

Brothers after all

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Brothers after all

by [LioSky](#)

Summary

Mike Ross and Neal Caffrey as brothers but lost contact as teenagers. They are both adults and have somehow found new types of families when they reconnect again. As they try to make up for lost time a freak accident suddenly gives them a changes to build new childhood memories. But who will take care of them? Peter and Harvey of course!

Notes

This is my first cross-over fic, it was a suggestion from a guest reader to my other story. It will be OCC and I have changed a few things from the shows. Hope you enjoy!

Chapter 1

Prologue.

Mike had never told anyone at Pearson Hardman about the fact that he had a brother.

Neal was just a few years older than him, but they had always been very different. When their parents died Mike had been 11 and Neal had just turned 14. They had dealt with the accident very differently, Mike had taken it the hardest and it still plagued him. Neal always said that it was because of his memory. He could remember every moment with their parents and Neal couldn't.

Neal had been much closer to their father. He had really admired him and wanted to be like him. Neal was always talking about how he wanted to be a cop like their father had been. When they had to move to their grandmother Ellen she had never encouraged that choice of work. The reason for that they found out when Neal turned 18 and Mike was 15. Neal left after that.

Up until then they had been fine. Sure there were tough times sometimes and Mike and Neal spent much time by themselves since Ellen was forced to take on a second job to be able to provide for the three of them. The two brothers didn't mind so much though since they both enjoyed each other's company and they rarely fought. Mike liked to read and Neal always encouraged him. Neal was clever for his age and sometimes too clever for his own good. Neal liked to test Mike's memory in different ways and sometimes they would go to different museums and Neal would have Mike read up beforehand about the exhibitions to later have him tell him about the art when they were at the museums. Mike enjoyed it though. Sure, art was a bit boring, but he liked to hang out with Neal.

Things changed when Neal turned 18. He was crushed by the truth about their father and the fact that everything he thought he had known turned out to be false. He felt betrayed and humiliated and made the choice to leave. He just felt like he needed to get away from it all. He needed a fresh start and needed to rebuild himself. The decision to leave was nothing he took easy though. The hardest thing about it was to leave Mike behind. He would always regret the fact that he didn't even say goodbye to Mike, he just left that they when Ellen told him the truth. He felt really bad for leaving her too of course, but he just couldn't stay there anymore. Everything he had known was a lie.

He had called Mike from a payphone that night. Mike had picked up after the fifth signal, he had been in bed. The younger brother begged Neal to just come back home.

"Neal, just come back home. Grammy isn't mad at you. She is out looking. She says she is worried."

"Mike I can't come back. I'm sorry. I just need to leave, okay."

"But why? I don't understand."

“Mike, I just need to do this, okay.”

“But what will you do?”

“I don’t know yet, I think I’ll move to the city or travel.”

“I want to come with you Neal. Please take me with you.” Neal could hear that Mike was crying over the phone. He bit his lip as he felt sorrow dwell inside him.

“I can’t Mike. You need to finish school, and someone needs to look out for Grammy.”

“Will I ever see you again?” Mike asked holding his breath as he waited for Neal’s reply. He hoped with all of his heart that the answer would be yes.

“Of course you will. We are brothers. Love you Mike.” He hang up before Mike had the change to reply. Because if he kept talking with his little brother he was going to change his mind about all of this. He quickly walked away from the payphone towards the bus stop.

“Neal, Neal? Please are you there? I love you too. Neal?”

Mike spoke even though he had clearly heard the dial tone when Neal hang up. He just didn’t understand. Why did Neal leave just like that? He had just gotten home from school and been met by his grandmother who had told him that Neal was missing and that she was going to go out and look for him. He would have to make his own dinner today and then he would get to bed and not wait up for her. He had tried to ask questions and demanded he go with her, but she had firmly said no. She even raised his voice towards him when he persisted. She had almost never done that before and he stopped where he was in the middle of the living room and watched her leave.

But Grammy didn’t find Neal and he didn’t come back. The really hard times started for Mike then. He was alone with Grammy now, and she refused to tell him the real reason why Neal left. She told him something, but he could see on her that she wasn’t telling him the truth. He just couldn’t understand why she was lying though. What had happened?

He pressed her about telling her what she knew, but she stuck to the lie and after some time he just gave up with trying to get her to tell him. He could see how much it pained her when he brought it up. She started to get worse after Neal left. She had been quite old already when she had to take them in, but now you started to notice it on her as well.

Mike went through different phases when it came to Neal leaving. At first he missed him terribly and he thought that Neal actually would come back. He went out to look for him himself, he went to Neal’s favorite museums every weekend in hope that he would turn up there and he even went to the city and wandered around there by himself for hours and hours until he missed the last train home and had to take the bus. Grammy had not been happy and had grounded him for two weeks. Every time the phone rang he would rush to get it in the hopes that it was Neal calling, but it never was.

The longer Neal was gone the angrier Mike got at him. How could he just leave him like that? They were brothers, they were supposed to have each other’s backs. He needed Neal.

Now he had no one to help him at school when the other boys picked at him for memorizing the entire text book, now he was all alone. Neal left him alone. Just like that, like he didn't care about Mike at all. He just cast him away like he was nothing. It angered him and he found that it was easier to deal with the loss of his brother with anger than anything else. Anger made the hurt easier. If this was what Neal had wanted, then fine, so be it.

Time passed and he met Trevor and they became best friends. He grew up, started collage and got into trouble. He was caught cheating on a math test and expelled. He didn't get to go to Harvard that had been his dream. He started smoking pot. He started working as a bike messenger to pay his rent and to pay for Grammy's care. He had to put her in a home after she started to become forgetful. For a few years their relationship had been difficult, but it was good now. After all, she was all he had. She was his only family and he would do anything for her.

Then he got the news that he needed a large amount of money to be able to keep her at the home. He got desperate and choose to take the easy and fast way out of it by agreeing to deal drugs for Trevor.

That was how he met Harvey and his whole life changed. It got good and interesting and he was challenged intellectually for the first time in his life. He loved it. Even though it came with a lot of pressure since he didn't have a law degree and he had to lie to people daily. But it was all worth it. Harvey was great too. Mike would never admit it, but he kind of looked at Harvey as a father figure.

Mike tried hard to not to think about Neal. No one in his surroundings even knew he existed. That somewhere out there Mike had a brother. He never spoke about him with anyone. Grammy tried a few times.

"I would like to tell you something about Neal." She would say to him, but he wouldn't listen.

"I don't want to talk about him Grammy." He would answer and if she continued he would just get up and leave. Stupid when he thought back on it, but he just wasn't ready to deal with it. His anger and hurt towards his brother was still there, especially since he could recall every minute with him like it was yesterday, and that was just too painful. He rather didn't talk about it at all.

Things for Mike were going great up until the day when Grammy died.

As tears were streaming down his cheeks as he cleaned up her room he were to find something when he went through her closet. On one of the shelf's hidden behind some shoe boxes he found a small wooden chest. It had the name Neal written on it. Mike's life were about to change the moment he opened that box.

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Neal's life took another turn from the moment he left. He moved to New York and met Mozzie and started a new chapter of his life. A totally different one then he had originally

planned and he found himself on the other side of the law than had been his long term goal up until now.

Along with the whole fresh start thing he decided to change his name from Neal Ross to Neal Caffrey which had been his mother's maiden name.

Life in New York were new, fun and exciting. He did whatever he wanted or at least was able to do. He got better and better of doing things that most people wouldn't with the help of Mozzie. He met Kate and fell in love. He thought that he was living the dream. It was just one thing that hurt him and it was the thought of Mike, and the fact that he had been leaving the kid alone. Sure he had Grammy, but Mike had always been a social person and he loved to hang out with Neal. Mike had also taking the loss of their parents so hard, and when he was younger he had used to ask Neal why they had to leave. Neal had tried to comfort him and told him that "You still have me. We are always going to be brothers" he remembered those words as he was sure Mike did as well. He had failed Mike big time. He knew he had and it was the biggest regret of his life.

After his first few weeks in New York he had decided to send Mike a postcard to let him and Grammy know that he was okay. He was sure that they worried a lot. With Mozzie's help he set up a post box and wrote down the address to it on the card so that Mike would be able to answer him. However he never did. Neal sent a new card two weeks later, but got no reply on that either. He wondered the reason as why Mike didn't reply. He even sent a postcard to his own address to make sure it got there. It did.

Maybe Mike was angry at him for betraying him like that. Maybe he just needed some time. But Neal didn't want him to think that he wasn't thinking about his younger brother, so he continued sending Mike post cards. He sent a new one at least twice a month, sometimes more often than that. When he travelled, he did it from every new city he visited. On the cards he would write small greetings, tell him about what he was doing, certain funny things that had happened to him, he would describe a new museum he had went to or sometimes he would just write "Love Neal" on them. He kept it up for years. When he knew that Mike had turned 18 he also wrote that he would love to meet up again. He had decided to wait until Mike was 18 because then he would be an adult and able to make his own decisions, just in case Grammy didn't approve of them meeting. Mike didn't respond, and for a while he was discouraged. Didn't Mike want to see him? But after three weeks he wrote another postcard. He wasn't going to give up.

He had to change the post box when the feds got on to him and wrote Mike a new one every time. He would explain it with that honest versions of their dad was looking for him. But never once did Mike reply. He didn't want to believe it that Mike didn't want to have anything to do with him, so he just couldn't stop sending them. He loved Mike and Grammy, but sometimes had his doubt that it was mutual. Maybe he had hurt them too much by leaving. He had thought many times about going to see them, but had gotten cold feet every time. He felt bad after those episodes and cheered himself up by getting a new project, like a complicated heist or something with Kate and Mozzie.

Then things happened and Kate disappeared and he started to look for her. He didn't send the postcards just as often then. And when Peter were closing in on him and he knew that he

probably was going into a trap just to see her again, he wrote the last postcard.

He went to trial, got sentenced to four years in prison. He didn't write to Mike from there. He couldn't do that to Mike, because he wasn't sure if the FBI knew about Mike, and if he wrote from the prison they would find out for sure. He couldn't expose Mike and Grammy like that and have the FBI storm in to their lives like that because of him.

Then Kate came and said goodbye and he just had to go after her. She was the one for him. She was the one that he wanted to start a family of his own with, and he knew that he was hurting her by being in here. He had to escape. So he did. But he was too late and Peter Burke caught him again.

Neal saw his chance to get out of here and he took it. It was not only Kate he had in mind when he got the deal with Peter and got the anklet. He was also thinking about Mike. He really would like to try again and reconnect with him. He had been thinking about him a lot in prison. He really missed him. They were brothers after all.

As he was working with the FBI and looking for Kate he also did some research on Mike. Mike and Grammy's apartment was way out of his radius but he got Mozzie to head over there and try and talk to them. Only to find out that they weren't living there anymore. At first he felt stupid, after all it had been years, Mike was an adult and Grammy was a lot older. He had the terrible thought that she might even not be alive anymore. But after some research he found out that Mike and she had moved out of there a few years earlier, just a few months after he went to prison. He found out that Grammy now lived in a retirement home, but Mike however he couldn't find an address to. He had been rolled in to a collage for some time, but there he had been registered under Grammy's address.

The retirement home was also outside his range, but he decided to write her a letter in which he apologized for everything and asked her for Mike's address or to at least let Mike know that Neal was looking for him. Nothing happened now either. He even called the retirement home and asked if his grandmother had received his letter, and was told after some persuasion that she had. She had chosen not to contact him he then understood. He took it as a sign that neither her or Mike wanted any contact with him. It hit him hard and he became more obsessed with finding Kate, much to Peter's dismay.

The relationship between him and Peter grew into something that Neal had been longing for all these years since his father had died. This was how a father should behave he thought, and he couldn't help but look up to Peter and really trust him. He loved Elisabeth as well, Peter's adorable wife. He had a pretty good life he had to admit up until when Kate died and he had to go back to prison. He almost gave up on everything then. He felt like he had nothing left now and he had himself to blame. Kate was gone and the two people that were left of his family didn't want anything to do with him.

But the thought of finding Kate's killer got him to want to get out and back to the deal with Peter. But times were hard and he missed her incredibly, and along with that he started to miss Mike and Grammy more and more. He used to lay awake at night and think about how life could have been with Kate, or how life would have been if he just hadn't left like he did all those years ago.

He knew that Peter could see how upset he was, and he knew that Peter worried about him. It was sweet actually, but he just couldn't tell him about Mike. He feared he would break if he started talking about Mike. And there was a risk that Peter would start digging, maybe find Mike and go and talk to him on Neal's behalf, and he just couldn't have that.

He sometimes wondered what Mike was like now. How did he look? What was he doing? Was he okay? Did he have people around him that cared about him? But mostly he wondered if he ever was going to see him again. His little brother.  
As fate had it, he would. And his life would change drastically.



# Meeting

## Chapter Summary

Mike and Neal meet up again after years of being apart.

Mike slowly opened the lid to the chest. He wasn't sure if he was ready for this. The loss of Grammy might be too fresh, could he really deal with more news about his family at this point. But now, he was all alone. He had no one, he almost thought that the feeling of that realization was going to crush him.

Neal was now his only living family member. He was his brother after all, even after what he had done all those years ago. He hadn't thought of Neal that much lately, which was strange. However some time ago when he had visited his grandmother she had mentioned Neal's name. She had said that it was time that they talked about him again. She had said that Mike couldn't keep doing this, shutting Neal out of his life like this. Mike had gotten upset and yelled at her that it was Neal that had cut them out of his life. His grandmother had said that it wasn't true, but Mike hadn't wanted to listen. He had stormed out in anger and hadn't seen her for some time after that. That was until he felt too guilty and went back to her and hugged her and apologized. She hugged him back and said that it was fine.

"When you are ready Michael, we will talk about your brother." She had said, and Mike had just nodded against her chest. He hadn't had time to be ready before she died. He regretted it so much it physically hurt inside him at this point.

He was standing there holding the small chest in his hand looking inside it at a letter that was on top of multiple postcards. The letter on top was Grammy's address written in Neal's handwriting, and he could see that it was marked with a date that corresponded with the time when Grammy had wanted to talk about Neal. What was this?

He backed out into the room and sat down on the bed with the box in his hands, staring at the content. Were all of this from Neal? He removed the letter and looked at the postcards. When he did he saw that they were the postcard was addressed to him! It was their old address though, where he and Grammy, and also Neal had lived, it was dated four years back. What the hell was this?

He removed the card and saw a similar card underneath, dated a few weeks earlier, the next one a few weeks before that, and so on. There were so many of them! All addressed to him, with two weeks apart, sometimes just a few days. They were sent from different places, some cities in Europe, Asia, South America, but most of them came from New York! For here! He looked back at the letter and saw that it was also from New York. His heart started to beat faster when he realized that Neal, his brother, was in New York, and had been all along. So close.

But why were the postcards here? And why the hell hadn't he ever seen them? He felt new tears in his eyes, but this time for a different reason. All this time he had thought that Neal wanted nothing to do with him, and here was years and years of proof of the opposite. He felt himself shaking, as he carefully tipped the box upside down. An old postcard picturing the skyline of New York was on top of the pile now. He turned it around in his hand and saw that it was dated just three weeks after the last time he had seen Neal. He started to read. He read card after card, some of them he read twice. They told a story about how his brother grew from a young man to an adult. Neal would tell him about his life, about things that happened to him, about people he met. Sometimes he wrote about museums he visited, places he had seen, sometime he just wrote two words "Love Neal". Mike found himself sitting there on the bed both laughing and crying. Some things that Neal wrote about he didn't understand, something about their dad. As time passed the letters got less clear, the details lessened and Neal became vague and Mike wondered why. In the beginning Neal had asked him questions in the letters, how he was doing, how school was, how Grammy was doing and things like that. But as time passed the questions stopped. Neal even wrote that even if Mike didn't want to answer him, he would continue to write to him, which he had. Until four years ago when the letters stopped. Mike didn't understand the last card, and he wondered what happened to Neal during that time. Maybe he had lost faith by then, he got tired of writing. But he wrote that people were looking for him. What did that mean?

Mike saw that each and every one of the letters had a return address scribbled down somewhere on the card. For a long time it was the same post box in New York, but then it changed to several different ones.

Mike was trembling and his heart felt like it was going to burst out of his chest when he was finished with all the postcards. He couldn't believe this! All this time, all these postcards and he had never seen one single of them. How was that possible? Why had Grammy kept this from him? He didn't understand it at all. But she had wanted to talk about Neal. Many times. He hadn't been ready, and now he had missed his change to every get to understand.

He still hadn't read the letter. The only letter and the only thing addressed to Grammy. He looked at it closely. It was addressed to the retirement home and when he turned it around he saw that the return address was to a place in a fancy neighborhood of New York. Neal was there!

With shaking hands he opened it and unfolded the plain paper. Neal started the letter by apologizing for what he had done and said all those years ago. He pleaded to their grandmother to forgive him and that he thought about her and Mike every day. He said that he understood if they didn't want to see him again, but he then asked if she could just send him Mike's address or give this letter to him. He said that he just wanted to explain and ask for forgiveness and if they didn't want it then he wouldn't bother them again. He signed it with Love Neal as he had done with every postcard.

Maybe this was what Grammy had wanted to talk about that time they had argued. Or he was sure it was. Why hadn't he listened? And why hadn't she shown him the postcards earlier?

Probably it had been because how he had acted then. He hadn't wanted to talk about Neal at all. But all this time Neal had thought of him, and wanted to have contact with him. But

Grammy hadn't allowed him to have that? How could she do that? She had made him hate his own brother, if he had only known. But he couldn't be angry at her, she was gone now and all he wanted was to get her back. He fell back on the bed clutching the letter against his chest. What would he do now?

Emotions and thoughts twirled around inside him. Loss and longing fought with each other. At the same time as Grammy was gone for good he had found his brother again. A brother who actually loved him and wanted to see him. He wasn't alone after all. He had Neal! He wouldn't have to be all alone, he still had family. But what to do now? He knew where Neal was! He should go there. No, he needed to go there, right now!

Before he even knew what he was doing he packed the last stuff of his grandmothers in boxes, luckily he had almost been done, and the closet had been last thing he had gone through. The next thing he knew he was on the subway on his way to Neal's apartment. He was going to see his brother again.

He wasn't sure if it was a good thing or not that he went right now, on the same night he found out that Grammy had died. He hadn't really grasped it that she was gone yet. Or of course he knew, but it was still hard to take in. That he was never going to be able to hug her again, or talk to her, visit her or play games with her. He had tears in his eyes and things were blurry when he looked at his phones map app to find the way from the subway. It was a couple blocks to walk and while he did he tried to collect himself. What was he going to say to Neal? But he found that it didn't really matter. He just wanted to see him again. Hug him and maybe cry a bit. He was most definitely going to do that.

Then he was standing outside a mansion. He looked at the address on the letter again making sure that it was right. Neal couldn't possibly live here, but he did. This was the right address. He hesitantly stepped up to the door and knocked. He hoped that Neal was still awake, it was pretty late after all.

A moment later the door opened carefully and an older woman peered down at him.

"Can I help you?" she asked.

"Eh..yes. Well I think so. Maybe." God he was rambling. The woman smiled at him and opened the door a bit wider.

"Are you doing okay, young man?" She asked him. "You look upset."

"Oh, yeah, I am. Sorry to bother you this late. I'm mean I'm okay. I was looking for someone."

"Might it be Neal maybe?" She asked then and Mike thought he was having a heart attack. It was the right address after all. Neal lived here! All he could do was nod with an open mouth.

"Well, come on in then." She said and stepped to the side to let him in. He couldn't move.

"Are you sure that you are alright, dear?" She asked him with a worried expression, she was holding a hand out against him. "You are trembling."

“Yeah, sorry.” He stepped inside, hesitating.

“He is upstairs. Do you need me to accompany you?”

“What?” Mike breathed. “Eh, no thank you, mam. It’s okay. Thank you.” He stared at the stairs.

“Alright. I’ll go back to bed then. Tell Neal to lock up after you when you leave.” And then he was gone, but Mike had time to apologize to be there so late, she just waved it off.

He slowly made his way up the stairs after that. He tried to do it as quietly as he could for some reason, because now he was starting to get really nervous. He was about to meet his brother again for the first time in about 12 years.

He was standing outside the door now. Neal was on the other side. Neal who had wanted to see him for so long, and all that time he had thought that Mike didn’t want to see him. What if he was angry at Mike? Should he just turn around and walk away? He could wait with this. He could write Neal a letter or something. He seriously thought about doing just that, but as he turned against the stairs he remembered that then he would have to go home and face the fact that Grammy was dead all by himself. Tears rose in his eyes at the thought of her again, and he turned back against the door and knocked before he changed his mind.

He could hear footsteps and saw how the handle turned down, and the door opened and there was Neal! Mike just stared at him. It was really him, it was Neal! He was wearing slacks and a white t-shirt with small dots on it, it looked like paint. They locked eyes then, and Mike saw Neal’s expression change as he realized who Mike was. At first he looked questioning and then his eyes grew wider and wider.

“Mike?” he breathed out. He let out a gush of air and his expression changed again as he started to smile. “Mike!”

Mike was just standing there. He didn’t know what to do know. He bit his lip. He still had tears in his eyes.

“Neal…” He said and then just fell forward into his brother’s chest. Neal caught him in his arm and wrapped them around Mike in a hug. At that moment when he was enclosed in his brothers arms Mike just let go and started crying. He wrapped his own arms around Neal and held on for all he was worth just as he felt Neal hugging him harder as well. They just stood like that and Mike cried for so many things, but mostly for losing their grandmother and for finally finding his way back to Neal again. Oh so many times he had secretly been dreaming about this.

Neal on his part felt shocked. He could hardly believe what was happening right now. One moment he had been painting and the next he was hugging his little brother. Mike had come, Mike was really here! He had known right away that it was him. His brother was clinging to him so hard like he never wanted to let him go again, and Neal’s chest hurt hearing Mike sobbing against him. Oh god what had he done to his brother? His sweet clever and sensitive brother. He just held him against him as Mike continued to cry. For probably two minutes they stood like that, but Mike didn’t seem to want to let go yet, and Neal wasn’t going to be

the first one to do it either. But he carefully maneuvered Mike inside the apartment without letting him go, and then closed the door behind him. He started to stroke Mike's back slowly as he shed a few tears himself. Mike was finally here.

After some time Mike started to try and get himself together and his grip loosened a bit. "I'm so sorry Mike." Neal whispered then. "I am sorry."

"No..." Mike mumbled against him and then let go. "I'm sorry too Neal." He said as they looked at each other. Mike shook his head. "I didn't know Neal. I didn't know until today."

Mike couldn't believe that he was doing this. Crying like a baby. What a great first impression he was doing. Neal probably thought he was crazy. But as he hugged Neal he felt something wet on his own shoulder, and when they broke away from each other after Neal started to apologies he saw tears in Neal's eyes too.

"What do you mean?" Neal asked him then. "What didn't you know?"

"About the postcards. I...I never read them Neal. I swear. I didn't see them until today. And I just needed...I just needed to see you."

"You...you never got them?"

Mike shook his head and a few tears broke free and travelled down his cheek. Neal looked away and didn't know what to say. Mike continued.

"I don't know why Grammy..." He let out a sob before he managed to collect himself again. "I don't know why she hid them from me."

Neal shook his head. "It's my fault Mike, it's not hers. Maybe she just wanted to protect you."

"But I don't understand why... I mean I hated you for years, I thought you just left and didn't want anything to do with me anymore. She let me believe that. Why would she do that?" Mike wiped his face and wished he could just stop crying already. Or at least had some tissues.

"Mike I don't know why she did that, you will have to ask her that. But I think I can guess." Apparently he had said the wrong thing because new tears appeared in Mike's eyes and he drew some deep breaths and started to shake his head.

"I can't." He whispered. "I can't." Neal's heart fell.

"Mike just let me explain. Don't leave." Neal begged him. But Mike just shook his head again.

"I mean...I can't ask her." He started to cry silently again and was biting his lower lip. "She died today." He then whispered and looked at Neal who's heart sank even deeper but now for another reason. Oh no.

“Oh god Mike.” He whispered and then stepped forward and engulfed Mike in another hug. “I’m so sorry. I’m so sorry.” He mumbled.

Eventually Mike was out of tears. At least for the moment. He felt exhausted. He broke free from Neal and looked at him. For real this time. He certainly looked older than the last time he had seen him. He had been a teenager then so that wasn’t that strange. Suddenly Neal handed him a tissue, and Mike smiled as a thank you. Neal went to the kitchen area to get him a glass of water and Mike looked around in the apartment. It was pretty amazing compared to his own. Through the big glass windows he would see parts of the city. An easel was put up next to the window and Mike walked over to it. The painting looked absolutely amazing, and Mike remembered seeing in at a museum once.

“Did you paint this?” he asked as he accepted the glass of water from Neal. The older brother just nodded.

“It’s really good.” Mike said and just stood there and watched it. “I remember that we saw it together at that art museum.”

Neal smiled, he had almost forgotten about Mike’s amazing memory. “You can have it, if you want.” He found himself saying. Mike smiled for the first time.

“I don’t know what to say.” Mike said, and Neal understood that he wasn’t talking about the painting.

“You don’t have to say anything. I can’t believe you are finally here. You want to sit down?” He mentioned for the table and they sat down across from each other.

Mike watched his big brother and decided that this was the best moment of his entire day.

“So, you found the postcards today?” Neal carefully asked.

“Yeah, when I cleaned out Grammy’s room.” He answered.

“Oh god, I’m so sorry about your loss Mike.” He said.

“It’s your loss too.” Mike said.

“Yeah but…”

“She wanted to talk about you, but I…didn’t.” Mike shook his head a bit. “I just didn’t want to talk about you, and she said that we would when I was ready. I think she wanted to tell me, but on my terms.”

“So all this time you thought I didn’t care about you?”

Mike nodded.

“She had no right to do that to you. I addressed them to you.”

Mike suddenly felt anger flare up at Neal's words. "Don't talk about her like that!" he said forcefully.

"Yeah you are right. Sorry. It's my fault when I left I wasn't really thinking about what I was saying, I was just so upset after finding out about our father, you know, so I just said things that I shouldn't."

"Find out what?" Mike then asked and Neal then realized that he might have spoken to soon. Mike didn't know! He should have found that out first.

"We can talk about it another time." He said. But Mike wouldn't have that.

"No way!" He said with force. "We are talking about it now. That's why you left isn't it? Isn't it, Neal?!"

Neal looked at him with wide eyes. This was much worse than he could ever had imagined.

"You didn't know why I left?" he asked in disbelief.

"No! I didn't!" Mike breathed through his teeth. "I have thought about it all this time, you just left and I had no idea why. I have been through every possible scenario."

"God." Neal rubbed his face.

"Tell me!" Mike demanded. Neal didn't know how to start. "Or was it because of me?" Mike asked and it hit Neal square in the chest.

"Of course not! I wanted to take you with me. I wish I had Mike, but you were still in school."

"Then why? Please just tell me Neal." Yep, he was not out of tears.

"Mike, you remember I was planning on applying to the police academy right?"

"Yeah, the day after your birthday."

"Yes, but Grandma Ellen told me something that day, which caused me to leave. I just had to get away Mike."

"What did she tell you?"

"Mike..."

"No just tell me. I have waited 12 years for this, I don't want to wait any longer. I deserve to know. You know, you left on your birthday, before I got home from school. I had a present for you."

Neal nodded. Mike was so right, he deserved to know. It was just that Mike's Grammy had died today, and now he was about to ruin Mike's image of their father.

“Ellen told me that our father, her son, was a dirty cop, Mike. And he killed a person. That’s why I couldn’t apply to the police academy, because they would know who I was, and who that was my father. I didn’t know how to deal with that knowledge Mike, so I did the only thing I could think of and I left.”

Mike just looked at him in silence with an expression of disbelief on his face.

“Dad killed someone.” He then stated. And Neal nodded. “I’m sorry Mike.”

Mike couldn’t look at Neal at this moment. ”Shit!” he then exclaimed. “This day!” He hid his face in his hands. “God, I don’t know what to do anymore.”

“I’m sorry.”

“No, it’s not your fault.”

“Maybe a little, some of it.”

“Like what?” Mike wanted to know.

“I told Grammy not to speak to me again.” Neal said sadly. “It was just something I said though. I was angry at her for not telling me about dad.”

“I get that.” Mike sighed. “But hey, she didn’t tell me either.”

“She didn’t want you to leave too.” Neal said.

“I wouldn’t have left her alone!” Mike countered.

Neal just nodded. He deserved that. It wasn’t like he had expected Mike to just forget the fact that Neal had left him to never return. And this whole time Mike had thought that Neal didn’t care, that wasn’t something you could get over night. When he looked at Mike noticed that he looked exhausted.

“Maybe we should talk more tomorrow?” He suggested and Mike nodded.

“I’m really tired. I should head home.” He said.

“Why don’t you crash here?” Neal suddenly was suggesting. He didn’t want Mike to leave yet. What if he decided not to come back again?

Mike looked at him.

“I know it’s a bit early and all, we have loads to talk about but you are tired and so am I. You can have the bed.” He pointed. “I’ll just take the couch. We don’t have to talk anymore. We can just sleep.”

To his luck Mike nodded his agreement. Neal found him something to sleep in and showed him the bathroom.



Mike climbed into the bed which was incredible comfortable. He would have to ask Neal how he ended up here tomorrow. He would have to ask Neal a lot of things tomorrow. But right now he just needed to sleep. He closed his eyes.

“Good night Mike.” He then heard Neal whisper in the darkness.

“Good night Neal.” He whispered back.

# Talking

Mike was sleeping on his bed! Neal could hardly believe it was true. His brother had found him. To some extent Neal could understand his grandmother for keeping the postcards from Mike, but mostly he just couldn't understand it. She must have thought that it was a good idea at the time, and maybe she had just kept on doing it after that. Maybe she was planning on telling Mike about it later, but by then Mike had started to resent Neal so much that he wouldn't listen. At the same time it felt incredible good that Mike hadn't known about the letters. He hadn't just ignored them, and refused to answer, he hadn't gotten them at all. That was sad, but better than the alternative.

Now he just wished that Mike would wake up so that they could talk. He wanted to know everything about Mike's life. He looked good and healthy. Maybe not yesterday evening, but that had probably been one of the worst nights in Mike's life. For Neal it was leaning more towards the best. Sure he was incredible sad about hearing that Grammy was dead. He had really loved her. But she had somehow, probably without realizing it spent much more attention on Mike than on him. But Mike had needed her more. After all he had only been 11 when their parents died. Neal could still remember how much Mike had cried the first night after they had died. He had wet the bed as well. Neal had been the one to take care of the soiled sheets as Grammy took Mike to her own bed. Neal had cried himself to sleep alone that night. Grammy had apologized the next day and hugged him tightly and he had cried some more then.

He looked over at Mike and smiled to himself. He should just let him sleep, right?

He placed a call to Peter's answering machine at the office, explaining that he would take a sick day. Hopefully Peter wouldn't come over and check up on him. Because he didn't really know how he would explain Mike if Peter came over now and saw a strange man sleeping in his bed. He would probably have to tell Peter about Mike now though. He thought a bit about how that conversation would go.

"By the way Peter, I have a brother." Peter would certainly be shocked. But at the same time Neal wanted Peter to meet Mike. Peter would like him for sure. He liked smart.

After a while he got up and prepared breakfast as quietly as he could, but Mike didn't stir.

Neal was sitting at the table reading when he heard movements from the bed. He looked over and saw that Mike was twisting around on the bed. He seemed to still be sleeping though. Neal jerked a bit in surprise when Mike suddenly flew up and looked around widely. He flinched a bit as well as he saw Neal.

"You okay?" Neal carefully asked.

Mike couldn't stop staring at him. He wasn't dreaming anymore. Right? However he didn't answer, barely aware he had been asked a question.

"Nightmare?" Neal asked then, and he just nodded. Neal looked at him with sympathy.

“What time is it?” He asked instead and Neal answered.

“Shit...” Mike groaned and fell back against the bed. “Harvey is going to kill me.” He mumbled. But he couldn’t go to work. Besides Harvey had told him to go home yesterday. He would deal with work later. He got out of bed and sat down in front of Neal. They looked at each other.

“I can’t believe you are here.” Neal said.

“Me neither.” Mike said.

A silence spread between them. “So...” Neal eventually started. “I made breakfast. Let’s eat outside.” He said, and they did.

“I can’t believe you live here! This place is amazing.” Mike exclaimed after admiring the view. “Who was that lady that let me in last night?”

“That’s June, she is my landlady.”

“She seemed nice.”

“She is amazing.”

Mike sat down. “So, tell me about yourself! I only know what I read at the postcards. You seem to have had a good life though.”

“Yeah, it’s been okay.” Neal agreed. He wasn’t sure if Mike had made the connections yet.

“Okay! You have been to Europe and South America, Asia! I have barely left the New York area.”

Neal smiled at him. This was the Mike he remembered from before. Excited and happy. “You should go sometimes.” Was all he said. Mike looked closely at him. He could see that Neal was hesitant about something. He straightened up and drank his coffee, which tasted amazing.

“So, what happened four years ago?” He asked and saw that Neal tensed a bit. “You stopped writing four years ago.” He searched his memory. “You wrote that honest versions of our father were looking for you. I didn’t know what that meant.” He stopped, looked at Neal and raised his eyebrows. “The police?”

Neal nodded once. Here it comes. “Well, actually it was the FBI.”

“What?”

“Look Mike, after I left I started making some different choices, which ultimately led me to a situation where the FBI thought of me as an interesting person.”

“You mean you committed crimes?” Mike asked.

“Allegedly.” Neal nodded.

“Hmm... I bet the FBI didn’t think so. Did you go to prison?”

“Yes I did Mike.”

“For four years?”

“Yes.”

“Wow...” Mike watched him closely. “Are you okay?” He then asked.

Neal just smiled at him. Also the Mike he remembered. “Yes I’m fine. But I escaped though and I would have gotten four more years. Or I did get them.”

“What? You escaped prison!? Are you crazy? Are you on the run now?”

“No, I’m on a work release. I work for the FBI now.”

“What?”

Neal lifted up his leg and pulled his pant leg up and showed Mike the anklet. He leaned forward and examined it closely. “I wear this at all times, and I have a two mile radius.”

“Oh.” Mike poked a bit at the anklet. “Isn’t uncomfortable?”

“Yeah, a bit. But it beats prison.”

“I bet.” Mike contemplated this for a second. His brother had been to prison for committing crimes, it was hard to take in. Sure Neal had always had a tendency for breaking the rules, if not at least bend them, which had made him and Grammy clash sometimes.

“Did you say that you work for the FBI now?”

“Yeah, I work at the White collar division, I help them solve cases.”

“Cool.”

“Yeah I guess it is pretty cool.” Neal smiled. It seemed like Mike just accepted the whole thing. “How about you Mike, I know nothing about you.” He said. It was true. Mike had only been a boy the last time he saw him, but the person sitting in front of him was a man.

Mike seemed to hesitate, which he also did. He suddenly didn’t feel comfortable with telling Neal about his life and the fact that he was a fraud. When they were younger Neal had always been going on about how smart he was and that he would do great later in life. He hadn’t really done that.

“I work at a law firm.” He said lamely.

“Oh, you do! That’s great Mike. So you are a lawyer then?” Neal didn’t understand Mike’s expression. He could tell that something was bothering Mike. He wasn’t looking at him. He

couldn't understand why, because to Neal it sounded excellent. His brother was a lawyer.

"I am an associate and I work for a guy named Harvey Spector." He said.

"That's really great Mike. I knew you would succeed."

Mike didn't know what to say. It felt wrong to not tell Neal the truth, but on the other hand Neal sounded so happy so he didn't want to disappoint him. He wanted Neal to be as proud of him as he sounded right now. He shrugged his shoulders.

Neal looked questioningly at his brother. Something was up. "So what have you been doing all these years? Where did you study?" He asked.

Mike decided then. He wasn't going to lie to his own brother. All the people he already was lying to was enough.

"I didn't." He said.

"What? Then how...?" Neal paused and looked at him.

"I'm working without a law degree. Apparently something runs in our family."

Neal smirked. "Allegedly."

Mike smiled back. "Sure." He then proceeded with telling Neal the whole story about how he got kicked out of college, what happened after that, and then how he got to be employed at Pearson Hardman.

"That's a pretty amazing story." Neal said when he was done. It really was, Neal thought. He was saddened by the undertones of Mike's story. He hadn't had it easy. Neal also didn't feel good about the fact that Mike had gotten to be the one responsible to take care of their grandmother. He just wished that things would have turned out differently. But at least things were about to change now.

"Not better than yours." Mike protested to Neal's claim. Mike wanted to know more about Neal's adventures and he was happy to tell them. The subject moved over to Kate after that, and to Peter and what happened when he got caught.

"I'm so sorry." Mike said when he was told about Kate's fate. "You must really miss her."

"I do. You must miss Grandma Ellen."

Mike paled at that and closed his eyes. "Oh god. I had almost forgotten. How could I? It was only yesterday. I can't believe she is gone."

Neal could see that he got something empty in his eyes. Mike was right, it had only been a day. So much must be going on in Mike's head right now.

"I...I should go." Mike said. "I have to prepare for the funeral and everything."

“Let me help you.” Neal said. It was the least he could do for Ellen. He could stand by Mike now. He regretted deeply that he hadn’t been able to talk to her one more time.

“You’d do that?” Mike interrupted Neal’s thoughts.

“Of course.”

Unfortunately it turned out that Neal couldn’t help that much since Mike’s apartment and the funeral home was outside his radius. The biggest problem however was that so was the church. Neal felt crushed when Mike asked him about it.

“But you will be able to make it to the ceremony, right?”

“It’s is also outside my radius. I’m so sorry Mike...”

“So what are you saying?” Mike suddenly felt angry. “After all this time you won’t even go to her funeral? If you want to help me. Be there!”

“Mike I wish I could...”

“The one thing I really could use your support with? You left! You were gone for years and years when I needed you, and now you are not going to do this either?! She is your grandmother too!”

Neal took a few steps back. “Mike... I’m sorry.”

“I don’t want your apologies. They are of no use to me.”

“Don’t you think I want to be there? Of course I do! I loved her. It kills me that I wasn’t able to see her again.”

Mike wiped his face clear of the angry tears that had appeared without his permission. He tried to calm himself down.

“Yeah. Sure. Sorry.”

“I’ll be there.” Neal found himself saying.

“How?” Mike glanced down at Neal’s leg.

“I’ll find a way. I’ll come. I’ll be there.”

Mike smiled and believed him.

They hugged each other when Mike had to leave and made promises about talking soon. Mike was walking down the stairs feeling lighter at heart than in a long time, even though the task he was now set up to do.

Neal watched Mike leave with a smile on his face. He just couldn’t believe this when he closed the door. Mike was in his life again. He had family, real family that wanted him. Mike

wanted him in his life, said he needed him. It was something Neal hadn't had in a long time. He had longed for it and had sort of found it in Peter. But that wasn't the same thing. Peter always had to make some stupid remark about him being a criminal or something. To that Neal would reply with a joke of his own even though he wished that Peter would just stop. He knew that Peter cared for him, things were just a bit complicated.

He wondered what Peter would think of all this. If he found out he would probably be happy for him that he had a brother and that they were in touch again. He wasn't sure about how Peter would feel about the fact that Neal hadn't told him about Mike, and also what he would think about the fact that Neal had abandoned his family. Neal was ashamed of it. He didn't want to reveal that part about himself for anyone, because it was stuck deep in him. The guilt. Mike's words said in anger confirmed them. Mike had really thought he had abandoned them, him. That Neal didn't want anything to do with him anymore. He could understand Ellen to some extent for keeping the postcards from Mike, but on the other hand he couldn't help but feel angry at her for doing that. But it was all in the past now, and Ellen was dead. He was going to go to her funeral with Mike. Nothing could stop him from that.

Now the problem was how to get there without getting in too much trouble. Suddenly he had gotten a lot more motivated to keep himself out of trouble. Mike, of course was the reason. He couldn't get himself thrown back into prison now or run for that matter. He had to be there for Mike now. He wanted that more than anything. He hadn't really had that before. A person that wanted him there. He wasn't sure of course that Mike really needed him that much, after all Mike had basically been on his own for a long time now. Hopefully he wanted to get to know Neal though. Because Neal wanted nothing more than getting to know his younger brother again.

He thought about that he probably would have to tell Peter about Mike, at this moment he didn't see any other way to get permission to go to the funeral. But he would try to get to go in some other way. He wasn't sure if he wanted to let Peter know about Mike at this moment. What if Peter started to look into Mike and found out about his secret? After all it was not really legal to practice law without a real degree. If Peter found out Mike could get in trouble. He couldn't be the cause of that.

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Mike managed to take care of all the necessary tasks for the funeral pretty quickly. It was hard and sometimes he just felt like he wanted to burst into tears.

His mind was a mess. At the same time as he missed his grandma like crazy he couldn't stop thinking about Neal and the fact that he had found him. They had been texting some. He kept Neal in the loop about the funeral and Neal offered his support the best he could. Mike was so grateful and something in him lifted up every time his phone beeped.

To keep himself distracted he went to work. It didn't go so well. He was restless and frustrated and didn't really wanted to talk to people, but he didn't want to be alone at home either. In the end he snapped at Rachel and yelled at Harvey which got him sent him home. Mike couldn't help but feel disappointed at Harvey, he just sent him home didn't ask what was wrong or anything. He kind of wished he would, but that didn't happen.

The funeral was two days later. Rachel was came and got him in the morning. He almost overslept. That would have been terrible. When he got to the church he looked around for Neal but couldn't see him. Where was he? He had said that he would be there. He had really believed that he would come. He felt tears threaten in his eyes. He looked at his phone but had no texts. He gripped it hard in his hand. Neal knew it was now, why wasn't he here then? Mike didn't want to call him and ask. But he really wanted Neal there. It all would be so much easier then. He also wanted Neal there for Grammy's sake. She would really have liked it if the two of them were there. After all she had wanted to tell Mike about Neal. He was sure about that. But he had been stupid and stubborn and had refused. Mike just wanted someone there for him as well. Sure Rachel was there, but that was basically all.

Rachel stroked his back and tried to encourage him. She wanted him to give a speech, but he wanted to wait for Neal. He could still show up! It was set to start in a few minutes.

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Neal had tried. He had brought it up with Peter already the next day after he had seen Mike, just casually asking if he could take a trip outside his radius for about an hour. Peter just glanced up at him for a moment before he looked back at the papers in front of him.

After Mike had texted him the time and date for the funeral he had tried again.

"Peter, can I ask you something?" He started and Peter looked at him. They were on their way back to the office in the car.

"Sure."

"I have an errand to run outside my radius. It's really important. You can have someone escort me or something, it will only take an hour or so."

"This again Neal. I thought you were kidding before. Of course I can't approve that."

Neal did his best not to flinch. He had just said no without hesitation. "It's nothing illegal Peter. I promise."

"Oh you do, do you. Your radius is there for a reason Neal."

"Just as there is a reason I need to go outside it. I would really appreciate it you did this for me Peter." He tried.

"I don't think so Neal. That's the end of this conversation. Come on, what do you think about the interview today?"

Neal just turned away from him. Peter didn't even ask him why he needed to leave his radius. He would try again later. He needed a new approach. He would get Peter to let him go in one way or the other. The truth was going to be his last option.

"Peter, if I can find someone to take me, will you let me leave?" He asked a while later.

"Neal, what's this about? I have already said no."



“Yeah you have! Without given me a change to explain.”

“Well, please do that then.”

Neal glared at him. “It’s for a funeral.” He reluctantly said.

“Yeah, right.” Peter didn’t believe him at all.

“It is!”

“Neal, if it is one of your criminal friends...”

“It’s not!”

“Neal, this is low even for you. I don’t know what games you are playing here, but I can’t just let you out of your radius just like that.”

“Then you can come with me. You can wait outside.”

“I have better things to do than sit in my car while you go and do something shady.”

“I told you it’s a funeral.”

Peter shook his head at him. “Neal the answer is no. We are done here.”

Neal rolled his eyes in anger and went for the door. Damn Peter.

“Neal, don’t you try anything. I’m keeping my eyes on you.”

Neal closed the door with force, ignoring the look from a passing agent. He couldn’t believe Peter. He had told him that he needed to go for a funeral, but he didn’t care. He needed to cool down a bit before he tried again. He had decided that he needed Peter’s permission. He wasn’t going to cut his anklet. It would be bad. Now he couldn’t exactly slip out somehow either, because he had told Peter the time he needed to go. He didn’t get another change that day to ask Peter, or more like beg Peter now.

Mike had texted him and asked if he really was coming, and he had answered that yes, of course he would. How could he answer anything different? He might have to go with truth now. The funeral was today. This was it, he thought when he knocked on Peter’s door. Peter nodded at him and he stepped in and sat down in front of the older man who had his fate in his hands.

“You got something?” He asked.

“No I don’t.” he hurried to continue before Peter would start complaining. “It’s something else.”

“Let me guess.” Peter sighed. “You have a secret meeting that you absolutely need to go to today?”

“Yes I do. I made someone a promise to be there.”

“It looks like you will break that promise.” Peter looked down again.

“No! I’m not!” Neal almost yelled, before he got himself under control. “I can’t break that promise Peter.” He said calmer. “It’s my grandmother’s funeral.” He then said.

“Come on Neal, you don’t have a grandmother.”

“Not anymore I don’t.”

Peter looked at him now and for a moment Neal was sure that he believed him.

“Neal, what’s gotten into you?”

“The funeral will take about an hour, the church is outside my radius. Peter, this is really important to me. I’m telling you the truth right now.”

They locked eyes for a moment. Neal swallowed hard. What if Peter didn’t believe him? He needed to leave pretty soon, and he wanted to change before the funeral. He thought about how Mike had looked at him when he had told him that he was coming. He got cold inside at the thought of not coming. He couldn’t let that happen.

“Neal, I have told you already. I’m not going to approve this.” Peter stayed then, and Neal felt tears threaten. No, no, no.

“I’m serious Peter. I need to go.” He tried.

“Neal. I have already said no. If you try to con your way to that meeting I’ll throw you back...”

“I promised my brother.” He then said. Whatever. This had not been the plan at all, but here he was. This was his last option. The truth. “I need to go Peter.” He repeated. Peter stared at him with a slightly open mouth.

“Your brother?”

Neal nodded.

“You have a brother now?”

Neal nodded again.

“You have a secret brother that you never have mentioned before, like your supposed grandmother.

“I do.”

“You realize how this sounds right?”

“It’s the truth, Peter. I’m not lying to you about this.”

“You have a brother and a grandmother.”

“I have a brother, our grandmother raised him and she died a few days ago. Her funeral is today and I told Mike that I would be there with him.”

“Mike.” Peter was still staring at him, as if he tried to decide what to think. Neal sighed. He had to tell Peter everything. After all Peter cared for him, right?

“I left them after I turned 18. It was the last time I saw them.” He couldn’t look at Peter anymore. “I was young and I felt like I couldn’t stay anymore. Mike spent all this time thinking that I wanted nothing to do with him. I sent him postcards Peter, a lot of them, sometimes every week. But he didn’t receive them. But when he cleaned out our grandmother’s things he found them. He came to see me.”

Peter’s eyes narrowed. “Your sick day?” He asked and Neal nodded.

“I need to be there for him. He is all alone now. I can’t let him...” He had tears in his eyes now. He stopped talking when Peter held up a hand.

“When does it start?”

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Mike’s leg was bouncing up and down. He couldn’t stop. He didn’t take his eyes from the door. Any time now. He had ignored the looks the priest had given him. He still thought Neal would come. He would. He had said so.

And then! The door carefully opened and Neal was there. Mike got up from his chair, rushed over and just hugged Neal, surprising him, but he returned the hug of course.

Peter had been a bit taken back in the car on their way over to the church.

“I can’t believe you have a brother.” He would say. “I would like to meet him, this brother of yours.”

Neal managed to convince him to wait with that. “You would like him though. He is smart.”

“Well, if he is anything like you...”

Peter agreed to wait in the car. Neal had only gotten a few steps inside then Mike was there and hugging him tight. “Thank you.” He whispered.

It was a nice funeral and Mike held his speech. Neal met his eyes and smiled sadly. It was strange for Neal to walk up to the coffin and say his goodbyes to their grandmother. But he had already decided to forgive her. She must have had her reasons.

Mike was also satisfied with the service. Grammy would have liked it.

Neal walked up to him after he had said goodbye to Rachel. She had to leave for the office.

“You okay?” Neal asked and Mike just shrugged his shoulders. He didn’t know. How was he supposed to be now?

“You want to come over to my place tonight?” Neal asked then. “I kind of have to go.”

“Yeah, okay. I can do that.” Mike agreed. “You have to work? How did you manage to get here anyway?”

“That’s why I have to go. Peter is waiting in the car outside for me.”

“He is here?”

“Yeah. I told him about you. He kind of thought I had something going on, so I had to tell him.”

Mike nodded. “Tell him thanks from me.” He smiled.

They said goodbye after that, and Neal went back to Peter.

“How did it go?” Peter asked.

“It was nice. Mike says thank you.”

Peter smiled a little and nodded. “I’m sorry for your loss Neal.” He said. “I didn’t tell you that before.”

“Thank you Peter.”

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# Getting to know

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Mike and Neal met up at a bar a few days after the funeral. Mike looked tired with dark circles around his eyes.

“Are you okay?” Neal asked him as they sat down ordering. Mike nodded.

“I haven’t had a lot of sleep. Things have been kind of...” he paused looking for the right word “much.”

He finished. Neal could understand him. It seemed like Mike didn’t really want to elaborate so they just talked about other things. They spoke about the past and the present and to Mike it just felt right. Neal was easy to talk to and a great listener, he had a way of making the impression of that he was really giving you all of his attention and that felt good.

That was true from Neal’s part, he wanted to soak in so much as possible about Mike. He really wanted to get to know him. And this felt as the first step of building a relationship again. He couldn’t believe they had spent all those years apart. He also wondered what his life would have looked like if Mike had been a part of it during those year. Certainly different. That was for sure.

But here they were now, making up for lost time. They started to meet up more often after that night. Sometimes they just met up for a drink, sometimes they had dinner. Sometimes Mike came over to Neal’s place. Mike also got to meet Mozzie and the two of them instantly found each other. They started a quote war which lasted an entire evening until Neal got tired of the two of them and begged them to stop.

“What? I can’t help it! They just keep coming to me.” Mike defended himself.

“Oh come on, the both of you have amazing memories, this can go on forever.”

“Fine.” Mike muttered, but then turned to Mozzie and whispered. “What’s with him?”

”No good man has a good enough memory to be a successful liar.” Mozzie said.

“Oh shut up. That’s easy by the way. Abraham Lincoln.”

“Even I knew that.” Neal muttered. They did stop then and Mozzie took his leave. Mike just sat on the couch staring out into space with a small smile on his face.

“Everything okay with you?” Neal asked him when he didn’t move in like a minute.

Mike shook his head. ”Yeah, I’m just glad we are doing this.” He said honestly. “I don’t feel so alone now as I thought I would after Grammy died.”

“I don’t feel as alone either.” Neal confessed.

“I missed you.” Mike simply said.

“I missed you too.”

Mike slept on Neal’s couch that night.

-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-

Mike couldn’t help but feel distracted at work after finding out about Neal. It was a lot, Grammy dying and then getting to see His long lost brother again. A lot was going on at work as well and Harvey was probably pissed at him for acting the way he did now. But he just couldn’t help it. Harvey didn’t say anything however and Mike was grateful for that. But he knew of course that Harvey probably wanted to yell at him most of the time. But he was being nice and Mike liked that.

He wanted to tell Harvey about Neal. He really wanted to. It would be great if he knew. He also wanted Harvey to meet Neal. He would most certainly like him, Mike was sure of it. He was just a bit nervous about what Harvey might think about Neal’s past. What if he didn’t approve of that, and what if he would think that Neal was a bad influence on Mike like Trevor had been? Mike couldn’t risk that, he didn’t think he would be able to handle the disappointment that would cause him. Not now. Not now when he just had found Neal again. But soon he was going to tell Harvey. He just had too.

Neal on the other hand had it different. It was Peter who went on about that he wanted to meet his this mysterious brother of Neal’s. Neal had promised him that he would get to meet him soon. He hadn’t brought it up with Mike yet, even though he had practically told Mike everything about Peter by now. Mike had said that he sounded pretty amazing, and had even mentioned on one occasion that he wanted to meet Peter.

He and Peter were busy now though. They were working on a different case, to put it mildly. It was the weirdest one so far. It involved stolen chemicals that happen to be some important ingredients that could be used to make pharmaceutical drugs. They had found forged documents that pointed to a company with multiple storage facilities. So far they didn’t have much to go on. The weird things were that some of the employees of the company had disappeared without a trace. Or that wasn’t exactly true. There was one trace. They had found two sets of handprints on the scene, one set from the missing employees and then a set that were from a child. And here was the weird part, it looked like the handprints was from the same individual. But neither of the two missing people had had kids. One was a twenty four year old lab assistant and the other was a forty year old women. They didn’t know what to think about it at all.

One night they had been brainstorming ideas but it only ended up with Neal spewing out thoughts the one crazier than the next until Peter sent them all home. But something wouldn’t leave Neal’s mind. He couldn’t understand what the child had been doing in the lab. Why would they bring a kid to a lab full of dangerous chemicals? Or was there another explanation?

He brought the idea up with Peter the next morning about him staking the lab out, however Peter thought it a waste of time for multiple reasons that he explained very detailed. Neal thought he was wrong. He told Peter so.

“Neal, just leave it alone. You will not go there. We are going to go with the money trail Jones found.”

“But Peter...”

“No Neal.”

“If you just let me go and check it out. I can pose as an inspector from...”

“The answer is no. No posing as anyone.”

“Yeah okay.” Neal sighed and they went to the conference room to meet the rest of the team. During the meeting he amused himself with texting Mike and complain a bit about Peter even when he saw Peter disapproving glares.

The brothers decided to meet up early for breakfast the next morning.

Neal spent the night outside the lab the thought that was the most suspicious. Something was up here. He had to take a look inside. He knew Peter wouldn't approve of what he was doing, but if Neal found something he wouldn't complain. He had noticed that the lab was the least guarded in the morning. That was when he was going to try. He would have time before breakfast with Mike.

-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-

Mike waited for almost thirty minutes for Neal at the coffee house. He texted after ten minutes and called after fifteen. Neal didn't answer and Mike couldn't help but start to worry. Why wasn't he answering now when they had decided to meet up? Was something wrong? Neal had mentioned the case that he was working on and had bounced his ideas with Mike. Mike thought Neal's line of work sounded pretty exciting so he didn't mind talking about it at all. He thought Neal's idea sounded pretty reasonable, but now he didn't know what to think, because Neal wasn't here.

He called again and looked at his watch. He was already late for work. He had to go if he wanted to be on time. But the thing was that he didn't know if Neal was okay. He needed to know that he was first before he went to work. He could take a yelling from Harvey, it would be worth it. He was going to give Neal a piece of his mind as well. This wasn't okay.

He went over to Neal's place but found it empty. He talked shorty with June and she said that she hadn't seen Neal this morning but he should talk to Peter. He would know. Peter. Mike had never met him before and it didn't really feel right to meet him this way. But it couldn't be helped. He had this strange feeling in his stomach and Neal still didn't answer his cellphone.

It was easier than he thought to get up to the floor where Neal said he and Peter worked. He just said that he had a meeting with Peter Burke and Neal Caffrey. He argued that he was late and that they could just call them and ask about him if they didn't believe him. He was let up after that. He thought of how Neal must have felt when he stepped off this elevator his first day on his work release. It was a bit intimidating in some way.

He stopped for a second in front of what must be Neal's desk. He couldn't see any signs of him being at the office. Mike would be pretty pissed if Neal in fact was here. Now, where to find Peter Burke. He asked an agent that worked close to Neal's desk and he pointed at an office up the stairs. There was a man there and Mike understood that this was Peter Burke. He went straight over and knocked on the door, even though it was open.

Peter Burke looked up at him with a frown. He looked just like he was about to say something when Mike knocked, but he stopped himself when he saw Mike. Mike recognized Peter from Neal's description of him.

"Yes, how can I help you?" He asked and put down the file he was holding and stood up.

Mike hesitated for a moment. He wasn't sure if he wanted to disclose for Peter who he was.

"I was just looking for Neal Caffrey." He said eventually. Peter observed him and Mike couldn't help but squirm a bit under his gaze. Peter mentioned for the chair in front of his desk.

"Why don't you sit down for a bit?" He suggested.

Mike declined. "I'm just looking for Neal." He said.

"Neal isn't in yet. You must be Mike. Neal's brother." Peter smiled at him and Mike was made. Peter was intelligent. Either that or Neal didn't get many visitors.

But he nodded and stepped forward and shook Peter's outstretched hand.

"Mike Ross." He said. "Nice to meet you."

Peter nodded. "Nice to meet Neal's brother as well. You two don't look much like each other."

Mike shrugged a bit. "He is more like our dad and I'm more like our mum was."

Peter nodded. "I understand that you just recently came into contact again."

"Yeah." Mike said. He didn't know exactly how much Peter knew about their situation. Peter looked a bit disappointed when Mike didn't continued confirming Mike's suspicion that he didn't knew much at all.

"Do you know where Neal is then?" He asked instead. "We were supposed to have breakfast this morning."

"Actually I don't know where Neal is. But he is late."



“How can you not know?” Mike muttered. “He is your responsibility right?”

“Of course he is. But I don’t keep tabs on him at all times.”

“But you could if you wanted too, right?”

“True.”

“Do you do that a lot? Check up on him?”

“As often as I think is necessary.”

“But you don’t know where he is now?”

“Neal is always up to something, but at this moment I don’t know what it is.”

“But you could look it up right?”

“Yes I could.”

“I was supposed to meet him this morning, but he didn’t show up and he isn’t answering his phone.”

Peter frowned a bit and then turned to his computer and Mike watched him type something. A wrinkle appeared on Peter’s forehead.

“Where is he?” Mike asked and leaned forward and got a glimpse of the screen that showed a map with a red dot in the middle of it.

When Peter noticed that he looked he clicked in the corner and the map disappeared.

“I’ll look in to it and let you know when he turns up.”

Mike couldn’t help but roll his eyes a bit. Peter was giving just the answer he expected. He had a feeling that he wouldn’t get any clues from Peter about where Neal was. At least he didn’t seem that worried.

Peter watched the younger man in front of him closely. Somehow he thought he could see some similarities between the brothers. Maybe not by look but the behavior and attitude. He knew as soon as he saw Mike by the door that this kid was Neal’s brother. Finally he got to meet him. He wanted to ask Mike a bunch of question but he didn’t think Neal would appreciate that so much. He was just about to ask Mike his first question anyway when the younger man stood up again.

“It was nice to meet you, Peter. I’ve heard so much about you” He said and smiled. Apparently they were on a first name basis already. “I have to go.” And with that Mike disappeared just as fast as he had arrived.

Mike needed to find a map. If he could find one, he would find Neal. He had the map on Peter’s computer screen memorized in his head now, he hadn’t been able to see any street

names but knew how the area looked like.

After some investigation on his phone map app, he found it. It wasn't far from here so Mike started walking. Maybe Neal would think he was crazy, but so be it. He just couldn't shake this feeling he had.

Peter watched as Mike headed down the stairs and past Neal's desk. He could feel a twinge of worry as he dialed Neal's number. It got to voicemail. That was strange. It wasn't often that Neal wouldn't answer him. Maybe Mike had been on to something. Peter had been able to detect worry in Mike's voice. He would wait for a bit and then give Neal another call, if he didn't answer by then he would go and look it up. Maybe Neal was in some sort of trouble. It wouldn't surprise him. He didn't like the address Neal currently was at. What the hell was he doing there? Peter was expecting a pretty good explanation when Neal returned. That better be soon too. He would give Neal another half an hour. It was always a bit amusing to catch Neal in the act of doing something he knew that Peter wouldn't approve of. Somehow Neal always had a good explanation for everything it would be interesting to see what he would come up with this time.

-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-

Mike looked up at the building in front of him. It seemed to be a medical facility of some sort. He put his phone on silent and stuffed it in his pocket. He had received a call from Harvey earlier but had declined it. He would have some explaining to do later he was sure of that.

Something strange was going on here. For one the facility looked closed even though it now was pretty late in the morning. Was Neal really in there? It was the right place, he was sure of it so he stepped forward towards the entrance. He felt the door and wasn't that surprised to find it locked. He looked around and saw a side door not far away. He walked over to it and glanced around him. The street was pretty much empty. He felt the door handle and then stumbled back in surprise as the door opened. For a moment he just stood there staring, but then looked closer at the door. He found that someone had put a piece of tape so that the door wouldn't lock. That if anything was a sign to Mike that Neal in fact was here. Then he walked inside, trying to as quietly as possible close the door behind him. He stood in a hallway with plain white doors on both sides. His heart was beating hard in his chest. What was he doing here? He was basically trespassing right now.

The place was empty though. Where was Neal? He didn't dare to call out for him because you never knew. That's when he heard something. It sounded like someone was doing dishes. As Mike came closer he noticed a change in the air. It felt thicker and he could detect some sort of chemical smell. He quelled his own urge to cough just as he heard someone else do it. Someone was in the building after all. He had to see.

Mike rounded a corner and as the smell got worse he looked into what looked like a laboratory. Neal was there! He was with his back against Mike fumbling with some sort of machine that seemed to be leaking some sort of smoke. He was only working with one hand as he had the other over his mouth and nose. He was coughing almost violently.

“Neal!” Mike called out and rushed towards him. Something told him that this was bad. Neal jerked in surprise at the sound of Mike’s voice. He turned against him momentarily forgetting all about the vent he was trying so hard to close. What was Mike doing here? He couldn’t be here!

”No, you have to leave! Mike, leave!” He had trouble talking from how much he was coughing. “You can’t be here.”

“Neal, what are you doing?” Mike coughed back. “Let’s go!”

Neal looked back at the machine. This was bad. When he arrived at the lab he had found it kind of difficult to get in to the facility, but managed. He had searched his way through the offices and had found some disturbing documents. He had drawn the conclusion that it was connected to this equipment and reported malfunctions of it. He had went to check it out and had some trouble with unlocking that door as well. He had decided to turn it off or sabotage it somehow so that it couldn’t be used anymore. But as he worked with it something broke and gas started to seep out. It was hard to breath and he couldn’t stop coughing. He had almost panicked when it happened and was about to leave, but just couldn’t leave it like that. Someone could get hurt. He had to turn it off!

But now Mike was here and Mike was breathing in the gas just like he was. They had to leave. It was just that he had some trouble with getting his limbs to move in the direction he wanted them too. His head felt heavy. He pointed towards the door and Mike nodded.

“Come on!” He yelled and grabbed Neal’s arm. Neal stumbled after him. Suddenly his feet didn’t cooperate at all. He was coughing so much that he couldn’t breathe right. His vision was shifting. But they had to get out! He started to push against Mike because he had stopped in front of Neal and was saying things. Mike grabbed his shoulders just as Neal felt his legs start to give out and he started to sink towards the floor just to be stopped by Mike. He felt Mike start to drag him under his arm pits. He tried to kick with his legs to help.

Mike was yelling at him. Neal tried to stay conscious but his eyes slipped close. He forced them open, but they closed on their own and his head lolled forward as he lost the fight.

-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-

## Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the long wait. The next chapter will probably come quicker. This first chapters and maybe the next will be kind of the introduction to the story I guess. It will change some after that :) I hope you will like it

## The accident

Mike could feel the moment Neal passed out from the way his body became limp. He knew they were in trouble then because he felt kind of lightheaded himself. He had no idea what kind of substance he was currently inhaling, but it was bad enough to cause Neal to pass out and Mike couldn't stop coughing.

They had to get out. He kept dragging Neal towards the door, they were close now. He had to lean against a wall for a while, because other way he was pretty sure he would faint. Neal's head was resting his chest. Mike made a last effort of dragging Neal outside into the hall way where he laid him down and sank down beside him. He shook Neal's shoulder but he didn't wake. Smoke was still coming out form the room which meant they still were inhaling it. He should close it.

He realized that they needed help. No one knew they were here and if he passed out they might not be found for hours or maybe days. He had to call someone, but who? His first thought was Harvey. He would help. But he wasn't sure if he would be able to explain what had happened how dire their situation was. He fumbled with his phone and pushed with shaking fingers the number for Peter Burke, his brother's handler. He knew where they were and he would come and help too. Mike was pretty sure of it. Good thing he got a glance at Neal's phone once when Peter called.

SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-

Peter glanced at his phone. He didn't recognize the number but answered anyway.

"Peter..." a voice he also didn't recognize slurred at the other end. "We need help...there, there is this gas.."

"Gas? What are you talking about? Who is this?"

"M-Mike.. Neal's brother. Neal's passed out, I can't wake him. We need help." Mike was saying and Peter's heart jumped in his chest.

"What are you talking about? What happened?"

As he asked he got up from his desk and gathered his things and ran down the stairs. He could hear Mike coughing on the other end. He didn't like what he was saying next at all.

"There is some... some sort of gas. Are you coming? I don't think I...I can get us away." Mike's speech was interrupted from coughing.

"Yes, help is coming Mike. But I need you to tell me where you are."

"That lab... on the map. I saw your computer."

"What? How did you? Yeah, Okay I know where you are. Sit tight Mike and we will be there soon."

Peter had already mentioned for Jones and Diana to follow him and they were all in the elevator now, his younger colleagues with confused looks on their faces.

"Oh okay, that's good."

Peter got a feeling for what was about to happen. "Mike I need you to stay on the line." He urged. But Mike had obviously other plans.

"But...but you are coming right? I need to...I need to close it..." he mumbled.

"No Mike you need to stay with me on the line." But it was to no avail because Mike had already hung up on him. "Damnit!"

"What's going on?" Jones asked.

"It's Neal. He has gotten himself in some kind of trouble. That was his brother calling. He said Neal is unconscious and he can't wake him."

"Wait? His what?"

That's when Peter remembered that the rest of his team didn't know about Mike. He briefly explained much to Jones and Diana's astonishment.

"Wow that's big news. I had no idea." Jones said. "And now they are in trouble?"

"Yeah. Mike was talking about some gas. We better have paramedics ready."

Peter couldn't help but both worry and feeling angry at Neal. Of course something like this would happen. And now Mike had been dragged into it as well. But it was not the time to be dwelling on Neal's mistakes and what had caused him to go to this place, now was the time to make sure that the brothers were okay.

When they arrived at the scene they quickly found the open door and went inside.

"Spread out and be careful." Peter told his colleagues and took the lead. He just turned down a hallway when he saw something laying in the ground in front of him.

"Here! They are over here!" He yelled and started running as he heard Jones coming up behind him.

The Two bodies belonging to Neal and Mike met his sight as he got closer. Neal was laying passed out on his back on the floor, Mike was farther away, close to a door. Peter could feel something strange in the air coming from the room. He bent down and shook Neal a bit. His head just lolled to the side but he let out a faint grunt. Peter looked over towards Mike. He looked...still. Peter patted Neal's chest and called out to Jones and Diana.

"Check on him." He headed over to Mike and quickly turned him over on his back.

"Oh no, oh no, oh no." Peter breathed as he felt Mike's neck with one hand and over his mouth with the other. "He is not breathing."

He immediately felt his own pulse go up as he prepared Mike to start giving him CPR. This could not be happening!

"The ambulance should be here any minute Peter." Jones said behind him as Peter started compressions on Mike's too still chest.

"Come on!" He exclaimed and then quickly tipped Mike's head back and enclosed Mike's mouth with his own and then breathed for him. Still nothing! Compressions again. He felt the ribs bending underneath his hands and felt sick. Why was nothing happening?

Relief rushed through him a moment later when Mike suddenly twitched below him and made a hissing sound as he started to breathe again.

"Thank god." Peter panted. "Just breathe kid. Just breathe, you will be fine." He sat where he was next to Mike and kept a hand on his chest to make sure it was rising and falling. Peter himself was panting. He nodded towards Diana who was next to Neal.

"He good?"

"Yeah he is just unconscious. Breathing is fine." She told him. "You did good boss." She indicated towards Mike.

Peter nodded again and looked down on Mike's pale face. This could have ended very badly, but he thought the kid looked a little better now than when they first arrived. He looked around and noticed that Jones had closed the door next to him.

"What the hell is going on here?"

His question didn't get answered and the paramedics were there the next minute. A second ambulance was called as the first one left with Mike since he was in worse condition. By the time the next car arrived Peter had had time to give his orders to Jones and Diana so he could go with Neal. There was a lot to do now, but his agents could handle it just fine. Someone had to go with Neal. Tracking anklet and all.

The ambulance ride went smoothly since Neal didn't wake up. The paramedic in the back with Peter didn't seem that worried. Peter was left in the waiting area of the hospital after Neal was taken to be examined. He tried to get some news about Mike but was just told that he had to wait.

He made some calls after that, the first one being to Diana to make sure that everything was going okay on the case. She confirmed that it did, they were waiting for correctly equipped technicians to come and take samples from the lab, and they had it sealed off for now. The next call he made was to Hughes to update him. He didn't sound happy. The third call went to Elisabeth. She was immediately worried when he told her he was at the hospital.

"It's not me El, it's Neal. And his brother." He told her.

“Oh no. What happened? Are they alright? Of course not you are at the hospital.”

“I don't know anything yet. They were both breathing the last I knew.”

“Breathing? Oh god. What are you talking about?”

“Neal did something he shouldn't El and this time he got his brother hurt and dragged into it as well.”

“Oh.” Was all El said and then demanded Peter to tell her what happened.

“Don't be too hard on Neal honey.” He told him before they hang up. “He will blame himself as it is.”

She was probably right. Neal would blame himself and Peter feared his reaction if something were to happen with Mike as a result of this. But on the other hand he couldn't help but feel angry at Neal for going to the lab by himself like that.

He thought that he should probably call someone for Mike as well, but he didn't know who to call and also didn't have any information about Mike to tell that person. He needed to find some information first.

A while later Peter was called over to see a doctor about Neal. He was told that the worst had passed for Neal, but they wanted to investigate some more and keep Neal a while longer. He hadn't woken up yet but Peter was allowed into the room. Peter was also promised information about Mike as soon as it was any.

Neal looked like he was sleeping, which he probably was. He was hooked up to some medical equipment but not much of it. Peter sat down next to him and debated whether to wake him up or not. He didn't and decided to wait. He didn't have to wait long until Neal showed signs of waking. He groaned a bit and shifted on the bed. His head lolled to the side as his eyes opened and he took in his surroundings.

Neal's head felt heavy and he was confused. He didn't know where he was or what was going on. A sound next to him made him flinch and he looked to the side and saw Peter there.

“Hi Neal.” He said. “Good to see you awake. How are you feeling?”

Neal just looked at him and swallow. His throat felt raw. He shrugged his shoulders.

“Do you remember what happened?” Peter asked next as he studied Neal. He could practically see Neal's mind working.

“M-Mike...” was his first word and his eyes widened and he started to get agitated. “Mike was...where?”

“Calm down Neal.”

“No! Mike where is he? Is he okay?”

Peter hesitated. What would he tell Neal?

“Mike is here too.” He said.

Neal lifted his head and looked around.

“Where?”

“I don't know Neal. He was brought in with an ambulance before you. I haven't received any information about him yet.”

“What? He was hurt? No...” Neal looked down. “Ten last I saw he was fine. He was dragging me out of there.”

“He wasn't fine after that Neal. He called me and asked for help and when we got there we found the two of you passed out on the floor.” He stopped not sure how to proceed.

“And? What are you not telling me? What happened?” Of course Neal would notice that he was holding back. He sighed.

“Neal, Mike wasn't breathing when we found him.”

Neal's breath hitched and he grasped the blanket that covered him hard in in his hands.

“Oh god no. No, no, no...”

“We got him back Neal. We got him back. He was breathing the last time I saw him.”

There was tears in the corner of Neal's eyes and Peter wasn't sure that the younger man even knew that were there. He was breathing hard.

“It's my fault.” He whispered. “That wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for me. I did..”

“Neal. Mike was doing okay. He will be fine. And it was a good thing that he got there. He saved you.”

Neal's head flipped around and he locked eyes with Peter his jaw was working but nothing came out. He looked away again and nodded.

“I'm sorry Peter. I know I shouldn't have been there.”

“You are right about that! Neal what you did...”

He stripped himself when his voice started to rise. Now was probably not the time to yell at Neal. He looked devastated. “Let's just say that it was stupid for now.” He finished. Neal didn't say or do anything else.

"Neal?" Peter didn't think Neal would respond but he did.

“What if he doesn't want to be around me anymore? What if he hates me now?” He swallowed hard.



“He won't hate you Neal. If the roles were reversed would you hate him?”

"Of course not."

“Then why would you think that he would hate you?”

“I left him.”

“Neal, he came to the office looking for you. Then he found you and saved you. That's not an act of hate but of love.”

Neal considered what Peter was saying. Maybe it was the truth after all. He actually had a hard turn believing that Mike would hate him now when he thought about it.

“Can I see him?” He asked. Peter shook his head.

“There hasn't been any news about him yet, and I think a doctor should check you out first.”

“But...”

“Neal.” Peter interrupted him. “By the way,” he added. “Do you know anyone I should be calling for him?”

“Harvey.” Neal said. “That's Mike's boss. He would want to know. You should call him Peter.”

“Okay. I will. You should get some rest. And maybe a doctor in here.

“No Peter you need to find out about Mike. Promise!”

“Fine. Relax. I will.”

-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-

## Chapter 6

Harvey felt annoyed. Mike wasn't in yet and Harvey needed him to come and do his damn job already. Mike didn't even answer his phone. What was up with that? It annoyed him a lot. He didn't want to spend his time lecturing Mike. Sure the kid's grandmother had just died and left Mike crushed but that was weeks ago now, he should be able to handle that by now. It made Harvey suspect that it was something else that was going on with his associate. Mike had been acting strange for some time now and it started after the death of his grandmother.

Harvey had been nice and let all his slip ups slide without commenting too much. But Mike was distracted. His phone blipped and Mike seemed to light up every time it did, but after that the kid was hopeless.

He didn't know why he didn't just ask Mike about it. But then on the other hand he had his reputation to maintain, even though he wasn't sure that Mike believed that reputation or not. Probably not. He had gone pretty soft on the kid lately.

He was pulled from his thoughts when his phone rang. He didn't recognize the number but answered anyway.

"Harvey Spector."

"Hi. This is Peter Burke. I work for the FBI, I'm calling regarding Mike Ross." The voice on the other end said and Harvey's heart took a leap in his chest. Shit! The FBI! This could only be bad news. What the hell had Mike done now?

"Yes?" He carefully answered.

"I understand you are Mike's boss?"

"Yes I am. What is this about?"

"I work together with Mike's brother Neal, and the two of them have been in an accident of sorts. I don't know much yet, but Mike is still unconscious which they are a bit worried about." The voice got quite and Harvey's brain tried to understand what he just had heard.

"His what?" He got out.

"Oh, you didn't know. Damn, Neal didn't say... well this is not my story to tell. Maybe you just should come down here."

"What happened to Mike?" Harvey asked. What the hell was going on? What brother? Mike didn't have a brother. But the FBI agent didn't seem to want to say anything else. He did tell Harvey which hospital Mike was at and that he would be waiting there. When Harvey hung up he was more confused than he had been in a long time. He stood up to leave though. Mike was hurt and needed him, the rest was of less importance. He knew he would get some answers sooner or later.

However he stopped at Donna's desk.

"Did you know that Mike has a brother?"

"What? No he doesn't. I would know."

"So then why did an FBI agent just call me and told he that Mike and his brother is at the hospital?"

For a moment Donna was at a loss of words. "Is he okay?" She then asked.

"I'm going to go and find out. That agent said that there was some sort of accident and that Mike is still unconscious."

"Oh god. Go and take care of him. I'll cancel your meeting."

When Harvey looked around in the waiting room on the correct floor at the hospital he almost immediately spotted the man that had to be the FBI agent. The suit gave him away. He walked over to the man.

"Are you Peter Burke?" He asked.

"Oh, yes. You must be Harvey Spector."

Harvey nodded and they shook hands.

"Can you tell me what's going on?"

"Of course. Do you want to sit down?"

Harvey drew a breath. "Do I have to?"

"No it's not like that. It might just be a while."

Harvey did agree to sit down then.

"So, is Mike okay?" Was his first question.

"I believe so. He inhaled an unidentified substance in gas form. We don't know the lasting effect of that yet, if there is any."

"But you are saying there might be?"

Peter couldn't help but hesitate. After all there had been something really strange going on with this case from the start.

"I can't say anything for sure. Hopefully they will be fine. Mike is still unconscious though, but they said that he might wake up soon. "

Harvey nodded. That was good news. But something still bothered him.

“They? You were talking about some brother? Mike doesn’t have a brother it has to be some sort of mistake.”

Peter rubbed his face a bit. He did not want to be in this situation. Apparently Mike hadn’t told his boss about Neal yet. The kid must have had a reason of doing so, and Peter felt reluctant to be the one that told the story and then left the kid without the option to do it himself the way he wanted.

“It’s not really my place to tell you.” He started. “That should be up to Mike, but I didn’t know either and I have known Neal for quite some time now, and I didn’t know he had a brother either.”

“I think this something Mike should have told me if it was true.”

“Apparently they had a complicated childhood that cause them to loose contact for quite some time. They only recently came into contact again.” He watched the other man listen intently to his every word. He still had a doubting look on his face.

“I met Mike today. He came by my office looking for Neal, who I should say is working for me. Mike found out where Neal was and went after him. We are working with a case involving stolen chemicals, a strange case. Something happened at that lab and we found Neal and Mike passed out on the scene.” Peter stopped talking, a bit surprised that he hadn’t been interrupted by the other. After all he looked like the type to do so, plus he was a lawyer.

“And?” He said now, apparently he was sharp since he sensed that it was something Peter was holding back on.

“Well, when we found Mike, he wasn’t breathing.” He said carefully.

“What? What the hell are you saying?” Harvey flew up from his seat. Mike hadn’t been breathing! This was way more serious than the agent let on. Not breathing? What the hell!

”We got him back pretty quick, and then paramedics arrived.”

“Got him back how?”

“CPR.”

“Oh god.” Harvey sank back down again. ”And you are making it seem like it’s not a big deal. He wasn't breathing?” Harvey swallowed and felt a chill down his spine.

“They think he is going to be okay?”

“Yeah, how do you know that? Do you even know for how long he wasn't breathing? He could be brain damaged.”

Peter could just nod, he understood the anger and frustration coming from the other guy. He felt the same with Neal.

"Neal would probably not be here if it wasn't for Mike." He said quietly. They locked eyes and Harvey nodded back.

"Thank you." He said after a moment. Peter knew what he meant.

"Let's just hope for the best for both of them. Someone was going to come out and tell us when Mike was ready for visitors."

Harvey nodded. There was a lot to take in. But actually he didn't feel all that worried. Mike would be fine. He always was in the end. So they waited. Both men lost in their own thoughts but suddenly Harvey looked up at Peter again.

"How is Neal doing?" He asked. After all if this was Mike's brother, that would be the first thing Mike would want to know when he woke up again.

"A bit tired and groggy, but mostly fine." Peter answered.

A while later a nurse came out and asked for family of Mike Ross and Harvey stood up, nodded once towards Peter and then followed her through a hallway to Mike's room. Mike was laying on a bed inside and his doctor was there. She told Harvey about the same thing as Peter had said. She also said that it was likely that Mike would wake up any minute and that he should let her know when he did.

Harvey sat down and waited some more after that. Mike looked like he was just sleeping, which apparently he did. He stirred after about an hour and blinked slowly as he tried to survey his surroundings.

Mike's head was pounding and his chest felt tight and hurt a bit. He didn't know where he was.

"Hi Mike." Someone said next to him and when he turned his head he saw that Harvey was there. It surprised him. He understood that he had to be in a hospital. Someone had called Harvey and he had actually showed up. That was nice. He tried to answer but nothing came out, so he tried again.

"Hey."

"Are you feeling okay?" Harvey carefully asked him.

"It hurts." He mumbled and Harvey looked worried. Then he got up and just left. Mike just blinked, confused. But Harvey came back just a minute later.

"I called for your doctor." He said. "You are in the hospital."

"I know."

"Do you have any brain damage?" Harvey asked and actually smirked a bit.

Mike was too tired to joke back. At least he assumed that Harvey was joking. He just said no. A doctor was there after that and examined him, asked him a bunch of questions and listened

to his lungs. She gave him something for the pain in his chest and it eased up a bit.

“Do you remember what happened?” He was asked. He did. Neal! He nodded, and looked around the room again to see if he could see some signs from Neal. He obviously wasn’t there. He nodded.

“Was there someone with me brought in here?” He asked.

“You mean your brother?” Harvey said then and Mike’s eyes widened.

“How...How do you?”

“Know that you have a brother? An FBI agent told me Mike.” Harvey didn’t look happy.

“I was...I was going to tell you.” Mike stammered. He was getting agitated.

Harvey put a hand on his shoulder then. “I know, Mike.” He said. “I know.”

This was so not the way Mike had wanted Harvey to find out, but right now he was too tired to care. “Is he okay?” Was all he wanted to know.

“Yeah, he is. Thanks to you I hear.”

“He is okay? He is really okay?”

“Yes, relax.”

Mike wanted to argue, but he felt his eyes slip close and before he could stop himself he fell asleep.

When he woke again he felt better and he noticed that he was in another room. How had that happened? He couldn’t help but feel a bit offended from the fact that he hadn’t even woken up when they took him to another room. But when he looked to his left he saw another bed standing there, and Neal was in it. It looked like he was sleeping, and he looked fine. Mike wondered how he looked himself, he didn’t feel all that well. His body felt all wrong. It felt a bit like he was vibrating, but when he looked down on himself he saw that he was laying perfectly still on the bed.

“Are you awake again?” Harvey’s quiet voice asked next to his right ear. Harvey was sitting on a chair and was leaning close to him, way too close actually.

“What are you doing?” Mike said. Harvey rolled his eyes and leaned back again.

“You in pain?” He asked instead.

“I don’t think so?” Mike answered.

“What kind of answer is that? That’s useless. Yes or no?”

“Sort of.” Harvey rolled his eyes again at him.

“They moved you to the same room as your brother. He seems like a nice guy.”

“Have you even talked to him?” Mike asked. Harvey shrugged.

“He has been asleep the entire time, so have you. It’s very boring.”

“Sorry for making you bored with all my sleeping. I was only poisoned and all.”

“You’ll be fine. You don’t have any brain damage. They checked.”

“Okay. So nothing is wrong with me?”

“Not more than usual that I know of.”

It was Mike’s turn to roll his eyes now. But it was still nice that Harvey was there for him. It meant a lot, even though he was kind of an ass.

It took a while until Mike and Neal was left by themselves and awake at the same time, but when they were Neal started with spewing out apologies and Mike kept refusing to accept them.

“It was my own choice Neal.” He said.

“I’m not a little kid anymore. I can make my own decisions.” He said eventually when Neal still insisted that it was his fault. But Neal stopped when Mike said that. He got something strange in his eyes and for a second he almost looked scared.

Neal had some trouble thinking. Somehow he didn’t exactly feel like himself. He felt different. But what Mike said about not being a kid got to him and he felt worse. At the same time he felt like there was something that he should remember. Something about the case. Unfortunately he didn’t remember much about what had happened in the lab before Mike had dragged him out of there. But he felt sure that if they went back there and looked they would find it. He had tried to tell Peter that, but he just told Neal not to worry.

Mike looked worried too now, and Neal made an effort to get himself together. He stretched a bit in the bed. His legs felt weird. Actually his whole body felt kind of weird. Like his muscles were aching. It didn’t hurt, just felt, well...strange. Other than that he felt fine.

Mike complained a bit of chest pains and they had told him that his ribs was bruised from Peter performing CPR on him. He had awkwardly thanked Peter, who just had brushed it off saying he was doing his job. But still. He had almost died. That had been scary. Mike knew that Neal felt incredible bad about what happened so he tried to not let it show too much when it hurt. It didn’t hurt that much though since he was on pain medication.

Both Harvey and Peter came a few times. Once they were all there together. It was a bit weird according to Mike. Harvey looked a bit like he wanted to yell at him, but wanted to wait until they were alone.

A doctor came when they all were there and explained the results of the test that had been done on both Mike and Neal to see if there were any effects of the gas they had been

inhaling. The doctor was a bit hesitant to tell them much about anything actually.

“Well, I have to say the test are inconclusive. There is something there in both of your blood tests but we can’t explain what it is, somehow it seems that your DNA is affected, we don’t know how yet though. But there is something there.”

“And what does that mean?” Harvey asked.

“We have sent to our labs for further testing, but for now all I can say is that it can be something but it can also be nothing.”

“Well, that’s pretty useless information.” Harvey muttered, but Mike didn’t say anything he agreed. It really was. It was kind of scary. His DNA was strange?

“Are they in any danger?” Peter asked.

“For now I have no reason to believe so. They are both breathing well, so we feel safe to let the two of you leave, under the condition that you stay with someone.”

“Mike can stay at my place.” Neal offered, and Mike nodded towards him.

“Not what I meant. You need to stay with someone else that can help you if something were to happen. And also the both of you are a bit unsteady on your legs. Until that goes away you shouldn’t be alone.”

“Looks like you are coming home with El and me.” Peter told Neal. “Ah ah.” He shook his head when Neal was about to protest. “It’s final.”

“And you are coming with me.” Harvey told Mike. So it was decided. They were told to come back to the hospital if they got worse or if something else happened with them health wise. Other than that they had to come back to follow up on the tests.

Mike didn’t know what he felt about going to stay with Harvey. It was true that he was a bit shaky on his legs. So far he had only walked to the bathroom and back, but he had had to support himself of the wall to not fall on his ass. It kind of felt like his legs were made out of jelly. He did not look forward to having to ask Harvey for help to the bathroom. That would be do awkward. But on the other hand he didn’t want to stay by himself either. What if something actually happened?

Neal really wanted to get out of the hospital. He felt strange here. He felt trapped when he had to stay in his bed the whole time. He secretly looked forward to getting to go and stay with Peter and El. He had never done that before but he really enjoyed spending time at their house. It was always such a nice atmosphere, and he love El. She was amazing and always made him feel in a good mood. He hoped that she wouldn’t mind him coming to stay with them. After saying goodbye to Mike at the hospital he asked Peter about it in the car. He had to humiliate himself by getting into a wheelchair and have Peter drive him in it all the way to the parking garage. But as they walked to short steps to the car he was thankful for it. It almost felt like he would fall over for every step he took. What was that about?



“I’m sure El will be thrilled to have you Neal.” Peter reassured him. Neal didn’t feel reassured, sure El was fine, but Peter had a frown on his face. Peter had probably just put up a façade and couldn’t wait to yell some about how stupid he had been when he went to that place. He had yet to tell Peter about it in detail. He didn’t look forward to that.

Peter had been right because El seemed genuinely happy about seeing him. She hugged him when he stepped inside, supported by Peter.

“Oh sweetie, I was so worried. Are you okay?”

“Yes, thank you Elisabeth, I’m just a bit shaky.” He notice how Peter and El looked at each other over his head.

“Let’s get you settled on the couch.”

It turned that Elisabeth already had made the couch ready for him to sleep on with sheets and a thick cover. She had also brought something for him to sleep in, which she helped with into even after his protests.

“Let my wife help you Neal.” Peter reprimanded him. When Neal was settled Elisabeth disappeared into the kitchen and Peter sat down next to him with a serious look on his face. This was it, Neal thought.

It wasn’t as bad as he thought it would be though. They talked for a while and Peter told him that this couldn’t happen again. Neal promised it wouldn’t and told Peter about his little adventure in the lab. He had found files that pointed on that something had gone very wrong in the company and that they were trying to fix it. There was something with a failed experiment and someone had gotten changed.

“Is that really what it said?” Peter asked. “They got changed? Changed how?”

“It didn’t say it was all very cryptic.”

“Well, we can’t really go through their records like you did, so we can’t find out more unless they let us. They weren’t happy about this either Neal, but they are shutting us out more now than ever.”

“And there is nothing you can do?” Neal asked.

“Not at the moment, no but we are working on it. Do you remember something else?”

“I don’t know, things are a bit fuzzy from when I went into the lab.”

“Yeah, why did you even go in there in the first place? And how did you manage to get the gas out?”

“I didn’t get it out!” Neal defended himself. “At least I don’t think I did. I think that I read something in one of the documents about a malfunction in one of the machines that produces the chemicals. I went to see if I could fix it. It was dangerous.”

“Yes, you proved that right.”

“I know Peter. I told you I was sorry.”

“I know you are. You should get some sleep. You don’t look that good.”

“Peter wait. Those disappearances, do you think it has something to do with this?”

Peter stopped for a minute, and looked back down at Neal. “We just have to wait and see.”

-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-

Mike and Harvey also had a long talk that evening. Mike had expected it and had prepared himself for it. Harvey wanted to know everything, so Mike just told him. He told him how it was after their parents died, how Neal ran away and how abandoned he had felt. About the many years they spent apart and then about Grammy dying and him finding the letter and postcard and his reunion with Neal. He proceeded to tell Harvey about what Neal had been up to and what he did now. He figured that he might as well do that, thus avoiding possible awkward situations in the future. Harvey didn’t seem to mind about that though. He was surprisingly supportive. Mike hadn’t expected that.

“I’m glad you told me Mike.” He said when Mike had finished. “I’m glad that you have a brother as well. He sounds pretty great.”

“Yeah he is.” Mike smiled.

“Are you doing okay now then?” Harvey asked. Mike did look a bit pale and in some weird way his body kept twitching, Harvey had noticed a while back, but it didn’t seem like Mike was aware of it.

“I think so. I feel a bit weird, honestly.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah, I feel all shaky.”

Harvey nodded. “Okay, well let me know if you get worse. I’m going to bed.”

Mike nodded from his place on Harvey’s couch. He felt really tired. He was asleep a few minutes later unaware of the changes that were taking place in his body at that very moment.

Harvey had some trouble falling asleep. It had been a hectic day to say the least. He had spent a lot of time at the hospital with Mike, he had only left for a short while to go to a meeting, but had come straight back. He kept both Donna and Jessica updated and said Mike would be away for some time. The kid had stopped breathing for god sakes. That was scary as hell to think about. He had almost lost Mike today!

He had to suppress an urge to get up and go and check on the kid. Mike was fine, he told himself. He was.

He had gotten to know a lot about his associate today. He got the story about Mike's long lost brother returning to him. It turned out that they had been living in the same city for years without either of them knowing about. That was pretty sad.

"I'm not alone anymore." Mike had said when he talked about finding Neal. Harvey had wanted to protest then and say that the kid wasn't alone, but it hadn't felt like it was the time.

Mike had been weak when Harvey helped him inside from the car earlier so Harvey knew that he had been affected somehow from that damn gas and what they had heard at the hospital was worrisome. Hopefully it was nothing, Harvey thought as he fell asleep that night.

Mike had no idea where he was when he woke up. His whole body felt too warm, he was trembling, his muscles so tense that it hurt. It got worse. He hurt everywhere. He couldn't move, couldn't speak. He was just laying there, his whole body shaking. It all happened so fast. He must have some sort of seizure he thought. He tried to convince himself that it would pass. It had to because he couldn't take this! He couldn't! Help! He needed help right now, he needed this to stop. He had never felt pain like this before. He could barely breathe. He started to feel lightheaded.

Every single muscle in his body right out to his fingertips were hurting. It was like the muscles were tearing themselves apart. Mike had never realized that your eyelids could hurt, his did.

What was happening? He could barely think. Was he going to explode? That was what it felt like. Was he dying now? Fear surged through him at that point? He didn't know how long he could stay conscious. Harvey! What would Harvey do? And Neal... his eyes closed. Or had they even been opened?

Then he knew no more.

-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-

Neal had trouble falling asleep. It was like he couldn't relax. He felt restless and itchy. His mind kept wandering back to thoughts of Mike. He wondered if he was awake or not. It was too late to call him right? Mike had assured him that he felt fine when they said good bye at the hospital, but Neal wasn't so sure. He didn't feel all that fine at the moment. Something in his body felt wrong, he just didn't know what it was. He just hoped that it was nothing. He tried to ignore it. However he was starting to hurt a bit. It was something with his muscles. They kept tingling and no matter how much he twisted around on the couch it didn't get better. He thought about calling for Peter and tell him about it. This was something strange right? Something strange that they had warned about at the hospital. But he chose to stay where he was. It was probably nothing. He managed to dose off after that.

When he woke again it was from the pain. It was so intense that the only reaction he had was to let out a scream. It was blinding. It was everywhere. He couldn't move, his body locked in pain. He didn't know if he was screaming again or what he was doing, all he knew was pain radiating from everywhere.

Peter and Elisabeth had been asleep and were both woken up by Neal's screaming. Elisabeth was the first one who sat up. She blinked a few times wondering what it was that had woken her. She looked over at Peter who was also struggling to get upright. Then they heard it again. Someone was screaming!

"Oh my god! Is that Neal?" Elisabeth gasped. Of course it was, who else would it be? She started to get the covers off her, but Peter was faster and actually threw his part of the cover over her in his rush to get downstairs. But she was right after him.

When Peter rushed into the living room he immediately saw that something was very wrong with Neal. His whole body was tight like a string and he was shaking. His breaths were coming out harsh and too quick. He looked so small where he was. Peter crashed on his knees next to him.

"Neal, Neal. What's going on? Neal talk to me?"

Neal showed no signs of even hearing him.

"Oh god, Peter. What should we do?" El breathed behind him. "What's happening?"

Peter wanted to know that same question. Something was very wrong, the way Neal thrashed on the couch looked terrifying. He put his hands on Neal and tried to make contact with him. It didn't work and Peter was starting to get really worried. Then things happened quickly. Afterwards it was hard for all of them to explain what it was that really happened.

-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-

## Chapter 7

### Chapter 6.

Neal suddenly started screaming. It startled Peter enough that it caused him to fall back on the floor. El gasped and held her hands over her mouth as she watched what was taking place in front of her. Neal's whole body was shaking like he had no control over his muscles at all.

"Neal! Buddy, hey. Neal calm down."

Peter shakily stood up and went over to touch Neal, to comfort him, to try and get some kind of contact with him but as he reached out a hand something else happened that made him jerk back. He took a few steps back and grabbed for Elisabeth to steady himself.

Then the two of them watched as Neal transformed in front of their eyes. At first his body went so ridged and tense that it looked extremely painful. Neal's eyes were wide open and staring unseeingly up at the ceiling. It was like he suddenly was paralyzed and unable to control his body. Then it was like his limbs and every muscle in his body started to retract themselves, they were shrinking. Neal was shrinking in front of them! It wasn't just that he was shrinking his features changed, they got softer, smaller and more childlike. Neal was turning into a child. The whole process happened so fast, and it was over in less than a minute. Instead of a grown man Peter and Elisabeth now stared at a small boy laying there on their couch practically drowning in his clothes. They didn't move. They just stared at Neal, unable to believe their own eyes.

It was like times stood still. Neal was laying all still looking up, his chest moving rapidly up and down. But then he moved. It was like he woke up, or got released from some sort of spell that had bound him and had prevented him from moving. His whole body twisted and he curled up on his side and moaned. His legs got tangled into the too big pants he was wearing, and he hugged his body. Then it was like he realized what had happened. He pushed himself up and held out his hands in front of him and just started in shock at them. He then looked over the rest of his body as he started to breathe more heavily.

"Noo..." He whispered. "No, what's..." He stopped at the sound of his own voice and slapped a hand over his mouth. Peter and El still just stared at him, holding on to each other.

"Eh..." Peter made some sort of unintelligent sound. He didn't know what he meant to say. What could he say? Neal heard him and looked up. He jerked back when he saw the other two. Had they been standing there all this time?

He just felt so confused. He had no idea what was going on. Neal blinked a few times. What was happening? Everything looked different, big. The couch was huge, and Peter and Elisabeth also looked different. He was sure it was them just enlarged. He glanced at his hands again. They were tiny. They looked weird, too thick and short. He was wearing some sort of dress that resembled the shirt he had been wearing before. His head hurt. Was he dreaming?

"Neal?" Elisabeth were saying, her voice shaking.

He felt his lip tremble as he looked up at her. She towered above him and he leaned back.

"Neal?" Peter stuttered out behind her. Neal's head snapped towards him. Peter had a look on his face that Neal had never seen before. It was one of absolute shock. Neal's eyes flickered between the two of them. What was going on? That was all he wanted to know. They didn't look like they held any answers what so ever.

"Pe-Peter?" He asked. "What's happening?" He felt all shaky inside. Like the world was tumbling down around him. Something terrible had just happened. He was changed. He didn't know if it was all real or not. He started to believe that it was.

"I...I..." Peter said.

"What's happening?" Neal asked again. This voice wasn't his! It wasn't his voice, but it came out of him when he spoke. He felt scared. More scared than he ever had been. It felt hard to breathe. He wanted to cry.

"Neal, is that really you?" Elisabeth asked and she sat down in front of him. She stretched out a shaking hand towards him, and he held out his own hand for her. His hand disappeared in hers. The three of them looked in amazement at Neal's and El's hands. The big one and the small one.

"No..." Neal said. "No, no, no. No it's not true. It's not happening. I'm dreaming." Neal the strange voice said. It was a child's voice. It didn't sound like his voice at all. He felt how his eyes started to fill with tears and he tried to pull his hand out of Elisabeth's grip. She didn't let him go right away and when she did he wasn't prepared and fell back towards the couch.

"No..." He moaned and pulled his legs up to his chest with ease. He hugged them tightly with his tiny arms. He was so confused. He hid his head against his arms wishing it was all a dream. He willed himself to wake up. He needed to wake up. Now!

But nothing happened. He didn't wake up. He couldn't be awake! This couldn't be true.

But then the couch tipped to the side as Elisabeth sat down next to him. She then wrapped her arms around him and pulled him towards her. His whole body could fit in her embrace. He started to cry. Quietly, heartbrokenly.

The sounds Neal made stabbed at Elisabeth's heart. She could feel how he was shaking, his whole body tense against her. She stroke his back with one hand and his head and the curly brown hair with the other. Peter was just standing there next to them with an open mouth.

"It's okay Neal." She whispered down to him and hugged him a little tighter. She wished for him to stop shaking. He was so small in her arms. She couldn't grasp that this was the young man her husband worked with. How was it possible that he now was curled up in her embrace accepting comfort from her? Neal calmed down somewhat about ten minutes later. The whole time he had been crying silently. He pushed against Elisabeth and she let him go. He looked up at her with red rimmed eyes.

"I'm not dreaming?" He asked with a small voice.

"I don't think so unless we have the same dream, sweetie."

He glance up at Peter. "Peter what happened?" He wanted to know. Peter sat down heavily on the coffee table.

"I have no idea Neal." He said. "You...you are a child."

"Yeah, I am right?"

"You turned into a child. Oh god. This is so weird."

"Why did this happened?" Neal asked. His eyes widened. "Was it the gas?" He said.

Peter nodded a bit and felt how the thoughts rushed through his head. That must be it. It couldn't be anything else. Something that Neal had inhaled in that gas on that lab had caused him to transform into a child. Neal looked up at him with bright blue eyes from a small face with round cheeks. What had just happened? In one minute it had been normal Neal on the couch and here was one in miniature. What should he do now? Should he call it in? Bring Neal to the hospital? What was the protocol for cases like this? There was none of course. This was way too unbelievable.

However this could explain some of the weird things that they had found on the case. Like the fingerprints from children that they had found on the scenes. This must have happened before. How could they have covered this up? How could they have managed to do something like this? He would never have believed it on the other hand if he hadn't just seen it happened with his own eyes, or if he didn't have the mini-Neal in front of him. The mini-Neal who currently looked terrified. Peter couldn't blame him. He really needed to start to deal with this now.

"How are you feeling?" He asked the child. "Are you still in pain?" That was the most important thing to establish at the moment he figured. Neal shook his head a little.

"I think I'm okay." He answered in a small voice. "I'm confused."

"So am I, and so is Elisabeth, but it's going to be fine Neal."

"How?" Neal whined, and Peter didn't have an answer for that.

"We'll figure it out. It's probably just temporarily. You will be fine." He repeated. Neal looked like he didn't believe a word Peter was saying. His lips trembled. He looked exhausted as he rubbed his eyes with tiny fists. He was just so small. If Peter had to guess he would say that Neal was currently about three years old.

"How's your head?" he asked. "Do you know what happened?"

"No. I don't know. I was just sleeping and then it hurt."

"But you feel normal, otherwise, except for this?" He pointed at Neal's figure.

"I think so."

"Good, that's good." He looked at Elisabeth. She looked about how he felt. Neal yawned.

"How about we all go to bed again, and we will figure all this out in the morning?" El suggested. "Lay down sweetie." She encouraged Neal. He did what she asked and then looked up at her with wide eyes.

"Will I be back to normal when I wake up?" He asked her.

"Try to get some sleep honey." She answered and stroke his hair once and then again. Neal's eyes fluttered close, but he forced them open again. This time he looked at Peter.

"Will I be in trouble?" He asked quietly.

"No, you won't Neal. You won't. It's not your fault."

Neal looked again like he didn't believe him, but his eyes closed again. Peter and El didn't dare to move until they were sure that the kid was asleep. El very carefully stood up from the couch. The two of them slowly backed away from the sleeping child careful as to not make any sounds. They had never had a child in the house like this before. But was it really a child? Could Neal count as a child? It seemed like it was still him. Just in a smaller version.

They came out into the kitchen and just started at each other.

"Did that really happen?" El asked. "Did Neal transform into a child?"

"I think he just did, hon." Peter answered, suddenly feeling so tired. Then he proceeded to tell her all about the case that they had been working on, the weird clues and the chemicals.

"Do you think they did this intentionally or do you think it's just an accident?" El asked him.

"I don't know, why would they want this to happen? It's seems like it has been accidents."

"Oh no." El exclaimed.

"What?"

"Then how will we get Neal back?"

"Oh god, hon. I have no idea."

"What are you going to do?"

"No clue. I don't know what I'm supposed to do with any of this."

They talked a bit longer before they decided to go to bed and deal with it all the next morning. They quietly walked out into the living room again, both looking hesitantly over to the couch. And sure enough, mini-Neal was still there, sleeping soundly buried in the blankets.



“Do you think we can leave him like this?” Peter asked.

“I think he will be fine.”

Peter still had a hard time falling asleep after that. It was just crazy. He did not look forward to the next morning.

-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-

Mike woke up in the dark. Everything felt wrong. Something was really wrong with him. His body ached and felt weird. He hurt. He couldn't help but moan a bit, but quieted out of shock. He sounded weird. It didn't sound like him. He knew that something with him was different, he just had a hard time understanding what it was. He blinked a few times and reached for his phone to get some light. That was when he noticed how big the couch suddenly had become. He was much farther away from the edge than was reasonable. He kicked with his legs to test what happened. Maybe he had been moved somewhere else, because he couldn't reach the end of it with his feet.

Something was twisted around his feet and he kicked a bit to get rid of it. The fabric fell down on the floor but he didn't care. He rolled to the side and found that he didn't hit the edge of the couch like he should have done. Strange. His body felt stiff as he crawled out from under the cover. What was he wearing? It was hanging from him like a dress. And wait? Did he just crawl on all fours to reach his phone? It was on the table next to the couch and he couldn't reach it! Oh, this was so wrong. He had to put his feet out and then practically jump down from the couch. His hands were shaking and his breathing started to speed up as he fumbled for his enormous phone. He didn't want to believe what was happening right now. As soon as he had his phone in his hand he turned it to light up his body. What he saw absolutely shocked him. He had known that something was wrong with his body but he would never in a million years expected this!

He was a kid! He now had a body of a child. Everything about him was small. The shirt he had been wearing reached down to his ankles and he could see his bare small feet. What the hell? What was going on with him? He needed a mirror, he needed to see in the light.

He took a few stumbling steps out from behind the table, shocked over how big and intimidating everything in Harvey's apartment suddenly was. He rushed towards the bathroom and managed to get the door opened, he had to stand on his toes to reach the handle. He couldn't reach the light switch and he wanted to cry. He felt close to panic as he searched for a way to get to the switch. He found an expensive looking shampoo bottle and threw it at the switch. He missed and tried again. It worked on the third try and the bathroom lit up. He looked towards the mirror only to realize that he couldn't see himself at all. It was too high up. He let out a wail of frustration, but stopped at the sound of himself. He sounded like a child too! He searched his brain for where he had seen another mirror in Harvey's condo but he came up empty.

“How the hell are you?” Harvey's voice startled him so much that he took a few steps back. Harvey towered above him in the doorway and radiating bit confusion and anger. Mike had never been scared of Harvey before, but now at this moment it came close. He backed away while his mind scrambled to come up with something to say.

Harvey knew that this was not really a good way to talk to a little kid. But what the hell? There was some child standing and throwing things in his bathroom. Where did he come from? He had woken up suddenly from something banging. At first he thought he had been dreaming or something, but then he heard it again. It sounded like something was hitting the wall and then the floor. He got up with Mike in mind. Maybe something had happened to him? Maybe he was worse and needed help.

He got up and glanced into the living room towards the couch. It was empty, which didn't really surprise him since the sound had been from the bathroom. He didn't know if he ever had been this surprised before when he saw a blond little kid standing on his bathroom floor, and he just said the first thing that came to his mind.

The kid looked up at him with wide blue eyes. He stumbled a few steps back but didn't say anything.

"How did you get in here?" The kid just stared at him. "Can you even talk? How old are you?" he added in frustration. And where was Mike? He glanced out in the room. This has to be Mike's doing. He was playing him some sort of prank.

"Harvey?" the kid said then and his head whipped back to look at the boy.

"How do you know my name? Did Mike leave you here?"

"I am Mike. I am." The kid said then.

"Yeah right. Where is he?" Harvey turned around and walked out to find Mike, then they would deal with the fact that there was a small child in his apartment. It was the first time he had had a child there.

The kid came running after him and tried to grab at his shirt.

"Harvey, it's really me." He said. "Something happened to me. I don't know what."

Harvey stopped and stared at him and removed the small hand from him.

"Listen to me, this is not some game. You need to tell me what you are doing here. You can't be here."

Mike looked up at Harvey. What was he saying? He didn't understand why he would be saying that he couldn't be here.

"But you brought me here, from the hospital. You said that I could stay with you until I felt better."

"I didn't bring you here. Mike must have done it. What did he say to you?"

"I'm Mike!" Mike was getting frustrated. What was Harvey doing? It wasn't funny. How could he not believe him. "What's happening?" He wailed. He wanted it to stop. He wanted Harvey to help him, not throw him out. He didn't know what was going on and he knew he

needed help. He needed Harvey's help. Harvey always fixed things. He could fix this too, Mike was pretty sure he could. Except now he was saying all these things.

"I didn't do anything. I woke up like this."

Harvey stared at the boy. What was he saying? He could tell that the kid was getting upset. He kept claiming that he was Mike. But that wasn't possible. He looked closer to the kid and now noticed that he was wearing his own t-shirt, it hang on him much too big. It was the same t-shirt he had given Mike the night before, to sleep in. He glanced over to the couch. He could see what looked like the pants he had given Mike half hidden under the blanket.

A tiny bit of hesitation rose in Harvey. But how could that be? It wasn't possible. He refused to believe it.

"Come on, did Mike pay you to do this? Does your parents know that you are here?"

That was apparently the wrong thing to say because he could see how the kid practically inflated in on himself. He suddenly looked devastated.

"What are you saying Harvey? You know they don't..." he stopped and it looked like he was going to start crying. Harvey couldn't have that happening, and felt sorry for this sad child.

"Okay, okay. It's okay." He said. "Look, I'm just trying to get to the bottom of this. If you can just tell me your name and what you are doing here."

"I told you!" The boy practically yelled. "I'm Mike. You took me with you here. You said I could stay the night and to tell you if I got worse. It did! This happened!"

He gestured towards his body.

"Well, if you are Mike, tell me something only he would know."

"What are you talking about? Who else would I be? Fine, you hired me even when I didn't have a degree. I came to the interview when I tried to get away from the cops when I tried to deal drugs."

It wasn't really something that only Mike knew but on the other hand it was kind of surreal hearing a toddler talking about dealing drugs.

"And what was Mike doing on the computer when I questioned him?"

"I was playing hearts. Harvey please, it's really me."

The kid then started reciting things that had been for Mike's ears only. Things he had said to Mike when it was only the two of them present. How could he do that, if this wasn't in fact Mike? Was it possible that this was Mike in a child's body, how impossible it ever seemed?

Harvey felt his eyes widen as he stared down at the boy.

"Mike? How...how?" He stuttered.

"I don't know!" Mike exclaimed. He felt close to breaking down at this point. He didn't know what he would do if Harvey still didn't believe him. He had really tried with everything he had to convince him, at least that was what it felt like. Harvey was just standing there looking at him now and Mike squirmed on the spot. He wanted answers but now he wasn't so sure that Harvey was going to be able to provide them for him.

"What's happening to me? Am I really small? Is this real?" He asked.

Harvey backed away from him then and sat down on the coffee table. His eyes fixated at Mike.

"Tell me what happened." He demanded in strained voice.

"I fell asleep and I woke up and was hurting real bad. My whole body was on fire and I think I passed out from how bad it was. Then I was like this when I woke up. I don't know anything else."

Harvey nodded. "How is this even possible?" He mumbled and Mike wasn't sure that the question was directed at him. He just waited. He was getting tired and felt so upset and confused. It was hard to grasp that this was even real, some part of him still held the hope that it was all just a dream that he would wake up from.

"How can you be a child?" Harvey was saying again.

"I don't know.." he didn't. He had never heard about something like this ever happening. "Maybe Neal knows?" He said.

"Why would he know?" Harvey asked. "You think it has something to do with why you were at the hospital? What you inhaled?"

"What else could it be? There has to be a reason. Right, Harvey? They can fix it right? They can fix me? Get me back to normal?"

Harvey suddenly felt really tired from Mike's questions and the hopefulness in his tone. He had no idea of anything but as he looked down on Mike he couldn't get himself to say so.

"Sure they can. They'll fix you."

"We need to call Neal! We have to call him right now." Mike held out his phone. "Please you have to do it. I sound like a baby."

Harvey hesitantly took the phone from Mike. Somehow he felt like he didn't, or couldn't refuse. It would be great if Mike's brother held some answers to the situation. Then he looked at the time.

"Mike, we can't call him now. It's way too late. They are sleeping. We'll call first thing tomorrow. Maybe you're even back to normal by then."

"No, you have to call him now! I can't be like this! I don't want to! Harvey please!" Mike felt prepared to beg Harvey with all he had. He felt that desperate, but Harvey shook his head.

“We need to sleep on this, hell I need to sleep on this. We will deal with it tomorrow Mike.”

"Noo..." Mike protested. "Give it back." He reached for the phone but Harvey just held up it hand in the air and it was out of his reach. He looked up at Harvey and saw that he wasn't going to give in. Mike suddenly felt more helpless than he had felt in a very long time. He felt like crying right then and there. But he didn't, instead he turned away from Harvey. He wanted to get away from him but didn't know what to do or where to go. Eventually he crawled back on the couch and pulled the cover high over his head as he pressed himself as close to the back of the couch as he could. He wished that he would wake up and find that this was all a bad dream. That he would wake up and not be able to practically fit his whole body on his pillow. He wished that when he woke up the wouldn't be so intimidating and big as it currently was.

He could hear Harvey sigh behind him and heard him get up. Then he felt Harvey pat his shoulder.

"It will be okay Mike. We'll figure it out tomorrow. Okay?"

Harvey waited for Mike to answer but he didn't. He just stayed as frozen in place not acknowledging him at all. He felt really bad for the kid as he left him there on the couch and walked back to his own bed. He wasn't sure if he should leave Mike alone like this. In fact he wasn't sure of anything at the moment. It was a long time ago since he had felt this lost. He didn't know how to fix this. He didn't know how he managed to fall asleep as quickly as he did either.

It took Mike a longer time. He laid there and felt afraid to move. He didn't want to move too much because it reminded him that everything was wrong. He tried not to think either. He was afraid that if he did it would all become real and he would break down.

-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-

## Chapter 8

Peter woke up early the next morning. For a moment he lay there trying to figure out why he felt so uneasy, but then it hit him. Neal!

He was up and out of bed and rushed down the stairs in the next moment. He came to an abrupt halt in front of the couch because there was Neal, barely visible under his blanket only his dark curls sticking out. He was still a child. Peter sat down heavily on the coffee table and just looked at him. Neal was a rather beautiful child with soft features and a little nose. He was in fact cute, a word Peter hadn't used to describe his CI with before.

What were they supposed to do now? It felt like he needed a plan of action before Neal woke up. They should contact the lab somehow and try to figure out if this was what had happened with the others on their case, the now missing people. It must be the case. He should probably do it without involving the bureau for now. How knew what would happen to Neal if they found out. Maybe he should contact Mozzie as well. He might have some contacts they could use.

But for now all he felt like doing was to just out there and watch Neal as he was sleeping. Breathing in and out where he was on his back, on hand sticking out underneath the blanket.

"Good morning honey." Elisabeth whispered as she put her arms around his shoulders. She watched Neal too.

"He is so cute." She said.

"Yeah." Peter agreed. "What do you think he would say if he knew we were doing this? Watching him sleep."

"If we stay we could find out." She said and Peter almost thought she was serious. But they decided to let Neal sleep and went to make breakfast.

"Do you think it's permanent?" Elisabeth asked.

"I have no idea, I certainly hope it isn't." Peter felt a chill run down his spine at the thought of Neal staying like this.

"I have never heard of anything like this, Peter. But imagine if it got out. There is probably a lot of people how would want to make money out of it."

"Maybe this was their aim. A way to stay young forever."

"A bit too young though. Neal looks like a two year old, maybe three. Why would you want to be three years old again?"

"Relive your childhood?"

Elisabeth nodded. "How do you think Neal's childhood was like?"

"I don't know. He has never talked about it. Never mentioned either of his parents or any family for that matter."

"Maybe he doesn't like to think about it then."

"Yeah, I have been thinking along the same lines. That his childhood wasn't so great."

"Let's make this one better then, hon."

Peter smiled at his wife and found he didn't mind doing that. "Are you going to make pancakes?" He asked as he saw that she took out those ingredients.

"Yeah, kids like that right?"

"You do know he is not really kid, right? It's still Neal."

"I'm not so sure." Elisabeth said. She thought back on the time on the couch when she had been sitting with Neal's shaking body in her lap. He had certainly felt like he was a child then.

Peter was in on his second pancake when the door was pushed opened and Neal walked inside the kitchen. He stopped and stared up at them when he saw them. He took a few steps back when Peter came towards him. If Peter didn't know better he would think that Neal looked scared. He still had Peter's old shirt on him like a dress. They needed to get him some clothes. He was clutching something in his hand that he held behind his back.

"Hi buddy, how are you doing?" He asked, but they were interrupted before Neal could answer.

Satchmo came running towards them from his spot next to the back door. He barked happily at the sight of Neal. Neal however was not as happy. He tumbled backwards as he saw the dog coming at him and what he felt the most was fear. It was unexplainable since he knew that this was just Satchmo and he was a nice dog. But the dogs face was in the same height as his own and all he could see was the big teeth. He tripped on his own shirt and fell to the ground. Satchmo was over him and he tried to protect himself with his arm.

"No, no!" He shrieked and crawled back until the door was behind him and he was trapped. He had nowhere to go and threw his arms over his head and drew his knees up. Everything g in order to protect himself.

Peter did try to stop his dog when he came rushing towards Neal. "Satchmo, no!" He grabbed the dogs collar and drew him back as he watched how Neal covered in the corner. "Neal, it's okay, it's just Satchmo."

"Here let me take him." El said and grabbed Satchmo and ushered him out of the room while Peter turned to Neal.

"Hey, he is gone. It's okay." He watched how Neal slowly unfolded himself. He looked up at Peter with wide shiny eyes.

"I'm still small." He said.

"Yes you are." Peter said softly and held out his hand for Neal to grab. He helped him stand up.

"Where is it?" Neal asked and looked around him.

Peter didn't know what he meant at first but then he saw what it was Neal had been clutching in his hand earlier and that he had dropped in the commotion. It was his anklet. Peter picked it up.

"I didn't mean for it to fall off Peter." Neal was saying. Peter studied him and the anklet. It would rather fit around Neal's waist now than his ankle. Maybe both his ankles Peter mused. "Peter, I swear." Neal insisted.

"I know Neal. I know that it's not your fault."

Neal looked pretty miserable where he was standing looking up at Peter. Peter couldn't help but pat his head. "It's okay." He said reassuringly.

"But what will happen with the marshals?" Neal wanted to know.

"Ehm...well, we'll figure it out. We'll just tell them that you are sick or something."

Neal didn't look convinced but let it go for now trusting Peter. He was relieved that El had brought Satchmo out of the way. He would deal with that later, as it was now he felt totally overwhelmed as it was.

He had woken up and just laid there for a while until he realized that it all had been real. He was a kid now. It was such a strange experience not like anything that ever happened to him. Everything had been so confusing and painful during the night, but it didn't feel that much better now. He decided to get up and talk to Peter. He wanted to know what would happen with him now. He couldn't work like this could he? The anklet didn't fit him anymore. It lay discarded under the blanket, so he had grabbed it and went to search for Peter.

He didn't feel that much better now, but Elisabeth returned at that moment and somehow it made him feel happy to see her. Happier than he ever had been at the sight of her and before he could reflect on what he was doing he rushed towards her and called her name in joy. She wore a look of surprise but caught him around the shoulder and hugged him a bit to her legs.

"Good morning Neal." She smiled at him. "I let Satchmo be upstairs for now. He seemed happy about it. Maybe you can get reacquainted later."

El threw a glance over at Peter who looked in surprise at Neal's actions. Neal seemed to realize what he had done and stumbled back, looking surprised as well. "Sure..." he said.

"Well, who wants pancakes?" She asked and the awkwardness was gone as both Neal and Peter cheered.



They all decided that for now it was for the best to just get something to eat and then decide what to do.

Elisabeth had set the table for them and Neal had to climb up the chair. His head was at the same height as the table, he barely reached over it. Elisabeth smiled and went to get him a pillow to get a bit higher up.

Peter watched in astonishment as Neal struggled with his fork and knife.

"Do you want me to cut that for you?" He asked eventually and Neal glared at him but then just pushed his plate against Peter to let him do just that.

That was when they heard a phone ring. They all looked at each other in surprise. "It's not mine." El said.

"It's mine" Neal exclaimed, jumped down and dashed for the living room. He found his phone on the table and saw on the display that it was Mike calling him. He felt his heart make a jump in his chest. He had almost forgotten about Mike. He felt an intense longing for his brother all of a sudden. Maybe Mike could help him out? Maybe he even could go and stay with Mike until he turned back, so that he didn't have to be a bother for Peter and Elisabeth.

"This is Neal." He answered, aware of that he was going to sound different to Mike.

At first he was met with silence from the other end of the line. "Mike?" He asked.

"Is this Neal Caffrey?" A sharp voice that wasn't Mike's asked. Neal knew that it was Harvey, Mike's boss.

"Ehm...yes?" He hadn't meant for it to sound like a question.

-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-

He hadn't been dreaming. Mike was sure of it now after laying on the couch with his eyes closed for a few minutes. He was a child! He didn't know what to do. He thought it had been a dream. Or at least he had hoped that it was. He felt like he didn't want to get up, he wished he could go back asleep and maybe then wake up. Maybe?

"You awake?"

Harvey stared at the little child on his couch. He had had the same kind of thoughts as Mike. Mike was awake and looked like he had been for a while, but he still asked. Mike turned his head towards him and nodded.

"So you are a still a baby."

"I'm not a baby!" Mike sat up. He immediately felt angry.

"Well, you are something." Harvey did a gesture towards his body. Mike ignored him.

"What are we going to do?"

"We need to find out how this happened and then try and reverse it somehow."

"Yes! We need to call Neal! Where is my phone?"

He searched but couldn't find it. Harvey spotted before him and held it out to him.

"Here it is."

Mike grabbed it and started to dial Neal's number but stopped himself.

"I can't talk. I sound weird. You have to talk to him."

"Me? What should I say? Hey, Mike is a child, do you know anything about that?"

"Yeah!"

Harvey rolled his eyes but pressed the green button. After a few signals a voice answered. It did not sound like Neal Caffrey. It sounded like a child. But when he asked the voice confirmed hesitantly that it in fact was.

"Okay, well... This is Harvey Spector, Mike's boss. I...we, Mike have a problem."

"Is Mike okay?" The voice asked, higher in tone this time. Harvey frowned. What was going on? Harvey looked over at Mike who looked up at him with wide eyes.

"Actually no, he isn't. And he, Mike and I thinks that you might know something about this."

"Oh no, what's wrong? What happened?" Neal exclaimed. Harvey could hear voices in the background.

"It's kind of hard to explain, so I'm just going to say it. Mike is a kid, an actual child. And it has to do be something to do with whatever you got him involved in..." Harvey stopped himself when he heard a squeal on the other side of the line and then a load clunk as the owner's phone fell to the floor. Harvey could hear voices again, but couldn't make up what they were saying. At least not at first.

"What? What is he saying?" Mike asked in the silence, but Harvey hushed him. He could hear how the phone was picked up again.

"...maybe give him some water or something." A man said. "Ehm...Hello, this is Peter Burke, who is this?"

"It's Harvey Spector, Mike's boss."

"Oh, hey Mr. Spector."

"What's happening over there?"

"You tell me, Neal got all quiet and dropped the phone."

"I told him what's happened to Mike, and if he is somehow involved with this, or knows anything at all..."

"What's happened to Mike?" The FBI-agent interrupted him before he got any further.

"Let's say he has changed."

The other didn't say anything in a while. "What happened?" He asked again.

"Actually I don't think you are going to believe me if I tell you."

"Oh well, today I'm inclined to believe just about anything."

"He has changed in some way, physically." Harvey said carefully. He didn't want this man to think him as crazy. He almost dropped his phone in surprise himself this time as Burke asked a question he hadn't been expecting.

"Is he a child?"

"How did you know?"

"Neal's the same. You should come over. Now."

Twenty minutes later found Harvey and Mike in a cab on their way to Peter Burke's house. The two men had ended the call after Peter had told his address and Harvey briefly had explained to Mike that it seemed like the same thing had happened to Neal. The reason that it took them so long was that they needed to find something that Mike could wear as clothes. It resulted in Mike looking absolutely ridiculous with his t-shirt and Harvey's running shorts tied around his stomach to stay in place. The kid was not happy.

"Is he really like me?" Mike asked.

"That's what he said."

"I can't believe it."

"You should. He sounded like a kid when he answered."

Mike didn't really know what to feel about that. Neal was the same as him? It would kind of make sense since they both were affected by that thing in the lab. But he had hoped for something else. He had hoped that Neal would be able to help him and now, if Neal was like this as well, what were they going to do? He had counted on Neal for this.

He and Harvey didn't speak much after that in the cab. He was sitting in the middle next to Harvey. Harvey had said that it was the best place for him regarding the seatbelt. He looked up at Harvey and the other man noticed and looked back down at him. Harvey smiled then, and something bubbled up inside of Mike. Harvey had never smiled at him like that before. Like he really liked him. He smiled back and then looked down in his lap. At his tiny hands.

They stopped on a quiet street and Harvey lead him towards one of the houses. He couldn't help but feel nervous. He wished Harvey could take it easy for a bit, but he just walked up and knocked on the door while Mike fell behind struggling with the big steps of the stair.

Inside Peter and El had cleaned up after breakfast, most of it uneaten as Neal paced around the kitchen and the living room. He also tried to look out the window, but Peter told him to leave it alone. He just wished that Mike would hurry up. When Mike's boss had told him that Mike was a kid as well he had been so shocked so he had dropped the phone. The next feeling that engulfed him was one of guilt. Mike was like this because of him. He was sure of it. He didn't talk to Peter and Elisabeth about it even though they asked him to do so. He needed to see Mike with his own eyes first. And now they were here! Peter told him to wait, but he ran after Peter when he went to open the door. At first he didn't see Mike, and he felt so disappointed, but then Harvey Spector stepped to the side and there was Mike!

Neal just stared at him, and when Mike got up the stairs he stopped and looked back at Neal with huge blue eyes. The two little boys were almost the same height, Neal slightly taller.

They were all gathered in the door way now. Peter and Elisabeth shook hands with Harvey, while the boys stayed fixed on each other.

"Oh, so that is Mike? Neal's brother. He is so cute." Elisabeth smiled. It was a beautiful child, and she could see the similarities between the brothers, one being their eyes. They had the same color.

"Yeah, and I take it, that's Neal."

The three adults looked at the boys, as they stepped closer to each other.

"Neal?"

"Mike. You... You look just like, just like you used to."

They hugged after that. Mike squeezing himself as close to his brother as he could. He couldn't believe that this was happening. It was like he was dreaming. Everything was so surreal. He was hugging Neal and they were kids. Holding on to Neal and just closing his eyes he wished that he didn't have to open them again, because then things would change and he would have to deal with them.

They broke apart at a sigh from Elisabeth and they both looked up at the others who were watching them. Neal put an arm around Mike and ushered him inside. At the same time as he felt guilty it also felt kind of good to see Mike like this. He wasn't alone. He had his brother with him in this. Now they needed to figure out what to do about it.

"What's going on Neal? What is happening? Why? Is this connected to the case you were working on?" Mike wanted to know.

"Why don't we take one thing at the time?" Peter suggested.

They decided to all sit down in the living room to talk. Neal and Mike close to each other on the couch.

"So, can anyone tell me what the hell this is about?" Harvey spoke first and gestured towards Mike and Neal.

"We know just as little as you." Peter started, and Harvey gave him a look. "Okay, a bit more. As you may have guessed it's probably related to the incident both Neal and Mike was involved in the other day." He turned towards the younger men. "You both inhaled quite a lot of that gas. And we have been investigating a case that involved disappearing people. At the scenes we have found traces of children's prints. And now we know what happened to them." He said the last part mostly to himself. But it was true, this is why those people seemingly disappeared. They were children now, just like Neal and Mike. Maybe he should put out missing posters at daycare centers.

"What case? Tell me everything." Harvey demanded, so Peter did with the help of Neal.

Harvey was quiet for a while after he had heard about the case. It was unbelievable that someone had been able to do this, intentionally or not.

"What now?" He asked the question on all of their minds, a question which none of them really could answer.

"I'll look in to it with all the resources I have." Peter said. "We'll try and search for some kind of antidote."

"What about the FBI? And the marshals?" Neal couldn't help but ask again. It had him worried. He felt vulnerable like this. Mike also looked worried at that. And Peter smiled reassuringly at them.

"It'll be fine." He said. "I'll figure something out. As for now, we don't tell the FBI. Except for Diana and Jones of course."

"And Mozzie."

"Yeah, you should check if he can help." Peter added.

Mike didn't talk much, he just listened to the others coming up with plans on how to find a solution to the problem. He felt lost. He had a weird urge of wanting to burst out into tears because of it.

"What about me?" He asked, but no one heard him. They were all talking about other things. What about him? What would happen to him now? He had hoped that Neal might be able to help him that he could maybe go and live with Neal. But now he didn't think that would happen. It was pretty obvious that Neal would be staying here at the nice house, with Peter and Elisabeth, who was very nice. She was looking at him now and smiling a little. He didn't know what to do all of a sudden. He felt himself blushing when he looked down on his lap and saw again what he was wearing. He couldn't have this on, he needed other clothes. How

would he ever get that? He couldn't go out shopping like this! He was really hungry as well. He couldn't ask for food here, right?

The more he thought about it, the hungrier he got. The others were still talking. He didn't listen anymore, because his stomach took up too much of his attention. He wished he and Harvey had had breakfast before they left. He didn't even remember the last time he ate. Yesterday at the hospital?

"Neal?" He tugged his brother's shirt. But Neal shrugged him off, probably unintentionally because he was telling the others something, but it still tugged on Mike's heart. Suddenly it reminded him of how he used to feel about Neal after he had left all those years ago. Like he didn't care about Mike at all. But it wasn't true right?

He tried again. "Neal?" This time Neal at least glanced at him before looking back at Peter. Mike just wanted to ask him if there was something he could eat. He really wanted to do that right now. It seemed more important than anything else.

"Harvey?" He tried. Maybe they could leave and get breakfast somewhere? But Harvey didn't hear him. And that hurt. It was like he was invisible. He didn't matter anymore. Suddenly he felt tears rise in his eyes. He didn't know what to do. What the hell? What was he doing? But he couldn't stop them from rising. He sniffled and tried to wipe them away before anyone noticed.

"Sweetie? What's wrong?" Elisabeth, the woman suddenly had her attention on Mike. She had been listening to them talking, and she was the only one to seem to notice that Mike wanted to say something. She saw that he tried to get Neal's attention and then Harvey's. His face started to change, he became slightly red as tears rose in his eyes. He tried to wipe them away, but more kept coming. He looked absolutely miserable.

At her words the others got quiet and everyone's attention turned to Mike, who when he noticed it bowed his head down and furiously wiped his eyes.

"Mike?" Harvey asked. Stunned to see tears trail down Mike's cheeks.

"What's wrong Mike?" Neal asked.

Mike shook his head. "Nothing" He whispered and Elisabeth moved to sit on her knees in front of him.

"What is it? You can tell me." She said kindly.

Mike mumbled something that she couldn't hear, so she had to ask him to repeat it.

"I'm just a little hungry." The kid in front of her whispered, clearer this time. Harvey heard it too and he swore to himself. He actually was a bit hungry himself.

"We didn't have breakfast." He told Elisabeth.

"Oh no. Of course you must be hungry then. And you were at the hospital just yesterday. Come on, let's get you something." She took Mike's hand and he just let her lead him to the

kitchen.

Mike, who had stopped crying like a damn baby followed and watched as she proceeded to heat up some pancakes for him. Not a minute later they were joined by Harvey, Neal and Peter. Harvey came up and patted Mike's shoulder a bit. It was his way of showing that he was sorry for starving the kid. He hoped Mike got that.

Neal ran back to the couch and got Mike a pillow for his chair and they ended up sitting down at the table, finishing the pancakes.

-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-

# Chapter 9

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Harvey had no idea how he had ended up here. He was sitting at a breakfast table at the house of some FBI agent that apparently was close to Mike's new brother. Or not new. Just new to Harvey. Harvey didn't do pancakes for breakfast or anything like that, but here he was. Next to two children and two adults he didn't know. Everything was just bizarre. But the pancakes were good.

Mike looked a bit happier now. It had really torn on Harvey's heart much more than he had expected to see Mike upset and crying. Lesson number one was learnt. Kids needed to eat. Breakfast was obviously important.

At first they all ate in silence. Mike and Neal were seated next to each other. Neal kept looking over at Mike. It looked like they were in about the same age now. That was weird because Neal was supposed to be the big brother. At least he was a little taller than Mike so maybe people would know anyway. He glanced at Peter. He was just about to take a huge bite with pancake. It looked funny and Neal couldn't help but laugh at him. Peter raised his eyebrow at him.

"What's so funny?" He asked.

"Nothing." Neal hurriedly said. "What are we going to do next?" He asked instead.

No one said anything.

"Well" Elizabeth said eventually. "The both of you are going to need some new clothes and other things. You can't walk around like that. I was thinking I'd go and buy it for you. And while I'm gone you can get to work."

The others agreed and when they had finished breakfast Elizabeth left for the store. Harvey had tried to give her some money if she was going to buy stuff for Mike as well, but she wouldn't accept any.

"It's fine. I like shopping."

The other's stayed at the kitchen table and Peter brought over his computer. Neal came over and they started to try and find something on the company that owned the lab where they had been infected. Harvey excused himself with his phone. Mike didn't know who he was calling, but found himself just sitting there without anything to do. He didn't know what to do to help. He felt lost and a little sad. He didn't have his own phone with him. He had no idea why. Where had he left it?

He looked up when Harvey hit him lightly on the shoulder. He was holding out his phone to Mike.



“It’s Donna. She wants to talk to you.” Mike smiled and eagerly grabbed the phone.

Harvey couldn’t help but smile too. Donna had been shocked when he spoke to her and had asked him if he had been doing drugs. They had agreed on meeting up later at Harvey’s condo so that she could see it for herself. If Mike’s childlike voice didn’t convince her, seeing Mike would.

Mike wasn’t sure that he had managed to convince Donna of what had happened. She was going to come over to Harvey’s condo later though. He looked forward to seeing her. She was always nice to him. For now, after he hang up the phone he didn’t know what to do. He walked over to the table where the others were and held the phone up towards Harvey. He was not at all use to looking up at Harvey. He was so big. It was weird. Also Harvey didn’t even notice him. He had to nudge him with the phone to get his attention.

“Oh thanks.” Harvey said and put the phone back in his pocket before he turned back towards Peter leaving Mike standing there feeling stupid. He went to sit down next to Neal again. He just sat there and listened after that.

Neal glanced over at Mike. He didn’t look happy at all and Neal felt a strong wave of guilt wash over him. He wished that it was only him this had happen to. He didn’t think that Mike blamed him, but for sure he blamed himself. He reached over and put his hand on Mike’s arm. Mike smiled a little at him then.

Harvey had also noticed that Mike was just sitting there quietly. It was so unlike the kid, normally Mike talked none stop. Normally he came up with different ideas, or he freaked out a little and Harvey had to talk some sense into him. But not this time. It was nothing normal with this time though.

”Hallo! Someone home?” Elizabeth’s cheerful voice interrupted them. Neal climbed down from his chair and ran out to meet her. Peter couldn’t help but smile when he watched Neal disappear in the hall.

When Elizabeth called Mike had also wanted to run after Neal. That was his first thought, but he stopped himself. Why would he do that? She hadn’t had him in mind when she called. He looked up in surprise when he felt Harvey’s hand on his shoulder.

”It’ll be fine Mike.” He was saying. ”We will figure this out.”

“Yeah, okay.” Mike didn’t see how.

Elizabeth walked inside, put her bags down and closed the door behind her. She smiled when she was greeted with little Neal standing in front of her.

“Did you find something?” He asked.

”What do you think this is?” She handed him one of the smaller bags. “Come on.” They walked into the living room and put the bags down.

“Did you buy the whole store, hun?” Peter asked her but she just waved him off. She opened a bag from a clothing store and then another one.

“I bought you three sets of clothes each, some underwear and shoes and a jacket each just in case. Oh, and sleeping wear of course. And this.” She handed Neal a toothbrush and looked around for Mike. He was still seated by the kitchen table, but was looking at them.

“Thank you Elizabeth!” Neal exclaimed. “This is great.”

“Come here Mike. This is for you.” Elizabeth waited until the boy approached her mentioned for the clothes on the couch.

“For me?” He hesitantly asked and looked up at her.

“Let’s go and change Mike.” Neal said, already with a full set of clothes in his arms.

“Go ahead.” Elizabeth told him. He reached for a blue sweater and looked at it. It had a crown in gold printed across the chest. He stared at it. “It was hard to find neutral things in such small sizes.” Elizabeth told him.

“No, thank you. It’s great.” He took the in his arms as well as underwear, socks and a pair of black jeans and followed Neal upstairs. As the boys went upstairs Elizabeth turned to the two men by the table.

“How are things going?”

“Well, at least we know the next step now. We have a plan.” Peter answered.

“Yes, thank you for buying all of that. I would have been lost at it.” Harvey said.

A few minutes later Neal and Mike returned and Elizabeth was pleasantly surprised to see that the clothes fit them. They both looked adorable and Elizabeth got an urge to scoop them up in her lap, but she didn’t. Instead she got the last bag.

“Neal, come here. This is also for you.” She watched as he looked inside it. He looked up at her with surprise written on his face. “Elizabeth, these are toys.”

“Yes, I couldn’t help myself. It’s just some games and toys. You don’t have to use them if you don’t want to. Why don’t you look through them?”

Neal stood with the bag handle in his hand for a minute. It was toys. He couldn’t understand why El had bought that. He glanced in the bag. It was filled with different colored boxes and games, he saw a puzzle as well. And paints and paper. That did look interesting. He wanted to look at that so he put the bag down and pored the content out on the floor and sat down to look at it. There were some things that caught his attention. El had gone all out. There were even a few stuffed toys there.

Mike watched as Neal sat down to look at the things Elizabeth had bought for him. He couldn’t help but feeling a bit jealous. Something was going on inside of his chest. There was

this weird feeling there. He bit his lip a bit and slowly sat down next to Neal. He didn't touch any of Neal's things though. He just wanted to look.

The others sat down at the table with a cup of coffee and watched the boys.

"This is surreal." Harvey was saying. "I can't believe this is even happening right now."

"Yeah, tell me about it." Peter muttered.

"I think they are cute." Elizabeth smiled warmly.

"What are they even doing?" Harvey asked in astonishment as he saw how Neal showed Mike something and Mike carefully taking it in his hands.

"They are playing." Elizabeth said.

"Playing? They are adults. Should they be playing?" Harvey looked at Peter, but felt like his own expression was mirrored in the other man's face.

They drank their coffee and left Mike and Neal to continue playing or whatever they were doing. After that Harvey thought it was time they left. Donna would be meeting them in an hour. He agreed with Peter that they would stay in contact during the next few days. Peter would take the lead in finding out what had happened and how to reverse it. In the meantime, all they could do was wait. Harvey promised to assist in every way he could, however didn't know what he could do to help. But he was going to be kept in the loop.

"Mike it's time to go, come on." Mike looked up at him from the floor and immediately climbed up on his feet from the puzzle he and Neal was working in. He was blushing.

"Yeah sure." He looked back at Neal, suddenly feeling unsure. He also felt embarrassed. He had been playing like a child. But it had been fun! He had forgotten everything else there for a second. Neal still sat there on the floor, deeply concentrated on what he was doing and Mike found himself wishing he could stay. He looked at all the toys and over at Peter and Elizabeth that were standing close to each other. Peter had his arm around his wife. They even had a dog. Neal had told him about him, a very big dog apparently. Mike had always wanted a dog.

"Are you coming?" Harvey had gathered up the clothes Elizabeth had brought for him and was waiting for him. Mike looked at Neal again and bit his tongue hard, so hard that it almost hurt. He wished he had what Neal had. If only he at least could bring one of the games with him. He would have liked that, or even one of the stuffed toys... But he didn't want to ask. Harvey would laugh at him. So he just said goodbye to Neal and followed Harvey to the waiting cab.

"Oh, I wasn't aware you had a kid with you." The cabdriver was saying and got out of the car and went to the trunk and brought out a car seat.

"Oh no...come on." Mike groaned. Harvey looked down on him.

"You are using it." He said.

"No I'm not. I didn't need one on the way over here."

"Well, technically you did need one, only the cab driver didn't have one. This one does."

"I'm not sitting in that." Mike argued when the cab driver held the door opened for him, car seat installed.

"Yes you are." Harvey said from behind him and to Mike's shock he felt Harvey lift him up under the arms and sat him down. He was too surprised to do anything, however he started to protest when Harvey lent over and started to buckle his seat belt.

"NO, stop it, Harvey! Stop."

"Mike, you are sitting in it." Harvey told him. Harvey tried to use a stern voice. He knew what he was asking of the kid, how Mike must feel humiliated, but he was too small to safely wear a normal seat belt. If something happened he could get seriously hurt, and the car seat would prevent it. He saw that Mike's face was starting to take on a reddish color as he started to protest again and tried to squirm out of the seat.

"Young man, you need to listen to your father and sit down. Otherwise I can't take you anywhere." Harvey got unexpected help from the front seat. The man had turned around and was watching Mike with a serious expression. It worked because Mike stilled, and Harvey took the opportunity to fasten his seatbelt before getting in next to him. Mike didn't say another word.

Mike was too stunned to protest. This was the first time someone had actually talked to him like he really was a kid. He had also believed that Harvey was his dad. It surprised him that Harvey hadn't said anything about it. But maybe that would be weird if he denied being Mike's father. Maybe the cab driver would think Harvey had kidnapped him or something. So he decided not to make things worse. He sat in silence the entire way to Harvey's apartment. So did Harvey. When Mike glanced at him after a while, Harvey wasn't paying him any attention at all.

#### *-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-*

Neal was a bit down about that Mike had to leave. It was nice having him there, they had gotten through almost half the puzzle Elizabeth bought him. She came and sat down on the floor next to him after Mike and Harvey had left.

"You did a good job there." She told him.

"You should have bought a harder one." He said, ignoring the fact that she had praised him like you would a small child.

"Maybe I should have sweetie." She leaned forwards and picked up one of the stuffed toys. A small bear. "Oh, I bought this for Mike. We forgot to give it to him." She said.

"Elizabeth, we are not little kids." Neal said, even though he knew how it sounded.

"You are never too old for this. Look how cute." She held up the bear to her face and smiled. Neal couldn't help but laugh, making her stroke his cheek. Neal stopped and just looked into her eyes. For a long time they locked eyes. Neal quelled the urge in him to jump up and threw himself in Elizabeth's arms.

"This is for you." She picked up the other bear, identical except in a different color. Neal took it in his hands and stopped himself from hugging it to his chest.

"Thank you." He said.

The rest of the day they spent watching a movie on the couch, Neal got to get reacquainted with Satchmo, which worked out fine, he wasn't so bad after all just big, and with getting a visit from Mozzie.

"Are you kidding me? Is this a joke? Did you do this suit? Did you want to be able to control him better?" was Mozzie's first words.

"What? No? I didn't turn Neal into a child. And who says I will be able to control him better like this." Peter exclaimed. He didn't like what Mozzie was implying. It hadn't been his fault. He had done everything he could to keep Neal safe, this time too. Only it hadn't worked. Peter was terrified really. What if they couldn't find a way to fix this? He hadn't said anything to the others, but he was pretty sure they all thought it. The situation was so extreme. Neal and Mike were children.

It seemed like Neal's mind was still in there, but it had surprised him that Neal had accepted the bag full of toys El had gotten him. What was that about? Neal wanted to play now? Was his mind a child's?

Now however Neal defended him and briefly explained the whole thing to Mozzie.

"Well you are kind of cute. Is this what you looked like when you were small?" Mozzie asked. Neal glared at him.

"So will you help us fix it?"

"Sure. And Mike is the same?"

"Yes, you got to help him too!" Neal's voice rose in volume.

"Of course. It will be fine Neal." Mozzie tried to sound reassuringly. Peter wasn't sure he bought it. He hadn't been alone with Neal yet. Honestly he actually felt a bit nervous about that. He wasn't great with kids. Sure this was Neal, but his appearance made it hard to remember that. The brown curls and big blue eyes made you see the resemblance of adult Neal, but the fact that he now didn't even reach Peter's waist and his absolutely tiny hands held a stuffed animal made it hard. After Mozzie left Peter sat down next to Neal on the couch. El was in the kitchen preparing dinner.

"You like that?" Peter asked. "Does it have a name?"

“What? No!” Neal said and dropped the stuffed toy on the floor.

“So, you doing okay?” Peter asked.

”Yes.” Neal said.

”It must be tough though. All of this.”

“You said we will fix it.”

“Yes we will Neal. It just might take some time.”

Neal nodded and looked up at Peter for a moment before turning away. He wanted to believe Peter. He hesitated but he just had to ask.

“What will happen to me in the meantime? What about work? The marshals?”

”We’ll figure something out. You don’t have to worry about that. We’ll just say you are sick or something.”

“Will that work?”

“Sure.” Peter said absentmindedly. Not convincing to Neal, but he left it alone for now. He was kind of tired. After dinner Neal decided to finish the puzzle. It helped with getting his thoughts off other things. When it was time for bed Neal found the discarded bear on the floor. He managed to sneak it upstairs without Peter noticing.

### *-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-*

Donna arrived exactly when she had said. She knocked on Harvey’s door and waited. He greeted her with a thankful smile when he opened it.

“Where is he?” she asked. She still doubted this insane story that Harvey and Mike had told her. Sure Mike had sounded different on the phone, but something like that was impossible. Right?

But there was a small blond boy standing next to the couch in Harvey’s living room. She blinked a few times but he was still there.

“Hi Donna.” He said.

”Mike? No...”

”Yes, it’s me.”

”You can’t be a child.”

“Surprise.”

“What did I wear to work last Tuesday?” Donna asked him.

“What?”

“Mike would have known.”

“Ehm...I don’t really notice those kind of things.”

“You don’t?” Donna tipped her head to the side. “Mike should. But fine, what did I tell Harvey after the meeting?”

“You said that if you hadn’t been Donna you would have told him I told you so.”

“Mike?”

“Yes.”

“Oh it’s really you.”

“I told you.”

”You did. I was just making sure.” She watched as Mike shrugged his shoulders a bit, looking down on the floor.

They sat down and Harvey and Mike brought Donna up to speed. She asked them a lot of questions and they did their best to answer all of them.

For Mike the rest of the day past slowly. He wished he could go back to Neal. He missed him. But he was stuck here at Harvey’s place now. He had nothing to do here. Harvey allowed him to watch TV while he continued to talk to Donna. He wished he could go back to his own place, at least just to get a few things. Maybe a couple of books. Harvey didn’t have any of those what he could see.

After dinner Mike started to get really bored. He wanted to do something. Anything really. Not just watch TV. Harvey and Donna were just talking and that was boring. Mike didn’t want to talk anymore. He started to wander around Harvey’s apartment in pursuit of something to do. He still didn’t know where his phone was. He must have forgotten it somewhere. Otherwise, if he had it, he could have called Neal. Somehow he felt a bit lonely. He felt that earlier too, before all this, but now it felt stronger. In fact most of the things he was feeling he was feeling it stronger than before. Weird.

He stopped by the window. Harvey really did have a great view. It was getting dark now. The lights of the city started to show and Mike wanted to look closer. He reached for the door handle. He was almost too short for it, but he managed to get the door opened and stepped outside. He leaned against the glass admiring the view. He could look at this forever. It was so beautiful.

“Mike? What the hell are you doing?” He couldn’t help but flinch when he heard Harvey’s angry voice behind him. “Get in here.” Harvey came towards him, he looked so angry that Mike found himself backing away. Harvey didn’t care though, he just grabbed Mike’s upper arm and dragged him inside.

“Stop! Let me go!” Mike yelled. His arm hurt. He dragged it out of Harvey’s grip and glared up at the older man. “What?”

”What? You don’t disappear like that, and you don’t go out there by yourself. Is that clear!”

”What are you talking about, I didn’t disappear and I can go wherever I want.” Mike responded.

“The hell you can’t! Not as long as you’re staying under my roof.”

“Well, then take me back to my place. You won’t have to care what I do.”

“Yeah, don’t be stupid Mike.”

“I’m not stupid!”

“Okay, let’s all cool down.” Donna interrupted their yelling. Mike glared up at Harvey. He didn’t know what the big deal was. He hadn’t done anything wrong at all and now Harvey was furious at him for some reason.

“Fine.” Harvey grumbled. ”Sit on the couch.” He told Mike and turned his back against him and walked to the kitchen. He noticed that Mike did what he said, even though he was muttering something to himself.

Harvey and Donna had been talking when Donna suddenly asked where Mike was. The called for him, but didn’t get a reply.

“Mike? Where are you?”

”Honey? Mike?”

”This isn’t some game Mike. Get over here.” They looked in all the rooms and Harvey felt his heart starting to beat faster. Where the hell was the kid? His only tiny shoes were standing there on the floor, so unless the kid had walked out barefoot he had to be somewhere. This wasn’t a great start. He lost Mike on the first day?

“Harvey!” He looked over at Donna and saw her nodding towards the windows. Damn it! There he was. He was out on the balcony. He looked so small against the city behind him. Harvey felt unexplainably angry at the kid for getting him to worry like that. For no reason at all. And Mike didn’t get what he had done wrong either. He was pouting on the couch now as Harvey pored himself a drink. He certainly needed one.

A little while later Donna left with promises of returning the next day and Harvey ordered Mike to go to bed. Mike argued a little, but soon he was curled up in the couch beneath the covers.



“See you tomorrow. And don’t do anything stupid.” Harvey went over to his own bed leaving Mike alone in the living room in his new pajamas with trains on it. Mike didn’t answer and Harvey left.

It was cold under the covers. Harvey had turned all the light off, Mike could barely see anything. He decided that he didn’t like that. Harvey was mad at him now. He wasn’t sure how that even had happened. Donna hadn’t helped him either. Mike wished she would have. He thought of Elizabeth. She would probably have helped him. Neal would have been on his side too. But he was alone now.

He couldn’t sleep. His whole body was tense as he listened for sounds. There wasn’t any, but he still couldn’t relax. He wished he wasn’t alone here. He almost wished that Harvey would come back. Even if he was angry at him. He wondered what Neal was doing. He was probably sleeping already. Harvey had said that it was late.

Mike curled into himself as much as he could and pulled the cover over his head. He tried to not think of anything at all. It was hard though, so much had happened and it was so much he didn’t know. What was going to happen to him now? How long would he have to stay like this? What if he never turned back? He didn’t want to think about that at all. But what about his job? He loved his job, he didn’t want to lose it but was pretty sure that he couldn’t be a three year old associate. Eventually he fell asleep.

*-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-*

## Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading, reviewing and the kudos. I really appreciate it! It's encouraging.

Also, if you have any ideas of what you would like to read in this story, please tell me and I can probably do something about it :)

## Chapter 10

Neal blinked his eyes open. He was a bit warm so he kicked the cover off him but remained in bed. He raised his arm and looked at his hand. It was so small and it still shocked him a bit to see it. He also had a blue sweater with stars on it. Elizabeth had told him that he looked adorable when she came to say good night to him last night. Luckily he had fallen asleep pretty quickly last night. It had been an eventful day yesterday. It had been so nice to see Mike. He could remember the last time before yesterday, he had played with Mike. Maybe not the last time but he did remember once when Mike had been about 13 or 14 and came knocking on Neal's door with a deck of cards in his hands. Neal hadn't been up for playing but agreed after Mike begging him. They ended up playing the entire night, even after their grandmother had told them to stop a few times. He remembered it fondly.

Yesterday had been kind of like that. He had had the same kind of feeling. Nothing else had been on his mind at that moment. He hadn't have to think about what Peter would think if he did that, or said that. He didn't need to worry about how the other FBI agents was going to treat him or how to get what Peter wanted from his contacts, and so forth. He had really been focused on what he was doing right at that moment, and had enjoyed himself, even though they were in a great deal of trouble and his future was uncertain to say the least. But with Mike on the living room floor he had forgotten about the mess he had gotten them all into.

"Good morning Neal." Elizabeth peaked inside his room. "You want to come down for some breakfast?" she asked. Neal nodded and crawled out of bed and followed her downstairs where Peter was waiting by the table.

What Neal didn't know was that Peter and Elizabeth had been waiting for some time for him to come down. Both of them wanting to wait for Neal before eating.

"How long can he sleep?" Peter grumbled. He was hungry after all.

"He is a child, he had a long day yesterday."

"It's so weird hearing you say that, now when it's actually true."

"Why don't you go and wake him up honey?" Elizabeth smiled.

"Eh...yes, sure." Peter glance hesitantly up at the stairs. "Or maybe we should just let him sleep. What if he gets cranky if we wake him?"

"I'll do it." Elizabeth told him and went upstairs. Peter couldn't help but feel amazed when he saw Neal coming down after his wife. He was holding on to the railing and looking down at his feet as to not fall.

"Hi Peter." Neal said and climbed up onto one of the chairs.

"Hi Neal." Peter couldn't help but smile at him. "Did you sleep well?"

“Yes I did.” Neal tried to reach the cereal. Peter helped him out and got him a bowl and a spoon as well. He took the milk carton from Neal’s hand and poured the milk for him, ignoring Neal’s claims that he could do it himself.

Elizabeth laughed at them and offered Neal some juice. They were cute, and she couldn’t help but enjoy the scene in front of her. Neal tried to argue with Peter but he wouldn’t have it. Neal grimaced at him and Elizabeth almost thought that he was going to stick his tongue out, but he didn’t.

After breakfast Neal quickly got bored. It was Saturday so they were all staying at home. Peter told him that he had made some phone calls but it wasn’t much to do until tomorrow.

“I’m bored.” Neal complained to Peter. The older man was sitting at the table reading a newspaper. Peter glanced down at him when he spoke.

“Okay.” He said.

”Peter...”

”Didn’t El get you some toys yesterday?” He smirked. ”Go and play with them.”

“I’m not going to play with toys.” Neal said with force. He wasn’t. He didn’t want to do that. Not at the moment at least, besides it wasn’t as fun to do it alone.

“You did yesterday.” Peter remarked.

”I’m not today.”

”Well, what do you want me to do about it?”

“I don’t know. Entertain me?” It was worth a shot. But Peter just leaned forward grabbed a discarded section of the newspaper he had and pushed it into Neal’s hands. “Here. Enjoy.” He said. Neal glared at him and left the paper on the floor making Peter groan at him.

Before Neal could do anything else Elizabeth came out to them with Satchmo in a tow.

“Why don’t you boys go out for a walk?” She suggested, smiling at Neal who carefully petted the dog. “Here you go.” He handed the leash to Neal, who happily accepted. He really wanted to go outside for a dog walk. He had never done that before, and he got to hold the leash!

“Honey...” Peter groaned again, this time directed towards his wife. He wasn’t as excited as Neal.

“You need a walk too.” El said. “Off you go.” She shooed them towards the door. “Do you need help with your shoes Neal?” She asked.

“No thank you Elizabeth, but you can hold on to this.” He handed her back the leash and sat down on the floor to get his shoes on. It was a reflex that he did that, he just figured that it would be easier that way.

Peter waited by the door for him when he was done. He was holding Satchmo now. Neal had wanted to do that. He looked up at Elizabeth.

“The stairs are tricky with Satchmo.” She said. “Peter will let you hold him when you are downstairs.”

“I will?” Peter questioned.

“Yes.” She waved at them as they left.

Peter did leave the leash in Neal’s small hand and told him to hold on tight. Neal promised he would. “I will Peter.” He said. Peter couldn’t help but smile as the child laughed of joy as Satchmo made a dash forward dragging Neal along.

They went to a park close and then back towards house. Neal was proudly holding on to the leash. It was fun, he enjoyed it a lot. Satchmo was a good dog. But as they were walking on the sidewalk halfway back to Peter and El’s house when Satchmo happened to see another dog on the other side of the road. He barked loudly and immediately took off towards it. Neal wasn’t prepared at all and was harshly pulled to the side and wasn’t able to stay on his feet. He fell forward and ended up losing his grip on the leash.

Peter hadn’t been prepared either but stopped in shock as Satchmo ran out into the street and Neal was splayed on his stomach by his feet. “Shit!” Peter swore. “Dammit Neal. I told you to hold on.” Neal was still on the ground and Peter hesitated for just a second, but Satchmo was almost across the road by now.

“You stay here. You don’t move. You get that?” He told Neal and then ran after Satchmo.

Neal’s heart was pounding hard in his chest as he started to pick himself off the ground. He noticed that he was shaking a little and that he was hurting. His knee really hurt as did his elbow. Why did it hurt so much? He had just fallen on the ground, it wasn’t supposed to hurt that much but it did. And Peter had yelled at him! It hadn’t been his fault. How was he supposed to have stopped Satchmo? He was so big now. Or rather, he was small. He didn’t want Peter to be mad at him, so he didn’t dare to move. He just stood there on the sidewalk where Peter had told him to stand. Peter had caught Satchmo and was talking to the lady that had the other dog that Satchmo had wanted to say hi to.

Peter yelled at his dog to stop and he did, not because he listened to Peter but because he had reached his destination. Peter grabbed the leash from the ground and apologized to the lady with the other dog.

“It’s no problem.”

“It was Neal...eh the kid, was holding the leash and Satchmo decided to run off.”

She smiled and snapped her fingers and her dog sat down next to her, making Peter a bit envious as he looked down at Satchmo.

“Well, it is a pretty big dog you got there. No wonder your son couldn’t control him.”

“Eh...my? Yeah. Yeah, I know.” Peter stuttered, taken by surprise.

”It’s really no problem. Have a nice day.” She left and Peter went back to Neal, who actually was standing exactly where he had left him.

“Let’s go.” Peter told him and started walking back. He was a bit mad at himself for letting Neal hold the leash by himself. He didn’t notice that Neal had trouble following him. Neal’s leg hurt with every step he took. It hurt and it was stinging. Maybe it was broken? No, it couldn’t be, that was stupid. He wouldn’t be able to walk then. But he wished that they would slow down. He didn’t want to ask Peter though, because he was pretty sure Peter was mad at him. Maybe it had been his fault after all? Peter seemed to think so. He almost felt like bursting out in tears. Where was that need coming from? He would have to hold it in though. Peter would get uncomfortable, and maybe even angry.

Neal’s legs ached by the time they reached the house. He quietly followed Peter through the door. Elizabeth came and greeted the three of them in the hallway. Neal took off his shoes and jacket. He didn’t know where to put it, he couldn’t reach the hanger. But Elizabeth helped him out and took it from him.

“Do you want to help me prepare lunch Neal?” Elizabeth asked him then. And he looked up at her.

“I’m a bit tired Elizabeth, I would love to help you, but...”

“Neal, help El out in the kitchen.” Peter sternly told him.

“Do I have to?” Neal whined before he could stop himself.

“Yes.” Peter said. “Of course not.” Elizabeth said at the same time. Neal looked between them.

“I would like to be alone.” He then said looking down again.

“It’s fine. Why don’t you go upstairs and rest for a while then.” Elizabeth suggested and Neal, after a glance at Peter, made it for the stairs before anything else was said.

“Don’t do anything stupid up there.” Peter called after him.

“Peter!”

“What?”

El rolled her eyes and walked away from her husband into the kitchen. He followed her.

“How was the walk?” She asked, knowing something had happened for Neal to behave like that. He had been happily chatting with Peter when she had watched them leave earlier. Now he wanted to be alone?

“It was okay.” Peter answered.

“But?”

“Satchmo ran away from Neal, ran across the road and everything.”

“Oh.”

“Yeah, I shouldn’t have let him hold him. He wasn’t strong enough to resist him.”

“What happened?” Peter told her and she asked another question. “So is he okay? Did you even check to make sure he didn’t hurt himself?”

“Eh...well.”

“Peter.”

“I didn’t think of that. You think he did? Should I go and ask him?”

“Let’s just leave him be for now, he said he wanted to be alone after all.”

Peter was about to argue but thought better of it at El’s gaze. However he went to his wife half an hour later asking the same question again. They went upstairs together. Peter knocked on the guestroom door.

“Neal?” He felt the door handle. It was locked. He turned to Elizabeth with raised eyebrows. She just waved at him to try again. “Neal, open the door.” He knocked again. They heard nothing from inside and the door didn’t open.

Inside the room Neal was sitting on the floor next to the bed. He couldn’t see the door, but heard Peter calling for him to open it. He hugged his good knee tighter to himself, the other stretched out in front of him. It still hurt. Peter sounded mad again. Why couldn’t he just be left alone?

As soon as Neal got inside his room earlier he had locked the door behind him and sat down right there on the floor. He felt like he wanted to cry, but decided that he wouldn’t. He wasn’t a kid, not really. But right now he had all of these emotions. He felt sad, angry and a little scared. He was angry at Peter for yelling at him and for ordering him around like he did. Like he always did. He always thought that everything was Neal’s fault. This time it hadn’t been. He hadn’t been able to help it when Satchmo ran off like that. And now his knee and arm hurt. He carefully pulled his sleeve away to look at the damage. His elbow was a bit red but wasn’t bleeding. He didn’t want to look at his knee. So he just sat there, waiting for something, he didn’t know what. To feel better maybe. For it to stop hurting. It shouldn’t hurt at all. Maybe if he just stopped thinking about it, it wouldn’t.

Then Peter was there. Neal didn’t want to open. He didn’t want Peter to yell at him again, so he did nothing. It didn’t help and the door opened a moment later. Peter had a key of course.

He felt vulnerable sitting like that on the floor while Peter towered above him. He was so big. Neal could feel his heart start to beat faster and he hugged his knee tighter. Peter was telling him not to lock the door, and what was going on with him?

“What are you even doing on the floor?” Peter asked and Neal just bowed his head down.

“Neal!” Peter could see how Neal flinched. His wife saw it too.

“Peter.” El stopped Peter’s tirade and he looked at his wife with questioning eyes. “Why don’t you go and wait for us downstairs.” It wasn’t a question and Peter decided to just do what she said. Neal looked so small where he was on the floor.

Elizabeth crouched down in front of the small child when Peter left. She had a hard time remembering that this was Neal in front of her and not a little boy.

“I thought you and I could talk for a while, without Peter here.” She told him and he nodded. He was still hugging his leg. It was so unlike Neal. “Are you doing okay?” She asked him. He didn’t answer her and just looked down on the floor in front of him.

“Peter told me you two had a little accident with Satchmo on your walk.” She tried. He nodded and mumbled something she couldn’t make out.

“Satchmo got away from you right?”

“It wasn’t my fault!” Neal couldn’t help but tell her that. “He...I... he I couldn’t hold him.”

“I know Neal.” Elizabeth said then, surprising him. She knew?

“Neal?” She asked then and waited until he met her eyes. “Peter said that you fell. Did you hurt yourself?” Neal hesitated for just a moment before he nodded. Elizabeth had to stop herself from overreacting and swoop him up in her arms. She had to yet again remind herself that this was Neal Caffrey in front of her. It was hard, because of how much he now looked like a hurt small little boy.

“Yeah?” She said instead. “You want to show me?”

Neal hesitated for just a moment before showing her his arm. She carefully stroke it and he blinked up at her. “Anywhere else?” She asked.

“My knee.” Neal whispered. “It hurts.”

She helped him pull it up to expose the torn skin on his knee. It was bleeding a bit and Neal bit his lip. It was like it hurt more now when he could see it. Elizabeth nodded and then told him that she would be right back. He silently waited for her. She returned with some paper and some supplies for bandage him. She quietly talked to him as she found a plaster that she put on his knee. She told him that Satchmo was a big dog and that Peter had lost him too once when he ran away to another dog.

“Don’t tell Peter I told you that.” She whispered and Neal promised he wouldn’t. The plaster really helped because after that he agreed to follow Elizabeth downstairs to help her prepare for something to eat. He knew that he was acting differently, the thought was in the back of his mind, but when he walked there next to Elizabeth he found that he didn’t care.

-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-

Harvey stared at Mike’s sleeping form. The blond hair and the small face. He still couldn’t believe that this was Mike. His associate. He was wearing a bright blue pajamas with some sort of print on them. Trains? Harvey debated on whether or not he should awake him or not.

In the end he decided against it. He somehow found it a bit difficult to talk to this version of Mike, at least it had been so far. It was hard to take Mike seriously when he looked like he did now. He thought he was managing it pretty well so far, but it was just different.

Mike had apparently been tired because he continued to sleep. He didn't know if this was usual for Mike. Mike had never slept over at his place before, but on the other hand he was often late, so maybe he like to sleep late. He had some trouble to stop thinking about yesterday. Especially the feeling when he thought that he had lost Mike. He wasn't sure if he had ever felt like that before. He kind of thought that he had been a bit harsh towards Mike after he found him out on the balcony. He had basically dragged the kid by his arm. But what had he been thinking wondering off like that?

Mike woke up an hour or so later. He felt his heart sink a bit when he realized where he was, and more importantly what he still was. A child. He slowly sat up and looked around the room. Harvey was nowhere to be seen, so he got up to go and look for him. Harvey sat in a chair by the huge windows next to the door to the terrace, he looked up when he noticed Mike.

"Hey. It was about time you woke up." He said and smiled a little at him. That made Mike feel a bit better, so he walked over to where Harvey was.

"You good?" Harvey asked him. The kid's hair was all messed up, and his cheeks were rosy from sleep. Harvey had managed to start focusing on something else than the fact that kid-Mike was on his couch. He was pretty proud of himself for that.

"Sure." Mike answered and Harvey nodded a bit and looked back at the papers in his lap. He didn't want to lose his concentration. Mike stood next to him for a while. "Eh...have you eaten?" Mike asked then. He was hungry after all.

"Yeah, i have. But help yourself." Harvey mentioned to the kitchen.

"Okay. Thanks." Mike hesitantly walked over. He looked up at the cupboards. How on earth was he supposed to reach anything? He wasn't even sure he could open the fridge. He did managed to open it though, but couldn't reach the milk that he wanted. It was on the top shelf. Maybe if he climbed and held on to the door? It worked and he could actually reach it! However his hand was too small to grab the carton, and he would need both hands. He jumped back down on the floor and looked over at Harvey. He was just sitting there. Why wasn't he helping?

He decided to give it another try. He could do it. Turned out he couldn't. He did the same maneuver as before, only this time he let go of the shelf to be able to grab the milk with both hands. For a second he thought he had it, but then he lost his balance and had to choose between hitting the floor, back first, or let go of the milk. He choose the later. The milk spilled everywhere and he ended up on the floor next to it.

Harvey's attention was immediately pulled from the case he was working on when he heard the loud thump coming from the kitchen. Mike! He rushed to the kitchen and was met with the sight of milk and Mike on the floor.



“Shit! What did you do?” He couldn’t stop himself from exclaiming, and went over to save at least some of the milk that was still pouring out. He put the rest of the milk back in the fridge.

“Nothing.” Mike mumbled and picked himself off the floor.

“It’s milk all over my kitchen floor.”

“I dropped it, okay. Sorry.”

“Dammit Mike, it’s practically the whole carton here.” He mentioned to the floor.

“I didn’t mean to do it! How was I supposed to reach it?”

“You could have just asked me!” Harvey almost yelled, and Mike took a few steps back.

“I’ll clean it up, okay.” He muttered. Harvey wasn’t being fair.

“You better.” Harvey muttered back. He then went to get cleaning supplies. Mike tried to find some paper or something, but everything was so high up. He started to push a chair towards the bench to climb and reach, but before he could get up Harvey was back and pushed the chair back.

“Come on, stop. What are you doing?” He said and pushed Mike out of the way as well as he started to clean up.

“I thought you wanted me to do that?” Mike said.

“I better take care of it myself.” Harvey told him. Harvey did it quickly all the while Mike was just standing there staring at him. He felt angry at Harvey. He just pushed him aside with his giant hands, just as you would a child. But he wasn’t a child! Harvey didn’t think he could do anything by himself.

“There.” Harvey said when he was done. ”Try and not to do anything else stupid.” Harvey started to walk back.

“So I’m not getting anything to eat then?!” Mike yelled after him. He was hungry and the thought of not getting anything to eat messed him up.

“Of course you do.” Harvey stopped and came back. Mike was standing there with a heaving chest following his every move with his eyes. As Harvey reached for a bowl he realized that there was no way Mike would have been able to reach it. That had been stupid of him. He should have helped Mike from the start.

“Did you hurt yourself?” He asked, his back still towards Mike. He must have fallen down after all.

Mike was surprised when Harvey asked him that. “I’m fine.” He said though.

“Let’s sit you down here.” Harvey walked with the breakfast bowl and a glass of water to the couch. He wanted to tell Mike to not spill anything on his couch, but managed to keep it in.

he wasn't sure if Mike was pissed at him or not.

The day passed slowly for Mike. After breakfast he watched some TV. Asked Harvey for work and was given a file. He got through it in a lot longer time than normal. He had some trouble concentrating. He complained a bit to Harvey.

"Why do we have to do this? It's Sunday Harvey?"

"Do something else then. I'm not forcing you to do this." Harvey said.

"What should I do then?"

"Stop whining for one."

"I'm not whining." Harvey just looked at him with a raised eyebrow.

"Fine." Mike muttered and stood up to go and amuse himself. It wasn't that much to do at Harvey's place, so eventually he ended up watching more TV. Things got a bit more interesting when Donna came though. She stayed and had dinner with them.

After she left Harvey thought it was time to go to sleep again. Mike disagreed, but Harvey said that he was tired and that he was going to bed himself. So he left Mike in the living room alone and went to his bedroom.

Harvey was tired. He had spent a lot of time with work today, but hadn't gotten that much done. Mike was distracting. Not that he did anything, but just his presence and his appearance. Mike couldn't help it of course, but it was distracting to have a child in his apartment, even if it was Mike.

Sometimes it was hard to remember that it in fact was Mike. He had to stop himself from actually talking to him like he would a child. He was pretty sure Mike wouldn't appreciate it.

They had talked a bit about what they would do tomorrow. Harvey needed to get to work, but he just couldn't bring Mike with him. Mike had argued a lot. He wanted to come, he claimed that he could work.

"I know you can, that's not the issue here Mike. The issue is that you look like a baby. I can't have a toddler doing briefs for me!"

"Shut up! I'm not a baby. This isn't my fault. You can't do this."

"I can Mike. This is how it's going to be, you are not coming with me to work."

Donna intervened before Mike started yelling again, telling them that they would start out like this. Mike had to be reasonable she argued. "Mike, Harvey knows that you still can work, he is not questioning that."

"But it's not my fault." Mike repeated and Harvey and Donna shared a look.

"I know." Harvey told him. "And we will start working on how to get you back to normal tomorrow. Until then you just have to be patient Mike. I'll leave you some files here, okay?"

Mike agreed after that. Hopefully they would be able to work this out fast. After all, Mike was right. This wasn't his fault, it wasn't right that he got his whole life turned upside down. However Harvey had no idea on how they would reverse this.

Mike had trouble falling asleep. He was laying on the couch under the blanket trying to keep his eyes closed. He wasn't ready to go to sleep. He wished that he and Harvey could have stayed up for a bit longer. They could have been drinking something and just talked. That wasn't going to happen though. He just laid there alone now. He felt alone. More alone than he had in a long time. Before all of this happened it hadn't been so bad. He had gotten reconnected with Neal, enjoyed his work and thought he had gotten closer with Harvey and the rest of his colleagues.

Everything was different now. It was almost like he suddenly didn't matter anymore. He was just an inconvenience now, a problem that needed to be fixed. He kind of agreed with that though, they really needed to fix this. But as it looked now, he wasn't sure that would happen in the close future.

At least Neal was in the same position as he was. He suddenly felt a strong urge to talk to Neal and decided to call him. He found his phone and dialed Neal's number. His heart sank though when Neal didn't answer.

-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-

Things between Peter and Neal felt a bit strenuous when he and Elizabeth came down the stairs, at least from Neal's point of view. However after making some sandwiches with Elizabeth Peter came up to him and asked if they could talk. Neal agreed of course and Peter surprised him by apologizing.

"I just got surprised, you know. Satchmo just ran out in the street like that, he could have been hit by a car. But it wasn't your fault Neal. I should have helped you holding the leash."

Neal didn't know what to say to that. He was conflicted. He didn't want to admit that it might have been a good idea for Peter to help him, but maybe he was right. He just shrugged his shoulders.

"Elizabeth said that you hurt yourself." Peter carefully said. "Are you okay?"

"Yes, it doesn't hurt anymore now Peter." Neal smiled up at him. Peter had some trouble smiling back. He patted Neal's shoulder though. "That's good buddy." He said. "So what's for lunch?"

Peter felt pretty bad when he listened to Neal telling what was on the sandwiches he had helped Elizabeth making. The kid had been hurt and he hadn't even noticed. El had scolded him a bit when she came out from the guestroom in search for band aids. He had acted too harshly towards Neal. He wouldn't do that mistake again if he could help it. Neal was a child

now, and even if he still was Neal in his mind things were changed. They would have to adapt to that now.

The rest of the day they spent inside. El and Neal played some card games while Peter prepared for the next day and watched a game.

El would stay home with Neal tomorrow and Peter would go to work. He planned on bringing Jones and Diana home to meet this version of Neal and get them involved in helping them figure this out. They needed all the help they could get. He also set up a meeting with Mozzie for later that day. He also planned to give Harvey Spector a call.

Neal seemed tired pretty early so he went to bed. El and Peter stayed up a bit later discussing their current situation. It was all a bit overwhelming.

-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-

# Chapter 11

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Neal woke up too early. It was not even six a clock and he felt wide awake. He tried to stay in bed a while longer but it was so boring to just lay there and wait. It wasn't like he was going to be able to sleep again. He listened if he could hear any signs of Peter and Elizabeth being up, but heard nothing. They were probably still sleeping. He search around the room for something to do. He found his phone and turned it on. The first thing he saw was two missed calls from Mike. Oh no, he thought, he must have left it silent.

He didn't even think about the fact that it was early, he just hit re-dial. Mike answered after three signals.

*"Neal?"* he said.

"Hi Mike. Where you sleeping?" Neal asked.

*"Yes. I was. But it's okay. I called you yesterday."* It was just a statement nothing else.

"Yeah, I know. I'm sorry. How are you doing Mike?"

*"I don't know. This is all so weird. I kept waking up tonight hoping it was just a dream. It never was though."* Mike said quietly.

Neal didn't know what to say to that. He just felt sad and guilty. It was all his fault. He was to blame for Mike and his own situation.

"I'm sorry." He said eventually. Mike was quiet for a while as well. Maybe he didn't know what to say to that either. Maybe Mike was thinking the exact same thing as Neal was, that it was his fault.

*"I just hope we will go back to normal soon. I don't remember it being this difficult to be a child."*

"You didn't know what you do now then. It's not that strange." Neal answered.

*"I don't know if that's a good thing or not."*

Neal had to agree to some extent. Maybe it had been easier to be a child also in mind, but probably not. They talked a while longer before hanging up with promises of talking again soon.

Neal decided to head up after that. He carefully crept past Peter and Elizabeth's bedroom and made his way downstairs. He stopped in the living room at the sight of Satchmo coming towards him. He had to quell the urge to run upstairs again as Satchmo went to lick him across his face. He manage to dodge and couldn't help but laugh a little. He petted the dog

and Satchmo whipped his tail happily. He joined Neal on the couch after that and Neal managed to put on the TV.

“Are you even allowed on the couch?” He asked the dog. “Peter will be mad. You don’t want that.”

Satchmo wanted to lick his hand as a reply.

That’s how Peter found them half an hour later.

“Oh, Neal. Hi.” Peter said as he saw them. He had woken and found himself walking straight to the guestroom to check on Neal. It was like a reflex, wake up and check on Neal. Panic rushed through him as soon as he saw that Neal wasn’t in his room. He went downstairs and relaxed when he found Neal on the couch with Satchmo’s head in his lap.

“Hi Peter.” Neal smiled.

They had breakfast when El came up to join them and after that Peter needed to head over to the office. Peter were a bit hesitant to leave him at the house alone with El and his dog. El just laughed at him and assured him that she would handle everything. She talked about going shopping with Neal. He still needed a few things she said. Peter wasn’t sure about that, but Neal seemed content with joining El for the day.

Neal had a pretty nice day. He and Elizabeth took a cab into town and went to a shopping mall. He didn’t mind spending time with Elizabeth, more like the opposite. He liked her company.

“Do you want to sit in the seat?” Elizabeth smiled at him and indicated at the cart she was pushing in front of her. Neal just groaned at her.

When Peter came to the office he started by contacting the marshals. He gave them some story about Neal being very ill and that he would be staying at his place for now. After some time he managed to convince them that Neal wasn’t going to be able to work and took a risk when inviting them to come and see for themselves just how sick Neal was. They politely declined and told him to report when Neal was better again.

His next step was to talk to the rest of his team. He called Jones and Diana into his office and asked them to sit down.

“What’s up boss?” Jones asked when Peter was quiet, trying to figure out how to start.

“Well...” he started. “As you may have noticed Neal isn’t here this morning. Something happened.”

“Is he alright?” Diana asked.

Peter nodded slowly. “Yes, during the circumstances he is fine. He is just different.”

“You are not making much sense Peter. What circumstances?” Jones watched him closely.

Peter looked at both of them. “Look, this is hard to believe and it is going to sound crazy, but just hear me out.” He saw how his younger collages gave each other a look before they turned back to him.

He then told them everything from the beginning to end, and watched their expressions of disbelief. When he was finished with the story he waited for their reactions.

“Boss, even if this would explain some things concerning the case...” Diana started. “It’s just really hard to believe.”

”I know how it sounds, but I was thinking that we could head over to my place around lunch.”

“So Neal is there?”

“Yeah, he is home with Elizabeth.”

They agreed to go with him, even if Jones looked like he thought Peter was messing with them.

“We are going to make this case our priority. We need to fix this. Jones I need you to look into the labs more thoroughly.” He handed out assignments to them and went to work himself.

By lunch they all went in one car over to Peter’s house. Peter had called El and she was at home with Neal. She had also promised them something to eat.

Neal was sitting on the floor next to Satchmo with one of the puzzles in front of him. He seemed to like those things. Both Jones and Diana stopped dead in their tracks to stare at the little boy as soon as they laid eyes on him. Neal noticed them and looked up at them smiling.

“Hi Clinton. Hi Diana.” He said and stood up. Jones just stared with his mouth open and Diana offered a weak hello.

It took almost all of the lunch to get them both convinced that this kid in fact was Neal Caffrey. Neal was the one that was able to convince them. He told them things about them that only Neal could know. But after that was out of the way both Jones and Diana promised to do their best to help solving this. They were all more motivated.

#### *-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-*

Mike tried to go back to sleep after talking to Neal, after thirty minutes or so of laying awake he succeeded, only to have Harvey come and wake him up what felt like two minutes later.

“I thought you wanted breakfast.” Harvey said. He was already dressed in a suit and tie and went to the kitchen without even checking if Mike got up or not.

“We need to go over some ground rules.” Harvey said as he watched how Mike tried to climb on of the chairs at the kitchen island. “Do you want me to help with that?” he asked.

Mike managed to glare at him. "What ground rules?" He asked when he was seated. "I don't need any rules." He rolled his eyes at Harvey and grabbed a piece of toast.

"Oh yes, you do." Harvey said. "I'm about to leave you here alone, looking like that. Who knows what you will do?"

"I'm not going to do anything to your place Harvey."

"Still. Rule number one. Don't leave the condo. No going outside, not even the terrass."

Mike groaned. "Fine." he said after a look from Harvey. "Is that all or do you have more rules?"

"Of course I do. Rule number two, don't touch anything. I guess that one covers everything that you could possible do here so I guess we are good." Harvey smirked.

"Well, that's a stupid rule. Am I allowed to touch the floor? Or the couch? What about the table?" Mike countered.

"You know what I mean." Harvey said and Mike wanted to argue more but what was the point.

"What am I supposed to do then? Just sit here?" he grumbled.

"I'll leave you some stuff to do. I'll swing by at lunch to pick it up and give you some more."

Mike didn't think that sounded like a good idea at all. He didn't want to be locked up in Harvey's apartment the whole day, but Harvey had already made up his mind and Mike doubted that anything he could said would change that.

Harvey didn't really feel all that comfortable at leaving Mike alone at his place. It was just hard to remember that the little boy in front of him in fact was Mike, his associate. Mike was so little now, he couldn't reach stuff like yesterday had proved. Mike seemed to be pretty down too, or was it just because he was little. Something stirred in Harvey though as he watched how Mike stared at the table while holding his toast with both hands. He did his best with putting it aside. He had to leave for work if he didn't want to be terribly late.

He waited until Mike was finished eating before he left. He would never tell Mike that the real reason was that he was worried that the kid would fall down the chair and hit his head or something. He left the kid a few files on the coffee table and left shortly after that.

"See you in a couple of hours." He said and was out the door leaving Mike standing in the hallway watching him leave. Yet again he had to remind himself that this was Mike, and nothing else. He wasn't about to leave a three year old alone for hours and hours. It was just Mike.

Mike that looked like a three year old.

Mike stood there for a while staring at the door, a part of him wishing that Harvey would change his mind and just come back. He didn't want to be here alone the whole day. But of



course Harvey didn't come so he went over to the files Harvey had left him. He picked up the first one and studied it.

He sat down and started to read it. However his eyes wandered over to his hands holding the files. They were so small. It was still so hard to believe it. Back to the file.

His legs were so short. He barely reached the edge of the couch. Maybe if he stretched out a bit. One other problem he had noticed was going to the bathroom. He needed to do that now. He couldn't reach the sink to wash his hands when he was done. That was a problem. He needed a chair or something to stand on. Harvey didn't have a lot of options that he could choose from. The chairs he had were a bit too heavy for him. He would have to use something else. The only thing he could think of was a waste bin from Harvey's office. He could stand on that.

He emptied it on the floor and brought it with him. It was perfect to stand on! After he had washed his hands he thought that he would better leave it there for later.

He went back to the couch and started up with the file again. He lasted about fifteen minutes. He had the yellow sharpie in his hand and had crossed over a few things that were of importance. He liked the way the yellow lines looked. He drew a longer line next to the text.

He stopped himself. Maybe he shouldn't do that. He would destroy the file. But it was quite fun to draw. After twenty minutes or so he decided that he wanted to do something else. He jumped off the couch and went to search for something to entertain himself with.

Everything was so fancy at Harvey's place. For a while he admired some weird looking statues Harvey had on a small table. He looked a bit at the books in Harvey's book shelves. He couldn't understand how he had missed them earlier. However nothing caught his attention. He wandered and admired the view. Pressed his face to the glass without even thinking about it. He was so tempted to walk outside, but he wasn't sure that he would be able to open the door. Last time he had been out there it had been slightly opened. This time it wasn't. Harvey must have locked it. Apparently he didn't trust Mike to do what he was told. He felt a bit ashamed when he realized Harvey had been right not to. But how was Harvey supposed to have known if he went out there? And it wasn't like he would jump down or anything. He wasn't stupid.

He was bored though. He did another attempt with the files. He couldn't concentrate. He wished Harvey would come back. He didn't like being alone, he wanted company. He wished he was back at Neal's place. Elizabeth had gotten Neal all those things to do. Mike had nothing to do. He tried to read a book. He even tried to sleep just to make the time go faster. It didn't work. It wasn't fair that he had to stay here. He wanted to be mad but wasn't sure of where he would direct his anger.

He could have jumped out of joy when he heard Harvey at the door way. He ran to meet him.

"Hi Harvey!" he called, smiling widely at the older man. It surprised him yet again when he saw him how big Harvey was. But Harvey smiled back at him.

“Hi Mike.” he said. “I brought Chinese food.” He handed Mike the bag and Mike went to the kitchen with it as Harvey took off his suit jacket.

“What’s this Mike?” Harvey asked a while later from the couch. ”You have barely done anything. I expected you to be finished by now. With all of these.” He was holding one of the files.

Mike shrugged. ”I’ll do them later.” He said, and even when he said it he suspected that it wasn’t going to happen.

“You’ll do them later.” Harvey muttered and turned the file over. He thought he had seen something on the back of it. “Mike! What the hell is this?” There were drawings along the whole back side of the file. He thought he could make out a bicycle other than that it was just circles and stars in different patterns.

“I got bored.” Mike explained. Harvey just stared at him with an open mouth. He got bored? But Mike had turned away from him, clearly done with the conversation. “Okay... you got bored.” Harvey mumbled more to himself than to Mike.

They had lunch after that. Harvey asked Mike again if he needed help with getting up onto the chair.

“It looks like you are going to fall down and break your neck or something.” He said. Maybe they should just stop using the kitchen island to eat at. He had a dinner table after all. Next time.

“So did you talk to Peter Burke today?” Mike asked when they had started eating. He needed to know.

”No, I didn’t. I can give him a call later though.”

“I thought you had already. I thought this would be a priority Harvey.” Mike whined. He just couldn’t help himself. ”I don’t want to be like this.”

“I’ll call him.” Harvey just said. He had been pretty busy at work. He was behind on a few things, and would be more behind since Mike wasn’t there to assist now. As soon as he was done eating he needed to head back to the office.

“I suppose I don’t need to leave you anymore work.” He told Mike. “I’ll be back later tonight, kid.”

”Are you leaving already? You just got here.” Mike said. He didn’t want Harvey to leave.

“Yeah I am. Can I get you anything before I go?”

“Like what?” Mike wanted to know. He felt annoyed.

”I don’t know.” Harvey said. ”Some juice or something?”

“Shut up.” Mike muttered.

Harvey rolled his eyes. Try to get some work done.” He said and started to walk to the door.

“Why can’t I come with you?” Mike asked. He just couldn’t stop himself.

“We been over this already.”

“I know, but we don’t have to say it’s me. I can pretend to be some random kid if someone sees me.”

“And why would I have some random kid in my office? How would we explain that?”

“We could say I wandered off and you are looking after me until someone comes and gets me.”

“Good idea.” Harvey said sarcastically. “But no one will ever come for you.”

Mike felt himself jerk a little as Harvey said those words. He didn’t know what to answer. Those words hit him hard because they were true. No one would ever come for him. There were no one that missed him. No one cared about him. Well, maybe Neal, but Neal couldn’t come.

“Right.” He said. He didn’t want to talk to Harvey anymore. ”I’ll see you later.” He said and walked over to the couch.

“Mike...” Harvey started, but he didn’t finish. He had seen that Mike had been affected by his words. He should say something, he knew that, but he didn’t.

“Give me a call if there is something.” He said instead and left. If he hurried maybe he could go home a bit earlier. He was going to call Peter Burke as soon as he got to his office.

Mike on the other hand was not going to work. He sat on the couch staring at the files in front of him. He couldn’t get what Harvey had said out of his head. *No one will ever come for you.* Again and again they came to him. Mike wished someone would come for him.

He didn’t know why he felt so down and sad all of sudden. Some of it was of course from what Harvey had said, but not all. He just felt alone and helpless like this. He thought a bit about crying but decided that he needed to do something to get himself on other thoughts. He didn’t know what though. So he decided to search further in Harvey’s apartment so see if he could find something to cheer himself up.

He started in the kitchen. He opened every drawer, looked in all the cupboards. He then went over to the hall, the book shelf again at least so high he could reach. He went into Harvey’s bedroom as well. He climbed up on the bed. It was soft. Much nicer than his own back in his apartment. He laid down in the middle of it. He tried not to think. He fell asleep after some time.

When he woke up again he felt hungry. It was hours and hours left until Harvey would be back, so he went to look in the kitchen for something he could eat. There wasn’t much there that he wanted, and he didn’t think it was a good idea to try and cook something. Maybe he could call Harvey and ask if he could come home earlier and bring him something. He had to

hold his phone with both hands as he listen to the dial tones. Harvey didn't answer though. But he was hungry! He needed to eat something. Harvey had some toast left, he knew that. He had seen it earlier, but it was on a shelf to high up for him to reach. He cursed his height to himself as he tried to climb up to reach it. It didn't work. He started to drag one of the chairs over and got all warm and sweaty from it, but he managed to get the bread. He didn't bother pushing the chair back. He settled for only butter on his bread which he ate cold.

His phone rang a while after he had eaten and had put everything back to place. It was Harvey that asked what he wanted.

"When are you coming?" Mike asked.

*"Eh...I'll guess I can leave in an hour or two. What's up?"*

"You said I could call if it was something."

*"Yeah. I did."*

"Well, I was hungry."

*"Oh, take something then."*

"I did."

*"Okay. Good. See you later then."* Harvey hang up.

Time passed endlessly slowly as he waited for Harvey to come. He settled with playing games on his phone which kept him occupied for some time.

#### *-SUITS-WHITE COLLAR-*

Neal enjoyed revealing himself to Diana and Jones. He could see on them when they started to believe that it was really him. Peter backed him up of course and told them how he and Elizabeth had been witnesses to his transformation into this body. They were shocked of course, but swore to help out.

After Peter and his agents left he was alone with Elizabeth and Satchmo. Neal was starting to really like Satchmo, now when he had gotten used to his size. He came with Elizabeth out for a walk with the dog. Elizabeth offered him to hold the leash, but he declined this time. The last walk was still fresh on his mind.

They were walking along the street when Elizabeth suddenly took his hand in hers. She didn't say anything she just held on to him. He looked up at her but she was looking at Satchmo. He didn't remove his hand from hers.

When they got home Elizabeth asked him if he wanted to play a game with her. He agreed and she said that he got to choose which one they would play. He choose between the ones she had bought him yesterday and thought it was a good choice. They played that one two times and then went through the rest she had bought. Neal liked the one with the lost diamond the best. They played that game three times. He won two of them. Actually

Elizabeth only won two time of all the games they played. For just a short while he got the thought that maybe she let him win on purpose, but soon forgot it.

They started making dinner after that and Peter got home as they were setting the table. As they ate Peter told him about what he had found out during the day. They had tried to find all the people connected to the labs and had made a list of people that they were going to start interviewing the next day. At least the ones that they could find. Peter said that he didn't think that this would be easy. It worried Neal to some extent, but Peter assured him that it would be fine. They were going to catch these people.

Peter also wanted to find the other people that had turned into children. It amazed Neal that there were more people out there like him and Mike.

"I also talked to Harvey Specter, Mike's friend." Peter told him. "He wants to be kept in the loop and I have decided to brief him whenever we find something. Mike deserves to know just as much as you."

Neal thought that was good. He had thought of Mike a few times during the day and wondered what he had been up to. He called Mike after dinner and Mike sounded happy when he answered. They spoke for a long time until Mike had to go because Harvey had gotten home.

Elizabeth thought that Neal should go to bed shortly after that. He agreed to do so. He was a bit tired after all. When he was in bed there was a knock on his door and Peter stood there.

He came in and sat down on the edge of Neal's bed.

"How are you doing Neal?" He asked.

"I'm good. Just a little tired." He answered.

"You don't feel..." Peter paused. "Do you feel weird somehow?" He then asked.

"What do you mean weird?" Neal asked.

"I mean, do you still feel like yourself?" Peter said and studied him.

"Yes, I do. Are you doing okay Peter?"

"Never mind. Good night Neal." Peter said and left. He didn't close the door all the way. He didn't know why he didn't do that. It was more of an instinct that told him to do so.

Earlier when he had talked to Harvey, the other man had said some things that Mike had been acting different. He had acted more like a child and Harvey was wondering why that was. Peter didn't have an answer to that. Truth was that he didn't have an answer to anything. This whole situation was just so weird that he didn't know or wanted to say anything about it.

As it was now they just had to take one day at the time and see what would happen. What else could they do?

## Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the long wait. Thanks for reading and for leaving kudos! If you have any ideas about the story, please let me know :)

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