to is JJ. I may have gotten them to notice you, and I may have cashed in a few favors to guarantee you would be on my team. I did absolutely not get you this interview though, and I can’t get you the
job. If you bomb this, and piss of Aaron, that shit’s on you, kid. So, don’t fuck this up, capisce?"

Tony rolled his eyes, and made a face at him. When he heard, “As if. I was born for this shit.” Rossi started the car back up, and headed back towards Aaron’s place.

An hour later, Rossi had been assigned to the living room to keep an ear out for Jack while the adults talked in the office. If Tony hadn’t been so nervous, he’d be exceptionally amused by this. “Nice suit,” he heard, and smirked and shrugged.

“I was practically raised by Rossi,” Tony snarked. “If I didn’t know how to buy an amazing suit he’d throw me out of the house.”

“I doubt it,” Aaron offered smiling as Tony settled in the chair in front of the desk. “He’s talk about you quite a lot over the years. He’s extremely fond of you.”

“I am extremely fond of him,” Tony admitted looking down to pick invisible lint off his pant leg. “He said that he had no influence on this interview?”

“He doesn’t” Aaron confirmed sitting back in his chair wondering where this was going.

“Then why would you possibly want me for your team?” Tony asked softly, and more than a little brokenly. It was only his years as a prosecutor hiding his feelings from a jury that allowed Aaron to keep his reaction contained. “My own team doesn’t believe in me. When I tried to be their leader, they rebelled becoming insolent and irresponsible employees. My best friend in the whole world sold me out because I talk too much. Why would you possibly want the joke of NCIS to be on the elite profiling team with the Behavioral Analysis Unit? What could I possibly offer that you don’t already have? I am not trying to paint you or Angelo in a bad light, but I honestly don’t see any reason why I would be offered this chance unless Dave arranged it.”

It was fortunate for Aaron that the younger man didn’t look up at that moment, because he was pretty sure that his formidable mask was failing him. What in the blue fuck was going on over at NCIS. When Dave came to him to ask how he would feel about his Figlio being a part of the team, and could he please think about it, Aaron almost hired the man on the spot. Aaron had been hearing Dave’s stories about his surrogate son since he’d met the man. So, naturally he already knew quite a bit about him. It was only his ingrained professionalism that kept him quiet.

Because he knew that there would be intense scrutiny eventually on this hire, he had Garcia run a background check more thorough than any she’d ever done before. As he’d suspected, nothing had come up to suggest that Tony DiNozzo, Jr. didn’t belong on his team. In fact, the check only served to support why he deserved the position. Degrees earned well after he’d started his law enforcement career, and in fact seemed to still be going on. Commendations from old departments that made it clear they’d beg to get him back. He’d even had a rather bizarre, and more than a little harrowing, visit from a CIA agent named Trent Kort who said they’d be bloody fools to not hire him. How the man even knew they were thinking about it was still a mystery to Hotch.

Once that was done, he’d quickly gone to Mateo, and together they’d visited John Evans at home… on a weekend… at the AD’s insistence. It wasn’t like it was a life and death situation, but the man had insisted. Considering he was the boss, and held all of their jobs in his hand, who was Aaron to object. The man made it more than clear that he expected Tony DiNozzo to be either employed with or somehow affiliated with not just the FBI, but the Behavioral Analysis Unit within 72 hours or he was firing everyone.

When Mateo argued possible favoritism complaints, the AD made it clear that he could give two rats’ asses what people thought about Dave’s relationship with the kid. Apparently the Italian wasn’t the
only one who had taken an interest in Tony after Senior’s arrest, or who was pleased with the kid’s hard fought, and self-made success. The AD had basically dared people to complain, and Aaron almost hoped someone did. He rather enjoyed hearing the older man tear someone a new asshole.

Unlocking one of his drawers, Aaron drew out a file folder with the FBI logo on it, and placed it in front of Tony. “I think that you should look at this. Please keep in mind that only a very small handful were requested. The rest of them just came in, and honestly keep coming in. I have also gotten more than a couple phone calls. Those people emailed me at my request. I think you should look through that folder before you filet yourself on my desk.”

Frowning Tony opened the folder, and cocked his head at just the top page. Skimming it, he then slowed down and read slower because he was sure that he was misunderstanding. After the third read through he lifted his eyes to Aaron looking more than a little confused. “This is a recommendation from Trent Kort.”

Aaron nodded smiling. “Yes that one came with a warning that if my team treated you as horribly as the NCIS team had there would be dire consequences.” He watched amused as Tony flipped the page, and seemed to start the same process over again.

“This is from Dwayne Pride.”

“I am aware,” Aaron advised holding in his smile, but just barely.

Tony frowned shaking his head. “He’s one of Gibbs’ best friends.”

“So he let me know,” Aaron shared lifting an eyebrow. “He also had some additional things to say about the whole situation. Some things I had to call one of my agent’s husband for translation. The gist seems to be that he thinks you’re a hell of an agent, and he’s gonna be visiting Gibbs to remove his head from his ass because it’s obviously gotten lodged up too deeply to be removed without his assistance. Please, Tony, I think you need to just read those.”

It was a testament for how thin the younger man’s shields were that his emotions played so easily over his face. Once he was done, Aaron watched as he closed the folder, and pushed it away from himself. Then he once more studied his pants leg. “I don’t understand.”

“Agent Fornell told me that if the FBI could harness the DiNozzo Network they would never have an unsolved case again. You, Very Special Agent DiNozzo, have made quite the impression on a lot of people. I hope you noticed that a few of those letters are from people whose lives you saved. Others are from fellow co-workers whose lives you impacted for no reason other than they needed a helping hand. A Delores Bromstead called me to inform me that if I didn’t hire you and then treat you right, I’d never see a vacation day again.”

Tony choked out a laugh, and grinned shyly. “Delores is pretty ok once you get to know her.”

“She told me all about the doll,” Aaron admitted and Tony blushed.

“I was going to bail… Ziva talked me into it.” Tony insisted, and Aaron lifted an eyebrow.

“Delores also advised me that she’s not been the nicest person to you or anyone else at NCIS. She said that life hasn’t always been kind to her, but that you might have done the nicest thing for her ever. Getting her a gift isn’t the same as taking the time to do research to find out the one thing that she’s always wanted, Very Special Agent DiNozzo. That one act says a great deal to me about your
character. As do similar stories from the security guard who retired, but still gets birthday cards and cigars from you. The janitor who you helped fill out Social Security forms for his mother. The mail clerk who you helped get a scholarship to college for his younger brother. Should I go on?"

"Please, no," Tony protested weakly, and fidgeted. "I hate it when people are nice to me. It freaks me out. It's not natural."

When the office door opened unexpectedly and Jack barreled in, Hotch tried to contain his equal irritation at the interruption and worry that something else was wrong. Immediately he turned his chair, which Jack took advantage of climbing up to sit in his lap. Rossi ran in the door and winced. "Sorry, Aaron, he’s quick. I thought maybe the headache would slow him down."

Aaron rolls his eyes as he ran a hand over his son’s back. "Head still hurt?"

When Jack just nodded, Aaron sighed. "It’s not time for more medicine yet. Daddy’s doing an interview, remember?"

Jack nodded again, but immediately pouted. "I’m bored. Nothing makes it feel better.” Turning his head, Aaron saw his son’s gaze fall on the anxious looking Italian. "Are you the new man?"

"Maybe?" Tony offered and winced. Aaron could tell he was clearly uncomfortable. "I guess that’s your dad’s decision. Headaches suck, huh?"

Jack nodded, and Aaron could tell he was intrigued by the other man. "Do you get them?"

"Oh yeah," Tony shared. "There’s really only one thing you can do for a headache."

When Jack sat up a little clearly intrigued, Aaron arched an eyebrow at Rossi who seemed surprised. Dave had warned him that Tony wasn’t much for kids, and this didn’t feel like a forced encounter to make points during an interview.

"The Aristocats," Tony replied, and Jack sat up a little more.

"What is Ariscat?" Jack tried to repeat, and Aaron was intrigued at the change slowly coming over the man in front of him.

"The Aristocats is a 1970 animated film… errr… cartoon made by Disney about a family of well to do cats who get help from an alley cat after a butcher kidnaps them. I watch it every time I get a headache or don’t feel good. My… my mom used to watch it with me when I was little like you. Interesting fact… it’s the last project to be approved by Walt Disney himself. He had been working on the Rescuers, but he… erhm… he passed away before it went into production."

"Do we has this movie, daddy?" Jack asked turning his eyes to Hotch, who hated to disappoint his son.

"I don’t think so, buddy." Aaron replied, and was surprised when Tony piped up.

"I have it on my Cloud account. If you have a tablet or something, I can sign you in to watch it."

When Jack slipped down to head to Tony, Aaron was surprised. His son usually didn’t like new people. After the two left, he saw Rossi frowning in the direction they’d gone. "That was unexpected."

Hotch lifted an eyebrow. "I thought you said he doesn’t like kids."
“He doesn’t just not like kids, he basically hates them. They make him uncomfortable, because they remind him of all the things he didn’t have as a child.”

An hour later, the two men decided they better go hunt down the missing child, prospective agent. When they found them huddled up in Jack’s room under a makeshift blanket fort they were surprised to say the least. Peeking inside they could see Jack curled up and sleeping on Tony’s lap. The Italian’s expensive suit coat was being used as one of the side walls. His equally expensive tie was being used to connect another blanket to a bed post. His leather shoes were being used as what appeared to be weights to help anchor two of the corners to the floor. Both child and man were fast asleep, while Ev’rybody Wants to Be a Cat played in the movie. Quietly the two men left shutting the door to let the two of them sleep.

When Rossi just arched an eyebrow at him, Aaron snorted. “He was hired before he even got here. He’s an amazing agent, and the fact that my son apparently likes him is just an added bonus. I’ll call John and get the ball rolling. Your son is officially a BAU team member.” Pleased with the results, Dave strutted off pulling a cigar out of his pocket. He clearly deserved a smoke break for all of his hard work. For once, things were looking up for his kid. This time no one would be hurting his figlio.

Tony watched Spencer step off of the elevator, and head through the glass doors to the BAU section. Without pausing he headed up the ramp and into Aaron’s office, not bothering to knock. Tony looked at Brian, and they trailed after him knowing it was their turn to keep him somewhere in the ballpark of calm. Their amusement at the situation had died somewhere between the Navy Yard and the FBI building in Quantico. He wasn’t afraid to admit that he was more than a little worried about where his partner’s head was at. While the SecNav experience was less than stellar, Tony had experienced worse. From the puzzled looks Brian was giving him, Tony was pretty sure he wasn’t the only one confused about Reid’s continued ire.

‘What exactly is Spencer so pissed off about?’ He wondered to himself as he followed Spencer into Aaron’s office with Brian following behind him. The blonde shut the door to limit how many people could hear Spencer yelling. The young genius certainly was not holding back. Looking at Brian, Tony felt a little better when the undercover agent just shrugged. It wasn’t the first time someone had underestimated him, and it certainly wouldn’t be the last. To be honest, Tony had built an entire career around being overlooked, and he’d done a damn good job of it too in his opinion. While it was true he’d been upset while at NCIS, he’d had time to calm down, and file the incident away as business as usual.

Spencer though seemed to think that some grievous injustice had been done to his reputation, and seemed to be currently trying to get Assistant Director Evans to promise that neither he nor Brian would be sent back without the full BAU team. Tony’d been with the team long enough at this point to know this was not business as normal. “Spencer, we can’t inconvenience the whole team because of a rude politician. It’s not the first time my capabilities have been doubted, and it won’t be the last.” Tony offered trying to soothe his partner. From the look he got in response though when the younger man turned to glare scathingly at him, you’d think he just killed puppies in Hotch’s office.

“That is NOT THE POINT!” Spencer snapped angrily, and Tony flinched. He’d not wanted to
make things worse, but now somehow Spencer seemed to be as mad at him as he was with SecNav.

“I think it’s time to take a deep breath, Dr. Reid,” Hotch suggested dryly. When Spencer turned to let his opinion be known about that, Hotch just gave one of his trademark glares. This seemed to at least bring Spencer back to reality enough that he stopped talking. “How about we change the subject for a moment, and shelf the SecNav situation for a few minutes. Maybe that will get all three of you on the same page with that situation again, because I think somewhere in the drive you left the other two behind, Dr. Reid.”

When Spencer turned and looked at his partners, he was confused to see their expressions were not what he’d thought. Tony had one of his blank masks on, but Spencer was familiar enough with it to see the hurt and worry beneath it. Brian had put on his happy go lucky surfer boy persona, but again Spencer knew better and saw the hardened protector lurking beneath the surface. Replaying the last several moments in his head, he winced realizing where he’d gone wrong. It didn’t seem to matter how far removed Tony was from his father’s mental abuse, there were certain tones and things you just could not do. Taking out anger with someone else on him, and expecting Tony to understand was at the top of the list. All it would accomplish is for Tony to feel guilty, and Brian protective.

“I’m sorry,” Spencer offered softly biting his lip. “I wasn’t mad at either of you.”

Stepping closer to his partners, Spencer reached out and touched Tony’s wrist. The smile he got in return wasn’t anywhere near as real as he’d like, but it was a start. He would just have to make sure to be careful of his word choice for a day or so. “How about we discuss Agent O’Connor?” AD Evans suggested and Spencer turned to look at the man who had served as his sponsor at one time. He had grown to respect him greatly over the years, and felt confident the man would see this whole Brian thing Spencer’s way.

“Now, I have spoken with both Brian’s Unit Chief, and his direct supervisor. Both of them expressed how greatly that he would be missed as he is their best undercover operative. However, they also both admitted that they had been waiting for this to come for a while. They both seemed to believe that Brian is over qualified for his current position. After looking through his records I tend to agree. While he doesn’t have the masters or doctorate that we like, his dual bachelor’s degrees in Psychology and Criminal Justice are more than enough.”

Spencer huffed and made a face. “He can go back with Tony and work on his Masters in Criminal Justice.” Behind him both men made faces, and Rossi chuckled.

“Kid, maybe you should keep in mind that not everyone likes school as much as you.” Rossi suggested, and Reid turned to see Tony and Brian were still making faces.

Pouting he stuck his lip out at them. “You are smart enough to both get a doctorate in it. I don’t understand why you wouldn’t want to do it.”

Tony smiled and reaching out ruffled Spencer’s hair making the younger man squawk. “Because I hated school, and not all of us can memorize shit the first time we read it. We can talk about it at home though, ok? I’m not saying no. I just don’t want to spend all my time going to classes and working.”

Brian nodded fast and smiled at Spencer. “Ditto what he said.”

Hoping to get the conversation back on track, Aaron interjected himself into their conversation. “Brian, has anyone asked if you are interested in a spot on the team? None of us want to take you
away from your undercover work if that’s truly where you want to be.”

Brian frowned and shrugged looking to Tony then back to UC Hotchner. “It isn’t that I’m not interested, sir, I just honestly don’t know what good I would be to the team. It seems to me that there’s probably someone smarter and more qualified than I am. Shouldn’t they get the position? I don’t want… favors to be made just… well… not to be offensive, sir, but just because everyone seems afraid to tell Reid no.”

Reid flailed his arms around and squawked again opening his mouth to protest. Tony grinned though and reaching out turned the man around putting a hand over his mouth. “This is not your turn to speak, Spence.”

Spencer frowned as everyone else chuckled. He tried to stick his tongue out to lick Tony’s fingers to make him move his hand, but it didn’t work. His partner just laughed harder, and leaned forward to whisper in his ear. “That doesn’t work Dr. Reid. You should know from the things you have watched that I quite like a good lick now and then.” Spencer’s eyes got big at that thought, and he stilled as Hotch glared at them shaking his head.

Aaron had no idea what Tony was saying to Spencer, and he was pretty sure that he didn’t want to know. Shaking his head at them, he hoped Tony kept his hand there for a few moments if only so he could concentrate on Brian. “As AD Evans advised, Brian, your educational degrees are more than enough. I see in addition to your two degrees you, like Tony, take online courses here and there. Several of them will do well to assist us, especially the computer courses. We don’t usually have Penelope with us, and it would be handy to have someone with a deeper computer background on the team.

“Spencer can make do in a pinch, but he isn’t terribly fond of technology as you know, and truly hates doing it. I am guessing from the number of classes in that area that you’ve taken it’s something you enjoy?”

Brian nodded blushing. “It’s different than what I do on a day to day basis, so it usually gives me a break. Plus, since it isn’t directly connected to law enforcement, I can sometimes do it while I’m undercover. So, that helps me keep my distance sometimes. I don’t…”

Brian paused when he felt Tony touch his back. Turning his head he looked at the man he’d known nearly his whole life. Long enough that they were able to do that having conversations without words thing. This time though Tony seemed to think that a vocalization of this thoughts was necessary. “You would be good at this, BoBo. Spencer is right in that you are more qualified than what you are doing now. I am the last person that you will find who is gonna poopoo all over undercover work. People think that just anyone can do it, but you and I both know it’s not the case.

“It takes a certain skillset to do it as long as we have, and not get killed in the process. We also both know though that there’s also a certain level of luck that goes with it. Not to mention how much I know that it wears on who you are. Eventually either your luck is going to run out, or you’re going to lose yourself in the job. We have already talked about how the Toretto job could have gone the other way had your personal life been different. I can’t lose you to this job, BoBo. You know… when on my way to interview for this liaison spot, Angelo said something to me.”

Tony paused and looked to Rossi, who just leaned back in his chair and smiled. Turning his attention back to Brian, he continued. “He told me that he could make the recommendation, and he could work around the fraternization stuff, but that there was no way Aaron Hotchner was even interviewing someone because he made the recommendation. If he ain’t doin’ it for Rossi he certainly ain’t doin it for Doc. I can also tell you that in the 5 years I have worked with Aaron, I can tell you Rossi is right.
“If Hotch is willing to take you into the team is about you, and doesn’t have jack shit to do with what Spencer wants. No matter what we joke about. We deserve this, Brian. We busted our asses. We suffered through undercover gigs where he forgot that there was anyone else in the world who cared. We also both survived fathers who said that we’d both end up in the gutter. Now I’ve been in the sewer on the job, and I have to tell you that we’re about as far away from that as it gets.”

Brian scowled at Tony, but nodded. “I hate it when you do that shit. If Unit Chief Hotchner is sure, I would like a shot at that spot, sir.”

AD Evans nodded and clapped his hands together. “Good! One item down, one to go. Let’s go back to the SecNav issue. SSA DiNozzo, if you could keep your hand where it is, I think we have a chance at getting through this without any more passionate outbursts.” Spencer blushed red, and crossed his hands, but remained where he was.

AD Evans nodded and continued on. “Your paperwork has been finished, SSA DiNozzo. You are now equal to SSA Morgan, and will be sharing duties with him. I have also called Director Vance who said that he’s already started your exit process. No need for an email on your part. He did advise though that he is willing to get your recommendations on people to add to the team. Apparently AIC Gibbs has advised his team won’t go back into the field without all of the people needed to fulfill the job. I also spoke to the Director about this whole thing.”

AD Evans took a drink of his coffee before continuing. “His only concern is the relationship between you three, but he’s not willing to put a stop to the transfer because of it. So, we agreed upon a year probation if you will. I know that you and Spencer already went through this once, but we want to make sure this change doesn’t alter anything. He also expressed his support for your actions, SSA DiNozzo. I can tell you that he is as unimpressed with the current SecNav as you are, but that is to remain in this office. As to you going back… To be honest, son, I agree with Dr. Reid.”

When Tony started to speak, AD Evans held up a hand. “I’m sorry, but I’m not changing my mind. First off, this operation of theirs is way bigger than they let on. I am not willing to put the pressure on you three, because I assure you if it goes south, SecNav will point fingers at you. I am not allowing my people to walk into that position. Secondly, it is deplorable that they didn’t already have these bases covered. Despite the fact that you were technically on their payroll, they haven’t requested your assistance in years. So, for them to suddenly call you for a high profile FUBAR to save their asses is in extreme bad taste. Think of it like this… If the situation was a little different, and it was SSA Dr. Reid they wanted for something. Would you want him to walk into it without the full support of his team after what she pulled?”

When Tony’s face just hardened, John nodded. “Exactly. Here at the FBI, son, we watch each other’s backs. Every member on our teams is as valuable as the next. So, if NCIS wants our help, and I can guarantee they are gonna come calling again, they will have to take the BAU as a whole. I know you’re not happy to hear that, but… well suck it up buttercup. It is what it is.”

Tony nodded, and relaxed his arm letting it fall to rest around Spencer’s shoulders. The younger profiler though remained quiet. There was no need for him to speak again. After all, he’d gotten what he wanted. Tony would have the whole team to protect him, and Brian was safely away from the undercover job that was slowly destroying the man both he and Tony loved. Sometimes it was good to be the spoiled baby of the team. Even if he’d never admit to it.
I mean, c'mon... did you really think Spencer wasn't gonna get his way? LOL The next chapter is almost done. Probably won't be posted on Sunday though. I have signed up for July Rough Trade. (Three sentinel short stories15Kish... WOOT! Mine will all be Tony themed. You all should not be surprised by now.) My goal is to have this written by then... we'll see if it works out that way. I think it'll be pretty darned close. Next chapter has one of the rare scenes that doesn't have Tony Spencer or Brian in it. The people in it are talking about Tony though. I think it's an important moment, and felt it needed to be shared.
Chapter Summary

A call for help along the DiNozzo Network gains Tony and the guys a new friend. Tony realizes his new job requires a new home, and decides to stick with what he knows. Gibbs gives someone a reality check where his Very Special Agent is concerned.

Chapter Notes

Not much to say at the beginning today other than a huge thanks for the continued awesome reviews. You people rock.

Personally I find the second section to be kinda meh... but really... its just getting a new place. So necessary, but not that exciting.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter Ten: The Circle of Friends Grows, New Job means New Home, and Reality Checks with a Second B
Tony was sitting on the couch in the penthouse living room with Brian sprawled out over the other side, his feet resting on Tony’s lap. Spencer was curled up in a chair reading a psychology journal sharing interesting bits when he came across them. The big screen TV hanging on the wall had a Mysteries at the Museum marathon of episodes collected on their DVR playing in the background. It was a show they all found interesting, and could watch together without having to devote their attention to storyline and such. This meant they could talk, and share their days with each other while still being entertained.

Spencer was in the middle of a ramble on why the article he was reading was completely wrong when Tony’s phone rang. Frowning he looked at the clock, and wondered who would be calling him at 11PM on a Friday night. When he picked it up and saw the caller ID read Dwayne Pride, he was even more curious, and a little worried.

Swiping his finger across his cell to answer, Tony put the device to his ear. “Pride, how are you doing? Is everything, ok?”

“Now why would you just assume there was a problem, Very Special Agent DiNozzo?” Pride drawled with that easy New Orleans accent that always made Tony wanna throw beads, and kiss the person next to him.

Grinning, Tony relaxed into the leather of the couch noticing the boys had quieted to listen to his conversation. “Maybe, Special Agent Pride, because you don’t ever call me for something fun like an invite to Mardi Gras. So, I am guessing there’s a problem somewhere.”

“Well now, that is an unforgivable slight on my part. I did call for a favor, but, regardless of the outcome, I insist that you come visit me that weekend in February. Christopher and I have plenty of room for you an’ your boys. We’ll show you all the best parties!”

Tony looked at Brian and Spencer, and thought what the hell. He knew Pride well enough to know the older man wouldn’t throw out an invitation like that if he didn’t mean it. He could have as easily made a throw away comment that didn’t include a direct invitation with a place to stay at the home he shared with his lover. Not to mention he knew Dwayne was very protective of his relationship with Chris. “Spencer, Brian and I would love to come, Pride, work permitting of course. Thank you.”

“You know how much I like showing off m’town to m’friends, Tony. I know Christopher will be excited to hear y’re comin’. Do you have a moment to discuss another matter? I’m tryin’ to help out a friend, an’ I expect with your connections that y’re m’best shot.”

Tony grinned, pointed to his glass of tea smiling thanks to Brian when the blonde handed it to him. “Flattery will get you everywhere, King. Tell me what’s going on, and how I can help.”

Tony could hear leather creaking, and guessed the older man was in his chair at the New Orleans NCIS office. “Well now, I gotta friend here who is a detective with New Orleans PD. His name is Taylor Kitsch. He recently reported his partner was working on the wrong side of the fence. The man was a veteran of 20 years on the force. He had a lot of friends, and despite the fact that the man admitted to his wrong doin’ not everyone is on board with his guilt. So, I have a feeling you understand how well Taylor’s actions went over with the others.”

Sighing Tony rubbed a hand over the back of his neck. “Intimately, Pride. What can I do to help him out? Is he lookin’ for a new home?”
Tony could practically hear the man nod. From the quiet chatter he heard it sounded like Chris had come near his lover to lend his support. Pride loved his city next to almost nothing, but Chris LaSalle. Tony knew that this kind of betrayal from someone who should be protecting what Dwayne “King” Pride thought of as HIS town wouldn’t settle well with the native. “I have expressed to Taylor that he might be safer movin’. He’s open to the idea, but, as I am sure you can imagine, reluctant to jus’ throw a dart at the board. I am hoping you’d know of a good landing spot for him.”

Tony turns his gaze to Spencer who lifted an eyebrow in question. “Actually, Dwayne, I might have the perfect spot for him. A co-worker of mine works for DC Metro as a detective and recently mentioned to me that he’s in need of a new partner. He actually called me to let me know if I heard of anyone who was looking for a new spot to please send them his way. Apparently they don’t feel any of the candidates within the department are ready just yet. If you get along with the Police Chief, can you see if he’ll put in a transfer request for the guy? Will actually came from New Orleans, and I believe his dad was on the force down there. William LaMontagne Jr. and Sr. Maybe the name will help things along with the Chief.

“Spencer or I will call Will tomorrow and let him know he’s got a potential partner coming. If you give me his travel itinerary I can let Will know when to expect Taylor when he gets into town. Better yet, just tell him to come see me at Quantico when he gets into the area. Either Spencer or I will take him over to Metro to meet Will.” When Spencer nodded smiling, Tony grinned big back at his partner. The faith and trust that his partners had in him never ceased to amaze him, and he hoped that it never would.

“I knew you’d be able to help, Tony. I appreciate your assistance. Lookin’ forward to seein’ you an’ your boys in February.” Tony smiled, and asked Pride to pass along his greetings to Chris before hanging up. Shrugging his shoulders at Brian and Spencer he explained. “Pride has a friend who needs to move to a new PD. Since the guy is a detective he thought I might be able to help with a department he could trust.”

Spencer nodded, but Brian just snorted flashing Tony a look of amusement. “The DiNozzo Network strikes again.”

Tony grins, and puts the phone aside. “I’ll call him in the morning. When I talked to Will the other day he said that he was taking JJ somewhere this weekend.”

Brian shakes his head from his end of the couch. “I still can’t believe you made friends with the husband of the woman who hates your guts. No, I take that back. I totally believe it. It is so completely you; I don’t know why I would expect you to do anything else. Forget I spoke.”

Tony snorted and rolled his eyes. “Will is a good guy, and, unlike his wife, he’s also open-minded. I like him. We meet up occasionally for lunch or whatever. I like hearin’ his stories about his hometown. I’ve always been able to imagine myself living there someday. Besides, it’s not Will’s fault that his wife is a total bitch, other than his obvious bad taste in women. Although people keep telling me she wasn’t like this before I came around.”

Looking up and seeing Spencer’s frown, Tony sighed. He hated that he’d forgotten about his partner’s feelings about the woman. Regardless of how he felt, he should be more tactful around the young genius who had a part of his heart. “Sorry, Spence, I know JJ is a sore subject. We shouldn’t be talking about her like that around you.”

“It’s only the truth,” Spencer admitted softly and laid his magazine across his lap. Looking at Brian he smiled weakly. “Tony’s right. Will is a good guy. Too good for JJ these days, if you ask me. I have resigned myself to the fact that she just isn’t the person who I thought that she was. Honestly, I would not be surprised if the two of them don’t make it much longer. Knowing Will, he’ll make one
last effort to get things worked out the next time she loses her mind, and does something stupid. My guess is she’ll half ass it for a while, but once he realizes that she’s too far down the rabbit hole he’ll take Henry and that will be it.”

Tony nodded frowning and bites his lip as he considers what they can do to help. “How would you guys feel about making those rooms upstairs that none of us know what to do with into a mini suite for them? You know… just in case Spencer is right? Doc, how do you think Will would feel about Henry climbing up and down those stairs daily?”

Brian smiles and toes Tony’s stomach. “Like I said, I don’t know why I expected anything else from you, Tone. It sounds perfect, Tone.”

Spencer nodded eagerly as he picked up his magazine. “You have my vote. I will be happy to oversee Henry’s area if that’s ok? I think the stairs will be fine. Henry is a good kid.” When they nodded, he glanced at his magazine, and immediately launched back into his rant. On the couch, Tony and Brian just smiled, as they listened indulgently.

About a week later, Tony was sitting in the bullpen alone going over some old case files. The rest of the team was out of town on a case. Tony though was stuck having to go to court to testify on an old case that had been granted a re-trial. JAG was concerned about getting a conviction the second time due to the fact that half of the team was either in jail or deceased. Tony had to admit that it was looking shaky to him, and he was re-evaluating evidence to see if he could find any new details.

The case hadn’t been that strong originally. As he reread the file, he remembered not being convinced that they got the right person. It had been a pre-Ziva case. So, while her imprisonment would be a non-issue, Abby was still in jail, and McGee and Kate were both dead. The JAG lawyer was already having the evidence re-tested to verify Sciuto’s findings. Tony had already marked a couple things down on his notepad to check into that he didn’t see reviewed the first time around. He was contemplating what else to do when he looked up to see security escorting a man who appeared to be Detective Taylor Kitsch his way. Closing the file deciding to let things stew in his brain for a while, he stood and, after grabbing his credentials and weapon, headed their way.

“Thanks, Bill, I have it from here,” Tony promised shaking the guard’s hand before turning his attention to the newcomer. “Give me just a moment, Detective Kitsch, and we can go to lunch.”

Tony sent a text to Will verifying that he was still free to meet them. Once he got the confirmation, Tony led Taylor back to the elevator. “I hope that you’re hungry. This place makes the best burgers in town. A friend from Metro is going to meet us. He will be your new partner there.”

“Please, call me Taylor, Special Agent DiNozzo. I really appreciate all of your help with this. It sucks that doing the right thing means that I am the ostracized one.”

“Call me Tony then, please. I’ve been where you are, so I understand. It’s unfortunate that doing the right thing isn’t always supported by everyone around you. Unfortunately, while the majority would have been on your side, I know that it only takes a couple good ol’ boys to make your life miserable.”

Leading Taylor through the parking garage he stopped at a 1970 Torino GT. “She’s gorgeous!” Taylor offered walking around the car admiring her. Tony preened in response. “Thanks! I love my girl. I hope I have better luck with her than her sisters.” Patting the roof, Tony unlocked the doors, and slid in. He spent the ride to the restaurant explaining to Taylor the history of his previous two Classics, and how it wasn’t until he got to the FBI that he felt safe chancing it a third time.

Once they’d gotten to Scotty’s Brewhouse where they were meeting Will for lunch and been seated,
the two men talked about random things to get to know each other. Tony found out Taylor prefers hockey to football, but being from New Orleans didn’t root for anyone but the Saints. He also found out the man rooted for the Longhorns, which led to a spirited defense on Tony’s part of his beloved Buckeyes.

Tony agreed that hockey was loads of fun to watch, but he preferred the Chicago Blackhawks to Taylor’s Dallas Stars. They both loved a wide range of movies and music, and they were discussing New Orleans Jazz when Will showed up.

After drinks and lunch were ordered, the three men got down to business. Tony and Will were watching Taylor play with his Pepsi when the young detective started speaking. “I wasn’t the most liked guy before all of this happened. There was a lot of hatred and jealousy that I was promoted to detective over others who had been on the force longer than I had. They didn’t like my age. They didn’t like how I did m’job. I’d worked undercover prior to the detective job, and they didn’t like m’long hair when I refused to cut it. They basically didn’t like anything about me.”

Taylor took a sip of his pop and sighed playing with the straw. “I always suspected there was another reason I was promoted, other than just how well m’last job went. There was never any hint that m’partner was dirty though, unlike other detectives. So, I figured that I was bein’ paranoid. It took about a year, but eventually I realized some things with Darren weren’t right. A couple cases got thrown out ‘cause of lost evidence, an’ I knew he’d been involved. In the end though it was just… coincidence. I just happened to be somewhere I normally wasn’t, and saw somethin’ I wasn’t supposed to see. Turned out not jus’ m’partner but one of the Captains an’ a few other officers too were into dirty things. IA cleaned house, but… things were… rough. They had a lot of amis, ya know?”

Tony and Will both nodded sympathetically. “Some don’t bother to check the right and wrong of things. All the see is betrayal. Mostly because they’re committing wrong doin’s themselves.” Will commented frowning.

Taylor nodded and chewed on his bottom lip for a moment, before continuing on. “There was one other reason they didn’t like me. Seein’ as we’re gonna be partners, I don’t wanna start off on the wrong foot hidin’ things. I ain’t never been ashamed of who I was as a person, an’ I ain’t ever been one to let other’s short comin’s get in the way of what I wanted to accomplish in m’life. Seein’ as though we’re gonna be partners though, I don’t wanna start off this relationship of sorts by hidin’ the important things from ya. So, I’m jus’ gonna say that I won’ need you ta be settin’ me up with any girls, ‘cause I don’t really get into their parts if’n you know what I mean.”

Tony nodded, and glanced to Will letting him respond. This was really an issue between the two men. Taylor certainly knew that he wouldn’t have trouble with it. He had no doubt that Pride told the young detective about Brian and Spencer. He wondered about the sad expression on Will’s face, but gave his friend time to answer.

“I appreciate you telling me that,” Will started. His voice a little softer, and a little huskier than normal. “Tony, has Spencer ever told you about when JJ finally gave in and told the team we were together?”

When Tony just shook his head, Will sighed before starting to speaking. “I had a partner. His name was Charles Luvet. He told us that he went to South Beach every year supposedly for the regatta races. One year when he was on his visit, he was murdered. I went down t’accept his body, an’ see what happened. JJ, m’wife who works on Tony’s team, an’ the BAU were down there to check it out. Turns out there wasn’t any regatta races. He went down there ‘cause he was gay. Guess he thought he couldn’t be himself at home.”
Will paused and took a drink of his tea. Tony wished that he could reach out and touch the man, show some kind of sympathy, but he wasn’t confident enough in the acceptance of such an action. So, instead he watched his friend concerned, and wished he could take away his pain.

When Will finally continued, his accent was thicker than normal. A sign of the emotional pain he still carried with him from Charles’ death. “M’biggest regret is that he died thinkin’ that I woulda cared. He was m’partner. Hell, he was practically m’brother. We went to the academy together! I don’t give two damns what the sex of y’re partner is, Taylor. All I care ‘bout is that y’re open an honest with me. Partners gotta be able to trust each other with everythin’. You can’t do that if there’s secrets bein’ held between ya.”

“You got m’word, Will,” Taylor promised sincerely and wholeheartedly. “Y’all have given me a new chance at a home an’ a career I love. I ain’t never gonna forget what the two of ya are doin’ for me. I got both your backs from here on out. No questions asked.”

Will and Tony nodded relieved. When Tony found Will studying him, he just lifted an eyebrow unsure of what was going on in his friend’s mind. “There one other thing I wanna fill you in on. I gotta say I am ashamed that I have to bring this up. However, I respect Special Agent DiNozzo. He’s one of the finest men I have known, and I consider it an honor that he counts me as one o’his friends despite… well despite m’wife’s actions.”

Tony started to protest, but Will just held up a hand. “No, Tony. This needs t’be done. He’s gonna meet her, and she’s gonna be a bitch when she finds out that he’s here cause o’you. I’m not gonna let him walk into that blind, and I won’t take a chance at her cloudin’ his mind with her bullshit.”

Tony just hung his head. The waiter brought their food, giving Tony an excuse to distance himself a little from the conversation. So, he dug into his food leaving Will to fill Taylor in on JJ. “When I met JJ it was on another case her team was call into in New Orleans. I thought she was beautiful, smart, generous, and basically everything I wanted in a woman. When we got married about two years later I was the happiest man in th’world. When we had our son Henry, all I could imagine was fillin’ up the house with bébés. Lately though… Since Tony joined her team she’s been different.”

Will stuffed a french fry in his mouth. Taylor looked over to see Tony eating with a determination that said he either had a weird obsession with loaded tater tots, or was uncomfortable with the conversation. Maybe both cause… really… tater tots. When the older New Orleans native started speaking again, Taylor decided to leave Tony and his tots in peace turning his attention back to Will.

“She doesn’t like Tony very much. To be honest I’m not sure why. She’s given me more than enough reasons, but frankly none of them make any damned bit of sense. Bein’ my partner I am sure you’ll meet her. She already knows that Tony recommended you, so… she’s gonna have her dander up. There’s also a chance that she’ll be nasty to you because of y’re relation to him. I jus’… I ask that you know I don’t share her views. I take m’marriage vows seriously. Honestly there all that’s holdin’ me there right now. I jus’… I’m not ready to give up on her yet.”

Will poked at his food for a moment studying his plate. “I jus’…”

“It’s all good, Detective.” Taylor offered softly. “She ain’t you. Its honorable that you’re still tryin’ to make somethin’ of it, and didn’t jus’ immediately throw it in the trash. Too many people do that these days. Throw things away before they know if’n they can be fixed or not. I ain’t never been one to let someone else make m’mind up about people. So, don’t you worry about me. I told y’all how I feel bout you two. She ain’t gonna change m’mind none. Now, if’n you don’t mind I am gonna dig into this burger, ‘cause it’s gonna start makin’ the drool run down m’face here pretty soon.”

Settling in wouldn’t be easy, and there was always going to be an asshole. Eventually someone
would take exception to him turning in his former partner, or the fact that he was gay. Taylor was ready though, and it wouldn’t be the first time he’d had to fight. At least this time he would have someone to watch his back.

He should have known Dwayne Pride would do right by him. Sitting back in his chair, he let himself relax and laugh at the funny story Tony was telling. In his head he turned the page away from his past and let himself think about the future. He had a feeling DC was going to bring him everything he needed. A job he loved, friends who were close enough to be family, and if he was really lucky a little romance to seal the deal.

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*Early December 2010* *New Job means New Home*

Tony walked into the penthouse condo that was the last one on his realtor’s list, and knew that he was home. The building was a new modern high rise in Alexandria. Most of the condos had been sold, but they hadn’t found a taker for the expensive penthouse yet. Tony had a feeling almost immediately that the availability of the space would be changing very soon.

“Oh, this has to be it, DiNozzo,” he heard from behind him, and turned to smile at Emily over his shoulder. He’d found that he liked the dark haired woman a lot. If a certain genius hadn’t already caught his eye he might have considered breaking rule 12 for her. As it was, his mind and attention seemed to be focused soul on one Dr. Spencer Reid lately. He wasn’t sure how he felt about that, but he wasn’t going to rush to judgment. Rule #12 was after all Gibbs’ not his. Tony hadn’t quite yet made his mind up on if it should be kept or discarded for his own list of rules.

“I agree, figlio, this fits you perfectly. Your baby grand will look gorgeous over there by the window overlooking the city. The view that you’ll have while playing will be breathtaking. Emily is right. This has to be it.” Tony smiled at Dave. He was grateful for everything the man did for him. He truly was every bit the father Senior should be, but didn’t want to be. He couldn’t imagine doing this without having Dave’s opinion.

Tony wandered around the space taking it all in. The living room/dining room/kitchen areas were all open and flowed from one to the next beautifully. The bedrooms and other closed in spaces were toward the back of the condo. The total square footage was enormous. Almost more than he could possibly need. The building was completely glass, and this particular penthouse condo came with a smaller upper level that was part of it.

He was thinking of making it the master bedroom and bath. Down here he could put more bedrooms. He could also envision putting the master bedroom down below and save the upper part for something later. There was plenty of room in the living area to place his baby in one of the corners overlooking the city view. He could only imagine how inspiring it would be to sit there at night and play or write. The kitchen was full of modern appliances and included a long island/breakfast bar with a second stovetop. The main stove had a gas grill section and two sinks one being also on the island with the second stovetop. The cook in him couldn’t wait to create a feast in that kitchen with friends all around.

There was room for an office and a formal library. They’d have to be creative with the shelving in the library as he didn’t want to break the modern feel. He could picture Spencer in the room curled up with a book in a comfy chair or a beanbag chair. That thought alone was enough to make him want to buy it.

Fresh start, new job, and now a new home. His old condo was already cleared out. Most of his things were in storage, and the place would be sold soon. He was just waiting for everything to be
finalized. His piano and a few other valuables were at Rossi’s place where he was living while he looked for a new place. Moving on from his old life was scary, but necessary and well underway. He didn’t know what his BAU future would hold, but it certainly couldn’t be worse than where he came from. Turning he looked at the hopeful real estate agent, and gave one of his big grins. “I’ll take it.”

~~* End of October 2010 *~~ * ~~* Reality Checks with a Second B *~~

Gibbs walked into Vance’s office and closed the door not bothering to wait for permission. “By all means Gibbs come in. I have plenty of time to wait on your every whim.”

“Stuff it, Leon. We need to have a talk, and frankly I don’t care if you have the time or not. DiNozzo just walked out. Technically he’s on vacation for the rest of the week, but if he hasn’t quit before then I will be surprised. He’s also filing an official complaint about the coms incident, and it will be going straight to HR, IA, and if I have my way SecNav. You have managed to completely screw this agency with your pandering to Eli David. Good luck explaining it to your boss.”

“Now listen here, Gibbs,” Vance started, but was cut off by the former sniper.

“Shut the fuck up Leon.” Gibbs snapped angrily. “You and I are gonna have a little heart to heart. You can keep your mouth shut and listen until I am done, or I can just walk out now. I could give two shits how you feel right now, or about politics. You have let your personal feelings interfere with this agency. You’re now the second Director in a row to pull that crap. I wasn’t around to chew Jenny a new one, but I sure as hell am capable of doing it with you.”

Gibbs scowled at the Director, taking a drink from his coffee before continuing. “Your personal feelings on an agent shouldn’t matter when it doesn’t affect his job performance. You have pigeon holed DiNozzo into this screw up category, and refuse to acknowledge any good he does. You then pump McGee up so much as the prototypical agent around here that he felt it was ok to do whatever the fuck he wants. You let little Miss Mossad do whatever the hell she wanted, and tied my hands so that I couldn’t say boo to her. You’ve not restricted her access to classified material. How much you wanna bet that she’s taking advantage of that. Fuck, Leon, even Jenny didn’t give her as much access as you have. Are you completely fucking stupid?”

“Now your perfect little Mossad Princess and Super-Agent have broken the most basic rule of being a field agent. If you think between DiNozzo and I that every fucking agency there is ain’t gonna know what they did, you’re out of your mind. While you’re at it, Abby’s ass needs to be in sling also. I don’t know why it hasn’t been addressed yet. I suspect that you or someone thinks that I’ll object, but as far as I am concerned she needs fired.

I have may have a strong personal feeling about her involvement in that situation, but I’m not discussing that with you. I sure as fuck won’t be allowing her to touch my evidence anymore. I’m not risking her getting one of my fucking cases thrown out of court because she decided to cover someone else’s ass. As it is, we most likely won’t be able to use all those recordings that Tony got despite him trying to save them. You can explain that to JAG. ‘Cause if you think that they aren’t gonna have a fit at how you’ve handled this you’re insane.”

Gibbs finished his coffee then threw the cup in the trash can before continuing. “Now let’s talk about what you’ve cost us. Tony is literally the best agent I have ever worked with. When I left, and McGee and David decided that they didn’t have to listen to orders anymore, the MCRT close rate didn’t drop because of Tony. People stayed on my team after I hired him because of Tony.

“I am complete bastard. I don’t have the time or patience or want to hold people’s hands. If Tony
hadn’t taken all of the training on his own shoulders we’d not have a stable team. Hell the only
reason McGee was hired was because Tony said that he could get him up to my standards instead of
NCIS’ standards. He was on his way to becoming one hell of an agent before you stuck your stupid
nose into things.” Gibbs snorted disgusted glaring at his boss.

“Now look what has happened. You bloated his ego, made sure everyone knew you think McGee is
prefect and Tony’s a fool, and who broke regulations again? McGee has ZERO commendations in
his file. Ziva has broken so many laws and regulations since she’s come here I wouldn’t give her a
commendation even if she deserved one. Tony has at least 4 just from here. That doesn’t count all the
awards he got before here. If you hadn’t fucked this up, Tony and I could have managed until we
replaced Ziva and McGee. Now thanks to you the MCRT is done. I can’t run things alone anymore.
There is no chance Tony won’t move on. David Rossi has been trying to get him from us to join the
BAU for years.” When Leon snorted in disbelief Gibbs narrowed his eyes.

“If you are that clueless about Tony’s abilities, then you don’t fucking deserve that chair. Tony still
takes classes to better himself. McGee and his puffed up ego haven’t taken a class since his flaunted
MIT graduation. Tony may not be as good as McGee at computers, or have as high an IQ as Tim.
I’ll take Tony’s continued pursuit to improve himself over McGee’s lauding over something that is
about 20 years old any day.

“When you explain this to SecNav, I guarantee that he’s gonna be pissed. I know for a fact he had
plans for Tony that you have now fucked up. If you don’t pull your head out of your ass, and
remember that this job isn’t about personal gain. It’s about the welfare of our Navy and Marine
personal and the families, and in my opinion you deserve to get replaced because you’ve just put a
huge dent in our abilities to find them justice.”

Gibbs stood and scowled down at his director. When his phone rang, Gibbs smiled coldly. “That’s
probably him. I made sure my email to him advising of Tony’s probable upcoming resignation was
sent before I came up here. Good luck, Leon. You’re gonna need it.” Turning Gibbs left slamming
the door behind him. He had two agents to chew out while he was in the Second B mood. This was
gonna be fun.

FYI... this is the version of Taylor I envision for this story.
HEH... I love it when Gibbs tears someone a new asshole. Yes, I kinda went out of the box for why some things may have happened. I needed to make some sense of why Gibbs just stopped being a freakin' leader. Vance tying his hands makes me feel better. No we're not firing Vance. Why? Umm... Because? That's all I got. Better the devil you know and all that jazz.
I know the transferring from one PD to another doesn't/can't happen that way, but we're playing pretend. This is my world and it works that way here. K?

OK... consider this your warning... INVEST IN KLEENEX people. You will need it for Chapter 11. I have written two sections and bawled through them both. Knowing what the middle section is... I don't think it will be any different. I am throwing my hat in the ring for Angst Queen with the next chapter.

Hopefully that will come next week if the musi keep behaving.
Chapter Summary

This is the chapter of angst. SecNav comes to kiss Tony's ass, and he has a surprise waiting for him when he walks into the meeting. Things turn emotional as Tony gives his honest opinion on the state of NCIS. Then Tony reconnects with Brian. There are some ruffled feathers that need smoothed down before things are all ok. When the subject of Spencer comes up, Brian is in for a surprise. Lastly, we bury Timothy McGee, and Tony gets to say his goodbyes.

Chapter Notes

** DO NOT SKIP THESE NOTES!! PLEASE READ!! **

OK people.... I need you to take this warning seriously. The third section is NOT happy. I bawled through writing the whole thing. My beta has done a quick read through and she cried through it. PLEASE, if you struggle with depression (or even are just sensitive or going through a bad emotional patch right now) I recommend that you consider skipping it. It isn't important enough to the story that you will miss anything if you don't read it. I myself refuse to read through it again, and I wrote the fuckin' thing. It's a highly emotional scene, and important for Tony, but not more important than anyone's mental health.

There is angst in the other two sections, and there are hints in the second section that Tony and/or Brian have or had bouts with depression. They are brief though. It's really the funeral scene that is the hardest to read IMO. Frankly, I don't feel it's worth anyone's mental health if you struggle with such things as I do at times. I will put a brief description at the end of this chapter for those that skip it but wanna know what happened.

On a separate note... I am completely ignoring NCIS season 13. That pretty much goes for all my future stories, but it will be relevant for part of this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

** Chapter Eleven: Emotions run high when Forgiveness is requested, the Reunion between Hope and Dreamers, and Offering up a Final Goodbye **
Tony was reading through an FBI file when he sensed someone stop next to his desk. When he’d switched from NCIS to the FBI, Section Chief Cruz received a request from the Cold Case Team that he be allowed to work on their cases instead of increasing his consult request case load. The Team Lead found out through the grapevine about Tony’s NCIS cold case close rate, and wanted to see if he could do that with the FBI cases.

Tony was more than happy to help them out. He found satisfaction in closing an older case, and getting justice for families that had been waiting years or sometimes decades for answers. They deserved justice for their loved ones death, or for the rape, attack, etc. that resulted in the worst moment of pain or terror in their lives. Tony felt that if he could give them answers then he was happy to help. With the addition of Brian to the team, the BAU would already be adding additional consultation help. So, Aaron was more than happy to agree to the request.

“Tony, with me. Our presence has been requested in the ADs office.” Tony studied his boss’ face before nodding, and standing to follow. He hoped AD Evans hadn’t changed his mind about the whole SecNav fiasco. It would suck to get yelled at now.

Since Hotch wasn’t able to give any information on the ride up as to what was going on, Tony didn’t know what to expect when he walked into the office. Seeing Tom Morrow sitting in front of the ADs desk though was not it.

“Tom?” Tony blurted as he frowned, and instinctively held out his hand to the other man who stood to greet him.

“Tony, I appreciate you meeting me. I am hoping we can get this clusterfuck my predecessor created resolved.” Tom expressed as he shook Tony’s hand. His normal serious expression present on his face.

“Sir?” Tony inquired following the older man to the couch and chairs in the ADs office corner. He noticed that Hotch hung back with the AD, and found himself thankful. While he was confused as to what was going on, he’d known the man forever, and trusted him not to pull anything shady. Tony firmly believe that if Morrow had still been running NCIS most of the bullshit that was the catalyst for him joining the FBI, both times, would not have happened.
“SecNav Porter has resigned. There were previous indications that she wasn’t right for the position, but her interaction with you was the icing on the cake, son. Between you and me, the President had other female options that would have been a better match, but we don’t get paid to make those decisions. Do we, Tony?”

When Tom patted his knee, Tony had to fight to keep his eyebrows from meeting his hairline. This encounter was... odd. While he and Tom Morrow did have a history that was generally friendly, this kinder more touchy feely interaction was starting to freak him out. Before he could question it though, the man continued.

“Anyway, the president has requested that I take over as Secretary of the Navy. I’ll admit that I am a little surprised. I’d be a fool not to take the offer though, and I understand his reasoning. The first order on my plate was to smooth this wrinkle out so that we can get your help with this case. I know you’ve switched to the FBI. AD Evans has made it clear that he’s not giving you back to us. Frankly, I don’t blame him. You are one hell of an agent, DiNozzo, and NCIS is not going to be better off without you. Tell me what we need to do to get your team on this case of Gibbs’? Lives are at stake, son, and we need our A-Team working this thing.”

Tony studied Tom for several moments before speaking. His first impulse was to just give in, but he wanted to make sure that he had the correct reasoning behind it before making a final decision. “I loved being a cop. From the night I had to listen to a little girl burn because I couldn’t save her, all I ever wanted to do was help people. When I went through the police academy in Peoria, I felt like I had found what I was meant to be. When Gibbs asked me to join NCIS, I was skeptical. The first case we closed though, I felt like I had made the correct choice. I really felt like I was doing good, like I was making a difference in the world.”

Tony paused, and took a deep breath to settle his nerves before continuing. This next part was hard for him to get out. It still six years later felt wrong to say. His loyalty to Gibbs ran soul deep, and may never be something that he could get rid of. “I respect Gibbs, and I love him like the big brother I always wanted. I could never again work for him though. I didn’t understand until I came here, and worked under Unit Chief Hotchner, what a real leader is like. I didn’t fully believe that I deserved to be treated with respect by the people beneath me. Even though I’d had the title of Senior Field Agent for years, I had never been given the respect of the position by the agents under me or by my direct supervisor. That is a problem that I didn’t understand before, but has been made clearly evident to me now. The chain of command is vital, and when you ignore it because you want to play power games, bad things happen.”

Tony clenched his fists, and wished desperately that Brian was there with him. Hell, he’d even take Spencer’s awkward, but heart felt, attempts at comfort right then. “I don’t understand how an organization like NCIS can continue to hire Directors who so easily forget how to keep their personal agendas out of the position. I’m not naïve enough to think it doesn’t happen other places. I, also, understand that all directors have different things that they feel are important to the future of their organization. There is a difference between deciding to focus on domestic terrorism over drug running, and deciding to go after a French Arms Dealer because you think he killed your father, or hunting down the man who killed your wife despite what other federal law enforcement agencies have warned you of. I can’t imagine though that other organizations have consecutive directors who forget law and policy in order to achieve their personal end games.”

Tony shook his head and looked up at Tom, his eyes burning with anger. “I can’t believe that other directors are so open and obvious in their favoritism of junior agents over senior ones. I find it hard to believe that other directors don’t understand they are creating an environment where people are fully aware that their own abilities and achievements have been and will continue to be blatantly overlooked by their boss. Surely the director of a Federal law agency should understand the type of
morale problems that creates. I can tell you that AD Evans has never even come close to such an act. Despite the fact that I am completely aware of his fondness for Dr. Reid maybe over everyone else in the building. However, at no time do I feel like he’s favoring Spencer in any decision he makes to the detriment of the FBI or other agents. Hell I’ve actually heard him tell Dr. Reid to back off. Vance wouldn’t have DREAMED of telling his little pet McGee such a thing, and look what that caused.

“Ziva is in jail. Tim is DEAD. All because Vance was more interested in his favorites than doing his job. Abby is in jail, because Gibbs was more interested in his weird father/daughter relationship than reminding her that she can’t act like a freaking toddler who hasn’t had her nap every fucking time she didn’t get her way.”

Tony stood, and looked around. Seeing Hotch holding out a bottle of water, he walked over and took it. When his UC gave him a concerned look as his hand shook as he tried to open the bottle, Tony couldn’t even pretend that he was ok. When he felt his lower lip twitch, he knew that Hotch wouldn’t have believed him anyway. Guzzling half of the bottle, Tony headed back to lean against a wall near the new SecNav.

“Somehow you fucking people, and I understand that you weren’t there at the time, created a terrorism unit that DOESN’T HAVE ANY FUCKING UNDERCOVER CAPABLE OPERATIVES ON IT! How the FUCK does that even happen? These are NOT MY MONKEYS, it is NOT MY CIRCUS, and it’s NOT MY PROBLEM, but I am the one that has to fix it. I have to find you fucking people the operatives you need to fill your team. I’ve got that done by the way. You’re fucking welcome.”

Tony looked out the window in AD Evans’ office as he continued to speak. “You want to know what I want? I want you people to get your fucking shit together. To be frank, Tom, this will be the last goddamned time I will be fixing NCIS’ shit. I’m fucking DONE. I’m fucking DONE. I’m going to have to send my fucking… My Brian…. My safety blanket… my lover… my sanity…. The only motherfucking thing I have left from my childhood that doesn’t SUCK after a goddamned terrorist. I can’t do it myself or I wouldn’t be allowing him anywhere NEAR NCIS. I simply don’t have the capability anymore. I found people that showed me it was ok to just be Anthony DiNozzo, Jr, and I don’t fucking wanna go back. I don’t know how to go back. I don’t work undercover for the FBI. They are happy with the other skills I bring to the table.

“So, I’m going to have to send one of the two men I love more than anyone on this planet after a terrorist, when I fucking know that he shouldn’t be doing it. There is a goddamned good reason that Spencer and I have spent almost two YEARS trying to convince him to stop doing undercover. I am going to have to take the chance of losing half of everything I have. I’m gonna assure you right now, Tom, that if something happens to Brian, and I fucking LOSE HIM that I am bringing NCIS down to the fucking GROUND. There won’t be anything but bricks and rubble left when I am done, if he so much as gets a scratch.

“You wanna know what I want? I want to know that Gibbs is gonna treat his NEW SFA better than he treated me. I wanna know that Leon Vance isn’t going to be allowed to treat NCIS as his personal vigilante group going after people he hates, and catering to scumbags like Eli David that he likes. I’m not going in without my team. I’m not allowing Brian to go in alone. I want G Callen AND Sam Hanna going in WITH HIM. I don’t give a FLYING FUCK what cases they are working on. You want me and the BAU, I DEMAND they be assigned to go in with Brian. PERIOD.

“Then when this is over, I don’t wanna receive another request for my help or the help of ANYONE I hold dear from NCIS EVER AGAIN! That’s what I want, that’s what I demand, and that’s what you are going to have to give to get our help. This isn’t a negotiation, this is a fucking list of demands. Otherwise, terrorists or not, you and NCIS can go suck your own dicks, Secretary of the
Navy Sir. FIX. YOUR. HOUSE!

When Tony turned his head back, and looked at SecNav Morrow, he could tell the older man was irate. Frankly, Tony didn’t care. He had finally found the freedom that came with people who REALLY believed in him. The fact that the AD and his Unit Chief hadn’t made a single peep to interrupt him during his rant, spoke volumes to him about the trust and faith that they had in him. It also spoke volumes to him of their agreement with his feelings. Tony watched as Tom glared at him. He could tell the man was trying to calm down enough to just be able to speak. He was well aware that people didn’t normally talk to him like that. Tom Morrow had been a powerful man in their world for a number of years. He was used to being the one yelling, and others groveling and kissing ass to appease him. Tony also honestly didn’t give two fucks. He was completely out of fucks to give to anyone at NCIS.

“You certainly never were one that was afraid of speaking your mind, DiNozzo, when I was director.” Tom eventually began. “I don’t appreciate it when people speak to me like that. I appreciate it even less when it’s nothing but the 100% truth. It pisses me off that after I left, the fire and passion in you was drowned out by the ineptitude of my successors. Your honesty and your moral compass was one of our greatest assets. It was something that I felt Gibbs needed desperately before he hired you. He always found it too easy to jump off track when he was obsessed with something.

“It makes me even madder that the man who threatened to quit if I didn’t hire you, treated you so shabbily. I wasn’t aware that Jethro had gone so far off the reservation. I thought at least that a decorated Marine Sniper could be counted on to follow the fucking chain of command. It pisses me off that I’m going to have to give him a refresher course. I also wasn’t aware that Vance had Jenny Sheppard’s tendencies. She wasn’t my pick, and I had more than a few doubts. Again, there were other female leads that would have been better suited for the position.”

Tom sighed and ran a hand over the top of his head agitated. “You want Callen and Hannah, you have them. I will inform Henrietta as soon as I get back to my office. Your… Brian… will be the lead on the undercover portion of the operation. We will assign anyone you want to back him up.”

“I want Eric Beale sent out also to run the… MTAC part of the operation. I want the absolute best covering his ass. We have computer people who are amazing, but none who have his experience or abilities with these types of operations.” Tony insisted.

Tom considered the request, and eventually nodded. “I agree. I will inform Henrietta that his presence will be required, also. I would like at least the names of the people you are recommending. I’d like to make sure that we have done our research, but I am willing to hire whomever you suggest once I have done my own background check.”

Tony smiled sweetly, and Tom flinched slightly worried. He knew that look, and because of that understood that it wasn’t a good thing. “Colby Granger and Tara Lewis. Tara will be the new Senior Field Agent. Technically it’s Doctor Tara Lewis. She is a Forensic Psychologist, and specializes in getting into the heads of the bad guys without losing herself to them. I guarantee that she will not take crap from anyone especially one Leroy Jethro Gibbs. She has graciously agreed to accept the position of SFA on the Terrorism Unit with my blessing to hand Gibbs his ass the first time he starts up his Captain Ahab routine. She understands undercover, and amazing at nurturing green probies like Ellie Bishop. She is intrigued and excited to go to battle on a daily basis with my former tyrant boss.

“Colby Granger is one of those people like Callen who thrive on undercover work. He is incredibly chill, until its time not to be. He also is not afraid to get in someone’s face, and tell them they are a
fucking asshat when needed. He certainly isn’t going to take anyone’s crap, or be made to work any kind of assignment without the correct backup. Colby formerly worked with the Army’s Criminal Investigation Division in Afghanistan. He knows terrorists. He knows the military. Hell he’s brought down American spies. He knows when to go off-script, and when to stick to the rule book. He’s the closest thing I know of to me that I can trust to still give a fuck about Gibbs when he’s being an unreasonable jackass. Because of his military background, he’ll still follow orders in the field as he’s telling Gibbs to go fuck himself.”

When Tony stopped talking, Tom just looked at him for several long moments. Eventually he burst out laughing so hard and long that Tony was afraid that they were going to have to call for oxygen. “Oh my God. I wonder if it’s too late to change my mind. Maybe if I call the president now, he’ll let me quit.”

Tony heard the snickers behind them, and looking up saw both Hotch and Evans trying and failing to hold in their amusement. “OK, DiNozzo, you got what you want.” Tom advised.

Tony turned his attention back to his former boss crossing his arms across his chest, letting the warm water bottle dangle from his fingers. “Yes to everything. I am waiving the white flag. I will get with AD Evans once we are ready to proceed. I will have Callen and Hanna come over here to spend a few days with Agent O’Connor, so they can get comfortable with each other once they are in town. Thank you for giving us another chance at this fiasco.”

Tom stood and held out his hand. In response, Tony crossed the short distance to shake it understanding how the political game went. He may be an emotional wreck inside, but you didn’t piss on an ally as powerful as Tom Morrow. When Tom held on, Tony lifted an eyebrow.

“I mean this sincerely, Tony. We at NCIS have suffered a great blow by losing you. We are not now, and will not be in the future, better off without you. You have my word as a man that I will get this shithouse cleaned up. This bullshit favoritism and ignoring the chain of command will not continue. I don’t care who it is. I am sorry that we had to lose you to realize that there was such a big problem. I am deeply sorry that you had to lose your Probie because of NCIS’ fuckups. He started out as a good agent, and had we done our jobs, he would have remained a good agent. Thank you for your honesty. Once this operation is settled, you will be free, professionally speaking, from NCIS. I hope that the FBI really understands what a huge asset they have gained, and treats you with all of the respect you deserve.”

Tony nodded, unable to speak as Morrow patted his shoulder then turning shook hands with Evans and Hotch on his way out. Not sure what to do next, Tony just sat in a chair and, letting the bottle fall to the floor, studied his hands. He felt completely drained. He thought he’d worked all the NCIS bullshit out of his system already. It was 2016. He’d moved to the FBI six years prior. He should be over this crap by then.

Feeling hands on his shoulders, he looked up to see Brian’s beautiful blue eyes staring down at him filled with concern and love. That was apparently all he needed before the dams broke and gut wrenching, chest heaving, soul shattering sobs tore from his body. Immediately Brian’s arms wrapped around his shoulders as Tony sobbed, and tried to explain why he was upset. He wanted to stop, he wanted to calm down and speak clearly, but all he could do was cry.

All he could do was think of Kate’s face with a bullet in her brain, and her blood all over his face. All he could picture was Gibbs and Mattie Tyler lying dead on the dock, as Tony tried desperately to revive them. His plague scarred lunge screaming in protest as he fought past his limitations. All he could hear were Ziva and McGee’s snide comments about how he wasn’t good enough at being Gibbs, or at being himself, while Jethro was in Mexico. All he could remember was Abby stabbing
him in the back, and doctoring the tape to protect people who had betrayed him.

His brain just kept flashing images… Blue lights in the isolation unit. Eli David’s sneering face in an interrogation room in Israel. Michael Rivkin’s drunken arrogance as he came at him with a piece of glass in his hand. Atlas handcuffed to him in a sewer. Jeffrey White’s eyes in his rearview mirror. Jeanne’s mask of betrayal when she found out Tony DiNardo was fake. Jenny Sheppard, Leon Vance, Mike Franks. Gibbs’ back as he abandoned him to go to Mexico. How in the hell had he survived as long as he had?

When he finally calmed down, his throat was sore, his eyes were gritty and dry, and his head felt like it was stuck in a vice. “Brian?” He felt a hand run up and down his back, as a bottle of cold water was pressed into his hand.

“Yeah, babe. We back to green?” Brian asked softly, perching himself on the arm of Tony’s chair. When Tony nodded into his chest, he just wrapped his other arm around his lover’s body pulling him in tight. “I love you, babe.”

“How about we get out of here? I think there is a blanket fort, and some episodes of Magnum calling our names.” When Tony just nodded, Brian squeezed his arms tight once more.

Dropping his head, Brian rested his cheek on the back of Tony’s head. He was tired of people hurting his lover, and just having to take it. One of these days, Brian was gonna take out one of these sonofabitches. For the moment though, he had a heart to piece back together one more time. After all, it belonged to a man he’d loved in some way since he was a child.

Closing his eyes, Brian breathed in the scent of Tony’s cologne mixed with a faint hint of anguish produced sweat. It hurt. Every time someone made this man bleed, Brian hurt. Every time they made him cry, Brian’s own heart broke. How many times could one heart be put back together? How many times could the same man be tormented before he couldn’t recover? Every time either happened, Brian could only hope that this wasn’t the time he couldn’t recover from.

Pressing a kiss to the back of Tony’s neck. Brian pulled his friend up, and put his hands on each side of his face. “How about we get out of here? I think there is a blanket fort, and some episodes of Magnum calling our names.” When Tony just nodded, Brian smiled softly, and taking his hand led him out of the building. He dared anyone to say a single fucking word.

When Spencer got home that evening, he had a bag of carryout Chinese with him. It was filled with all of their favorites, including several orders of crab rangoon, egg rolls, and shrimp toast. Pausing inside the front door, he could faintly hear the sound of a TV going somewhere. “I’m home! Food is here!”

Heading to the kitchen, Spencer pulled down plates, and got out the silver wear so he could dish up the food. As he did this he considered how far their relationship had come. There was a time in the beginning he would be upset that Brian was the one to come home with Tony. Not because he wanted to do so himself, but because he couldn’t.

Spencer was well aware of his short comings. Highly emotionally fluid situations made his skin crawl. He never knew what to say, and he didn’t understand what was going on. By the time he figured it out, things always changed, so he never got to a place where he felt like he understood what was happening. Eventually at some point he would force himself to do or say something, and it
would always be wrong. It wasn’t until Brian and Tony that he was made to feel like it was ok to be him. It was ok to be really bad at those situations, and help where he could, without forcing himself into a reaction that would only cause further damage.

They made him understand that not everyone was good with the emotional stuff. They gave him the freedom to offer comfort in his own way. Picking up dinner, allowing hugs and cuddles without asking first, and even his rambling of some random fact gave Tony comfort. He said the rambles were like white noise, and let his brain forget the other stuff. In the past, people tried to convince him that he needed to get better at thrusting himself into these situations. The intense connection between Brian and Tony allowed him to offer his love and help in his own way. He absolutely loved them for the freedom that they gave him.

When arms wrapped around his waist, and a chin rested on his shoulder, Spencer turned his head, and smiled hesitantly. “Are you feeling any better?” When Tony nodded and squeezed him slightly, Spencer bravely leaned in, and pressed a quick kiss to Tony’s cheek. The small smile he got in return was well worth it.

“I got your favorites. Are you hungry?” When Tony just smiled again, Spencer smiled back. He had learned that it wasn’t unusual for Tony to go quiet after one of his emotional overloads. Sometimes they could last into the next day or beyond. Spencer suspected that the office would be extra quiet the next day, and maybe into the day after. From what Brian relayed in his phone call, this had been a whopper of a breakdown.

He watched his lover move off to get drinks out of the fridge, as Brian came over to help Spencer dish up food. When Brian nudged his shoulder with his own, Spencer looked over and smiled shyly. When the blonde leaned in and gave a quick kiss, Spencer couldn’t help but laugh and smile. He loved both of these men dearly. He loved the relationship that they had forged. His connection with Brian had developed slowly, and wasn’t quite what he had with Tony, or what Tony had with Brian himself. He’d also learned though that was ok, too. The best thing these two had done for him was making him feel like it was ok to just be Doctor Spencer Reid, and fuck anyone who thought otherwise. Because of that, there wasn’t anything he wouldn’t do for either man. NCIS better watch themselves.

~~* Early April 2011 *~~ * ~~~* the Reunion between Hope and Dreamers *~~

Tony pulled the piece of paper out of his pocket that had his old friend’s address from his personnel file on it, and frowned. What the hell was his friend living in this dump for? Looking around at the Blue Beach Motel, Tony scowled at the blinking neon weekly rates section that actually read ‘ee ly ate’ thanks to the burned out neon letters. This couldn’t be right, but he didn’t dare call Garcia, and suggest that she was wrong. He liked his credit report the way it was, thank you very much.

Deciding to take the plunge, Tony got out of his car and walked up to room number 187. “This cannot be right,” he muttered aloud before lifting his fist, and knocking on the door.

He was about to walk off, feeling unsure and embarrassed, when he saw the curtain move, and heard a muffled holler from inside. The door was quickly yanked open and, before he knew it, Brian had him wrapped up in a massive hug. “Fuck, Flyboy, it’s really you.” He heard muttered into his ear, as he hung onto his best friend. He was half afraid the man would disappear if he didn’t.

“BoBo,” Tony whispered closing his eyes and breathing in the familiar scent.

When Brian finally released him from the hug, his friend’s hands moved to cup his face. Tony was considering a wisecrack but, before he could even come up with something good, Brian was pulling him in. He pressed their lips together in a not so chaste kiss, pulling Tony even closer than should be
Possible. Changing the angle of the kiss, deepening it to make Brian half moan, half whimper in the
back of his throat, angling his hips to rub their cocks together with only denim separating them. He
felt a tongue flick out over his lips. He tried to keep from moaning himself, but the sound wouldn’t
stay in. The vibration made him want more. It needed released as much as his want for this gorgeous
man in his arms. The kiss was...everything that he remembered and all that he needed. Brian himself
was everything that he remembered, and all that he needed.

When Spencer sat Tony down, and told him that he had found Brian, Tony was speechless. When
Doc admitted that he was hoping that they would not only renew their friendship, but their sexual
relationship as well, Tony thought he was crazy. After many more discussions though, with not only
Spencer but Rossi and Emily also, he finally gave in. He knew he should stop this though. Brian
didn’t know about Spencer. Goddamnit it felt so good to be back in the arms of someone who not
only knew him, but loved and accepted though. This man loved him even when all Tony’s masks
were set aside. He’d always been the only one to love Tony when he’d laid his soul out completely
bare.

Eventually the two had to come up for air, and the kiss was broken. Tony rested his head on Brian’s
shoulder as he gasped for air. When he felt the weight of Brian’s head against his cheek he smiled.
There just weren’t words for how much he’d needed this.

“Food and talk?” Tony asked softly, not really wanting to move, but needing to clear the air before
his guilt ate him alive.

“As much as I’d like to take this right to bed, this place is nasty and you’re probably right. I can
practically hear you fretting over something.” Brian admitted reluctantly. When he felt the man
straighten, Tony stepped back and let him go, even though the little boy in his head was screaming,
“No, don’t go!”

Eventually, the two made it back to Tony’s car, and they were headed toward a Mexican place
nearby that Brian was swearing was the bomb. Unable to wait any longer, Tony blurted out, “What
the fuck are you living in that craphole for?”

He heard his friend laugh, and glanced over just in time to see him shrug. “I mostly work long term
undercover assignments, Tony. I can be gone anywhere from a couple weeks to a couple months or
more. Hell I did one gig where I was undercover for almost 2 years. That shit sucked, lemme tell
you. The point is that I don’t really stay in town long enough to justify paying for an apartment. This
place is shitty, but it serves its purpose. What’s the point of anything more than that?”

Tony frowned, and didn’t respond letting the words turn over in his head. It wasn’t until he’d pulled
into a parking spot at the restaurant that he commented. Leaving the car running, and the windows
down to let in the cool spring air, Tony ran his hands over the top of the steering wheel before
turning his head to frown at his friend.

“The point is that living in crap continuously drags down your spirit. Living in the same
environments, whether you are on a job or off, never gives you a sense that one job is done, so that
you have a fresh mind when the new one starts, Brian. The point is that living in this hovel increases
the chance that you’ll be recognized. Unless you can tell me that you’ve never done a gig in DC, or
even on the East Coast. Of course, if you can do that I’ll fucking take off my leather shoes and eat
the goddamned things.

“The point is that you are too goddamned special to me, Brian. I have to question what the fuck is
going on with the team around you that they haven’t noticed you’re losing your fucking perspective.
That they haven’t noticed you’re losing yourself. That you’re in serious danger of clinical depression,
if you aren’t already there. The point is, Brian, that this is not your life.”
“You have no fucking clue what my goddamned life is,” Brian spat back, turning his head to look out the side window. “You disappeared. You left me by myself.”

“You’re right,” Tony replied. His heart heavy, and wishing that he could resurrect Brian’s father so he could kill the motherfucker, again. “You’re right. I did disappear. I left, and didn’t say anything other than I love you. You’re wrong though if you think I don’t know what your life is, or at least what it should be. Do I regret the way things turned out after college? Every motherfucking DAY! I know you though. I know you, and I know that this isn’t or shouldn’t be your life. I know that you are too smart not to know the danger you’re putting yourself into.”

“We promised,” Brian spat and turned to glare at Tony. “We sat there in that fucking dorm room, cut our fucking palms, and SWORED! Blood oath, Tony. It was your goddamned idea. SWORED that we wouldn’t leave each other again unless we… we had no choice.”

As if those final words were some release valve, Tony watched his friend deflate in front of his face. “I know you won’t confirm it, but I have to ask anyway. Was it my father? Did he do this to us?”

Tony bit his lip, and this time it was his turn to look away. He’d never blamed Gibbs for killing Hernandez. Not once. He’d not killed Brian’s father. He could never do that. He could never turn his gun on someone and kill them out of vengeance. No matter how much he wanted them dead. He understood how Gibbs felt though, because he knew what it was like to be in that spot.

He knew what it was like to have to make a life and death decision, and… decide death was the correct outcome. He may not have killed Brian’s father, but he hadn’t tried awfully hard to stop it all those years ago in Philadelphia. He certainly had never lost a single second of sleep over it, either. Not then, and he wouldn’t tonight. He, also, would never admit to his friend what his father had done to them after college, or what Tony had done to make sure he was out of their lives forever.

“I would never have abandoned you, I would have never stopped answering your calls unless I had a life and death reason not to. That’s the only answer you’ll get from me. Let’s go eat some Mexican.”

Getting out of the car, Tony walked to the entrance and turned to look back, watching to see if Brian would get out.

He knew this was a test. He knew this was a huge moment in their friendship. He knew that if Brian got out of the car, then everything would be ok. He also knew that if Brian didn’t get out of the car then nothing would ever be ok again. The only thing that kept him going, the only thing that made him feel like his life had hope some days, when the darkness got too dark, was the knowledge that Brian and his love and friendship were still out there.

Everything Tony did every fucking day of his life, every person he helped, every slimeball he put in jail, every time he made the choice to do the right thing, he did it for Brian. He did it for the hope that Brian held in his hands. If Brian didn’t get out of the car he’d affectively be ending the last bit of hope Tony had in his life. Without the hope Brian held, Tony wasn’t sure he’d ever be able to believe in the promise of forever that Spencer was offering.

Brian had known him longer than anyone other than his father and Rossi. His father hated him. Rossi was basically his stand in father. Brian was the swing vote. Without Brian, Rossi would just be an anomaly, and Spencer would be only a dream. Without the hope of Brian, Tony was pretty sure that he’d go back to that kid he was before Brian ran into his life, and refused to leave way back at boarding school. Fortunately for Tony, Brian got out of the car.

He didn’t move until Brian reached the spot that he’d become rooted to just outside the door. It was lucky for Tony that no one tried to leave, or they’d hit him with the door. “You’re a jackass, and an idiot. Fortunately for you, I love you anyway.” Brian offered shaking his head before cupping the
back of Tony’s to bring his head forward until their foreheads touched.

“I love you, ya crazy fucker. I loved you when I was a kid, and didn’t understand what it meant. I loved you when I was a horny college student, and would rather shag you instead of the hot cheerleaders. I will love you when we’re both old, grey, and pathetic living off of ‘hey you remember when…’ stories. My father is dead though. So seriously, if you disappear on me, again, I am hunting your ass down and kicking it, capisce?” Laughing Tony nodded, and grinned big, before pulling back to enter the restaurant. Looks like life was going to go on after all.

Not long after that, the two found themselves seated in a booth away from the other restaurant patrons. Coronas on the table, and a double order of queso dip, white with the jalapenos, already put in, as they perused the menu trying to decide on what they wanted for dinner. When the waitress came back with the dip, they ordered the steak fajitas for two. After she left, they did the catching up small talk. Where have you been? Who have you been with? What new enemies have you gained that I have to destroy?

Eventually the small talk ran out, and Brian sat a moment watching Tony. “Why don’t you just get out whatever it is that you’re stressing over. You know in the end I will understand.”

“That’s the thing. I’m not sure you will. Hell, some days I am not sure that I understand. I only know that it feels right, and it’s the most amazing thing that’s happened in a while… before today I mean. I don’t understand why it makes sense though, and most of the time the whole concept of being happy with it scares the crap out of me. So, I don’t know that you’ll understand, and that scares me even more. I cannot lose you, BoBo.”

“You’re not losing me, Flyboy,” Brian insisted softly and earnestly. “I will repeat it every day if I need to. You are not losing me. It’s not happening today. It’s not happening tomorrow. It’s not happening ever. Whatever it is, you and I will figure it out, just like we always do.”

Tony nodded studying the queso, eating intently for a few moments, as he tried to work out where to start. “I told you that I was a liaison for NCIS with the Behavioral Analysis Unit out of Quantico. One of the team members, Dr. Spencer Reid, he’s…. we’re…We’re dating.”

When Brian straightened surprised, and looking a little angry, Tony held up his hand. “Please,” he begged softly, “I need you to wait, and listen.”

Rubbing a hand over his forehead, Tony could feel his hands shaking, and signed. He was tired of the constant stress. “It’s been… I skimmed over a lot of things at NCIS. Things on my team were… bad when I left. My boss, Gibbs, is like my big brother, but he’s a crappy boss. He plays people against each other. Despite being a retired Marine Sniper he has no respect for the chain of command when it comes to his subordinates. I was his Senior Field Agent, but he never treated me as anything but just another agent on his team. The other two people on the team, Ziva David, who is the daughter of Eli David, and Timothy McGee were most of the time highly insubordinate. Tim wasn’t always that way, but he has that picked on kid syndrome. When he found someone who was willing to help him ‘get back at the jock’ as he saw it, he was all gung ho.”

Tony huffed and shook his head thinking about Tim. “I basically recruited Tim onto the team. He was this nervous, stuttering, geeky cyber nerd who had big dreams, but no way to accomplish them. I convinced Gibbs to give him a chance. Gibbs hated him. I trained him. Maybe my methods are outside the box, but the normal shit wouldn’t have worked with him.

“Ziva…. Ziva I never liked, never fully trusted. She got her job through favors and thank yous for helping former Director Sheppard. Her brother was an assassin, who killed one of my team mates. Hell SHE was an assassin. SHE created the dossiers that her brother used to eventually target Kate.
She was, in my opinion, ordered to create chaos within NCIS, and she did so once she convinced her friend to place her on the premiere investigative team.

“From almost day one she seemed to be determined to drive a wedge between team members. She wanted Gibbs to see her as some kind of daughter substitute. She wanted me to be alienated from the others, and the only reason I can think of is so that my voice would be ignored. I’ve always been the one to step up, and call Gibbs on his bullshit when he gets out of line. If we were not on the same page anymore, which we weren’t because she was in my opinion successful in her mission, things, serious things, could slip by. Serious things did slip by.”

Tony picked up his beer bottle draining it, and ordering a pop when the waitress came over. He was driving after all. “I loved my job despite all the crap I had to go through. I loved it despite the whole getting stuck in the sewer handcuffed to a marine. I loved it despite getting sent undercover with the antiquities trader who turned out to be a serial killer. I loved it despite getting the plague, in my own fucking office.”

“I stopped loving it when a woman was hired who helped orchestrate the death of my friend. I stopped loving it when she had a team dinner, and everyone rubbed it in my face that I wasn’t invited. I stopped loving it when she shot me, because she fired her weapon inside a fucking shipping container, then told everyone it was a splinter. I stopped loving it when she hid a terrorist. I stopped loving it when she would have rather I have died when he attacked me, instead of him. I stopped loving it when my own director sent me to Israel to be questioned by Mossad, and then the princess got mad when I made daddy look like an idiot.”

Tony took a deep breath and ate a few chips and queso before continuing. “I stopped loving it when Ziva and Tim turned off the coms so they didn’t have to listen to me. We were doing voice prints in the field looking for a fucking terrorist, but they were tired of my voice so they turned off the coms. After that I refused to take anymore. So, I left NCIS, mostly.

“Since then Ziva’s been arrested. McGee’s been fired. Abby Sciuto, our forensic analyst, who was supposed to be my best friend, was found to have doctored the evidence to try and hide what they’d done. She then began stalking me, and tried to attack me outside of my new penthouse apartment. She’s now in jail, as well.”

Tony took a deep breath and peeked at Brian, when he saw the hard look on his face, and the fire in his friend’s eyes, he relaxed somewhat. “When I got to the FBI things were better, but still not great. Derek Morgan decided that I was a player. Jennifer LaMontagne decided that I was just a horrible person in general, and hates my guts. It felt like I couldn’t go anywhere and just... be happy. Somehow though... somehow then Spencer happened.”

Tony couldn’t help but smile at the thought of the genius. “Dr. Spencer Reid is the most genius genius that you’ll ever meet in your entire life. He’s almost uncomfortably smart sometimes. He has no sense of fashion, and is completely clueless about pop culture. For some reason, he likes me. I mean really likes me. Likes me enough to take the first step when I was trying to throw everything in my desk in a box, so I could quit because I wasn’t having any of the shit anymore.”

“I am assuming that changed,” Brian prompted smiling when Tony didn’t speak again after several moments. The waitress brought their food just then though, so Tony was saved from answering for several long moments while they got things settled. Finally though, as he build his fajita, he began to explain what his relationship with Spencer Reid was.

“It did change. We went out. Went to the Smithsonian, and a diner afterwards. Went to a Bogart and Bacall movie marathon at a theater. Spent New Year’s Eve together. He’s... I like it. He’s different. Our relationship it’s... it’s different, Brian. He’s... he’s actually why I am here. He found you. He
found out about you through my stories then tracked you down. He… he umm… he decided that I needed a… a boyfriend? So, he talked to Angelo and… well… he decided that it should be you.”

When Brian just stared at him dumbfounded, Tony couldn’t help but chuckle. “Yeah, that’s everyone’s reaction. That’s part of why JJ hates me so much. She’s decided that this whole… relationship and how it works between me and Spencer is of my doing. The thing is… I mean… pretty much from day one I have let Spencer take the lead. He decides what he wants, and I just… I just try and give it to him.”

“And, he wants you to have a boyfriend?” Brian asked confused, and Tony nodded smiling.

“See, um, Spencer is A-Sexual. I have learned that isn’t quite as black and white as it sounds. Apparently there are all different kinds, and it seems to mostly differ from one person to the next. Spencer he umm… he doesn’t mind the cuddling, and he really loves kissing. He has no interest in sex, other than a onetime purely scientific experimental type deal.”

“Onetime… scientific… what?” Brian repeated feeling like he’d lost his footing on reality. When Tony just laughed, he huffed and took a huge bite of his own fajita.

“When I say Spencer is a genius, I mean it. He graduated high school at 12. Had his first degree by 16, and his first doctorate by 17. He is a completely scientific minded person. So, most things in life are an experiment. Sex is no different. He’s tried enough of it to know basically he doesn’t want it, but he keeps saying some day he’d like to find out if that includes with me. See, until he tries it with me, his mind can’t rule out the possibility that there could be an anomaly in his research data.”

Tony found himself laughing, again, as he watched Brian just shake his head. “Personally I doubt it will ever happen, and to be honest, I hope that it doesn’t. He doesn’t need to do it, he doesn’t want to do it, and a science experiment is a really bad reason to have sex with someone you love. It’s just how his mind works. He gets so caught up in… how the rest of the world lives their lives, and how his life isn’t that way. Most of his life he’s been told that it wasn’t ok to just be himself. Spencer Reid doesn’t want sex.

“Spencer Reid though does want ME to have sex, and he wants me to have sex with you. Also, in his words, he wants to ‘watch the beauty of them being with someone they care about, and if that person could like him too it would be nice’. So, Spencer found you. He wants you and me to be together. He wants me and him to be together. He wants you and him to have some kind of relationship. I am pretty sure that it’s a ‘you and me and him’ kind of thing.”

Brian frowned as he turned the story over in his head, while he created another fajita. He’d been propositioned a lot in his life. He’d figured out long ago that Tony DiNozzo was his one and only forever kind of person. Since that realization, there had been nothing that had dissuaded him from that belief. Tony was forever and love and home and comfort and being able to just be himself with no masks or acts needed. Now though when he finally finds his Flyboy again, there is another person already standing there who apparently wanted a relationship without sex with said Flyboy.

Brian didn’t quite understand it, but he’d never been one to discriminate against someone because of what they did or did not want to do in their bedroom. The world was filled with all kinds of people. He loved life. He believed in the right of people to live their lives however they saw fit, as long as that living didn’t harm others. He also knew Tony.

It may have been years since they were last together, but he could bet that he still knew what kind of person attracted him. It wasn’t about the looks. That’s what people got confused by. Tony could always be found with a physically wide variety of bed partners. For him it was something about the person’s mind or personality that drew him in.
He was a social butterfly, and could make friends with just about anyone. He’d talk to anybody who would stand still long enough to hold a conversation. If in that conversation something sparked his interest, he was going to become attracted. That’s just the way it worked. Relationship or not.

The thing was when he was with someone he was absolutely faithful. He just couldn’t stop flirting and socializing to save his life. It was simply too ingrained into who he was. It would be like to tell him to stop having hazel eyes. People always misunderstood that as well. They’d see him flirting or talking with a pretty girl, know he was dating, and assume he was trying to get into her pants. For Tony though, he was just… being Tony. Talking, socializing, flirting were as natural and necessary to him as oxygen and water. Some people didn’t understand or weren’t secure enough in themselves or their relationship to understand that you could be faithful and still flirt.

The more he thought about what Tony had described of this relationship, the more it made sense to Brian. Comfort without the expectation of more. Lazy days in bed watching movies. Afternoons spent wandering through museums. An attentive ear when he had a bad day, and needed to verbally release some frustration.

Spencer would give him something most people never offered Tony. A body, a love, a relationship, a home that wasn’t dependent on his being able to entertain, to perform, to be the perfect little boy dressed up in the cute costume and serving alcohol to his lush parents and their lush friends. Dr. Spencer Reid gave Tony all the things he’d never had as a child, and all the things every child really needed. Home, love, and security.

If he was honest with himself, Brian knew that there wasn’t anything he wouldn’t do for Tony. He’d set himself up as his protector when they were just children. He’d fallen madly head over heels in love with him when they were young men at college. He’d believed in him even when years and miles separated then with no contact. If Tony was bringing this proposition to him, then he believed in it.

Brian wasn’t quite sure what his own part was in this whole… threesome thing, but he’d take Tony anyway that he could get him. He loved him enough that some things just didn’t matter. He knew in his heart that Tony loved him back. Sometimes the little details just… weren’t important. Sometimes all that was needed was… well was to know Tony was there. He was getting that. He was getting his Flyboy back. The rest was just… details.

“It sounds perfect for you, Flyboy,” Brian offered smiling, as he watched Tony eat his food. “I can’t wait to meet him. It sounds like this is gonna be everything we ever wanted. Count me in.”

~~* May 2012 *~~ * ~~* Offering up a Final Goodbye*~~

Tony stood at the back of the crowd trying to blend in with others trying to pay their respects. Brian was on one side gripping his hand tightly. Spencer was on the other, his elbow looped through Tony’s and a hand resting on Tony’s upper arm.

He wasn’t going to come. He wasn’t sure it was appropriate. He’d gotten word though Gibbs from the family, though, that they wouldn’t be offended by his presence. Tim’s father had sent him a note saying that his son’s mistakes were not Tony’s. They recognized what the former SFA had meant in Tim’s life and would be fine with him being there. They admitted to Tony that he had come clean to them not long before he died. Admitting the things he’d done wrong, the things he’d lied to them about.

They told him Tim had meant to reach out, try and mend fences. That part might have broken Tony’s heart more than anything. The ‘what ifs’, what could have beens, and what should have beens were soul shattering. Tony appreciated them letting him know though. It helped the pain to ease slightly
knowing that he wasn’t the only one who regretted the way it ended between them. His Angelo said that you never forget your first rookie or probie. That was certainly the case with one Very Special Agent Timothy McGee. Still though Tony thought it was best if he stood toward the back of the mourners. He wasn’t positive that everyone had the same feelings as Tim’s mom and dad.

The service was filled with family, friends, and even people from NCIS. Tony was glad to see the NCIS folk had put the things Tim had done wrong behind them, to acknowledge the man he was. He’d always been more disappointed in Tim than angry at him. Disappointed and hurt at the idea that someone he’d tried so hard to help succeed had turned on him. Had allowed himself to be manipulated so easily.

Tony must have gotten lost in his own head. When hearing Brian say his name, he blinked and realized that Sarah McGee was standing in front of him with Penny her grandmother by her side. He hadn’t spoken to them yet. Only to Tim’s parents. The last thing that he expected was to be hugged by them both.

“Thank you so much for everything you did for him,” Sarah offered. Her voice cracking as her tears started, again.

“He admired you so much, Tony” Penny relayed, her voice heavy with grief.

Tony didn’t know what to say. Hell, he was pretty sure there wasn’t anything that he could say. At that moment he was literally incapable of speech. It hurt so bad. He missed him so much. He regretted it all so fucking much.

If it wasn’t for Brian’s sturdy presence at his back, and Spencer’s quiet strength next to him, Tony was pretty sure he’d have fallen apart. He swore to himself though that he wasn’t going to cry. Not here, not in front of the family, not when others needed him to be strong.

He could cry with Gibbs in his basement. He could cry with Angelo in his study. He could cry with his boys in the privacy of their home. He couldn’t do it there in front of everyone. He just couldn’t share that pain with the world. It was hard enough with the four people he loved the most in the world.

When Penelope and Sarah pulled back, Tim’s parents were there. He hugged his mother, and shook his father’s hand. He couldn’t help but wonder how much longer the older man would make it. He didn’t look good. Not that anyone really looks good at their child’s funeral, but… all things considered he didn’t look good. Tony heard that he had cancer, and there wasn’t much time left. He had no doubt that Tim’s death was taking an extra toll on his health. Jesus, how would they handle a second death? Tony made a mental note to keep an ear out so that he could offer support when the time came.

Eventually, the family went away, and Gibbs came over with Ducky, Jimmy and Vance. More hugs and small talk were exchanged. Ducky dragged out of him a promise for a visit. Jimmy was issued an invitation for a guys’ night at the penthouse sometime soon. Gibbs gave a rub to the back of his head. Vance got a nod and a handshake. Tony wasn’t gonna pretend he liked the man no matter where they were at, or what understandings they’d previously come to. He might not hate him as much as before. He may be able to be in his presence without wanting to punch him in the face or throat as Angelo liked to threaten. He’d never like him though.

After the NCIS people walked off, he realized that the rest of the crowd had also left. That made it just the three of them standing there. Letting go of Brian’s hand and Spencer’s arm, Tony walked toward the casket. The top was covered in flowers. Reaching out, Tony put his hand on the top of the metal feeling the coolness under his palm.
“Jesus probie,” Tony whimpered, “it wasn’t supposed to be like this.”

When he felt his knees grow weak, he put his other hand on the metal, and dropped his head. “It wasn’t fucking supposed to be this way. We were supposed to be brothers. We were supposed to have a huge yelling blow out over all this crap, and get past it. You were supposed to invent some huge technological... thing and end up the King Elf Lord of the Universe. We were supposed to be able to sit on a porch... not at my house of course, ’cause why the hell would I own something with a porch... but a porch someday as old geezers, and say hey you remember that time?

“You weren’t supposed to go first, Probie. Goddamnit! You fucking weren’t supposed to go first!! I’m fucking tired of people fucking LEAVING ME! How the fuck could you do this? I goddamned trained you better than that! FUCK!”

Tony sank to his knees and rested his head against the side feeling his shoulders shaking. “You weren’t supposed to let some fucking crack head home invader kill you because you wouldn’t give up a fucking watch. You weren’t supposed to go!”

When the tears eased, and his vision cleared again, Tony stood back up and placed a hand on the casket again. “You will be missed, Probie. I am gonna buy a dog, and I am naming him Probie, just for you. Not today. Not tomorrow, but it’s happening.”

Reaching in his suit coat, Tony pulled out his well-worn NCIS hat and placed it on the casket. “Keep it safe for me, Probie, and don’t let any of those featherheads up there forget who you are, Very Special Agent Timothy McGee.” Turning Tony walked away from the casket, glad that Brian and Spencer were there to hold him together with their arms, and their love.

Later that evening as they were all cuddled up on the bed, Brian leaned against the headboard, Tony in front of him with his back to Brian’s chest, and Spencer curled by Tony’s side with his head on his partner’s chest Tony thought maybe eventually it would be ok again.

“I thought you told me that Tim hated dogs,” Spencer inquired softly. Tony couldn’t help but chuckle wondering how the man had held the question in for so long.

“He didn’t just hate them he was terrified of them.” Tony explained, and smiled softly when Spencer pulled back and frowned up at him.

“I don’t understand. Explain, please?”

Tony nodded and leaned back into Brian a little more feeling his lover’s arms tighten around him. He let his brain wander a moment as he imagined Tim standing in the room corner glaring at him while laughing on the inside.

“If Tim were here he’d be standing with that pinched ‘Tony you are a moron’ look on his face. He’d call me all the names that he thought Penny wouldn’t smack the crap out of him for. Then he’d grin and start researching what kind of dogs would work best in apartments. He’d make spreadsheets and graphs, and spend all night looking crap up on the internet. When I got the little bugger he’d look at the picture, and nod telling me he was right of course. It’ll be perfect. We can get a girl, too, and name her Kate. Dogs live longer than goldfish.”

Spencer frowned, still not understanding, but filed it away to ask Derek later. Brian smirked and reaching over ruffled his hair making the youngest of them squawk. “It’s what a brother does, Spencer.”

Spencer turned the words over in his head, and finally nodded laying his head back down. Tony
smiled as imaginary Tim just grinned and nodded before disappearing. “It’s been an honor knowin’ you, Tony.” He heard in his ear, as a cool breeze moved across him. Looking over he confirmed the window was closed, and the air conditioning and fans were off.

Closing his eyes, he let the tears fall one last time. “The honor was all mine, Probie. The honor was all mine.”

Chapter End Notes

For those that didn't read the third section, Tony released his pain over the whole thing at the funeral. Tim's family thanked Tony for all he'd done for McGee. Tony and Tim had a Sixth Sense type goodbye at the end before Tim moved on as the three boys (Tony Brian and Spencer) snuggled on the bed. All very sad for poor Tony

Big Kudos go out to Rivermoon1970 for her assistance on the kissing scene. I suck at such things. Really I am horrible at kissing scenes. It's awful. I made my attempt, and she came in and wrote something kick ass, which I then tweaked slightly.

I hope everyone made it through this angst fest. The next chapter also has a dark scene in it that involves a flashback to Tony and Brian's father and... the ending Tony hinted at in the second section. I don't think it's triggery, but I will have the appropriate warnings in the beginning notes. After THAT though I think there's only mildly angsty things left.
Chapter Summary

Brian learns something surprising one day while picking out clothes. Tony finds himself equally amused and sad as he explains some things to his lover. Then Brian and Spencer clarify their personal relationship. Brian is hopeful, until he isn't. Spencer is confused, until he isn't. Hotch is amused and then not that he has to explain such things. Lastly, a view into the past clears up the mystery that is Tony and one Padraig O'Connor better known as Brian's father.

Chapter Notes

OK peeps! Here is the next chapter. It isn't nearly as angsty as the last. The third section definitely features a slightly darker Tony than we are used to though. I don't think it is triggery, but there is some mild torture. Please keep in mind, this Tony was raised by David Rossi and therefore would have a different sense of justice and protecting your family.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

**Chapter Twelve: An Unexpected Forever Home, Considering an Unexpected Romance and, You Reap what you Sow**
Brian stepped out of the bathroom, a towel wrapped around his waist. Making his way into the closet in Tony’s room, Brian looked at the clothes hanging up trying to decide what to wear. Looking at the jeans hung neatly in a row, he realized that his six pair of jeans fit in nicely with Tony’s own denim. Something about the sight struck him as odd or out of place for some reason. Turning slowly in a circle, Brian looked around at the rest of the clothes hanging in the closet. He saw his shirts mixed in with Tony’s. His shoes were mixed in with Tony’s. His suits…

Walking out of the closet, still only wearing a towel, Brian looked around the room. The bed area was definitely divided into ‘sides‘. Tony’s side was closest to the door. There was a nightstand next to it that had two pictures on it. One was of the three of them, while another one of Tony and Rossi when Tony was just a kid. There was some of change Tony had pulled out of his pocket the night before, as well as Tony’s wallet & the doc for his cellphone.

The other side had a picture Brian had carried around since college of himself and Tony at one of the Frat parties. It was something precious to him, and was never left somewhere he didn’t know it wouldn’t be safe. He also had his own wallet, phone charger, and a paperback that he’d been reading. Walking over to the dresser he opened drawers finding his underwear next to Tony’s. His socks with Tony’s, and on and on and…. Frowning deeper he walked out of the room, and back to the bathroom where he found his hair stuff, deodorant mixed in with Tony’s. Moving to the room Tony called their office, as opposed to the library type room that they considered Spencer’s, Brian realized that there were two desks, each set up with its own stuff. Again, one held Tony’s things, and the other one was set up with Brian’s.

After that he started wandering around the penthouse. Every room he went into there were things of his own, mixed in with Tony’s. He was standing in the kitchen, still wearing only his towel, when he heard Tony speak from somewhere behind him. “Why are you standing in the kitchen with the refrigerator door, the pantry door, and all of the cabinet doors open wearing only a towel? Not that I am opposed to your state of mostly undress, but…. Seriously, Bri, what the fuck are you doing?”

Brian turned, and stared at his friend not speaking. Eventually, Tony lifted an eyebrow. “Yes? Are you trying to read my mind, Professor X? I wasn’t aware of your mutant status.”

Brian opened his mouth, and shut it looking back to the fridge, before closing the door and turning back to Tony again. “I have shit everywhere around here! Why didn’t you tell me I was taking up too much space?”

Tony frowned, and stared at the blonde feeling confused. “Because you aren’t? Seriously, what are you freaking out about? I don’t understand.”

“I have crap in every room, Tony!” Brian shouted freaking out, and Tony cocked his head to one side. He was trying to decide if he was gonna stand and hash this out, or flee for his life. He was starting to wonder if aliens had replaced his normally calm and reasonable lover with some odd freaked out pod person.

“You live here. Why wouldn’t you have stuff all over.” Tony finally asked still confused, but
deciding to be a brave soul, and stay to face the weird beast that had taken over his friend.

“I… I live here?” Brian repeated feeling disconnected. He wondered if he’d missed a conversation somewhere. Deciding he needed to point out his living situation he commented, “I was just staying a few days.”

Tony’s lips twitched, as he tried to remain expressionless. “Dude, that was six weeks ago. You’ve moved in since then. Granted it was slowly, but you have definitely moved in. I figured you knew. My house is your house, or rather my penthouse apartment is your penthouse apartment in this case. It doesn’t make sense for you to live in hovel when you can live here.”

When Brian still kept staring at him, Tony frowned confused before the light bulb finally flicked on in his head. Sighing sadly, he moved to stand in front of the man he loved so desperately. “Brian, this isn’t going away.” He promised softly. Reaching out he covered circled Brian’s wrists with his hands in a gesture that normally didn’t leave the privacy of their bedroom. In this instance though, he needed to make sure that Brian was focused on Tony and not whatever was going on in his head.

“It’s safe, BoBo. I’m not throwing you out. The thing that made me break my promise can’t ever happen again. This is your home. This is our home. Someday I hope that it’ll be Spencer’s home, too. He’s even more clueless than you are though, if you can believe it. So, I am biding my time with him.

“Forgetting Spencer for the time being, it’s ok to trust this place we’re in. It’s ok to let yourself be happy, again. It’s ok to rise above it all. You don’t deserve those crappy places that you seclude yourself in, Bri. You aren’t the man you play. You aren’t a scumbag. You aren’t him. You aren’t your father, and you don’t deserve to live like a wanted criminal just because he wanted you to be line him. I am sorry I didn’t understand quicker where your head was at, or I would have told you all of this before now.

Tony wanted to say “I love you”. He wanted to tell the man that all the dreams they made lying in bed together at OSU were going to come true. He wanted to make new dreams that included Spencer. He wanted a lot of things, but as someone who was as broken as Brian, he knew that it wasn’t time for all of that.

Instead he just leaned forward resting his forehead against Brian’s. “This is our home, BoBo. We made it. We’re finally free.”

When his lover wrapped his arms around him and let loose the tears he’d held in for years, Tony stubbornly kept his own in check. There would be plenty of shower time to release his own angst later. Right now it was about Brian. It would always be about Brian first, and Tony wouldn’t have it any other way.

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**February 2013** *~~* **Considering an Unexpected Romance** *~~*

Brian was sitting on the sofa with the latest editions of Car and Driver and Popular Mechanic on his lap. In one of the nearby chairs, Spencer was curled up reading a book at a pace that while still faster than most was much slower than what he’d seen used for work information. It was one of their rare nights without Tony. It had been awhile since he’d gone to see Gibbs, so he’d headed over there after work with pizzas and beer. He’d declared that he needed to spend time with his big brother, and to not expect to see him home that night.
“I feel like we’re just acquaintances.”

When Spencer looked up surprised, Brian bit the inside of his lower lip realizing that he’d been the one to speak. Having drawn the younger man’s attention, Brian decided to just go with it, and speak his mind. “I don’t want this to be about you and Tony or me and Tony. I want this to be you and Tony and me. I don’t want this… it feels like when Tony isn’t around, you and I have this weird college freshman year roommate thing going on. We’ve figured out how to cohabitate, but haven’t really taken the time to be friends. That’s usually because both kids know sophomore year they’ll be rooming with a friend.”

Brian sighs as Spencer puts down his book. A confused frown was firmly in place on his face. “The difference is that next year, unless something horrible happens, you and I will still be here still just… cohabitating. I don’t want that. We should be more than that. I… I feel like we should be more than just two random people who happen to be in love with Tony. I just want to be more to you than just ‘that other guy Tony dates’, and I don’t feel like I am right now.”

When Spencer just continued to frown at him obviously confused, Brian sighed. “It’s ok. Never mind. It was… it was just an… it was a stupid idea. There’s nothing wrong with how things are. Ignore me.”

Spencer watched Brian head to the bedroom that he shared with Tony, and knew he’d messed something up. He just didn’t understand what. Pulling out his cellphone, he navigated to the phone function, and called the person that he went to when he didn’t understand things.

“Spencer?”

“I think I messed something up, but I don’t understand what I did.”

He heard a sigh on the other end with a hint of amusement followed by softly spoken instructions, he guessed to Jack. They were followed by a few moments of absolute silence, and he could picture his boss moving to his home office. Hearing a door shut, he knew that he’d been correct.

“Tell me what happened,” he finally heard, and obediently relayed the one sided conversation. When he got done, he definitely heard a sigh from his boss and friend.

“Spencer…” Hotch started this time a hint of exasperation in his voice. The older man then abruptly stopped, before eventually starting again. “He’s trying to tell you that he wants a relationship with you, too.”

Spencer frowned deeper, turning the words over in his head. “I don’t understand. Why would he want that? He has Tony.”

This time he heard an inhale of air, and frowned deeper trying to catalogue what that meant, but found he couldn’t. “Reid… Spencer…” Aaron started and stopped. Spencer couldn’t help but notice he did that a lot in these conversations.

“He wants it because he cares about you. Threesomes aren’t about two relationships consisting of one person with two different people. A true threesome is about the connection between three individuals. Yes, there is a relationship between you and Tony, as well as another one between Tony and Brian. For things to work, for things to be healthy, there needs to be a relationship between you and Brian independent of Tony. Otherwise Tony’s just going to end up feeling like the middle man torn between two vastly different partnerships.”

Spencer bit his lip turning Hotch’s words over in his head. “Let me ask you this, Reid. What did you
want? What did you hope for when you proposed this relationship to Tony?"

“I wanted Tony to have someone that he could have sex with who cared about him, and maybe
didn’t hate me.” Spencer replied. When his friend didn’t reply right away he wondered if he had
given the wrong answer.

“That’s all you wanted? That Brian didn’t hate you? You didn’t want some kind of relationship even
if it’s just a close friendship with him for yourself? I ask because it sounds like you’ve set the bar for
your personal relationship expectations terribly low, Reid. You deserve more than that. Do you… do
you understand that? Do you believe that?”

“But, I have more. I have Tony. I basically already got a miracle. Who ever imagined that someone
as amazing as Tony… Someone successful and popular and smart and good looking as him… He
can get almost anyone he wants. I never imagined someone like him would not just be willing to
spend time with me, but actually want to be with me.”

Spencer paused thinking over what he’d just said before going on. “How could I possible deserve a
second miracle in Brian? Brian’s like… He’s basically… He could have been made into a marble
statue. He’s…. He’s beautiful. I don’t deserve them both.”

Spencer heard Hotch take a deep breath, and went back to chewing on his lip. “But, you already
have them both, Spencer.” He heard Hotch point out gently. Spencer turned the words over in his
head as Hotch went on.

“Regardless of what you think that you deserve, Spencer, you have been given more than that. Tony
and Brian both seem to believe that you deserve more than that. For what it’s worth, I think that you
deserve everything that you are being given.

“At this point, the issue isn’t even if you deserve them both, because they have already committed
themselves to you. The real issue here, is what are you going to give back? Brian is telling you that
he wants a stronger relationship between you and he. It sounds like he was trying to open a dialog so
that you two could get on the same page. I think you need to decide what you want from Brian, not
what you think that you deserve. Ask yourself this. If you could have with Brian what you have with
Tony, would you take it? Would you like it, or would it make you uncomfortable? Then when
you’ve made a decision, you need to go talk to him and be honest. Tell him what we’ve talked about.
You might be surprised by his response.”

Reid nodded then remembered that Hotch couldn’t see him. “OK, Hotch. Thank you for the advise.”

“Anytime, Reid. Call back if you have any other questions. I am always here for you.” When he
heard the call end, Spencer set his phone down, and let his brain process what he’d been told. It was
hard to get past the ‘what he deserved’ part, but he did as Aaron suggested.

One question Hotch had asked kept circling in his head. ‘If you could have with Brian what you have
with Tony, would you take it?’ His relationship with Tony was amazing. He loved the time he spent
with him. He loved being able to tell him anything. He loved getting kisses and hugs at home when
he’d had a bad day, or even just because. He loved seeing the affection and love on his face and
knowing it was for him. Would he want that from Brian, too? How could he not?

He loved Brian’s smile. He loved the sound of his voice when he was happy. You could practically
hear his smile. He was completely fascinated by the man. He loved the way he looked at Tony. It
was like he could see all the things that went through Spencer’s own mind reflected on Brian’s face.
There were times he wished that he could sit and ask him a million questions about Tony and the
parts of their lives that they’d shared. It never actually occurred to him though that those questions
might be welcomed.

Would he want a similar relationship with Brian that he shared with Tony? After running all the scenarios and possibilities through his mind, after going over all the data and information that he had available to him, Spencer found that he couldn’t think of a reason why he wouldn’t. It occurred to him that most people probably didn’t make decisions involving emotion this way, but then he figured most people didn’t struggle with understanding even their own emotions as much as he did. Having made his choice, Spencer stood, and moved out of the room.

Pausing just outside the bedroom doorway, he watched Brian as he lay on the bed. His stomach was churning with guilt as he observed Tony’s lover. That though, that label alone, made him feel bad. Brian was right. There shouldn’t be a Tony and Spencer or a Brian and Tony. There shouldn’t be a Tony’s boyfriend or Tony’s lover distinction. Brian should be as much his as he was Tony’s. Maybe not in the same way, but still his in their own Brian and Spencer way.

Wouldn’t it be nice to be important… to be that important to a second person? Heck he’d have more boyfriends than Derek! The thought made him giggle drawing the blonde’s attention. Spencer waved in greeting drawing a small smile to the other man’s face.

“Can I come in?” Spencer asked shoving his hands into the pockets of his sleep pants.

When Brian nodded, he moved into the room, perching on the end of the bed. “I’m not very good at this understanding how I relate to other people thing. JJ used to help me figure this stuff out. Sometimes Derek does, but usually only if I go to him first. By then it’s too late, and I’ve already messed things up. JJ used to tell me when I was missing something. Since she has turned into the queen bitch though, she doesn’t anymore. I think that she’s trying to punish me for not listening to her about Tony… and you, but mostly Tony.”

“You didn’t mess anything up.” Brian protested, but Spencer cut him off disagreeing.

“I hurt you,” Spencer disputed quietly. “The why doesn’t change that. I will admit that I didn’t understand. It wasn’t until Hotch explained it to me that I was able to see what was going on. It never occurred to me that you wanted or would want a relationship with me, also. I consider Tony’s interest in me a miracle. The idea that someone as beautiful and as together as you could want a connection with me separate from Tony doesn’t make sense to me. Not because you are lacking in something, but because I am. I wouldn’t… It would be nice to have a relationship that is Brian and Spencer specific. That is if… if you still… want… it?”

When Brian smiled a little more, Spencer felt himself relax slightly. “People always assume that I have like a hundred friends. They assume that because I am outgoing, and generally I am a fairly happy and relaxed guy, that I have this huge social circle.”

Spencer began chewing on his thumbnail, one arm wrapped around his waist as he tried to decide where this was going. When Brian just barrelled on though he determinedly paid attention.

“The truth of the matter is, I have a ton of acquaintances. I know people all over. I have one friend. I have one person that I trust with everything, I have one person that I have ever let all of the way in. There’s only one person who has ever been given all of my hopes and dreams and secrets. That is Tony. I would really like to expand that list to two people. So, if you’re willing, then yes. I am all for finding out what it means to be Spencer and Brian.”

Smiling shyly, Spencer moved to curling into the blonde’s side as he began to tell the story of meeting Jason Gideon. He was excited to see where this led.
The next morning, Brian walked into the gym at work to see Tony stretching on a mat as he waited for one of the machines to open up. Walking over he bumped his shoulder, making his lover stumble slightly. When the other man just grinned goofily, Brian smiled shyly. “Mornin’, Flyboy.”

“How’d it go?” Tony asked abandoning his stretching. He hated Gibbs’ couch with a freakin’ passion.

Brian just smiled brightly and nodded quietly. Tony smiled back understanding. Words weren’t necessary. “Thank God!” He exclaimed then tackled his friend, making him yelp as they began to wrestle on the mat. Their tensions over the lack of cohesiveness between the three of them without Tony gone from their minds.

~~* Flashback Scene Pre-NCIS *~~ * ~~* You Reap what you Sow *~~

Officer Anthony DiNozzo, Jr., currently known as Antonio DiBennedito, stood next to Marco Russo watching dispassionately as the man kneeling on the floor begged for his life. Normally, Tony would be horrified by this. Normally, his mind would be whirling trying to find a way to save this man’s life. This wasn’t normal though, and the man kneeling and begging wasn’t just any man. Tony couldn’t prevent his mind from going back to the last time he’d seen him.

Tony was walking back to his one room apartment, possibly weaving slightly from the amount of beer that he’d consumed as he tried to forget that his best friend, and the love of his life, was currently thousands of miles away at FLETC. Thanks to his football injury, Tony hadn’t been able to graduate with Brian. The plan was that he’d finish this last semester and then Tony would begin his own route into the FBI.

They’d known that they were going to have different paths. Tony had intended to go into the NFL until his football injury. Once that happened, and then he had to listen to that little girl burn, Tony and Brian came up new plan for Tony’s future. Tony would officially start the Peoria, IL Police Academy the following Monday. Brian had begun FLETC three months prior.

He’d almost reached the frat house when he sensed the presence of someone behind him. Unfortunately, though it wasn’t early enough to avoid the blow to the head. The last thing he remembered before blacking out was the hands picking him up, and the van rolling to a stop next to them on the curb.

When he came to he was tied to a chair, with a bright light hanging over him. “How very mobster movie,” he thought to himself as he squinted into the darkness. His head hurt like a bitch. Soon though his concussion would be the least of his worries. “Hello? Is anyone there? Look, I think you have the wrong guy!”

He was working on trying to figure out what was going on, while trying to loosen the ropes tying his wrists together when he heard a door bang closed, and footsteps of more than one person approaching him. A tall-ish heavyset blond man stopped just before him. “I can assure you Anthony DiNozzo, Junior that we do not have the wrong guy. I know exactly who you are.”

“That’s great. I have no idea who the hell you are. You mind filling me in?” Tony mouthed, and immediately regretted it when a blow to his cheek came from the darkness beside him. “Shut your
fucking mouth, you filthy guappo! You ain’t disrespektin’ the boss like that.” A few more blows were delivered to his face before the older blonde held up a hand.

“I am going to explain how this is going to work, Anthony. I am speaking. You are listening. If you speak, Sean here gets to shut you up. He prefers to do this with his fists. Once I am done speaking, you are to agree with me. If you do not, there will be consequences. Consequences that will be painful for us both, but that I assure you I will insure that you pay the most heavily for.”

“You gonna at least tell me who the fuck you are?” Tony smarted back, and immediately Sean delivered more blows this time dividing them between his face and his stomach.

“You are not very intelligent, Anthony, or maybe I should call you Junior as your father does. A despicable human being. I can see that his son did not fall far from the tree. I will tell you who I am though. It is only right that you know whom you are to be fearing. My name is Padraig O’Connor. You have been trying to sully my son Brian with your WOP filth. I tried to keep the two of you apart after you managed to mess up the boarding school I selected for him telling your lies about Headmaster McSweeney. I worked very hard to get Brian in there, and get the correct man in place as the headmaster. Then you mess it up with your constant rebellion and stupidity. You and that filthy guappo agent friend of yours.”

Tony saw Padraig flick his hand, and soon Sean stepped in to deliver more blows to Tony’s head and chest. At one time he heard a crunch, and knew that he now was the proud owner of at least one broken rib.

“This is very simple, Anthony. You are going to leave my son alone. You will cut off all ties to him. You will not seek him out, and should my kind hearted son seek you out, you will insure that he does not do so again. I have plans for Brian. One day he will remember his place, and return to my side. I am allowing him to play at this being a federal agent thing because it could be useful at some point. You though are nothing but a nuisance.”

“Fuck you!” Tony spat spitting a mouthful of blood at the elder Irishman. “Brian will NEVER join you! Fuck you if you think that he’d ever stoop to your level. Brian has HONOR. You’re just a fucking SCUMBAG! I’m gonna make sure that Angelo takes all of you apart!” He wasn’t surprised when the blows came. He wasn’t sorry though. He’d never give up Brian though. He’d fight for him to the death.

When the blows stopped, Sean pulled his head back so that he was forced to look at Padraig’s face. “I don’t believe you will go to your filthy WOP friend David Rossi. I know this because should you do so, I will turn my son over to my new associate.”

Tony flicked his eyes to the side when a man stepped into the light. He was shorter than Tony by about a head, with a nasty scar running down his face. “You should feel honored, Anthony. Not many outside of my world know what this man looks like. I would like you to meet Nikolai Rushkov. I believe your friend Agent Rossi may have told you about him. He probably referred to him though as the Ghost Enforcer. If I cannot have my son at my side, he is of no use to me. If he is of no use to me, I have no care if he lives or dies.”

Padraig smiled coldly and Tony shivered knowing that he was truly looking into the eyes of evil. “The only thing keeping my son safe and alive, Anthony, is you. Should you make the wrong decision then Brian will be given over to Nikolai. So, you understand what that means, he’s going to let you experience a… taste of what my son will suffer though.”

From then all Tony could remember was pain and screaming and the sound of Padraig’s voice one last time. “Remember, Anthony, only you can keep my son alive.”
When he’d woken up, Tony had Rossi write a letter and made his Angelo promise it would be delivered to Brian. His Angelo had been worried sick, and furious when Tony had refused to answer any questions. When Tony only said to do his job, and find the Ghost, he saw a look of fear on his friend’s face. That had been the last time he’d willingly spoken of the incident.

Blinking and shaking his head, Tony came back to the present and noticed that Padraig O’Connor was much bloodier than when they’d started. Unfortunately for the old Irishman, his influence had waned over the years. He’d recently run his mouth to the wrong person about Marco’s father.

“What do you say, Tonio? Should we give this man another chance?” Marco asked. Looking at the blonde next to him, Tony shrugged then moved to stand in front of the kneeling man. With a flick of his wrist, Padraig’s head was lifted so that he was looking into Tony’s eyes.

He could see the moment the Irishman recognized him. Fortunately his broken jaw kept Tony’s cover intact. As the man screamed and made other equally urgent noises, Tony searched his heart and his conscious for any guilt or regret over what he was about to do. All he could find though was the picture of Brian’s face the last time they’d made love, and the tear stained letter Angelo had delivered back to him.

“I think that you do what you have to protect family, Marco. I know if it were me, I wouldn’t lose a second of sleep if O’Connor were to die. I’m going back to the car though. He’s not worth my time, and the disgusting noises he’s making is giving me a headache.”

Turning Tony headed to the vehicle he’d arrived in with Marco. He could honestly say that he had no idea who shot Padraig O’Connor. All he knew was that by the time he got to the car door, the deed had been done. When he turned to look back, Brian’s father was laying on the floor in a pool of his own blood. The bullet hole in the back of his head would make the cause of death easy to determine. True to his word, Tony never did lose a minute of sleep over the action.

A year later Rossi invited him for the weekend, and informed him that a man named Nikolai Rushkov had been killed by Interpol. His Angelo hadn’t said anything more, but Tony knew. Tony knew that his father figure knew what he’d done. He knew what had been done to him and by whom. He knew, and he approved. After all, you did what you had to for family.

Chapter End Notes

Tony is definitely Rossi’s son in everything but genetics. I hope you enjoyed a little bit of revenge for what Padraig has put the two boys through.

I want to say that you are all amazing, and I appreciate all of the kudos and comments. Rough Trade starts next Friday, and goes through the month of July. I am still expecting to be able to keep posting this story. Thirteen is finished, and once I get fourteen written all the other chapters are already partially done.
Chapter Summary

Brian's most recent case has a familiar name involved. The ending though is vastly different than the original. He realizes how much worse it could have gone if his life was just a little different. Then Ducky is in danger, but no one at NCIS wants to listen. When the smoke clears some hard truths have been learned, and firm lines drawn in the sand. Lastly, Spencer's previous predictions finally come true. A marriage falls apart, and the penthouse gets some new residents.

Chapter Notes

I am not a doctor, and I don't even play one on TV. The medical facts for some... actions in the second section are a little on the unrealistic side, but the musi get what the musi want.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.
Brian entered the penthouse, which was silent except for the sound of the air conditioner blowing. He’d just finished the debriefing on his latest undercover assignment, and had been given the rest of the day off. He was looking forward to the three hours of alone time until Spencer and Tony got done at the BAU. He needed the time to process his thoughts about the case, and the man he’d sent back to prison. That man being one Dominic Toretto guilty of hijacking and various other charges.

The older of two children born to Marco and Louisa Toretto. His younger sister Mia was trying to become a doctor. He hoped that she succeeded. He hoped that her time separated from her brother would give her some clarity in where she wanted to go in life. In his opinion, she needed some distance from him and his crowd. She had a lot of potential. Some day she could do a lot of good for the world, save a lot of people. It would be a shame if it were wasted because he dragged her down with his life of crime.

Dominic and Mia’s mother had died when Mia was just 5 years old. Their father had died when Mia was just a teenager. Because of this the siblings formed an extremely close bond. One that in Brian’s opinion hadn’t often worked in Mia’s favor. As he moved into the bedroom that he shared with Tony, Brian’s mind moved away from the facts of the case. He instead found himself thinking about what could have been, and how lucky he was.

If Brian didn’t have this penthouse to come home to…. If Brian didn’t have Spencer and Tony in his life…. If he hadn’t found Tony again at Ohio State University…. If he hadn’t reached out to that broken child everyone else had written off…. If he hadn’t found him that first time at boarding school… If his mother hadn’t had the forethought to get him away from Roman Pearce… Brian knew that he could have been one of those people caught in Dominic’s web.

Brian could picture a part of himself being drawn to Toretto and his ragtag family. If he was lonelier, greener, or if he simply didn’t have the two men that he shared his life with to depend on, it would be easy to get lost in the man’s pull. That thought made him sit heavily on the bed.

One leg in his jeans and one out, shirt lying on the floor, and cold dread in his heart. Jesus that could have really been him. He’d never thought himself as having been fortunate in life, but he could see clearly now how he could have easily gone off track. Mostly his life had been crappy with brief Tony connected moments of happiness. But…

Jesus that could have been him.

If Brian had less knowledge of what a scumbag his father had been in life, he could picture himself overlooking the line between good and bad, right and wrong. It would be easy to make excuses for Dominic. Losing his mother to disease, losing his father in a horrific track accident in front of his eyes, growing up poor, getting thrown in Lompoc when he was still vulnerable from his father’s death.

The thing was he had options. His family may have been poor, but there had been a lot of love in that little house. His father had been strict, but made sure his children knew that he loved them. Even after Dominic got out of prison he’d had options. He had the garage, which did a decent enough business to live on. They also had the income from the store, which had provided enough money to
give them a little bit for extras. Sure they wouldn’t get rich, but they’d be living an honest life. They’d be doing things the right way. One of them wouldn’t be in prison right now facing the next 10 to 20 years behind bars. The other wouldn’t be faced with a life alone separated from everything she’d known.

Dom was a smart guy. If he’d wanted to do things the right way he could have succeeded. Instead he’d wanted the easy money. He’d wanted the adrenaline rush from the heist. He’d wanted things he hadn’t worked for. The world didn’t owe him jackshit. Too bad that no one thought to inform one Mr. Toretto of that.

Jesus that could have been him.

Brian couldn’t let go of that thought. He’d enjoyed his time in the garage with Dominic’s crew. He’d genuinely liked some of them. Vince… not so much. Vince was a thug plain and simple. He had the typical hot-headed, guard dog mentality. Brian had met a guy like him in every undercover job he’d ever done. If Vince ever found out who Brian really was he would be a credible threat once he was out of prison. That is if Vince survived prison. Brian had his doubts about that. He’d currently put it at 50/50. Brian had recommended that the judge separate them, except for Jesse. Poor fucking Jesse.

There was another one that he felt sorry for. Jesse had no clue what was going on. Jesse was a prime example of what happened when society turned their backs on kids that needed a little more love and attention. Jesse would be placed with Dominic. Brian had talked to the prosecuting attorney who had promised he’d get it done. He hoped that there was a way the young man could avoid prison, or at the very least get a very minimal sentence. Jesse Brian would be keeping an eye on, and watching to see if he could help along the way. Even if it would have to be at a distance. Unfortunately though, Jesse would never survive prison without Dominic Toretto.

Jesus that could have been him.

The thought wouldn’t go away. It just kept swirling around in his head. He could have turned into Dominic’s right hand man. He could have slipped down the rabbit hole, and gotten caught in the shiny aura that surrounded the big man. He could have easily thrown everything away. Jesus that could have been him.

When Spencer and Tony walked in the penthouse door, Brian was pacing around the living room wearing only his jeans. His blonde hair was going in all directions, as if the man had been running his fingers through it, or pulling at it. “Brian,” Spencer called out frowning, as he felt Tony stop behind him.

When Brian turned slightly wild eyes toward them, Spencer worried. He was confused when Tony didn’t move forward, so instead he crossed the space between himself and the blonde. Reaching out hesitantly, he touched his arm making the blonde start slightly. “Jesus, Spencer, I… I could have been them.”

“Been who, Brian?” Spencer asked defaulting to his freaked out victim tone he used at work. Out of the corner of his eye, Spencer saw Tony moving toward them, removing his tie and suit coat.

“How did you…? Nevermind, I don’t wanna know.” Brian swore. Lifting his hands he ran his fingers through his blonde waves. Spencer opened his mouth to speak, but felt Tony’s touch on the small of his back.
“What happened with Toretto, Brian?” Tony asked, and Spencer recognized that as his ‘I am in charge, and don’t even think of fucking with me’ tone. He normally only used that when things got difficult at work.

“I could have been them,” Brian repeated, and Spencer turned slightly so that he could see both men. His gaze landed on Tony just in time to see the man nod.

“You said that,” Tony pointed out. Spencer was a little confused at the dynamic here. It was the first time he’d really seen Brian upset, but he’d always assumed that Tony would treat Brian with something close to the care the Italian gave Spencer when he was upset.

Later he would learn that sometimes being nice to someone when they were upset was the worst thing you could do. Tony explained that people like himself and Brian hated people being nice to them on the best of days. Doing so when they were in certain moods though was just asking for a mess. That would be much later though after they had Brian calmed down, and taking a nap in Spencer’s room. Now he just remained quietly confused as he watched and listened.

“Who is this ‘they’, and why is it so horrible that you could have become them?” Tony asked the boss tone now very obviously in place.

“Toretto’s crew,” Brian explained stilling, and putting his hands in his pockets. Spencer blinked at the transformation, and just made a mental note of another thing to ask Tony about.

“I… I realized that I could have been them. I could have gotten caught in his web. If I didn’t have you two. If Spencer hadn’t found me. If you and I hadn’t met. If my mom hadn’t sent me to boarding school.”

“That’s a lot of ifs,” Tony pointed out, and Brian shrugged seemingly careless, but Spencer could see the strain behind the façade.

“Not that many.” Brian argued. “Just taking out one of those things could have changed everything. I could have been them.”

Spencer frowned at the repetition, and couldn’t resist pointing out, “but you aren’t.”

When Brian turned his gaze in his direction, Spencer felt the urge to step back. He didn’t know why. He knew Brian wouldn’t hurt him. It was the steady presence from Tony at his back that kept him in place. “You aren’t them. You do have us. I did find you for Tony, and you two did meet up both in boarding school and college. That all did happen, so you aren’t them.”

Spencer saw Brian startle, as if none of that had occurred to him in the time he’d spent pacing around the penthouse half dressed. When the youngest of the three turned his gaze up to Tony, he saw an amused smirk firmly in place, and his eyes trained on their blonde partner.

“He’s the genius of this trio for a reason, Brian.” Tony offered tongue firmly in cheek. When Spencer turned his sight back to Brian he was just in time to see the man huff.

“I know it didn’t, but…”

“You’re in too deeply, Brian,” Tony said gently. Spencer felt a kiss to his cheek before Tony moved to stand in front of Brian, putting his back to Spencer. “Spencer’s right. None of those what ifs happened. You’ve lost sight of your reality, again. This is becoming a disturbing habit.” Spencer wasn’t sure what Tony meant, but trusted his partner to know the truth of the situation. After all, Tony was the one who understood Brian’s undercover life.
“Since when do you concentrate on the ‘what if’s’ instead of the here and now?” When Brian sighed and lifted his hands to run them through his hair once more, Tony caught them. “I think you need sleep. Let’s put you in Spencer’s room, so you aren’t disturbed when I go to bed. He can stay with me tonight.”

Spencer watched Tony lead Brian away, and removing his satchel, sat down on the couch to await Tony to come back. He knew explanations would be forthcoming, and he was right.

He would learn about needing time alone after an undercover job to get your head back on straight. He would learn about losing yourself in your undercover identity, sometimes to the point where you forgot who the real you was. He would learn about the other hazards of undercover work. In the end when Tony was done explaining, and Spencer was done learning, the young genius would be even more determined to get Brian into the BAU. He was not losing the man to the demons someone else had created for him.

~~* February 2012 *~~ * ~~*The Gremlin Shouts Danger*~~

“Tony!”

Hearing his name shouted, Tony looked up from the file that he was studying to see Jimmy Palmer hurrying toward him. Frowning he stood to meet the excitable younger man. “Tony! I need to talk to you, and you have to listen to me. No one else will believe me, and they all say I’m just imagining things, but I know I’m not. He’s in danger, and no one will listen!”

“Gremlin, take a deep breath,” Tony ordered just before the young autopsy assistant latched onto him with a hug. “OK, Jimmy.”

Patting the man’s back, Tony rolled his eyes at Prentiss who was smirking unhelpfully. “Jimmy… come on man. You said Ducky was in danger? Come on man…” Tony started separating the two of them.

“Why don’t we go to the conference room that the team uses and talk? Hey, do you mind if Prentiss comes? That way if we need the FBI you don’t have to repeat things.”

“I’m sorry, Tony,” Jimmy offered stepping back looking miserable. “It’s just, no one will listen!”

“Hey, no sorrys. If Ducky is in trouble I’m glad you came. Come on now, let’s go up to the room.”

Looking up to Hotch’s office he saw him standing at the railing with Rossi. Hotch gave him a nod of approval, as Tony made his way to the round table with Emily and Jimmy following. Once they were settled in, Jimmy on one side, and he and Emily on the other, Tony prompted his friend to start from the beginning.

“I was opening mail. Dr. Mallard wasn’t in when it came in, and sometimes there are urgent things that need taking care of. In with the nomad mail was one that was addressed directly to Dr Mallard only I didn’t see it was for him personally, because I had the pile flipped over so the backs were all up. It looked like one of those ransom notes that you see in the movies with the letters cut out of magazines. Only it was threatening to kill him!”

Tony frowned at this, and reaching out patted Jimmy’s hand. “We’ll figure it out Palmer. Do you remember what it said?”

“No, but I brought them all with me.” Jimmy advised digging a pile of letters out of the backpack
that Tony knew he carried his school books in.

“This is…” Emily started picking one up, while Tony frowned concerned at the number in front of him.

“There’s more,” Jimmy said feeling like maybe finally someone was going to listen finally. “I am positive that he’s being followed.”

“I’m not surprised,” Emily agreed looking at one of the letters. “Take a look at this, Tony. I think that we need to get Derek in here. This is….”

As he read the letter Emily had been reviewing, Tony felt himself grow more concerned. “Yeah, Em, could you…” Emily was already on her way out the door before he was finished.

“So, I was right?” Jimmy asked, his voice quivering with fear.

Looking up, tiny nodded at his friend. “You did well, Black Lung. This definitely should not be ignored. I need to know, was Gibbs one of the ones who blew you off?”

Jimmy bit his lip, and nodded nervous. He knew that the senior agent and Tony were close. “I… I tried to tell him, but he just said that I had an overactive imagination, and wouldn’t listen when I tried to tell him about the letters! Ducky said I needed to mind my own business, and it wasn’t as big of a deal as I was making it out to be. When I tried to mention the car I kept seeing he said that I was being paranoid. I’m not though, right? I’m not being paranoid! He’s really in danger?”

When Emily returned, she had Derek in tow along with Rossi and Hotch who had their guns on their hips. “Tony, I would like to see the letters,” Hotch requested, holding his hand out, which was already gloved. Rossi handed Tony a set, as Derek and Emily settled in with gloves already on their own hands.

“Some of these recent ones aren’t even opened,” Emily noted frowning.

After reading through some of the newer letters, Hotch nodded shortly frowning. “I’ve seen enough. I have already contacted Director Vance. Rossi and I are on our way to NCIS. We’re going to bring Dr. Mallard back with us for his protection, and so that we can ask him some questions. Vance has agreed to let us investigate this as long as Tony takes point. The rest of the team will be in shortly, Tony. Mr. Palmer, good job.”

Tony nodded, then looked to a wide eyed Jimmy. “Why don’t you come over here by me, Jimmy? If you think of anything when we’re talking, feel free to speak up. Any observation you have is important. Don’t worry. I’m not letting anything happen to the Duckman.”

Over at NCIS, Leon Vance stood at the railing outside of MTAC observing Gibbs’ new team. It had been rough going for them in the beginning. The director had too late come to appreciate the things that Tony brought to the team when he was there. His most senior agent had chosen to stay where he had always been in the bullpen. Personally, Leon would have wanted to move, but he realized that Gibbs was one who chose to hold all of his memories as close as possible. Even the bad ones, or the things that really should be set go.

After getting off the phone with Unit Chief Hotchner, Leon was incredibly displeased. At first he was pissed that the ME’s assistant had dared to take his concerns to another agency. It was only after Tony’s new boss informed him that the young man had tried voicing his worries to both the ME and Gibbs that he chose to go to Tony that Vance turned his anger on a more suitable subject. It seemed that Gibbs still hadn’t learned valuable lessons.
Leon had hoped that the older Agent in Charge would have learned that some of his ways were archaic and needed to be thrown in the dumpster after the fiasco with the MCRT. It seemed though that he still had some things that would have to be taught the hard way. Vance had no doubt that Dr. Mallard would be making a stop on his way up.

After getting off the phone with the Unit Chief, he’d called the ME immediately and ordered him up to his office refusing to answer any questions. While a part of him understood that no one wanted to believe that they could be in danger, he believed that someone who worked for a federal law enforcement agency, and had seen what stalkers could do, would take some things more seriously. Hearing the elevator ding, he took a toothpick out of his pocket and, after shoving it in his mouth, watched Ducky make his way toward Gibbs. This was not unexpected in the least. It was in fact the main reason that Leon was standing where he was.

He knew Gibbs was aware of his presence and, watching the hushed conversation between the two men, knew there was no way to keep Gibbs out of this. Well that was just fine with Vance. Aaron Hotchner was clearly irate that such a concern had been basically brushed off as a wild imagination. Leon thought he just might be looking forward to listening to the man tear Gibbs a new asshole.

When the two men looked up at him, Vance scowled angrily. “Dr. Mallard, I do believe that you were ordered to my office. I do not recall requesting you to confer with Gibbs first. Since you have chosen to include him though, you both can get your asses up here. NOW!”

Turning, Leon stalked back toward his office, pausing to let Cynthia know of the visitors that should be shown in immediately when they arrive. He also instructed that everyone else should be kept out, and to hold all of his calls. He’d just gotten settled behind his desk, a fresh toothpick in his mouth, when Gibbs came stalking in with Ducky following behind.

“Leon, what the hell is this about? Don’t tell me you’re taking this fantasy Palmer has going seriously? He’s watched too many damned spy movies. I’d know if Ducky had someone following him.” Gibbs spat, and Leon narrowed his eyes.

“Sit. NOW! Someone shut the door before you sit down. The whole building doesn’t need to hear this mess.” Ducky quietly shut the door, looking less confident that normal, before moving to sit in a chair in front of the director’s desk. Gibbs scowled, but took the other seat not bothering to hide his displeasure.

“Leon, seriously…”

“Shut your goddamned mouth, Agent in Charge Gibbs. Before I knock your damned teeth in! It seems that you only have half the story. Since from what I understand that is your own goddamned fault, I’m gonna just let you two sit there in silence and think about what you POSSIBLY SHOULD HAVE FUCKING BROUGHT TO ME PREVIOUSLY! INSTEAD YOU BLEW IT OFF, DIDN’T BOTHER TO DO EVEN A BASIC CHECK INTO THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE CONCERN. NOW SIT THERE. SHUT THE HELL UP, AND I WILL LET YOU KNOW WHEN YOU CAN SPEAK AGAIN!”

Clamping his lips shut, Leon tried to calm himself down before he really did knock one of the two of them out. That person being Gibbs. When it looked like the infuriating agent was going to argue, Leon took out his toothpick and pointed it at him. “One word, and your ass is suspended, Gibbs. Please, test me right now.”

“Jethro, maybe it would be best if we do as the Director wishes. It is possible that possibly we… made a misstep?” Gibbs’ snort of disbelief was all the answer that came, and Leon spent the next half an hour reading reports deliberately ignoring his guests.
When his door opened without warning about 40 minutes later, Vance stood relieved to see that Hotchner and Rossi had come personally. With Tony’s father figure present, this was going to be even better than he’d expected. Gibbs of course didn’t wait for any explanations before losing his mind. “Palmer went to Tony! What the fuck, Leon! What the hell is the FBI doing involved in this? Even if there was a problem, which there isn’t, it should be my goddamned case!”

Gibbs would have continued screaming, but suddenly found himself face to face with a pissed off David Rossi. “Please, continue your tantrum, you poster boy for anger management problems. I have been waiting a long time to tell you just what the hell I think of you, Gibbs.”

When Gibbs opened his mouth to reply, Hotch cut him off. His cold blooded Prosecuting Attorney persona firmly in place. “Agent in Charge Gibbs, I suggest you sit down in your chair, and listen. I have neither the will nor the need to listen to you. Frankly, your presence isn’t even required. Had you done what you should have when Mr. Palmer came to you, we might nor be here. However, since you chose to act like a bully on a grade school playground, and made him aware of how stupid you think he is before you even had all the information, it's now MY CASE.”

When Rossi turned, and lifted an eyebrow at his friend, Aaron dipped his head in acknowledgement. “You’re right, Dave. It’s actually not my case. It’s Tony’s. He would be here, but he’s too busy filling the team in on the threat to Dr. Donald Mallard’s life to play around with your little hissy fit. So, Dave and I are here in his place to fill Director Vance in on what we know, and to take Dr. Mallard into protective custody.”

“THE HELL YOU ARE!” Gibbs bellowed. “This is completely stupid. All this bullshit because Palmer is paranoid! If there’s really a threat to Ducky, I will look into it myself. I am not letting Tony’s fake father steal slip in, and steal something else from me! Hell, for all we know one of Rossi’s mob buddies are responsible for all of this whatever it is. Everyone knows the bastard’s fingers are more than a little dirty. God only knows how much he’s corrupting Tony.”

Gibbs had no idea the blow was coming, until he found himself on the floor with dark spots in his vision. He could hear shouting erupting around the room, but found himself unable to respond. Ducky was yelling about the EMS. Someone else was yelling at Rossi to calm down. For his part, Gibbs thought maybe he would just lay there for a moment holding his throat, and wondering what the fuck happened.

When things calmed down, the group was settled at the conference table in the room. Gibbs had a cold pack on his throat, and was glaring silently at Rossi. The silent part was the result of the punch, which it seemed had caused just enough damage that he was temporarily unable to speak. Ducky was still arguing heatedly that Rossi should be brought up on charges.

The veteran profiler for his part was sitting quietly in his chair not looking the least bit sorry for what he’d done. Gibbs had heard an apology from Hotchner at some point, but the Unit Chief was currently staring stoically at the ME. Finally Vance whistled shrilly. “ENOUGH! Dr. Mallard, no one is being brought up on charges of anything. Gibbs clearly started the whole damned thing, and was very obviously trying to provoke SSA Rossi.

“AGAIN, I will remind you that had YOU AND GIBBS done what you should have to begin with, none of this would have happened! Now, SHUT IT! Since it appears you haven’t bothered to tell Gibbs the whole story, I think I’ll let Unit Chief Hotchner explain why we’re actually here.”

Aaron nodded frowning as the ME quickly quieted, and began to look nervous again. He also didn’t miss the look of surprise from Gibbs, or the glare he gave the elderly gentleman. “Earlier today, Mr. James Palmer came into the BAU bullpen looking for NCIS Liaison DiNozzo. He advised him that he believed Dr. Mallard was in danger, and was looking for help. He told Tony that no one would
listen, so he’d come to him for assistance.”

Aaron paused to glare angrily at Gibbs, who mulishly refused to believe that this wasn’t some figment of Palmer’s imagination. “Tony led Jimmy and one of my agent’s SSA Emily Prentiss to one of the conference rooms. There he explained that he’d been opening mail in Dr. Mallard’s absence, and came across a letter threatening the ME’s life. I have that letter here to show you, but it will need to go back with me as it is evidence.”

When Gibbs’ eyes got big and he opened his mouth to start bellowing, Hotch wondered if the elder man was suddenly thankful for Rossi’s punch. He had a feeling that if it wasn’t for the fact that he couldn’t talk right then, the irritating agent would be bellowing at his friend. Taking the letter out of his briefcase, Hotch let Vance and Gibbs look at it. He noticed that Gibbs’ face got bright red, and the NCIS Director looked none too pleased himself.

For his part, it seemed that Dr. Mallard was avoiding looking at it. A detail that Hotch didn’t miss, and wondered if the ME really had not believed that there was a problem, or if there was something else going on. “Mr. Palmer then advised Tony and Agent Prentiss that he had other letters of a similar nature. He also advised that he believed that he’d noticed Dr. Mallard being followed. After they looked at the opened letters, as it seems quite a few of the recent once had gone unopened, Emily and Tony quickly determined that they wanted to bring in SSA Derek Morgan who is our expert on obsessive crimes. Emily also decided to fill me in on what was going on, and I immediately called Director Vance.”

Hotch glanced at the now blank faced Gibbs, then looked to see Dr. Mallard fidgeting in his seat looking at his hands. “Upon reviewing what letters had been opened, Agent Morgan and myself quickly agreed that Dr. Mallard’s life was in serious danger. I agreed to bring Agent Rossi, and come take Dr. Mallard into protective custody. When I left Tony was gathering the team to fill them in, and get started with the investigation. Tony will be taking the lead on this to find out what is going on. The last thing we want is for something to happen to someone who means so much to one of my agents, when it could be easily avoided. I will be honest, Dr. Mallard, you are very lucky that Mr. Palmer was so diligent in looking out for your safety.”

“My recommendation,” Rossi started leaned back in his chair, and appearing as if he didn’t have a care in the world, “is that in the future you take every suggestion of danger seriously, Agent Gibbs. It has been my experience in the more than 30 years I’ve been doing this that it’s the ones you don’t listen to that end up dead the quickest. Fortunately for you, my figlio knows better.”

Aaron cleared his throat, trying to hold in the laugh that desperately wanted to come out. If he didn’t think so little of the man, he’d feel sorry for Gibbs. Hotch had no doubt that the Director would be taking advantage of his silent state once they left.

A couple hours later, Tony found himself standing in the back corner of the conference room listening to Derek and Emily as they interviewed Ducky. He’d desperately wanted to do it himself, but he recognized that he was too close to the elderly man to be completely objective. He was afraid that he’d be unable to push him when needed. Derek and Emily however would have enough respect for not only his age, but also his life achievements to give leeway when needed, but also were professional enough to know when they needed to be a little tougher and not let him hide information.

By the time they were done, they’d managed to get what Ducky knew out of the Scotsman. It seemed that early in his career with NCIS, the ME had been called into the death of Midshipman Earl Bates. The cause of death had been unclear, and the investigating team had been torn on whether it was murder or not. During his autopsy, Ducky had found enough evidence to rule that
Midshipman Bates had unfortunately killed himself. The family, and especially the man’s new bride, had never agreed with the ruling. They refused to believe, despite the signs that they eventually admitted to, that the man had sought to end his own death.

Despite being sure of his ruling, it seemed that the elderly ME had always felt bad, and wished that there had been something more he could have done for them. Apparently, Midshipman Bate’s wife had been pregnant when he died, and eventually gave birth to a son. Ducky revealed that the investigating team had found some hints that the man had some kind of a mental illness, which Ducky couldn’t remember exactly what it was right then. However, based on the nature of the letters, which had recently become only more and more disturbing, Tony felt that whatever his father had suffered from had been inherited by the son.

Ducky, feeling bad about what the family had suffered through, had not wanted to add to their burden. He’d continued to insist that young Reginald wasn’t a serious threat. Finally, Derek not so gently laid out everything he knew about obsessive crimes, and suggested that Ducky use his own profiling skills to look at the evidence objectively.

The whole thing just served to make Tony more and more pissed, and by the end of the case nothing had happened to change that. Reginald Bates was dead. His wife was sobbing uncontrollably while clutching their three year old son to her side. Tony couldn’t help but wonder if someday they’d be back once again for the grandson Stephen.

Much later that evening, Tony lay in bed with Spencer curled up at his side. Brian was out of town on a case, and for once Tony was thankful for it. He felt at that moment that Spencer might be the best one to understand what was going on in his head.

“What do you think the chances are we or someone after us aren’t going to be back at that house because of something the grandson has done?” Tony asked quietly. He felt Spencer’s head lift from his shoulder, but Tony kept his eyes trained on the TV.

“Probably much higher than you’d like,” Spencer replied equally as soft. “How did your yelling at Gibbs go?”

Tony huffed and finally turned his attention to his boyfriend. “Awesome since he can’t talk. I can’t believe that Rossi finally hit someone in the throat, and I missed it. I don’t think Gibbs is very happy with me right now, but honestly, I don’t give a fuck. I’m not happy with him back.”

Tony pulled Spencer back down, and rested his cheek against the back of the slighter man’s head. “I told him that I’m tired of his bullshit. I told him that he needs to pull his head out of his ass, and act like he means all that shit he says about people being family. I pointed out that if Jimmy wasn’t so stubborn Ducky would be dead right now. That bomb under his car would have gone off the second he opened the door. I told him that was all on him.”

Tony shook his head, and closed his eyes at the pain in his heart. “Do you… do you think I’m a fool for caring about Gibbs still? Do you think I should have cut him off with the rest of them?”

When Spencer didn’t answer right away, Tony wasn’t upset. He knew conversations about emotions weren’t the younger man’s favorite. “I think that no one has the right to tell you who to care about. Considering all the people who have treated you badly, I don’t blame you for wanting to hold onto someone who has shown that he genuinely cares for you. Loving him as a big brother though, doesn’t mean that you won’t be disappointed in his actions. In fact, it’s because of your importance to him that just maybe you can get through to him when no one else can.”

“I told him that I won’t be around for awhile. I told him that he needs to fix himself. We… well I got
into a screaming match. He just made rude gestures and threw things. I told him that he needed to see someone who wasn’t Kate’s sister and get some real therapy before I’d be back. I… I told him that I love him, but that I wasn’t particularly fond of him right then. I also told him that all the bullshit he hadn’t let go, Ducky’s almost death was the one thing he needed to think about every time he wanted to bring out the ‘Second B is for Bastard’ bullshit.”

Tony heard Spencer sigh, and the man’s hand began running up and down Tony’s chest. “You’ve done all that you can, Tony. It’s up to him to decide where to go from here, but if it’s worth anything? I think you did the right thing. I think that Gibbs and Ducky and Jimmy are all lucky to still have you. I know I am lucky to have you, and I hope every day that in some way I show you how much you mean to me.”

Tony pressed a kiss to the top of Spencer’s head as he closed his eyes letting the sound of the TV put him to sleep. His heart may be heavy, but he had hope in his soul that things would work out in the end.

~~* April 2014 *~~ * ~~* An Early Morning Crisis *~~

It was just after 3am when they heard the penthouse doorbell rang. Brian got to the door first. He had bouts where he didn’t sleep much. Spencer theorized it had something to do with his undercover work knowing that Tony occasionally having them himself. Of course Spencer himself didn’t slept much, so Tony thought it had more to do with how active their brains were.

Since there wasn’t any reason for someone to show up at that hour, he stopped at the gun safe and tucked his piece into the back of his jeans to be safe. By the time he got to the door he could hear Tony coming down the hall, and he suspected Spencer would be not far behind him. When he opened the door, Will and Henry were the last people that he expected. At the same time though, it made the most sense.

They hadn’t seen or heard much from the man in the last few months. He’d stopped communicating with them as he gave his last effort to fix his marriage. They’d all understood, but it had hurt in different ways. Surprisingly Brian thought that Tony had been the most affected. If he’d had to guess before the disaster at the cookout, he would have assumed it to be Spencer. In reality though it was Tony though who took Will’s absence the hardest.

Thinking back now though Brian knew that he should have suspected it would be difficult for Tony. He didn’t connect to people the way he and Will had often. Sure he was friendly with a lot of people, but that was different than being actual friends. It was different than caring enough about someone that you were willing to turn your swanky pad into a home that was able to house a single father and his abandoned son. While none of them held Will’s absence against him, Brian hoped this signaled the end to it. No matter that it most likely meant the end to his marriage had come. He was perfectly ok with how selfish that made him.

“I’m sorry,” Will said softly, and incredibly brokenly. “I didn’t… I don’t…”

“Stop apologizing, and come in,” Brian ordered quietly trying not to wake the little boy sleeping, but still hiccupping. He hoped the little man hadn’t cried himself to sleep. He guessed that he probably was wrong though. By the time Will got into the penthouse apartment, and Brian got the door locked with the alarm reset, Tony and Spencer were both standing in the entryway.

Spencer quickly moved forward and helped Will transfer his godson from his daddy to his godfather. “I’ll put him in his bed, and bring out the baby monitor.”
“Sit,” Brian ordered taking Will’s arm and leading him to the couch. Tony headed off, toward the liquor cabinet. When he returned he was carrying the Jack Daniels Honey Whiskey and four tumblers. It was their late night crisis drinking alcohol. When Spencer got back, and settled in curled up in Tony’s lap with Brian and Will on the couch, the Cajun began his story.

“Thank you for taking us in,” Will began. His voice more hoarse than normal.

"You were trying to save your family," Tony offered softly as he rested his chin on Spencer’s shoulder. “There isn’t a single person in this room that is going to hold that against you. If family isn’t worth putting every single ounce of effort into saving, I don’t know anything that is. Did it hurt? Sure, but that doesn’t mean you did anything wrong, or that all that hurt wasn’t forgiven the second you walked through the door with your child who obviously bawled himself to sleep.”

Will sighed and rubbed his eyes. ‘I don’ know what I did ta deserve y’all. JJ and I are through. The State Department offered her a job overseas. She didn’…. It never occurred to her that Henry and I should go with her. When I told her I didn’ wanna uproot Henry, and that I wouldn’t be able ta find a job in wherever the fuck she’s goin’, she jus’ blinked at me. She was all confused like. I could tell she hadn’ even considered takin’ us with her.”

Will leaned forward, and took a drink of his whiskey before continuing. “She readily admitted that she’s having an affair with her boss, an’ that she didn’ want Henry. She already had tha papers drawn ta terminate her parental rights to him. Can ya believe it? She’s jus… She’s throwin’ him away like he’s nothin’!”

Tony found himself tightening his arms around Spencer and burying his face in the genius’ back inhaling his scent. Just when he thought that he could put his hatred for the woman behind him, she did something else so incredibly selfish and unforgivable that it was all brought up again. Abandoning your child was an inexcusable act in his book. It doesn’t matter that Henry’s young enough he may adjust well. Tony knew from experience that you just don’t get over that kind of thing. The second you think you’ve moved on, something comes up to remind you all over again that you just weren’t enough.

“JJ doesn’t deserve either you or Henry,” Spencer spat angrily. He couldn’t believe that his former friend had gone so far away from the amazing woman she used to be. Maybe though she’d never been that person, and she’d just previously done a better job hiding this horrible side of her personality. As far as he was concerned she was dead to him.

“Of course you’ll live here with us. We have a suite all ready for you and Henry. You have your own little area, but are always welcome to share the rest of the penthouse with us. If the rest of the world doesn’t want us, well then we’ll just make our own little family. Fuck ‘em!”

Will blinked at Spencer, as Brian snickers. When the Cajun just sighed and shook his head, even Tony snickered. “Every time I hear ya cussin’, Spence, I think the world is about to come off of its axis.”

“Curse words are perfectly acceptable when used in the appropriate environment and context,” Spencer offered huffily, and Brian and Tony snickered again.

Brian grinned finishing his drink, then looked at Will. “It helps that Tony and I tend to cuss like sailors. Guess we’ll have to cut back on that with the kid around.”

“Henry’s a good boy,” Will offered smiling. “He knows not to repeat things like that, an’ ask if he doesn’t understand somethin’. If the only bad habit he learns from y’all is some curse words, I’ll count myself lucky to have such amazin’ friends. Merci, mes amis.” (Thank you, my friends.)
Tony nods smiling and relaxed into Spencer’s back. He was glad that his friend was back, and JJ was gone from their lives forever. Spencer was right. The fates had handed her an amazing man, and she’d thrown him and her child away. He had nothing but faith that eventually Karma would find her. It was just a matter of time.

Chapter End Notes

Will and Henry won't make any big appearances in the future sections... at least I don't think they will. This is hopefully the ending of the JJ arc of this story. There are a million things I could add to the story, but honestly just don't have the energy to write.

RT is going on, but I have managed to make some good headway on this story still. So, I don't expect any issues with posting this. Fourteen is complete, and I only have one section left of fifteen to do. I am anxious to get this completed so I can start sharing my April RT story with you all. It will be the beginning of a new universe. I foresee several stories covering several different couples and fandoms in that universe. This one won't have any longer stories, but may have a one shot here and there if the inspiration hits.
Not Crying Wolf when you should and Pomp and Circumstance

Chapter Summary

We have a Spencer-centric chapter. First the boys find out that he hasn’t refilled his Anthrax medicine after an uncharacteristic outburst at work. This leads to Spencer having to open up about some things he's been holding inside. Then, Spencer finally gets that Philosophy degree, and the boys want to celebrate. Spencer however is more than a little confused by their request, and kind of just hopes the whole thing will go away.

Chapter Notes

Just two sections today. A little note because the difference in whole Spencer/Brian dynamic may be confusing. The first section is prior to their talk about their own relationship. The second part is after their talk. That's why you will see a change in some of the things Brian says and thinks between the two parts.

Also, I tried to do as much research on the two events as I could. I used the facts as they fit my needs and to bring as much realism as possible. There will be some inaccuracy. Some of that is from not knowing on my part, and some is I just want it that way. As always we are playing pretend that this is all how it goes.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter Fourteen: Not Crying Wolf when you should and Pomp and Circumstance
Tony was frowning at the answering machine in Spencer's office when Brian wandered in. He had a landline phone number only because on the rare instances that his mother called him, she refused to call a cellphone because of her belief that the government listening in. Tony desperately wanted to point out to her that they’d been listening in on landline conversations long before cellphones, but he didn’t. It was after all Spencer’s mother, and she was the only one of two parents among them that had really deserved the title. Since Brian’s mother had died when they were children, she was the only living one who really mattered. Not to mention, her illness made logic difficult on the best of circumstances. The fact that she would occasionally call her son was miracle enough. Why Spencer had given the landline number to the pharmacy though he didn’t know. From the message it’s possible that it was an emergency number. The message definitely seemed like it was important enough to warrant it.

“What are you doing?” Brian asked, only to have Tony turn his frown on him, before leaving the room. Confused, Brian followed Tony to the bathroom that Spencer used. When Tony started going through the medicine cabinet, Brian tried not to imagine the worst. “What’s goin’ on, Flyboy? You’re freaking me out. I need you to use actual words.”

When he saw Tony take a deep breath, and noticed his hands had moved to grip the sink lip tightly the blonde shifted to stand straighter from his position leaning against the doorjamb.

“I’ve noticed things at work and home over the last week or two with Spencer. He’s wheezing. He’s drinking more coffee than is normal for even him, and goes to bed earlier only to sleeping longer. I also hear him coughing more. He’s been… twitchy, anxious, and… I mean Spencer is always OCD about some things, but…”

“I saw him rearranging the cabinets in the kitchen before I left on that job a couple days ago,” Brian admitted softly. He’d just gotten back from a quick three day surveillance job where he’d needed to blend into surroundings. The team he’d assisted hadn’t had anyone that the target didn’t know, and Brian was thankful for an easy job like that.

“I realized something was seriously wrong when he about took Derek’s head off today. I mean, yes, Derek tends to take the whole teasing Spencer thing too far at times. At those instances I wouldn’t blame him for taking a chunk out of Morgan’s ass. This wasn’t one of those times though, and to be honest, Spencer took his anger way too far. I honestly believe that he was trying to hurt Derek.”

Brian flinched, and knew there was a serious problem. Spencer and Derek were as thick as thieves. While they may bicker like brothers, he normally wouldn’t do anything to hurt his friend. As Tony continued talking, Brian tried to stop all the suspicious thoughts going through his head. “Hotch pulled Spencer in his office to tear him a new ass, and Emily stole Derek for a long lunch to try and calm him down. I asked Rossi if I could check something out. I don’t know why I thought of it I just…”

Tony took a pill vial out of the cabinet. “This is his Zoloft. It’s empty.” He tossed the vial in the sink, and then took a round disc out and shook it. “This is his Flovent. It’s also empty. I know for a fact the rescue inhaler he keeps in his bag is empty because I saw him use the last dose and throw it away. He keeps other meds in his bag for emergencies… things he doesn’t have to take daily. I am fairly confident that they are all empty. Especially after listening to the urgent message from the pharmacy.”
Throwing the disc in the sink, Tony took out what Brian knew was Spencer’s joint pain medicine, and Brian sighed. “Lemme guess, empty?” Tony nodded and turned leaning against the sink. “He probably forgot, Tony. You know how Spencer is. You don’t think he did this on purpose do you?”

Tony sighed and shrugged. “I would hope not, but... he’s been off lately. Something with his mother has freaked him out. I think he’s having nightmares again. John... AD Evans asked me how he was doing the other day. He hinted that someone that he’s close to has started using again. I inferred that he was talking about someone at Spencer’s meetings. If I interpreted what the man was saying then some medication that he was taking triggered it. There was a lot of double talk and vague references. He was doing his best as Spencer’s sponsor to help without betraying a group trust.”

Brian reached back and rubbed the back of his neck. “All of this medicine is from when he got Anthrax, right? I did research after you explained your plague attack. I came across articles about those Anthrax attacks back in ‘01. It said that some of those people are still dealing with odd symptoms that they shouldn’t have. I also recognize some of those breathing medicines from what you take. I think the asthma medicine is the same right? You don’t think…”

“No!” Tony snapped, then took a deep breath. “Sorry, it’s not your fault I’m worried. No, I don’t think Spencer is using, again. I think his big brain through the possibilities using whatever factors that he has, and he got too many of the wrong outcomes. It freaked him out. I think on top of it we’ve been busy at work, and you know how he is about asking for help.”

Brian snorted. “I thought you were bad. Spencer would literally cut his own arm off first. Hell, he makes you look needy.”

Tony nodded smiling slightly. “I also think something is going on with his mother that has contributed to it, because he’s been mentioning her more lately. You know, telling stories from good days before she got really bad when he was a kid. I think that everything all just… they came together in the perfect storm. Would you be willing to make a call for me?”

When Brian nodded, Tony took a deep breath. “OK, here’s what we do. I need to go get all his medicine. I need you to call Hotch, and have him bring Spencer home. I am gonna call Derek on my way to the pharmacy, and give him a general hint about what happened. Spencer can explain better when he fucking apologizes. I don’t want Morgan to assume the worst, and he will. I could tell him and Emily both were suspecting the worst. After all they were all around when Spencer was using, and I have heard that his personality changed. From what I heard this outburst today isn’t far from what they experienced. Then when Spencer and I are both home, the three of us will have a little meeting, because this shit ain’t happening, again.”

Over an hour later when Spencer got home, he slammed the front door petulantly. Somewhere in the back of his head, he knew that he was acting like a brat, but he couldn’t seem to stop himself. “In the kitchen, Spencer,” he heard. Recognizing Tony’s ‘I am gonna verbally kick your ass, and you’re going to shut up and listen’ voice, he scowled deeper. Tossing his bag onto the couch on his way past, he moved to the kitchen area stopping when he saw both Brian and Tony seated at the table. On the top were his medications lined up in a row.

“So, it seems as if we have a problem, Doc,” Tony started pushing one of the pill vials along with a bottle of water forward. “Take that. Right now. Actually take all of it right now. Then we’ll talk about what happened. I gotta be honest, I’m pretty fucking upset, a lot fucking worried, and slightly freaked out right now. I’m also not taking your attitude, especially when I know,” Tony waved his hand at the medication Spencer hadn’t filled, “all of this could have prevented it. I am trying to be calm and understanding, but if you push me I can’t guarantee I won’t push back. Especially after your deplorable behavior toward your best fucking friend in the whole world today.”
Sliding into one of the empty kitchen chairs, Spencer took all of his medications, and twisted his fingers together tightly. “I’m sorry,” he offered softly looking at the table top. His anger and defiance from just a few minutes prior had disappeared.

“Doc, look at me,” Tony ordered equally as soft, and Spencer lifted his gaze to the man. “Understand this, Spencer. I love the fuck out of you. I’m upset, worried, and freaked out because I fucking love you. We care, Spencer. If we didn’t, we wouldn’t be sitting here right now. I know you don’t like asking for help, but goddamnit…” Tony’s voice cracked at the last word, and he had to stop talking or he’d lose his composure.

“We both have noticed something isn’t right, Doc,” Brian pointed out gently. “Hell, Tony and I are the last ones to throw stones about not asking for help. What we also know though is that when we don’t do it, you get upset when you know you could have helped. This really isn’t any different. Let us in. Tell us what’s going on.”

Spencer chewed on his lip. His hands were shaking which made opening some of the pill bottles difficult. He would have continued struggling if Tony hadn’t stood, and come over to open the bottles putting the correct dosages on the table. When the older man sat down, Spencer couldn’t look at him, because he was embarrassed. He had known he was being foolish. He had known what not taking his medications would lead to, but after Riley fell off the wagon…

“I have a… Someone I know from my… A friend that I… from my meetings… He’s…. he’s been going longer than I have. He’s… he’s so careful, almost paranoid about everything that he takes because his… his wife told him she’d take his kids if he ever… ever…”

When he felt someone cover his hand, Spencer looked up and smiled weakly at Tony. He hadn’t felt the man move to sit next to him. “She did it. She… He got… he got sick. I don’t… I don’t know what, but he got sick. He wouldn’t tell me… he wouldn’t… I just know he got sick, and the doctor had to give him medicine. He had to get a new one because of whatever it was, and even though he told them about… they… something they gave him was addictive, and he… She took them, Tony.

“She took his kids, and it wasn’t even his fault not really. He tried so hard, and when she took them he… The jumper off the bridge last month… that was him. He couldn’t… he… It wasn’t my fault! I didn’t ask for this, and I could lose everything because of my medication. I didn’t ask for any of it! I can’t… I can’t lose… I can’t…”

As Spencer fell apart, he felt first Tony then Brian wrap their arms around him as he cried. He was only vaguely aware of being picked up, but when he eventually calmed down, noticed that they had moved to the couch in the living room. Brian and Tony were sitting side by side, and Spencer was mostly sprawled out across the both of them.

“What’s going on with your mother?” Tony asked softly, and Spencer huffed burrowing further into the man’s arms.

“Her meds aren’t working. They have to change them up. What’s the point of taking the risk of losing everything if the fucking things are going to just… stop working someday?”

“The point is that her medicine is different from yours,” Brian offered softly making Spencer frown. “Your mother has been on her medicine since you were a kid. How often does it really get changed? I know that it’s rough right now while they get her off the old stuff and onto the new ones. How often do you really have to do this though?”

Brian wanted to kiss Spencer’s shoulder, touch his cheek, even take his hand. He’d already pushed things though with the hug, and with how close he was sitting right then. He wasn’t sure how much
more would be accepted, and didn’t think that this was the time to push it. “Also, while I am not an expert, I did look up lung medicine after I found out about Tony’s plague attack. From what I can see your asthma medicine especially is much more stable than her medicine would be, I am guessing.”

Tony rubbed Spencer’s arm drawing his attention. “Brian’s right, Spencer. I’ve only had to change my medicine once since I started requiring it regularly. That was because the doctor felt the new stuff was more advanced, and therefore would be better for me. That could be the case with your mother, too. There’s also the part where you aren’t alone in this whole… making sure you don’t relapse thing. We want to help you. Brian and I both have experience in dealing with people who have additions, Doc. We know what to do to help, and what not to do to help. Don’t shoot yourself in the foot by cutting off the people who have the experience to help keep you on track.”

Brian nodded, and couldn’t help but add his thoughts about the friend had died. “I think I can safely speak for Tony when I say that I am crushed for you hearing that your friend died. I wish that you’d shared this with us then. Even if it was just a - Hey I know this guy, and he died He was important to me, and I’m scared that my meds are gonna make me relapse. I don’t know what to do. - kind of thing. Not only would we do anything we could to help you, but my guess is Penelope Garcia would hack every freakin' pharmaceutical company on the planet to find out the information you need to feel safe about your post-Anthrax drugs.”

When Spencer snort giggled softly, Brian counted that as a good sign. From the thumbs up he got from his lover before he took over, he guessed that Tony agreed. “I think as a whole we three need to work on our communication. None of us are good at it, but we need to start… this shit needs to be shared all around. So, I promise I will try my best to ask for help when I need it if you guys are willing to do the same?”

When the others quickly nodded, Tony smiled and relaxed against the couch back. Tomorrow would be an interesting day. Things between the three of them might have been worked out, but Spencer would have to make amends with the team. Right at that moment though, all that mattered were the two men on the couch with him, and the endless future possibilities for them as long as they never stopped trying to work this shit out.

~~* Late March & May 2013 *~~ * ~~*Pomp and Circumstance *~~

“So, Doc, when is graduation?” Spencer heard right before a paper ball hit the back of his head. Straightening, he turned to glare at his boyfriend who was grinning at him unrepentantly. Cocking his head, he ignored the object knowing dangerous things happened when Tony got bored. They hadn’t had a case in almost three weeks, and to say his friend was bored was an understatement.

“What are you talking about?” Spencer asked noticing Emily had looked up from her papers to listen in.

“Your BA in Philosophy. This is your last semester, correct? You told us the other night that finals were coming up sometime next month, and that you’d have your degree when it was over. When is your graduation? When do you walk? I need to know when to tell Rossi we’re having the party at
his house. You know he gets grumpy when he has to plan things last minute. Something as important as this, he’s gonna want time to make plans.”

Further confused, Spencer just frowned at him. Feeling someone ruffling his hair, he looked around to see Brian walking by. “What are we talking about?” The blonde asked as he perched on the corner of Tony’s desk.

“Tony is trying to get Spencer to tell him when graduation is. I didn’t know you were that close, Spence. I better be included on that ceremony list.” Emily explained to Brian, and demanded of Spencer in the same breath.

Looking at the three of them, Spencer could sense nothing but genuine honesty in their interest. It only served to confuse him further. “I… graduation is the weekend of May 19th to the 21st. We won’t know for sure until we get closer. If it’s nice they’ll hold it on the lawn. You want to come? I don’t…”

Tony cocked his head, and took a deep breath before speaking. He suddenly wished that he’d brought this up at home. “Spencer, hasn’t anyone ever celebrated your degrees with you before?”

Spencer shrugged before shaking his head. “I’ve never actually participated in the graduation ceremonies. My first few I was too young, and it was intimidating. I would have just been alone anyway. Later well… I mean… the alone thing never really changed. It isn’t like you have to walk to get your degree.”

“Well I expect that will be changing this time,” Spencer heard from behind him. Turning he saw Hotch standing on the ramp above where they sat.

“Count Jack and myself in on that ceremony attendance request. I expect Rossi and Morgan will want to go as well, and heads will roll if Garcia doesn’t get an invite.” Spencer noted that he didn’t mention JJ, and wasn’t surprised. “That will have to wait though. BAU team to the conference room. We have a case.”

“THANK THE GODS!” Tony exclaimed jumping up and running toward the conference room only to get a head slap from Derek as he ran past the man.

“It’s tacky to be happy for a case man.” Derek pointed out smirking, only to get a similar slap from Rossi who was following him.

“Then maybe you shouldn’t have done the fist pump in my office when Hotch let us know, SSA Morgan,” Rossi pointed out. Emily and Spencer just snickered as they followed them in. Brian mentally started planning the party on his way to the elevator.

While Spencer may have put the conversation out of his mind, thinking that it was just a product of Tony being bored, the rest of the team hadn’t. Quietly arrangements were made between the team and Spencer’s college friends. The entire team minus JJ was coming. She had made her disinterest clear, but Will and Henry on the other hand were both planning on going. Henry was interested in what was going on, and Will was determined to show his support no matter how big of a child his wife was being.

The morning of the ceremony, Spencer was curled up under his normal mound of covers when he smelled the scent of the Gods. “Coffee?”

Brian laughed from nearby causing Spencer to open his eyes. “You have to get out of bed to get it. C’mon, Doc, you gotta get a move on. You have a busy day.”
Spencer tried to think of what he could possibly have going on that day that required he be awake at an ungodly hour on his day off, but couldn’t come up with anything. Intending to just get comfortable again and ignore the man hoping he’d go away, he found his covers disappearing and shrieked. “Hey!”

“Chop Chop, Doc!” Tony said from the end of the bed grinning. “Get up, drink your coffee, then get in the shower. I will have your clothes laid out for you when you’re done. Stop wasting time, or I will carry you in there.”

“What… I don’t…”

“I think he means it, Spencer,” Brian pointed out as Tony moved around the bed.

“OK, OK!” The genius pouted sitting up and draining his mug. “I don’t… what are we doing today?” When the two just rolled their eyes at him, Spencer frowned.

“Ten minutes. I have the shower already running. Get a move on li’l doggie!” Tony clapped, and Spencer scowled harder as he wandered out of the room.

A half hour later he was still confused. He was sitting in the backseat of Tony’s Torino trying to determine where they were headed. He could tell they were on their way toward DC, but wasn’t sure why. It wasn’t until he recognized the turn off for Georgetown that things started to click.

“I umm… I didn’t…”

Brian turned grinning. “Your advisor took care of everything for you. They are excited that they finally get to be the ones that lured you to attend a graduation ceremony. You’re giving a speech. Don’t worry. Tony and Rossi wrote it already for you. Just stick to the notes.” Brian passed some papers not bothering to hide his grin at the younger man’s surprise.

Tony too was grinning when he looked in the rear view mirror. “Your advisor’s TA is meeting you in front of the building and will take you to get your robes and things. He gave us a list of people from school you might like at the party later. You didn’t tell us you were top of your class, Spencer!”

Spencer blushed and shrugged studying the words his boyfriend and mentor had written for him. “I’m always top of my class,” he admitted absently not seeing the eye rolls in the front seat. “You… you really want to see me graduate?”

Spencer looked up to see Brian looking at Tony then turn to look into the backseat at him. “Yes, Doc, we wanna watch you graduate at the top of your class at Georgetown University. We’re extremely proud of you, and we want to share this moment with you. We want to meet your school friends. We want to tell strangers that you’re our partner when they talk about how freaking smart you are. We want to show you off as the intelligent, gorgeous, and loving man that you are. We love you, Doc.”

Spencer was quiet until Tony stopped the car outside of the building. “Thank you,” he said softly before leaving the vehicle. He honestly didn’t know what else to say.

Later he was sitting in Rossi’s backyard, watching those around him. He didn’t think that he’d ever been so complete in his entire life. His school friends were there. His work friends were there. His family, the team, was there. His mother had actually talked to him via Skype! AND, she’d watched the graduation online! He didn’t know how they had managed that feat, but he knew how much she’d had to overcome to do such a thing.

His face hurt from laughing. His various friends weren’t just there they were all talking! The career
students and his fellow Philosophy majors mixing with FBI agents talking about life, sharing stories of him, or arguing about Big Bang Theory of all things. Spencer was a little bemused, but found it wonderful. He’d heard more than one offer of a job or recommendation if needed. He’d heard laughing and friendly arguments. He’d never in his wildest dreams believed that his two worlds could interact so flawlessly.

Feeling hands on his shoulders, Spencer looked up to smile at Tony. When he looked back at the crowd, he saw not only was Tony sitting with him, but Hotch and Rossi had joined them as well. Sometimes he wondered if there wasn’t something secretly going on between them. Usually though just as he started to contemplate it, something happened to distract him.

A plate of food had been placed in front of him, and he noticed that they all had one. “Having fun, Civetta?” Rossi asked, and Spencer nodded enthusiastically. The nickname was new. It meant owl in Italian. He noticed Rossi’d taken to calling Brian “Boemo” as well which was Bohemian in Italian. It was a take on Tony’s nickname for the blonde which was BoBo. Spencer had learned that it stood for Bohemian Boy. A name that Tony had given Brian when they were in Alpha Chi Delta together. Once he’d learned the nickname, he had to admit that it was fitting for their boyfriend.

“I am!” Spencer answered smiling big. “I never imagined that all of my friends could get along like this. Did I hear Emily’s boyfriend offering Edward a job?”

Hotch nodded smiling. “More like a recommendation for another department, but essentially yes. He told me the department was getting desperate because they’ve been looking for the right person for almost a year. He thinks he will be perfect for the position.”

Spencer hummed happily as he dug into Rossi’s homemade lasagna. It was one of his absolutely favorite things in the entire world, and was glad that it had been on the menu for the evening’s food.

“They’re good people,” Tony offered covering Spencer’s hand smiling at the younger man with obvious affection. “I think I heard Brian making plans to go to a car show with Rachel and Louis.”

Spencer perked up at that nodding with a big smile on his face as he ate. Eventually his advisor came over, and a discussion started over early serial killers. It was one of the rare times that his work could be an entertaining dinner conversation without making people uncomfortable.

Later, when most everyone had left, Spencer stood in the backyard looking up at the stars. He could faintly hear Tony and Rossi inside singing some Sinatra song as they washed dishes. He’d offered to help, but been advised that he wasn’t allowed that night. Brian was outside with him somewhere. Probably watching him.

He wanted to go to him, and he would. Once he was done processing everything that had happened that day. He’d never felt like his educational accomplishments were anything other than just part of who he was. They’d never been celebrated, or treated as if they were more than what was expected of him. Not until today. Not until two men came into his life, and treated him as if all parts of him were precious and rare.

When he’d proposed this relationship with Tony, he’d never really expected it to last. He hadn’t had much real hope down deep in his soul that it could last. It had though. It would be three years in December. They’d have been living together for two years on Halloween. He thought about his mother, and the pride that was so clear on her face when he’d talked to her. He smiled at the demand to meet his wonderful two other halves. It would happen. If he knew Tony at all, he knew the man would move mountains to make it happen.

Considering his life, Spencer thought that he could honestly say that he had everything. He had the
love of two marvelous men. He had friends & coworkers who had formed an amazing family around him. He had support for his mother, which extended to that family. He had an amazing job, and an ongoing education that was supported by everyone in his life. He had a beautiful home that he shared with his loves. He literally had everything.

He’d spent a lot of year’s afraid and lonely, thinking that he’d never be enough. It was nice to know that all that pain had been the prelude to something wonderful. It almost made it all worth it. No, it did make it all worth it. As long as this was always what it was meant to lead up to, every second of pain had been worth the price he’d needed to pay for this happiness. Love he had learned was always worth it.

Chapter End Notes

Writing on this is still going smoothly despite my RT commitments. I realized today that I am almost done with the writing portion of this story. I only have three chapters and 8 total sections to write. I cannot begin to tell you how happy that makes me. While I love these boys dearly, I have other stories I want to share with you all. Namely the beginning of my Tony/Hotch Verse. I have already plotted out a Jeremy Renner/Robert Downey Jr story that will be part of the verse. For those of you that read the story in the April RT challenge that will make more sense to you. I don't even have words to tell you how excited for the Jeremy/Robert fic.

The next chapter seriously has just about everything in it. There is some serious Tony and Gibbs 'Comin' to Jesus' type talk. There is some character death. Not telling who, but not anyone who has played an important positive part of this story. Lastly there is the absolutely FABULOUS Mardi Gras trip which came out MUCH more slashy than I expected. My musi don't usually like writing sex scenes, but... there is a fun one in chapter 15. I will update the pairings when I post it though to warn you. Yes, you read that right. It will require additional pairing warnings. Let your little imaginations run wild. LOL
Chapter Summary

Tony completes one last act for NCIS, and makes some requests of his former boss. Then there is one more loss. Tony isn’t sure how to feel about this one though. Lastly, the trip makes a trip to Mardi Gras to visit Dwayne and Christopher. Things get... interesting.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter Fifteen: One Last Assignment, Unresolved Loss, and A Trip to Mardi Gras

Tony walked down the basement steps with two file folders in his hand. Crossing to the work bench, he placed them next to where Gibbs was working. He then stepped back to sit on the stool he used when visiting. Eventually the older man stopped what he was doing, and pulled the folders over to rest in front of him. Before he opened them though, he looked over to Tony waiting patiently for an explanation. Gibbs’ had received a thorough tongue lashing from SecNav Morrow that afternoon so he had some idea of what not only was in the folders, but also what this visit was about.

Morrow had expressed his displeasure at how far Gibbs had gone off track. At first he’d been pissed off at the accusations. He was tired of things continuously being thrown in his face from the past. However, once he’d calmed down, he had to admit that the concerns were all valid. Because of that fact, he was willing to sit and listen to whatever Tony had to say. Even if it was a repeat of the fight that ended up sending Gibbs to therapy.

“I am not here as your friend who sees you as his big brother right now, Gibbs.” Tony started. Gibbs could hear the nerves in his voice. He hid them behind a familiar mask that said ‘I don’t have a care
in the world’. Gibbs knew better though thanks to years of experience in handling the DiNozzo manual.

“Right now I am your former Senior Field Agent, and you are my former boss. Those folders in front of you are the people that I chose for you to complete your current team. I need… I need to know that you are going to treat them better than you treated me.”

Gibbs’ first instinct was to get pissed, and there was a time that he would have given into that impulse. After almost costing Ducky his life, the Team Leader had a wake-up call. He knew Tony was right in his anger. It probably also helped that his young friend and brother had been true to his word about not coming over until he had his shit in order.

Therapy hadn’t been pleasant, but it had been necessary. Gibbs had come to realize after two weeks of no contact with Tony, as well as several gentle and not so gentle prods from Ducky, just what his stubbornness was going to cost him. Despite the therapy he’d gone through, and the self-awareness he’d gained from it that knee jerk angry response didn’t seem to go away. Hell, maybe it never would. Maybe it was too ingrained into who he was.

What it had given him though was the awareness of that reaction, and taught him not to give into it. Because of this he was going to sit and calmly listen to what his former SFA was saying instead of flying off the handle and not learning anything. When he finally nodded his understanding of Tony’s terms, the younger man continued speaking.

“I have busted my ass to find you the best two people that I could. They are amazing at what they do. They are veteran agents who understand the stresses that come with the job. Colby has real experience with not only what you’re doing, but the mentality of someone who served in the military. He worked in Army ‘Intelligence before he was with the FBI. He also did a long term undercover stint that dealt with treason. It his classified up the ass so high not even my contacts could get a whiff of what it entailed. I did learn though that the world was his oyster afterwards, but instead of picking a juicy detail he instead stayed with the team he’d been on. Needless to say, Colby Granger understands you, and will be loyal to you right up until the time that you prove you don’t deserve that loyalty. Colby loves undercover work and is pretty damned chill, right up until the time that he needs to not be. Honestly I couldn’t have picked someone closer to myself unless I’d been cloned.”

Gibbs snorted at the idea, and was thankful that possibility didn’t exist. The world just didn’t need two Tony DiNozzo’s. “Dr. Tara Lewis is brilliant, and maybe the most kickass female agent I have come across in all my years in law enforcement. She’s everything Kate wanted to be, but was too uptight and rigid to achieve. Tara can get into the head of any unsub better than any interrogator I have met, and I grew up with one of the best.

“She doesn’t have quite as much undercover experience as I would like, but there’s enough there that I feel comfortable sending her on assignment looking for a terrorist. She is also willing to learn and take direction, and Colby is willing to guide her along. I have chosen her to be your SFA, and Morrow accepted my recommendation. How the fuck after six years you still don’t have one I don’t understand. I may be irreplaceable, boss, but my position isn’t. I am going to say this a second time. I need you to treat them both better than you treated me.”

Tony took a deep breath, but didn’t move his gaze off of Gibbs. “If you chase them off, I won’t help you find replacements. There will never be a time when I return to NCIS, Gibbs. That ship has long sailed, and I should have just quit the first time instead of taking that stupid liaison offer from Vance. I’m not coming back. I’m never going to be your SFA again. I have however chosen the perfect people to take my place. Consider it a gift from me to you.
“Tara and Colby will follow your orders, but they won’t take your bullshit. If you bellow at them in public they will do as you say, but don’t be surprised if you get pulled into your office and bellowed at back. IF you act like a jerk to them then they are going to tell you that you’re acting like a jerk.”

Tony ran a hand through his hair, and took a deep breath. This next part just might be the hardest of the whole speech he’d been rehearsing for two days. “When this case is over, Gibbs, professionally I am done with NCIS. They’ve taken advantage of me for the last time. I don’t like Vance. I don’t trust Vance. I want to be done with Vance, and Morrow promised me that after this case I will never have to hear NCIS knocking on my door again.”

Quietly, Gibbs nodded his understanding. Tony stood and held out his hand. “It was an honor, Boss.”

Smiling Gibbs shook his hand before pulling him into a hug. “Honor was all mine, DiNozzo.” When the younger man pulled back, a part of Gibbs wanted to clutch him tight and beg him not to leave. Sadly though instead he watched his former SFA walk up the steps and leave. Thank God though that he still had Tony as his kid brother. He promised himself that he wouldn’t fuck up that relationship, too.

Sitting back down, he opened the top folder, and started learning all about his new SFA. If he knew DiNozzo, Dr. Tara Lewis was going to make his life one interesting ride. She had some big shoes to fill though. Both she and Colby did, but considering who selected them, Gibbs had nothing but faith in them already.

~~* NCIS/BAU 2014 *~~ * ~~* Unresolved Loss *~~

When Fornell showed up in front of his desk with that look on his face, again, Tony immediately got up and just headed to Aaron’s office. The whole way there he prayed in his head that it wasn’t Gibbs. Knocking on the open door, Tony walked right in and moved to the sofa in the back corner. He could hear his boss end his phone conversation, and then call Dave to come over. As he sat on the sofa with his head in his hands, Tony tried to run through the possibilities, Fornell came over and took a seat in one of the chairs, and sighed. “It’s not Gibbs this time either, DiNozzo. I promise. He said to come over after work, and he’d have the steaks on the grill when you got there.”

Letting out a sigh of relief, Tony nodded, again, and once more let his head drop to his hands. He was going to have to stop at Dave’s church on the way home to light a candle for Kate in thanks. He couldn’t shake the belief that she was responsible for keeping Gibbs alive for him. When everyone was in the office, and seated, with the door closed. Tobias took over.

“I’m just gonna get to it. Ziva David was found dead in her cell last night. They don’t know how it happened, and conveniently there is no video recordings for all of last night. They have somehow been completely wiped out. Considering she was in a high max prison, based on who she is, and what she did, there will most certainly be an investigation. They have put my team in charge of it. At some point I will need to speak with Tony officially, but right now we have reason to believe this was initiated by someone outside of the country. We also believe that it had connection to Mossad.”

Tobias took a drink of the coffee he was carrying before continuing. “She was in one corner of her cell and had tried to fight but we are guessing that she was outnumbered. She was stabbed several times in the chest and stomach, before having her throat slit. Hell they almost took her head right off her damned neck. It obviously wasn’t done with some homemade prison shank. The wall of her cell had a message written in her blood saying ‘Death to infidels. Death to Traitors. When you are not loyal to one, you betray many.’ There were some symbols included that lead us to believe this is either coming from within Mossad, or from one of its sympathizers. Eli David runs a thin line between good and bad at times. I don’t even know what to say, Tony.”
Tony chuckled humorlessly. “I don’t know what to say either. How tacky is it to be relieved someone is dead? I am definitely not sad though. I can honestly say that I hate her more than any other person other than Senior, and to be frank she gives him a run for his money. I know I will be a suspect, so I will contact my lawyer, and tell him to cooperate within reason. I didn’t do this, but I won’t lose a second of sleep knowing she’s dead. Hell I am more worried about the security issues at a Super Max.”

Tobias nodded sympathetically. “I wish I could tell you that we won’t have to go through your life, but I have to do my job. I can tell you off the record that none of us believe you are responsible, but we have to do our due diligence. Just send me your lawyer’s information and we will schedule everything through him. I know that right now you don’t know how to feel, but at some point… You’re a good man Tony, and you didn’t always hate her so much. She wasn’t Kate or Tim, but she was a team member and you watched her back for a lot of years. Sacks was a pain in my ass, and I wished more than once I could be rid of him. When he got killed last year though, it hit me harder than I expected. So, when you do feel it, and I am sure you eventually will, you have my deepest sympathy.”

Tony nodded to Tobias, and the older man stood and left shutting the door behind him so the three left could have some privacy. “Jesus, Figlio. I don’t know what to say either.” Dave sighed and rubbed a hand over Tony’s back.

Across from them, Aaron nodded. “Tobias is right. Eventually this will hit you. I know you are not gonna want it, but I think you need to take some time off and process this. It’s going to hit you, and hit you harder than you think. Sometimes it’s the… unresolved ones that leave the biggest mark. It’s only Monday. Take the rest of the week. Let me know Friday if you need longer.”

Later that night, Tony would find himself with a belly full of steak, and sitting on the floor of Gibbs’ basement sobbing his heart out. He would have his older brother’s arms around him, and rage against all the things that he’d never be able to resolve, and never knew that he wanted to. He didn’t love her. He wasn’t even sure that he liked her, but at once point they’d been almost friends. He was tired of losing people that were important to him. They had all been right. This death lingered longer than he ever imagined, if only because he seemed to live for quite a while with the fear that Gibbs would be next.

He didn’t even bother to hide his happy tears the day that Gibbs walked into the BAU bullpen, and said that he was done years later. That wasn’t coming for a while though, and all Tony knew in that second was that he was tired of people around him dying before he was ready for them to go.

~~* February 2013 *~~ * ~~* A Trip to Mardi Gras *~~

Spencer was walking through the French Quarter following Tony and Brian with Christopher LaSalle next to him, and Dwayne Pride behind them. He’d allowed Tony to pick out his clothes. He had on a simple pair of jeans with a black t-shirt. His hair had in the front been left to hang around his face in a mass of waves framing his thin face. In the back Tony had pulled it into a ponytail. He had several days of facial hair growth, which Brian had told him he couldn’t shave off yet. Spencer quietly admitted, even if it was only to himself, that it was nice not having to shave every day.

Hearing people above him yelling, Spencer looked up, and frowned when more beads came flying at him. Beside him he heard Chris laugh as the NCIS agent happily placed them around his neck. “I think New Orleans likes ya, Doc.”

Spencer couldn’t stop the twitch of his lips. Even if he didn’t quite understand what was going on, it amused him that he had the most beads of the group. When the NCIS agent threw his arm around Spencer’s shoulder, the normally touch phobic man tolerated it. He’d come to like both Christopher
LaSalle and his partner Dwayne Pride. Chris reminded him a lot of Brian and Tony. He was very sociable and friendly. Maybe portrayed himself as not quite as intelligent as he actually was, but had various layers just waiting to be paled back if you looked hard enough.

Spencer had stumbled onto a personal conversation between the two lovers concerning Chris’ brother Cade. It prompted him to explain his mother’s mental illness, and seemed to have created a unique bond between the two younger men.

Spencer couldn’t help but enjoy himself as Chris pulled him into a bar following Tony and Brian. He found this whole scene highly fascinating. The people watcher inside of him was gleefully taking notes happily anticipating being able to discuss his observations with Tony and Brian later.

He knew that somewhere underneath all of this partying and happiness there was a layer of dark and misery. He found though that he was unable to pay attention to it though unless he had to. When the NCIS teams forensic analyst Sebastian came up and sat next to him, Spencer wanted to bounce with glee. Chris wasn’t the only person he’d bonded with.

Sebastian was someone that Spencer could truly understand. The two of them had already exchanged email addresses and phone numbers so that they could keep in touch. Overall so far it had been a productive and enjoyable trip. He couldn’t wait to see what that evening brought. He’d planted a seed in Tony and Brian’s heads that he hoped came to fruition.

Spencer was sitting on Pride’s lap watching Tony, Brian and Christopher. The beads that he’d collected throughout the day were still around his neck, and Pride’s arms were wrapped loosely around his waist. Tony and Brian had Chris in between them. Brian was sucking Chris’ cock as Tony slid his cock in and out of the younger man’s ass. Spencer couldn’t help but wonder what it felt like to be Christopher at that moment. To be stimulated so much, to be the center of their attention. To be filled with one, and surrounded by the other.

He wondered what it felt like to feel Brian’s lips around him. Brian’s mouth so hot and wet. Christopher’s cock so hard and aching for release. He wondered what it was like to be Tony watching his lover performing such an action. He knew what it felt like to be Spencer watching it, but he wondered what it was like to be Tony.

Did his older partner think like he did in a moment like this, or were his thoughts completely different? Was he wishing that it was his cock Brian was sucking on, or was he enjoying the beauty as Spencer was himself? He wondered if they’d all three still have wanted it so bad if they were sober. He believed they would. He wouldn’t have agreed to it otherwise. He felt like he knew them well enough by then that he knew the difference. Dwayne had assured him that it wasn’t the first time he’d watched his Christopher and Tony play. That sealed the decision for him. Not to mention that… well he’d really wanted to watch. So badly, he’d wanted to watch.

Spencer could feel Pride getting hard under his ass. He wondered if Pride got the same things Spencer did out of watching them. To Spencer it might be the most beautiful thing he’d ever seen. He wondered if Pride thought Tony and Brian were as gorgeous as he did. He wondered if Christopher always looked this hot in the throes of passion. He wondered if he was imagining himself with the three on the bed. He wondered if he was remembering himself in either Brian or Tony’s place, or maybe both?

Was he remembering a time when maybe they’d brought someone home to play? Did they do that? Or, was this something that he reserved for special people like Tony. Spencer had a feeling that it was the last. Dwayne Pride didn’t seem like the type to share his young lover with just anyone.

The sounds the three on the bed were making were like an erotic symphony. He wondered if anyone
had ever tried to make sounds like this into music. He wondered if there was an orchestra in the
world who would play such an erotic composition. He wondered if it had even occurred to anyone
else to try, or was it just him and the way his brain worked.

The sounds grew louder as they got closer to the end. He could hear the X Rated Symphony in his
head increasing their sound to match. He wondered which on the bed the horns were. He wondered
who would come first. He wondered who would come last. He wondered who would come hardest.
He wondered who would come the quietest. He wondered if anything but the sensation and feelings
were going through any of their brains at that moment.

He wondered what it would feel like to have your mind reduced to nothing but feelings. He
wondered if he’d like it, or if he’d freak out. Would he want it again? Would he become addicted to
it like he had the deluded? Would he become an addict?

Pride was whispering. Spencer wondered if he knew that he was doing it. It was almost…
descriptive. He wondered if it was for Pride’s own benefit or Spencer’s. He wondered if the older
man would let him suck his cock.

When one came it was like a chain reaction. The symphony in his head turned into an elaborate
mathematical equation where one equaled the second and caused the third. He wondered if the world
could handle that kind of complex math.

When the three men were laying spent and panting, Spencer turned his attention to Pride. The older
man’s cock had to be uncomfortably hard. Turning his gaze back to the bed a moment, Spencer saw
Tony watching him. Bashfully Spencer smiled and cocked his head to one side. As if he could read
his mind, he got a sleepy smile and a thumbs up in return.

Slipping off Pride’s lap and straight to his knees, Spencer looked up as the older man protested.
Spencer just cocked his head to one side, and let Tony deal with it.

“S’cool, King.” Tony slurred, and Spencer could imagine the smile on Brian’s face.

“Be honored man. Not many get this honor. He gets pleasure from it, just… not the way the rest of
us do. Think of it like a contribution to science.” Brian quipped, and Spencer could hear Tony and
Christopher chuckle.

Quietly though Spencer just looked up at Pride, waiting for a response, waiting for a sound, waiting
for anything to indicate that he’d let him do this. Eventually he did. He wondered if he and
Christopher had their own ability to speak without words. When he eased back and spread his legs,
arching his hips and lifting his ass to push down his jeans, Spencer smiled.

Lifting himself up slightly Spencer ran a finger over Dwayne’s cock marveling at the feel. He
wondered if they all felt like this. So hard, and yet almost velvety smooth at the same time. The few
that he’d experienced all had a similar feel, but he wasn’t convinced that his limited set of test
subjects was enough to form a hypothesis. Sticking out his tongue, he licked the end, tasting the salty
pre-cum already easing from the tip. He wondered what Dwayne’s actual ejaculation would taste
like. This he’d found differs. This he’d found had differed between few the men he’d been with. He
wondered if it tasted different for everyone, or if it was just him.

Easing up further, he ran his tongue up the underside of Pride’s cock trailing up the vein there, up to
the tip which he circled. Moving his hands, Spencer took his balls in his hands massaging slightly
before moving them to grip the older man’s thighs. He wondered if marks would show there in the
morning, or were his hands not strong enough. He wondered if this felt different when a woman did
it, or did it not matter. He wondered if all men felt the same thing when on the receiving end. He
wondered if all men felt the same sense of curious joy that he did when doing the giving.

As his head began to bob, he let his hands run up and down Dwayne’s thighs. He felt long fingers bury themselves in his hair, twisting themselves to tangle in the long strands. He wondered if people got off on that. Spencer himself felt neither joy or annoyance. It was just another factor to apply to his mental database.

He remembered the suggestion that he’d received in college about vibration. He wondered if he would realize that Spencer was humming the Star Trek theme. A few moments later he wondered if that was why someone on the bed was giggling.

He could feel Dwayne’s hips beginning to lift. Spencer wasn’t strong enough to hold him down. He also found that he wasn’t bothered by the action to try too hard either. Taking this as a sign that the man was close to finishing, Spencer began sucking harder. His cheeks sucking inward with the force of his suction. His hands moving around the circumference of his legs instead of up and down their length. He felt the joy inside of himself growing. He wondered if everyone got happier performing this. He wondered how a sexual response would change this act. He wondered if it mattered to Dwayne that his only joy was in the older man’s pleasure.

When Pride finally came, Spencer swallowed taking in the taste of his ejaculation. Remembering the sound the man made as he came. He wondered if the number of responses to climaxing were as varied as there were men in the world. He made a mental note to do some research later online to find out. Pulling back, he saw Pride’s head laid back on the chair back, his eyes closed, and his breathing slowing.

Standing Spencer made his way to the restroom and got a few washcloths. This part he understood. This is where he felt useful, and enjoyed participating. He wondered if that was normal. Did others enjoy the act of cleaning up after the act of sex, or was it just another thing that made him weird? Mentally he heard Tony in his head correcting the word weird to different. Spencer wasn’t sure that he understood the difference, but he knew that it was important to the man so he allowed it.

Going back into the living area, he carefully washed up the others. He threw a blanket over the trio on the bed, and considered what to do with Pride. There wasn’t really enough room for him with Tony, Brian, and Christopher so he just left him where he was. He hoped that he wouldn’t stay there long. Feeling accomplished, Spencer rinsed the cloths off and hung them up before heading to the kitchen. On his way through the house he grabbed his satchel. He wanted to make some notes. Tony was always willing to answer questions that he’d thought of while watching. It was one of those amazing things that made him the man he was. After filling a glass with some grape juice, and grabbing some cheese and fruit from the refrigerator, Spencer settled in at the table to write down his thoughts. It had been a good evening, and while he didn’t need the help to remember it, he enjoyed writing down the things that had come to mind.

Hearing one of the chairs scraping along the kitchen tile, Spencer looked up surprised to see Dwayne sitting down at the table with a pastry on a plate and a glass of wine. When arms wrapped around his shoulders, he looked up and smiled to see his Italian smiling down at him. When he got a kiss on the top of his head, Spencer felt his belly warm with happiness. He wondered if that was what others felt when they had sex.

Eventually Tony joined them after getting his own foot and drink. Spencer happily let the sound of the other two men’s quiet conversation wash over him as he made notes on his pad of paper. He wondered if anyone else had ever experienced the kind of pure joy that he did by simply taking in other’s pleasure at their most primal moment. As he felt Tony’s fingers running though his hair, Spencer hummed happily. He loved it when Tony played with his hair. He hoped that he wasn’t the
only one who had ever experienced such joy. Surely the world deserved to feel this kind of peaceful happiness. Surely they deserved to know this kind of love. Spencer hoped that he would never stop understanding how very lucky he was.

Chapter End Notes

Sooooo.... I think Spencer enjoyed Mardi Gras. I will admit I didn't expect that. While blow jobs aren't something that Spencer likes to receive, he does give them on occasion when he's feeling playful and comfortable. I wasn't sure how clear that was made in the section, so I wanted to clarify. Mostly he just watches but... c'mon it's Mardi Gras in New Orleans. Even Spencer lets his hair down sometimes.

Five chapters left to post. Four sections left to write, and two of those are half written. Ironically the two half written ones are from Spencer's perspective. I've developed some weird block when writing from his POV, but I will get through it. My last RT fic is almost done, and I am hoping that I will be able to have Dead Air completely written by the end of the month also.

Thank you to all those reading. I appreciate your time. The next chapter has a flashback to when Rossi met Tony for the first few times. Happy moments they were not people. It will be prefaced with a cute Spencer section, and Derek acting like a dumbass then getting a talking to from Tony. Good times.
The Genius’ New Clothes, Facing Your Fears, and Where It All Began

Chapter Summary

Spencer finds strange clothes appearing in the laundry, and has no idea where they came from. Then Tony has a heart to heart with Derek after his friend makes an uncharacteristic remark at work. He has a feeling there is a certain DC cop that is somehow involved in his friend's recent behavior. Lastly, we see a peek into the first two times David Rossi met a little boy named Anthony DiNozzo, Jr.

Chapter Notes

The first section was requested by Rivermoon1970. I suck at cute, so I hope it is close to what she had in mind.

The second and third sections make mentions of child abuse and neglect. Most of it is cannon, although in Tony's case it would depend on which version of Senior you're going with. I dislike him greatly so... yeah. I chose the non Robert Wagner version of the early writers.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter Sixteen: The Genius’ New Clothes, Facing Your Fears, and Where It All Began
If there was one household chore that Spencer truly hated, it was doing laundry. Usually he could delay long enough that Brian or Tony would just do it for him. He had avoided the task for two months though, and knew that it was time he took a turn. He was sitting on his bed folding clothes, and finding himself confused at the pile of clothing that he didn’t know the owner of.

Brian and Tony were easy. They were near the same sizes, and since they shared a closet as well as drawers, all he had to do was put the right things in the right areas. They always had new clothes, so he was used to checking the sizes of things he didn’t recognize. The items were not big enough to be either Tony or Brian’s. The shirts were not big enough, and the waist on the pants wasn’t big enough either.

Usually folding clothes was a task of brain numbing boredom, which was why he hated it so much. This time though the pile of clothing in his size that he didn’t recognize had kept him occupied. There was a little bit of everything. Jeans, slacks, shirts, boxers, unmatched socks all were in piles that he didn’t know what to do with.

Frowning he got up off of his bed, and headed into his closet. Why Tony had a walk in closet built in his room, Spencer didn’t understand. He didn’t have nearly enough clothes to need one. Or… well…. He used to not have enough clothes to need one. As he looked from one rack to the next he noticed there were all these items that he’d never seen before.

Wandering back to the bed, he looked at the piles, and realized that he’d worn some of the things he didn’t recognize this week. There was a pair of jeans he’d worn one day when he couldn’t find any of his slacks. Emily had literally fallen off Tony’s desk when she saw him walk in wearing them.

There was a dress shirt he’d put in the ironing pile that he knew that he’d worn and thought it was cool. At the time though, it hadn’t even occurred to him that he had no idea where it came from. From a distance it looked like a regular blue and white striped dress shirt. When you got closer though, the blue stripes were little blue Dr. Who phone boxes.

Deciding to finish the chore, Spencer put everything away in his own closet. He then wandered into Tony and Brian’s room to put away their clothes. On his way from one room to the next he’d heard shouting from the entertainment room where his two housemates liked to play their video games.

Logically, he knew where these things had to be coming from. It wasn’t very likely that someone was breaking into the penthouse, and just adding things to his closet. That meant either Tony or Brian or both were putting things in there.

Biting his lip, he stood in the middle of the hallway, turning over an idea in his head. Generally, he wasn’t very spontaneous, but he kinda felt like being brave and trying it out. It was Saturday evening, and still early enough that they could still go out.

Going back to his room he quickly changed into a pair of jeans that he noticed hugged his skin, and carefully selected a plain long sleeved cotton shirt then put a t-shirt that looked cool over it like he’d seen Brian do a couple weeks prior. He then picked out a brown worn looking leather jacket and headed to the entertainment room.
He was hovering in the doorway, as he wasn’t sure how to approach this, when Brian looked over and noticed him. “Dude!” Brian shouted, and jumped up with a big smile on his face. Tony paused the game then quickly followed.

“Lookin’ good, Doc!” Tony offered hugging Spencer who immediately felt better.

“Are you guys getting me all the new clothes? I thought maybe we could go out? Did I put this on, ok?”

“We're just adding to your wardrobe, Spencer. We noticed you didn’t have many clothes, and since we both love to shop, we just got into the habit of getting things for you.” Brian explained, and Tony took over when he was finished.

“You can put them on however you want. We aren’t trying to dress you. We just like buying things for you, and your sweater vests are hard to find this season. My tailor is keeping his eye out for new ones though. I think it would be awesome to go out. The jazz club has a new act if you guys are interested.”

Spencer’s immediately lit up, and Brian just grinned. “Sounds like a plan man.”

Later in the evening, they were sitting in a booth in DC at the club. Tony and Brian were sitting together on one side of the U shaped bench, and Spencer was on the other side to get a better people watching view. The genius was happily telling them about the history of jazz in America, and the differences between the different styles when a server came over.

“For you sir,” the woman said giggling as she set down a brown colored something in front of him. It joined the scotch, the gin, the vodka tonic, the imported beer, and something called A Lonely Island Lost in the Middle of a Foggy Sea.

“What’s this one?” Spencer asked curiously studying the tumbler which appeared to be filled with ice and filled with a brown liquid then garnished with a cinnamon stick and a lemon wedge.

She laughed and set it in front of him. “It’s called By the Fireside. It has Croft 10-year-old tawny port and Café du Monde chicory coffee with lemon, nutmeg and cinnamon.”

“Coffee?” Spencer asked looking interested, and Tony and Brian laughed.

“At least they’re getting closer, Doc,” Brian teased, and Spencer looked up at the waitress.

“Do they realize that if I drank all of these I’d be unconscious?” Spencer advised frowning as he looked at Tony. “Is that what is going on? I don’t want to have sex with anyone. Can I make it stop? Although that last one is intriguing. Why are they sending them to me, and not you or Brian?”

Tony smiled and turning slightly leaned closer covering the genius’ lips with his own. He could feel
the immediate moan, and the little bounce that his love always did when they kissed. It was like he was so excited he was getting to do one of his favorite things that he just couldn’t hold it in.

He felt slender hands grip his shoulders, and Tony leaned forward enough to pull Spencer half into his lap deepening the kiss. When he felt Spencer’s hand grip his shoulders’ tighter, Tony curled a hand upward to cup the back of his head to deepen the kiss. Not wanting to cause too big of a scene, Tony ended it much sooner than he’d like.

When the genius tried to follow him when he pulled back, they heard a laugh from behind Spencer. Tony winked at Brian who had moved to Spencer’s other side. “I’d say that’ll get rid of your admirers, Doc.”

Spencer noticed that the scotch, the gin, and the vodka tonic were gone. The imported beer was in front of Brian himself, and the weird orange looking thing called A Lonely Island Lost in the Middle of a Foggy Sea was in front of Tony. The most recent one called By the Fireside was in front of Spencer, who eyed it as he settled in curled into Tony’s side.

“Why are they giving them to me, and not you and Brian?” Spencer asked Tony as he continued their earlier discussion.

Tony just smiled, and took a drink of the odd concoction. “They think you’re hot, Doc.” Brian offered, and Tony continued when he was done.

“Surely you know other people think that you’re good looking, Spencer. Derek doesn’t call you Pretty Boy because he thinks you’re ugly.”

Spencer frowned as he processed that taking a sip of the drink. “This is very good. Is it because of the new clothes? I’ve never gotten this much interest before.”

Tony sighed and rubbed Spencer’s shoulder. “Honestly, probably. Clubs are all about the sex appeal and looks. Brian and I could care less what you have on. Other people in here…. Well, this isn’t like the places that Deek takes you to granted. However, they don’t know that you’re a genius, funny, and an amazing cuddler to go with being unreasonably pretty.

“I have a feeling that things will die down with that little show you two just put on,” Brian joked sipping the beer. “But to make sure, I asked the waitress and bartenders to not send over any more drinks.”

Spencer nodded eyeing the drink. “It’s ok to drink this? I’m not… hurting someone’s feelings?”

Tony grinned, and shook his head. How like his love to worry about some random person’s feelings when he knew the man was probably more than a little freaked out. “All part of the game, Spence. Think of it as your reward for being so brave tonight.”

Turning the answer over in his head, Spencer nodded and took another sip. The next set started just then, and he was saved from more conversation. He couldn’t help consider though how lucky he was to have two people in his life that loved him whether he looked like a fashion model or a college professor. That was, in his opinion, what love was really about. Not all this… sending drinks in clubs.

Love was buying clothes because they were needed not because you wanted to change someone. Love was snuggling on the couch instead of pushing for sex. Love was listening to a lecture on the history of jazz in America instead of interrupting and changing the topic two minutes in. Love was acceptance. The rest was just… lust. Spencer felt lucky that he had found love and not lust. He was
pretty sure he’d gotten the better end of the deal. Must be his Vegas luck.

~~* November 2012 *~~ * ~~* Facing Your Fears *~~

Tony led Derek into the penthouse. He had been quieter than normal with a hair trigger mixed in lately, and Tony was determines to find out why. Today he’d gone completely off the rails making a completely out of character, and frankly a highly inappropriate, remark to Agent Anderson. So, he’d invited him over for dinner. He then made sure Spencer and Brian would be away until they were done talking.

After getting them each a beer Tony took a seat on the couch, then watched Derek pace around the living room area touching things and studying pictures. “You wanna tell me what’s going on with you? Because you haven’t been yourself for a few weeks now. Don’t give me that bullshit about not profiling each other either. Usually we’re just too polite to mention what we’ve read off of each other, but we all do it.”

Derek turned from where he was looking at a picture Tony had taken of Brian looking out one of the windows in the penthouse at the night sky. Derek scowled at him, and Tony ignored it taking a sip of his beer. Since the other man was refusing to comment Tony pushed a little harder verbally.

“It seems that something happened when you met Taylor a few weeks back. You’re “honey” mentions have gone through the roof, and you’ve been twichy as fuck to Spencer and myself, especially if we show any kind of affection toward each other. Since I know that you’re not a homophobic asswipe, I have an idea as to what’s wrong, but I don’t know why. So, I’ll be a nice profiler, and give you one last chance to tell me what’s up before I start guessing. Let’s be clear in our expectations, because it will be less guessing, and more telling you what’s going on in your head. You, SSA Morgan, are not nearly as mysterious as you’d like to think that you are.”

“You’re a fucking dick, and this is none of your business,” Derek snapped. His eyes flashing with anger.

“I have one, yes,” Tony drawled lazily refusing to be baited into an unrelated argument. “It’s quite large, and I know how to use it to achieve maximum pleasure. It’s well used, but then so is yours. I’m not sure what that has to do with you being a jerk though. You wanna try that again, or am I just profiling you?”

“It ain’t any of anyone’s business!” Derek growled, but Tony just ignored him. It was well established that he wasn’t afraid of Derek Morgan.

“You almost got written up today for that bullshit that you spewed at poor Anderson today when he was just helping Hotch gather files. Anderson by the way is probably the straightest man on the planet, and it doesn’t require a psych major to figure that out. So, suggesting he suck someone’s dick could in no way be considered a joke. The only reason that you didn’t get immediately suspended was because I asked Hotch to let me talk to you first.”

Derek snorted, and stalked toward the door. He got halfway there before Tony started talking, again. “My parents were both alcoholics. My father would beat the shit out of me. When she was alive, my mother loved to dress me up in cute outfits so show off to her friends. At least she cared for me
Tony took a drink of his beer before continuing. He noticed Derek had stopped, but hadn’t yet turned around. “After my father murdered her so that he could try and get access to her bank account, and my trust fund, no one else really cared about me for a while. Not until Dave rescued me the second time. My Uncle Clive sent me to a boarding school less than a month after he got custody of me. The molestation started two days after I got there, and didn’t stop until Angelo saved me about two years later.

“The first time I realized that I was attracted to Brian I puked, and then I punched him in the face when he touched me. There is absolutely nothing that you can tell me that I won’t understand. So, how about you start talking before you get suspended for asking Anderson if he wanted to suck Hotch’s dick while he was at it?”

Derek seemed to practically wilt in front of Tony’s eyes. He watched as the man moved to sit in one of the chair opposite where he was sitting. “I’m scared shitless, man. I can’t seem to stop acting like a prick, and I… I want… I…”

“Just say it, Derek,” Tony ordered softly and gently.

“I can’t!” Derek snapped then stopped and took a breath clenching his hands together. “I can’t stop thinking about Taylor, and it scares the crap out of me.”

“Why,” Tony asked. He suspected the answer, but Derek needed to say it. He waited long enough that he was beginning to wonder if his friend was going to speak. Just as Tony was about to make another comment, the quiet reply came.

“I was molested by a man named Carl Buford as a child.” Derek hung his head, and Tony just nodded sympathetically.

“Did you ever get counselling for it?” Tony asked, and Derek shrugged.

“Hotch made me go after it came out awhile back.”

Tony rolled his eyes knowing how unhelpful forced counselling could be for something like that. Granted Hotch probably didn’t have a choice, but if Derek wasn’t open to it, Tony knew no good would come of it.

“And how receptive were you?” Tony inquired lifting an eyebrow.

“Not very,” Derek admitted, and Tony nodded not surprised.

“Here’s the thing, Derek. This whatever you have with Taylor is obviously not just a one-time attraction, or you wouldn’t be this worked up. You need to talk to Taylor, and be honest. Lay everything out. I suspect your interest will be returned, and he’ll be understanding. As I said, you’re not alone in this. McSwirley was a serial child molester who killed the boys after he was done with them. So, I get where you’re coming from.”

When Derek opened his mouth to speak, Tony held up a hand. “Thank you, but I didn’t say that for sympathy. I understand your intentions, but we both know how I feel about people being nice to me sometimes. So, here’s what’s gonna happen at work. Hotch didn’t exactly put your punishment in my hands, but he is willing to take my recommendation. Understand he can still tack on whatever else he wants. Don’t be surprised if you still get an unpaid vacation.”

When Derek nodded frowning, Tony rolled his eyes unsympathetically. Derek was a supervisor, and
knew better. He’d created this situation by not talking to any number of people who would have
listened. Did what happen to him suck? Yes, but he couldn’t take his frustration out on people, and
he certainly couldn’t make prick comments to people who never hurt him.

“You need to apologize to Anderson AND Hotch. Then you need to find someone and get help. I
have a name I can recommend if you would like. Not for me or the team or the FBI or even for
Taylor, but for you. It won’t work unless you are committed to it. We both know that.”

Derek sighed and nodded. “I messed up.”

“Yes, SSA Morgan, you did.” Tony scolded gently. “Fortunately for you there are a lot of
understanding people involved.” Staring off at the river in the distance, Tony was quiet for a
moment before he continued.

“Here’s the thing that I realized in college, Derek. Neither Headmaster McSweeney nor Carl Buford
deserve the power to keep us from people who will love us no matter what their gender is. By not
getting this shit fixed, your continuing to give him power over you. Cut that fucker off.

“But, Taylor deserves to have a family who will love him. He deserves all the spoiling you’ll give
him, and the affection and acceptance that your mom and sisters will offer him. We all have our
stories, Derek. Don’t let a predator like Buford keep you from your happy ending.”

Derek nodded, and stood holding out his hand. “Thanks, man. I owe you.”

Tony grinned shaking it before turning to head to the kitchen. “I’ll add it to your tab. Come on, let’s
get dinner started.”

The following week, Tony was sitting at his desk working on a cold case when Derek came up and
leaned against the edge. Things were still a little quiet, but everyone was slowly getting over what
happened.

“Nice to see you back. How bad was it?” Tony greeted leaning back in his chair. He grinned when
he saw his friend wince.

“My mamma kicked my ass all over Chicago,” Derek grumbled, and Tony laughed not the least bit
sympathetic.

When the dust settled from Derek’s outburst, Hotch did take Tony’s recommendations. However, he
also added on a three day suspension as well as ordering him office bound for a month. Normally
the suspension would be longer, and there would be a series of sensitivity classes required before he
could come back. Anderson had been understanding after he heard Derek’s story though, and given
the circumstances, Section Chief Cruz had been satisfied with the punishment.

Derek had chosen to take the time off to see his mother, so that he could confess in person as to what
he’d done. “I called that doctor you recommended. She made it pretty clear that she had my number
though, man.” Tony laughed at the remark.

“Dr. Kate’s Sister is awesome at what she does. I promise you that she isn’t gonna be fooled by you,
or take any of your bullshit. There will be no scamming her I can promise you that.”

“I called Taylor, too,” Derek confessed almost shyly. “He agreed to go out with me Saturday, and
said that we could take things as slow as we needed. I know I said it once, but I seriously owe you,
QB1.”

Tony shrugged, and bumped Derek’s fist. “I’ll collect eventually.” He promised then eyed the man
“Treat him good, Derek. He deserves it, and so do you.” Derek nodded, and after patting Tony’s shoulder walked off. Satisfied with his work, Tony turned his attention back to Master Gunnery Sergeant Wilkins and his son’s murder. It was time to find the man some justice.

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~~* Flashback *~~ * ~~* Where It All Began *~~

David Rossi hated his job some days. It seemed to be a constant reminder of the worst things that humans could do to each other. His current case was a prime example of that. The local police had written it off as a simple suicide, but Elizabeth DiNozzo, formerly Paddington, was from a rich and powerful English family.

They had never liked Anthony DiNozzo, Senior, and wanted their loved one’s case investigated more closely. They feared that the scoundrel had influenced the locals with money, and Dave had to admit he was a little suspicious himself.

The director had personally requested that David and his new partner Jason Gideon check into it. They had both found that Elizabeth’s husband was a despicable human being. Not only had he murdered his wife, but he was a con man that had no remorse for the harm that he cause other people in his scams.

Supposedly, the couple had a child. Anthony DiNozzo, Junior was eight years old, and nowhere to be found. When they’d asked senior about him, the man had just sneered. The house staff had advised they hadn’t seen the boy since his mother’s funeral.

Jason had ordered a thorough search of the grounds for the boy, and was currently upstairs in the mansion. Dave had just come in from the stables through the kitchen side door when he heard the loud hysterical shouts of a child. From the sounds echoing from the cellar Dave guessed that they’d found the boy. Hurrying toward the commotion, it sounded as if Anthony was speaking only in Italian.

Dave didn’t have much time to think about that though, because when he reached the scene, it was pure chaos. There were three offices, and one little boy. One of the officers had a hold of one of the child’s arms, and appeared to be trying to yank him out of a dark closet.

The boy was screaming that he couldn’t leave the dark, or Senior would kill him. Dave quickly lost his patience with the three adults, who seemed to have no idea how to treat a scared child. “Enough!” Dave bellowed startling them all into silence.

The officer wrestling with the child was shocked enough that he let go of the boy who immediately scooted back into the dark.

"All three of you get out of here.” Dave ordered stepping past them as they left. Sitting on the floor
in front of the open door, David considered his options. Deciding that he’d start off talking to the boy in Italian, and began to try and coax the child out. Taking his badge out, he set it as far inside the darkness as he could. He thought he saw movement, as if the child had grabbed it, but he couldn’t see well enough into the room to be certain.

“Hi there. My name is Special Agent David Rossi. I work for the FBI. That’s like a police officer. I’m sorry the policemen who were just here didn’t listen to you. Do you mind if I sit here and talk to you?”

“I don’t mind,” came from the room. “My name is Anthony Dante DiNozzo, Junior. I don’t work for anybody.”

Dave smiled at the reply, and feeling a tap on his shoulder, turned his head to see Jason holding two flashlights. Taking them, the profiler nodded his thanks. He felt his partner retreat as he turned his attention back to the child.

“Would you like me to turn on the light, Anthony? Or, do you prefer that I call you Tony?”

“There’s no light. He took the bulb.” Anthony replied quietly. Dave longed to crawl in there with him, but was worried how the child would respond. “No one’s ever called me Tony before. Mamma called me Anthony, and Senior calls me Junior or stupid. Usually it’s stupid. Does he know you’re all down here? I don’t think that he’d like it, and I don’t wanna get in trouble, again. Do you think we can make it light again, soon? I’ve tried to be good.”

Dave bit the inside of his cheek to keep from growling and asking aloud how much trouble a child could get in a dark closet in a wine cellar. Slowly, he reached out, and set one of the flashlights just inside the doorway. “I need to talk to you about Senior, figlio. You won’t get into any trouble for using the flashlight. When you get comfortable you can come out to me, alright?”

Turning on his own light, Dave scanned the dark room, until he found a small child sitting on a mattress that had been placed on the floor. There was a bucket in one corner, and from the stench Dave guessed that was where the child went to the bathroom.

The only thing resembling a toy was a teddy bear Anthony had clutched in his little arms. It looked like Dave’s badge was clutched in one if his hands, and the profiler took that as a good sign. Seeing that the flashlight was out of the child’s reach, Dave moved his foot out, and kicked it so that it rolled closer to him.

“How long have you been in here?” Dave asked afraid of the answer. “Do you speak English?”

“Since we put mamma in the ground,” Anthony replied following the switch, and sniffled. Dave watched him reach out and take the light, but didn’t turn it on. “I can speak English, ‘Talian, an’ Rosa the maid taught me Spanish. What do you have to tell me, Mr. Rossi?”

“Senior did something bad, and he’s going away for a long time.” Dave said worried how the boy would react. Elizabeth DiNozzo had been dead for just over two months. Jesus, he’d put his son in a storeroom in a wine cellar for over two months. Dave hoped all the things the church said about hell were true. Guys like Anthony Dante DiNozzo, Senior didn’t deserve redemption.

“You mean when he hurt mamma, and made her go into the ground?” Anthony asked, studying Dave’s badge.
“Did he tell you that, Anthony?” Dave asked carefully. He was surprised, but this child seemed to speak and act much more maturely than his age suggested he should.

“When we got home from the place where mamma’s living now, he said that he put bad things in her mint julep, and made her go away. He said that she’d been bad, and that I was bad. So, I had to live in here now. He said that if I came out that he’d make me go into the ground, too. Is he gone forever?”

“If I have any say in it then he is,” Dave promised, and quickly found himself with a lapful of little boy. Closing his eyes, Dave wrapped his arms around the child and let him cry. He was sure hell was even too good for the child’s father.

Just over three years later, Dave was thinking about that moment as he ran through the main building at Rhode Island Military Academy. Tony had been with him for almost six months before the courts got things straightened out with the child’s custody. Soon after that his Uncle Clive’s representative came to take him away.

Dave hadn’t been allowed to know any more information on the subject. He’d been trying to tell himself it was for the best, but their current situation obviously proved otherwise. Jason had the headmaster Byron McSweeney in cuffs, and Dave was in search of a familiar little boy.

How many times could one small child be thrown into hell, and survive? They’d been investigating a string of child deaths. All boys aged eight to twelve with blonde hair and blue or hazel eyes. All neglected, starved, and eventually murdered.

When he’d seen Tony’s name on the student roster, he’d flown into an immediate panic. He’d known that he should have fought to keep the boy. To hell with what the lawyer said. He could guarantee that he wasn’t giving him up this time. No matter what the fucking courts said.


“Mister Dave!” Tony shouted hitting him like a ton of bricks. Knocking them both over with Dave landing on his back, and Tony sprawled out on top of him. “Please, let me live with you this time. Please? I’ll be good, please?”

“I promise, figlio, I promise.” Come hell or high water Dave was not breaking this vow.

Decades later, Dave paused at Tony’s door inside the mansion, and peeked inside. He’d been sitting in the study thinking about the first two times that he’d met his son. He’d grown into an incredible man despite his hard beginning. Seeing the sheets tangled around his legs, Dave stepped inside and straightened them then brushed his fingers over his son’s cheek.

When he turned to leave, he glanced at the dresser, and smiled. On top was a teddy bear, a flashlight, and a frame holding a badge that Dave had turned over almost thirty years before. They’d come a long way, and there had been a lot of bumps and rough patches along the way. The man on the bed had lasted longer in Dave’s life than all of his marriages combined. Tony was his son though, and he wouldn’t change that fact for all of the women in the world.
I only have two sections left to write! Woot! Both are partially done, so there is a clear bright light in the darkness. I hope you are all still enjoying this.

Seventeen will feature one of the rare scenes without Tony, Brian or Spencer in it. It's important though I think, and gives us a look into McGee's mindset on Tony before he died. I expect that it should be posted in a week or less if I get those last sections written this weekend.

Lastly, (and completely unrelated to this story) for those following my Rough Trade story Swingin' on the Vegas Strip... There won't be any more of that story posted this challenge. As I worked on it, I came to realize that to write it correctly, I needed much more than 15,000 words allowed. I am in love with the Swing SentinelGuide idea, and want to do it right. Therefore I am not posting anymore, and will be finishing it during the mulligan challenge in April. I have an idea for November, but I'm not sure yet if I will do it. I have so many other ideas that I might not participate and work on some other things collecting dust on my hard drive.
Gibbs was sitting in his basement when he heard the front door close, and someone crossing the wood flooring upstairs. It took him a bit to place the steps, because they hadn’t been to see him in almost two years. Once he did realize who it was though, he took his hand off the gun he’d pulled out and tucked it back into its hiding place. By the time the man was making his way down the basement steps, there was no indication he’d almost gotten himself shot.

When his visitor stopped next to him, Gibbs looked up making sure his face was blank. He didn’t want his true feelings revealed just yet. He wasn’t sure why this man was there, but if it was for absolution it sure as fuck wasn’t going to be given freely.

“Boss,” the man offered in greeting, and Gibbs nodded back not stopping the sanding he was doing on the gun box that he was making for Brian.

“McGee,” Gibbs finally offered back. He wished he could better see the expression on the man’s face. His peripheral vision wasn’t what it used to be though.
“I’ve been doing some thinking, boss,” McGee offered softly, and Gibbs could hear the anxiety in his voice. “I really fucked up. Didn’t I?”

“Yup,” Gibbs replied forcing himself to keep the steady rhythm on the wood.

“Ziva was a traitor,” McGee observed, and Gibbs could see him shifting his weight back and forth every so often. He was obviously not comfortable. Well too fucking bad because Gibbs wasn’t about to go out of his way to change that.

“Yup,” was all that he offered. Pausing his sanding to check the wood, he decided that it was smooth enough, and moved onto another small square he was using in the design.

“Abby was at the very least out of touch with reality, but possibly a little crazy,” McGee continued uncertainly. “She wasn’t… she was kind of a brat. Wasn’t she?”

“Yup,” Gibbs offered again wanting to shove the wood he was sanding through the little bastard’s throat, but instead he just kept sanding. He shoved down his own personal thoughts on Abby. He’d made peace with himself on that subject and had no intention of sharing his thoughts.

“I let Tony down, Boss,” Tim sighed looking down at the floor.

“Yup.” This one Gibbs really wanted to say more about, but there was a large part of himself that didn’t think Tim deserved his wisdom. Therefore he wasn’t about to offer it unless asked.

“I don’t,” Tim started, but stopped for a long moment before continuing, “I don’t know what to do now.”

This time Gibbs couldn’t keep quiet. He was a little incredulous, and was pretty sure McGee was either being obtuse, or lying all together. “Don’t know, or don’t wanna admit what you need to do, McGee? ’Cause it seems to me you knew what the hell you wanted to do when you had Ziva backing you up.”

When McGee didn’t respond, Gibbs looked up to see the younger man staring at him somewhat shocked. It was that expression that broke his resolve.

“What? You think I didn’t fucking notice, McGee? You think that I didn’t hear all the crap that came out of your mouth aimed at Tony? You think I didn’t hear how quickly you puffed up your own overinflated ego with your piddly little degrees, and put Tony down because you thought his PE degree was worthless. Do you know what you can do with that, McGee? Huh? Did you ever think to check before you just put him down and crossed his accomplishments off as worthless?

“Chiropractor, Teaching, Athletic Trainer, Sports Management, Physical Therapist, Coaching, Sports Medicine… Those not good enough for you McGee? Those degrees not important enough for you McGee? You used yours to be a cyber-nerd. You’d still fucking be a cyber-nerd if Tony hadn’t convinced me to not knock your teeth in, and let him take charge of your training.”

Aggravated, Gibbs slammed his hand down on the workbench taking pleasure in making McGee jump. “On top of that McGee, Tony had six years of law enforcement experience before he joined the team including undercover work and detective work. What exactly did you have to offer that I couldn’t get Abby to do, or shit for that matter Tony to do?”

When McGee snorted, Gibbs shot out of his seat, and had Tim pinned to the beam next to the workbench before the younger man knew what was happening. “Reality check, McGee, who the fuck do you think did all the damned computer searches before you joined the team? It wasn’t all Abby. She didn’t have time.”
Disgusted, Gibbs let go of Tim, and sat back down at the bench. “Since education seems to be all that you care about, just exactly what have you done to better yourself since you got your degrees at MIT? ‘Cause I know what the hell Tony’s done, and I have to say his current major in Criminal Justice with a minor in Psychology to go with the PE degree are pretty damned impressive for not just NCIS, but his new position. And, speaking of that… what are you doing again, McGee?”

The younger man hadn’t moved from where Gibbs had slammed him, and was currently studying the floor as if life’s answers would pop out of it. “Working in the IT department for a small company who manufactures vacuums.”

Gibbs snorted not bothering to hide his amusement. “Tony is currently the liaison working with the premiere Behavioral Analysis Unit out of Quantico. He’s lead on any case that involves any military personnel. My guess is when he finally gets tired of NCIS all together he’ll end up working with them full time. I would be willing to bet that someday he’ll have his own team of profilers. He’s in a committed relationship. He’s got a penthouse apartment with an amazing view. He has the job of his dreams.”

Gibbs stood again and moved to stand in front of McGee. “You have no relationship. You live with your parents. You fix computers for a fucking vacuum manufacturer. You fucked up. You got a big head, and let yourself be manipulated by a spy into an act that cost you your job. Hell! You didn’t even try very hard to protest! You wanna fix what you broke McGee? Shove your fucking hand down your pants, find your fucking balls, and USE THEM! You broke it. You fix it.”

Shaking his head Gibbs paced away, and came back. “My guess is your family still hasn’t a clue what you did. You wanna fix this? Don’t just be a man, McGee. Be a GOOD man. Be the man Tony believed you were when he went to bat for you with me. Be the man Tony thought you were when you shot that cop. Be the man he always believed would be his SFA when he took over for me when I retire. You wanna fix this? STOP TALKIN’ ABOUT IT, AND DO IT!”

Finally done, Gibbs moved back to the workbench and took back up his sanding. “Until then, McGee, you and I got nothing to talk about. I respect you, Tim. I eventually believed in you, but Tony believed in you first. I believed in Tony first. Stop wastin’ time, and fix it. You never know when your time will run out.”

He thought he was gonna have to order the younger man to leave, when he finally spoke. “I understand, boss. For what it’s worth… I’m sorry I let you down. I’m sorry I let everyone down. I’m… You’re right. I’m gonna go talk to mom and dad then… I’ll make it up to Tony, boss. I don’t know how, but someday I’ll do it.”

Gibbs had no idea that would be the last time anyone at NCIS would ever see Timothy McGee alive again. Later he’d wonder if he would have done things different if he’d know. Later he’d regret that things had ended between them still unsettled. At that moment though he still had hope that eventually Tim would work things out. Unfortunately, he’d never have the time, because it had already run out.

~~* March 2014 *~~ * ~~* Don’t Look Backwards *~~

Tony walked into Gibbs’ house carrying some takeout Chinese, and a four pack of this Orange Cream soda that Spencer had gotten him hooked on. Normally he’d bring beer for one of his talks with his big brother, but he didn’t want alcohol to cloud the discussion he needed to have. He also wanted to be able to sleep with his boys wrapped around him that evening.

“Gibbs! Food!” Tony shouted as he set the bag on the kitchen counter, and began digging out plates
and silverware. He was just getting sniffing the ice in the tray he’d taken out of the freezer when Gibbs came into the room. “How old is this ice?” Tony asked, hearing the snort of amusement from his brother.

“New enough it won’t taste funny. What do we need ice for?” He heard Gibbs ask. Nodding, satisfied with the man’s answer, Tony put ice in the two glasses he’d set on the counter, and handed one to Gibbs. “Spencer has me hooked on this orange cream soda. I thought you might be interested.”

Gibbs looked at him a moment, then shrugged figuring it wouldn’t kill him to try it. Following Tony to the table, he set down at the empty place setting, and plated the little box of sticky rice and the box of sweet and sour pork that he knew would be his. Opening the bottle he filled his glass and took a sip. “Not bad, DiNozzo. So, what’s up? Chinese food means you’re stressed. I thought things were better with JJ gone. Has that new woman… Callahan started givin’ you problems?”

Tony shook his head looking down at his plate of Orange Chicken with fried rice. “I... I feel like I need to try again with Abby.”

He finally admitted softly refusing to look up from his food. Giving himself an excuse not to speak immediately again, Tony shoveled a couple forkfuls of food into his mouth. Eventually though the silence from the other side of the table got to be too much, and he had to look up. When he did so, he found Gibbs studying him.

“I’m guessing that this has something to do with McGee and Ziva’s deaths?” Gibbs asked in confirmation, and Tony shrugged playing with the food on his plate.

“She’s getting out soon. Like… six months or something. I could help her get a job somewhere? Maybe let her stay in the guest room? She’ll need…”

“No!” Gibbs said softly, but firmly making Tony look up from his plate once more.

“Boss?”

“Their deaths are not your fault. I am not letting you fuck up your life trying to rescue Abby over something that wasn’t your fault. Especially when it’s just adding to the reason she ended up like that. We never…” Gibbs stopped and took a deep breath rolling his head on his neck.

“Boss?” Tony asked biting on his lower lip, but now it was Gibbs who was studying his plate.

“I’m not going to cloud your judgment on Abby with my thoughts on the subject. I didn’t go into it with Tim, and I’m not going to do so with you either.”

“You… you spoke to Probie before he died?” Tony asked quietly shocked.

Gibbs nodded, and ate a bite of his food before answering. “I did. Had I known that it was the last time I’d talk to him, I’d have maybe worded some things differently, but I did. We talked about you actually. He was beginning to pull his head out of his ass about what he did to cause his situation at the time. My guess is he came knowing I wasn’t gonna pat him on the head and tell him it was all gonna be ok, and I didn’t. He had things he needed to make up for. I can tell you that he wanted to, but he just… he ran out of time. That conversation though does not mean that you should fucking have a dumbass attack and try and fix Abby.”

“Are you sure, boss? I just…” Tony stopped and began moving things around on his plate.

“Eat that, DiNozzo, don’t play with it. As far as Abby goes, I am sure. The issues between you and
“I don’t understand,” Tony admitted stirring his food once more before shoveling a big fork full into his mouth.

“If one of you tries to fix the clusterfuck that your friendship ended in, it won’t be the right one makin’ the amends in the end. You’ll give in because you’re a damned good man, and more tenderhearted than you let on. You feel bad about Abby because you’re scared shitless something will happen to her. Even though you don’t want to be her friend, you also don’t want to go through the pain of Ziva and Tim again. I can understand that. You and I both know though that if you give her an inch she’s gonna take a hundred miles.”

Gibbs took a deep breath, and drank more of the soda before speaking again. “Abby has resources. Tim had resources. Ziva had resources, even if they weren’t the ones she wanted. Abby has her parents. She has her brothers, and the nuns who last I heard from Sister Margaret visit her every week. Forget for a moment the recording she altered. Forget the fact that she took Tim and Ziva’s side. Let’s think about what happened to get her arrested, and her bail revoked.”

Tony nodded shortly and took a deep breath. “She was stalking me.”

“Yes, she was. She had your phone tagged. Your new FBI issued phone. She had your new unpublished address. She had photos of you on her walls. She had emails from your work email address. She had Spencer’s cellphone tagged. She had his emails. She had his address. What do you think she’s gonna do if you give her an inch on this?”

“If she died, boss…”

“Ain’t gonna happen, Tony,” Gibbs promised feeling his throat start tightening as he held in the emotion wanting to let itself loose. “I can’t promise you, but my gut says it ain’t happening. Tim and Ziva they were… unrelated. Tim’s was a break in gone wrong. Ziva was killed by her own people. Even if it does happen, it will not be your fault. Unless you go nuts and kill her yourself, it won’t be your fault.”

Tony sighed and nodded feeling a little bit of relief at the words. His guts had been tied in a knot ever since Ziva died. He didn’t want to let Abby back into his life, but… he was more than a little afraid that he should. Like maybe others were expecting him to. Like maybe if he didn’t and she got hurt or killed people would blame him. It felt good having Gibbs shoulder some of the weight for once.

That night when he got home, Spencer and Brian were sitting in front of the couch watching one of the Star Trek movies. When they scooted apart to let him climb in between them, Tony stripped down to his jeans and did just that. With their bodies snuggled up next to him, he quickly fell asleep finding peace in those he loved, and who loved him in return.

Chapter End Notes

Good news... the writing portion of this beast is DONE!! WOOT!
That's the reason for the chapter posting. There are only three more chapters left after this. I am thrilled, and a little sad at the same time. this is the biggest story I've ever written.

I am considering posting the timeline as a sort of chapter 21 when I post the final part if people are interested. I know that it is probably the only way I kept things straight as this thing came out.

For those that are still reading, I can't even begin to tell you how much I appreciate your loyalty to this. It truly means the world to me. I don't plan on dragging out the posting now that the writing part is finished. I expect it to be completely posted by a week from now, but it could honestly be done sooner. Expect 18 to post this weekend and I'll go from there. Y'all are amazing. For serious.
Broken Vases & Undercover Jobs, Bullets and Big Brothers, & When Two Becomes Three

Chapter Summary

In the present, Brian is undercover trying to catch terrorists, and Tony isn't taking it well. Spencer is a little lost as to why this time is different than any other time. Rossi sets about explaining things to the young genius. Then, while Tony is out of town on a case, Gibbs gives Tony a scare. The team moves heaven and earth to get him back to DC with support waiting. Lastly, the penthouse finally gets its third occupant. Tony picks Spencer's favorite holiday to ask him to move in, and the genius can't stop showing off the rooms his boyfriend designed for him.

Chapter Notes

Lots of schmoopy angst in this one. Tony is all kinds of emotional, and we get a look at how different people approach it. No warnings for this one. Just a whole lot of hurt wrapped in warm fuzzies.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter Eighteen: Broken Vases & Undercover Jobs, Bullets and Big Brothers, & When Two Becomes Three
Tony was pacing around Rossi’s study. His Angelo was watching him calmly as Tony circled the room. Spencer though was more than a little confused and stressed. There were a dozen questions that he wanted to ask, but was pretty sure that they would only make things worse. Something about their current case had his partner on edge. There were so many possibilities why that could be happening that Spencer didn’t know where to start to narrow them down.

Tony had been like this all day. He’d paced around the conference room at NCIS until Gibbs given him a head slap and barked at him to sit down and start going through phone records. When Tony had just taken it with a ‘Yes, Boss,’ Spencer was more confused.

He hadn’t thought that Tony would take it, but the slap and the bark seemed to have calmed him down slightly. It didn’t seem like the nerves went away, but Tony did stop pacing as he was forced to work quietly. Spencer was thankful that he wasn’t the only one confused. There had been several raised eyebrows in room from the BAU side. He was the only one in the room that was Tony’s boyfriend though. So, that made it a little embarrassing.

“Figlio, I have a craving for your shells stuffed with the rocatta and shrimp in the cream sauce. Take pity on your Angelo and go make me some, huh?”

Spencer watched Tony pause, and study the veteran profiler. “Do you have any asparagus? I’ve been wanting to mix some of it in with the cheese and shrimp to see how it’d turn out. Or maybe in with the creme sauce that I’ll put over them. I’m not sure… hmm.”

“Either way sounds amazing. I believe I do have some. It should be in glasses of water on the bottom shelf. Maybe you could make those tiramisu brownies for Spencer. I bet that a treat would make him feel better.”

Spencer watched as Tony blinked then came over to hug him. “Shit! I should have thought… He’ll
be fine, Spence. No sweat! One homemade dinner to make you feel better coming up. You’re gonna love these brownies!”

Spencer was about to argue that he wasn’t the one freaking out, when he noticed Rossi subtly shaking his head at him. “That would be awesome.” He said instead getting a kiss on the cheek before Tony hurried to the kitchen.

Confused, Spencer turned his attention to Rossi knowing that he would explain. “When I was in the service, do you know who I worried about the most on a daily basis?”

“The rookies?” Spencer guessed, but the shake of Rossi’s head said that he was wrong.

“You’d think so, huh? I won’t say that they weren’t a concern, I mean they were usually greener than the grass. No, they weren’t the ones that I worried about the most. It was the guys that had been over there forever, and were finally getting to go home. They were the ones that were the most likely to get hurt or killed, or get others hurt or killed.”

Rossi smiled at Reid’s confusion, and took a sip of his drink before continuing. “The second they found out that they were getting to go home, no matter their intentions, their minds automatically turned away from the war, and onto their friends, family, kids. They just couldn’t stop thinking about all of the things that they were going to do when they got stateside.

“Then on top of it, they were trying to be careful, because they had all these plans that they were making. They were watching for booby traps, landmines, tripwires, and instead were missing dozens of other things. They were the ones I was most worried would get killed.”

“Like Brian,” Spencer confirmed quickly getting the connection between the story and their real life problem.

Rossi nodded shifting in his seat before continuing. “That old saying ‘ignorance is bliss’ is true here. While you always have a general worry when Brian is undercover, you aren’t or weren’t any more worried this time than normal. If we hadn’t had this talk you’d most likely still be in the dark as to there being any difference than usual. You don’t do undercover work typically. You certainly don’t work overseas catching terrorists. My figlio though…”

“That’s what he did at NCIS,” Spencer pointed out finishing Rossi’s though, and the older man nodded once again.

“Tony has enough experience in this situation to know better than anyone else involved what is really at stake with Brian here. He has lost a lot of people in his life, and he’s already been separated from Brian twice. I don’t know if he’d survive a third time.”

Spencer nodded understanding what the situation was better. “Thank you for explaining. The dinner is to keep him busy, and not giving him time to brood right? I notice at work that he really only acts up when he’s got nothing to do. A bored DiNozzo is a dangerous DiNozzo.”

Rossi smiled setting his empty tumbler on the side table. “I have a feeling that Hotch and Gibbs will be assigning Tony plenty of busy work between now and when we finally catch this bastard. It might help if you stick close to him after hours, as well.”

Spencer nodded seriously. “I will. I promise that you can count on me to look out for him.”

“I had no doubts about that, Spencer.” Rossi promised.

Later that night, Spencer lay with Tony in their room at Rossi’s. He was curled up against his
Italian’s side with his head resting on Tony’s shoulder. The other man was running his fingers through Spencer’s hair making him feel loved. Neither of them seemed to be able to sleep, but they weren’t talking either. Spencer was pretty sure that was a problem.

“He’s going to be ok,” the genius finally offered feeling Tony’s fingers still. Eventually though they continued their movement. When his boyfriend finally spoke his voice was quiet and husky in that way it got when he was exhausted. A hint of his New York accent would peak through on occasion.

“You don’t know that. No one knows that for sure. They all wanna tell me that I’m worrying over nothin’ but no one can guarantee me that he’ll come back to me safe an’ sound. An’ nobody understands. Not even you an’ Angelo. I love you both an’ you mean the entire world to me, Doc. I can’t lose Brian, again. I’ll be in a million brittle little pieces if I do. I’d never recover, an’ I know that now you think that I don’t love you as much as him. It’s not true though. I just…”

“No,” Spencer interrupted. Pushing himself up he tucked the hair hanging in his face behind an ear, and frowned down at Tony. “That isn’t what I think at all. Maybe I would have once when this thing was new, but I understand now. You’re absolutely right, and I’m sorry.”

Sighing, Spencer lay back down in his previous position. This would be easier if he didn’t have to look into Tony’s broken, desperate eyes. “I shouldn’t have suggested that I knew that he’d be ok. Noone can guarantee it. We can all hope. We can take strength from the fact that you placed the best two undercover operatives within NCIS with him. We can hope that Brian is not so focused on his future that he loses sight of where he’s at right now. None of us though can guarantee that he’ll come back, and I’m scared. If I’m scared, I can only imagine what you are feeling.

“I’m scared because I don’t want to lose him, and I don’t want to lose you. I know that if I lose one of you that I’ll lose you both. How much you love me versus Brian has nothing to do with any of this. It’s a stupid argument that I would never entertain. It’s like…”

Spencer searched his mind, and quickly found the correct analogy. “My mom had this vase. It was her favorite possession, because her mother had given it to her. It kept getting knocked over and broken or chipped though. I’d already glued it back together a few times, and one day it fell off the side table and shattered. No matter how much she loved it, there just weren’t enough pieces left that could be put together again, so I had to throw it away.

“I saved my money and bought her a new one for her birthday a few months later. She still has that one. It’s in her room at the hospital. She says that it’s her favorite thing when anyone asks her about it. You and Brian are the first vase that she’d gotten from her mother. You’ve already been broken twice. Anymore and there won’t be enough pieces to put back together. You and I are the new vase that doesn’t have even a scratch. We can withstand a few bumps and drops and still be fine.

“I can’t guarantee that he’ll be ok, but I have hope because I know that you did your best to keep him safe. I don’t know if it helps, but we can be scared together.” When the first sob came, Spencer just wrapped himself around Tony, and held in his own fear. It was his turn to be strong. After all, his vase was whole.
They were on a case when it happened. Tony was out in the field with Prentiss, and he’d been up most of the last 48 hours. No matter how much Hotch tried, he’d never been able to break him of some of Gibbs’ bad habits. Not sleeping on a case was one of them. They’d gotten so they could get him to take catnaps on whatever available spot there was at the station, but there wasn’t much going back to the hotel just yet.

Something had been buzzing around in his brain for about the last 15 hours or so. It was driving him nuts because he couldn’t get a clear image of it. He and Emily were checking out cemeteries. Hotch had learned to give him a long length of rope when he requested something out of left field. He’d discovered that sometimes Tony’s weird ideas were what they needed to break the case. Dave had told him it was no different than him using Spencer’s extensive knowledge of a wide variety of topics, or Dave’s own interrogative experience.

There was something about the cemeteries, or something in one of the cemeteries. He just couldn’t get a handle on it yet. He had a good feeling about the one they were on their way to though. Lindenwood Cemetery was one of the oldest in town with the largest number of people. He wasn’t sure what he was going to find, but he knew it was here. “That’s an awfully pensive look on your face.” Prentiss noted from the driver’s seat. One very firm rule set down by Hotch was that if Tony wasn’t going to sleep as much as the rest of the team then he couldn’t drive. While his number of sleep hours had increased since he joined the BAU, it was still a work in progress.

“No offense, Em, but I feel like Spencer should be here instead of you.” Tony remarked looking out the side window.

“What, I’m not pretty enough for you, DiNozzo?” Emily quipped. She was quickly becoming his soul sister, and he was quietly happy about that fact.

“More like your brain isn’t big enough.” Tony teased back. “Seriously though… Call it my Gibbs Gut, but it feels like we need Spencer here.”

“Well, we can call…” Emily started when Tony’s cell rang. When he saw it was Hotch he grinned, and answered. “Your timing is perfect as always, Boss. I am beginning to think…”

Emily frowned as Tony stopped talking. Turning her head. “How bad is it?” She heard Tony ask, his voice tight with worry. All it took was one sideways look from him, and she was turning the SUV in the direction of the station. “They… they’re sure that he’s alive?”

Emily’s hands tightened around the steering wheel running the possibilities in her head. Spencer was working on the geographical prophet when they left, and Rossi had been interviewing one of the families with JJ. The ‘him’ part though suggested he was only worried about one person. Emily knew that even as horribly as she treated him, Tony would still worry if JJ was hurt. For Will’s sake if nothing else, as she suspected the two men were becoming friends.

No, this sounded different, and Emily really only suspected one person. God help them all if Gibbs died. Tony might not recover from such a blow. Turning on the sirens, she made sure he was back at the station as quickly as possible. They needed to get him back to DC pronto.

Tony sat in the waiting room at Bethesda in DC, with his hands clasped together. Brian was off getting coffee. Ducky was off checking with doctors, and Jimmy was back at NCIS working on an autopsy for another team.

Brian was going to make him sleep soon. There was little doubt about that. Not yet though. First he
needed information. He needed to know how he was. He needed details on what happened. He needed to see him. He needed… he needed Gibbs to live. Everything else could be worked around. Jesus he just needed to live.

So far he hadn’t seen anyone from Gibbs new team, and he was happy for that. It would be weird, and he didn’t need to deal with them right then. Jesus, he just had to live. Tony couldn’t stop thinking about it. He couldn’t stop wishing Kate was there to pray to a God Tony didn’t believe in. He wished…

“DiNozzo,” He heard and looking up saw an exhausted looking Fornell coming into the waiting room. Immediately Tony stood anticipating finally getting some news. “You got here a lot quicker than I expected.” Tobias noted pulling him into a hug. Tony could only hope that this wasn’t a precursor to really bad news.

“I have a kick ass team,” Tony noted. “Please, Tobias, no one has told me anything.”

When the older FBI agent moved to sit next to the seat that Tony had stood from, the liaison sat back down. His hands were fenced together with fear.

“There was a party last night.” Tobias started. Tony was thankful to see Brian walking back in just then. When his friend and lover sat down, Tony grabbed his hand desperate for his touch. “SecNav ordered his presence. There was an explosion. Secretary Jarvis was killed. Jethro was hit by some falling debris, which knocked him out and injured his leg. He was trying to help a young woman named Delilah Fielding who last I heard may be paralyzed for life.

“Gibbs injured his leg in the falling rubble. They’re doing surgery right now to put in some kind of bar… Ducky explained but… He’s in with them right now watching. They had to wait on the surgery because of the fear of the gunshot wound. Somehow he also ended up with a bullet wound in his shoulder. We aren’t sure how. My team is investigating, and you have my word we’ll get all the answers.”

Tony felt a muscle in his jaw twitch, and dropped his gaze to his hands. He felt Brian place a hand on his knee in comfort. It had been awhile since he’d been this mad. It had been awhile since he felt this level of loathing for NCIS. “I need you to stay out of this.” Tony heard, and his head whipped up ready to argue strenuously.

“There is no way to justify you investigating this, kid, and you know it. I also know you want justice mixed with a little revenge, but remember he’s my friend, too. However, unlike you I am not so closely and strongly tied. I didn’t work for him. I don’t consider him my big brother, and the directors of both NCIS and the FBI don’t consider me his protégé. Let me do this. Let me do my job. You need to focus your attention on keeping that bastard from coming back early.”

Tony opened his mouth to argue, but stopped when Brian squeezed his knee hard. Looking over at his lover, he saw the man eyeing him quietly. Tony had never been more thankful for their ability to speak without words than he was at that moment. “I think you need an undercover operative on the case, don’t you, Tobias?” Tony asked turning back to look at the more senior agent.

Fornell frowned, wondering if Tony was suffering from sleep deprivation. “DiNozzo, what the crap would I…” He started, but was cut off when Brian had a coughing fit.

“Sorry, Unit Chief Fornell, I caught a little cough on my last undercover job. Fortunately it’s almost gone. I’m on some downtime though. Can’t take a new job for about a month. It’s gonna be really boring. Man, I wish I had something to do.” Brian reached up and scratched the back of his neck unrepentantly.
Tobias closed his mouth, and snorted. “You’re as subtle as DiNutso here. Do you have any investigative experience?”

Brian rolled his eyes. “I didn’t go right from FLETC to undercover, and besides that you have to have some investigation skills to work undercover, dude. Yes, I have investigative experience.”

“If it helps, Hotch has been trying to get him into the BAU since about 6 months after we got back together, Toby. His college degree isn’t in undercover you know.” Tony offered smiling slightly at the man’s scowl.

“Fine, O’Connor, you are with me then. I need to get back to things. Tony, let the stubborn bastard know that I said to cut this shit out! We’re getting too old for this life and death crap!” Tony smiled before accepting a kiss from Brian before he hurried after the Unit Chief. Suddenly, he felt better knowing that his boyfriend would be there to ensure that whomever was behind this didn’t get away.

Two hours later, Tony found himself sitting next to Gibbs’ bed watching the older man sleep. He couldn’t take his eyes off of the man who was the closest thing he’d ever have to a brother. He couldn’t get himself to calm down. He was afraid to look away. There was a big part of him that was afraid he would look back and the man would be dead. That couldn’t happen. Tony just couldn’t lose him.

Watching him as intently as he was, Tony didn’t miss when the twitches started. Leaning forward, hand steepled together in front of his face, eyes locked on Gibbs, Tony smiled when finally the head rolled, and blue eyes opened. Reaching across Gibbs’ body, Tony pressed the button for the nurse before speaking to the man looking at him confused. “Morning, Boss err Gibbs. Suppose I shouldn’t confuse you. You do remember me, right? What’s my name? Do you know the year?”

The nurse came in smiling. “I think some of those are my questions, hon.” The woman had to be at least 70, and was a real firecracker. Tony had already warned her that his friend was going to be a difficult patient.

“DiNozzo, how could I forget you? You’re the biggest pain my ass has ever seen.” Gibbs grumped before the nurse came into view. She immediately started her questioning and checking of her patient, interrupting any retort Tony could have made.

Breathing easier, Tony stood and made an excuse to get coffee before darting into the hall to head to the bathroom. After checking all of the stalls, Tony let the walls break, and sliding to the floor, wrapped his arms around himself. “He’s not dead. He’s not dead. He’s not dead. He’s not dead.”

Once he was done, Tony washed off his face, and actually did head to the café to get something to drink. No coffee though. No sense in teasing the beast. Sending texts to Director Vance, Rossi, Spencer, Brian, and Tobias, Tony considered everyone he gave two fucks to update updated.

Deciding he’d waited long enough, Tony headed back to the room, glad to see the doctor was just arriving.

Once he’d filled in Gibbs, and answered all of Tony’s questions, the two men were left alone. Tony sipping on his strawberry banana smoothie, and staring at Gibbs who as always seemed to be content to just look back. Eventually, Tony found his courage and spoke.

“This was a little too close this time, Boss.” Gibbs just tilted his head to one side watching him silently, so Tony continued. “I really need you not to die, Jethro.” Tony advised his voice breaking at the end. Looking down at his hands, he took a trembling breath only to look up quickly when a rough hand touched his chin.
“Not goin’ anywhere, Tony.” The man promised, his eyes filled with compassion and understanding. “You have my word. Not goin’ anywhere, not anytime soon anyway.” Nodding as he tried to swallow the lump in his throat, Tony decided to throw his pride in the trash, and rearranging his body, lay his head on the bed, feeling his big brother carding his fingers through his hair. Feeling proof that the man was still alive, Tony finally slept.

~~* Halloween 2011 *~~ * ~~* When Two Becomes Three *~~

Halloween was Spencer’s favorite holiday. If Tony hadn’t known that fact prior to October first, the amount of decorations that appeared around the penthouse would have clued him in. Considering the fact that Spencer didn’t live at the penthouse, and spent most nights in his own apartment, made it all that much more amusing. He hadn’t had the heart to tell Spencer that he didn’t like the holiday. It just had too many bad memories attached to it. For Spencer though, he was willing to pretend that the whole thing didn’t make his skin crawl.

He was hoping that his plans for the evening would help to build some positive memories, and change his opinion of the day. He’d decided that it would be the perfect day to ask Spencer to move into the penthouse. He’d hired Derek to remodel the bedroom and library that would be considered Spencer’s. Brian was on a job, but had whole heartedly agreed to the genius moving in.

The two of them were going to Rossi’s for the night. Angelo’s house not only got decent trick or treaters, which Spencer would love, but the older man threw party every year that was legendary. It was an all ages affair, so the kids could and would attend with their parents.

Tony and Spencer were going as Frankenstein and the bride of Frankenstein. It was the younger man’s idea, and he’d promised Tony that he would be the bride. There was no way Tony was walking around all night in a dress and heels.

Tony had gone to lunch with Derek to whine about the whole thing. He’d been sympathetic when he wasn’t laughing, and calling Tony whipped. The work he’d been doing had been finished the previous weekend, and Tony thought that it looked amazing. He hoped Spencer liked it as much.

Previously the bedroom had been filled with only a bed covered in a drab comforter. The library had been a completely empty space. Both areas now screamed Spencer, and Tony was excited to see his love’s reaction. They were getting changed into their costumes at the penthouse, much to Spencer’s frustration. He’d pointed out that since he was ordering everything, and had supplies at his apartment, that it would make sense to get ready there. Tony had been stubborn though, and won out in the end.

When the doorbell rang, Tony rolled his eyes knowing that it was Spencer. Opening the door, he mock glared at the man. “Some day I can only hope that you’ll use your key.”

“If we were at my apartment I wouldn’t need it.” Spencer pointed out, and Tony snorted. “I still don’t understand why we had to do this here. It would have been more logical to do it at mine.”

Since he couldn’t give the real reason, Tony just answered, “Because,” and smiled.

Spencer was unimpressed, and proved it by shoving his way past with a huff as he headed for the bedroom that Tony and Brian shared. “I put everything in the spare room.” Tony called out
watching his boyfriend change direction.

When Tony reached the room, Spencer was turning circles trying to take everything in. Half of the room was Dr. Who, and the other half was Star Wars. Penelope had helped them refine the rough design that Tony had sketched. When she was done she’d kissed Tony’s cheek, and called him a gallant knight worthy of her Junior G-man.

“Come on,” Tony said holding out his hand. “There’s another room for you to see.”

When Spencer took his hand, the Italian pulled him out of the bedroom, and down the hall into the library. Of the two, Tony thought Derek did the best job with this space. Tony had stuck with the Star Wars theme in this space. He’d used photographs online to design a two story space that replicated the Jedi Archives. Derek had promised that stealing some space from the upper level that hadn’t yet been used would leave plenty of room for whatever they decided on in the future.

Tony just stood at the door and watched Spencer wander around open mouthed. The room had two light settings, which each gave the space a vastly different look. Tony grinned big as Spencer seemed to take an almost childlike glee in flicking the lighting between the Jedi and Non-Jedi lighting. When the genius finally came back to reality, Tony found himself with an armful of excited boyfriend.

“I can’t believe that you did this!” Spencer squealed still trying to look at things from his position within Tony’s arms.


“Yes, yes, yes!” Spencer laughed happily holding onto Tony, again. Closing his eyes, Tony felt the last empty place in his soul fill up. Spencer was finally home.

Later that evening, Tony was sitting in the study by himself. In a reversal of their usual roles, Spencer had been the social butterfly all evening, and Tony had stuck to the quiet corners. He was contemplating the fire, and letting his thoughts roam, when Hotch and Rossi came in.

“How did you manage to get the study to youself?” Hotch asked sharing the couch with Dave. Tony was sitting in one of the soft leather chairs nearby.

“I shut the door when I came in,” Tony explained, and Hotch nodded noting that Dave had done the same thing.

Tony nodded sipping his tea, and felt honor bound to clarify Hotch’s observation. “Unless you’re at a frat or sorority house. Then it probably means someone is getting laid. Even then it still means it’s off limits, but only because it’s occupied.

Aaron snorted amused, and saluted Tony with his beer bottle. “I see the plan was successful.”

Tony laughed and nodded. “Did he show you the pictures?”

“Figlio, I think that he’s shown everyone the pictures. That includes the people just coming to trick or treat. You did good, kiddo.” Rossi praised, raising his tumbler in salute.

Aaron nodded his agreement. “I don’t know if I’ve ever seen him this happy. It’s nice. I’m happy for the three of you.”
“I can’t stop thinking what my life was like last year at this time,” Tony replied ignoring the praise. “At the time I thought that I’d die alone. My team were my friends and family, and they had betrayed me in the worse way possible for a cop. The only family I had was Rossi and Gibbs, which isn’t bad, but at some point they’ll be leaving me behind.

“Nature won’t give them another option. I doubted my skills as an agent, because I worked in an environment where I was taught that my skills weren’t enough. I was taught that I wasn’t a good enough leader to command anyone’s respect. I had a whole lot of the wrong things, and none of the right ones.”

Tony looked at Hotch and smiled. “Now I have a career where my skills are respected, and I have never been given any doubt that I am a capable leader. I don’t have to fight and beg and bribe to get people to follow my orders, they just do it. I have a boss that makes sure my authority is recognized, and doesn’t pit me against my subordinates like some never ending gladiator match.

“I have new friends who genuinely care about me, and don’t treat my accomplishments like a joke. While things aren’t perfect, my boss always has my back, and I never have to worry that he’s going to stab me in the back. There isn’t a single thing that goes on within the team that I can’t deal with. Not even JJ and her constant ‘Mean Girl’ shtick. I have Spencer. I have Spencer who found me Brian, and urged me to not only rekindle our friendship, but our love. He gave me the single most important person in my whole life back to me of his own free will.”

Tony grinned happily, his eyes sparkling with the joy he didn’t even consider containing. “I have an amazing home that is for the first time in my life going to BE a home. I’ll have both of my loves under one roof. Yet, if you’d asked me last year at this time, I would have told you that you were nuts if you suggested I’d be this happy now. Life is kind of amazing, ya know?”

Hotch nodded and lifted his bottle. “To the unpredictability of life, and all the joy it brings us.”

“Here, here!” Tony and Rossi happily lifted their drinks in salute.

“To another year of happiness and joy,” Tony offered.

“To another year of love,” Rossi replied, making both Hotch and Tony grin. Tony had to wonder at Hotch’s smile. Sometimes… sometimes he wondered about his boss and his Angelo. There was just enough to make you wonder, but never enough to give you reason to ask.

Tony wasn’t going to look too deeply into it though. It might make his head explode, or his dick shrivel. The last thing he wanted was confirmation that the man he saw as a father, and the man he was quickly coming to think of as a second big brother were having sex. As far as he was concerned they were both celibate. If anyone ever told him different they were dying. Painfully. Horribly. Slowly.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed it.

The timeline seems to be a popular idea, so it will post with chapter 20. It’s just dates of when things happened, along with the break down of who is in the BAU and on Gibbs’ team. No chapters and sections for those that want to read ”in order”. Hopefully though the timeline will help some.
Two chapters left after this one. I am itching to start working on new things. I think my April RT Tony/Aaron will be next up, but no posting until it's completely done. I still have some sections to go back and add in. That will be the first story in the Series within the Series 'Verse. I already have a Jeremy/Robert story plotted out to explain there backstory. There's already a one shot posted in the series which is a future fic.

I have also been working recently on the Tony/Callen story I posted a snippet of for EAD. That idea has grown from its original concept. I should be used to it by now. It's the hazard of being a pantser. Also, I plan on offering the first story in my Tony/Hotch and Danno/Chin Ho Kelly series where Tony and Danno are childhood friends. Lastly, I will be working on reworking the second story in my Sam Winchester/Lindsey McDonald Verse. Mixed in will be the two S&G stories I finished and whatever one shots come to mind.

For those that were following my July Sentinel & Guide stories on Rough Trade.... The Tony/Nick Stokes/Greg Sanders story is being put off until the April Mulligan challenge. The idea simply got too big for the word limit, and I am too in love with what I have planned to simplify it. So, it will be finished in April, but no more will be posted at this time.
Chapter Summary

Brian reflects on his life while on his undercover assignment with G Callen and Sam Hanna. During downtime he clashes with one of the NCIS agents. Then we go back in time to see Spencer’s conversation with his mother regarding his new relationship. It doesn’t exactly go as he had planned. The lastly we come back to present time. Brian is now home from overseas, and decides that the penthouse needs some more residents... of the furry nature.

Chapter Notes

Speculation in the third section about Kate's time at the Secret Service is just that. It's all made up in my head, and I have no factual information that suggests it to be true for the real life Secret Service. I used it as a plot point, and in no way intend to disparage the men and women who work for that agency.

Edited 1-14-17 to correct the boy dog’s name.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter Nineteen: Reflections on Life & Love, Telling Mom, and From Goldfish to Furbabies

~~* February 2016 *~~ * ~~* Reflections on Life & Love *~~

Brian was sitting in the hotel room that he was sharing with Sam Hanna and G Callen from the NCIS OSP office in Los Angeles. The two men were talking quietly on the other bed, and Brian was taking a moment for himself. He couldn’t really get true alone time, but the other two did their
best to give him the illusion of time to himself.

Brian was glad that Tony had insisted on their presence. Their connection and familiarity with the area were big help. When combined with Brian’s own contacts they had both a viable lead on their terrorist scumbag, as well as a workable plan to get them in.

Callen would be piggy backing in as the brother of one of Brian’s identities with Sam playing Callen’s bodyguard. They had a few days though before they could get a meeting. So, until then they were mostly laying low. Although they were also getting out there to be seen and set their covers on occasion. It was a tricky balance, but one they were all familiar with.

Callen seemed to be alright. He was what you’d expect from someone who had spent most of his adult life undercover, and spent his childhood bouncing around between foster homes. He was a little aloof, and a lot hard to connect to. Fortunately, Brian didn’t need to form a lifelong bond with the man, he just needed to be able to trust him to watch his back. This was doubly fortunate when it came to Callen’s partner Sam Hanna.

The man came across to Brian as condescending and judgmental, and the blonde found himself constantly resisting the urge to use Rossi’s favorite throat punch on the former SEAL. Bri hadn’t felt comfortable around most military types since his boarding and military school days. The only ones that he’d ever been able to let in were Rossi and Gibbs, and both of those relationships were still works in progress even five years into his relationship with Tony.

Brian had come a long way from the hell of his childhood, and the years spent being judged as being a slacker by uptight military brats. The assholes had only looked at his blonde hair and laid back persona before finding him to be lacking. He’d been tormented and just short of abused by assholes who felt it was ok to pick on him because they interpreted some code to mean that they were superior to him. He hadn’t had enough positive experiences since those days to convince him that people like Sam Hanna could be trusted.

Every time Sam spoke to or about Brian it the man came across like felt that he was lowering himself just by being in the same room as the blonde. Callen tried to play the peacemaker, but frankly it was distracting. Given that Brian was in charge, and didn’t have time for the drama, Agent Hanna was on thin ice. If he didn’t watch it he was going to find himself watching the op from the sideline.

Brian had already warned Callen that he felt the two of them could pull this off just fine, and wasn’t going to let himself be bullied into believing otherwise. He didn’t understand why the hell the SecNav had asked for Tony’s help when they had a damned Office of Special Projects that seemed to deal with this type of thing all the time. Tony had suggested that there was some distrust between Morrow and Hetty, and possibly Gibbs’ ego hadn’t been willing to let go of his operation. The whole thing was a FUBAR, and Brian just wanted out in one piece.

He just kept reminding himself that he now had people who accepted and loved him for who he was blonde hair, blue eyes, and laid back attitude notwithstanding. David Rossi had practically adopted both himself and Spencer. He was the former military man in Tony’s life that Brian liked the most.

Maybe it was because he felt more like a profiler, and less like a marine. Maybe it was because Gibbs acted too much like some of Brian’s former instructors. Whatever it was Brian was starting to feel as if Rossi was as much a father to him as he was to Tony. He knew that Spencer viewed him as an uncle that he’d always wanted, and was treated like a nephew by the older man.

They’d had dinners with Gibbs over the years, Brian, despite his own misgivings, could see why Tony held onto that relationship so tight. Even if he wasn’t sure that he could get to that point himself. Spencer interestingly enough seemed to be amused by Gibbs most of the time, and happily
stood up to that man when needed. Maybe it was the nature of his job, and the years spent learning
to build his own backbone while dealing with Derek Morgan.

Brian could see that there was clearly an affection between his lover and Gibbs. He wasn’t sure if
he’d ever see the man as a big brother like Tony did, but in the last few years the older man had
relaxed some. Because of that, he was starting to see beneath the crusty surface. He was hoping if
only for Tony’s sake that someday he could honestly call Leroy Jethro Gibbs a friend.

He knew though that he’d never understand how Tony worked for the man so long. While the Gibbs
he normally saw away from work was growing on him, the asshole he’d seen at NCIS before Brian
had left the country was intolerable. There was no way he would ever work for such a tyrant, and
was going to give Tony the blowjob of his live for surviving that as soon as he got back to the states.
It certainly explained why Tony was so damned fond of his current team.

The BAU team was awesome, and Brian liked every one of them. Derek Morgan was everything
that a brother should be, and Brian had already slotted him into that role. Hotch had that big brother
vibe that made Brian feel safe and protected. He knew that he’d never have to wonder where he
stood with the man or worry that he wasn’t good enough.

Emily Prentiss was just a badass. Brian had always liked strong confident women, and the
ambassador’s daughter certainly filled that role.

Kate Callahan was the team mother, and Brian adored her. She was one of the only people that had
ever been allowed to be nice to Tony and be tolerated no matter the mood. For that alone she had
Brian’s respect.

Penelope Garcia as a bright colorful light in a vast depressing darkness that Brian was finally pulling
himself out of. There had never been a moment that he’d seen her when she hadn’t made him smile.
It was literally impossible for Brian to pick a favorite amongst the team, because they all filled some
role in Brian’s life that he’d desperately needed.

Rossi however was already threatening to retire again. He’d taken to bitching about all the trouble
that Tony, Prentiss, Derek, and Brian himself were going to get into. Emily had tried to claim herself
a perfect angel, and Spencer had literally fallen off the sofa on the jet he was laughing so hard.

Letting his mind wander at the thought of the genius, Brian wondered what Spencer was doing at
that moment.

His relationship with him had certainly evolved since they’d met. The first year or so was awkward
and a little miserable. Brian had been too afraid to ask for what he wanted. Spencer had been too
self-conscious to think that a second person could love him the way that Tony did. When Brian had
finally stuck his neck out, and asked Spencer for more, he’d been sure that he’d crashed and burned
when Reid hadn’t immediately responded.

Since then, Brian had come to understand how Spencer processed emotional things and emotional
situations. It took the younger man a bit to understand that aspect of things, and then figure out how
he was supposed to process it. Often times Brian noticed that there was a call to Hotch or Derek
involved in the understanding process before a resolution was reached.
These days, Brian knew not to expect an immediate response to certain kinds of conversations. That
day though he’d just known that it was all over.

Since then, both he and Spencer made it a point to take moments to spend together without Tony.
Their’s would probably never be the great love that they each felt that they had with the Italian. That
didn’t mean that it wasn’t special in its own way though.

Slowly but surely, the two of them found common ground, and then built on it. That then led to a
stronger bond between the three of them, which made for a happier Tony. A happy Tony was really
all that either Brian or Spencer wanted. So, oddly that strengthened their bond putting them back at
that connection between the two of them being important in its own way.

Of course nothing would exist without Tony. Literally everything in Brian’s life led him back to
Flyboy in some way. When Tony came back into his life, Brian felt like a newly rebuilt engine.

He might not be as good as he was when he rolled out of the factory. He might have some miles on
him, but he also had some shiny new parts, and a new lease on life. There wasn’t a road that he
wasn’t willing to explore. With Tony by his side, they all seemed possible.

It was hard to imagine how his life might have turned out if they’d never met. Sometimes Brian
thought that the two of them would always be those two scared little boys tossed into a boarding
school with a monster by people that couldn’t be bothered with them. All while they were missing
mothers who had been stolen from them. Most times when he was in those moods, Brian came to
realize that if that was true then it was ok. He’d never before needed more than Tony, and couldn’t
imagine a situation in the future that would change that.

Of course now he had Spencer to add into that equation. Underneath the intelligence and uncertainty
the genius worse like a skin was a spine of steel. The man had his own list of complaints to take up
with the world. The first probably being with a father who had thought it ok to abandon him with
only a mentally unstable mother to care for him. All because the man hadn’t been able to take what
his wife had done to protect her son from Riley Jenkins’s murder.

Knowing what he did about the situation from Reid, Brian could understand how a lawyer would
have a difficult time living with the knowledge that his wife had killed someone. Even if that was
the case though that would never make the abandonment of his innocent son acceptable. In Brian’s
opinion, William Reid was as bad as Anthony DiNozzo, Senior and Padraig O’Connor ever were.

The only difference between them and Reid’s dad was that on top of being selfish and a bad father,
he was a coward as well. Brian wondered if maybe that wasn’t worse than Senior and Padraig. At
least they hadn’t cared and never let their sons believe that they did. William made Spencer believe
that he was loved before simply disappearing. Abandonment was hard under any circumstance. At
least Brian and Tony had known the score long before their fathers left though. Spencer had believed
that he was loved and safe.

Of course Tony and his own knowledge of their father’s hatred of them didn’t take away that hope
that their situations would change. In Padraig’s case, Brian was pretty sure that the man believed that
he loved his son. It might have been a twisted and cruel love, but the man probably had known no
other type.

Brian had only met his seanathair (grandfather) Aengus O’Connor once. In his opinion that had
been enough. Regardless of all that the bottom line was they’d all had crappy fathers, but to him
William Reid and the sins he’d committed against his son were the worst of the three.

“Deep thoughts?” Brian heard, and opening his eyes, smiled weakly at Callen.
“Kinda,” Brian admitted surprising both himself and the NCIS agents.

“Too much downtime will do that to you,” Callen offered sounding as if he understood. From what Tony had told Brian about the man’s life, he believed that Callen probably did.

“That’s why you have to train your mind to ignore negative impulses,” Sam said smirking. Brian just wanted to smash his fist into the man’s throat. His snark and arrogant air weren’t helping the blonde’s restlessness.

“Not now, Sam,” Callen reprimanded softly, but his partner ignored him, unfortunately.

“It’s never not the time to teach discipline to those that are lacking,” Sam quipped. He may have been joking, but Brian’s mind and history didn’t interpret them that way. Nor were they willing to let the man off the hook a single time more.

Leaping off the bed, Brian ignored the fact that the man was built like a brick house as he thrust himself into Sam’s personal space. “Why don’t you take your self-discipline and shove them up your ass, you judgmental prick? I have had just about enough of you and your ‘I’m better than everyone else’ mentality.

“I met dozens of fuckers like you at military school. Every one of you jackasses treated guys like me as if I was a waste of space. Well, I hate to tell you princess, but you aren’t any fucking better than any of the rest of us. If you think that I haven’t put my life on the line for my country then you don’t understand the first thing about my career. I believe in right and wrong, good and evil, justice and injustice just as much as you do, and if you can’t understand that then I don’t want you watching my back.”

Ignoring Sam’s attempt to stick up for himself, Brian turned to Callen scowling. “You’re gonna have to rework your half of the plan. I’m not letting him get me killed because he thinks that he’s better than me and doesn’t follow my lead. I don’t care if he’s your partner or not. He’s out. PERIOD.”

Stomping back to his side, Brian picked up the hat that Brennan O’Rourke always wore, and stormed out of the room. Fortunately Brennan was known for his fiery temper, so if he someone was watching they wouldn’t be surprised in the least.

Back in the room, Callen was glaring at his partner. “I told you to knock that shit off. I told you not to take whatever bullshit you have with Deeks out on Brian. I told you that he wouldn’t get it or take any more of it. Did you listen? Of course not.”

Callen grabbed his sunglasses and his own hat before moving toward the door. “You’re my partner, Sam, and I trust you with my life. Sometimes though I wish that you’d get over yourself. You can call Hetty to explain why the plans have changed, and you won’t be able to accompany us. I have a brother to calm down.”

Sam watched Callen chase after Brian, and ran a hand over his head. This was not going to be fun. Hetty was going to be pissed.

Brian was wandering through the market when he felt someone come up next to him. He was about to reach back for the gun that he’d kept on him since he’d left the states, when Callen spoke. “I have put him in his place, brother. I should have listened to you before it got to this point. I’m sorry.”

Brian looked up from the stand of books that he’d been studying to see real regret in Callen’s eyes. “I know you trust him, Gregor, but he just isn’t right for this. He and I don’t have the history that
you two do, and I am not comfortable with him. Ahmir will pick up on that, and our deal will be in jeopardy. I don’t think that any of us want that.”

Brian picked up two of the books, and wondered if he could indulge. Brennan was known to partake on occasion in such intellectual things, and he had a feeling that Spencer would enjoy them.

“Books, Brennan?”

Brian bartered with the vendor over the price, and paid the settled on amount before answering. “I think that my doctor friend will enjoy them. It’s always good to have such a person in your life. You never know when their knowledge will come in handy.”

“This is true,” Callen replied laughing as he carried on his Gregor O’Rourke persona. The older man settled in at Brian’s side as they made their way leisurely further into the market. They passed several stalls before he spoke again.

“Do not let Samael’s antics throw you off. The end is close. I won’t let him ruin this for you. You are almost free brother. Remember that.”

Brian took a deep breath, and nodded. His hand gripped the book tight enough that the edge of the cover dug into his fingers. It was a reminder of what was in front of him. The sights and sounds around him were a reminder of what he was leaving behind. “I just want this to be done, Gregor.”

“I’ll get you through this. You have my word. All those plans will be yours.” When Callen gripped his arm, Brian stopped and nodded to acknowledge the man’s sincerity.

“I am holding you to that.” Brian advised, and continued his stroll. Callen was right. The end was in sight and he wasn’t going to let Sam Hanna throw him off of his game. He was almost done, and had two amazing men waiting for him at home.

~~* Thanksgiving 2011 *~~ * ~~* Telling Mom *~~

Spencer walked into Bennington with his hands shoved into the pockets of his slacks. Tony had been trying to get him to dress more casually on his downtime, but Spencer knew a visit to his mother wasn’t the time to begin that. A part of Spencer wished that he’d let Tony come with him to do this, but it was never certain how his mother would react to strangers.

Pausing in the common area where his mother was sitting, Spencer took a deep breath telling himself she’d always supported him. Then before he could chicken out, moved over to sit down with her.

After they’d talked about other things for awhile, Spencer knew he couldn’t keep stalling. His mother was having one of her good days, and she’d pick up on what he was doing soon. “Mom, I have something to talk to you about.” Spencer admitted softly. Diana put down the papers she’d been reading to him, and took off her reading glasses.

“I knew there was something wrong,” she proclaimed frowning. “What happened, Spencer? Is it that job of yours? If the government has come after you they are going to have to deal with me. I will scratch all of their eyes out!”
“Mom, its not,” Spencer began frustrated and a little amused. “It’s not bad, mom. It’s good. At least, I think that it’s good. I’ve… I’m in a… I met someone… someones? I’m in a relationship with two men, and I’ve moved in with them.”

“Someones?” Diana repeated frowning. “Explain this, Spencer. You haven’t turned into some kind of a gigolo have you?”

“Mom!” Spencer squeaked. “It’s not like that I… Their names are Tony DiNozzo and Brian O’Connor. They work with me. Tony is on my team, and Brian works for another department. They… they accept me as I am, mom.”

Diana studied her son seriously. “They don’t mind the sex thing?”

Spencer blushed shaking his head. “No, mom, they don’t mind. That’s how… I met Tony first, and felt bad because he is… he likes sex a lot. So, I found Brian for him. They… they’re amazing, mom.”

Diana nodded then leaned forward. “Are they attractive? You deserve men who are good looking, Spencer, but they need to be smart, also. Are they sexy and smart?”

“Mom!” Spencer shrieked feeling the conversation devolving out of his control, and Diana just made a face.

“Don’t be a prude, Spencer. I have had sex you know. You weren’t created in a test tube.” Diana frowned at her son’s embarrassment. “A mother needs to know these things. Are they? Do they let you watch them? I know you enjoy that greatly.”

Spencer hid his face in his hands. He couldn’t believe the direction that their conversation had turned. He felt his mother pat his head, and groaned.

“Why back in my college days, I experimented a time or two. There was these two girls…”

“Mother!” Spencer shrieked again wide eyed, and Diana just sighed.

“I hope these men of yours get you over this. Sex is a natural act. You didn’t answer my question, young man. Don’t think I didn’t notice.”

“Yes!” Spencer interrupted. “Yes, they are sexy and smart. They also let me… they let me do what I am comfortable with.”

“Oh, that’s perfect, baby,” Diana replied nodding. “All I want is for you to be happy. Do you love them? I want to hear about these men. Does that boss of yours like them. He seems to be a good judge of character even though he does work for our fascist government.”

Spencer smiled, and ignored his mother’s comments about Hotch relaxing back into his chair. The embarrassing stuff seemed to be passed. “Hotch likes them. Rossi has known Tony since he was a kid. So, Aaron has known him longer than I have. I love Tony. Things with him just clicked. Brian I don’t know as well yet. We’re still working on things I guess.”

Diana reached out and patted his hand. “Not every relationship is the same. Did they go to college? A college education is very important.”

“They both graduated from Ohio State University. They’ve actually known each other since they were kids. Not only do they both have their original degrees, but they take classes here and there as they have time.”
“Good! You’re never too old to learn something new, Spencer. Never forget that. Now, what book should I select for the class next? I am torn between The Republic by Plato, and Oresteia by Aeschylus. Which do you think is more important and why? Come on now. No dawdling. I need your answer Mr. Reid.”

Settling in, Spencer smiled and turned his mind to his favorite subject. Despite her illness, his mother would always be the woman that he respected the most. As long as she accepted his relationship, no one else’s opinion mattered to him.

~~* February 2016 *~~ * ~~* From Goldfish to Furbabies *~~

Brian practically ran out of the building when he was finally let go. It was his last debrief from hopefully his last major undercover assignment. He had an appointment, and he couldn’t wait to get there. It was time that Kate and Probie came home.

When he finally got to the penthouse over two hours later, he was carrying two puppy carriers. Hearing sounds coming from Spencer’s library, Brian snuck down the hall, setting the cages on the floor just outside the room. Opening the doors, he grinned as Kate bound out with an excited yip, announcing her presence to the house, and running into the room in front of her to explore.

“Was that a dog?” He heard Tony ask, which was quickly followed by Spencer’s, “Holy shit! A Puppy!”

Brian was in the process of trying to convince Probie to come out when he heard footsteps behind him. “Whatcha doin, Bobo?”

“Trying to get Probie to come out,” he complain frustrated. The frightened puppy definitely was not as adventurous as his sister, and seemed content to remain in the back of his current home. Because he was glaring at the puppy, Brian missed the look of fondness on his partner’s face.

“Let an expert try,” Tony requested, and Brian was more than happy to step aside to let him. The dogs were for them all in principle, but the blonde had a feeling that Probie specifically would always be Tony’s first.

When he stood up, Spencer was walking out into the hallway giggling as Kate licked his face. “I think she likes me! Clooney’s the only other dog I ever met who didn’t hate me on sight.”

“I always knew that there was a wild child lurking inside of Kate,” Tony snickered before turning his attention back to the quivering brother. “Come on, McGeek! Time to come out and play in the real world. You can play Elf Lord later.” Astonishingly enough the puppy immediately bounced out, and into Tony’s arms.

“HA!” He crowed, standing with the puppy safely snuggled against his body. The grin on his face was confirmation enough to Brian that he had done the right thing.

“What kind are they?” Tony asked scratching behind Probie’s ears. With the way the pup’s tail was wagging it was obvious that the puppy was happy with his change in environment. It seemed Probie was as fond of his new daddy as daddy was of him.

“They are yorkie poos,” Brian answered, and grinned when Spencer took over.

“A cross between a Yorkshire Terrier and a Miniature or Teacup poodle. They usually get no more
than twelve inches tall, and weigh on average no more than ten pounds with the males being bigger. So, Kate will always be able to perch regally on my arm or in my lap.”

Tony snorted nor even trying to hide the grin on his face. “Don’t worry McPup. We’ll make a manly Yorkie Poo put of you. No delicate perching and outfits for you. I wonder if they sell computers for dogs.”

Spencer perked up again petting Kate who was surveying her kingdom from the safety of daddy Spencer’s arm like the royal queen pup that she was. “Actually they are creating computers that service animals can use to assist their humans. It’s also been shown that dogs can interact with touch screens. So, it’s possible that someday Probie could have his own tablet. Maybe he’ll watch Lassie!”

“Kate, of course, will have all of the accessories that a lady of her standing deserves,” Brian joked.

Kate gave a yip as if she was agreeing. Tony laughed imagining his Kate’s reaction to all of this. He hoped that she would come to accept it all once she worked past the obstacles that her faith would raise. A pang of grief hit him as it always did when he thought of his lost friend.

Over the years there had been several moments when he’d wondered how things would be different had she been there instead of Ziva. Kate was complicated. She’d just been coming back to the person that Tony believed her to be when Ari stole her from them.

Tony had always believed that Kate wasn’t quite what she projected. The Spring Break picture proved that she at least at one time had a wild side that she’d let out. He had a feeling that the ultra-conservative Catholic schoolgirl routine was an over compensation to whatever happened to her while she was with the Secret Service.

It was no secret that women had a rough time in all areas of law enforcement, but maybe especially so in the Secret Service. That agency was still more of a good ol’ boys’ club than other federal agencies. Tony could only imagine what Kate had been forced to endure to get placed on the President’s detail.

The fact that she seemed to take the brunt of the punishment when her liaison was discovered spoke volumes. Timothy Kerry was as culpable as she was, and should have been headed to the same dismissal that Kate had been. Instead the marine who had been assigned to carry the football for the president had skated by, and served several more years in the position.

Knowing what he did of Caitlin Todd, Tony was fairly confident as to her thought process once she found out that she was the only one who was getting dismissed. Kerry had received little more than a slap on the wrist. That could not have set well with his partner, and must have helped to create the identity she’d assumed when she came to NCIS.

His suspicions of Kate’s true nature were helped along by having such familiarity with one of her former flames. Steve Adler had gotten the cold Shoulder from his fellow frat brothers when they’d found out he’d shared house secrets with a woman just so that he could get into her pants.

It had only been after Kate’s death, and at Tony’s request that it be let go, that the brothers forgave him. Steve may not have been Tony’s closest friend in the fraternity, but he’d known him fairly well. Certainly he’d known him well enough to know that a repressed feminist would not have gotten in close enough to get the secrets that Kate had.

“Can I see our girl a minute, Doc?” Tony asked. Spencer happily agreed without questioning him why, and he was thankful for that. Poor Probie wasn’t as happy about it though, and Brian had to move to Spencer’s side to once more try and calm the nervous pup.
Taking Kate, Tony moved though the apartment giving her the tour, including an introduction to her fish self. When they got to the piano, Tony moved around the instrument so that she could see the view from the window.

“What do you think, Kate? I know that it’s not what you’re used to, but they’re good for me. This place, the new job is all good for me. NCIS just wasn’t anymore. So, I had to find us a new home. I’ve been here about five and a half years now, but it’s hard to tell how goldfish you feels about things. She just swims in circles and eats fishy flakes.

“Do you think that you and Probie can be happy here? I know this relationship with Brian and Spencer would have been hard for the Post-Secret Service you to accept. I’d like to think though that when you saw how happy that they make me you’d work it out. I really need you and Tim to be happy here, Kate.”

When he looked down, the puppy was studying him with rapt attention. It was as if she thought that he was the most interesting thing in the world. When she suddenly leapt up, resting her little paws on his shoulders so that she could lick his cheek, Tony just laughed happily.

“I think that we need to go to the pet store. Kate needs some pretties.” The puppy yipped and wagged her tail seeming to be fully on board with the plan.

The next morning, Brian was standing under a tree in the park near their house. He was watching Tony run around an open field with the puppies who were both on his heels. They seemed to be enchanted by their new human.

“I’d say that the puppies have picked their favorite,” Brian heard. Turning his head, he saw Spencer standing there holding two coffee cups. Brian grinned, and took the one being held out to him. “No coffee for Flyboy?”

“He’s cutting back,” Spencer explained. “He started while you were gone. He drinks coffee with his breakfast, but for the rest of the day it’s tea. Since he only likes that when it’s fresh, and prefers the loose leaf variety, I didn’t bother bringing any. You did well with the puppies. I think that he really needed them. He talked about the real McGee and Kate quite a few times while we were working with NCIS.”

Spencer paused, and Brian could practically see him working something out in his head. “To be honest, I am glad that we won’t be working with them anymore. It… that environment wasn’t good for Tony.” Brian noticed that Spencer was chewing on his bottom lip, and turned his attention back to their mutual partner.

“They haven’t been for a while.” Brian noted quietly. “I am glad that he finally took a stand, too. I think that it was the Gibbs thing that made him let that negative relationship ride for so long. He didn’t want to let the guy down. I think if the old SecNav hadn’t pissed him off, then he’d still only be a liaison. He probably would have even let them talk him into doing the undercover job that he wasn’t suited for.”

Brian could hear the confusion in Spencer’s voice when he spoke again. “I know that Tony had Rossi. So, I don’t honestly understand the Gibbs thing. If he didn’t have Dave, it would make more sense to me. I mean, it mostly made sense until I saw them work together on a daily basis. There is certainly not a healthy working relationship between the two of them. Gibbs just barks, and Tony just jumps. Even when he says that he’s not going to do it. I don’t understand why Tony would still want the man in his life.”

“C’mon, Spence, you’re a profiler.” Brian scolded gently. “Forget that he’s Tony, and ask yourself
Brian took a drink of his coffee before speaking, again. “No matter how horrible Senior was, he will always be Tony’s father. No matter how much love Dave shows him, he will always be the man who stole Tony’s dad from him. 99% of Tony loves Dave more than he will ever love Senior, and the same amount of him hates Senior more than anyone, but possibly my father. It’s that 1% of him that needs Gibbs, and sometimes that small amount is all that you need.

“I guarantee that you don’t hate your father any more than I hate mine or Tony hates his. If you can tell me that there isn’t a part of you that doesn’t still scream for your father to pay attention to you and love you, then I’ll give up sex and cars.”

Spencer hid behind his own coffee before sighing. “It hurt to see him go through that. No matter what I did, I couldn’t make it stop.”

“And, you never will. Tony will always hold people too close even when he shouldn’t.” Looking to the field, Brian smiled. “But, if you want to help…”

Brian pointed to where Tony was running around, his arms stuck out at his sides making fighter plane noises. Brian guessed that the puppies chasing him were his backup. “Play with him. What do you say, Spence?”

Instead of answering, the genius just put his cup down, and took off. Brian followed close behind thinking to himself that it was all blue skies and sunshine from there.
Chapter End Notes

The nuclear football (also known as the atomic football, the president's emergency satchel, the button, the black box, or just the football) is a briefcase, the contents of which are to be used by the President of the United States to authorize a nuclear attack while away from fixed command centers, such as the White House.

So, you are getting two chapters and the timeline/team breakdowns tonight. I am thankful to everyone who has followed this from the beginning. I am especially thankful for those that take the time to comment.
Chapter Summary

Tony goes to visit Gibbs after getting his six month review. He's a little freaked out, and needs some words of wisdom from his big brother. Then Agent Sacks makes an appearance in the BAU break room to harass Spencer. Tony waits as long as he can, but eventually steps in. Once the smoke clears, Spencer and Tony have a conversation about their feelings. Lastly, while Spencer is in Las Vegas talking to his mother, Tony has a moment to himself in the penthouse. He decides to take some time for himself and reflects on his life.

Chapter Notes

Here it is. The end has arrived. Three important moments early in the relationship. I hope that you all enjoy it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.
Tony wandered down the steps to Gibbs’ basement and placed the pizza boxes he was carrying on the bench. Grabbing a couple pieces and some wings he took a seat on the empty stool Gibbs had moved downstairs for him. After a few long minutes, the man he considered his brother stopped sanding and grabbed a slice out of his own box. “What’s wrong?”

Tony huffed and studied the slice in his hand before replying. “Nothing is wrong.”

Gibbs arched an eyebrow and looked from Tony to the pizza box and back. “The pizza boxes say otherwise.”

“You’re gonna think that I’m a freak.” Tony offered pouting, and Gibbs lifted an eyebrow smirking. “Tony, I’ve known that you are a freak for years. Whatever you have to say isn’t gonna change that.”

“Hey!” Tony grumped playfully, and threw a piece of crust at Gibbs’ head when he laughed. “Fine! I’m worried because it’s going so well.” When Gibbs just stared at him, he barreled on. “I had my 6 month review with Hotch today. I had actually had a meeting with him, and then we went to lunch. He asked me if I had any concerns… I had nothing to say, Gibbs.”

Tony frowned as he stuffed most of a piece of pizza in his mouth thinking as he chewed. “I mean, yeah JJ is still being a bitch, but Angelo said that wasn’t my issue. Derek is being cool now that we worked things out. This thing with Spencer is… Jesus, Gibbs, it’s more amazing than a relationship with sex. I mean, shit! He found me Brian so we can have sex!”

Gibbs snorted amused then eyeballed Tony. “Explain that whole thing to me, again. Is Brian like your approved piece on the side or what?”
Tony huffed and shoots Gibbs a dirty look, even though the smirk on the man’s face said he wasn’t quote serious about it all. “No, he’s… OK look it’s like this. We are basically one unit with three different levels of relationships. There’s me and Spencer, and we do everything a normal couple does except for the sex.”

“Last I checked sex was a big part of it, Tony. Maybe one of the biggest.” Gibbs pointed out, and the younger man scowled.

“Jesus, Gibbs, it’s no wonder you’ve been divorced three times. I know you and Shannon weren’t that way. We hold hands and kiss. We go on dates. We go grocery shopping. We pay bills, and make life decisions together. We have arguments then have awesome makeup cuddles with homemade dinner and movies. We share secrets and fears and... Everything.

“Brian and I are like a normal relationship with the sex. Spencer and Brian are… well I don’t know what the fuck they are. It’s not my relationship though so I am not sticking my nose into it just yet. I am giving them time to figure out what the fuck the two of them want on their own before I start meddling. Eventually, I hope that there will be a Brian and Spencer as well as Brian and Spencer and me element, but their relationship has to develop first.”

“And this makes you happy?” Gibbs asked softly, satisfied when his friend and little brother nodded.

“It does. That’s why I’m freaked out. When was the last time I got to be happy, and someone didn’t take it away? I can’t lose all this Gibbs. I’m scared to death, and I don’t know what to do.”

“Don’t borrow trouble.” Gibbs advised sighing and mentally cursing Senior. “You’re allowed to be happy, Tony. There’s a not a lot of things I regret in my life, but not being a better boss to you is one of them. Not being a better friend is also one of them. I thank God that you had Rossi in your life to pick up my slack.”

“Boss,” Tony began, but was cut off by his mentor and big brother.

“No, Tony, you deserve this. You have deserved it for a long time. It pisses me off that I was such a jackass to you. Being a bastard at work is one thing. Being a bastard to you outside of work is another. I have always considered us not just coworkers, but friends and family. You deserved to be treated as such by me, but I didn’t do it. You have my word that’s changed though.

“Don’t let the bullshit that Senior and I have put you through cloud what you have with your new team now. Don’t let Jeanne and what Wendy did to you cloud what you have with Spencer and Brian. If it works for you then hold onto it. Trust it. Believe that you deserve it, because you do. I’m proud of you, Tony.

“You could have hung around NCIS for years, and put up with our shit. That would have been the easy thing to do. Instead you took a stand and stood up for yourself. That takes more guts than maybe even I have. You did good.” Gibbs watched until the younger man nodded. When he started rambling about some their most recent case, and what movie he’d remembered to help solve it, Gibbs just sat back and listened. The rambling was a song he’d never thought he’d miss. His boy had done well for himself despite Senior, despite Gibbs, and despite all the people who had worked against him. The world had basically shit on him since the day he was born.

He’d suffered through parents who liked to drink more than they wanted to love him. He had what seemed like an endless stream of people who only wanted him on their terms. He kept having to make a place for himself in the world only to have people take it away sending him back to the start again. He was betrayed in the worst way by the very people he called family, and then lost forever
his chance to make up with the one person who actually got it.

Tony somehow managed to stand on his own two feet, and find a real home, with friends who loved him. He’d found not one, but two men to love him, in what could only be in Gibbs’ mind a true DiNozzo relationship. One that went against all conventions, but he refused to back down from what was true to his heart. Gibbs had done things he wasn’t proud of, and he’d been accused more than once of being a dinosaur. He could only hope that from here on out he had the courage to take a page or two out of the DiNozzo Playbook. He had a feeling if he actually set down and read it, he might learn a thing or two.

Later that evening, Tony walked into his penthouse, tossed his keys in the bowl, then stowing away his gun and badge, crossed to feed Kate. As he watched her chase the food flakes around the bowl, he contemplated the things Gibbs had told him that evening. He couldn’t help but wonder how different his career at NCIS would have been if the man had said some of those things before those coms had been turned off. Maybe he wouldn’t have left. Maybe he would have tried to tough it out longer. Maybe he would have been willing to withstand more. Maybe…

Tony hadn’t met his DiNozzo relatives from the old country many times, but his uncle, whom he saw occasionally mostly thanks to Rossi after he’d taken over Tony’s care, would talk about his grandmother. There were two quotes the older man had passed down to him that the matron was quite fond of. Both were by Dante Alighieri, or more widely known as just Dante, better known for his work The Divine Comedy. The first was “Thus you may understand that love alone is the true seed of every merit in you, and of all acts for which you must atone,” and could be found in the second book. The second was “Do not be afraid; our fate cannot be taken from us; it is a gift,” and could be found in the first book.

Tony couldn’t help but think that they were both relevant to his current situation. Tony didn’t know what those quotes were really talking about, but he knew what they meant to him. He’d never read the actual books. Frankly the thought of them kinda scared him, and therefore he’d always avoided reading them. To be honest he’d lived hell right here on earth, and didn’t really need someone else’s interpretation of it. He liked the quotes though, and chose to use his own interpretation of their meaning.

Maybe everything he’d been though, maybe everything he’d suffered through was only to lead him to this moment. All the pain and loneliness and suffering were to get him ready for this new journey he was on with a team that was a real family, and two men who Tony had little doubt he would love until the day he died.

Maybe then things at NCIS, things with Gibbs had worked out exactly as they should have. Maybe NCIS was only his final trial he had to suffer before entering paradise. Maybe it was finally time to give himself a chance. Feeling as if a weight had been lifted from his soul, Tony said goodnight to Kate, and went to bed excited for what all his tomorrows would bring.

~~* BAU June 2012 *~~ ~* Big Mouthed Bullies & Confessions of Forever *~~

Tony listened to the bullshit conversation that he wasn’t supposed to be hearing. Spencer had gone
off to get coffee, and had taken too long to come back. Maybe it was the case that they were on pushing some buttons, maybe it was the lack of sleep, or maybe it was just the fact that he loved Spencer beyond distraction. Whatever it was though he was absolutely not happy about what he was overhearing. Somehow his partner had been cornered in the break room at the office. They’d been working the case from home since it was in their general area, but that didn’t change the long hours all of the team was working. If anything it had just added to them. Rossi and Emily, and Derek and JJ were all out of the office looking at dump sites or interviewing family and friends of their victims. Tony had stayed behind to talk to family members that came into the building with Hotch, while Spencer was working on the geographic profile, and working on some old files they were looking through to see if they were related to their current case.

Tony tried his best not to treat Spencer any different than any of the others while they were working. Admittedly though he was only human, and things came up that he was helpless to not get possessive about. One of those weaknesses was people who felt it ok to treat Spencer badly just because he was different. He knew how his boyfriend felt about Tony reacting to such things. In his opinion though, Spencer took way too much shit. Tony tried his hardest to let him handle his own affairs, but there were times, like the bullshit that he was listening to currently, where he just couldn’t not step in.

Popping out his phone, Tony sent a message to both Hotch and Fornell. There was no way that he was going into this without both his supervisor, and Sack’s knowing shit was about to go down.

Then, after putting away his phone, Tony strolled into the BAU break room. “Agent Slacks, I think you’ve wandered a little far off Fornell’s leash don’t you?”

Ron turned his attention away from the BAU’s pet super geek, and turned his attention to the murderer that they’d hired. “DiNozzo, what a surprise. I heard you were sniffing at the geek boy here. What’s wrong, stud, you not enough of a man to tempt him? I mean I know the kid is a freak of nature. I didn’t know he was dysfunctional, too. It must be something to find someone that you can’t con into your nasty cock. I’d offer to show you what a real man was like, Super Geek, but I’m not some dysfunctional faggot. I certainly don’t waste my time on freaks like you. Who the hell doesn’t like SEX? I’d say that you just need a good fuck by the right person and you’ll be on it like normal red blooded man.”

Tony’s fist clenched so hard that he wasn’t sure he’d be able to straighten his fingers anytime soon. His jaw was clenched together so tight that he was a little surprised his teeth hadn’t cracked. When he started to move forward, a hand clamped tightly around his upper arm. Looking back sharply, he saw Hotch standing there, eyes blazing as he took in the situation. “Say anything you want to him, DiNozzo, but do not hit him. That is an order. I am getting Garcia to pull the video and audio footage from this room now. So, remember that it will be taken care of.”

Tony nodded and turned his attention back to Sacks, who suddenly wasn’t looking as happy as he had been before. “What’s wrong Slacks? You can bully someone who’s simply too nice to put you in your place. You can harass me, and call me a murderer over a bunch of trumped up charges that should never had been brought up had you actually done your fucking job in ANY of those situations. But you’re afraid of continuing your harassment, homophobia, and loud mouthed bullshit when one of the boss’ is around? Sounds to me like you know you’re in the wrong. A real man stands by his convictions, but then you wouldn’t know anything about that would you? After all, you’re nothing more than a grade school playground bully with a badge.”

Tony chuckles darkly as he sneers at one of the few people that he could genuinely say he hated, along with such people as Ziva and his father. “You’re such a fucking coward. For your information, there is abso-fucking-lutely nothing wrong with Dr. Reid, or his sexual preferences or orientation. Sex isn’t the end all that be all. Do I enjoy it? Hell fucking yes, but that doesn’t mean that
I am such a fucking Neanderthal, apparently unlike you, that I don’t understand a relationship is based on more than where I stick my fucking COCK. Spencer and I don’t either need or frankly give two shits how you or anyone outside of our team feels about what we do or don’t do in the fucking bedroom. You’re a loser, Slacks, and you’ll never go anywhere beyond a low level desk jockey. Hell you aren’t even Fornell’s SIC anymore because of your stupid big mouthed bullshit.

“I suggest that you remember your fucking place in this world. I also suggest that you remember what fucking floor you work on. You have absolutely no reason to be up here other than to harass someone. How you even found out about the workings of our relationship is beyond me, but I have a guess. After all you have a thing for pretty blondes. Don’t worry, I will be making sure a formal complaint is filed against you. I will also be personally finding out who is running her big fat fucking mouth.

“Not that I need to, but I am going to fill you in on some real truths, Slacks. I fucking love Spencer Reid. I am crazy, completely, head over heels, want to spend the rest of my life in love with, and can’t imagine my existence without him in love with Dr. Spencer Motherfucking Reid. He doesn’t need to let me fuck him to get my attention. His incredible brain does that all for itself, not to mention how incredibly gorgeous he is, and how fucking crazy in the head his hands make me when he’s doing just about anything. I would lay down my fucking life for him without thought, and I would give away every fucking thing I own for him without question if he only asked once. I am the goddamned luckiest bastard on the fucking planet for him even considering offering me a place in his life. The fact that he’s willing to let me in so fucking close makes me almost believe in a higher power. Now, I fucking suggest you leave, and don’t ever speak to SSA Dr. Spencer Reid again or I am going to forget I really like my job. Punching you in the fucking throat would make me incredibly happy.”

“Listen here, DiNozzo! You can’t tell me….”

“SACKS! WHAT IN THE EVER LOVING FUCK ARE YOU DOING UP HERE?” They heard bellowed, as Tobias Fornell stormed in red faced and clearly pissed off. “I SPECIFICALLY TOLD YOU NOT TO FUCKING GO ANYWHERE NEAR THIS FLOOR OR ANY AGENT IN THE BAU. Are you completely fucking stupid? BULLSHIT LIKE THIS IS WHY YOU FUCKING GOT DEMOTED. NOW GET YOUR STUPID ASS DOWN TO MY OFFICE WHILE WE DISCUSS WHAT WE’RE GOING TO BE DOING WITH YOU.”

Storming over, Tobias grabbed his agent by the ear as if he was a petulant child, and dragged him out of the break room, all the while telling him and anyone that could hear him exactly what he thought of the latest fuckup.

Hotch watched the two men leave, then turned to smile at his agents. “I am going to go start the complaint. Why don’t you two take a few moments to gather yourselves before getting back to the case?”

The two nodded, but neither were looking at their boss. Tony was staring at some random cabinet, and Spencer was watching Tony as if he were afraid he was going to disappear. “For what it’s worth, I am crazy in love with you, too, Anthony DiNozzo, Jr. I would be quite happy to spend the rest of my life with you as well. Can we include Brian in that, too? I like him. He is pretty, and he promised to teach me how to surf. He says it’s a sport I might actually enjoy and be good at.”

Tony looked up surprised, then laughed when Brian was mentioned. He was fully aware that his boyfriend had more than a little crush on his lover. It never failed to amuse him when he was brought to his attention. “You’re not mad that I stepped in, and defended your honor? I know you generally hate such things.”
Spencer chewed on his bottom lip for a moment as he considered the question. “No, it’s different when you defend me than when say Morgan does it. I know there are many more times that you want to defend me than when you actually do it. Not to mention, I suppose that being in a committed relationship with me should give you some extra privilege. It isn’t like you’re getting sex out of this.”

“Stop,” Tony ordered and headed over to his startled boyfriend. “You know I hate it when you do that. I said it to Ron. I have said it to you before, and I will continue to say it to you. There is absolutely nothing wrong with you. You’re not weird. You’re not defective. You’re not a freak. You’re a beautiful, highly intelligent, incredibly loyal, and insatiably curious man, and there isn’t a single thing about you that I would change if I could. Including and in capitals with an exclamation point even your sexual orientation. Our relationship, you and me, me and Brian, you and Brian, you and me and Brian isn’t anyone else’s business. Including the people on our team. I mean every fucking word I said to him, Spencer. If I am fucking lucky, I will be with you until the day that I die. Forever Spencer. My entire life has been leading me to you, and now that I know that everything that’s hurt before this has been worth it.”

Spencer nodded, and stepped forward into his boyfriend’s arms happy when they wrapped around his thinner frame. Resting his head on Tony’s shoulder, Spencer considered how incredibly lucky he was to have found this. Forever was never something he thought he needed or would have a chance at. Now that it was here though, he was happy to know he’d never live without it again.

~~* Thanksgiving 2011 *~~ * ~~* Reflections *~~

It was a rainy fall day, and Tony found himself with a rare moment of solitude. He knew that most people assumed that he was always on, and therefore had some phobia about being left in the apartment by himself. In all actuality he craved these moments where it was just him, his piano, and his gorgeous view.

He was glad that when he’d been looking for a new place to live that he hadn't succumbed to the pressure to buy a traditional house. That just wasn't him. He was thankful that neither Spencer nor Brian were picky about where they lived, which would have forced him to move once they finally all ended up in the same dwelling.

Spencer had flown to Vegas that morning, which was day after Thanksgiving, to see his mother. Tony had offered to go with him. Spencer was worried how she'd react to his presence though, and he expected it would be just a short trip so that he would be back to work Monday morning.

Brian was on assignment. A case he’d been working on for a year had broken wide open. There had been a chance at a meeting with their target that they'd thought they'd never get. Tony completely understood, and promised that he could amuse himself. Rossi and Gibbs had both invited him over if he got bored. Maybe he’d take them up on it the next day, which would be Saturday, but not right then.

All he wanted that night was some homemade pasta, some wine, and his piano. He’d had a song roaming around in his head for a while, and he wanted to get it out. It was a little sad, a little lonely, but the ending held hope and promise. The ending… the ending spoke of love and forever and
finally finding your one true great romance. Finding that thing that Gibbs had felt with Shannon, and explained maybe a little why after all of these years he just couldn’t let himself begin to move on.

So, there he sat, at his piano with his blank music sheets out. He hadn’t placed window treatments on this side of the room. He hadn’t imagined ever wanting to block his view from this direction. The building was right on the river, and he could see the Potomac River and Maryland beyond that. Sometimes when he couldn’t sleep, and woke earlier than the others – which was really hard to do with Dr. Spencer “I don’t sleep” Reid living there, too – he’d sit at the piano with his coffee and watch the sun rise over the river. It was a truly breathtaking scene that reminded him of the simple pleasures, and why he kept going even when life was in the shitter.

Although lately life hadn’t been so bad. In fact, life had been pretty awesome he had to admit. For the first time since Wendy, he was in a committed relationship. For the first time maybe ever he actually felt like he and his relationship were coexisting in the same skin. Looking back he understood that while he loved Wendy in a way, it wasn’t this. It wasn’t his kind of love. It wasn’t his kind of forever. It wasn’t… it wasn’t him. The best thing she may have ever done for him was walking away. Although he still would have rather she did it a little earlier. Even with his new self-awareness, being dumped practically at the alter sucked.

This thing that he had now though…. This was… this was different. When Spencer proposed this relationship, Tony was…. Well ok…. Tony said that he was all on board. He wanted to feel all on board, but he had his personal quiet doubts about his ability to enjoy such a thing. Frankly, he’d has his doubts about his own ability to ensure that Spencer enjoyed it, and got what he not just needed but deserved out of it.

However, once he let himself…. Once he actually gave himself a chance, and opened himself to the idea that maybe new doesn't equal bad, he found out that this thing was not as weird as it sounded. He loved his moments with Spencer. He loved being free to express love in a way that wasn’t connected to his dick or his ability to perform while naked. He hated being expected to be purely entertainment value only. He’d never before equated that to his bedroom activities until he met Spencer. Or, until he’d gotten Brian back and remembered that good sex didn’t have to leave him feeling like a manwhore.

Brian…. Brian was the other half of his soul. Brian was the reminder that his childhood hadn’t been completely horrible. Mostly horrible, largely horrible, but not completely. There were brief moments of happiness thanks to both Brian and David Rossi. Moments that he’d locked away in a chest and taken out only when desperate. Moments that he’d since been trying to free and vowed never to imprison again.

As his fingers flowed over the ivory and ebony of his mother’s piano, he would occasionally stop to scribble down what he’d just played. Sometimes erasing and backtracking, sometimes scribbling ahead, but always enjoying himself. Tony could feel his body relaxing, and his spirit growing lighter. He needed to do this more regularly. The problem with that was it would be risking exposing it to the others. Writing music wasn’t something he’d even shared with Brian.

It helped that their previous encounters hadn’t exactly been conducive to creative environments. Boarding school had been full of mental, physical, and emotional abuse. College had been less of all of that, but a house full of Frat Boys wasn’t really the place to admit such things. At least his wasn’t. Maybe there were some that would be more accepting, but it wasn’t Alpha Chi Delta in the late Eighty’s.

As the song came together he could feel the loneliness and despair of his past pouring themselves out into the notes being replaced with hope and love and the possibilities of a bright future. When he
was finally done, he set his pencil aside, and played the song from the beginning. He let the words flow out of his mouth, his husky voice mixing beautifully with the piano. When he was finished he closed the lid covering up the keys, and drained his now cold coffee as he stared out into the night.

When he’d found out that Ziva and McGee had turned off his coms, leaving him without backup, Tony felt like his life had really ended. Maybe it was dramatic, but that was how he felt. The longer he’d tried to force himself to accept it, forget it, and move on, the more he’d felt like he was dead inside. By the time he’d left he felt like he might never recover.

When his Angelo offered him the BAU, he felt like he’d been stuck in a cave for a decade, and just saw an unexpected light in the distance. Now a year later, he felt like he had finally emerged from the dark and camp, and had just stepped out into the sunshine. A little more than a year after the coms incident he had new friends. He had respect from the people he was to be leading, and from his boss above him. He had a new love, as well as the return of an old one. He had a beautiful new home. He felt like he could see never-ending possibilities in his future. Life was good. Love was amazing. Tomorrow wasn’t gonna know what hit it.

The End

Chapter End Notes

HUGE thanks go out to Rivermoon1970 for all of her hand holding during this process. This story would not have EVER gotten this far without her.

I already have another story to post, and it will probably start Saturday evening posting once a week. It is one of my two finished Sentinel and Guide fics from July's RT.

Thank you again for all of the amazing comments and to everyone who has made it to the end of this beast!
Chapter Summary

No story info here. Just my timeline of what happened when. There is also a breakdown of who was in the BAU, and who was on Team Gibbs after Tony left.

Chapter Notes

Some things in the timeline were moved several times. It was hard at times to find the right moment for certain things to happen. I believe that this reflects the final breakdown of events. My apologies if something isn't in the correct spot. The dates on the actual sections would be the final order.

Rossi is like a father to Tony
Rossi calls him Figlio
Tony calls Rossi Angelo
Brian calls Tony Flyboy
Tony calls Brian BoBo
Derek calls Tony QB1
Tony and Brian call Spencer Doc

BAU Team
Hotch - Unit Chief
Morgan - 2IC Non-Military Cases
DiNozzo - 2IC Military Cases
Dave Rossi
Jennifer Jereau - leaves team sometime in summer of 2013
Spencer Reid
Emily Prentiss
Kate Callahan - JJ Replacement
Brian O’Connor - Joins Team 2016
Penelope Garcia - Technical Analyst

Gibbs new team
Gibbs
SFA Dr. Tara Lewis - recommended by Tony in 2016
Ellie Bishop
Ned Dormegat
Nicky Jardaine
Colby Granger - Recommended by Tony in 2016
Timeline:

2010

Mid October 2010 - Dead Air Happens
End of October (Just b4 Halloween) - Tony Quits
Same Week October 2010 - Tony talks to Vance and takes the Liaison position
Mid November 2010 - Garcia and Tony talk
Late November 2010- Tony and Emily go on their Interview
Mid December 2010- Tony and Derek have their fight
Late December - Between Christmas and NYE - The First Date
New Years Eve 2010 - The First Kiss

2011

Early January 2011- Reid talks to JJ and Derek
Mid January 2011- Derek Apologizes
Mid January 2011 - Tony goes and confronts Ziva in prison
Mid February 2011 - Tony has Abby arrested for breaking the restraining order
February 2011 - Reid gets mad at JJ for her actions
Mid March 2011 - Spencer finds Brian
Late March 2011 - The First Migraine
Early April 2011 - Tony contacts Brian.
Early April 2011 - Tony and Brian meet for the first time in years
May 2011 - Tony has a heart to Heart with Gibbs at his 6 month mark
Early June 2011 - Brian moves in (comes to stay and never leaves)
Mid June 2011 - The first fight
July 2011 - Brian Spencer and Tony spend the 4th together
August 2011 - Brian reflects on his relationship with Tony and how it's changed over the years.
Halloween 2011 - Tony asks Spencer to move in
Thanksgiving 2011 - Spencer goes to see his mother to explain his relationship

2012

January 2012 - Hotch and Tony talk JJ
February 2012 - Jimmy shows up to TT Tony - thinks Ducky is in danger and no one will listen to him at NCIS
March 2012 - Spencer notices clothes showing up in his closet
April 2012 - Gibbs and Tim talk, and Tim realizes how badly he's screwed up
May 2012 - McGee dies
May 2012 - Tony goes to McGee's funeral
June 2012 - Tony defends Spencer
July 2012 - Tony and Brian realize Spencer hadn't refilled his Anthrax medicine or inhalor
August 2012 - Brian gets a flight home on the jet
September 2012 - Taylor shows up
November 2012 - Morgan talks to Tony abt Taylor

2013

Sometime in 2013 Ron Sacks dies
January 2013 - Tony Brian and Spencer's relationship is clarified
February 2013 - Brian and Spencer discuss their expectations of each other
February 2013 - Mardi Gras!!
April 2013 - Tony's breathing attack
May 2013 - Spencer gets his new degree
May 2013 - Senior writes Tony
June 2013 - JJ Leaves the BAU
September 2013 - Gibbs gets shot

2014

January 2014 - Ziva dies in jail
March 2014 - Tony discusses Abby with Gibbs
April 2014 - Will leaves JJ and takes Henry with him
May 2014 - Brian goes undercover with Torettos
August 2014 - Gibbs is hurt. Tony Panics.

2015

Late 2015 - Charleston Case
Late 2015 - Tony and Spencer return from the case

2016

January 2016 - SecNav insists Tony goes undercover for them
January 2016 - Tony quits NCIS and becomes an FBI agent
Late January 2016 - SecNav unexpectedly steps down & the president replaces her with Tom Morrow.
Feb 2016 - Tony and Gibbs talk He recommends Colby Granger & Lewis
February 2016 - the case becomes critical. Morrow himself meets with Tony and mends fences.
Feb 2016 - Brian goes undercover looking for a Terrorist, and Tony worries
February 2016 - Brian comes home with some furbabies

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!