Paterfamilias
by SparklePuppy

Summary

If he wasn’t William Reid’s son, whose son was he?

Notes

Rated G right now. Might turn into T for swearing later.

I took some liberties with who was where during the Riley Jenkins case. Please just go with it. I also have no idea if what Garcia does would even be possible. It is in this story. Just go with that too. :D

Disclaimer: I don't own Criminal Minds or the characters. Just borrowing them for a while.
Spencer fisted his hands in his hair and rocked on the bench. He had made Morgan pull over when he’d felt the bile rising in his throat. The SUV hadn’t even stopped fully before he was out, scrambling across the park for the trash can to empty his stomach contents into. He dimly remembered one of the others pushing a bottle of water into his hand so he could rinse his mouth. After that, he’d stumbled to the bench under a tree. He had pushed Morgan away when he’d tried to join him on the bench. Rossi hadn’t tried to sit, but when the older man had approached he’d shook his head making a whining noise in the back of his throat.

He didn’t want his coworkers’ comfort. He wanted…

He didn’t know what he wanted.

The man he had always believed was his father, the man that had abandoned him to take care of a mentally-ill mother when he was just ten years old, most likely wasn’t his father. He didn’t know what he’d been expecting to learn from the conversation that bordered on interrogation with William Reid, but he had not expected to learn this. If he wasn’t William Reid’s son, whose son was he?

He made the whining noise again and jerked his arm away when Morgan tried to pull him up from the bench, saying they needed to get back to the hotel. He didn’t want to go back to the hotel. He didn’t want to go anywhere. He wanted the pavement below the bench to open up and swallow him, rescue him from the confusion and the misery and the heartbreak crushing down on him.

His mother had lied to him.

The one person he had trusted growing up, the one person who had always told him the truth regardless of how much it hurt or how complicated it was, his mother had let him believe that a man was his father when he wasn’t. Spencer Reid was good at math and the mental math that he’d performed after the conversation with William Reid told him that unless he had been born almost four months premature, he was not a Reid genetically.
He recognized Aaron’s cologne just before he felt gentle hands covering his own, teasing to get him to release his grip on his hair. The hands moved down to the outsides of his thighs as Hotch crouched in front of him. “Spencer? Baby? What’s going on?”

Spencer avoided making eye contact with his lover. He concentrated on the fact that the older man was wearing jeans and a casual button down instead of one of his suits. It was a sign of just how odd this whole situation was. “They can tell you.”

“I don’t want them to tell me. I want you to tell me.” Aaron’s thumbs rubbed in gentle circles on his thighs.

“William Reid is most likely not my father. If I wasn’t born four months premature, which my mother has never told me I was, then he’s not the man who got her pregnant. He didn’t meet my mom until she was already three months pregnant.” Spencer drew in a shuddering breath and finally met Aaron’s gaze.

Aaron considered the information. “You’ve always given the impression that you hate the man, so what prompted this?” He waved one of his hands in a circle around the park. He would have expected celebration at the concept that William Reid wasn’t Spencer’s father from the amount of venom the genius had always used when discussing the man.

“It’s less about the fact that he might not be my father and more about the fact that Mom lied to me.” The young man’s voice turned hard.

“Ah.” That made so much more sense. The older man stood from his crouch and sat on the bench next to Spencer. “She probably thought she was protecting you. You believed that he was your father for so long, then he left. She most likely thought that finding out he wasn’t would hurt you worse.”

“You’re taking her side.” The young man accused, staring at him.

Aaron shook his head quickly. “No, I’m not. I’m on your side. Always. I just think you should talk to her before you pass judgment. She went off her meds when she found out she was pregnant with you. Is it possible that the timeline is jumbled in her head?”

“Maybe,” Spencer admitted with a sigh. He turned slowly towards the man next to him on the bench.
“I thought you were back at the hotel.”

The man laughed. “I was, but when neither Dave or Morgan could get you to let them help you back to the SUV they called me. You’ve been in this park almost an hour, Babe. If you’re feeling up to it, why don’t we go get some lunch then go visit your mom? Maybe you can get some answers.” He stroked his hand up and down on Spencer’s back.

Spencer nodded and allowed Hotch to pull him up from the bench. They walked back to the parking area together in silence. “You two can go ahead and do whatever you need to do next. Spencer and I are going to go grab lunch and then visit his mom.”

“Sure. If you need us Kiddo, just call.” Rossi patted Spencer’s shoulder and climbed into the SUV.

Morgan hugged the young man quickly. “You okay?” When he got a nod, he followed Rossi.

The couple watched the SUV pull away. Aaron unlocked the rental car and opened the door for his boyfriend. He put out a hand to stop him from sliding in. “Spencer, whatever comes out of this, you know I’m with you. Always.”

The younger man smiled. “I know.” He leaned in for a quick, chaste kiss before getting into the car.

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Aaron sat at the end of the bed watching Spencer pace the hotel room. “Now what do I do? She can’t remember his name. All she can remember is that he was close to her height and dark haired!” Spencer’s arms gesticulated wildly as he paced.

“What you do next probably depends on what you want to know. If you want to know. Do you want a relationship with the man? Just want to know his medical history? What are you wanting Spencer?” Aaron caught the younger man’s wrist as he passed him and pulled him so he was standing between his knees.

Spencer’s leg jiggled as he considered. “What if we’re related? Oh God.” He stared at him horrified.
Aaron’s laughter echoed in the room, and he let his head fall forward to rest against his boyfriend’s body. “My family has been firmly rooted in Virginia for several generations. None of the Hotchners before Sean and I would dare to pick up a woman in a bar. A high dollar prostitute? Yes. But a stranger in a bar? No. I’m pretty sure your mother was not an escort in the early ‘80s. On top of that, Sean was definitely too young to father you, and I was stuck in military school. I feel very confident in saying that we’re not related.”

Spencer combed his fingers through the hair just above Aaron’s neck. “It’s happened, you know. There was a well-documented case where a brother and sister only 11 months apart were separated by the foster system and adopted by two different families. They were unaware they were genetic siblings until after they’d had four children together, all of whom suffered from rare genetic disorders. Another case a few years ago was a woman who accidentally married her own father.”

“That’s kind of gross, Spencer.” Aaron grimaced.

“I’m just saying that it could have been a possibility. You’re absolutely sure no Hotchner would sleep with a woman in a bar?” Spencer used Aaron’s hair to tilt his head up.

The older man slid his arms around him, pulling him closer. “They all stuck to prostitutes once they’d had their requisite two children.”

“Okay. Good.” Spencer licked his lips. “What if I’m the son of a serial killer?”

Aaron sighed. “Spencer, stop looking for the worst possible outcomes. It’s most likely that your father was just some guy that your mom met in the bar, was good looking, nice, probably shared some interest in common with her since he caught her attention enough for her to have sex with him. So, I’ll ask you again, what do you want out of this?”

“I don’t know,” he admitted, letting himself be pulled onto the other man’s lap. “I definitely would like to know medical history. A relationship is a possibility if he seems like a decent guy who would be interested in knowing me, but where do I even start? About six feet tall with dark hair is nothing to go on.”

“I bet if you asked nice and gave her your puppy face Garcia would rise to the challenge.” Aaron nuzzled at Spencer’s neck.

The younger man snorted. “I’m not sure that even Garcia could do much with the info we have.”
“Spencer, your genetic profile is in your FBI record. Think of what she could do with that.” Aaron pulled away and looked him in the eye.

“Oh! Are you seriously telling me to ask Garcia to hack into my file and into however many databases she has to in order to find my father?” Spencer raised a brow.

“I’m not telling you to do anything. You’re the genius. Figure it out.”

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Garcia put her hand over her mouth, covering her gasp. She read the information a second time, followed by a third. She had found the Boy Wonder’s father. She printed the report, tucked it in a file folder, and hurried towards the bullpen. She slipped into Hotch’s office and bounced on her toes. “I found him, Sir!”

“Garcia?” Hotch looked up from his paperwork.

Garcia smiled and held up the file. “I found Reid’s father, Sir.”

He held out his hand for the file. He flipped the folder open. “Oh shit.”

“I know! Oh, I’m so excited!” Garcia clapped her hands, bracelets tinkling musically.

“No. Stop right there. You have to develop temporary amnesia about this, Garcia. Spencer’s not even completely sure he wants to know who his father is. You cannot say anything to anyone about this.” Hotch gave her his sternest face.

“But Sir, he…”

“No. Garcia, I mean it. Once you walk out of this room, you forget what’s in this folder until Spencer or I tell you otherwise.” He stared at her, watching her war with herself.
She finally nodded. “Yes, Sir.”

He nodded and rose from his desk. “I’m going to call him in now.” He crossed to the door and waited for Reid to look up at him. He gestured for him to come to the office. At the nod, Hotch reached over and closed the blinds on his window. Reid stepped in and closed the door. Hotch didn’t pull his hand away when the genius grabbed it, lacing their fingers together.

“I’m like 90% sure that I found your father. The good news is that he is not a criminal. I know that you were bothered by that possibility,” Garcia said quickly.

Spencer blew out a shaky breath, concentrating on Aaron’s squeezing of his hand. “I, uh...” He licked his lips and blew out another breath. “Don’t tell me who yet. But how did you find him?”

She smiled. “There were a few matches on CODIS. Not close matches. I think they’re cousins, maybe second cousins. But they were clustered in the same area, so it gave me a place to start focusing. His DNA’s in the system because he’s law enforcement.”

“You inherited something from your father at least. You’re not completely your mother’s son.” Aaron chuckled and squeezed the hand clasped in his again.

Spencer snorted and bumped his shoulder. “Shut up.”

“So do you wanna know who the daddy is?” Garcia smiled.

“No. I mean, not yet.” He turned to his boyfriend. “Do you think you could contact him? Explain the situation and see if he’d agree to a DNA test to definitively prove it either way? I don’t want to know his identity unless it’s sure that he’s my father. I’ll pay for the test. He just has to part with some cheek cells.”

Hotch nodded and rubbed his thumb on the back of Spencer’s hand. “Of course, I’ll contact him. Garcia, thank you for doing this. Will there be any problems for you?”

She shook her head. “No, Sir. I don’t think so. I didn’t leave any trace of my wanderings.”
“Good. Thank you.” He subtly angled his head towards the door. She nodded and patted Reid’s arm as she slipped out of the office, closing it quickly.

The younger man turned towards him. “Thank you. I know it’s a lot to ask of you to do this.”

“I love you, and if doing this for you is what you need me to do, then I’ll do it gladly.” He gently cupped his face and kissed him. “You okay to go back to your desk or do you need a minute?”

“I’m okay.” Spencer brought their lips together again.

Aaron smiled and watched him leave the office before opening the blinds again. He looked at the closed folder on his desk. This whole thing was a damn mess.

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Spencer licked his lips and looked at the nondescript envelope in front of him on the breakfast bar. He traced his fingers over his lover’s address in the center before pushing the envelope slightly away. “Does he know?”

“Yes. He would like to have a relationship with you, but he won’t force it on you if you don’t want it. The ball is completely in your court Spencer.” Aaron rubbed his back comfortingly. “If you’re not ready to find out, I’ll put it in the safe till you are.”

One of Spencer’s hands shot out and clutched the envelope when Aaron moved to slide it further away. “No. I’m ready.” He took a deep breath and pulled out the paper. He skimmed down the letter to find the name of his father. The paper fluttered from his hands. He gaped at Aaron in shock.

His father was …

David Rossi.
Paternity definition from Merriam-Webster.

So, there you have it. The start of my new story. I've seen a couple Rossi is Reid's father stories, and I wanted to play with the idea. I hope I'm not stepping on any toes. If I am, it's unintentional.

~* HermitPanda *~
Chapter Summary

Rossi fell into step next to him as they walked towards an SUV. “I know I told Aaron the ball is in your court, and it is, but would you like to get some coffee later after we’re let loose for the evening? Talk about stuff.”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Denial - a refusal to admit the truth of a statement

Spencer kept his head ducked over the file folder to avoid making eye contact with either of the men watching him intently. He was sitting alone at the back of the cabin because he had been the last member of the team to the jet. He had been at home instead of at the office when the case came in. So much for asking for having a day off to process what was going on in his head.

He briefly glanced up at Hotch. The man was watching him in a way that was part Unit Chief and part concerned boyfriend. He was worried about whether Spencer could handle working a case so soon after learning the life-altering news. He was worried whether Spencer could work with or in close proximity to Rossi. He was worried how this was affecting Spencer’s relationship with his mother. Spencer knew he needed to have a conversation with Aaron about what was going on but on the jet with an audience comprised of their teammates, including his newly-discovered genetic donor, was not the place.

He slid his gaze over to look at Emily so that Rossi was in his peripheral vision but there was no risk of making eye contact. He knew the oldest team member was unsure if he should approach Spencer or not. Was he just a coworker still? Was Spencer expecting him to be a father figure now? If Spencer didn’t know what he wanted, he couldn’t tell Rossi. It was best just to ignore him for now.

So far none of the others had questioned them about the increase of tension around the trio of men. Morgan and Prentiss both knew about the revelation that William Reid wasn’t his father, but they hadn’t been told that his real father had been identified. Spencer didn’t know JJ’s temporary replacement, Jordan Todd, well enough to share any information around his paternity issues with the woman. The team still hadn’t trusted her with the knowledge that he and Aaron were a couple yet either.
After the team had finished discussing various ideas for the case and Hotch had given them assignments, he moved to the seat across from Spencer. “Okay?” the man asked watching him.

Spencer smiled slightly and nodded. “We’ll talk later if there’s a chance.”

Hotch nodded. “I expect to be kept in the loop if you feel like you can’t handle the case.”

“I know. I will.” Spencer nodded again. He felt eyes on him again, and he glanced up. Jordan was watching him curiously. “Personal stuff,” he said softly and turned away, falling silent until they had landed.

Rossi fell into step next to him as they walked towards an SUV. “I know I told Aaron the ball is in your court, and it is, but would you like to get some coffee later after we’re let loose for the evening? Talk about stuff.”

No. He would not. He wasn’t ready to talk about stuff with Rossi, but he also wasn’t ready to admit that out loud. Spencer slowly turned his head towards the older man. “I’m sorry. I don’t know what stuff you’re talking about.”

“Yes, you do, Kid,” the Italian gave him a frustrated look.

“Don’t call me Kid. I really don’t know, and no, I wouldn’t like to get coffee later.” Spencer adjusted his messenger bag and headed towards the SUV that Morgan had commandeered, leaving Rossi to join Hotch and Prentiss in the other.

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The more he ignored the situation, the more Spencer felt like it was all an elaborate prank being pulled on him. It was easy to pretend nothing had changed during the case. Hotch was being careful to keep Reid and Rossi separated as much as possible. Times when it was unavoidable they generally gave each other a wide berth.

Morgan leaned against the wall next to him while they waited for Emily and Jordan to get ready to go into the club. “Everything okay with you, Pretty Boy?”
“Everything’s fine.” Spencer looked away.

“Things okay with Hotch on the personal front? You both seem a little tense around each other on this case.” Morgan glanced towards the Unit Chief standing down the hall with Rossi.

Spencer nodded. “We’re fine. It’s the whole father thing. It’s really complicated, and we haven’t had a chance to talk about some new findings. So it’s just hanging there between us.”

“My ear’s always open if you want to talk to me.” Morgan watched him.

“Thanks. I know, but I’m not ready to talk about it with anyone besides Aaron yet.” He looked away again. He had been avoiding eye contact with all of the team. He was afraid they would see something in his eyes. Something he didn’t want to talk about. Something he didn’t even realize for himself yet.

“No problem man.” Morgan drummed a rhythm on the wall behind them. He turned to Spencer again as Hotch and Rossi joined them. “I’ve been meaning to ask you since this case is all about flirting. What kind of a flirt are you?”

“Um… What?” The genius stared at him.

Morgan chuckled. “You heard me. What kind of flirt are you? I’m not sure I’ve ever seen you flirt.”

“I don’t know. That’s stupid. I’m not answering that.” Spencer grimaced. He looked at Hotch with a silent plea to save him from Morgan’s questioning.

“Must not be a very good one then.” Morgan grinned.

Hotch rolled his eyes before looking to see if the women had come out of the changing room yet. “This is hardly an appropriate conversation right now Morgan. But if you must know, he’s an excellent flirt. It’s subtle and easy to miss if you don’t know that he’s flirting.”
Spencer gave him a dazzling smile. He shifted his hips just enough to draw the older man’s attention towards his crotch for a brief heartbeat. “Yeah Morgan, I’m an excellent flirt.”

“A bit of a tease sometimes, too.” Hotch narrowed his eyes at him.

“I don’t think I want to hear or see this,” Rossi grumbled and stalked off.

Spencer winced, and Hotch shot a guilty glance at Rossi’s retreating back. That was one way to suck all the fun from their workplace flirting. “I’m just gonna…” Spencer gestured vaguely before hurrying away in the opposite direction from Rossi. He found his way outside and sat on the sidewalk with his back against the building. He tipped his head back.

He opened his eyes when he heard someone approaching. “Please let me buy you a cup of coffee later. I really think we need to talk.” Rossi looked down at him.

Spencer slowly stood up. “No. I don’t know why you keep pushing this. Nothing’s changed. There’s no reason for us to chat.” He stepped around the other man and went back inside.

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Hotch grabbed Spencer’s elbow when he tried to pass him leaving the jet. “Will you come home with me?” he whispered. At Spencer’s nod, he released him and finished collecting his things.

Spencer hesitated before walking over to where the rest of the team was loitering. He carefully avoided making eye contact with Rossi. “You need a ride Pretty Boy?” Morgan asked.

“No, thanks. Hotch already offered. He and I need to talk anyways.” He shook his head. He raised a brow at Jordan’s wrinkled nose. He just watched her until she looked away. He heard Hotch call out to him. “See you at work.” He smiled and walked towards Aaron’s car.

“I don’t want you to feel caught in the middle of the situation with Agent Todd.” The Unit Chief watched him arrange his bags in the trunk of the car.

The younger man turned towards him. “Outwardly, I’ll remain neutral for as long as possible.
Especially since we’re not sure if she can be trusted with this yet.” He made a slight hand gesture between them. “But you and I both know where my loyalty lies, so does the rest of the team. I don’t think they’ll allow me to be put in a position of having to make a bold declaration.”

“I don’t expect unwavering loyalty like that, Spencer.”

“But yet you have it, Aaron.” He smiled. He waited until they were standing with the car between them to speak again. “Even without this, my loyalty would be skewed towards you anyways. You’re our team leader. She’s just passing through.”

Aaron nodded and slid into the car. “So do you want to discuss the paternity thing while we drive or wait till we get home?”

“Can’t we talk some more about Todd?” Spencer groaned and hung his head while Aaron pulled away from the airport parking lot. He knew from his boyfriend’s silence that there was no way he was letting him avoid the discussion anymore. “I just want it all to go away. He keeps trying to get me to go to coffee.”

“He’s trying to remove me as the middle man so that I don’t have to feel like I’m being pulled in two directions. His words, not mine.” Aaron glanced over at him.

Spencer watched him. “Do you feel like a middle man?”

“No, but it has the potential to get awkward.” The older man shook his head.

“Why?”

“Because I’m the person that both of you talk to. I’m your boyfriend. Who do you confide in, talk things through with?”

“You,” Spencer admitted.

“I’m Dave’s best friend. Who do you think he’s going to confide in and talk things through with?”
“You.”

Aaron nodded and parked the car in his assigned space. “Right. It’s not uncomfortable for me right now, but the potential is there. He’s just trying to break the ice with you about this, get a feeling for where each of you stand right now.”

Spencer considered what his boyfriend was telling him as they unloaded their bags and went inside the apartment building. “I’m not ready to talk to him yet.” He plucked at the fabric of his pants.

They leaned on opposite walls of the elevator. Aaron licked his lips before continuing. “Look, if you’re not ready to talk to him, go to coffee and just say you’re confused or not ready or whatever it is that you are and until you know what you want, you want things to stay as they are. You don’t need to pretend you don’t know what he’s talking about.”

“I just want to pretend nothing’s changed.” Spencer sniffled softly slipping inside the apartment. He sank into the chair closest to the door and buried his head in his hands. “I want to pretend like my opinion of my mom hasn’t changed. I want to pretend that my father left because he couldn’t handle me being me, not because he wasn’t my real father. I want to pretend that Rossi’s just my coworker, just my boyfriend’s best friend. I want to pretend that my entire world hasn’t been shaken to its core. I just want to pretend like everything’s the same as it was a month ago. But I can’t.”

Chapter End Notes

Denial definition from Merriam-Webster
Anger

Chapter Summary

“Okay. How about this? We’ll give each other some space to figure out what we both want. If we’re put in a position where we have to work together, we’ll be professional and courteous. Same thing if we see each other in a social setting. Agreed?” Dave wanted more and didn’t like the compromise that he was offering to his son, but he knew he had to wait and let Spencer come to him.

Chapter Notes

Let’s spend a chapter (and probably the next) in Dave’s headspace. I tried to stick close to the show timeline with the first two chapters but bailed on it with this one. I made the case that gets discussed up. There have been a lot of father-related cases on the show, though, so it might be similar to a case they did on the show but it wasn't intentional. I cut a chapter from the outline so we’ll get to the warm fuzzies sooner. Enjoy :D

~* HermitPanda *~

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Anger - a strong feeling of displeasure and usually of antagonism

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Dave was taken aback when he saw Spencer enter the coffee shop accompanied by both Jack and Aaron. Jack spotted him and waved. After saying something to the adults, Spencer put him down and the boy made his way over. “Hi, Uncle Dave.”

“Hey, Kiddo. I wasn’t expecting you to come with Spencer.” Dave smiled. He wondered how much the toddler knew about what was going on. Spencer appeared reluctant to be there. Aaron had a hard grip

“Spencer told us to.” Jack climbed into the chair across from Dave and watched people walk by the window. He turned his attention back towards his honorary uncle. “Are you and Spencer mad at each other?”

Dave shook his head. “No, there’s just some stuff we have to work out.”
Jack eyed him. “You acted mad when Mommy left me at the office.”

“We weren’t mad at each other,” Dave assured him.

“Jack, go sit with your daddy. He’s got your hot chocolate, and he got you one of those yogurts you like.” Spencer appeared at the boy’s side. He smoothed a hand over messy blond hair. He pointed when Jack looked up at him. “He’s sitting right outside.”

“Kay. Bye, Uncle Dave.” Jack slid off the chair and waved again.

Spencer remained standing until he’d watched the three-year-old make it all the way to the table Aaron was sitting at. Dave watched him take several deep breaths before finally sitting down. “How much does he know?” The older man finally broke the silence.

“Nothing that I know of, but he’s smart and figures stuff out. He noticed how tense we were last night, obviously.” Spencer glanced outside to where his lover and his son had their heads together looking at something on Aaron’s laptop.

“Things going okay with Haley?” Dave ran his fingers over the handle of his coffee cup. If talking about Aaron’s son and ex-wife was the only way to get his newly found son to talk to him, then he was going to milk that topic for all it was worth.

Spencer looked at him. “In what sense?”

“Last time Aaron really talked about her, she wasn’t thrilled with the idea that he was dating a man. But obviously, you and Jack spend quite a bit of time together.” Dave watched Spencer. With the exception of working in the BAU, he hadn’t seen himself in the young man yet. Spencer looked so much like his mother that no one would ever expect them to be related. He was unable to see any of his own personality or behavior in the genius either. It was almost as though his genetics had bailed as soon as the egg was fertilized.

“Ah, you must not talk about Haley very much then.” Spencer frowned at his coffee. “About six months ago, the three of us went to dinner together. It was really awkward but after that, she’s been okay. I’m pretty sure she hasn’t hassled Aaron since then. She’s even called me a couple times to babysit Jack in a pinch if she can’t get ahold of Jessica or Aaron. So she’s accepted it, I guess.”
Dave nodded. “Good. Aaron deserves to have some happiness. You do too.”

Spencer shrugged. “Thanks.”

They fell in an uncomfortable silence. Dave wanted to sigh. He couldn’t think of anything to say to his son. He wanted to reach across the table and hold him, but he knew that Spencer would balk and refuse the physical contact. “I’m not sure what to say or do,” Dave finally admitted.

“I don’t know how I feel. I never expected my… you know to be a man I work with. I need some time to work through my emotions. I don’t know what I want. I don’t know if I even want a father anymore. I don’t know if I can be friends with you either. I just… I don’t know.” Spencer looked at him. Misery and confusion dulled his hazel eyes.

“Okay. How about this? We’ll give each other some space to figure out what we both want. If we’re put in a position where we have to work together, we’ll be professional and courteous. Same thing if we see each other in a social setting. Agreed?” Dave wanted more and didn’t like the compromise that he was offering to his son, but he knew he had to wait and let Spencer come to him.

“Agreed.” Spencer nodded. “When I figure out what I want, whether it’s a friendship or a father, I’ll let you know.”

“Thank you.” Dave smiled. “Why don’t we take our coffee outside and see what those two have their heads together over?”

Spencer stood up. “Okay.”

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He couldn’t help it when his hands curled into fists watching his son across the bullpen laughing with the rest of the team and JJ while holding his new godson. Spencer was still barely talking to him. Dave suspected that he had even asked Hotch not to pair them together in the field. He glanced over when the Unit Chief leaned on the railing next to him. “Everything okay, Dave?”

“Just fine.” He tensed. He knew that Hotch would hear the lie and call him out on it.
The other man studied him. “Let’s go get some coffee or something. Come on.” Hotch walked off expecting him to follow. He walked right over to the group Dave had been staring at. “Dave and I have an appointment we have to go to. Will you stick around long enough so that I can get baby time when we get back?” He smiled at JJ and stroked a finger over the baby’s soft cheek.

“Sure, Hotch.” She nodded with a smile.

“Great, thanks. We shouldn’t be gone long.” He led Dave out of the BAU and to the elevator. Neither of them spoke until they got to Hotch’s car. “So do you actually want some coffee or just want to go somewhere to talk about it?”

The older man considered. “Just somewhere to talk.”

His friend nodded and drove to a nearby park. “It’s about Spencer,” Hotch stated when they settled on a bench overlooking the soccer field.

Dave swallowed and watched a man chase a toddler at the far side of the field. The sight clawed at him. He had been denied that experience with Spencer. All of the things he should have been then for, he hadn’t been. He hadn’t taught him how to tie his shoes. He hadn’t seen him graduate from high school or college. He hadn’t been there bursting with pride when his son had been awarded his first doctorate. “I don’t want you to feel caught in the middle between us.”

“I don’t feel caught in the middle. Spencer’s not ready to talk yet. He’s still processing. You’re ready to talk, and I’m here to listen.” Hotch leaned back on the bench watching the sky.

“I’m just so pissed. I was robbed of experiencing my son’s life. I can’t even be pissed at anyone for it either.” Dave pushed off the bench and paced. “I mean, how can I be angry at Diana for keeping him from me? I was only in Vegas for three days! I left the very next morning after I was with her. Both of us knew it was a one-off. She had no way to contact me after I left. I introduced myself as Dave. We talked about books. I never told her whether I lived in Vegas or was just passing through. She didn’t know I was FBI.”

Aaron watched his friend. “Were you with Carolyn still?”

He shook his head. “No, but the ink on our divorce agreement was still wet. I’m not a cheater.” He stopped pacing to stare at the man on the bench.
“I didn’t mean to imply that, Dave. I’m sorry.”

“It’s fine.” Dave waved it away and resumed pacing. “What did I do to deserve having not one but two sons stolen from me by fate? On top of that, my son was raised by a man who couldn’t hack it. He couldn’t see past the hardships to see what a precious treasure Spencer was. He doesn’t deserve to have Spencer claim him. He married her knowing she was pregnant. He was supposed to step up, to be the father I couldn’t be. Instead, he tucked tail and ran. My son had to raise himself and take care of a sick mother and graduate high school and college and deal with bullies all by himself because William Reid wasn’t man enough to appreciate the son he lucked into having.”

“It’s very unfair that this happened to you and Spencer. Both of you deserved to have each other from the start. I don’t even know how to give you any comfort except to point out what an amazing man Spencer became. He overcame the ill mother, the shitty father, the bullies. He is such a beautiful, good, strong man, Dave. He got that strength from you. He’s your son in so many ways. You might not see it because right now, you’re blinded by the absolute unfairness of it.” Hotch smiled up at his friend. “I see it in the compassion that he has for the victims that we see. I can see it in the way that he loves my son. I see it in the way that he’s so generous with his friends. Once you get into his inner circle, you’re in, forever, and he’ll bend over backward to give you everything he can. That is very much you.”

Dave blinked away the tears that formed listening to Aaron praise Spencer. “He hates me. I’ll never be able to be his father. Not truly.”

“He doesn’t hate you. He’s confused and hurt and trying to find his way out of the forest. Spencer will come around. He’s always wanted a father figure. That’s why he attached himself to Gideon. He hasn’t attached himself to you yet because he’s still hurting over Gideon’s vanishing act. It’s not going to come easy or happen overnight. There are more than 25 years you both have to overcome, but it will happen, Dave. Spencer will be the son you want. You just have to be there for him when he realizes he needs you.” Hotch stood up and patted his arm.

Dave gave him a lopsided smile. “When did you become so smart?”

Hotch laughed. “I had a really great mentor when I joined the BAU. Now let’s go play with JJ’s baby.”

“Does Spencer know you go nuts over babies?” Dave chuckled and followed him to the car.
Dave could feel Reid’s stare as he focused on the case file. He wasn’t sure what he had done to be on the receiving end of that glare. Until they’d arrived in the conference room, they hadn’t seen each other in nearly 48 hours. Now they were on the jet sitting at opposite ends of the cabin. “Are we sure that the gym is the connection for the victims? Three of the men were divorced, four legally separated and the latest victim has a different address than his wife. Maybe they were separated as well. They all have kids under the age of ten.”

“You think someone’s killing them because they’re divorced or in the process?” Morgan asked.

Dave frowned. “We’ve already established that there’s a bit of a juvenile aspect to these killings. I think the unsub might be mad that they abandoned their children.”

“You’d know about abandoning kids, wouldn’t you?” Reid glared at him. Everyone’s heads swiveled between looking at Reid and looking at Dave for a few tense seconds.

“Reid.” Hotch gave him a sharp look. “It’s a plausible idea. Dave, when we land, I want you and Prentiss to go talk to the latest victim’s wife. Find out exactly what their marital status was and how much time he spent with the kids. Then check into the other victims and their time with their kids.”

“It’s a rare father that doesn’t abandon his children in a divorce. Sometimes they abandon them without a divorce.” Reid narrowed his eyes slightly at Dave.

Dave met his glare. “Do you really want to have this conversation here and now?”

“Maybe I do. If we don’t, you’ll just run away again.”

Hotch’s head whipped around to pin Spencer with his own glare. “No. You are not doing this in the cabin of the plane. If you’re going to insist on having it out with Dave right now, take it to the baggage compartment.”

“Fine.” Spencer launched himself out of his seat and rushed towards the back of the cabin.
Dave looked at Hotch and got a hand wave to follow the young man. He stood and slowly followed. He closed the door of the baggage compartment and allowed his eyes to adjust to the dim lighting. He watched Spencer pace as well as he could in the small space. “What’s going on in your head, Reid? Why do this on the plane in front of everyone else?”

“You abandoned me! You left me to be raised by a man that isn’t my father!” Spencer whirled on him.

“I didn’t abandon you, Spencer. I met your mother on my last night in Vegas. We didn’t exchange numbers or last names. I didn’t know she was pregnant. If I had, I would have stayed. I would never have left you alone. Ever.” Dave told himself that he had to stay calm to diffuse his son’s anger. He didn’t believe that the anger was truly aimed at him. He was just the handiest outlet.

Spencer resumed pacing. “She lied to me! My whole life my mom’s lied to me. She knew he wasn’t my father. But she let me think he was! I wouldn’t have missed him so damn bad if I’d known. My entire life I’ve tried to please my parents. If I could just work a little harder, be a little smarter, maybe my father wouldn’t leave. But he did leave. He left me alone. With a sick mother! I had to take care of her. I was ten! So I had to prove to my mom I was fine, prove to myself that I didn’t need him, prove to him that I didn’t need him. But I did need him. I needed a father. Then I thought I found a father in Gideon. I needed him after Hankel but he wasn’t there. He let me flounder and struggle with an addiction that wasn’t my fault. But I forgave him and looked at him as a father again. But he left me too.”

Dave forced himself to stay near the door while Spencer paced and ranted. He could see the anger the young man had been building up about the unfairness of the situation was leaking out. He felt like he was watching a week-old balloon in human form. The more Spencer said, the more that he folded in on himself. He put his hands in his pockets, hunched his shoulders, lowered his head to stare at the floor. “You deserved better,” Dave finally said.

Spencer turned to him, and he saw tears glistening in his hazel eyes. It didn’t matter that his son was a grown man, an FBI agent who saved lives. The man standing before him was still a scared ten-year-old boy aching for a father. “Why did they leave me? Why wasn’t I good enough for them? It’s so unfair. I did everything right.”

Dave reached out and wrapped his arms around his son when he heard his voice falter. “I don’t know, Son. I don’t know. I’m here now,” he whispered to the man in his arms. It had taken 27 years, but he finally got to hold his son.

Chapter End Notes
Anger definition from Merriam-Webster
Depression

Chapter Summary

“I don’t mind when you call me Kid. Not really. I was just… trying to process still when I told you not to call me that,” Spencer said quickly. He ducked his head and looked at the older man through his hair almost bashfully. “You, uh, called me Son on the jet. I didn’t mind that either.”

Chapter Notes

Another chapter from Rossi’s headspace. There's not a lot of depression in the depression chapter. I'm not trying to make light of it. It's a serious problem, but different people deal with it differently. No two people's depression is the same. So I hope you guys enjoy this one. There's light at the end of the tunnel. Two more chapters, one of which is almost an epilogue. Enjoy :)  
~* HermitPanda *~

Depression - a lowering of vitality or functional activity

~*~ ~/~ ~/~

Dave looked up from his notepad when Morgan appeared next to him. The younger profiler looked at him intently. “So about what happened on the jet…”

“You’ll have to talk to Spencer about it.” Dave shifted so he could see Spencer and Aaron talking intently near the case board. He knew that his son was embarrassed by what had transpired on the jet a few days before. So much so that Spencer had requested to only be partnered with Aaron or Dave. The young man wasn’t ready to admit to Prentiss or Morgan that his father was one of their teammates. He definitely wasn’t ready to share any information about what was happening with Jordan.

“He won’t talk to me. At all. He’s attached himself to Hotch, and whenever I try, Hotch runs me off.” Morgan glanced back at the pair. Their conversation was about the case from the way that Spencer was gesturing to the map he had tacked up.
Dave sighed warily. “Try again when we get home and aren’t on a case. I can’t promise that he’ll be ready to talk, but just make sure he knows that you’re there for him when he is.”

“Am I wrong in thinking that he might be depressed?” Concern etched itself across Derek’s face.

Rossi considered. The genius had been even more reserved than normal since the jet incident. He often had to be spoken to multiple times before attracting his attention. Dave knew that Aaron was concerned about Spencer. “It very well could be that he is. He’s got a lot of changes going on in his life right now. He and Aaron have gotten more serious. JJ’s not here right now. There’s a temporary teammate to adjust to. He has a godson now. The paternity thing. The Riley Jenkins case stuff. Not all the changes are bad, but it’s still a lot to cope with all at once.”

“I also think you know what’s going on with Reid’s paternity stuff,” the younger agent stated bluntly.

“You’re right, but I’m not going to tell you. Just be his friend. He’ll tell you when he’s ready.” Rossi patted his shoulder. “Hotch wants us over there.”

Morgan grabbed his arm as he moved to step around him. “If I’m right in my suspicions, you need someone to talk to also. I’m here for you too.”

The older man eyed him. It wasn’t surprising that Derek had come to the right conclusion. If he had figured it out, Prentiss probably wasn’t far behind. He would have to warn Spencer the first chance they were alone. “Thank you for the offer, but I’m okay.”

“Well, if you do, you know where to find me.” He smiled before releasing Dave’s arm. They moved over to where the others were gathering.

~*~

Dave slid onto a stool in the hotel bar. The case was over, and they weren’t flying until the next morning. Morgan, Prentiss, and Todd had gone out to dinner. He had wandered around the area near the hotel going from one small art gallery to the next. Hotch and Spencer had holed up in one of their hotel rooms. He watched the bartender work her way towards him and spotted a familiar face at the other end. He placed his order when the woman got to him. “Is that man with the long hair down there running a tab?”
She glanced at Reid before making Dave’s drink. “Yes, he is. Why?”

“Put everything of his on my tab.” He accepted his drink. “We’re co-workers,” he explained when she eyed him speculatively. She nodded and moved away to help other patrons. Dave was nearly finished with his second drink when someone slid onto the stool next to him.

“Thank you for the drinks.” Spencer turned towards him. He spun his glass between his palms.

Dave nodded. “No problem, Kid.” He winced. “Sorry.”

“I don’t mind when you call me Kid. Not really. I was just… trying to process still when I told you not to call me that,” Spencer said quickly. He ducked his head and looked at the older man through his hair almost bashfully. “You, uh, called me Son on the jet. I didn’t mind that either.”

“I’ll keep that in mind. Where’s Aaron? I was beginning to think you two had been surgically attached.” Dave waved off a fresh drink.

Spencer pushed his hair behind his ear and smiled. “Talking to Jack on Skype. Haley and her sister took him to the zoo today, and he’s giving Aaron a complete recap of the day.”

Dave laughed. “Good.”

“Prentiss and Morgan tried to corner me about being depressed earlier.” The genius broke the silence a few minutes later.

“Are you?” Dave watched him.

Spencer stared into his glass. “There’s some debate about the validity of the Kubler-Ross model, but some psychologists believe that not only do people motivate through the stages during grief after a death or a negative, major life event, some people go through the stages after other events as well. For example, a job change or a relationship change. Even if it’s a positive change like a promotion or a marriage. Or even perhaps after finding out the man they believed to be their father is not.” He raised his eyes to his father’s.
“Is that so? What stage are you on?” Dave nodded when the bartender offered to refill their drinks.

“Depression. I’m experiencing anxiety, loss of interest, sadness, loss of appetite, insomnia, lack of concentration, irritability, excessive crying.” The young man blushed slightly at the admission. “Those are all classic symptoms of depression. I don’t think I’ll need medication, though. As I work through my emotions and thoughts, the depression is easier to deal with.”

Dave patted Spencer’s arm. “You had a major life-changing revelation about your life and childhood. It’s normal to feel that way, but promise me you’ll ask for help if you need it.”

“I will. I’ve experienced denial and anger. I’m sorry that I lashed out at you, by the way. I was so frustrated at William Reid and Gideon. You were a handy target. I’ll have to apologize to the rest of the team, as well, for being unprofessional.” Spencer frowned.

Dave knew that his son felt humiliated by his actions in front of the team. “I understand. I’m sure the others will as well.”

Spencer gave him a half smile. “I seem to have skipped bargaining.”

“The stages of grief are nonlinear. You might even circle back around to one of the ones that you’ve already experienced. Have you thought about talking to someone? It might help you sort through your emotions and thoughts.” The older man suggested.

Spencer nodded. “Aaron suggested it. I have an appointment tomorrow afternoon when we get back.”

“Good.” He stood up. He looked at Spencer when his hand shot out to grab his arm.

“Thanks for not pressuring me to talk before I was ready. I’m still not completely sure exactly what I want, but I want us to be friends still.” The young man studied him.

He smiled. “No problem, Kiddo.”

“What do you want? I feel like I should at least consider what you want.”
“I’ll take whatever you’ll give me. If you decide that we can’t be anything more than friends, then so be it. We’ll be friends.” Dave patted the hand still on his arm.

“No, not what you’ll settle for. What do you want? Honestly.” Spencer squeezed his hand on Dave’s arm.

Dave sighed. “I want a son. You have a brother you know. He died shortly after birth. I always told myself that if I had another chance to be a father, I’d cherish it.” He swallowed. “I may never get another chance to tell you this so I’ll do it now. I am so proud of you. You made yourself into a great man despite the adversity that you faced. I’m proud of the fact that you became a doctor and an FBI agent. I would be so honored to call you my son. I’m not sure I’m worthy of it, but if you wanted a father-son relationship, I’d never stop being proud of you and trying to live up to the standard of father you deserve to have.”

Spencer stood up and hugged him. “Thank you.”

“The bartender will bill your drinks to my room. Don’t stay down here too late or drink too much.” Dave patted his son’s back after he’d pulled back and sat down on the stool again. “Goodnight, Spencer.”

Dave smiled when he heard the soft, almost testing response. “Goodnight, Dad.”
Acceptance

Chapter Summary

Spencer waved with a smile when he saw his father already waiting in a booth. He leaned into Aaron’s touch slightly as they walked. They slid into the booth opposite Dave. “Oh, best father ever. Aaron rushed me out of the apartment before my second cup.” He wrapped his hands around the cup Dave had poured for him as they crossed the restaurant.

Chapter Notes

Warm fuzzies! Only one more to go after this. Enjoy :)  
~* HermitPanda *~

Acceptance - the act of recognizing as true

~*~ ~*~ ~*~

Aaron studied the list tacked to the fridge, sharing a magnet with the grocery list. It was Spencer’s handwriting but hadn’t been there the evening before. He vaguely remembered his lover climbing out of bed in the middle of the night. It must have been to write the list and place it on the fridge.

Dad
Strauss
HR
Team

“Hey, Babe, what’s this on the fridge?” he asked when the younger man shuffled into the kitchen for his coffee.

Spencer blinked at him and the list for a few seconds. He wasn’t fully awake yet. Aaron could see when he recognized the list. “Oh. I’ve made my decision. I need to talk to Dave, then we need to talk to Strauss about it, change my personnel file to list him as my father, and then tell the team. I was
afraid if I didn’t write it down, I’d chicken out and just keep floating along like we have been.”

“You’re calling him Dad now?” Aaron smiled and passed him a mug.

“Apparently Late Night Spencer does. I’ve thought of him that way a few times now. I said it once. The night when I was drinking in the hotel bar. I’m not sure if he heard me or not. He’s never commented on it.” Spencer scratched absently at his stomach while sipping his coffee.

Aaron held out his phone. “Call him. You can meet up for breakfast before work. Before you chicken out.”

“Will you come?” Spencer hesitated.

His lover nodded. “Of course. We can drop Jack off on the way. I’m going to go shower.” He smiled when he heard Spencer dialing the phone as he left the kitchen. Aaron showered and dressed then coaxed Jack through getting ready for the day while Spencer showered. They dropped him off at the before school activity club on the way to the diner where they were meeting Dave.

Spencer waved with a smile when he saw his father already waiting in a booth. He leaned into Aaron’s touch slightly as they walked. They slid into the booth opposite Dave. “Oh, best father ever. Aaron rushed me out of the apartment before my second cup.” He wrapped his hands around the cup Dave had poured for him as they crossed the restaurant.

“Poor Spencer,” Dave said in mock sympathy. He was watching his son intently. He hadn’t figured out how to respond to Spencer’s occasional remarks referring to him as his father. It had been happening more frequently over the previous weeks since their conversation in the hotel bar.

“Yes, poor me.” Spencer drained the cup in two gulps and poured another one. He waited until the waitress had taken their orders before leaning on the table and starting the conversation they were there for. “I want a father-son relationship. I want you to be my dad.”

Dave reached across the table and clasped Spencer’s wrist. “I’d like that.”

Spencer smiled shyly. He felt Aaron’s hand rub his thigh gently. His boyfriend knew what was coming. They had discussed it in the car, and Aaron had agreed to help him do the paperwork and push it through the legal system required. “If I had fewer degrees and hadn’t published so many
papers under the name of Reid, I probably would have changed my last name.”

“You don’t have to carry the Rossi name to be a Rossi. I don’t care if you change your name.” Dave squeezed the young man’s wrist before pulling his hand away.

“I’m going to change my middle name, though. I don’t use my middle initial or name for anything. It’s not on any of my papers, so I can change it easily. I don’t want it to be William anymore. It’s bad enough I carry his last name when he’s not my father, but I don’t want to give him my middle name also.” Spencer grimaced. If only he’d found Dave 15 years earlier, then he could have carried Dave’s last name through college and into the Bureau.

Dave nodded. “Understandable. Have you decided what you’re going to change it to?”

Spencer met his father’s gaze with a smile. “David.”

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Straus raised her eyebrows at the trio of agents waiting to speak with her. She waved them in. “Come on in gentlemen.” She sat behind her desk as they settled themselves in her visitor’s chairs. “What can I do for you?”

Reid cleared his throat. “Recently, I found out that William Reid is not actually my father. After doing some searching, I found who I thought might be my father. A paternity test confirmed it. Dave’s my father.”

She blinked taken aback and looked at the eldest agent. He nodded and explained. “It was a one-night hook-up after meeting a woman in a bar. I never realized that Spencer’s mother was that hook-up.”

“Well, this is a rather interesting situation that we find ourselves in. You’re currently Doctor Reid’s supervisor because he’s in a relationship with Agent Hotchner. Since you’re his father, you can’t continue that role.” She rubbed her temples and sighed. “Your team is an evil twin away from being a daily soap opera. You’re not hiding one of those are you, Doctor Reid?”

“I hope not.” He smiled sheepishly.
Dave crossed his ankles. “What do you want us to do, Erin? I’m not ready for my second retirement. The team works well together. I know Hotch is reluctant to make any changes to the team right now since JJ is still out on maternity.” Hotch nodded but stayed silent.

She drummed her fingers on the desk and considered. “I’ll take over Doctor Reid’s reviews, but I’ll need to be kept apprised of anything that happens in the field that would affect those reviews. You can’t hide things from me. Understood?” She looked at each of the three men, in turn, getting nods.

“Yes, ma’am.” Hotch finally spoke. “Thank you.”

She nodded. “I really hope there are no more surprises from your team.”

“Well too,” Hotch agreed.

She smiled slightly at Reid and Rossi. “I hope I can offer my congratulations on finding each other?”

“Thank you, ma’am.” Spencer smiled. The trio of men excused themselves and left. “Well, that’s done. Next up is lunch with the team.”

“Is JJ still coming?” Hotch asked leading them into the elevator.

Spencer nodded. “At 12:30. She’s already itchy to come back.”

“Just a few more weeks. Then the team goes back to normal.” Hotch blew out a breath.

Dave shushed him loudly. “Don’t say that too loud. You’ll jinx us. Every time that things are going well, something happens.” They were laughing as they entered the bullpen. The other members of the team were already there trying to figure out why Hotch wasn’t in his office already.

“Case permitting we’re having a team lunch at 12:30 in the conference room. I suggest getting to work because I don’t see a productive afternoon in store for us,” Hotch announced and headed into his office.
“We’ll talk at lunch. It’s nothing bad.” Reid smiled when everyone turned to him and Dave. He sat down and pulled his stack of cases out of his desk.

~*~

Reid waited until everyone had settled down from greeting JJ and filling their plates with pizza, breadsticks, and salad. He looked around the table. Garcia was watching him. He was pretty sure that she knew what the lunch was about. He was surprised that she had managed to keep his paternity to herself for as long as she had. Emily and JJ were focused on each other, chatting about the new baby and making plans to get together. Jordan was toying with her food. He knew that she felt out of place. Her time with the team was coming to the end, and she was probably questioning her presence at the gathering. Morgan was quietly watching him with a raised eyebrow. He smiled at his friend before clearing his throat.

Everyone’s eyes turned towards him. “Um, I have a few things to say.” His leg bounced under the table. He glanced at Dave and got a nod before continuing. “I need to explain my behavior on the jet a couple weeks ago. I know that it made things awkward, and it was unprofessional of me. I already apologized but I owe you an explanation. Most of you know that I found out that William Reid’s not actually my father not too long before that.”

“You don’t have to tell us this if you don’t want to Pretty Boy,” Morgan said.

“I want to, and it affects the team.” Spencer licked his lips nervously and sat up straighter. “On the plane, I lashed out at Dave because he was a handy target for my frustrations over all my father figures leaving me up to that point. I was also trying to push him away before I could get hurt by another father. He is my biological father.”

The group broke into gasps and congratulations. Dave held up his hand to silence the questions. “I didn’t know I had a son. I had a one-night thing with a woman I met in a bar in Vegas. I would never have known I left her pregnant if not for Garcia working her magic for Spencer.” He smiled at the tech gratefully.

“So what happens now? Is the team changing?” Prentiss asked.

“No, the only change in the foreseeable future is JJ coming back from maternity.” Hotch shook his head. “Strauss will take over Reid’s reviews and such from Dave since I can’t do them. But that doesn’t affect any of you.”
Jordan frowned at them. “Why can’t...” She looked back and forth between them. Realization ran across her face. “Oh.”

“So anyways, Dave’s my dad. I’m happy about it.” Spencer looked at his father. “I think he’s happy about it?”

“I am.” Dave nodded and patted his son’s shoulder.
Spencer slipped unseen into Dave’s kitchen. He took a deep breath and braced himself against the counter. The backyard party was a much-needed celebration after a hard year, but at that moment he needed to have a few minutes alone away from his families.

It had only been a couple months after finding out that Dave was his father when the BAU had crossed paths with the Reaper, then the anthrax case and Spencer’s stay in the hospital. When the Reaper had returned again and attacked Hotch, life had really gotten chaotic. The older man had tried to push Spencer away, especially since Spencer had been shot and was stuck on crutches. That plan hadn’t worked, though. After realizing what his partner was doing, Spencer had confronted him. They had agreed to give the appearance that they had split, never seeking each other out while home, but they both spent longer hours at the office together and while on the road during cases, they had begun sharing a room.

Those months had been hard for Aaron knowing that he had sent Haley and Jack into hiding. Unannounced to the man, Dave had retrieved the pair from WitSec less than 48 hours after being placed. He and Spencer had been worried that the Reaper would be able to track them even with the protection of the marshals. The extended Rossi family had gladly taken in and protected the ex-wife and son of Spencer’s partner, shuffling them between homes as they saw fit. When Foyet had killed the marshal that would have been protecting Haley and Jack, they knew their fears had been justified. The lack of information on Hotch’s family had frustrated the serial killer, sending him after Spencer who had been prepared to cross paths with him.

So now, on a day when they might have been laying Haley and Jack to rest if Foyet had had his way, the BAU family and the Rossi family were gathered at Dave’s to celebrate their safe return.
“Everything okay, Kiddo?”

“Yeah, Dad. I just needed a couple minutes to myself.” Spencer glanced over at his father. He looked back out the window when he heard Jack’s laughter as Aaron hefted him over his shoulder in a fireman’s carry.

Dave crossed to him and began rubbing across his upper back. He saw that his son was watching the trio of Hotchners. He knew Spencer was struggling with being the one to kill Foyet even though he had been in a life-or-death situation. “It was a good shot, Spencer. We’ll never know how many lives you saved, but there’s three right there, along with your own. Foyet would have kept going until he broke Aaron completely. You’re a good man. I’m proud of you, Son.”

“Thanks.” Spencer bumped their shoulders together. Aaron made eye contact with him and smiled before loping towards the house with Jack still draped across his shoulders.

“Spencer! Daddy says you’re gonna move in!” Jack crowed happily from his father’s shoulders.

Spencer nodded. “I am. You going to be okay with me being there whenever you visit him?”

“Yeah! You can take us to fun places and teach me magic.” Jack grinned then frowned slightly. “But…”

“But what Jack?” Aaron transferred the boy to a stool and studied him.

Jack looked at them. “Mommies and Daddies live together. But Spencer can’t be my mommy. He’s not a girl.”

The three men looked at each other unsure how to explain the relationship. “He’s kind of your step-dad. Remember when your friend Sara’s mom got remarried and her new husband was her step-dad? It’s like that,” Haley spoke up from the door. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to intrude. I just… I love your family, but there are a lot of Rossis. I needed a breather.”

“It’s okay. I needed one too. I don’t know what their excuses are.” Spencer pointed at his father and his lover.
“We were checking on you.” Dave squeezed his shoulder before stepping away to get fresh drinks for the small group in the kitchen.

“Hey, Spencer?” Jack brought everyone’s attention to him again. He was holding his arms out to the genius.

Spencer settled him on his hip. “Yeah, Jack?”

Jack peered at him with big eyes. “If you’re kind of my dad now and Uncle Dave’s your dad, does that make him kind of my grandpa?”

“Well, it does. Though, you should probably ask him if you can call him Grandpa before you do it, okay?” Spencer bit back a laugh and hugged the boy tightly. He glanced at Aaron and Haley and saw that they were also holding back laughter. Dave had frozen reaching into the fridge. He slowly turned to face the others, stunned at the new connection between himself and his best friend's son.

“Can I call you Grandpa, Uncle Dave?” Jack gave him his puppy dog eyes and sweetest smile.

Dave smiled and nodded. “Sure, Jack. You can call me Grandpa.” He caught the boy when he reached for him.

“Hey! You guys ditched us out there. What’s going on in here?” Prentiss and JJ appeared followed soon after by Morgan and Garcia.

Spencer ruffled Jack’s hair. He glanced out the window at the family he had found before turning to the family he had made for himself. Everyone was smiling and happy. He smiled when Aaron gave him a subtle wink. “We were just talking about family.”

Chapter End Notes

Well, there you have it. The end of Spencer's journey to find his father. I hope you enjoyed it. Let me know in the comments. :D

~* HermitPanda *~
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!