### Rating:  
**Mature**

### Archive Warning: **Rape/Non-Con**

### Category: **M/M**

### Fandom: **Criminal Minds (US TV)**

### Relationship: **Derek Morgan/Spencer Reid**

### Character: **Aaron Hotchner, Derek Morgan**

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**No Ignorance But Darkness**

by **sugarplum_fairy**

**Summary**

After Morgan and Reid got through Fuck or Die situation, Hotch visits Morgan's hospital room.

**Notes**

This is a sequel to "More than meets the eye", but I think you can enjoy them separately. I hope you'll like my work!

How much does knowledge spare people?

With his eyes closed, Hotch counts five in harmony with Prentiss' retreating footsteps. Composing himself is one of many skills he's enhanced throughout his career and it must be the time to make the most of it. After five, he knocks on Morgan's door, but there's no answer as he anticipated. Since he originally intended just to announce himself, not to get a permission, he enters the hospital room anyway.

The resident is invisible in the small room, but the shower sounds from the bathroom reveal his whereabouts. Hotch quickly decides to occupy the window side and looks around the room like he does in crime scenes. Fixing his gaze on the unused bed, he's abruptly seized with uncertainty which he's usually successful in preventing from reaching the level of vulnerability. This seems to be one of the exceptions.
He should feel grateful for the time line at least, he thinks. Though he hates admitting it, the information on teenage-Morgan the Seattle case provided sharpens his understanding of the current situation. Above all, this is Morgan. They've known each other for years as if they practically lived together in Morgan's words. He tries to convince himself of his competence to support his teammate.

Hearing a click of the door, he focuses on the present at once. Morgan slowly turns up in his own gray henry neck and black combats instead of hospital pajamas. From his choice of clothes, Hotch catches his claim that he doesn't need to be taken care of and sighs inwardly. Morgan shows no signs to Hotch's presence though it's clear that he notices him. He sits down on the bed with his back against his boss.

"Morgan___"
"I don't need your pep talk."

Morgan interrupts in a quiet but warning tone. Hotch sighs without trying to hide this time.

"I wish I could prepare reassuring words for you."

Morgan stays completely still. The tense lines of his shoulders shout for solitude. However, Hotch dares to ignore it. He can't leave him alone even though his confession is an absolute truth; he doesn't have an idea what will console his distressed colleague. He opens his mouth, observing the other's reaction carefully.

"I know you know the logic. Still, you should hear it from someone else. Morgan___the Unsub threatened to kill the little girl if you two didn't follow his orders. You and Reid did your best to save the girl. What happened to you was not your fault from any point of view."

On the verge of assuring that they did the right thing, he has to stop himself from saying it aloud. No matter how demanding the nature of their job is, it shouldn't force them to sacrifice themselves in such a way. Instead, he tries a different approach.

"If I'd been in your position, I'd have done the same thing."

Morgan gives a short laugh without humor.

"If I'd been assigned to Reid's role...I'm not sure what I'd have done."

At once realizing that his try went wrong, Hotch steps forward before Morgan hunches down. Hotch suspects that Morgan gets sick but he doesn't. Instead, his breathing becomes rapid and shallow. Hotch kneels down in front of him and sees him trying to control his breathing.

"Morgan...Reid will be alright."
"Of course, he will!"

Morgan abruptly stands up and glares down at Hotch. He continues through his gritted teeth, heaving.

"Reid will always be alright. Because he always has to."
"We'll be there for him."
"Oh, really? Were we there for him after Hankel?"

They stare hard at each other for a while. It's Hotch who averts his eyes earlier. He slowly sits down on the bed and fixes his eyes on Morgan again.

"You don't need to feel guilty for that, either. Reid is my responsibility. That was my fault."
"Come on, Hotch! We're not talking about ranks!"
“No, but you did your best for him.”

Morgan shakes his head without waiting for the remark to end.

“Don’t patronize me. It was far from the best. I sometimes feel I’ve failed him at every critical occasion.”

This declaration revives many scenes in Hotch’s mind. He feels a lump in his throat but manages to swallow it. Suddenly tiredness sweeps in him. This is the fifth day of their restless investigation, it turned out to be the type of cases which hit the team hardest, and yet they aren’t all of his exhaustion.

"I never patronize you. You've done remarkable jobs. It's just that...you can't protect him from everything. None can."

Though Hotch carefully keeps his voice neutral, Morgan definitely senses something. He crouches down and leans against the bed next to Hotch as if the gravity got stronger.

"...How's Reid?"
"I haven't seen him yet. Prentiss is with him now. His doctor said that he wasn't seriously injured and seemed to be calm."
"He was calm all the time, trying to comfort me and make all of us survive."

This comment doesn't surprise Hotch owing to many episodes which proved Reid's protective ness. Morgan closes his eyes and sighs.

“Do you believe … do you think my staying by his side will be good for him? To keep working for BAU?”
“Honestly, I can’t answer at this point. However, we’ll work out the best way for both of you.”

Hotch puts emphasis on ‘we’, meaning this is his commitment not to leave this to them. Morgan can’t respond at once. Hotch understands him enough to pick up his sense of shame in his pause and waits for him on a certain hunch.

"Maybe...I'm not sure, but...maybe, I won't be able to stay."

His voice is so thin it strongly reminds them of their closeness. For the first time since he entered this room, Hotch obeys his instinct and pats the other's shoulder. He realizes this is what he’s wanted to do from the very beginning.

"It's okay, Morgan. None will blame you, whatever your choice will be."

Silence stretches in the room lit by the twilight. It’s not peaceful, not comfortable either, but somehow intimate. Before rooting himself to the bed, he manages to get to his feet and looks down at the man on the floor.

"For now, you need some rest. I’ll go see Reid."
“Yeah.”

While Morgan sounds drained to the hilt now, he raises himself as well. Hotch doubts if he intends to follow. He has absolutely no idea what comes next till he hears the words from Morgan.

"I know you feel sorry for what happened in Seattle. But you don’t need to. I didn’t want you there, not in the slightest, but you didn’t do anything wrong. I should have told this to you before.”
Morgan fidgets awkardly but there’s no hesitation in his voice and expression. In contrast, Hotch is unsure how to reply.

“Thank you” is all he can murmur, cursing himself inside.

Morgan nods. “Later.”

The very moment he goes out into the corridor, Hotch deeply exhales and leaves there quickly to avoid Morgan’s attention. Heading for Reid’s room, he searches for the appropriate response to what happened just a few moments ago but nothing comes to his mind. He becomes aware that his mind is too occupied with what he wants to say to assimilate Morgan’s words.

I’ve noticed that you understood and didn’t expect anything from me. Even so, I should have chosen different course of action. You shouldn’t absolve me. No matter how meaningless and futile this thought is, he knows that it takes long to dismiss it.

And that this is exactly how Morgan is struggling now, too.

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