

## Uncloaked by Xanthe



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### **Story Notes:**

Keywords/Warnings: Angst, spanking, references to BDSM. If spanking isn't your thing then don't read it.

Post-ep for "Cloak". This fic pre-supposes an existing BDSM relationship between Gibbs and Tony. For Haggy, because she asked!

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Tony let himself into Gibbs's house and walked stiffly upstairs to the spare bedroom. God he ached! His face still throbbed from where he'd been knocked down by the butt of a gun, and his entire body was feeling the strain of that particular fight.

He opened the door to the spare room, and paused. Usually when he entered this room he was in a very different frame of mind. Usually he didn't come here of his own accord; in fact, he only ever came here when Gibbs sent him – and when that happened he always had to follow some set rules when he got here.

Tony fought down the sense of wrongness, and turned on the light. The room looked ordinary enough – there was a mirror at the far end (so Tony could see himself being spanked, or tied, or fucked), a large bed with plain rails at the head and foot (so Tony could be fastened easily in place when Gibbs wanted him in bondage) and a cushion on the floor

(so Tony could kneel beside the bed for long periods of time).

Usually Gibbs allowed him to come up here alone and get himself into the right frame of mind for a scene. He'd undress, slowly, and hang his clothes in the closet. The act of getting naked helped him focus, and prepare for what was ahead of him. The closet was completely empty apart from a large wooden trunk. It was Tony's job to lift the trunk and pull it out into the room. He had to leave it beside the bed, unlock it with the key Gibbs made him keep on a chain around his neck – the twin of the one Gibbs kept in his own pocket – and open it up. If Gibbs was feeling indulgent then he got to choose something from within that he wanted used on him, and leave it on the bed. That didn't happen very often though – Gibbs wasn't a very indulgent kind of dom. He made Tony work for every single reward – and Tony wouldn't have had it any other way. That task completed, Tony would take the cushion over to the mirror and kneel there, gazing at himself, putting the stresses and strains of everyday life to one side and finding the sub within.

Finally, he'd lower his head, close his eyes, and wait for Gibbs to come upstairs and do what he wanted to him. Sometimes, Gibbs made him wait for a very long time, and other times he'd come up almost immediately. Whichever way it was, Tony just accepted. He was Gibbs's sub – that was what he did.

That wasn't the way it was going to go down tonight though. Tonight Tony was going to call the shots – and he had something very different in mind.

He opened the closet door and fished around for the chain around his neck; Gibbs said he'd like to keep him collared all the time but as that wasn't practical in their everyday lives the chain and key would do, as nobody but the two of them would know their significance. Tony knelt down and opened the box with tense, jerky movements of his hands. It was full of items that he viewed with a mixture of trepidation and adoration. Some of them were pure evil, but he loved them anyway because, when wielded by a master, they could give him the kinds of highs he'd never known existed before he met Gibbs. And Gibbs *\*was\** such a master. He was the kind of master that Tony had dreamed about his entire life but had never dared hope he might one day serve.

It felt wrong to be crouching here, in front of all these sacred objects, and considering which one he wanted to use. Which one *\*he\** wanted to use. It felt wrong in so many ways. Tony caught a glimpse of himself in the full length mirror; he got up, went over to it, and gazed at himself searchingly. Then the wrongness hit him again – he only ever looked at himself in this mirror when he was naked and submissive, never when he was in this kind of headspace. His jaw tightened as he saw the bruise on the side of his face, around his eye. He pulled himself up and glared at himself.

"You have to do this, Tony," he said, psyching himself up. He did have to. He needed to – because if he didn't he knew he could never be naked and vulnerable in this room with Gibbs again, because he could never *\*trust\** Gibbs again if he didn't do this.

He jerked off his tie and stuffed it into his pocket, and then took off his jacket and threw it on the bed. Finally, he undid the buttons on his shirt sleeves, and slowly, very slowly, rolled

them up to his elbows. He watched himself, fascinated. He'd watched Gibbs do this hundreds of times, and it never failed to make his heart skip a beat and his body ache with need, his belly churning in anticipation, a mixture of dread and longing. Gibbs always understood, and went slowly, every movement of his hands sending Tony further and further into his own subspace, so that by the time Gibbs was done, and his shirt sleeves were folded neatly back to his elbows, Tony was ready. He was ready to go over Gibbs's knee, or be tied to the bed, or to have his wrists cuffed and fastened to the innocuous little hook Gibbs had embedded in the ceiling, or to be pushed ass up over the bed for his master's pleasure.

Now though, he was psyching himself up in a different way. He looked at the man in the mirror and saw that side of himself that was hurt, betrayed and angry. He had never been good at letting out his anger. Even when Gibbs asked him to, demanding during a tough spanking that he hold nothing back, he still found it hard to express it. Tony's anger was cool, hard and uncompromising, unlike Gibbs's red hot rage that could spill over in an instant in their working lives – although never during a scene. In scene-time Gibbs was always controlled, totally in charge of both his own emotions and his sub's body. That was one of the reasons why Tony had always trusted him...until now.

Tony's jaw settled into a hard line, and he turned back to the trunk. He didn't waste time looking through it – he knew what he wanted. He found the hard, leather-bound paddle and removed it, then closed the trunk and locked it. This was an implement that Gibbs only used for punishment, never for pleasure, so he would understand the significance of it. It wasn't a subtle instrument – it thudded and stung, and had, on two memorable occasions, reduced Tony to helpless tears and left him with a red ass that had made sitting painful for days. It was, in short, an implement that meant business.

He left the room and walked downstairs. Gibbs still wasn't home but Tony didn't expect him home just yet. Tony sat down on the couch - this couch that he knew so well because he'd been bent over the back of it and spanked there more times than he could count. This couch, where so often he lay naked and collared, his head resting in Gibbs's lap as they watched TV together on lazy evenings. This couch, where sometimes Gibbs would seat himself and pull Tony over his knee for a slow, easy, hand-spanking that would end in hot, pleasurable sex. This couch, which sometimes Gibbs made him kneel beside for hours on end, gagged, plugged, clamped and bound beside him as he worked on files he'd brought home, pausing only occasionally to ruffle Tony's hair or kiss him – or, if he wanted, to twist Tony's clamped nipples, making him gasp and squirm and scream as best he could around the gag.

This was the fabric of their existence, so familiar to him, a place where he had found comfort, peace, love, acceptance, and a sense of belonging that he'd never known before. Yet now all that was in jeopardy, and he had to find a way to restore harmony to their world, and rebuild his shattered trust – and this was the only way he knew how.

He sat back on the couch, resting his legs up on the coffee table, the paddle on knees. He could do this.

He was still there, in position, when Gibbs returned an hour later. Gibbs walked into the living room and then stopped, abruptly, when he saw Tony. He didn't say anything for a moment, just looked at him, and then he threw his keys and cellphone onto the side table where he usually kept them. He removed his jacket, and then turned back to face his sub. His eyes flickered over Tony's bruised face, and travelled over his neatly folded back shirtsleeves, and then lingered for a moment on the paddle resting on his knee. Tony didn't say a word. He just watched, as a muscle in Gibbs's jaw twitched and tightened.

Finally, Gibbs looked up into Tony's eyes. Tony kept his gaze as hard as it had been earlier, in autopsy, when he'd challenged his boss on the plan that had placed his team in danger, the plan that hadn't been fully explained to any of them, but especially to \*him\*, Gibbs's second - his sub, his lover and his life partner.

Gibbs saw the expression in his eyes, and grunted in acknowledgement, recognising exactly what this was about, but Tony didn't think for a moment that it was going to be that easy.

"What the hell do you think you're doing with that, Tony?" Gibbs asked, gesturing with his head at the paddle. Tony felt his eyes narrowing. He leaned back on the couch.

"Fair's fair, Jethro," he said quietly. "You spank me when I screw up – and what you did today was more than just a screw up."

"This isn't part of our deal, Tony," Gibbs told him, standing his ground.

"It is now," Tony snapped. "What about trust, Jethro? Huh? What about the trust I show to you when I go ass up over the back of this couch, or over your knee, for you to spank my ass with this paddle, or your strap, or that damn hard hand of yours? Well...trust works both ways, Jethro and you screwed up today. Big time."

That muscle in Gibbs's jaw twitched, violently. "I was \*trying\* to keep everyone safe," he growled.

Tony pointed at his bruised face. "Well, that didn't work. Letting us in - letting \*me\* in, might have worked better," he said, in a hard voice. He couldn't go easy on Gibbs because if he did, this would always be between them. Gibbs had to see that – Tony had to \*make\* him see it.

Gibbs nodded, exhaling slowly. "Okay. I can see why you're pissed with me. But what were you intending to do with the paddle?"

"Make you win back that trust you lost today. What's the matter, Jethro? You don't trust me the way I've always trusted you? You don't trust me to do this right? You don't trust me with this the same way you don't trust me enough to share your plans with me? Plans that involve me! Plans where I risk my damn life for you – because I \*trust\* you."

Gibbs gazed at him silently for a long time, those blue eyes burning. Tony held his gaze, unflinching, showing him that he meant business. Finally, Gibbs looked away. "I trust you,"

he said quietly.

Tony nodded, thoughtfully. "Then get your ass over my knee and prove it," he said.

Gibbs didn't hesitate, and for that alone he won back Tony's respect, if not his trust – not yet at least. He walked over to where Tony was sitting, unfastening his belt and pants as he went, and then lowered himself over Tony's knee, as fast and efficient as he always was when their positions were reversed. He didn't pull back, or make excuses, or prevaricate, as Tony often did. He just delivered himself up for his punishment without another word.

Tony took a deep breath, suddenly faced with the reality of the course of action he'd chosen. He looked down at Gibbs's naked ass, ready and waiting for him, offered up without caveat or condition, and had a sudden moment of doubt. He'd never done this before. He'd been on the receiving end more times than he could count, but he'd never been the one handing it out before. He hoped he could do it right.

He raised the paddle and swung it down, hard, on the exposed flesh. Gibbs didn't even grunt. Tony winced as he saw the red mark he'd left behind. Was this how Gibbs felt, he wondered, when he blistered Tony's ass for his many misdemeanours and his endlessly smart mouth? Did he worry about doing it right? Was he afraid of causing harm? Was he ever afraid that he wouldn't know when to stop? Or that he wouldn't go hard enough and give Tony what he needed? Or that he'd go too hard and give him more than he could bear? No. Tony knew that Gibbs had no such doubts – he inhabited his top-space more completely than any dom Tony had ever known. Tony wasn't a dom though. He was a sub, through and through, and he'd never wanted to be the one handing it out. That felt too much like responsibility.

Gibbs glanced at him over his shoulder, a question in his eyes at the long pause, and Tony pulled himself together. He remembered that man he'd seen in the upstairs mirror, and he accessed that part of himself again – the part that was hurting, the part that felt angry and betrayed.

He raised the paddle a second time and brought it down again, even harder this time. Then he put his arm around Gibbs's body to hold him in place and proceeded to deliver spank after hard spank on his upturned ass. Gibbs didn't say anything. He didn't cry, or moan, or kick his legs the way Tony did during punishment. He didn't wheedle, or try to put his hand back to block the blows. He didn't make extravagant promises that he couldn't keep, or beg for mercy. He just stayed in place, quietly trusting Tony to do this right.

It was that trust, in the end, that broke Tony. He was trusted. Gibbs *did* trust him, despite the way he'd deceived him, and Tony accepted that on this occasion Gibbs really had thought, in his usual stubborn, wrong-headed way, that he was protecting them all by his actions. Tony's anger faded, blinking out into nothingness within a heartbeat, and his hand stopped in midair.

"That's enough," he said quietly. He rested his hand gently on Gibbs's reddened ass, feeling...empty.

"We done now?" Gibbs asked, rolling out of Tony's grasp. Tony wished he'd stayed, so he could hold him, the way Gibbs held him so often after a tough spanking, but that wasn't Gibbs's way.

"We're done," Tony said firmly. He put the paddle down, and watched as Gibbs got up, pulled his pants up over his blistered ass without so much as a wince, and fastened them. Tony stared at him. That had been harder than he imagined. Gibbs walked into the kitchen and Tony heard the faucet running. He got up and went and stood in the doorway, watching as Gibbs downed a glass of water in one gulp. Then Gibbs turned and saw Tony watching him. He looked at Tony for a long time, and then sighed. He walked back over to him, and rested his hand against Tony's cheek.

"That wasn't how you thought it would be, was it?" he asked quietly.

Tony shook his head. "It was necessary though," he replied.

"Yeah." Gibbs nodded. "I can see that. I \*do\* see that, Tony. You did good. I'm glad you called me on it if it was hurting you that much. And for what it's worth – you were right, and I deserved it." He ran his fingers gently over the bruise on Tony's face. "I deserved it for this alone," he whispered, his fingers sliding over the bruised flesh. Tony saw a haunted look flash briefly in his eyes - and then it was gone. Gibbs pressed a kiss to the side of Tony's face and then turned back into the kitchen. "We gonna eat? I'm starving."

They moved around the kitchen in silence. Neither of them was good at preparing meals but they managed to invent something from what was in the fridge, throwing it all together in a pan and frying it. Gibbs had more of a flair for food than Tony so Tony left him to it, returning to his vantage point in the kitchen doorway, watching his lover silently. This still felt wrong. Unfinished.

They sat down and ate, and, once again, Tony looked for a sign of a wince as Gibbs sat, but there was nothing. He watched Gibbs eat, doing nothing more than push his own food around his plate.

"Want to talk about it?" Gibbs asked eventually.

"Yes." Tony nodded. "How do you switch if off?" He asked. Gibbs raised an eyebrow. "The anger, the hurt? When I do something to piss you off and you punish me – how does that translate into the emotions going away?" He thought of the many times he'd been punished, and ended up crying into Gibbs's shoulder after, being soothed, and held, and petted. Gibbs never, ever went easy on him but afterwards he was always there for him, and it always felt so good.

"That's the deal," Gibbs said with a shrug. "I can't ask you to take anything I hand out and not feel humbled by your trust in me. That just works for me. Every time."

"I felt that." Tony nodded. "It worked that way for me too – only...you won't let me take

care of you."

"It's not the way I am." Gibbs shrugged.

"I understand that. But it's also...you don't think you did anything wrong," Tony said slowly.

Gibbs hesitated, then nodded. "No – but I do think you were hurt. I told you, the punishment was justified, Tony."

"But it's not over for me yet," Tony said. "You haven't given me what I need yet."

Gibbs raised an eyebrow. "I took what you wanted to hand out," he said.

"Yes, you did. And you gave me back my trust in you, Jethro, for trusting \*me\* enough to do that, but you haven't given me what I need to finish this."

"What do you want from me?" Gibbs growled. "My damn soul?"

"Yes," Tony said quietly. He thought of the many times he'd given Gibbs just that after a punishment. How he'd curled up in Gibbs's arms and Gibbs had held him and kissed him and petted him and told him how much he was loved. He thought of clinging onto Gibbs, his ass throbbing but his heart light and giddy with happiness. "It's what I always give you," he said softly.

Gibbs's eyes flashed. Tony got up, went around the table, and held out his hand.

"Trust me again?" he asked.

Gibbs looked at him, and then at his hand, and then back at him, and his eyes travelled over that bruise on Tony's face once more. His jaw twitched, and Tony saw the conflict in his eyes, and \*knew\* how hard this was for him. This was much harder than going over his sub's knees for a spanking. Pain was something that Gibbs could take without flinching but comfort – that was something he could only give, but never accept in return.

Tony knew that, and suddenly felt a wave of affection for this man sitting here. This stubborn, difficult man, who had so much pain locked up inside him that he would never share with anyone. This man who had lost the two people he loved most, and who would never entirely get over that, no matter how many times Tony curled up in his arms, or offered himself up to him, body and soul, showing him that he trusted him to take care of him. The last people who had trusted him to take care of them had been killed, and Tony knew that Gibbs would never, ever forgive himself for that. He also knew that every time he gave himself to Gibbs, every time he let Gibbs collar him and bind him – every time he simply surrendered to Gibbs, that it healed a tiny part of Gibbs's damaged soul. Gibbs needed to be needed, and trusted, and that was why he had gone so easily over Tony's knee earlier; Tony suspected that Gibbs could stand anything except losing his sub's trust.

Gibbs sighed, and shoved his plate of food away angrily, then placed his hand in Tony's, his

jaw twitching violently as he did so. Yeah - Tony knew that this was definitely going to be harder for him than being paddled.

He led Gibbs into the other room, put his arms around him, and gently pulled him close. Gibbs was stiff in his arms, resisting the comfort, his entire body tense. Tony wouldn't be pushed away though. He ran his hands down Gibbs's back, and nuzzled at his ear, then kissed the side of his face.

"Feels stupid," Gibbs muttered. "Like dancing."

"Tough," Tony replied. Gibbs grunted, and Tony kissed him again, one hand gently stroking, stroking, stroking, until those tense shoulders started to loosen. Tony held him for a long time, until he felt that Gibbs was at least starting to submit. Just as Gibbs's body began to unravel against him, just as he was on the verge of finally relaxing and accepting Tony's comfort, the stubborn bastard stiffened, and tried to draw away. Tony tightened his arms around him, refusing to let him go. "It's not optional, Jethro," he said, straight into Gibbs's ear. He could feel the struggle in Gibbs's body as he warded with himself. It would have been amusing if it wasn't so sad, Tony thought to himself. This man could take a hard paddling without a murmur, but ask him to submit to just being held, and stroked, and \*loved\*, and he fought against it with all his might.

"Take it," Tony whispered in his ear, the way Gibbs had so often commanded him to take it when he was over his knee, yelling his head off, sure that he couldn't take another stroke of the paddle, or strap, or whatever implement it was that Gibbs was wielding. "You can take it," Tony said. "You will take it. For me."

They were all Gibbs's words, repeated back to him, and Gibbs knew that. His entire body convulsed for a moment beneath Tony's loving embrace, and then, finally, he gave up. His hands came up to settle, loosely, on Tony's ass, and he rested his chin on Tony's shoulder.

"Good. That's good," Tony soothed, his fingers still gently stroking his dom's body.

Gibbs didn't cry. Gibbs would never cry, but he did sigh. It was a deep sigh, that sounded like it had been ripped out of his belly, forcefully yanked out of him against his will, and that was the point at which Tony knew that he'd got what he wanted, and it was going to be okay.

He held Gibbs for several minutes longer, to be sure, and then he pulled back, found Gibbs's mouth with his own, and kissed him. Gibbs's kisses were usually as forceful and driven as the man himself, but this time his lips were hesitant as they met Tony's, searching, needing something from him. Tony could understand that. He knew how vulnerable it felt to give your soul to someone. He kissed Gibbs gently but firmly for several minutes, still holding him, still stroking him, and he felt something click back into place between them, something that was healing for them both.

He pulled back to find Gibbs looking at him, the expression in those blue eyes more open and vulnerable than Tony had ever seen before. Gibbs reached up and ran a finger over Tony's bruised face again.

“I was trying to keep everyone safe,” he murmured. “I got it wrong,” he admitted, finally.

Tony saw the flash in Gibbs’s eyes, and realised just what it meant to this man when he got keeping people safe wrong. He saw Shannon, Kelly, Kate and Langer haunting Gibbs every day of his life, and knew that while Gibbs could just about take it happening again, the one thing he couldn’t take was if it was \*Tony\* he failed to keep safe.

“I understand.” Tony nodded. “I trust you to keep me safe, Jethro. Always.”

It was what Gibbs needed to hear. To Tony’s surprise, he moved back to within the warm circle of his arms again, rested his chin on Tony’s shoulder once more, and asked, silently, that Tony hold him for a little while longer.

Tony did.

The End

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