House & Home

by G33kDiva, palominopup

Summary

Sam Winchester was in trouble. His job with a popular home improvement network was in jeopardy unless he could come up with a new show that would boost ratings. He needed new talent that would invite more viewers. Enter his brother, Dean, a lewd, loud carpenter, who looked like an underwear model and Castiel Novak, a hot-headed interior decorator that catered to the rich.

The two men were to take a rundown home and turn it into a showplace. At the end of each season, the house would be given away in a big contest. But, they had to finish it first, without killing each other in the process.

The first day on set sparks flew, but not the good kind. The two men hated each other. Sam just knew they’d have to pull the show after its pilot episode aired and he’d be back to making commercials about genital herpes. But the viewers loved it. The emails and tweets about the two men required the network to hire more people just to keep up with them. The snarky comments, the glaring looks and the sexual tension shot the show to the Number One position.

Then one night after filming, the months of tension exploded into hot, angry sex. Something changed between the two men and the viewers couldn’t stop tweeting about it.

Notes

I have a co-writer on this work. G33kDiva (aka Amanda) was my editor for my last story, Cruisin’. She helped me a lot and whenever I drew a blank, she would come to my rescue. I
will be giving her the reins more often on this fic and since we think alike most of the time, it
should be a fun story to write. Those of you who know me, know that I've only co-written a
story once before and Hedge Witch was born. Angi, like Amanda, was on my same wave-
length and they can see my vision.

So, we hope you enjoy it.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Chapter 1

Prologue

Sam leaned against the wall outside the office of the chief of programming for HHTV. His sphincter was still tight from his boss ripping him a new one. He thought he was definitely going to get canned… but for some reason, Crowley liked him and gave him a second chance to come up with a new show to pull in more viewers. How the fuck was he going to just *magically* come up with a brand-new, smash-hit show? If it was that easy, he would have done it already. But now his job was on the line.

He took a deep breath, exhaled slowly, and walked out of the headquarters of *House & Home Television*. The corporate offices were located across a large parking lot from the studio that housed the production offices and sound stages. The sun was shining and it was unseasonably warm for November in Seattle.

Instead of returning to his office, he took out his keys and pressed the key fob to unlock his red BMW. He was too anxious to concentrate on work and really needed a drink. Once he was in his car, air conditioner blowing hard enough to ruffle his long hair, he called his brother.

“What’s up, Sammy?” Sam could hear the whine of a power saw in the background.

“Just wanted to know if my favorite brother wanted to grab a beer,” Sam said, turning on his blinker and taking a left on the highway.

“I’m your only brother,” Dean responded dryly. To someone else, he yelled, “Yo, Garth, load up the
tools. It's time to knock off for the day.” Sam waited patiently for his busy brother to bring his attention back to the phone conversation. “Okay, I’m back… I have a cooler full of beer on the back of my truck. Stop by the job site and we’ll hang out.”

“You still at the site near the mall?”

“Yep.”

“See you in fifteen.”

“Cool.”

Sam took the ramp and headed to his brother’s job site. Winchester Construction was building a subdivision geared toward people that wanted to live in smaller homes. Sam thought the tiny house craze was… well, crazy… but the majority of the houses Dean was building were already pre-sold. He steered his car through the open chain-link gate and parked his car next to Dean’s work truck. He looked around and spied his brother talking to his crew. The group of men exchanged a few fist bumps and dispersed to their cars and trucks. Dean headed in his direction as Sam got out of the car and went straight for the cooler. He pulled out two beers and twisted the caps off both, handing Dean one when he plopped down on the tailgate. Dean took it and brought the bottle to his mouth. After he swallowed, he looked at Sam. “So, bad day?”

“The worst… Got my ass chewed, but at least it wasn’t handed to me.” Sam looked around the worksite. “Damn, Dean, I’m impressed.” The small homes looked like tiny cottages, each painted in a nice pastel color. With how tiny the houses were, he expected it to look almost comical, but the way Dean designed the neighborhood made it look quite lovely, almost elegant. “You almost done?”

“Pretty much. I’m working on the punch list now. A couple of ‘em need interior paint, kitchen cabinets, little shit like that. Obviously, I still need to do the landscaping.” Dean toed the dirt with his work boots. “I want to close out this project by Thanksgiving.”

“How many have you sold so far?” Winchester Construction bought the land, built the houses, then turned around and sold them without a middle man. It was a much smarter way of doing things if you had the initial capital to fund it. Dean was a really smart businessman, though if you asked him, he’d just say it was luck.

“Twenty-six out of the thirty.”

“Wow… That’s great, Dean.” Sam continued to look around the site. It truly was impressive, and it was a perfect example of a very popular trend. Sam was proud to say his brother was a visionary. The wheels in his head started spinning as an idea began to form.

Chapter 1
Dean stared at his brother in disbelief, his beer forgotten. “Let me get this straight… You want me to be on a TV show… renovating a house… to just give it away?”

“That’s the gist of it. It’ll be great, Dean. You’ll get lots of free publicity and the network pays its talent really well. You’ll still be able to do your own thing. We can even film around your schedule.”

“I don’t know, Sam.” Dean looked away from his brother’s eager expression. After hearing that he almost got fired because his last show idea tanked, Dean was feeling pressured to say yes. He wasn’t television material though. He cussed… a lot. He had no filter or tact. It just wouldn’t work out. He glanced over at Sam and saw the puppy eyes. Damn it to hell, not the puppy eyes. “Alright, fine… I’ll give it a try, but I’m not making any promises.” The censors were going to have a field day with him and his mouth.

Sam jumped off the tailgate and hugged Dean. Dean rolled his eyes. “Thank you, Dean. You’re really saving my ass here. And don’t worry… it’ll be fun.”

Right. Famous last words, Dean thought, a feeling of impending doom already settling around him. It felt good to help his brother, but he didn’t want to disappoint him. Whatever happened, he knew he wouldn’t do anything to let Sam down. He couldn’t.

Dean met his deadline and was finished with his subdivision on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. He’d sold twenty-seven homes by then. The remaining three would be listed with a real estate agent. He stood on the newly-placed sod and looked around. The new owners would be taking possession on Monday. With one final look, Dean got into his truck and headed home. He had work to do.

There was already a car in his driveway. Dean grinned as he cut the ignition. His best friend, Charlie, was waiting on his porch. Several bags of groceries were around her. “About time, Kemosabe.”

“I said to meet me here at one. It’s…” Dean looked at his watch. “…one-fifteen. Yeah, so sue me.” He gathered up some of the bags and unlocked the door to his house. Charlie followed him inside the cool interior. They began to unpack the food and organize it into the piles that Dean already had on his kitchen counters. “I cleared the top two shelves in the fridge for the cold stuff.”

Charlie took the three boxes of butter and a few bags of fresh vegetables to the refrigerator. “Holy shithalls. You think you got a big enough turkey?”

“Last count, we’re feeding twenty-one,” Dean replied, already pulling together the things he’d need for his pies.

Two hours later, Dean pulled his four pies out of the oven and set them on racks to cool. Charlie had the stuffing done and waiting to be put in the refrigerator. The green bean and sweet potato casseroles were both already stacked inside the large stainless steel appliance.
Dean grabbed Charlie by the hand and twirled her around. “We performed admirably, my Queen.”

The redhead giggled and let herself be dipped. When Dean lifted her off the floor, she shook her head. “You’re ridiculous, Handmaiden.”

He walked her to the door and promised to see her bright and early in the morning. Once she was on her way home, Dean ran upstairs and undressed. He changed into sweat pants and headed back down to the living room. He had a few hours to relax and decompress before he needed to hit the hay.

Thanksgiving was a roaring success with his friends and family. The rest of the holiday weekend, Dean enjoyed eating the leftovers and being a couch potato. It was rare that he had time off and he was loving it. He didn’t shave and never even left the house. For someone as busy as Dean, it was Heaven.

Monday, he drove to the small office that housed Winchester Construction. He greeted his receptionist slash secretary slash girl Friday. “Morning, Donna.” He went straight to the coffee maker and poured some into his favorite mug… the one that read ‘Muggle in the streets, Wizard in the sheets.’ Charlie had given it to him last Christmas. The nerd.

“Morning, Boss. Here are the messages from this weekend, and here is the file for the Everson project.” Dean took a donut from the box on the edge of Donna’s desk before flipping through the messages. Most were from suppliers. He and Donna both munched on the donuts in silence. Dean took a few of the messages and dumped them in the trash can. He tucked the job file under his arm, balanced another donut on top of his mug and took the remaining messages to his office. He’d no sooner sat down when his phone rang.

“Hey, Sam. What are you doing out of bed this early?” Sam had one of those jobs that didn’t require him to be at work until eight or nine… the lucky bastard.

"I spent the weekend coming up with a plan for the show. You’re gonna love it," Sam exclaimed, voice full of excitement.

"I doubt that," Dean retorted. It wasn’t that he didn't trust Sam… he just wasn't all that excited to place himself on display like a circus monkey on national television. It could have been a show about classic cars, and he still wouldn't have been excited.

Ignoring him, Sam kept talking. "I'm close to your office. I'll be there in five." Dean rubbed the back of his neck. He was going to regret this.

Dean, booted feet up on his desk, was just finishing his coffee when Sam appeared at his door. To sit, he had to move Dean's toolbelt and a box of tile samples from the only other chair in the room. Damn, he looked like a puppy about to piddle from excitement. "You pee on the floor, you clean it up," Dean muttered. Sam was used to his humor, so he ignored him.

"So, I worked out a synopsis for the show, and I’m planning to run it by my boss after lunch. Here’s my idea..." He spread out a file folder on the desk. Dean had no fuckin’ clue what he was looking at. It must have showed in his expression because Sam began to explain. "The network will buy an old house... you know, one in really bad shape. You and your crew will renovate it from top to bottom. We will film the entire process and put it in thirteen episodes. We're going to advertise the sweepstakes on each episode, and when the house is done, we'll announce the winner. With the help of an interior designer, you'll have the place finished for the big reveal and boom, we have a hit series."
"Just like that, huh? Who picks the winner?" Dean asked, still skeptical.

Sam looked flustered. "Uh... What?"

"Who picks the winner?" Dean repeated. "You gonna draw names from a hat? Sell raffle tickets? Hold a wrestling match? What's to stop some real estate agent from getting it and selling it for a profit?"

"I didn't think about that," Sam admitted. "Maybe we could... no, that wouldn't work... maybe..." Sam stopped and frowned. "I'll just let the network figure it out."

"Why don't you have them send in a video saying why they want or need the house? Then you could have the network guys choose the winner based on merit or need."

Sam stared at him, mouth agape. "You're a goddamn genius, Dean." Dean smirked and was about to agree when he remembered something else from Sam's spiel.

"Now, go back to the part about the interior designer. I don't need some snooty woman in high heels bossing my crew around on the job site. Especially if she is only there because some producer thought she'd look good on camera. I take a lot of pride in the work we do, and I don't have time for anyone that doesn't."

"Not all women wear high heels, Dean. Besides, I'm sure I can find at least one qualified designer to meet your lofty expectations," Sam said with an eye roll punctuated by a bitch face.

"I don't really see why you have to hire an interior designer. I've picked paint colors and all that crap before. None of my clients ever complained."

"That's not enough, Dean. We plan on furnishing it, too. I've been in your house. A seventy-inch television and a leather sofa aren't going to cut it."

"Hey, there's nothing wrong with having a big-ass TV. Some things are just better bigger," he said, cupping his junk and smirking.

"Dean, you cannot be this crude on national television," Sam grumbled, standing and closing his file folder.

"Oh come on, Sammy... I was just kidding around. Jeez, you act like I'm gonna embarrass you or something. I know how to play well with others." Dean gave him a wide, shit-eating grin.

Sam sighed. "I hope so, Dean. I've got a lot riding on this." Like Dean didn't know that already.

Sam was already gone before Dean realized they hadn't settled anything about the interior designer. "Fuck," he muttered. He'd just have to make it work. Besides, if she couldn't keep up, she would be the one looking like an idiot on camera, not him.

Donna came in, interrupting his thoughts. "I have Jo on the phone. She's at the Payton house and the concrete guy hasn't shown up yet."

"Christ, it's always something. Call 'em and see what the holdup is. I'll head over there to make sure Jo doesn't hurt the bastard when he finally does show up." Jo Harvelle was his right-hand-woman and was like a sister to him. When he first started Winchester Construction, all he had was a truck full of tools and a fuckton of ambition. She was his first employee and now she was his second-in-command. She was damn good at her job, but she was also a hot-head with a mean right hook. He slammed on the gas and spun the tires as he pulled out of the lot.
Castiel's attention wandered. The commission from this job would be substantial, but dealing with the wife of one of Seattle's richest men was making him contemplate poking her large breasts with his stylus to see if they would deflate. "I want it pink... not like Pepto Dismal... more like Victoria's Secret..."

"Bismol," Castiel corrected absent-mindedly.

"Huh?"

"It's Pepto Bismol. Not dismal. Though I’m sure if you need it, you are probably feeling dismal." She was staring at him like he'd sprouted a penis on his forehead. "I'm sorry. Please continue." He pasted on a smile and pretended to jot notes on his iPad.

She blinked at him a few times and then started talking again. An hour later, she was still droning on and on about colors and they'd only made it through four rooms in the stately home. "... and she picked the most hideous paint. I can't believe Andrew was married to that repulsive creature." Castiel followed her into the kitchen. "In here, I want to get rid of all these appliances. Silver is so outdated, you know?" The items in question were actually top of the line stainless steel. The latest version of Mrs. Kline wouldn't know style if it came up and bit her on her ass. The current wife was trying to vanquish the former wife's mark on the house. He felt sorry for her husband. Was getting a young piece of ass worth listening to that whiny voice every day for the rest of your life... or until a younger, prettier one came along?

It was after five when he finally made it back to his storefront on the east side of the city. His studio was in a renovated warehouse. It had the industrial feel, but Castiel added inviting seating areas and warm wood tables where clients could flip through fabrics, wallpaper, and paint swatches. Anna was still at her desk. "Why are you still here?" He asked, setting his messenger bag on the center table.

"I was trying to finish up the Daniels project," she answered, standing and stretching. She yawned and gave him a questioning look. "Why are you back so late? Your appointment was at noon."

"I have the client from hell. She actually called..." Castiel was interrupted by the office phone.

"Damn it. I forgot to put it on night ring," Anna whined, reaching for the phone.

"I got it, you go home to that sexy husband of yours," Castiel told her, hand already on the receiver. She was already blowing him a kiss goodbye as he said, "Hello, Castiel Novak Designs."
"Yeah, um... can I speak to Castiel Novak, please?"

"Speaking," Castiel responded.

"Oh, good... this is Sam Winchester, I'm the programming director for House and Home Television." House and Home? Next to HGTV, they were one of the more popular cable networks. "I was hoping to get a minute of your time."

"Alright," Castiel said, curiosity eating away at him.

"I'm putting together a new show for the network and I would like to see if you might be interested in maybe... starring in it?"

"A show... on HHTV?" Castiel sat down. He was a bit floored by the man's words. "Why me?"

"Honestly, I Googled interior decorators and you had the most stars on Yelp," he said hesitantly. Well, at least he was honest. "You website says you are also a licensed architect and I think that will give you a lot of credibility, if you decide to accept my offer.

"Interior designer is the term I go by, Mr. Winchester." It came out sounding like he was a snob, but Castiel didn't have much in the way of social skills. That's why Anna usually took care of most of the interactions with clients.

"Oh, sure, sorry. And it's Sam. Look, can we meet sometime tomorrow and discuss the particulars? Then after I explain the concept, you can see if it is something you'd be interested in."

"Tomorrow?" He cleared his throat and got his head in the game. "Tomorrow... uh... Let me check my calendar." He pulled up his calendar on his iPad. "I have some time available in the afternoon, say two?"

"Perfect. I can meet you at your studio."

"That's fine, I will see you then." Castiel hung up after Winchester said his goodbyes. He sat down in his chair and stared into space. He and Anna had always joked about being on HGTV or HHTV back when they were in design school together, but did he still want that? It had been a pipe dream. His business was doing very well and his clients were some of the wealthiest in Seattle, maybe even the whole state.
He'd listen to what the guy had to say, but he didn't think he'd be able to work it into his schedule. He put the call out of his mind and locked up.

Castiel sped out of the downtown area heading west toward the coast on his motorcycle. The indulgence in transportation was a hardship in the dead of winter, but during the spring and summer, he loved riding along the coast on his fully restored Indian Chief. He navigated through Seattle until he got to the marina. His home was his sanctuary. He had the floating house built right after he moved to Seattle several years ago. He was just starting out and couldn't afford the real estate prices in the area, but an article in a magazine caught his eye. It took three months to build it and he worked closely with the contractor to make sure it was perfect. Now he got to wake up every morning to a stunning view of the water.

He walked down the dock, waving at a few of his neighbors. Stepping onto his home, he unlocked the door and set down his bag by the door. He poured a glass of wine, said hello to his fish, and stepped out on the small deck. It was colder here on the coast, but still pretty mild for the first day of December. No matter what the season was, he always took a few minutes after work to enjoy the view of Puget Sound. It centered him and helped him to shed the stresses of the day before trying to sleep. Castiel had always had a tempestuous relationship with sleep and often found himself waging wars with insomnia. His mind went in too many different directions and he found it hard to fall asleep most nights. If he could manage to calm his thoughts and actually surrender to sleep, he slept like the dead. He had a feeling tonight wasn't going to be one of those nights.

The alarm came too early and Castiel sat up, rubbing his face and groaning. He'd been right and had only gotten about four hours of sleep. At least it was Friday. Not that he had any plans for the weekend. Castiel never had plans. The few friends he had, including Anna, tried to set him up on dates... but after a steady stream of men who just wanted to share his bed a few times, he decided he wasn't meant to have a long-term relationship. The truth was that he wanted exactly that... which is why he couldn't bring himself to engage in meaningless sex anymore. It was frustrating, but it was honest.

He arrived at the studio before Anna like he did every morning, and he sat down to check his email before moving over to Facebook and Twitter. He was addicted to social media. He found it comforting to connect with people in a way that he could control. Once Anna made it in with their usual order from Starbucks, Castiel settled in to type out his daily blog post. Today's subject was using brightly colored pottery to accent your home. He was halfway through his lunch of soup and salad from the deli next door when he remembered he was meeting the guy from HHTV. He shared the conversation with Anna, and she sat in stunned silence when he said he'd more than likely be turning down the offer. "What? You know I don't have time for something like that."

"Have you lost your mind? God, Castiel, this is what we dreamed about in design school," she lamented, tucking a stand of her long, red hair behind her ear. "Maybe he'll let me do it instead...because if you don't do it, I will."

"I will let him know that you are interested," Castiel replied as he cleaned up the remnants of his meal. "Anyway, he'll be here at two." Anna would have a good presence on television and he'd make sure he mentioned it to Winchester. Would she leave him if she landed a role on HHTV? That thought didn't make his lunch sit very well.

While he waited, Castiel began the design board for the Klines. He turned up his nose at the garish shade of pink she'd chosen for the master bathroom. He tried to steer her toward a more soothing color, but she wouldn't budge. He was once again reminded that the old saying about money not buying class was indeed true.
At two minutes after the hour, the door opened and an incredibly tall, ridiculously good-looking man entered the studio. Anna greeted him warmly... a bit too warmly... before showing him back to Castiel's workspace. He stood and shook his hand in greeting. He had long, brown hair and pretty hazel eyes. Eyes that were studying him closely. "Please, have a seat," Castiel offered.

"Can I get you something to drink," Anna asked, hovering.

"No thanks," he replied. Disappointed, Anna went back to the front of the studio, leaving the two men alone.

"Mr. Winchester, let me save you some trouble. I just don't think I have the time to give something like an HHTV show my full attention. I can give you a list of other interior designers in the area... and Anna would be at the top of that list. She is a licensed architect, as well."

"No," he said emphatically. "I think you would be perfect for this show. Please, just let me tell you about it." Castiel shrugged and listened to his pitch. Castiel had to admit he was intrigued. He was especially excited about giving the house to someone in need. He did a lot of charity work with Habitat for Humanity and Rebuilding Together, so it would be great if he could convince the network to plug those charities on the show. He decided to set those questions aside until he decided whether or not he was going to even do the show. Instead, he asked a few questions about picking the winner and how long filming would take. "We're only doing thirteen episodes, but you'll actually have sixteen weeks to renovate the house."

"When would filming start?" Castiel asked, warming up to the challenge.

"The end of January. We would have to locate a house, have it inspected, and go through the process of buying it. You and the contractor would be able to look it over before the first episode."

"And this contractor... is he qualified to do major renovations?" Through his work, he'd met a few of the local contractors. Although most of them could slap together a house, he knew renovations were much more specialized and required a higher level of expertise than most contractors possessed, especially in older homes.

"Yes. Dean has an impeccable reputation with historic renovations as well as new construction."

Dean? He couldn't place anyone named Dean from his previous contacts. "Dean who?"


"Dean Winchester? Any relation?"

"He's my brother." Ah. It all made sense. The network programmer was trying to help his brother out. He was probably a one-man company whose biggest job was building a back porch for someone or installing a new toilet. Being paired with a buffoon on national television wasn't going to happen.

"Mr. Winchester, I don't think—"

"Just look at these pictures of Dean's work," Winchester said quickly, pushing a large envelope at him. Castiel exhaled with a huff, but took it. What he saw when he opened it shocked him. The photographs ranged from a turn of the century mansion to a tiny house community and everything in between. The person who did such work not only had an eye for detail, but a creative mind as well.

"These are truly beautiful," Castiel said, looking up. "And your brother did all of these?"
"Yes, he did. He just finished this one." He pointed to the row of small homes, all painted in a colorful palette. Intrigued, Castiel looked at it again, examining the craftsmanship. He'd love to see the inside of one. His own home was on a smaller scale than most would be comfortable with, but he had always been interested in that type of design. Minimalism was the latest trend, and he regretted not having any clients who truly appreciated the concept. It would be refreshing to work with someone who understood it. Maybe this wasn't such a terrible idea after all...

Sam stared up at the large window. The logo in blue read *Castiel Novak Designs*. He had researched every interior decorator... nope... *designer*, in the Seattle area. Novak had gotten stellar reviews and when Sam went to the guy's website, he'd been really impressed. Not only was he good at decorating, but he was a licensed architect. Even Dean would be impressed and unless he was a cross-dresser, no one would have to worry about high heels.

"Good afternoon," an attractive redhead said, standing to greet him. She held out her hand and he shook it. "You must be Mr. Winchester. Castiel is expecting you." She finally let go of his hand, right before it became awkward. He followed her through the large open space. By the looks of things, the place was once a warehouse. Long industrial size tables were strewn with books, fabric, and carpet samples. A sitting area was to his left, but she didn't stop there. A dark-haired man sat at a large desk. As he got closer, he couldn't help noticing his strikingly good looks. The camera would love him. Along with Dean's handsome features, he might give the Property Brothers a run for their money. Their demographic was mostly women and they would be instant fans. If he could convince Novak to do it, that is...

Novak invited him to sit and the redhead, he didn't catch her name, offered him something to drink. He declined because he was anxious to show his concept to the designer. Novak was polite but a bit stiff. The programming director in him was picturing his personality next to Dean's... a straight-man to Dean's own brand of humor. It could work.

Sam began his hard sell of the show, but Novak didn't seem interested and said as much. So, Sam had to appeal to Novak's charitable side. From his website, Sam knew the guy was heavily involved with Habitat For Humanity and a few more altruistic causes. He seemed to perk up and began asking questions. It was going well until they got to the part about Dean being his brother. Reading Novak's face, Sam could almost guess what he was thinking. Poor dude is trying to help his brother become famous. If he only knew Dean.

*Time to pull out the big guns.* Sam gave him the envelope. Novak seemed really impressed with the photographs of Dean's work. He'd gotten Donna's help in pulling them together. Dean wasn't one to brag, but he did damn good work and Sam was proud of him. He'd also shown the pictures to Crowley when his boss asked about Dean's credentials. The impressive work shown in the photos had convinced the pompous little bastard to grant his seal of approval. Crowley was in. Dean was in. Now he just had to get Novak on board, which was proving to be a little more difficult than Sam expected.

Judging from Novak's reaction, the picture of the tiny house community is what did it. He went from 'no, not interested' to a 'strong maybe' in the blink of an eye. Sam knew when to back off, so he stood and showed himself out with a promise from Novak that he'd have his decision by Monday. He gave a brief smile to the redhead, Anna, and stepped out onto the sidewalk. He needed to get
back to the office and begin researching properties for sale. He also had a lot of other stuff to work out – permits, permission from the city to film, product vendors they would feature on the show... the list seemed endless. Filming would begin in January and it was already the second day of December. Whether Novak agreed or not, they were moving ahead.

Dean drove to the address Sam had given him. He wanted to see the old place before the production crew started mucking up the place. He checked his phone's GPS and took the next right. He was in the Greenwood area of the city, which was a neighborhood that appealed to the thirty-somethings. Shopping, upscale bars, and fancy coffee houses were within walking distance of the homes there. The houses were on the small side, ranging from a thousand to fifteen hundred square feet.

He took a left on Ninetieth and saw the little clapboard cottage for the first time. According to the paperwork Sam had given him, it was built in the early nineteen hundreds. He slammed the door of his old Chevy truck and did an exterior inspection. By the time he'd walked completely around the house, he was already renovating it in his head.

After taking a few dozen pictures, he got back in his truck and headed into the office. He'd spent the morning going over the final inspection of a house on Puget Sound with the owner, then had lunch with Charlie to talk over some software she was hooking him up with that would make invoicing a whole lot easier. Now all he had to do was touch base with Jo before knocking off for the day. It was Friday and he was going out for drinks with his crew to celebrate the end of another project.

Benny, Garth, and Ash were waiting on him at the bar. He slid into his seat and motioned for the waitress. She leaned in showing her cleavage. "What'll it be, handsome?"

"I'll have a Black Jack Lager," Dean told her, flashing his patented panty-dropping smile. If he played his cards right, he'd be going home with her tonight. He'd been so busy lately that he hadn't been laid in... damn, was it back in October? She left him to get his beer and Dean watched the sway of her hips in her tight jeans. "Yum," he said, running his tongue over his teeth. Benny groaned.

"You are such a slut." The words were said with a raised beer bottle and Dean didn't take offense. "Hey, you going to fill us in on the TV show," Ash inquired, digging into the bowl of peanuts in the center of the table. Dean began to describe the house and the ideas he had, then he told them how they were going to handle the filming schedule while keeping up with their normal workload.

"Since I'll be stuck on that job site, I'm putting you and Jo in charge of the day-to-day stuff," he said, pointing to Benny. "I plan on doing most of the work myself, so I shouldn't have to pull you guys in unless we run into a crunch." Dean already contacted his tile guys, the electricians he preferred, and a few other subcontractors he trusted. Sam had given him carte blanche with hiring a crew.

"Donna said some interior decorator was going to be your co-host. If she's a looker, how you gonna keep it in your pants?"

"That won't be a problem. You know I don't shit where I eat," Dean hadn't even noticed the waitress putting his beer in front of him. Huh? How had he missed her? He been so busy talking to the guys
about the show, he missed setting his hook in his latest conquest. Sammy had said the interior
designer was on board with the show, too. Dean being Dean, he hadn't even asked about her. He
was already thinking ahead to how he was going to juggle his schedule and to be honest, Sam's
whole one-sided conversation went in one ear and out the other. He was supposed to meet her on
Monday at the studio for some initial filming. Sam said they were going to start advertising
*Designing Dreams* right before Christmas.

The night wore on and Dean started paying more attention to Cassie, the waitress. A night between
the sheets was a slam dunk. Her caramel skin and black curls filled Dean's head with dirty thoughts,
and he found himself frequently checking his phone for the time. The other guys left, so Dean moved
to the bar. He'd been nursing his last beer and when Cassie said she was clocking out, Dean paid his
tab.

Her apartment wasn't far from the bar, and he followed her yellow Beetle into the complex. Once
inside, she offered him a drink, but he declined. With a knowing smile, she led him to her bedroom.
He stripped, all the while watching her reveal more and more skin. She was beautiful... exotic even.
When they fell into bed, Dean was on auto-pilot. He knew how to please.

She asked him to stay afterward, promising to cook him breakfast, but Dean didn't spend the night
with his partners. He gave her his usual excuse. "Sorry, I have to be up early for work. Maybe next
time." He asked for her number and put it into his phone. He'd probably never use it again, but hey,
stranger things have happened.

He got behind the wheel of his pride and joy, the '67 Impala he'd inherited from his dad. Twenty
minutes later, he was home. Unlocking the door, he flipped the light switch, illuminating his living
room. He'd lived in the house for a little over a year and other than the kitchen and dining room, it
barely looked lived in. A milk crate served as his end table, and the coffee table was a wooden box
that once contained a shipment of switch plates. It was a good thing his clients weren't invited here.
The rental was cheap and conveniently close to the office. Those were its good points. Sam and
Charlie gave him a hard time about the old house, but he didn't need anything fancy. In the dark
recesses of his mind, he wanted to build his dream house, but since he didn't have anyone to share
that dream, he settled for the little clapboard bungalow in a decent neighborhood.

He ran water from the tap into a plastic tumbler, then took a couple of aspirin and washed them
down. He went upstairs to his room and sat on the edge of the bed, feeling strangely unsatisfied with
his life and he didn't know why. He flopped back on the bed, staring up at the ceiling. He had a great
reputation in his field. He had money in the bank – more than enough to build the perfect home. And
he had friends and family that kept him centered. Dean didn't need a white picket fence and he sure
as hell didn't need a relationship. He turned his head to see the two pillows next to the headboard.
Why was everything geared toward couples? He enjoyed being a lone wolf. *He did.* A nagging
sensation in the back of his mind told him that if he enjoyed being alone so much, he wouldn't have a
problem seeing two pillows, knowing one would remain empty. He shut that thought down and fell
asleep in his clothes.

Dean spent Saturday on laundry and running errands. Sunday morning, he called Charlie to see if
she wanted to hang out and play video games, but she was at a client's office setting up a security
system. Sam was next on his list, but he was at his office working on the paperwork for the building
permits. Dean offered to help since he had to deal with bureaucracy all the time. "Dean, I've got a
legal department that gets paid for this kind of thing. I'm just getting everything together for them.
Rain check?"

"Yeah, sure.," Dean said, trying to keep the disappointment from his voice. He already knew Jo was
helping Ellen and Bobby with a bathroom renovation this weekend, so there was no reason to call
her. Resigned to being alone, Dean sat down in front of his laptop and looked at the pictures of the Designing Dreams house. He made some notes. Maybe he should get a dog. He wasn't sure where that thought came from. He didn't have time for a pet and he didn't even like dogs.

He stood, stretched, and picked up his phone. He could always call... what was her name again? Cassie, yeah... no. With some women and men, if you called them a second time, they suddenly thought things were serious. He tossed the phone aside and frowned, finally admitting to himself that this lone wolf thing sucked ass.
Chapter 2

Chapter by palominopup

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Castiel stood at his kitchen window watching the activity on the Sound. Even in December, the water was busy with sailboats. The decision had to be made by tomorrow. He'd spent the entire weekend weighing the pros and cons and was leaning toward saying yes. Sam emailed him the concept boards he put together yesterday, and it seemed like the filming schedule wouldn't interfere with his design business. The added bonus was the salary. Apparently, HHTV compensated their hosts very well.

He heaved a deep sigh at himself for his failure to make a decision, so he called Luc. He knew his brother, a well-known attorney in Boston, would give him rational advice. "Hello, Castiel."

"Luc. How are you and Lilith?" He despised his brother's wife. She was the reason the two brothers were not as close as they once were. He always thought Luc would end up with a strong-willed woman because he was not an easy man to handle, a strong woman is exactly the type of woman his brother needed. But he never thought Luc would marry a demon bitch with no soul. Castiel thought Luc deserved someone better...at least someone who actually loved him. He may be a difficult man, but Luc was always there for him whenever Castiel needed him. No matter how busy his life was or how strained things got between them, Luc never let Castiel feel guilty for needing his big brother.

"I'm good. And you?" Castiel rested his forehead on the cool glass of the window. When had they gotten so formal with each other? He failed to notice that Luc didn't include his wife in his response.

"I'm good as well. I called because I have a question and need advice."

"Ah... well, big brothers are good for advice, aren't they?" Was he being sarcastic? Castiel went on to tell Luc about the offer to do the HHTV show. His brother asked a lot of questions, some Castiel didn't know the answer to, but he made notes to email Sam for more information. "And what about a contract?"

"He'll email it to me once I give him my answer."

"You called for my advice and I will give it," his brother said gruffly. "When you were in college, you used to watch that home and garden network constantly. You told me that one day you would have a show on there. Live your dreams, Castiel. Don't ever wake up with regrets." Castiel suddenly felt like they weren't talking about him anymore.

"Luc, is everything okay?" He heard his brother's soft, mirthless laughter.

"Far from it," came the reply.

"Talk to me. Little brothers can be good for something, too," Castiel told him.

"Lilith was... is having an affair. I've asked for a divorce."

"Luc... I am so sorry." And he truly was. He might have hated her, but he knew his brother loved the cold, heartless bitch. His heart ached for his brother. Luc didn't deserve to be hurt like this.
"The affair isn't even the worst of it. She wants half the fucking firm." Lilith was an associate in Luc's firm when they met. Castiel always thought she latched onto his brother just to get her claws in it. Within months of their first sexual encounter, Luc made her a partner. By rights, she was half owner. Castiel was pissed, but he tried to stay calm for his brother's sake. "That's fucked up. What does your lawyer say?"

"We're going to fight it. I made her partner, but since I didn't require her to buy in, we're going to claim no monetary loss on her part. I have proof of the affair and plan on showing it in court. We're also going to argue that splitting personal assets in a divorce shouldn't automatically require a division of our business assets. If we can make a legal distinction between the two, then we have a better shot at maintaining the firm's value without her fucking it up." Castiel felt a chill run down his spine at how cold and detached Luc sounded. It would have been healthier for Luc to rant and rave about it than to shut down his emotions like this.

"Luc, if you need me—"

"Castiel, I'm sorry."

"For what?"

"I let Lilith and her religious... tendencies drive a wedge between us. You know her views on your... preferences... were not mine. Don't you?"

"Being gay is not a preference, Luc," Castiel said blandly. He knew his brother didn't mean anything by it, but it still stung. "I was born this way. I didn't pick being gay off the menu."

"I always seem to say the wrong things. Again, I apologize." Luc seemed resigned and sounded tired.

"No, I'm the one that should apologize. I know you didn't mean any disrespect. You always were my champion." Castiel thought back to high school when, as a freshman, he was being bullied by a group of boys from the senior class. Luc, the captain of both the lacrosse and the baseball teams, saved him from another brutal and humiliating attack. Needless to say, once they found out who his brother was, he was left alone.

They talked for another twenty minutes, and Castiel felt confident that he finally had his brother back. He just needed to remind Luc that he was a fighter. He wouldn't come through the divorce unscathed, but he would eventually be happier.

He fired off the email to Sam, copied Luc on it, and then made dinner. That night, Castiel fell asleep comforted by the peace he found with his brother, and he slept better than he had in a long time.

Monday morning, Castiel was faced with a sulking Anna. She really wanted to be picked for the show and her disappointment showed. Sam responded to his queries, and after another brief conversation with Luc, Castiel committed to the show, barring anything unsavory occurring outside of the contract terms.

The rest of his week was spent going over his schedule and passing some of his clients to Anna, who'd finally forgiven him. The contract, after getting Luc's final stamp of approval, was signed. He was instructed to be at the HHTV studios on Monday to do some initial publicity photographs, meet his co-host, and go over all the other things he'd need to know about starring in a television show. He found himself getting a little bit excited.

Seeing the pictures of Dean Winchester's work made him eager to meet the man that would be his
co-worker for the next several months. He was intrigued by anyone with that level of talent. In his field, it was common to work with creative minds, but it was all too rare to encounter someone without any architectural training to have that kind ability and vision.

He followed the directions given to him by Sam and pulled up to the guard shack. He showed his driver's license and was waved through. In the guest parking area, he spied a slot and pulled in, not noticing until he was already shutting off his ignition that a huge, hulking gas guzzler had been ready to park there. He waved his apologies before removing his helmet. The guy flipped him off as he pulled away to find another spot. "Sorry, assbutt... your dinosaur wouldn't fit in here anyway," Castiel muttered.

Dean's morning had gone from bad to worse. He dressed kind of nice since Sam mentioned a photographer, but he spilled coffee on it when some dumbass on a crotch-rocket zipped in front of him as he was leaving his favorite coffee shop, so he had to make a pitstop at home to change. Then the shipment for some specialty windows had been delayed at the factory, which would put one of his projects behind schedule. The cherry on top of the shit sundae was when some motherfucker on a motorcycle took his spot in the crowded lot. What was it about the two-wheeled bastards today? Did he have a sign on his back that said 'fuck with me' or something?

He pushed open the double doors and made his way to the receptionist's desk. A guy in a suit was in front of him, and Dean noticed the helmet he was holding under his arm. He waited until the man turned around before saying, "Thanks for cutting me off, asshole. Hope you enjoy your parking spot."

Cold blue eyes looked back at him. "I'm sorry, were you talking to me?"

"I'm sorry, were you talking to me?" Dean said in a falsetto and continued in his normal baritone. "Damn straight I'm talking to you. You cut me off and took my parking space."

Understanding dawned on the man's face. "Oh, I'm terribly sorry." Only he didn't sound sorry at all. "Though I seriously doubt your gas-guzzling behemoth would have fit in it." Oh hell no... Insult Dean all day long, but say anything disparaging about his baby and it's on. He pulled himself to his full height, which was only an inch or so taller than the dickhead in front of him, but he knew how scary he could look. He was a construction boss, wasn't he?

His voice was cold as ice and a bit loud. *Way to be intimidating. "My fuckin' car is a classic. It beats the hell out of your..."*

"Dean?" Sam's voice stopped the insult he was getting ready to hurl about the guy's taste in transportation. He held the guy's gaze for a beat before turning his back on him.

"Hey, Sammy. You ready to get this ball rolling?" He decided to ignore the motorcyclist. He wasn't worth his time, even if he was pretty to look at. *Stop. He's an asshole. His brother looked a bit green. "You okay?"

"Uh... Dean, I'd like to introduce you to your co-star, Castiel Novak. Castiel, this loud-mouth is my brother, Dean." Dean spun around just in time to see a look of disgust on the other man's face. Dean
set his own expression to match and threw in some wrath for good measure.

"I thought my co-star was a chick, Sammy," he said, not bothering to look away from the other man. Those blue eyes narrowed, but didn't waver.

"Um, no, Dean, I never said..."

"Whatever. I don't see this working out," Dean stopped just short of telling Sam 'either he goes or I do'.

"As much as it pains me to say so, your brother is right, Sam. I don't think I can work with... him." Dean knew it was irrational, but he hated that the man agreed with him. *Fuck this guy.*

"Both of you have committed to this project," Sam growled getting their attention and they finally broke away from the staring contest. "You cannot wait until crunch time to decide to take your fuckin' ball and go home." He was glaring at both of them now. "*Both* of you are going to put on your big girl panties, then march over to the studio to get your pictures taken and do a camera test."

"But—" Dean started.

"*Now, damn it.*" Sam pointed to a hallway, and without making eye contact with the blue-eyed asshole, Dean followed his brother. He heard footsteps behind him and knew Novak was following him. Sam led them to a large room where a bunch of people were milling around. "Step over to makeup and when you're done, meet me by the photographer," Sam ordered before stomping off toward what looked like a photography studio.

"Makeup," he muttered under his breath and when he approached the table with lighted mirrors, a young, blonde woman stepped forward with a beaming smile.

"Hi, I'm Kate and I'm going to be assigned to your show. If you'll both have a seat, we can get started." Dean returned her smile.

"Well hello, Kate. Are you going to make me pretty?" Flirting just came naturally to Dean and Kate gave a delighted laugh.

"You don't need much help in that department," she said, putting a drape around his neck, before moving to do the same for the asshole. Dean refused to look at him. A hot man like him was probably used to people eating out of his hands.

"Mr. Novak, your cheekbones are gorgeous," Kate gushed. Dean frowned. He looked at the huge mirror on the wall and cut his eyes to the left, so he could see what was going on. The makeup artist was dusting powder on Novak's face and the jerk was talking to her about camera angles and shit. Dean crossed his arms and waited for his turn.

The photographer was a short, round guy that kept touching Dean's ass. Sam made them change for the shoot. It wasn't fair that Dean got stuck in a denim jacket while Novak got to wear a leather one, but when he pulled Sam aside to discuss it—*not whine*—he said something about aesthetics and a bunch of other crap. Basically, he said Dean was stuck wearing the denim.

Several stiff poses later, Sam and the photographer were getting pissed. Finally, the photographer lost his shit and shouted, "*Jesus H. Christ, can you at least pretend you like each other? I'm not asking you to kiss for crying out loud.*" Dean noticed how the entire building got silent. All eyes were on him and Novak. To Sam, he muttered, "Good luck with your show, man." Knowing how much Sam had riding on the success of *Designing Dreams,* Dean knew he had to put his personal feelings for the guy aside... *for now.*
"Let's try again," Dean suggested. "I'm good, Sammy." He turned to Novak. "You're good, right?"

"I'm good," he responded curtly.

Sam and the photographer had a little powwow while Dean was waiting, he spoke softly to Novak. "Look, we don't have to like each other, but we are both stuck doing this show together. You pick curtains and rugs. I'll handle the rough stuff. Capisce?"

"Capisco." Dean glared. Of course, the guy could speak Italian. Where did Sam dig this fucker up?

Somehow, they got through the rest of the afternoon. There were pictures, interviews, screen tests, and by five, Dean was exhausted and fed up with trying to be nice to Castiel. What kind of name was that anyway? Probably some ritzy family name... He seemed like the type to claim his ancestors were on the Mayflower or some pretentious shit like that.

The designer was always friendly to everyone else, but when he turned his eyes to Dean, they were as cold as ice. After enduring yet another icy glare from Captain Asshole, Dean returned his focus to some dude with a clipboard telling him something. "I need one more shot," the photographer said from his left. "Just the two of you for the banner ad." Dean sighed. He was tired of getting his picture taken.

"Yo, Cas! You're needed over here." Dean didn't know where the nickname came from and didn't care. It got Captain Asshole's attention and that's all he cared about. From the smitey face he made, it was apparent that Cas didn't like it one bit. Dean couldn't resist smiling with sadistic glee.

"You guys did great today," Sam told them, obviously lying. "Tomorrow, we will go out to the house and film most of the day there. We'll be filming your initial reactions and thoughts about design. Castiel, we want you in a suit, and Dean, you just dress like you normally would for a home inspection. Meet here at seven sharp, then we'll ride over together with the crew and production team."

With a sigh of relief, Dean high-tailed it out of there. He needed a drink.

The next morning, Castiel growled at the ungodly hour he had to get up. The shower and three cups of coffee didn't help his attitude. Of all people, he was stuck working with Dean Winchester. The contractor might be a genius when it came to building homes, but he was very much a rude, arrogant jerk.

His view, even with the usual rain coming down in steady sheets, wasn't enough to put him in a better mood.

Precisely at 7:00, Castiel pushed through the doors of HHTV and of course, Winchester was already there. He was dressed in indecently tight jeans, a plaid shirt, and his hair was damp from the rain. He wasn't going to think about how beautiful the man really was. Lusting after his co-star, especially one that he despised, would only lead to bigger problems. Winchester didn't even acknowledge him and that was perfectly fine with Castiel. Yesterday had been a fiasco and the crack he'd made about Castiel picking the curtains really pissed him off. Like a typical redneck, he assumed that interior designers were all flamboyantly gay men. It was the assumption that made Castiel mad. Sure he was
a gay man, but he knew plenty of others who were not. If Winchester made one comment about Castiel's sexuality... well... he didn't know what he'd do, but it wouldn't be pleasant. And where the hell did he get off thinking he could shorten Castiel's name? His name was his trademark and no one was going to bastardize it.

Sam and a few other people came toward them. Sam smiled, clearly hoping to lighten the mood. "Everyone ready?" They loaded into two SUVs and a panel van pulled up behind them. Thankfully, Sam and his team talked about lighting, scripting, and other production topics while he and Winchester sat quietly in the backseat. Mercifully, it didn't take long to get to the Greenwood neighborhood where the house was located. When they pulled up, Castiel's eyes fell on the small bungalow. It had so much potential. He was so focused on the house, he didn't even wait for anyone else. He started walking around taking mental notes. He would extend the front and add on a small porch... and he'd have the yard landscaped, maybe plant more trees in the back...

"I was thinking about ripping off this vinyl siding to see what's underneath. I'll bet it's just clapboard under there. Cedar tongue and groove would look pretty sweet..." Winchester said from behind him.

"No, paint would be more cost effective and we could showcase new, and much larger, windows with a primary shade to give it a pop of color."

"The windows are fine," Winchester said, going up to the front and running his hand around the casing.

"They're old and not energy efficient," Castiel said and knew he created a direct hit when Winchester frowned and moved on. It wasn't until they were in the back of the house arguing about the virtues of a pergola versus a traditional covering for the patio that Castiel realized the cameras were rolling.

Once the outside inspection was complete, Sam gave Dean the key and they went inside. Old, musty carpet and stark white walls greeted them. The kitchen was a Victoria's Secret pink and Castiel smiled at the image of Mrs. Kline. "I just love it, Cas-tee-ell." His amusement was short-lived as Winchester talked about concrete countertops and appliances from Sears. Sears. He had nothing against the store, but he could get much nicer products from some of his suppliers. He really needed to talk to Sam about discounts from advertisers. He'd gotten a lot of things for his own home by reviewing them in his blog posts.

"While concrete countertops are functional and can be very pretty, they are also higher maintenance. I think granite would be a better choice."

"Granite is fuckin' pricy, dude." He heard a distinct groan from Sam at his brother's foul mouth.

"It's more than worth it, especially when you factor in practical use and aesthetics," Castiel said promptly, already picturing the kitchen with colorful cabinets and stainless steel appliances.

For thirty minutes, the cameras were on Winchester while he explained joists and load-bearing walls. During that time, Castiel took measurements of rooms and let his artist's eye see the potential.

His alone time with the camera came later. He hoisted himself up on the kitchen counter and talked directly to the blinking red light. "I see a young couple or a small family living here. I want to create a space that is affordable to maintain, easy to clean, but would also be a place they're proud to show off to their friends and family." He went on to talk about furniture styles and green building designs. He caught Winchester watching intently and knew the man was probably disagreeing with everything coming out of his mouth.

The ride back to the studio was quiet. Very quiet. Castiel stared out the window at the rain that had
been drizzling on and off all day. He and Winchester hadn't agreed on anything, and the tension between them only escalated as the day went on. Good thing neither of them had quit their day jobs because *Designing Dreams* would probably never get air time.

That night, he sat in his living room with a glass of wine in his hand, staring out the windows into the darkness. The patter of rain relaxed him. People either loved Seattle's weather or they hated it. There was no in-between. Castiel was usually in the former group, but tonight it was depressing him. Then again, maybe it wasn't the steady showers... Dean Winchester's image filled his head and he leaned back in the chair and closed his eyes. He didn't know why the man got to him so badly. Because of him, Castiel's dreams of being on HHTV and hosting his own show were about to be dashed.

Sam had tried... and failed... to stay upbeat as the day progressed and Castiel felt sorry for him. He couldn't believe someone as nice as Sam could have a brother that was such a... such a... *prick*. Castiel could count on one hand the number of people he used that term on, and every single one of them had deserved it. In spite of his brother, Sam genuinely seemed like a good person. The poor guy had given him a schedule of filming, but Castiel fully expected a call telling him not to bother. With a huff, he rose from the chair and drained his glass in one gulp. As expected, sleep didn't come easily that night.

Long after Castiel and Dean left, Sam sat in the editing room and watched hours and hours of digital film. He rubbed his temples, but it didn't ease the headache. His phone rang and he saw his brother's name appear on the screen. His disappointment turned to anger. "What do you want?"

"Whoa, Sam, hello to you, too."

"Don't, Dean... just don't. I'm not... I just can't talk to you right now."

"Sammy... Sam... Look, about today... I know I fucked everything up for you and I'm sorry. That guy is a douche though. Can't you see that? He thinks his shit don't stink. We can find someone else... hey, we can even find a chick in high heels. This project is awesome and I really... I really want to do it for you." Dean's last words were said in a whisper and Sam let his head fall back to stare at the acoustic-tiled ceiling.

"Dean, we have a contract with Castiel, same as you. If he goes, you go," he said resignedly. "It's a moot point anyway. The footage from today was worthless. All you two did was bicker like an old married couple. My boss is going to take one look at it and pull the plug."

"I..."

"Dean, just stop. I need to go." He hung up and a part of him felt guilty. Dean always took care of Sam, all through his childhood and even through film school. Dean sometimes forgot that Sam was an adult now and still took his job as big brother very seriously. Guilt would eat Dean alive, but instead of calling him to make it right, Sam went back to the computer and finished what he'd started. Crowley was not going to be happy about it.

Walking down the hall the next morning, thumb drive in hand, Sam felt his headache returning. This was going to be bad. He was already mentally packing up his desk.
Crowley had the photographs from the shoot on his desk when Sam knocked and was told to enter. He looked up. "Handsome lads, aren't they? The lonely housewives are going to have moist panties." Sam shuddered at the word 'moist'. "We'll have to get them shirtless at least once an episode. Really push the sex sells button." He pushed the pictures aside. "Well, let's see it."

Sam handed over the small drive and watched with growing dread as Crowley slipped it into his USB port. On the wall beside his desk was a large monitor and within seconds, Castiel's face filled the screen. The cameraman had to scramble to get out of the van and catch his initial reaction. Crowley leaned back, fingers tapping on his desk as he continued to watch. As the clips ran, Sam stayed silent. He wondered where his resume was stored. On his laptop or his desktop in his office? It would need to be updated.

The screen went black. Crowley's fingers stilled. "This is fucking gold."

"I understand. I thought the two... wait, what?"

"Gold, Mr. Winchester. The tension between those two is delicious. I think the audience will absolutely eat it up. I'll have the editing department put together a pilot and we'll get it in front of a test group ASAP. When are you set to film again?"

"I... Uh... tomorrow..."

"Good. Winchester, this is on the fast track. I want this to air no later than mid-January." He pointed to the photographs. "I want these two sexy bitches plastered on billboards no later than Friday. Take the interviews they did in the studio, put in some footage from this..." He pointed to the screen. "and we'll have a promo to start showing..." He looked down at his calendar. "no later than the eighteenth. Sundays are a prime viewing day." Sam sat stunned. Crowley thought it was good. "What the fuck are you waiting for? Fast track, Mr. Winchester. The key word being fast." Sam stepped quickly to the door, but Crowley stopped him. "And Sam, change Novak's name on the promos. The production crew has been calling him Cas. It's shorter and rolls off the tongue better. Dean and Cas." He frowned. "No... Designing Dreams with Cas and Dean. Yeah, that's money. Run with it." He waved his hands in a shooing motion and Sam shut the door behind him.

He was grinning as he walked down the corridor. He had a show. Crowley actually loved it. Dean was going to flip out and Castiel was going to be ecstatic. Sam furrowed his brow. No, he couldn't imagine Castiel Novak ecstatic about anything. Pleased yes, ecstatic, not so much. Sam had seen the way the interior designer looked at the house. He was itching to get his hands on it. Cas. Cas... wasn't that what Dean called him yesterday? It was easier to say and from a marketing point of view, it seemed a better choice. Hopefully, he wouldn't have a problem with it...
Chapter End Notes

Hope you guys like it so far. When these two finally have angry sex, it might melt your screen. I like to imagine biting and scratching...marks Kate, the makeup girl, will have a hard time covering.
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Dean held onto the phone for a long time. He'd failed his brother and it stung. A surge of anger made him throw his phone across the room and he watched it explode. He hated letting Sam down. Everything he'd ever done was for Sammy, and as the big brother, he thought it was his duty to make sure his little brother was happy. Dean never put himself first... until today. Hearing the disappointment in Sam's voice was enough to push him into full-on guilt mode, and he couldn't find his way out. He coped the way he usually did when he was down... he'd been drinking beer all day, but it was time to switch to stronger medicine. He screwed the cap off the bottle of Jack and poured himself a healthy dose. He winced as the burn of the whiskey reached his empty stomach.

He sat in the dark, and it eventually became too difficult to pour, so he drank straight from the bottle. Sometime in the wee hours of the morning, he slept.

A loud banging woke him and he sat up, holding his aching head. Where...? Oh, he was on his couch. It was light outside, or as light as a rainy morning in Seattle could be. The knocking came again, more insistent this time and he groaned. His head was killing him, and he was fairly certain he was still a little bit drunk. He staggered to the door and flung it open, squinting at his visitor. "What the hell, Dean? It's eight-thirty," the blonde dynamo ranted, hands on slender hips.

"Seriously? Fuck." Why hadn't his alarm... oh, yeah... because his phone, a.k.a. his alarm, was in pieces on the floor.

"You look like shit, boss." His expression of suppressed exasperation made her shrug. "I got the crew going this morning and Donna is fielding your office crap. So you know, if you need time to put in a tampon and do your nails, feel free."

"Bite me, Jo," Dean growled. "I broke my phone and didn't have an alarm."

"Lame excuse, since you smell like a brewery." Jo never judged him, but she didn’t pull any punches either.

"Let Donna know I'll be in as soon as I go get another phone," he said, shutting the door on her next words. He scrubbed his hands over his face and headed for the shower. This was going to be a long-ass day, and he didn't want to face it. Of course, he would, but he didn't want to...

While in the shower, he thought about Novak... no, not like that... The man was an enigma. He was an arrogant asshole, but then he'd given that speech about the house and how he imagined a young family living there. And the part about green building design was right up Dean's alley. He used solar power when he could and made sure he used products that were sustainable. Dean wouldn't let his guard down though... the guy was still a dickweed.

New phone in hand after a hard hit to his credit card, Dean pulled into his spot in front of the office. Donna looked up when he stepped inside. "Morning, boss. Coffee is ready for you. I made it extra strong," she said smugly.

"Jo is a loud-mouthed..." He stopped at her amused look. Shaking his head, he poured his coffee and waited for Donna to give him the rundown of what he'd missed.
It was after lunch before he came up for a breather. Juggling his ongoing projects with the two wasted days on Sam's show wasn't as bad as he thought it would be. Jo and Benny had really kept things running smoothly. He was just going over shit to make sure they hadn't missed anything. He was kind of disappointed when he realized they didn't really need him. When his phone rang, he looked at the screen with apprehension. It was Sam calling to tell him the show was a no-go and that meant his brother was out of a job. It was all his fault.

"Hey, Sam," he said, his tone not nearly as upbeat as usual when he greeted his brother.

"Dean, you aren't going to believe this. Crowley loved the dailies. He thinks the tension between you is gold. Gold, Dean. His word, not mine. It's incredible. So in a nutshell, the schedule I gave you is still a go. We will start demo in the morning. You and Cas will have to get together and do some initial drawings. But wow, Dean... Crowley liked it, and he never likes anything."

Dean was grinning as Sam finally wound down. Sam was going to be okay and all was right in Dean's world again. Wait, did Sam call Novak 'Cas' a minute ago? That was freakin' hilarious. The pompous bastard was going to straight-up lose his shit over this.

"That's awesome, Sammy. I'll be ready to go. I've already got some sketches done, so everything should be a breeze."

"Great, just show them to Cas to make sure they fit with what he wants to do. And Dean, the advertising push should be starting Friday. We're talking billboards and promos on HHTV. You're going to be famous, Dean."

"I'm really happy for you, bitch," he said and he meant it. Sam deserved this.

"Thanks, jerk. Hey look, I gotta go. There's so much stuff that has to be done. I'll see you in the morning."

"Sure. See ya, Sammy," Dean said and ended the call. He didn't have any time to waste, so he stood up and went to the big whiteboard in the front office. It held the notes on every project they were working on. He picked up a marker and made a few notes. He'd meet with Jo and Benny this afternoon and tell them about his schedule.

When he was done, he went to the adjacent warehouse and got his demo tools. He hefted a large sledgehammer and added it to the power saw and crowbar. Maybe he should get someone to help him because he doubted Novak would be any assistance at all. He loaded up his work truck and went back to his desk. He rolled up the sketches he'd done and placed them in a cardboard tube. Now all he had to do was finish some invoicing and wait for his crew to get in from the field.

Bright and early the next morning, he drove his truck straight to the jobsite. The film crew was already there. An RV was set up in the front yard and a generator was next to it. Thankfully, Sam had the foresight to have the power and water turned on in the house. A row of porta-potties stood just to the side of the house. As Dean got out of his truck, he heard the sound of a motorcycle and turned. Novak pulled into the yard and shut off his engine. He was wearing one of those dusters to keep the rain off and when he swung his leg over the bike, Dean noticed just how muscular his thighs were in jeans. Wasn't he supposed to be wearing a suit? Wasn't the whole idea to have beauty and brawn, Novak being the beauty in the equation. "Cas, you slummin' with the working class today?" He asked with a gesture toward Novak's clothing. The slicker covered a red leather jacket and a t-shirt. He'd been in a suit every other time Dean had seen him, so this was just wrong.

"Today is demolition day, isn't it?" The look he gave Dean was one usually reserved for stepping in dog shit. He slowly removed the long coat and slung it over the bike and Dean couldn't help notice
how the jeans fit the guy's crotch.

"It is, but your job is to stay out of my way and look pretty. Just leave demo to the professionals."
Dean smirked and turned around to start unloading his tools. Good one, Winchester.

"I can assure you that I can handle a sledgehammer," Novak said, promptly snatching it out of Dean's grasp.

"Hey," Dean cried out, but Novak was already heading toward the RV. "Son of a bitch," he muttered as he followed, definitely not checking out Novak's ass.

Castiel was looking through a new collection of fabrics when his phone rang. When he saw Sam's name, he almost didn't answer it because he knew his HHTV career was over before it even began.

"Hello, Sam."

"Cas... great news," Sam crowed. "My boss loved the stuff we shot. It's a go, man."

"That's wonderful news, Sam," Castiel said. "What's next?" Did Sam just call him Cas? Surely not.

"We'll be moving forward with the schedule I already gave you. Tomorrow is demo day and you'll have to get with Dean sometime to go over your initial plans. Dean said he'd done some sketches, but I need both of you on the same page." Castiel guessed that was Sam-speak for you two need to get along. Well, he wasn't the one walking around with his ass on his shoulders.

He dressed for the job in jeans and a t-shirt. He added his rain slicker just before he walked out the door. He tossed in some work gloves, safety glasses, and a hardhat into the saddlebags on his bike and headed to the house. He spotted Dean getting out of a beat-up truck as he pulled up in the yard and cut the engine.

Castiel thought Dean was trying to insult him with the comment about his attire, but Castiel wasn't taking the bait. What he did take was Dean's sledgehammer... right out of his hands. As he walked away, Castiel couldn't help the grin that spread across his face. Serves the prick right for making ignorant assumptions...

Sam was inside the RV with a few others he recognized by face, if not by name. Sam greeted him with a smile. "Good morning. You look ready to work," Sam said, indicating the large hammer in his hand.

"Sammy, let's get this show on the road," Winchester said, bursting through the door like a raging Viking. "I feel like breaking shit." Immature child.

It took a while to get makeup on, get the cameras set up, and decide which room they would start in. By mutual agreement, Winchester started in the bathroom and Castiel began working on the horrific trim around the windows in the living room. He was about to start when music began to play... loudly. No, not music... head-banging lyrics with screeching guitars was not music. Dropping the crowbar, he stomped down the hallway. The bang of a sledgehammer was followed by the shattering of ceramic tiles hitting the floor. Castiel spied the portable stereo near the door to the bathroom and yanked the plug out of the wall.
"Come crawling faster
Obey your master
Your life burns faster"

Winchester's voice died. "What the fuck?"

"I can't work with that... that... caterwauling." Dean was standing in the middle of the small bathroom, a layer of white dust covering his black t-shirt. He was holding the heavy hammer and his biceps were... fuck... No. Stay on track, Castiel.

"Caterwauling? What are you, eighty? You gonna call me a whipper-snapper and tell me to get off your lawn next?" Castiel heard a snort behind him and turned to notice that his cameraman had followed him and was still filming. Castiel knew the angry tic in his jaw had been captured on camera and there was no way to disguise it as anything other than rage. Dean was standing in the bathtub smirking, and the camera guy was panning from Dean to Castiel like he was filming a tennis match. Without another word, Castiel stormed back down the hallway with Dean's laughter following him. Moments later, the music started again and he could have sworn it was even louder this time.

Needing to cool down before he said or did something stupid, he stepped outside. There was a steady drizzle and he knew he should have brought his slicker inside with him. Unless he wanted to ruin Kate's work on his face and hair, he was stuck in the house for now... with him. How on earth was he going to get through this? Castiel knew the added drama would play well with the viewers, but it wasn't playing well with him. To be honest, he was losing his fucking mind trying to deal Dean. How can such a gorgeous man be so insufferable?

He took several deep breaths, counted to ten, and returned to the bathroom. Winchester looked up from the pile of porcelain and plaster he was pushing with a broom. The music would make conversation impossible, so he waited until Winchester got the hint. The man had the audacity to roll his eyes, but he stepped around Castiel and turned off the music. "What?"

Castiel needed to appeal to the logic he hoped the man possessed. "Dean... we are filming a television show. Don't you think the viewers would like more commentary and less... loud music?"

"He's right, Dean," Sam said, coming down the hall. "You both have to talk more. Tell the people what you're doing and why."

"I work better with music, Sammy," Dean said, ignoring Castiel.

Sam crossed his arms and raised an eyebrow. Dean frowned and nodded curtly. As Castiel turned to follow Sam down the hallway, he heard a muttered 'dickhead' from behind him.

"Alright, that's a wrap for today," Sam called out from the front door. Castiel had been putting tags on the cabinets he wanted to salvage, but he set his marker on the old countertop. They would film again for a half-day tomorrow. It was supposed to be nicer out and Winchester wanted to pull the siding off the house to see what was underneath. Castiel would finish in the kitchen. He looked
around. The appliances had been hauled off, leaving large empty holes in their place.

They met out in the RV after Sam locked up the house. A temporary alarm had been installed since they didn't want to risk vandals or thieves. Sam handed Dean and Castiel their own set of keys. "These are for the house and the command center," he said waving his hand around. The travel trailer contained a makeup station, a table with a few computers on it, and storage areas for cameras and other equipment. "We're leaving, but I want you both to stay and iron out your plans." Castiel wanted to argue, but it was clear from Sam's tone that he was insisting they take this opportunity to work out their differences. He didn't want to be alone with Dean Winchester... one of them might not make it out alive.

Novak was getting on his last goddamn nerve. Dean knew he was partially to blame for the tension between them, but if Novak wasn't so fucking arrogant, maybe Dean would make more of an effort to get along with the bastard. It wasn't normally Dean's style to be so insulting or to judge anyone's profession like this. Sure, he made sexist comments in front of Jo every now and then, but she usually slapped the shit out of him when he did it, and she also knew he didn't really mean it. With Novak, it was different. For some reason, the guy just got under his skin and brought out the demon side of Dean. He'd never met anyone that made his blood boil like this. It was unsettling and pushed all of Dean's buttons.

The thing with his boombox was fucked up. When Dean did demo on any project, he liked loud music. It was just his thing. Novak looked like he took it as personal insult or something. Jeez, it was just music... and Dean had to admit, it was kind of fun to get the guy all riled up. He'd be lying if he said he wasn't a little turned on by Novak's intensity. But there was no fucking way he was going there...

To make matters worse, Sam got involved in their dispute and sided with Captain Asshole. Dean's logical self was telling him they were right about the music, but his illogical side was pissed off. When Dean was pissed, he didn't communicate well and it showed on camera. He was supposed to be talking about what he was doing so the people watching could follow along, but today he was just off his game and he probably came off like a dumb motherfucker. Meanwhile, Novak was sounding all intelligent and shit. Dean's anger only grew.

At the end of the day, they met in the RV, and Sam handed Dean and Novak keys to the house and the motorhome. While he waited for Sam to talk to his assistants, he scoped it out. It was pretty cool... there was even a bedroom in the back. Nice to know if he needed a nap. Shit, instead of going home to his empty house, he could work late and just sleep here. Yes, that was pretty awesome.

"We're leaving, but I want you both to stay and iron out your plans," Sam said, his hand on the doorknob. No, no, no... Sam couldn't leave him with Novak. Dean imagined yellow police tape around a crime scene the next morning.

"Aren't you staying? What if we have questions? I have questions," Dean's words spewed out like bad Mexican food.

"What questions?" Sam asked, expression turning to Bitchface Number Eight which translated to - - I don't have time for your shit, Dean.
"Uh..." Shit, what questions did he have? "Well... Can I work over some nights without the crew to film? All the little shit that's kind of boring doesn't need to be taped, does it?"

"Of course you can, Dean. Most of the 'little shit' would be edited out anyway. All this demo will be slimmed down to fit in forty minutes," Sam responded. "Anything else?" Sam knew he was stalling. Dean could see it in his face. Asswipe.

"No, I'm good." The door shut, leaving Novak and Dean alone. Dean figured they might as well get down to business and get this over with. Without looking at the other man, Dean picked up the tube he'd left with Sam earlier and uncapped it. He spread the roll out on the table. "I just made a few sketches."

Novak peered down at them for a long time, moving them around a few times. "I want to move this wall up to create more space in the living room," Novak said in a low monotone, pointing to one of the drawings.

"That's a load-bearing wall," Dean replied, in the same tone.

"We can add ceiling joists to hold the weight."

"Maybe," Dean had to give him that. It could be done.

"In the living room, I want to add a feature wall using old barn wood."

"No, that's way too pricy," Dean said, sounding superior.

"It's within the budget. I've already created a spreadsheet..."

"A spreadsheet," Dean repeated. He had also set up a budget form and he knew with the sale of the appliances, it would offset the extra expense... but it was Novak's idea. He knew he was being childish, but he couldn't stop himself. "Well I also have a spreadsheet, and I say it's too expensive."

Novak swept the drawings away in one fluid motion and clenched his jaw. "You know what, Dean? You are a colossal prick. God, it's like every fucking conversation with you is a dick-measuring contest. Is that what this is about—who has the biggest dick? Because I assure you my cock is just as big as yours." And with that, the RV door slammed behind him. The roar of a motorcycle's engine filled the night and Dean was left feeling chastised. Instead of being amused by winding the guy up, Dean knew he'd gone too far. He reflected on his actions and realized he'd been acting like a bully. Dean felt ashamed of himself.

To blow off some steam, Dean turned off the alarm and got back to work. He pried off the crown molding from most of the rooms and tossed it all in the large dumpster out back. He wanted to start on the carpet, but looking at his watch, it was after ten. He needed some shuteye.

At home, he brushed his teeth and stared into the mirror. How the hell did this Crowley guy think this could ever work? Maybe Dean wasn't cut out to be on television. Novak was a freakin' rock star on camera... always articulate, knew how to act, and he was one charming son of a bitch. No... no more thoughts about him.

He stripped down to his boxer briefs and bumped up the heat a bit. A warm body to share his bed would be awesome right now. Dean sighed as he turned off the lamp by his bed and settled into a comfortable position. Luckily, the physical labor and mental stress were a great recipe for sleep, and it didn't take long to fall into a deep slumber. He dreamed...

Strong hands with nimble fingers ran across his ribs. 'Beautiful.' The whispered word was in a deep,
gravelly voice. Familiar... but who? Dean's dick hardened and he felt the velvety slide of another cock next to his. It felt so good. Stubbled skin rubbed against his neck, making him moan and arch his back to get closer to the warm body on top of his. He wanted more... needed more... His mouth sought his lover's and he felt the smile on the other man's lips. Dean opened his eyes and stared up into the blue depths of... Cas?

Dean sat up, his breathing labored and ragged. What the actual fuck?! His dick was hard and he pressed his palm down on it, willing it to go away. No way was he jacking off after a dream like that... No fucking way.

Chapter End Notes

This will have to do until Wednesday. It is a four day weekend for me and family is coming in to share good times and good food. For those of you in the USA, have a safe and happy Fourth of July. Everyone else - eat, drink and be merry.
Chapter 4

Chapter by palominopup

Chapter Notes

Hope everyone had a safe and happy 4th. We are back in the saddle and writing furiously.

Dean Winchester was an asshole. A rude, vulgar piece of... enough. Castiel wasn't going to waste another second thinking about him. He would work with him, but the minute the cameras stopped rolling, Castiel was fucking done.

Feeling his age the next morning, Castiel got out of bed slowly. Trying to prove himself to Dean Winchester gave him a seriously aching back. He took some ibuprofen, stretched as much as he could, and got ready to face the day.

On his way to the house, he called Anna and got an update on a few of his clients. Everything seemed to be running smoothly. When he arrived, he noticed Dean hadn't made it in yet and he breathed a sigh of relief. He waved to some of the crew and entered the bungalow. He looked around in disbelief. Dean had gotten a lot done last night. How late had he stayed? All the cheap crown molding was gone and the carpet was ripped up in the hallway.

"Cas, glad you're here. Dean called to let me know he had to run by a job site and would be about thirty minutes late. In the meantime, we can work on some solo stuff with you," Sam said from the doorway.

"It's Castiel," he corrected and Sam almost looked pained. "I'd like to get the cabinets out of the kitchen today and rip out the rest of the carpet. After that, I need to go through some catalogs to place orders for tile, paint, bathroom fixtures, and the like." Since they were only shooting a half-day, Castiel went straight to work in the kitchen. Using the drill that Dean brought, Castiel took down the cabinets he wanted to save and handed them off to one of the laborers HHTV hired to keep the site clean. He was busting out the rest when Dean appeared in his peripheral vision. He stopped, the sledgehammer hanging from his right hand. "I hope this meets with your approval," he said sarcastically.

He watched something like disappointment flash in Dean's eyes before he schooled his expression, flexed his jaw, and gave a curt nod. "Whatever. I'm going to finish the carpet." Castiel watched him walk away and felt confused by his response. He shrugged it off and resumed his work.

A couple of hours later, Castiel stood in the kitchen. Devoid of the cabinets and counters, the room was a lot bigger than he thought. Pleased with the result, he walked into the hall. The living room floor was down to the plywood subfloor, as were the two bedrooms. With the camera following him, he felt the need to say something. "It looks like Dean has been very busy. As you can see, the carpet has been removed. We're hoping to begin ordering the materials this afternoon." Where was Dean? Was he avoiding Castiel?

He drifted over to one of the windows. The sun had made an appearance and Castiel saw another camera in the yard. Stepping out of the back door, Castiel got his second shock of the day. Despite
the cool temperatures, Dean was *shirtless*. With his toolbelt slung low on his hips, he was the poster child for the all-American male. He and one of the crew were pulling off the siding. He couldn't help staring at the man. Dean's large muscles rippled as he flexed his arms, the sunlight accenting each bulge. His abs weren't cut like one would find in a magazine, but despite the bit of soft middle, he was gorgeous. Simply *gorgeous*.

*And the cameras caught the way he licked his lips. Shit.* There was no fucking way he could play that off as anything other than what it was. He turned and went back in the house to find something else to focus on.

Sam called time just after one o'clock and everyone began packing up. It was Friday, so no one would be back on the site until Monday. Castiel stopped by the RV to pick up his bag and helmet. Sam sat at the table, typing away on his laptop. "Have a good weekend, Sam."

"You too, Cas... Castiel. The promos will start this weekend, so be prepared to get noticed." That's right... Castiel remembered the billboards would be going up today. While he wasn't thrilled to lose his privacy, he had to admit he was getting pretty excited about actually being someone who got recognized by fans.

He stood by his bike and pulled on his helmet. Other than the few words they exchanged that morning, he hadn't heard a word from Dean. Instead of making him happy, it bothered him... more than he cared to admit. Frowning, he stiffly got on his bike. The Ibuprofen had worn off hours ago and he could see a hot shower and a heating pad in his future. Dean was used to working like this, but Castiel was not. A few days at the gym and running a few miles a day kept him in shape, but it didn't prepare his body for intense manual labor. He rose up to start the bike and the twinge in his back became a sharp stabbing pain. Before he rode off, he saw Dean staring at him from the porch, his usual frown etched into his otherwise handsome features.

Castiel had plans to go into the office on Saturday to catch up on his blog and check Anna's progress with their clients, but when he woke, his back was still killing him. The damp weather wasn't helping. From the comfort of his bed, he logged into his blog, *Castiel's Concepts*. Now that the billboards were supposedly up and the promotional ads would start this weekend, he could inform his membership of his new role as host. He refrained from talking about Dean other than saying his co-host was a contractor in the Seattle area.

His stomach told him it was time to get his sore body out of bed. He fixed himself a light lunch and slipped on a jacket. He enjoyed eating outside whenever he could. He climbed the stairs that led to his observation deck and sat down. With another unusually sunny day, his neighbors were out as well. He nodded and waved to a few as he ate his salad. Going for a run later was out of the question with his back still aching, so he decided to spend the day watching old movies. Castiel's collection contained movies that were mostly from the black and white era of Hollywood. With *Casablanca* in the DVD player, Castiel ensconced himself on his couch with his partner of choice, a heating pad. Between the difficulty getting out of bed, stiff movements, classic films, and the heating pad, Castiel felt like an old man. It was a bit of a blow to his ego.

Throughout the day, his thoughts kept drifting back to Dean. The man perplexed Castiel and got under his skin like no one he'd ever met before. Just when Castiel had finally accepted that the man hated him, Dean had to get that disappointed look in his eye when Castiel snapped at him. *What was that about?* Thinking back on the exchange, Castiel realized that before he'd spoken, Dean had looked... friendly... maybe even hopeful. Of course, Castiel had to immediately ruin that by being an asshole for no apparent reason.

It saddened him to think that the tone of their relationship could have been changed so easily if he'd
only spoken with more kindness. Now it was just as bad as ever, and he had no clue how to fix it. It didn't help that he kept thinking about how perfectly edible Dean looked with his shirt off. Every time he thought about it, his dick twitched with desire. He refused to acknowledge it because there was no way he was going to think about Dean while pleasuring himself. He shook himself out of his errant thoughts and went back to his movie, hoping that he'd be back to his normal self by tomorrow.

Sunday morning, he was relieved to find his geriatric condition was not permanent. He ran a good five miles, then decided to spend some time at his studio working on the design boards for each room in the reno-house. Satisfied with his progress, he packed it all in a large portfolio case and set it aside. Next, he printed out several dozen photographs of ideas for the kitchen and bath for reference. He wasn't looking forward to going over everything with Dean, but he knew he had to do it. Sam had been very clear about them getting on the same page. The tension between them might make for good television, but Castiel didn't want to lose sight of the overall goal, which was to build a lovely home for a family in need. As long as he stayed focused on that first and foremost, he could probably deal with the rest.

Sam stared at the newly erected billboard near the entrance to the studio. Crowley's idea was brilliant and the billboards looked amazing. There were three more around the city and one in every major city across the nation. Print ads would appear in all of the prominent home and garden magazines for the January issues, and the promotional spots were already running on HHTV and their sister network, Food & Family. The station was already hearing good things from viewers, and their test audience had been ecstatic over the pilot episode they previewed. The show was going to be a hit.

If only his stars weren't such a fucking nightmare. Individually, they were model employees, but together it was another story. The tension between Castiel and Dean was palpable and had the entire crew walking on eggshells. It drove Sam crazy that they didn't get along with each other, but Crowley was downright giddy over the dailies. Sam hated to admit it, but the show just might work because of the tension. The slogan the marketing department came up with was pretty damn cool and played up the angle beautifully. He grinned and got back in his car, driving away from the giant, unsmiling faces of Castiel and his brother. Sam nervously chewed on his lower lip. He wondered just how pissed the designer was going to be when he saw the nickname the marketing department used on everything.
Dean had been uncharacteristically quiet all day, and it was obvious that he was avoiding Castiel. It was fine so far because they had several great solo videos of them. Crowley would be over the moon that Dean took off his shirt when he worked up a sweat prying off the siding. When he thought about having Castiel remove his shirt for the camera, he chuckled. If he knew anything about the guy, he knew that getting him to take his shirt off was not likely to happen.

Sam pulled into his driveway and decided he should call Dean to check in, just to make sure he really was okay. He dialed the phone, prepared to be the perfect brother.

"Hey, Sam," Dean answered, sounding subdued which only increased Sam's concern. Since Dean was typically opposed to conversations that had anything to do with emotions, Sam decided it would be a good idea to start out by asking for advice from his big brother. He knew Dean was most comfortable when helping with anything he needed. Considering the issue he chose to ask about, he hoped talking to Dean would help fix more than just Sam's problem.

"Hi, Dean. I need to ask your advice about a potential problem."

"Sure, Sammy... what's up?" He could practically hear Dean relax into a soft smile. Perfect.

"Nothing major. Just something with the show. I realize you guys don't get along, but it's about Cas... Castiel."

"What about him? Did he do something to you? I swear if he was a dick to you, I'm gonna—"

"Dean, stop," Sam interrupted, his tone sharp. "It's nothing like that at all. Jeez... Look, I know it's hard for you to imagine, but he's been nothing but nice to me. No, this is more about my side of things... Okay, so you know how he likes going by Castiel and how he hates being called Cas?"

Dean snorted his response and Sam rolled his eyes in exasperation. "Nice, Dean, since this was all your fault. Anyway, Crowley decided everything—the ads, billboards, and commercials all sound better if we say 'Cas and Dean' instead of using his full name. He's not wrong. All of us agree on it. The only problem is that we never asked Castiel if it was okay. Legally, it's not an issue, but—"

"You think he'll flip his shit when he sees it." Dean sounded more solemn than Sam expected.

"Exactly. Actually, I know he will. I guess what I need to know is what you think the best way to handle it would be. I mean, I know how to handle pissed off talent. It certainly wouldn't be my first time. But you know Castiel better than I do, and don't even try to argue with me on that. Just because
you hate the guy, that doesn't mean you don't understand how he ticks."

"I don't hate him. I think he's an asshole, but I don't hate him. We just... I don't know, rub each other the wrong way I guess. "As far as his name goes... I think it's probably important to him because of his business. If he looks at his name like it's his label or something, then that's probably why he wouldn't want to have himself advertised under a different name. It's exactly how I'd feel in his shoes." Dean paused to let out a sigh. "I don't think there's any way for you to avoid him getting pissed off... but maybe you can fix it by offering to display his logo at the beginning or end of each episode. That way he won't have to worry about potential clients being confused about his identity."

Sam couldn't speak. He was completely floored by Dean's thoughtful response. Not that he didn't think Dean was thoughtful, he just didn't expect it to extend to Castiel. His big brother was truly an amazing person.

"Dean... that's perfect." He heard Dean let out a grunt of laughter. "No, Dean, I'm serious. That's a fucking perfect solution, and I'm certain I can get the network to approve it. I can't believe... I mean... I would have never even thought of that. Man, you always save my ass when it needs saving."

"Fucking hell, Sam, keep it in your pants..."

"Okay, fine, I won't go all Gilmore Girls on you. But I seriously can't thank you enough." Sam cleared his throat and decided to switch gears. "Now that we've got my problem settled, how about we talk about what's bugging you?"

"Sam..."

"Dean... Don't even try to act like today was normal for you. You were quiet all day and that's not like you. This thing with Castiel... is it bothering you that much? You just seem really down..." He trailed off and waited for Dean to respond. After a couple of minutes of silence, Sam was ready to give up when Dean finally spoke.

"I have no idea, Sam. I want to make this work because it's important to you. And I will... it's just... harder than I expected it to be. I've never had a problem getting along with someone I worked with before... not like this. I know I played my part, and I feel like shit for how I acted. I wanted to try and fix it... at least make things civil between us. When I got to the site this morning, I went to start a friendly conversation and try to make an effort with him. But I didn't even get the chance to speak before he got shitty with me. And uh... Listen, if you ever breathe a word of this to anyone, I'll email Web-Stalker Becky and tell her you're madly in love with her, got it?"

"Duh... of course, I won't tell anyone. Jesus, calm down. And fuck you for even bringing up that wacko." Dean chuckled.

"Good. Now that I'm sure you'll keep your mouth shut..." Dean trailed off, and when he spoke again, it was quiet. "Uh... I was actually feeling kind of hopeful that I could fix it and we could maybe even be friends. But when he acted like a dick to me for no fucking reason, it uh... well..." Dean stopped talking and Sam sighed audibly. Dean got the message and finally spit it out. "Fuck... I hate this shit. Okay, fine... it hurt."

No way. No freaking way did Dean just say he got his feelings hurt. He knew Dean was sensitive and caring, but never in a million years did he believe that Dean would actually admit it... out loud... to another person. It was like a goddamn miracle. Did he miss something here? How could Castiel have affected Dean so much this quickly? Sam had no idea what to say... everything that popped into his head felt like a potential landmine.
Sam thought it would be prudent to keep quiet about Dean's confession, but he did want to let his brother know he was kind of proud of him. "I think that you were right to try this morning. It may not have worked out the way you wanted, but that's not what matters here. What matters is that you cared enough to try, and I respect you for that. I'm not sure you'll listen, but I think you should keep trying."

"What? Why? He obviously hates me, and there's nothing I can do about it."

"I disagree, Dean. You can do anything. I've seen you do amazing things and most of them were accomplished when they seemed impossible. You can do this. And who knows? Maybe you're right about being friends. Everything I know about each of you makes me think that you could be."

"I don't know, Sam... maybe," Dean mumbled. Sam knew that was all he was going to get, and he was more than happy with that. Dean had shared much more than Sam thought he would. "I gotta go, Sammy. I'm pretty beat."

"Okay, Dean. And thanks for the advice. Seriously."

"No problem, Sammy. See you Monday."

Dean woke up Monday morning to a brilliant sunrise and a clear sky. It was a beautiful day, a rare occurrence for this time of year. Unfortunately, Dean was still feeling out of sorts. He didn't know why he was so put out by the situation with Novak, and he wondered how it had gotten so out of hand. The guy was infuriating... easy on the eyes, sure, but definitely infuriating. Okay, he was flat-out hot as fuck and Dean couldn't stop thinking about him, whether it was with desire or rage. It was driving him up the fucking wall.

It had gotten so bad that he'd told Sam about his hurt feelings. Hurt feelings... didn't that make him sound like a pussy.

Dean sipped on his coffee and went over his mental checklist for the house today. Every time he thought of something that needed to get done, those stupid blue eyes popped into his head. He ran his fingers through his hair in frustration. Then he thought about Sam's advice and decided it was time to take a chance. Dean knew exactly what he was going to do. He went to his computer and printed out a picture of a bathroom he'd done a while back. The entire room was decorated in a Batman theme, floor to ceiling. Dean smiled to himself as he thought about how Novak would react to it. All he needed to do was find the right time to sneak it into the stuff pinned on the designer's board. He placed the photo in his bag and headed out the door.

On the way, Dean was sitting at a stoplight when he looked around and noticed an absolutely massive billboard with his and Novak's faces on it. It was... overwhelming, but kind of awesome. He sat there in disbelief for a few seconds, unable to fully grasp that he was actually on a damn billboard. Then he read the tagline for the show and threw his head back and laughed. It was simultaneously the most hilarious and the most accurate ad slogan he'd ever seen. He only enjoyed it more when he saw that they used Novak's new nickname. This was going to be a very entertaining day...
He pulled up and parked alongside Sam's car and saw Novak climbing off his bike. He started to say something, then thought better of it and absorbed himself in unloading his tools. He didn't look up to see if the other man noticed him or not. He wasn't sure how he would react if he looked up to meet those eyes right now. He would either go off on the guy or his brain could stop working entirely. He had no idea which one it would be, so he kept his own eyes firmly glued to his tools as he gathered them up.

As he got closer to the house, he found himself glancing around to see where Novak was. Once he realized what he was doing, Dean started to get annoyed, then moved rapidly into full-blown grump mode. He stepped into the house and dropped off his tools, then headed to the RV for his war paint. Once he was 'camera ready', he set off to find Sam.

He was looking down as he swung open the door to the RV, so he didn't see the other man until he crashed into him on the steps, sending them both tumbling to the ground. He landed on top and was still trying to figure out what the hell just happened when a strong pair of hands reached up and grabbed him by the biceps. His stunned gaze met the blue eyes that had taken up permanent residence in his mind, and his breath hitched.

"Uh... fuck... I..." Dean stammered, mentally slapping himself for being such a dumbass. He couldn't think of anything except the fact that he was lying on top of Castiel-fucking-Novak and the man was grabbing his arms. Say something, Dean, what the fuck?

"Would you mind getting off of me please?" Novak growled as his hands tightened on Dean's arms. He noticed the man was almost as flustered as Dean. That was something he could work with...

Dean smirked and cocked an eyebrow. "Sure thing, Cas," he said with a wink.

He watched as Novak's expression changed from flustered to angry in a flash. Dean frowned in confusion, then... Ugh, the fucking nickname. Shit. Well, that moment's gone. He pushed off the ground and stood up, then offered his hand to help the designer up. Novak took the hand grudgingly, then dropped it as soon as he got his footing. Dean started to say something, but he was halted by Novak storming away without a word. Dean shook his head and went about his day, hoping with everything in him that this day didn't get any worse.

As the day dragged on, things, of course, went from bad to worse. Dean couldn't fucking win. Every time he tried to speak to Novak, the man just got more pissy and acted like he was insulted by Dean having the nerve to talk to him. Dean was so fucking done. He did what Sam asked. He made the effort...multiple times...and it was pointless. He was over Novak's bullshit, he was over this goddamn show, and he was afraid that if he didn’t get the fuck out of here, he was going to start swinging and end up in jail. Just as he was storming out of the house, Sam casually drew up beside him and gracefully guided him to the RV, which was currently empty. He had to admit, Sam was pretty smooth. To anyone watching, it would have looked like a casual meeting between the two of them. Dean knew it was nothing of the sort. He knew Sam recognized the signs of one of Dean's full blown temper tantrums and was trying to head it off before Dean erupted.

Sam closed and locked the door and turned to Dean. "Breathe, Dean. I know you're at your limit... so just breathe for a minute. We don't have to talk."

Dean gaped at Sam, ready to launch into a righteous tirade, but he shut his mouth and took in a few deep breaths instead. He closed his eyes and focused his efforts on unclenching his fists. Sam was right. He had to get himself under control. He couldn't lose his shit in front of the cameras, nor would he give Novak the satisfaction. After several minutes, Dean finally felt calm enough to talk.

"I don't think I can do this, Sam. I've been making an effort all day, and the guy still hates me.
Honestly, it's pretty fucking ridiculous. I'm here to build this house and work hard to make some nice family's dream come true. I actually fucking care about that. What I don't care about is trying to kiss Novak's ass and be his best friend. Fuck that and fuck him. I tried, Sam, I really did. Now I’m done."

Dean had worked himself up into almost shouting. He went back to taking deep breaths again.

"I understand, Dean. You did the best you could, I guess. I'm not mad or disappointed. It was pretty naïve of me to expect two complete strangers to hit it off and be friends. I'm sorry it didn't work out that way, but you're right. We have a job to do here. Let's just focus on that for now. I'll figure out how to make it work when I need to film you together." Sam ran a hand through his hair, looking tired.

"I'm sorry, Sammy," Dean said in a small voice. He hated even the possibility of disappointing his brother. "I don't want to be a problem for you here. I know it's too late to turn back now, but I'll do whatever you need me to do. I just... I don't know..."

"No, Dean, I'm the one who should be sorry. You gave me such good advice, and mine turned out to be total shit. I should never have asked you to put yourself out there like that."

Dean heaved a sigh and reached into his back pocket, then handed his flask to Sam. Sam laughed and accepted it eagerly. They passed it back and forth a few times, then left their refuge to resume filming once they consumed enough alcohol to take the edge off of their stress.

That afternoon, Dean was working on moving the living room wall when Novak came into the room carrying several paint swatches and flooring samples. He started laying them out across the floor by the window, presumably to see them in the daylight. Dean kept hammering away at the studs and glancing over every time the designer bent down to rearrange things. He had to admit Novak had an amazing ass... the kind of ass poets would write about... if poets wrote about asses. He was startled from his wayward thoughts when he realized Novak had asked him a question. He set his hammer down and wiped the sweat off his forehead with the bottom of his t-shirt.

"Uh... What?" Dean asked intelligently.

He looked irritated. "I asked you how much longer you would be in here." Novak stood there staring at him like he thought Dean was some zoo monkey about to start throwing feces.

Dean snorted a laugh and bent over in an exaggerated bow. "My humblest apologies, your highness. The filthy peasants will be done and out of here by the end of the day." Take that, you snobby fucker. The cameramen snorted back laughter and that only seemed to make Novak angrier.

Novak's gorgeous blue eyes burned with magnificent wrath. He was positively fuming, and Dean raised back up, fascinated by the marked change from the icy exterior he was used to seeing. Novak dropped his remaining samples and slowly made his way across the room to where Dean was standing with his smirk still in place. He got right up in Dean's personal space and leaned close enough to share the air he was breathing. Dean's smile faltered, but he stubbornly held his gaze, refusing to back down. He squared his jaw, green eyes blazing with defiance.

They stood there like that for several minutes, just staring each other down, their chests almost touching with each breath. Dean licked his dry lips and Novak's eyes darted down, noticing the motion before slowly shifting his gaze back up to Dean's eyes. Dean felt his lips slowly drawing up in a wicked smile, then Novak was storming out of the room, leaving his samples behind on the floor. Dean stood there for a minute trying to process what the hell just happened. It was almost like Novak was turned on... No. No way that was it. The man hated him. But even if it was... still no. Dean shook his head and went back to work, grounding himself in the familiar sensation of smashing shit with his big-ass hammer.
Monday morning, Sam arrived at the job site feeling both hopeful and nervous. He hoped Dean would take his advice and keep making an effort where Castiel was concerned. He was anxious over how Castiel would react once he saw the billboards. He didn't have long to wait.

As he approached the RV to check in with his team, he was startled by the roar of a motorcycle. It came to an abrupt halt a few feet from him. From his vantage point, he saw Dean's truck pull up and park just on the other side of his car. Castiel took off his helmet and stalked toward him. As Sam expected, the man did not look happy.

"Good morning, Castiel." Sam braced for impact.

"Sam. We need to talk, and it's probably best if it's in private." Castiel was rigid and looked like he was barely holding back his temper. Fuck, the guy was intimidating... and that's saying something, considering how often he had to deal with Crowley's fury.

"Sure, Castiel. Uh.. How about my car?" Castiel nodded, and Sam led the way, cringing inside over the impending conflict. Thankfully, Dean already disappeared into the house. Sam took a few deep breaths and reminded himself he was in charge and he had a solution, thanks to his brother. They climbed into Sam's car and closed the doors. Before he could speak, Castiel got right to it.

"What the fuck happened with my name? I saw the billboard this morning. I cannot believe after I told you, in no uncertain terms, that my name was to remain Castiel, you changed it to that god-awful nickname instead. What the hell happened?" Castiel was clearly pissed, but he was showing a surprising amount of restraint, speaking in a low, calm tone. It was much more terrifying than if he'd shouted.

"I know you hate the name. But this is a TV Show, Cas...Castiel. It's our job to sell it to the viewers and in order to do that, we have to brand everything just right. I understand it's not what you prefer, but the network thought it sounded better. I happen to agree with them. I'm sure if you can set your personal feelings aside and look at it from a business perspective, you would agree."

"I am looking at it from a business perspective... my business. My name is my trademark and your brother bastardized it. He was mocking me, and now everyone thinks it is acceptable." Sam was astounded at how spot-on Dean's assessment had been, and he mentally filed that away for further examination later.

"I understand where you're coming from, and trust me... I have a solution. I can't change the promos for the show, that's a done deal." Castiel opened his mouth to speak, but Sam held up a hand to stop him. "However, what I can do is offer you something else. We can display your business logo at the beginning or end of each episode, whichever you prefer, and that should prevent any potential confusion. Would you find that an acceptable compromise?" Sam knew free publicity on a nationally televised show could sway Castiel to lighten up, since a spot like that would have cost him thousands. To be fair, he'd have to do the same for Dean, but he didn't think it was a good idea to bring up Dean's name at that point in time.
Castiel seemed to be having a spirited internal debate. Sam waited for him to think it over and tried not to let his mind wander to the day's shooting schedule, which was falling more behind with each passing minute. After what seemed like forever, Castiel finally spoke.

"That would be acceptable. I would like it displayed at the beginning of each episode, after the opening credits, and for no less than five seconds."

"Done." Sam held back his relieved smile. "Now, one more thing...I promised myself I wouldn't get involved in this situation between you and Dean. I have no intention of breaking that promise, but I would like to offer you some advice as your boss." Sam waited until Castiel made eye contact with him before continuing. "Stow your crap and work together. That's all I'm going to say about it."

Castiel narrowed his eyes and Sam felt like he was trying to see into his soul. It was a little disconcerting, but Sam didn't waver.

"Fine," Castiel replied curtly.

"Good. Now let's get to work." Sam exited the car and headed toward the house, not looking to see if Castiel was following him. He was energized by the success of his negotiation with Cas, and he prayed that Dean would be in a better mood today.

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He was lying on his bed, looking up into green eyes dark with desire. Warm, calloused hands glided down his chest, to his stomach, and stopped at his hips, gripping them hard enough to bruise. Castiel gasped as the green-eyed god plunged his cock into him, punching the air out of his lungs. He threw his head back and grabbed the man's strong biceps, holding on for dear life as he felt waves of pleasure coursing through his body with each thrust. His eyes were locked in the man's fierce gaze as he felt his orgasm building. He was so close... He let his eyes roam down the man's face to his full, pink lips... a mouth he'd fantasized about. The man rolled his hips, moving inside Castiel so deliciously. Castiel cried out with Dean's name on his lips. His orgasm was right there...

Castiel was snatched from sleep by an obnoxious beeping on his phone, and it took every ounce of self-control to refrain from launching it against the wall. He felt unsettled by the unbelievably erotic dream and tried to calm his breathing. He was sliding his hand down, reaching for his cock to finish himself off when he suddenly shot up out of bed in a panic as he remembered who had starred in his dream... Dean Winchester.

Castiel growled in frustration and sat down heavily on the bed, burying his face in his hands and running his hands through his unruly hair. This wasn't possible. He couldn't have been dreaming about having sex with that prick. He was just attracted to Dean's looks, that's all. He'd been around attractive men before, this was no different. There was a small, traitorous voice in the back of his mind saying, "...but you never had sex dreams about them." He told the voice to shut the hell up and moved on to start his day.

As he approached the house, he noticed the huge billboard in front of him. He was astonished to see himself on it and felt a twinge of excitement...until he actually read it. His name. They changed his fucking name. He felt rage shoot through him, but he forced it down until he could talk to Sam. This shit was going to get fixed.
Unfortunately, his talk with Sam did not go the way he wanted, but he was fairly satisfied with the compromise. He was still pissed off about the nickname, thanks to Dean-fucking-Winchester. He was mostly worried that everyone would think they could call him 'Cas' from now on. It occurred to him that he didn't actually feel that angry about it, and he wondered if he would have been this pissed off if anyone other than Dean had given him the new moniker. Probably not. He shrugged off his thoughts and stepped out of Sam's car. As he closed the door, he saw Dean's truck parked just on the other side of Sam's BMW. He'd been so intent on his need to settle things with Sam that he hadn't even noticed the man arrive. *Dean.* Just thinking of the man had him feeling a mixture of shame and annoyance.

He went inside and started lining up his work for the day. Today he wanted to focus on laying out the flooring and wall colors in the living room, maybe even the bathroom if he had time. Once he had everything in order, he made his way to makeup. He was about to grab the door handle when someone crashed into him and sent him flying back to the ground. Dean landed on top of him with a loud 'oof'. *Holy fuck,* *Dean body was...* He couldn't think. He found himself reaching up to grab the man's biceps, then once again, his dream popped into his mind. Dean was stammering something and seemed flustered. Castiel tightened his grip on Dean's arms without thinking and suddenly remembered how to speak.

"Would you mind getting off of me, please?" The treasonous part of Castiel's mind was screaming in protest, but the rational part was winning. Still, he couldn't deny that he enjoyed the feeling of Dean's body on his... *No, shut up.* His traitorous brain was going to be the death of him.

He was surprised to see Dean smirking down at him. *What?* "Sure thing, Cas," Dean replied.

Castiel saw red at Dean's casual disregard for his identity. He seethed with anger as he accepted Dean's hand to stand up, then dropped it just as quickly. He couldn't get away from this prick fast enough. He stepped past Dean and into the makeup trailer. While sitting in the makeup chair, he found himself trying to regain control, but this time for a very different reason.

This whole situation baffled and enraged him. How could he be so attracted to someone he disliked so much? How was that even possible? He'd read plenty of love stories like this, but he always scoffed at the incredulity of the characters. He believed that physical attraction always accompanied mutual respect and admiration. He never imagined he could ever feel physical desire for someone he couldn't stand. The more he thought about it, the angrier he became. Even his breathing exercises weren't enough to pull him out of his dark mood.

It didn't get any better as the day progressed. Every time Dean came near him, he was hit with simultaneous waves of revulsion and arousal. He couldn't reason his way out of it, and all he could do was avoid the man at all costs. He needed to check his samples against the light in the living room, but Dean was working in there. He put it off as long as he could and steeled himself to just ignore the man. Sam's words came back to him. He'd promised to get along, at least on camera. He took a deep breath and strode into the room. He carefully laid out his floor samples and paint swatches. He glanced up as Dean was swinging his sledgehammer into a wall stud. His mouth went dry. Dean's muscles were rippling with every motion, and the power of his body was astounding. Castiel's dream flashed through his mind yet again and he felt a rush of exasperation.

"How much longer will you be in here?" Castiel asked sharply. He stared expectantly until Dean finally looked at him. Dean reached down and pulled the bottom of his shirt up to wipe the sweat from his forehead, revealing his spectacularly naked stomach. Castiel wondered if he was having a heart attack. What were the symptoms? He couldn't breathe and his chest was tight... those *were* heart attack things, right? He swallowed hard as Dean finally spoke.
"Uh... What?"

"I asked you how much longer you would be in here." Castiel was shocked at his nasty tone as the words poured out of his mouth. He didn't mean to sound like such a dick, but it just came out and he refused to apologize for it. He raised his chin and maintained his cool exterior. The cameramen and a few of the crew were standing around to witness his behavior, and he prayed this scene would wind up on the cutting room floor.

Dean laughed as he bent over in a mocking bow. "My humblest apologies, your highness. The filthy peasants will be done and out of here by the end of the day."

Castiel clenched his fists as he felt his temper rising. *Don't punch people on camera. Don't punch people on camera.* He kept repeating it to himself as he thought of ways to shut that pretty mouth up... maybe cram a fist in it. He could see himself enjoying both equally. He moved toward Dean on autopilot, deliberately placing one foot in front of the other as he drew himself up to his full height, radiating power and intimidation from every pore. He stopped within centimeters of the man's face and stayed there, just staring him down.

He hoped Dean would flinch away or at least lose his composure under Castiel's penetrating gaze. Instead, he watched as Dean doubled down and jutted his chiseled jaw out stubbornly. His green eyes were gleaming with defiance, and Castiel was mesmerized by the magnificence of Dean's unflinching resistance. He inhaled deeply, their chests practically touching. Then the man parted his lips and his tongue darted out to lick them. Castiel was drawn to the motion, then slowly raised his eyes back up to Dean's as he felt a powerful rush of desire overwhelm his senses. Just as he was about to grab the man and claim his perfect lips, Castiel gathered his resolve and turned on his heel. He stormed out of the room, leaving his discarded work materials behind.

He rounded the corner and ducked into the bathroom, closing the door and leaning against it, eyes closed to block out the world. What the fuck was happening to him? Why couldn't he get a damn grip? This had spun completely out of control, and Castiel *hated* not being in control. Christ, it had taken every ounce of willpower and strength he had to keep from slamming the man against the wall and kissing him senseless. He tried to blame it on the dream, but even his rational mind knew that was bullshit. He hated to admit that, for whatever unfathomable reason, he was very much attracted to Dean Winchester. And judging by Dean's reaction, the attraction was mutual.

Dean finished the wall with renewed energy, each and every hard blast of the hammer spurred by his anger at Novak's behavior. The designer had once again been a total asshole, then all of a sudden made Dean so turned on he could hardly breathe. *What the fuck was this?* Dean was confused, and a confused Dean resulted in an angry Dean. So he blocked out everything and kept demolishing shit until he was interrupted.

"Dean, where's Castiel?" Dean glanced over his shoulder to find his brother standing in the room.

"It's not my turn to watch him, Sam," Dean said, pulling his tape measure off his belt. He handed Sam the end and he knelt automatically to hold it to the floor. Dean let the tape unwind and nodded in satisfaction. A good three feet would be added to the front of the room. He didn't want to acknowledge that it was Novak's idea.
"Dean..."

"Found him, Sam," the cameraman assigned to Novak called from the hallway. Sam let his end go and it retracted with a snap. He stood and disappeared. Curious, Dean followed. When he rounded the corner, Novak was coming out of the bathroom. That in itself wouldn't have been unusual... nature called on everyone. But this particular bathroom was empty— as in no toilet. Novak seemed to be a bit more composed than he was when he stormed out, but he still avoided eye contact with Dean. Apparently, Novak had needed some alone time.

"Castiel, we would like you and Dean to go over your design boards together for the camera," Sam was telling Novak. Dean's eyes widened. Shit. He'd put the photo he'd brought into Novak's folder. It was supposed to be a joke, but that was before... He had to get it out before they started filming. He spun around and was out of the house in seconds. Mercifully, no one was in the RV and Dean found what he was looking for. He'd just picked it up when Sam and Novak walked in. He was caught red-handed.

"What are you doing with my photographs?" Novak's tone was clipped and he all but snatched them out of Dean's hand. *Crap.* The bathroom picture was still in there. This was going to be a disaster.

"Nothing," Dean responded shortly. *Christ on a cracker.* Even Sam was giving him the evil eye. "Nothing. I was just trying to get the show on the road so we can get this over with," he insisted lamely. One of the cameramen squeezed into the space, and Sam backed away leaving Dean and Novak staring at each other distrustfully.

"Alright, so I want you both seated here at the table. Castiel, you'll go over your designs and concepts, and Dean, you'll chip in with questions or ideas. And guys..." Both men looked at him. "Play nice. Please."

They took their places and the cameraman nodded that he was ready. "I think it will be easier if we go room by room, Dean. Here is my design board for the kitchen. I originally wanted a bright color on the cabinets, but I think both of us envision this home with more of a country charm." Dean blinked at him. Novak was actually smiling. *At him.* Oh, right, he's playing a part. Well, Dean could do that, too. He looked at the samples of veneers, tiles, and paint chips glued to the board.

"I think country charm is a great concept, Cas. I would suggest that we use a high traffic grade laminate on the floors instead of hardwood or tile."

"That is acceptable," Novak said, obviously biting his tongue with the use of the nickname. They went through the design boards one by one and then Novak picked up the folder. He took a stack of glossy photographs out and set them on the table. "I have a few ideas for furnishings as well." He pointed to the first one. "This entertainment center is a Shaker style and would look great in the living room. While not true farmhouse or country, I think it will make an interesting contrast."

Dean tried to look interested, but furniture wasn't a big deal for him. Novak could have shown him a picture of a medieval throne and Dean would have been fine with it. It was the picture coming up soon that had Dean feeling antsy. His hands were sweating. Novak flipped over a picture of dining room set and there it was... Novak looked at it, his expression confused, and then he began to laugh. Dean was so in awe of the man's laughter that it took him a second to grin and ham it up for the camera. "I love your idea for the bathroom, Cas." Dean turned the picture so the camera could get a closeup of it. The photo was taken a few months back. The family had been through so much. The ten-year-old kid, Ben, was recovering from his fifth heart surgery. Dean wanted to do something special for them, so he did the Batman themed bathroom free of charge. The parents cried at Dean's generosity and Dean rode that wave of warmth for weeks.
"That was great," Sam said, motioning for the cameraman to cut. The smile on Novak's face disappeared. He stood up and marched outside without a word.

"What the fuck?" Dean narrowed his eyes in confusion. Sam looked just as perplexed.

"What was that all about?" Sam pointed to the picture. "This was the bathroom you did for that sick kid, wasn't it? How did it get in Castiel's..."

"It was a joke. I did it this morning, hoping to make him lighten up. Then he started his shit again and I tried to take it out... but you came in and well, the rest is history."

"He laughed," Sam said, eyeing the door that had clicked shut behind Novak.

"Yeah, I thought..." He shrugged. "Who the fuck knows what's going on with that guy?" Dean looked at the photograph once more before heading back to the house. He had things to do. Novak was in the living room and Dean steered clear. He supervised the replacement of some of the drywall and then did the taping and mudding himself.

"Dean, I'm heading out. The crew has already knocked off for the day," Sam informed him with a wave. Dean wanted to finish prepping the bedroom, so he decided to stay for a little while longer. Assuming Novak left as well, he cranked up the boombox and began to sing and bump his hips to the beat. It was dark outside and the old fluorescent lights weren't bright, and Dean knew he should finish up.

When he walked by the window, he saw that a light was on in the RV. Weird... Sam said the crew left. He went into the living room and looked out the front door. Sam's car was gone. Novak's bike was sitting there in the dimness of a streetlight. "Shit." As soon as the word left his mouth, the door of the trailer opened and Novak stepped down onto the lawn. He seemed to have come to a decision and marched toward the house. Dean thought about running out the back door and leaving before Novak could find him, but he decided it would make him a coward, and Dean Winchester was no chickenshit.

Novak burst through the door. "What are you still doing here, Cas? Figured you'd be home getting your beauty sleep." Dean's attempt at levity failed under Novak's glare, so he rolled his eyes and squared his shoulders. "What's your problem now, Novak? I agreed with every damn color you showed me. I even made nice about the stupid furniture you picked. What the fuck does it take to win with you, huh?"

"You made me look like a fool." Each word brought him closer to Dean, but Dean wasn't about to
"What the hell are you talking about?" Surely he wasn't still mad about the picture. "Is this about the Batman bathroom?" In hindsight, he shouldn't have laughed then... because the next instant he was slammed against the wall. "What the—" Novak's face was inches from his. Dean could feel his warm breath on his face.

Castiel made a promise to himself as he followed Sam and Dean to the RV. He was going be a professional. He listened to Sam's instructions and knew he could 'play nice'. It was going pretty well. Dean was attentive, offered good suggestions, and asked intelligent questions. He found himself beginning to relax into the role... until the photo appeared. It was obviously a shot of a child's bathroom or that of a geek's, who lived in their parents' basement. It had thrown him, but with the cameras rolling, he played it off as a joke. He should get an Academy Award for remaining jovial in spite of his anger. When the cameras stopped, so did his act. Winchester did it to make him look like an idiot. If he hadn't walked away when he did, he might have punched the man in his too-fucking-handsome face. There was something about Dean that brought out a violent streak that was more fitting to Luc's personality than his.

He stewed for the rest of the day. By the time Sam and the crew left, he'd worked himself into a serious state of rage. He remained in the RV working with a design program to implement 3D renderings of each room. It usually relaxed him to bring a room to life, and for a while, he got lost in it. When he looked up and saw that it was dark, he decided to head home. Thinking he was alone on the site, he locked up the trailer. As he took a few steps toward the house to make sure the alarm was set, he noticed a dim light coming from the bedroom near the back of the house. He groaned when he spied Dean's old truck. All the anger he'd channeled into something artistic came rushing back in an instant.

Honestly, he didn't know what he would do once he confronted Dean. Violence didn't solve anything and they still had a show to do. Why couldn't the man be an unattractive troll? That would certainly put an end to his confused emotions. Dean Winchester, with all his infuriating sexiness, was the very bane of Castiel's existence.

When he put his hand on the doorknob, he had every intention of asking Dean why he hated him... why he wanted to sabotage him on a show that would be nationally televised... just why?

Seeing Dean standing there, shirt undershirt untucked, smears of drywall mud on his faded jeans, and that perfect fucking face... The man said something, but Castiel was beyond hearing. *Why did Dean hate him?*

Dean's next words set him on edge. "What's your problem now, Novak? I agreed with every damn color you showed me. I even made nice about the stupid furniture you picked. What the fuck does it take to win with you, huh?"

"You made me look like a fool." He hadn't meant to say it. He just wanted to know why they couldn't get along. They were both adults. As he spoke the words, he found himself moving closer to Dean like a moth to a flame.
"What the hell are you talking about? Is this about the Batman bathroom?" Dean's laughter was what finally broke him. He'd been laughed at all through school because he was overweight and gay. He never had any friends. He would show Dean that he wasn't the lonely, fat kid anymore. He shoved Dean against the wall and pressed in, his face close enough to kiss him. To kiss him... "What the—"

The kiss was brutal... punishing... utterly savage. Did he kiss Dean or had Dean made the move? It didn't matter. This couldn't happen.

Dean was kissing him back, then his hands flew up as he shoved Castiel away. He was panting and his eyes were dark with desire. He moved forward in one rapid stride, clenched Castiel's tie in his fist, and pushed him backward, forcefully slamming him into the opposite wall. The fresh drywall cracked, sending flakes of plaster flying around them. Dean's hands seemed to be everywhere, then one hand slid up his neck to curl into Castiel's tousled hair, gripping it hard enough to hurt. Castiel growled and shoved his knee between Dean's thighs, parting them roughly. This couldn't happen. "No," he whispered, but Dean's mouth swallowed the sound. Just like in his dream, he grasped Dean's biceps and held him in a fierce grip. Dean rutted against his thigh and Castiel's cock responded by pressing painfully against his zipper. He felt Dean's hands drop to his back, dragging his shirt out of his pants, and then the scrape of nails on his flesh. Castiel gasped for air and let his head fall back. He was disoriented. Dean didn't waste any time as his lips trailed along the sensitive skin of his throat. Dean's teeth nipping hard enough to leave a mark should have brought him back to his senses, but it felt so good.

This couldn't happen. He needed to stop this madness. Of their own free will, his fingers roamed up Dean's back, clawing at him, dragging him closer... Castiel gripped the front Dean's tool belt, moving to turn them around and knocking over a stack of lumber as he pinned Dean against the wall. "Fuck..." Dean groaned against his neck before moving his mouth down to Castiel's collarbone, sucking and biting. Castiel felt Dean palm his erection and he thrust into it. God help him, he wanted this. He latched his teeth onto Dean's earlobe and tugged, drawing a whimper from the other man. As soon as he heard that beautiful sound coming from Dean, Castiel lost all sense of control. He shoved his hands up under Dean's undershirt and ran his palms across the muscular ridges he'd been dying to touch. His skin was so warm... Castiel let out a feral growl and raked his fingernails down the front of Dean's chest, causing the man to cry out when they raked over his nipples. He yanked on Dean's tool belt and snarled when he couldn't unbuckle it. Then Dean's hands were on his and the clasp was released. Castiel tossed it aside and it hit a nearby lighting rig, sending it to the floor with an audible crash. Undaunted, he unsnapped Dean's jeans with vicious accuracy and thrust his hand inside.

He wrapped his hand around Dean's shaft, reveling in the feel of his velvety smoothness... of heat... of wetness. His thumb rolled over the slit and the scent of Dean's arousal made him hungry for more. "Cas..." Dean hissed his name... no, not his name... God, how did he make the unwanted nickname sound so damn erotic? He pumped Dean's cock with hard, merciless strokes. He let out a loud moan as Dean violently tugged at his zipper. He felt it give and then Dean's hand was in his boxers, enclosing Castiel's cock in his fist. Teeth and nails punished as they rutted like wild animals, their movements fueled by passion and rage. His breath was coming in harsh gasps, but his mouth stayed on Dean's lips, Dean's face, Dean's neck... He couldn't get enough. The smell of sweat, aftershave, and their combined arousal was driving him out of his fucking mind. He was close... so close. Dean made a strangled sound and Castiel felt Dean's hot, sticky cum on his hand. Castiel drove his hips forward and back, fucking into Dean's tight fist. The rough drag of it wasn't comfortable, but he needed it to be hard and cruel... because this shouldn't be happening. Not with Dean.

"No... No..." He came, his muscles locking up, and with one final thrust, he stopped moving. What had they done? He pushed away, hands already at his fly, trying and failing to get the zipper up. Dean had broken it in his haste...their haste.
"Cas..." There was a question in Dean's voice. A question Castiel didn't have an answer for. He just shook his head. "Look at me," Dean demanded. Castiel knew what he'd see. Disgust. Hatred. Pity. He ran. It was the only thing he could do. He mounted his bike and came down hard on the throttle. It roared to life and he spun out in the grass. As he bumped onto the pavement, he saw Dean crossing the porch, then running down the stairs and coming to a stop on the lawn. He was a block away before he realized he didn't have his helmet or his jacket. Saying a silent prayer that there wouldn't be any police between here and his house, he veered left and headed home.

At the house, he stripped off the pants with the broken zipper and threw them across the room in a childish tantrum. His underwear was covered in dried cum, and he wadded them up and cast them aside. Standing there alone, the full impact of what happened hit him and he let out a howl of frustration. "Fuck..." he groaned, willing himself to calm down. He was the one who started it, not Dean. He wanted to blame Dean, but Castiel was the one unable to fight the attraction to his surly co-star.

His reflection in the bathroom mirror made him gasp. Dark bruises left a trail down his neck, stopping at his collarbone. When he turned around, he saw scratches down his sides and lower back. Despite his anger at his own actions, he smiled in satisfaction. Apparently, he wasn't the only one who couldn't fight the attraction.

Castiel had no idea what to expect from Dean, but he decided that he would be a professional. He would show up at the reno-house and act the part of an intelligent and talented interior designer. He could do this. It was going to be fine... It had to be. And this thing with Dean...it wouldn't happen again.
Obviously, I don't know how a television show like this works. I can only assume certain things, so any mistakes about filming or televising as show are mine. I'm just faking it.
Dean may have been expecting a punch in the mouth, but the kiss shocked the hell out of him. He'd been too stunned to respond at first, but Novak... no, Cas—you couldn't call a guy by his last name once you've had his cock in your hand—Cas took what he wanted. He kissed like his life depended on it, like he was trying to devour Dean. It was wet, filthy, and hot as fuck. Dean managed to get with the program, and he did what he'd been wanting to do since the first time he laid eyes on the man. Yes, his hair was just as soft as it looked and Dean was determined to give it that 'just fucked' look. He wasn't ashamed that he pulled Cas' hair and used his teeth. It had been so much hotter than he could have imagined. Dean couldn't remember the last time he'd been that turned on.

An... it was only a rough handjob. He thought that if they ever fucked for real, the explosive nature of it might level a whole city block.

He grinned at his reflection in his bathroom mirror. The love bites and scratches covered a lot of real estate and he was kind of proud of them. "You've still got it, Winchester." He winked at himself and made pouty lips, quoting one of his secret chick-flicks. "He thinks I'm gorgeous... He wants to kiss me... he wants to hug me..." Then he frowned.

While Cas was into it... really into it, there wasn't any afterglow or soft kissing. Nope, it was the exact opposite, like he'd been disgusted... with himself or with Dean? Either way, it sucked. He wouldn't even look at Dean after. He just ran out of the house and took a chunk of the lawn with him when he left. He wasn't even wearing his helmet... the dumb-ass. And so what if Dean was worried about him? He had almost been worried enough to call Sam to get the guy's address so he could check on him. But that would be kind of stalker-ish, and he didn't want to even think about answering Sam's inevitable questions about why he wanted the info.

Yeah, so he didn't follow him. Instead, he packed up his tools and drove home. Now, here he was gawking at himself in the mirror. Exhaling loudly, he turned to start the shower. As the hot water flowed down his body, Dean found his mind drifting back to Cas. There was no doubt that he was freakin' gorgeous and he was definitely into dick... but would this change anything between them? If he was honest with himself, Dean hated being... well, hated. He couldn't guess how Cas was going to handle things, but Dean actually wanted to make things better between them.

Morning brought more rain, which was nothing new in Seattle. Dean went over his list of shit to do at the reno-house while he waited in the drive-thru of Biscuit and Bean. He got his usual, an Americano with extra sugar and a Cheesy Biscuit. When he got to the window, he hesitated before asking the barista if she could double the order. With the small bag sitting beside him and two coffees in his cup holders, he parked next to the RV. The motorcycle wasn't here yet. He chewed on the corner of his lip, trying to decide what to do with the peace offering he'd brought for Cas.

Sam stepped out of the RV and waved him inside. With a huff of annoyance, he grabbed the coffees and the bag and went to meet his brother. He wiped his feet on the mat inside the door and moved to the table where Sam was reviewing the schedule. He was still looking down when he started
speaking. "Just an FYI, we're going to have a bit of a delay this morning. The guys must have had a few mishaps in the house last night, because there was quite a mess this morning. I've got them in there cleaning it up now." Dean grinned wickedly, then wiped it away when Sam finally looked up. 

"Hey, Biscuit and Bean breakfast. Thanks, Dean."

Dean held the bag behind him. "Not for you," he mumbled. Sam blinked at him, a look of surprised disappointment on his face.

"Who did you get it for then?" Sam asked and then his expression changed. "What the fuck happened to your neck?" Sam pushed aside his collar and hummed. "Guess you had a hot date... oh God, please don't tell me it was one of my crew... Is that who you brought breakfast for, one of my crew? Jesus H. Christ, Dean..."

"I didn't... no, Sam... not one of your people." Well, technically that was a lie. The sound of a motorcycle took Sam's attention away from Dean.

"Good, Castiel's here." Sam called out, "Kate, see what you can do about my brother's hickey's." Everyone in the RV turned to look at him as his face turned red. Sam smirked. Dean plotted putting Nair in Sam's shampoo. It wouldn't be the first time he turned the asswipe into a bald Samsquatch... You'd think the fucker would learn. Dean was still holding the bag and the coffees. He couldn't exactly pass the meal to Cas with everyone standing around. Maybe he should have just given it to Sam.

Cas entered the RV. He was carrying another helmet. This one was a cheaper model than the one currently sitting on the bench near the planning table. He removed his coat and Dean quickly noted the black suit, crisp white shirt, and black tie. How did the guy still look so put together after riding a motorcycle in the rain? He noticed Cas' neck about the same time Sam did. With wide eyes, he looked from Cas to Dean. Dean felt his face heating and knew he was blushing again. Cas looked sheepish for a split second before he schooled his features. "Good morning, Sam, Kate, Harry, Ed... Dean."

No one spoke as he made his way to the makeup table and sat down next to Dean. Kate stared at their side-by-side reflections, irritation marring her pretty features. "I should get overtime for this," she muttered and picked up a sponge. Without fanfare, Dean shoved the bag and coffee at Cas. He looked surprised but took it, making brief eye contact in the mirror.

It took her a while, but Kate managed to cover most of the evidence of their hook-up. Sam was waiting for them inside the house. He halted his conversation with one of the cameramen when they walked in. He stood to his full height and looked down his nose at both of them to make sure he had their full attention. "I'm not going to ask about... anything. Frankly, it's none of my business... but what happens in front of the camera is. You're both fucking professionals and I expect you to act like it." Dean swallowed and nodded. They were grown-ass men, but Sam made them feel like children being scolded for breaking the house rules... or maybe it was for breaking the house. "Dean, tell me what you have planned for the day."

"I need to finish the drywall in the second bedroom and work with the electricians on the light fixtures."

"Castiel, what about you?"

"I will be selecting paint colors and placing an order for them. I also want to discuss cabinetry with Dean. A decision needs to be made so we can get those ordered as well. I'm hoping to get the painting done when we get back from the holidays."
"Sounds good." Sam clapped his hands to get everyone's attention. "Alright, let's do this, people."

Dean worked on the walls until lunch. As he ate his sandwich from the small truck the studio sent over, he called Donna. She gave him a rundown on all the happenings around the office, and he promised to swing by to sign some checks after they wrapped up shooting for the day. His calls to Jo and Benny went as expected. Everything was fine, but Benny needed his signature on a few permits and said he'd bring them by later that afternoon. Dean hung up, finished his sandwich, and returned to his work.

He hadn't spoken to Cas yet. They'd exchanged a few passing glances, but not long enough for Dean to get a read on the guy. He didn't even thank Dean for the breakfast. More and more, it was looking like Cas regretted what happened between them. Dean was surprised to discover he was disappointed by that. It's not like he expected them to ride off into the sunset together or anything, but he'd be lying if he said he didn't want more from Cas... at least friendship. That wasn't too much to ask, was it? He definitely didn't regret what they did, but the thought of Cas regretting it or being disgusted by it sent a pang of sadness through him. Dean did regret that there was nothing left to smash with his sledgehammer.

Dean was taking measurements for the porch addition when Benny pulled up in his truck. He waved at Dean with the folder holding the permits as he strolled across the lawn. Dean smiled widely, relieved to see a friendly and familiar face. He brushed off his hands and greeted Benny with a handshake and a bro-hug.

"Hey, brother. How's fame treatin' ya?" Dean snorted and rolled his eyes.

"Oh, you know, the usual... nothin' but massages and caviar all day. Obviously." Benny laughed heartily and slapped him on the back. His laughter was contagious and Dean felt himself relax for the first time in days. When the laughter finally died down, Benny opened the folder and flipped through the permits so Dean could sign them. With the business taken care of, Dean offered to give Benny a tour of the place to get his opinion on the work they were doing. As they made their way around the site, Dean answered his questions and took in Benny's feedback. They ended up in the kitchen, where Cas was comparing paint chips.

"Hey, Cas, this is Benny. He works for me and wanted to take a look around. Benny, this is Castiel Novak, the best damn interior designer in Seattle." Dean smiled broadly at Cas as he made the introduction. His smile faltered when he saw the stony expression on Cas' face.

"Nice to meet you, Benny. Have you enjoyed your tour so far?" Cas sounded like a robot as he gave Benny a cordial smile that didn't reach his eyes. Before Benny could answer, one of the workers popped his head in the door.

"Excuse me, Dean? Could we borrow you for a minute? The guys out here have a couple of questions about the eaves."

"Sure, no problem. You guys gonna be okay here while I take care of this?" Dean didn't think Cas actually had an issue with Benny being here, but he thought it was polite to check.

"Of course, Dean," Castiel answered without emotion. Wow, three whole words... Dean couldn't help frowning as he walked away.
Castiel enjoyed riding his motorcycle in the rain. It was just risky enough to sharpen his senses and drive everything else out of his mind. He needed that this morning. He hadn't slept well and when he did, his dreams were invaded by green eyes and strong hands. For now, he fully embraced the distraction provided by the weather conditions and fixed his gaze on the road ahead.

He pulled into the job site and saw that Dean was already here. His heart rate spiked and he used the walk to the trailer to return it to normal and calm down. When he entered the RV, the mood was... odd. He stood there trying to see why, then he caught Sam's expression as he looked at Castiel's neck, then Dean's. Castiel felt his heart stop and he started to panic, then quickly shut that down. Instead, he fixed his face in a neutral expression and greeted everyone by name, including Dean, before sitting down at the makeup station.

Suddenly, Dean shoved breakfast into his hands. Dean bought him breakfast? Why? Castiel looked up to meet his gaze in the mirror, but when he saw the earnest look in Dean's eyes, he had to look away. He didn't understand this. He didn't like it when he didn't understand things, and the situation with Dean Winchester was definitely something he didn't understand. The man rattled him. He also gave Castiel one of the hottest orgasms of his life less than twelve hours ago... No. Stop it.

They met Sam inside the house and the man actually gave them a parent-style lecture like they were children. Castiel found it insulting, especially considering the fact that he hadn't been anything other than professional. Well... except the part where they practically trashed the house during their tryst. Maybe Sam had a point.

After their meeting, Castiel went off to start his own work without saying a word to Dean. He wanted to... or at least he thought he should. He just didn't know what to say. What did one say when they exchanged handjobs with a coworker they despised? Was there a particular etiquette for that? Castiel chuckled to himself at the idea.

He worked on finalizing his paint selections for each room, then took a break to eat lunch. He stood next to the window as he ate, noticing Dean sitting and eating alone. He watched the man make a few phone calls, then finish eating his sandwich in silence. When Dean stood up to walk toward the house, Castiel returned to the kitchen, trying not to think about the fact that he had just stared at Dean Winchester for the last thirty minutes.

Castiel was absorbed in filling out his paint orders when he heard a truck pull up outside. A tall, unfamiliar man stepped out and smiled as he waved at Dean. He watched the man saunter across the lawn like he owned the place, then he hugged Dean. Castiel felt something dark twist in his chest. He stood there, transfixed by the man's interaction with Dean. Gone was the surly, defensive exterior he'd come to associate with Dean. In its place, was an easy smile on a relaxed, friendly face. Dean looked... warm. The dark feeling in him started to simmer and grow more intense. He resented the fact that he'd never once seen this side of Dean. It didn't seem fair.

He watched as they walked out of sight, then he returned to the task at hand. A few minutes later, he heard Dean's voice approaching. He tried to calm the tight, burning feeling in his chest as they entered the room.

"Hey, Cas, this is Benny. He works for me and wanted to take a look around. Benny, this is Castiel
Novak, the best interior designer in Seattle." Dean was smiling at him, but Castiel didn't fully process anything he said after the man's name... Benny. He kept his face blank and remembered his manners.

"Nice to meet you, Benny. Have you enjoyed your tour so far?" Castiel cringed inwardly at the coldness in his tone... but cold was better than whatever he was really feeling inside. Before Benny could answer, Dean was pulled away to deal with an issue outside, leaving him alone with the man.

"You guys have done some amazing work so far. Seems like you both have a good grasp of what you want."

Castiel narrowed his eyes. Was he imagining the double meaning? Did Dean tell his friend about last night? He didn't think Dean would do that, but Castiel was learning that he didn't really know much about Dean at all. "Yes, we've been working diligently to make a decent amount of progress before the holiday break." Castiel looked down to his photos, shuffling through them for no reason other than to keep his hands busy. He came across the stupid Batman bathroom and tossed it aside. He was startled when Benny reached over and grabbed it.

"Oh, brother, what in the heck is this doing here?" He laughed and looked at it fondly. Castiel didn't know how such a horrid bathroom could inspire fondness in anyone.

"Apparently, Dean thought it was funny. Personally, I think it's hideous and wouldn't be caught dead associating my name with such a monstrosity." Castiel looked at the man and saw that his open, friendly demeanor had vanished, leaving a hardened expression in its place.

"Well, good for you. Nothing wrong with having standards. It just so happens that in this instance, your lofty opinions make you seem like an asshole."

Castiel frowned. Why was he taking this so personally? "I'm sorry if I have offended you... but it is just a bathroom."

"Actually, it wasn't just a bathroom. This particular bathroom belonged to a ten-year-old kid fighting heart disease and he'd just finished going through his fifth open-heart surgery. The parents hired Dean to do this for their son as a welcome home surprise, only their original idea wasn't anything close to this. Dean beefed up the design, went above and beyond for this kid, and ended up doing the entire thing for free. I've never seen anyone so dedicated when they weren't getting something in return. But that's Dean for you. He's a giver, and he's generous to a fault. But I'm sure you already know that, huh?"

"I uh..." Castiel cleared his throat. "No, I didn't know that. Our interactions have been... limited."

Benny let out a mirthless laugh. "Well, that's unfortunate. The truth is, Dean may have his faults, but he's the best man I've ever known." It was obvious that Benny cared for Dean... Really cared for him. Was there something more? Had Dean cheated?

"How long have you been... uh... together?" Castiel jumped when Benny let out an extremely loud bark of laughter. He stared in confusion, waiting for the man to stop laughing. Benny wiped his eyes as he calmed down to a light chuckle.

"Oh, man, that was a good one. Listen, Dean's a hot piece, but my wife isn't all that keen on sharing," he said with a twinkle in his eye. Castiel felt the unpleasant feeling dissipate and suddenly decided he might have liked Benny under other circumstances. He smiled sheepishly and thought he should probably apologize.
"I'm sorry for the misunderstanding. You just seemed so friendly..."

"Yeah, that's because we're friends." Benny was holding back another laugh as he looked at Castiel more shrewdly. "You seem to notice an awful lot about Dean... It's a shame you didn't notice any of the good stuff. Well... aside from the obvious..." He stopped, still smiling and pointed to his own neck.

Castiel figured he deserved the ribbing the man was dishing out. He felt himself blushing and went back to shuffling through his photos. Benny noticed and of course pounced right away.

"Huh... Well I'll be damned," Benny murmured. He was hitting a little too close to home, and Castiel needed to get away. He was about to make up some excuse when Dean came back into the house.

"Sorry about that. You ready to head out, Benny?" Castiel could feel Dean's eyes on him, but he couldn't will himself to meet his gaze. Benny noticed and narrowed his eyes at him.

"Sure thing, brother. Nice talking with you, Castiel. I hope this show will be educational for you," Benny said with a pointed look in his direction.

"Yes, I'm sure it will be. It was nice meeting you, Benny." Castiel shook his hand and turned back to his photos.

When he was certain they were gone, he stepped into the empty bathroom and slid down the wall to sit on the floor. It seemed like he was spending a lot of time in this space lately, but on the set of a television show, there wasn't much privacy. He leaned over and buried his head in his hands. How could he have been so wrong about Dean? How could the man he'd grown to despise be the same man someone like Benny talked about with so much admiration? It didn't add up. Castiel went through what he knew about Dean, but this time he tried to focus only on the good things. He knew that Dean was passionate... he'd witnessed that one himself last night. Dean was driven... that was evident by the success of his business. Dean was creative... his tiny house development was nothing short of genius. Dean was persistent... the past few days, he'd tried repeatedly to talk to Castiel even though he'd continuously blown the man off. Dean was caring... even after the way Castiel behaved, the man still brought him coffee and breakfast. Castiel didn't even thank him. Thinking through all of this only led Castiel to believe that he had somehow been completely wrong about Dean.

He had automatically thought Dean was just like all the bullies that relentlessly tormented him in school... the good-looking jocks that made his life a living hell. Dean was so handsome and cocky, he'd just assumed... Castiel reached up to brush his fingers over the marks hidden beneath the makeup on his neck. *Dean gave him these marks.* It occurred to him that he no longer felt disgusted or angry about that.

Sam knew his brother was a man-whore. He also knew Dean didn't lead people on. If it wasn't mutually satisfying to both partners, Dean wasn't into it. That's why he was surprised when Dean brought in breakfast for someone—someone on the set—and he was covered in hickeys. Hickeys. If Dean screwed around with someone on the crew, it had the potential to cause problems... and Sam had all he could handle at the moment. Dealing with the tension and outright hostility between his two stars was enough to give him high blood pressure. He was already popping antacids like they
were M&Ms...

It wasn't until Castiel walked into the RV that Sam put two and two together. He had to admit, he didn't see that one coming. Both men looked like they'd been through a couple of rounds... with each other, and Sam really didn't want to think about the details... ever. All he knew was that he had a show to produce. In twenty-five days, Designing Dreams would broadcast to hundreds of thousands of homes across the nation, maybe even millions if they were lucky. Crowley was so certain the show would be a hit, he had given them a coveted time slot on Saturday night. If this tanked, Sam's career would go down with it. He'd be back to working on low-budget commercials about erectile dysfunction and genital herpes.

He decided it would be wise to keep a watchful eye on his stars whenever he could, but the two men seemed to be avoiding each other for the most part. Overall, filming was going well, and the house was showing the results of their hard work.

Around three o'clock, Castiel brought him the order forms for the paint. "I still need to run my cabinet choices by Dean," he said softly. Sam looked up at his tone. The normally confident man was acting humble and subdued. Did something happen? He was about to ask when Dean showed up. His brother's steps faltered upon seeing Castiel... just enough for Sam to notice.

"Perfect timing, Dean. Castiel was just saying he needs to talk to you about the cabinets." Dean nodded, but kept his head down. Neither of them made any effort to make eye contact. Sam felt like smacking both of their stubborn, drama-queen heads. No. Producers can't go around bitch-slapping the talent.

Castiel cleared his throat. "Um, I've picked out a few that I think would fit the design aesthetic, but I need your input for the final selection." Dean took the offered folder and thumbed through them. He shrugged.

"I'm good with any of these." Sam stared at his brother and frowned. Something was definitely wrong here. Castiel was being... nice, almost too considerate. Dean, however, was withdrawn... He seemed almost dejected.

"I thought this one would go well with the color I picked for the kitchen and dining room," Castiel offered.

Dean didn't even look at the picture. "Sure, whatever you want." Turning to Sam, he said, "I've got my stuff done, so if you don't mind, I'm going to go ahead and head out." With the holiday break starting tomorrow, Sam knew everyone was ready to go home a little early. This thing between his stars was bothering him, though. Fighting and back-biting was a typical occurrence in showbusiness, but this... this was different. He had to see what was going on.

"We have one more segment to tape, Dean, and then you can go." Dean and Castiel looked at him expectantly, their faces blank. Sam grasped at straws trying to think of something he could do to get them to interact with each other. He pulled out a paint sample deck and held up a finger. "Come with me." He led them to the house and found the camera crew packing up. "Just a second, guys. We have one more thing to film."

Everyone was patient as Sam explained what he wanted from Castiel. Dean's direction was just to look interested and ask any questions he could come up with. "And... go."

Castiel sat on a board across two sawhorses and Dean stood next to him. Side by side, the hickeys were more noticeable. The makeup had worn off at some point during the day.
"There has been extensive research on the way colors can make a person feel. Personally, I believe the colors you choose for your space can have a profound impact on your mood. For instance, brown tones make you feel comfortable. Red raises blood pressure and stimulates the appetite, hence the reason it's commonly used in restaurants. Orange is friendly and relaxing. Yellow is a highly emotional color and can cause feelings of anger or hostility, but in small doses, it can be a happy color. Green is associated with optimism and evokes happiness. Blue is said to lower blood pressure and gives a sense of security. White is pure and clean."

"What about black? You forgot that one," Dean commented. All eyes were on Castiel and Sam saw his face turn pink. Would the cameras be able to pick that up? The human part of his soul hoped not for Castiel's sake, but the producer in him hoped it would.

"Black is mostly associated with... sex and mystery," he said softly.

"Oh," Dean said, rubbing the back of his neck nervously and looking like he wanted to be anywhere but here.

Castiel found his equilibrium first. "We chose white for the kitchen because it's a clean color and the family can bring in warm colors to accent it – small things like dishes and towels will make the room come alive."

"Guess we need to paint the master bedroom black, huh?" Dean said, a slight smile on his face. If Sam hadn't been leaning against the wall, he would have fallen over in shock when Castiel returned his brother's smile.

"I don't think that would complement our overall design, Dean." Sam noticed the way Castiel's smile seemed to widen when he finally looked up into Dean's eyes.

Dean threw his head back and laughed. "Okay, fine... but a guy can dream, right?"

"Indeed," Castiel replied and hell yes, the camera was definitely going to pick up the red tint of their faces. Sam had to restrain himself from fist-pumping in triumph.

"And cut! Let's wrap things up and go home, everyone. I hope you have a great Christmas, and we'll see all of you bright and early on Monday."
Dean left the job site with a positive outlook for the first time since the day he first met Cas. The last segment they filmed ended up being awesome, and left Dean feeling excited to come back after the break. For now, he headed to the office to sign checks and wrap up any remaining loose ends before he sent everyone home for the holidays. As long as there weren't any delays in their existing projects, he would keep the tradition of giving his employees the rest of the year off. He had a great staff and they had undeniably earned the extra vacation time, especially after taking up his slack so he could do the show.

Benny was waiting at his desk when he came in, a satisfied smile on his face. Dean couldn't imagine what he would be so smug about. "What?"

"Nothing, brother. Just got the chance to exchange a few words with your buddy, Castiel, today."

"Yeah, so?" Dean sounded defensive without meaning to. Benny ignored Dean's tone.

"I just think he's interesting, that's all. What about you, brother? Do you think he's interesting?"
There was no mistaking what Benny was getting at. Dean didn't take the bait.

"Sure, I guess. I mean, he's pretty good at what he does. He has a lot of talent." *Fuck...* Dean regretted the words the second they left his mouth. Benny snorted a laugh.

"I bet he does. I can see the evidence of his...'talent' on your neck and I'd guess further down as well. Must have been *some* design consultation."

"Very funny, Benny. I'm not going to tell you anything, so stop fishing. It's between me and Cas, so just let it go."

"You and Cas, huh? See, I find that pretty interesting... especially after the conversation I had with him today."

"I'm not asking about it, Benny. I don't want to know. Drop it."

"Alright, Dean. But just so you know, the guy had you figured all wrong, so I set him straight." Dean turned around sharply, ready to launch in to a tirade, but Benny held up his hands to stop him before he could speak. "Relax, Dean. I didn't go all caveman on him. I just told him about the Batman bathroom, and I might have shared how much I admire you as a person."

"Oh, is that all?" Dean scoffed in disbelief. "What the fuck, Benny? You know I hate that shit. I don't like anyone knowing—"

"What, Dean? That you're a good person? I don't see why that should be a secret. You ought to be proud of the man you are."

"Jesus, Benny... shut the fuck up already. Let's just get this shit done so we can get the hell out of here. I'm tired of seeing your dumb face." Benny chuckled and went through their remaining business in record time.

Dean locked the office up once everyone left, relieved to be heading home to his house for some peace and quiet. The past few weeks had been busy as hell and full of enough drama to last a
lifetime. He welcomed the silent embrace of home... at least for a couple of days anyway. Then it would be Christmas.

Dean had always loved Christmas when he was little. His parents were loving and always did their best to make everything magical for him and Sam, even during the hard times when they didn't have much money. When Dean was twelve, everything changed. His mom found out John had cheated on her ages ago and even had a kid with the woman. He'd kept Adam a secret for years, only seeing him once or twice a year. When the kid's mother died, social services reached out to John and ended up talking to Mary instead. Needless-to-say, they divorced, and John went off to raise Adam on his own.

Mary tried to keep up their Christmas traditions, but she just wasn't the same after John left. She'd become bitter and Dean had to take the responsibility of raising Sam. His mother had basically checked out. Now, Christmas was a more somber affair, but Dean still loved the holiday meal. His mother was an amazing cook and she always made his favorite foods for Christmas dinner, including her incredible apple pie. Still, there was always that inevitable phone call from their dad that never failed to derail whatever fun they were having. They didn't even have to answer it... the ringing was enough to upset Mary. Even after more than a decade, his mother's heart was still broken from what John had done to her. After John called, his mother would put on a brave face for as long as she could, but she always ended up 'heading to bed early'... meaning she would go to bed and cry herself to sleep. She never accepted any comfort from Dean or Sam, so they learned years ago to leave after John's call.

This year was the same... Honestly, Dean stopped hoping for anything better a long time ago. His favorite part of Christmas was after they left Mary's. Dean and Sam would go back to Dean's house where they welcomed their friends for their own version of Christmas. It was one of those holiday traditions born from choice rather than obligation. Dean and Sam left behind their family drama and embraced the family they had chosen for themselves, which usually included Charlie, Jo, Benny and his wife Andrea, Garth, and Donna. Every Christmas, Dean and Sam hosted an epic gaming party, and Charlie was in charge of the game this year.

"Merry Christmas, bitches," Charlie shouted, bursting through the door without knocking as usual, much to everyone's delight. She always brought the best games for their monthly game nights, so they knew she would bring some epic shit for Christmas. She didn't disappoint. "Alright, fellow gamer-geeks, heed your Queen. This year, we will be holding a knock-down, drag-out, no-holds-barred, Rock Band Tournament. We’re going to split into teams to form bands, then throw down some sick tunes. Obviously, the band with the highest score wins. Any questions?" Sam's hand shot up. Of course, the nerd would be the one asking the questions.

"I have two, actually... How are we choosing teams, and what's the prize?"

"Great questions, Sam," Charlie answered, glaring at Dean when he rolled his eyes. "As Queen, I have decreed that we shall do something new this year... a battle of the sexes, Girls vs. Boys. Since this isn't Chuck E. Cheese, the prize will be bragging rights. Okay, is everyone ready? Great. Ladies, if you please..." Charlie smiled as each woman high-fived her with wicked grins.

"Come on, men. Let's show these ladies how it's done." Dean exchanged fist bumps with his team as they gathered to strategize.

They all laughed hysterically over the band names... Charlie's band was called 'MoonWhores' and featured Charlie on lead guitar, Jo on bass, Donna on the drums, and Andrea was the singer, Dean named his band MetalliCocks and featured Dean on lead vocals, Benny on lead guitar, Garth on bass, and Sam on drums. The first song of the game was Pour Some Sugar on Me and had everyone
singing along loudly. Fueled by copious amounts of alcohol, both bands were a laughing mess by the end of the night. It wasn't clear which band was the winner, so the MoonWhores declared themselves the winners while the MetalliCocks kept shouting the lyrics to Nothing Else Matters.

The night was awesome and Dean ended up taking lots of pictures and videos. On New Year's Eve, most of them would get together again and Dean would show his friends the incriminating videos of their debauchery. He was currently making his way through the living room, taking pictures of everyone passed out on the couches and in sleeping bags on the floor. At the risk of having a chick-flick moment alone, Dean stood there for a minute and allowed himself to feel grateful for the incredible people he had in his life. He let out a contented sigh and made his way to his own bed for the night, locking his door to keep out any potential pranksters.

Dean was exhausted, but he couldn't fall asleep. He felt unsettled and couldn't pinpoint exactly why... He closed his eyes and tried to quiet his mind so he could finally sleep. As he breathed and felt his body relax, a pair of piercing blue eyes flashed through his memory. No... not now... please...

Thinking about Cas was not going to help him sleep. On the contrary, Dean knew it would keep him up since that's exactly what's happened every night since they hooked up.

He tried to push those thoughts away, but it was no use. He was already getting hard just thinking about Cas' gorgeous eyes and his warm hands on Dean's body... Dean slid his hand down into his boxers and palmed his erection, already feeling drops of precum leaking from the tip. Fuck... He'd never met anyone that had this kind of effect on him. It was like he was under some sort of spell, helpless in the face of his attraction to the man. His dick twitched, aching for more. Dean chose to go all in and grabbed the lube from his nightstand drawer. He slicked his hand up and wrapped it around his hardened cock, biting his lip to keep from groaning out loud. He held his hand still and started thrusting up into his fist as he imagined fucking Cas' perfect mouth.

He remembered the feeling of Cas' tongue in his mouth and let out a strangled moan at the thought of that tongue licking up and down his cock. He was already close to blowing his load and he'd barely even started... If he felt like this now, he couldn't imagine how amazing it would be to fuck the man. Then he pictured Cas all laid out across his bed, just waiting for Dean to ride his incredible cock.

Dean sat up on his knees, lubed up the fingers of his other hand, and began teasing his hole as he stroked his cock. He pushed two fingers in, feeling the burn as he relaxed around the intrusion. He couldn't wait any longer and began riding his fingers, imagining himself bouncing up and down on Cas' cock. He added a third finger and curled it, hitting his prostate and sending him into overdrive. He was panting as he rocked back and forth, fucking his fingers into his ass and thrusting his cock forward into his fist. God, he wished he had Cas here... the things he would do to the man. Dean remembered the sounds Cas made and that was it. He was coming all over his hand, his cum shooting out of him and landing halfway across the bed.

He pulled his fingers out and fell over on his side, panting as he fought to regain control. Holy fuck... That was one of the most intense orgasms he'd ever had... well, except for the one he'd had with Cas' hand wrapped around his dick. The more Dean thought about how unbelievable it would be to actually have sex with Cas, the more he realized how much he truly wanted it... he wanted Cas.

Cleaned up and back in bed, Dean found himself wondering what Cas was doing for Christmas. Would he spend it alone, or did he have family? Was his more traditional, with everyone smiling as they gathered around the tree, opening presents and singing carols? Would they sit around the dinner table having easy conversations and sharing stories? It was an idealistic fantasy, but Dean couldn't help imagining what the holidays would be like without all of drama in his own fucked up family...
Castiel landed at Logan in Boston two days before Christmas and found his brother waiting for him. He looked leaner and had dark circles under his eyes. They embraced as they greeted each other warmly. The ride to Luc's new apartment was filled with catching up on their lives. Luc was interested in Castiel's newest endeavor and asked a lot of questions about the show, the house, and his co-star. "I saw the billboard on I93. Nice picture by the way," he said with a soft laugh. "The girls at the firm never shut up about how 'hot' you two are." He'd made quotation marks in the air and Castiel rolled his eyes. "One or two might have even asked me for an introduction." At Castiel's sharp glance, Luc shrugged. "Don't worry, I told them you were unavailable."

"I don't mind if you tell people I'm gay, Luc. I've never hidden it." Was Luc still harboring disappointment at Castiel's sexual orientation? He'd always hoped his brother was different. His parents had been pillars of the community and their church. Castiel never had any doubts where he stood with them. While they didn't toss him out on his ass, they may as well have. He'd gotten a good scholarship, but it was Luc that paid for most of his college expenses. The night of his high school graduation, his mother and father sat stone-faced in the formal living room and informed him that he was on his own from that point forward unless he relented and went to one of the 'pray the gay away' programs. Castiel went right to his room, packed his belongings, and waited for Luc to come get him since he didn't have a car. Castiel liked to think of that as the beginning of his life. He couldn't believe that Luc would be anything other than supportive.

"I'm never sure how to broach that subject with people, Castiel," Luc said honestly. "I guess I still don't want to cross any lines that might upset you. 'Hey, my brother is gay' just seems like I'm stepping into your personal life." Luc didn't want to upset him?

"You aren't ashamed that I'm..."

"Fuck no, Castiel. Christ, what do you take me for?" Luc's indignant outburst startled Castiel. He stared at his brother and knew that despite Lilith's attempts to separate them, they were going to be alright now.

"Thank you, Luc. And please feel free to tell the women you work with that they don't have the right equipment. The network is fine with it. Speaking of the firm, how is it now that you and Lilith are separated?"

"She stays in her office and has a few clients, but she mostly stays out of my way. The other employees have taken sides, which is of course ridiculous. I'd say it's about an eighty-twenty split in my favor. The court date is slated for right after the new year and quite frankly, I'm ready for this shit to be over."

Luc parked his Lexus, and they grabbed Castiel's bags and climbed the brick steps that led to the front door. The complex was high-end and fit with the old world Boston feel. The exterior was quite lovely, but the interior was sparsely furnished. "Sorry... I haven't had much time to do any shopping."

"No need to apologize. I could help, you know."

Luc grinned and slapped his back. "You fell right into my trap, little brother."
The next day, the two men shopped at several home furnishing stores. By the end of the day, Castiel was content in the knowledge that his brother's new residence would have the official approval of Castiel Novak Designs.

On Christmas Eve, Castiel acknowledged the elephant in the room and asked the question he'd been dreading. "Are you seeing our mother and father tomorrow?"

Shaking his head, Luc finished pouring the vodka into the tumbler full of ice and tonic water. "No. You know the church doesn't approve of divorce. Their advice was as helpful as ever... They told me that mistakes should be forgiven, and since Lilith is my social equal, I should try harder to make her happy."

"I guess both of us are the fallen ones then, huh?" Luc tapped his glass to Castiel's and they both swallowed the bitter beverage.

"Well, here's to being the best disappointments ever," Luc toasted, making both men laugh.

That night as he lay in the guestroom, Castiel reflected on the memories of his childhood holidays. His parents were religious, but they were strict and cold. There wasn't anything magical or creative about the way they observed Christmas. They always held a prayer vigil, then went to the midnight service on Christmas Eve. The next morning, they would sit in an orderly fashion and wait patiently for their gifts... practical things like socks, pencils, or new Bibles. The only tradition Castiel truly enjoyed was when they volunteered at a local soup kitchen on Christmas day. He loved giving back to the community, and it filled his heart with joy to bring kindness into the lives of the less fortunate. Other than that, he couldn't remember ever feeling what others called 'holiday cheer' or any kind of warmth.

His thoughts drifted to Dean. What were his holidays like? Was there laughter and warmth? Maybe stockings hung by the chimney with care? He snorted a laugh at the mental image of Dean eagerly checking his stocking on Christmas morning. Oddly enough, he could easily picture the man doing such a thing. He imagined Dean's face lighting up with joy and remembered the rush he felt when he made Dean laugh. The way he threw his head back and just let himself go was bewitching. Castiel fell asleep with a smile on his lips and when he dreamed, it was of green eyes and a kind heart.

Castiel flew home on Christmas day. His neighbor, Mildred, was kind enough to feed his fish and water his plants while he was gone. He checked on his exotic collection in the saltwater aquarium that was the focal point in his living room. "Hello, lovelies... Did you miss me?" The triggerfish, RuPaul, swam to the surface and Castiel gave him a pinch of food. Soon the others were swimming in circles waiting for a handout. "Yes, I know... Cher, leave Hugh alone. There is plenty to go around."

When he was sure they were all happy and well fed, he took his suitcase to his room and unpacked. With Christmas falling on a Sunday this year, it didn't give him much down time since he had to be back on set first thing Monday morning. He showered and dressed for bed before calling Anna to check the status of the studio and filled her in on his trip. She gave him a brief report about the studio and gave him a list of things that needed his attention. With promises that he'd be in a half-day on Tuesday, he hung up. He spent the next few hours on his blog discussing storing your holiday decorations and his adventures furnishing his brother's new home.

Monday morning, the reno-house was bustling when Castiel arrived. He caught himself looking for Dean's truck and stopped when he realized what he was doing. He couldn't allow the man to distract him... there was too much work to be done. He checked in with Sam, stopped by makeup, then went inside, a cameraman trailing behind him as usual. Dean was in the living room with another man. They were standing by the fireplace. "Just a quick clean and we'll need a bit of masonry work done,
both here and on the roof,” Dean was saying to the camera.

"When will they run the gas line, Dean?” Castiel asked, stepping forward. They'd discussed leaving the woodburning fireplace alone, but Castiel thought a natural gas model would be more efficient and much cleaner. They disagreed, but Castiel was convinced his idea was better.

"We're not doing that. A woodburning fireplace might not be as clean, but it gives the room a warmer look and feel. Plus we won't have the added expense of running a gas line just for that."

"The stove will also be gas, Dean.” Castiel felt his temper rising. He tried to stay calm, but Dean was still bound and determined to undermine every idea Castiel had.

Dean's expression hardened. "No, Cas, it is standard electric, just like every other appliance."

"I did not agree to that. Gas is better,” Castiel stated, ready to go to the mat on this one.

"Why the fuck are your ideas always better, huh? You think you're smarter than me just because of your fancy-ass education? I can tell you right now you have no fuckin' idea what it's like living paycheck to paycheck. The family that gets this house won't have a trust fund or a big bank account. I'm trying to save them money. Natural gas can get expensive, and an all-electric house can save them from paying deposits to multiple utility companies."

"Fine. I guess Dean knows best,” Castiel said sarcastically before turning on his heel and leaving. As he walked away, Castiel knew he was wrong. He hadn't even thought about the financial impact on the family. Dean did, though... he was kind and genuinely cared about others. Why the hell couldn't Castiel remember that when he was in Dean's presence? It kind of stung that Dean thought he was a trust fund baby. Castiel had nothing but a suitcase full of art supplies and a few clothes when he left his parents' house that night. Luc was just starting out as a new attorney at a large law firm. They struggled for a while before things got better, so he did know what it was like.

The new cabinetry for the kitchen was stacked in the dining room and he spent the morning measuring and marking the walls for installation. He did his best to work through the tension headache he'd had since his confrontation with Dean.

With the frame going up for the addition, Dean had a power saw running almost constantly in the living room, and the shrill noise made Castiel's head pound. He felt a wave of nausea and knew he was developing a migraine. He needed quiet and his medication. Outside, he made for his bike and opened the saddlebag. He shook out an Imitrex and swallowed it dry. The pain was intense and with all the people milling about on the front lawn, Castiel felt the need to get away. The back yard was quieter and he sat down on the ground, covering his eyes with his hands. It would take a little while for the pill to do its job.

"Napping on the job?” Dean's voice came from above him. He looked up and the light from the rare Seattle sun stabbed through his eyes like a needle. He groaned and felt his stomach churn. "Cas... Castiel... what's wrong, man?” Dean actually sounded concerned.

"Fucking Christmas didn't do his personality any favors,” Dean muttered to no one in particular.
He'd seen Cas' notes and was fully aware that he wanted a gas insert for the fireplace. Dean knew it was more efficient as a heat source, but it would be better for the family if they didn't have to add a gas bill to their monthly expenses. Dean still enjoyed getting Cas all riled up... even though he knew it was childish of him. There was just something about Cas when he got angry that Dean found appealing. Still, in the interest of world peace, he put a halt on the fireplace for now and shifted his focus to the installation of the new windows in the living room. The wall studs would be complete for the new addition by the end of the day and he needed to build the frame for the large window. The table saw made quick work of the thick pieces of lumber.

An hour in, Dean needed a break from the noise and he was thirsty as fuck. He stepped into the kitchen where a cooler full of bottled water was kept and pulled one from the ice. He was unscrewing the cap when he saw Cas sitting on the lawn. What the hell? His cameraman was talking to one of the grips and Dean went over to him. "What's up with Cas?"

"Not sure. He was working on the cabinets and then rushed out of here. He looked a bit green." Dean frowned and went back to the window. Cas hadn't moved, but he was hunched over.

Out of instinct, he grabbed another bottle of water and stepped out the back door. His cameraman followed, but Dean was so used to it by now he didn't really notice.

Cas' eyes were closed. Was he sleeping? "Napping on the job?" Dean spoke loudly and noticed the other man flinch. He looked awfully pale. When they opened, Cas' eyes were dull and lifeless. He groaned and closed his eyes again. Christ, what was going on? "Cas...Castiel... what's wrong, man?"

"Migraine," Cas' said in a whisper. Shit, Donna had problems with migraines and she actually wound up in the ER a few times. He knelt beside Cas and took the cap off the water, lowering his voice when he spoke.

"Cas, I want you to drink some of this, okay? Do you have any medicine?" Cas pushed the bottle away.

"Took it...already."

"When?" Dean glanced around, wondering what to do and saw the cameraman. "Shut that fucking thing off and go find Sam. Tell him to...to..." Fuck. Dean ran his fingers through his hair. He placed his hand gently on Cas' back. "What can I do?"

"Cold." Shit, of course the man was fuckin' cold. He was sitting on the damp ground for Christ's sake.

He turned to the cameraman and said, "Send Sam back here. We need to get him up and into the trailer. Clear everyone out of there." Knowing his orders would be carried out, Dean bit his lip. "Cas, I'm going to move you to the bed in the trailer. We gotta get you more comfortable." He saw a slight nod and despite the cold, he saw sweat beading on Cas' forehead.

Sam ran up to them. "What's wrong? Do we need an ambulance?" Dean gestured for him to lower his voice.

"Not sure yet. It's a migraine. I just want to get him inside the trailer and more comfortable." Between the two of them, they got Cas up on his feet. Dean whispered, "Cas, I want you to keep your eyes closed. Me and Sam are going to walk you to the trailer, and I need you to trust me so you won't have to open your eyes. Can you do that?" Cas nodded slightly and kept his eyes closed. Dean took that as his cue to get moving and they gently walked Cas to the RV. As he requested, it was
empty and Dean placed his arm behind Cas, supporting his weight and easing him down on the bed. "I got this, Sam. You can go. Turn off the light, shut the door, and keep the noise down," Dean whispered his orders to Sam while he removed Cas' shoes and maneuvered the comforter so he could cover him. The only light remaining was from the sun coming through the narrow slats of the blinds. He rifled through the cabinets until he found a couple of towels and hung them over the windows. "You still with me, Cas?" Dean kept his voice low and steady.

He picked up another slight nod. "Good. I'm going to be right here. If you need anything, just ask." Dean sat down on the floor with his back to the wall. He took out his phone and dialed the office. Donna answered on the first ring.

"Morning, boss," her chipper voice answered.

"Donna, what helps your migraines?"

"You're going to have to speak up, Dean. I can barely hear you. Did you say you had a migraine? You don't get migraines. I'll bet it's just a bad headache..."

"Shhh... Donna, I need you to listen."

"Okay," Donna's tone changed to all business.

"What can I do for someone with a migraine? He says he's taken his pills, but he's clammy and pale."

"I can only go by what helps me... everyone is different, Dean. Strong smells, noise, and light make it worse. Keep him comfortable and if he can tolerate it, try to apply a cold compress to his head. If the medication doesn't help in an hour, you might want to get him to a doctor. They can give him a shot of Toradol."

"Great, thanks, Donna."

"Dean, if he's feverish, confused, having shortness of breath, slurred speech, or stiffness in his muscles or joints, you need to get him to the ER right away." Dean went over the list in his head and said goodbye after thanking her again. He got on his knees and leaned on the bed.

"Hey, Cas... I need to ask you some questions and then I'll leave you alone." All he got was a whimper. "I need to know when you took your meds."

"Don't remember...right before...outside." Dean looked at his watch. He watched Cas through the window for a good while before going out, then wasted a few minutes then. By his calculations, it had been about twenty minutes. He set his alarm to vibrate at the one hour mark. He was breathing okay, so no shortness of breath. He was answering questions, so no confusion. Dean reached out and touched Cas' forehead. He didn't feel like he had a fever either. So that was good, right? He released a breath he didn't realize he'd been holding.

"You're gonna be fine, Cas," he whispered softly and brushed a lock of hair from Cas' face. He went to the sink and wet a hand towel with cold water and wrung it out. He folded it and placed it gently on Cas' forehead, wrapping it down around his ears to muffle any sounds that might disturb him. He sank back down on the carpet to wait it out. He picked at his fingernails and plucked at the carpet fibers. Never one to sit still for long, he was antsy. It had been forty-five minutes.

He was about to step out to see what everyone else was doing when he heard Cas. "Dean?" His voice was raspy, barely there. Dean jumped up and leaned over him.
"I'm here, Cas. You okay?"

"I think so. Can I have some water?" This close, Dean could see Cas' eyes open in the dim interior of the room.

"Sure, man. Just...don't go anywhere," he said, smiling. A soft smile played over Cas' lips. Dean stepped out of the room and opened the small fridge. He grabbed another bottle and brought it back. Cas tried to sit up and Dean set the water down to help him. Once he got Cas settled, he sat down next to him on the bed. Cas drank a little bit and began peeling the label. Dean kept quiet, perfectly content to just sit there.

"Dean, why are you being nice to me?"

He felt a pang of sadness in his chest and looked down at his hands. Was it so strange that he would show compassion for someone in pain? He must have really been a dick for Cas to be confused by his kindness... or maybe Cas wasn't used to anyone being kind to him. Dean looked up into Cas' gorgeous eyes and answered.

"You needed me... Uh... I mean, you needed help." He didn't know what else to say. I care about you. I want to be there for you. I want you. He couldn't say any of those things, so he didn't add anything else.

"Thank you, Dean. You really did help. I don't know what I would have done..."

"It's fine, Cas. I don't mind, really. Hell, I practically raised Sam, so I tend to feel more comfortable when I can take care of people. I won't lie, though, you had me pretty worried." Cas' eyes widened in surprise, then a change came over his face and he seemed... softer.

"Dean, I don't know how to do this. I think we got off on the wrong foot and it seems like we can't seem to get on the right one... but I want to. So I think we should start over." Cas held out his hand. "Hi, I'm Cas."

Dean grinned and felt a surge of happiness when he heard Cas use the nickname he gave him. He recognized the gesture as a peace offering. He clasped Cas' hand and shook it. "I'm Dean. Nice to meet you."

They sat there smiling at each other for a while, not noticing that they were still holding hands.
Chapter 8

Chapter by palominopup

Castiel laid in the darkened room, aware that Dean was still there, but unable to care. The pain was intense. He hadn’t had a migraine in a long time and while this one wasn’t the worst he’d ever had, it was still torture. The Imitrex finally kicked in and did its job, and Castiel slowly became lucid. Before opening his eyes and taking stock of his situation, he went over the recent events in his head. Dean had been nice...attentive...caring. From what he had observed so far, such behavior wasn’t unusual for Dean, but it was significant that it was now directed at him.

Castiel wasn’t used to being cared for by anyone. He had always been rather independent as a child and his parents weren’t exactly the comforting type. As an adult, he’d never really had what he would call a serious relationship... well, not serious enough to trust anyone to take care of him. He was too guarded and held onto his independence too fiercely. Being vulnerable like this around Dean was... unfamiliar. It should have felt wrong or uncomfortable, but he was surprised to discover that it was neither of those things.

The rest of the day, Castiel couldn't get their conversation out of his mind. It felt like a new beginning. It was... nice. When Dean gently pulled his hand away, he thankfully didn't make a big deal about Castiel clinging to it. Migraines always left him feeling lethargic and emotional. Since they were ahead of schedule, Sam sent him home early and he was grateful. Dean was concerned about him riding the bike home, but Castiel assured him he was fine. It left a warm feeling in his chest that Dean was concerned for his safety.

At home, Castiel took a hot shower to ease the tension in his neck and shoulders, then put on some pajamas and got comfortable. He longed for a nap, but knew that it would throw off his sleep schedule. He logged onto his social media accounts and updated a few things. When the glare from the screen became too much, he took a book and settled in to spend the afternoon reading. He tried to focus on the words, but his mind kept wandering back to Dean, Dean, and more Dean. He finally closed the book and set it down on the side table with a huff. He made himself a cup of tea and grabbed a blanket, heading outside to sit on his deck. He watched the water rippling, listened to the wind blowing through the trees, and took deep breaths of the fresh air as he let himself revel in the beauty of nature. Meditating was great for relieving stress, so it eventually settled his turbulent mind.

Tuesday, Castiel felt like himself again and eagerly dressed for the day's filming. Today, they were supposed to film the opening segment for the pilot. He'd been dreading it because of his rocky relationship with his co-star, but he knew things would be different now.

Instead of going to the house, they met at the HHTV studio. The receptionist directed him to the large room they used the very first day... the first time he met Dean. He shook his head ruefully before pushing open the door. Two chairs were the focal point of the set with large, stationary cameras pointed in their direction. Sam, holding his clipboard, grinned at his arrival. "Castiel... good, you're here. I have an outline of what I want you guys to talk about and that will be on the teleprompter, but we're really going to ad-lib most of it. I want your personalities to show." Sam took a breath and shrugged. "Sorry, I might be a little bit excited... How are you feeling?"

"Better, thank you for asking," Castiel said, glancing over and noting Dean's arrival. He was determined to play it cool, so he gave a casual wave and a slight smile. Dean came up to them and patted Castiel on the back, his hand lingering just a bit.
"Morning, guys." He smiled at Castiel and held his eyes for a beat, then turned to Sam. "What's the plan, Sammy?" Castiel stood silent while Sam explained what he wanted them to do. He took in Dean's laidback appearance. They had both been instructed to wear something more casual. Dean was wearing a pair of well-worn jeans... so well-worn, there was a hole in one of the knees. A thick wool sweater over a white dress shirt completed his ensemble. He looked... hot. "Cas... you okay, dude? You kind of zoned out on us."

"Shit... had he been caught staring? Blushing a bit, he cleared his throat. "Sorry, just thinking about... the segment."

"You two go ahead and hit makeup and I'll finish getting everything ready." Sam left them and Dean narrowed his eyes at Castiel.

"You sure you're okay? I know Sam wouldn't mind if you took the day off."

"I'm fine, Dean," Castiel responded with a grin, that feeling of warmth swirling around his chest now. "Actually, I wanted to say thanks again for your assistance yesterday. I'm not... I'm not really used to that, so... thank you." Castiel looked down at the floor and felt heat rise to his cheeks.

"Cas, you don't have to keep thanking me. I didn't mind taking care of you one bit. I kind of enjoyed having you at my mercy." Dean smirked and winked at him, obviously picking up on his discomfort and lightening the mood. Castiel was grateful.

They walked to makeup together in a companionable silence, then spent the next hour prepping for the short segment. Sam reviewed the outline of what they needed to say before they started rolling.

"Hi, and welcome to the first episode of Designing Dreams. I'm Castiel Novak and I'll be taking you through the decorating aspects of transforming a rundown house into a warm, welcoming home for one lucky family."

"And I'm Dean Winchester, the brawn to his beauty. I'll be handling the construction aspects of that transformation. This is a shot of the home before." Dean pointed to his left where a photo of the house would appear on television screens across the nation. "In this episode, we'll be taking you through our initial inspection and design session."

"This home will ultimately be given to a very special family. To register, send in a video telling us why your family deserves this home. The winner will be picked mid-season and announced in the twelfth episode," Castiel explained.

"At the end of this season, Cas and I will be there to personally hand over the keys to the winning family and give a tour of their new home. Between now and then, you'll get an up-close look at what it takes to make this house a home. I hope you enjoy the ride." Dean flashed a wink to Cas and smiled at him before returning to the camera. Castiel smiled back at Dean, then looked back at the camera.

"Now let's get over to the house and start Designing Dreams," Castiel finished up.

"And that's a wrap," Sam called out from behind the cameras. "Good job, guys."

Since the taping didn't take long, Castiel took advantage of the opportunity to get back to his studio before lunch. He hadn't had a chance to speak to Dean alone, not that he'd have known what to say.

Anna was with a client when he arrived. She acknowledge him with a wave and he nodded before going to his desk. An orderly stack of invoices and account statements were waiting for him. He was only halfway through the pile when Anna showed the woman out. "Holy shit, Castiel... you didn't
tell me Dean Winchester was so dreamy. I've seen the ads on HHTV and told Nick that I wish I was still single. That man could do me in the backseat of a car anytime," she said with a laugh. Castiel felt an irrational surge of jealousy. Not only was Anna happily married, Dean wasn't even his to begin with.

"He is an attractive man," Castiel said, aiming for nonchalance.

"Attractive? That's an understatement. He's the drop-dead, toss your panties into the ceiling fan, instant drool kind of gorgeous. What's he really like?" Anna looked at him eagerly.

"He's..." Castiel gave it a split-second of consideration before finishing, "a vulgar, crude redneck." There. He didn't want Anna to get suspicious and after all, isn't animosity what the marketing people were aiming for? Still, he felt a stab of guilt in his stomach at his nasty words... especially since Dean had shown him such kindness.

Her face fell. "Well, that sucks... but at least you have some eye candy."

"I see that Mr. Phelps called. Is he still talking about the indoor pool?" Castiel changed the subject and returned to the familiar comfort of being emotionless at work. The rest of the afternoon went by rather smoothly.

Dean said his lines and overall, he thought the taping went pretty well. Since they finished right at lunch time, Dean thought about asking Cas to grab a burger or something, but he never got the chance. Before he knew it, Cas was already gone and Sam was ranting to him about his boss. The guy sounded like a douche and reminded Dean how nice it was to own his own business with no one looking over his shoulder.

As soon as he left the studio, he called Donna to see where Jo and Benny were and told her he'd swing by the office after he checked on the jobsites.

Jo was literally ass-deep in a ditch when he pulled up. Already petite, she came up to his knees now. Looking down at her, he snickered, "With a bit of orange makeup, we could call you an Oompa Loompa."

"Kiss my ass," Jo growled. "The fucking plumber didn't put the conduit deep enough and the concrete truck ran over it... busted it all to hell."

"He gonna make it good?" Dean asked, hoping he wasn't going to have to make a phone call to the older contractor that did the majority of his plumbing work.

"Yeah, Joshua fired the kid who did the work. He's sending another crew out now, but in the meantime, I've got to find the crushed pipe and block it off."

"Sounds like you have everything handled then," Dean said and backed away at her look of irritation. "I'll just leave you to it... bye." He heard her grumbling as he walked away, but he didn't dare turn back around. He knew better than to poke the bear.

The next stop was a commercial renovation project that was near and dear to his heart. He stepped
into the garage and whistled. His godfather, the man he always turned to when he needed advice, looked up from the '64 Thunderbird he was working on. "Damn, Bobby, that's a sweet ride... for a Ford."

"You finally decide to come see me? Figured with you being a big-time movie star and all, we wouldn't see you around much anymore," Bobby said gruffly.

"Jeez, I'm not a movie star, old man. Just a tasty sex symbol on television," Dean replied, grinning and posing provocatively. Bobby snorted.

"Idjit." He straightened and wiped his hands on the towel tucked in his belt. "Guess you'll be wanting to check on the progress."

"Gotta see if Benny's treating you right." Dean followed Bobby through the doorway that led to the offices of Singer Restorations. He'd restored his own Baby in one of the bays and had spent plenty of summers working for the man. The waiting room was down to studs and cement floors. Benny was measuring a large opening, but stopped when they walked in.

"Hey, boss... to what do I owe this honor?"

"Just making sure you're doing things right," Dean said, meandering around the room, pushing on the studs to check placement and stability. Benny looked on with tolerance. He knew Dean wasn't going to find any faults with his work. The three men discussed the schedule and Bobby's preferences on paint and flooring. The new window in the front would bring in a lot of natural light. The dated building was due for a facelift and Dean was giving it to Bobby at cost, not that Bobby needed to know that. The older man had plenty of money, but when he and Ellen retired, Dean wanted them to enjoy life. They had both done a lot for Dean and Sam over the years and they deserved it.

In his car, getting ready to pull into traffic, Dean had a wild idea and pulled up Castiel Novak Designs on his phone's GPS. Feeling good about how they were getting along, he thought he would break down and ask Cas if he wanted to grab a burger and beer after work. He dialed his office. "Yo, Donna, give me another thirty minutes and I'll be in."

"Sure thing, boss."

The sophisticated logo on the window made Dean look down self-consciously at his ripped jeans. Oh well... it was good enough for television. He pushed open the door and looked around the huge space in awe. Cas had some fancy digs. The Winchester Construction office was filled with mismatched filing cabinets, stacked cases of tiles and flooring samples, a few window frames leaning against the walls, and various drafting sheets sitting on just about every available surface. This though... what once was an old warehouse had been converted to an open space that looked like a showroom. It still had an industrial feel, but there were yards and yards of sleek design tables filling the floor, all accented with coordinating low-backed stools. Matching storage units lined the walls and modern LED lighting illuminated the space. It was impressive, and Dean felt a little rush of pride for Cas' accomplishments.

An attractive redhead was walking toward him and he pasted on a smile. "You're Dean Winchester," she said brightly, eyes widened in surprise.

"Guilty as charged," he replied as he shook her outstretched hand.

"I'm Anna, Castiel's assistant. He's in the..." They both saw movement and Anna laughed softly. "uhm...he's on his way."
"Dean, what are you doing here?" Thankfully, Cas didn't sound put out, just curious.

"You left before I got the chance to tell you... uh... I thought the segment went really well." He really didn't want to ask Cas out in front of his assistant. No... not ask him out-out, just two friends having dinner. Yep. Just that, nothing else.

"Oh... I thought so too." Cas looked slightly confused. Nervously, Dean ran his hand over a colorful sampling of fabrics.

Anna looked back and forth between them. She laughed and said, "Well, Castiel, he sure is adorable for a vulgar redneck." Cas winced at Anna's words. She didn't seem to think there was anything wrong with her attempt at humor, but Dean's smile fell as he took a step back. Was that really what Cas thought of him? Was that how the man described him to people? Dean was the first to admit he wasn't as classy as some, but hearing that Cas thought Dean wasn't good enough actually hurt.

"Yeah, I'm all kinds of adorable, sweetheart." He turned toward the door, then stopped halfway and looked back at Cas. "I just wanted to see where you worked your magic. Guess I'll see you tomorrow." With that, he made for the door, leaving no time for Cas to respond. He didn't want to hear anything from the man, and he wasn't about to let Cas see the pain his words had caused.

"Dean..." Dean let the door close behind him and quickened his pace to reach the familiar comfort of the Impala. He saw Cas come to the door as he hit the gas and pulled away with a squeal of tires.

When he arrived at his own place of business, he passed Donna without a word. She glanced up at him, but kept her mouth shut. She'd worked with him long enough to know when he needed to be left alone. He shut his door, something he rarely did unless he had to chew out an employee. The hurt quickly turned to anger. He couldn't believe he had considered being friends with that asshole. How could he have been so wrong about the man? Cas was one of the most impossible, two-faced... fuck it. Dean wasn't that hard up for friends or... or anything else. Screw the pretentious fucker. Dean was done with his hot and cold bullshit. He didn't need it.

When Castiel heard the door open, he looked up from his monitor and his brow furrowed in curiosity. What was Dean doing here? He watched as Anna stood to greet his co-star and he hurried forward. He didn't want Anna to be alone with Dean for very long. Of course it was petty jealousy, but still...

Dean seemed a bit nervous. His stunning green eyes kept darting around and the reasoning behind his visit seemed odd. Surely he didn't drive over to this side of town just to tell Castiel it was a good segment? Just when he was about to invite Dean back to his desk for some privacy, Anna had to go and open her big mouth. He shouldn't be mad at her, but he was...furious. The look on Dean's face felt like a dagger to his heart. He seemed disappointed in Castiel and was clearly hurt by the callous words. He called Dean's name and even followed him out the door, but Dean was too fast and the sleek, black car drove away with a screech of tires on asphalt.

Back inside, he rounded on Anna. "What the hell, Anna? How dare you repeat my words? I told you that in confidence, not so you could spread gossip or fucking repeat it to Dean."
Anna drew herself up to her full height, still leaving her six inches shorter than Castiel, and lifted her chin defiantly. "Castiel, you need to calm down. I don't get why you're so pissed at me. I was just making a joke." She narrowed her eyes. "What's this really about, Castiel?" Understanding dawned in her eyes. "Oh my God, you like him."

"No... Dean is my co-star and I would like to keep our relationship friendly, but professional," he lied. She was right though, it wasn't her fault. He'd been the one to insinuate Dean was some sort of hick. He was the one to blame for the hurt in Dean's eyes. He dug his fingers in his scalp in frustration. Her features softened.

"Castiel, if you like him..."

"I said no," Castiel stated firmly. "You are my employee, Anna, not my..." He almost said friend and that would have done irreparable damage to their relationship. "I'm sorry." He allowed his posture to relax as he sighed in defeat. "He probably hates me even more than before."

"Before...?" Anna questioned and Castiel told her the whole pathetic story, leaving out the angry handjobs, of course. That was no one's business but his and Dean's...and the crew who witnessed the evidence the next morning.

Anna lifted herself to sit on her desk and she looked at him with pity. He didn't want to see that from anyone, least of all his employee. "Do you think he would listen if you talked to him?"

He gave her a self-deprecating laugh. "I can't talk to him. He's... well, you've seen him. God, Anna, he's the perfect man and I'm just... me. Whenever I'm around him, I say all the wrong things."

"It sounds like you need to figure out what the right things are," she said softly. She stood and picked up her purse from under her desk. "I'll talk to you tomorrow."

Castiel was left alone with his thoughts. Usually, being alone in the studio calmed him. Next to his home, this was his sanctuary... his buffer between him and the sometimes cruel, outside world. Tonight, the walls seemed to be closing in on him. He wandered back and sat at his desk and stared at the cursor blinking on the invoice he'd been typing before Dean's visit. Castiel was pleased to see him, and he was so hopeful after their interaction yesterday and this morning. He couldn't believe he had torn it all down with a few stupid, insensitive words... words he didn't even mean.

He felt horrible... and he didn't know how to even begin fixing it. Anna's advice had been useless. He needed someone who really understood him. He picked up his phone from the charging station and dialed. "Luc... I need my big brother."

"Sounds serious."

"I hurt someone... Someone I've grown to care about."

"A friend... or someone who means more?" When Castiel didn't answer right away, he heard his brother's soft chuckle. "Well, that answers that question. Let me take a wild guess... it wouldn't happen to be your extremely handsome co-star, would it?"

Castiel sighed into the phone. "Yes," he answered in a small voice. "I really fucked up, Luc. Things were going really well between us... great, even. Then I said something awful..." He shared the whole story with Luc and waited for him to speak. He wasn't expecting the response Luc gave him.

"So he got his feelings hurt... Why should you give a shit?"

"Seriously, Luc? I was a dick. He didn't deserve what I said." Castiel couldn't believe how cold Luc
"Yeah, and? Who cares if the guy got his poor, little feelings hurt?"

"I care, Luc," Castiel shouted. "He's a good person, and he took care of me when I needed someone. He's been kind to me even though I've been an absolute... dick. I care how he feels because... I like him." He heard Luc's satisfied chuckle and realized what just happened. "You asshole... you did that on purpose."

"Yep. Now that you know how you feel about him, what are you going to do about it?"

"I don't know, Luc. I want to fix it, but I don't know how. I'm not good at this sort of thing... opening up to people, sharing my feelings... trusting."

"I know, Castiel. But not being good at those things isn't the same as not wanting them." What did he want from Dean though? Friendship? A relationship? Was he ready for something like that? Was Dean?

Luc was right, as usual. Castiel longed to have someone in his life to share things with, to laugh with, to trust. Even though he didn't always like Dean, he had no doubt in his mind that Dean was not the type of person to betray others. Castiel wanted to be able to say the same about himself, but at the moment, that was a bit of a stretch. He leaned his head down on his hand and closed his eyes.

"Luc... I don't want to be alone anymore. What do I do?"

"Well, bro, it's a good thing you came to me because I'm practically a black belt in grand apologies."

Castiel laughed and listened to his brother's advice. It was a good plan... he hoped it would work. He just needed to get Dean to listen to him.

Feeling more positive with a solution in mind, Castiel rode home and spent a quiet evening making plans. When he got into bed, he felt restless with anticipation... maybe he should have gone for a run. He huffed as he tossed and turned, resigning himself to yet another night of insomnia. He lay on his back staring up at the ceiling, the rain on the roof making a soothing sound. He found himself wondering if Dean was also listening to the rain. Or was he out having fun? It was still relatively early. Dean could be out at a bar... perhaps surrounded by pretty women and handsome men. Would he go home with one of them? He punched his pillow in frustration and squashed the thought.

What if things had been different? What if he'd met Dean at a bar? Would he have approached the beautiful man... maybe asked to buy him a drink? Probably not. You had to have confidence to approach someone as attractive as Dean. When it came to his career, Castiel was very confident, but not in social situations.

But he kept thinking what if? He closed his eyes as his mind filled with the fantasy... Dean came over to him and leaned in. He smelled like sawdust and the woodsy soap he used. He smiled that perfect smile and asked if Castiel was meeting anyone. Castiel replied no. Dean turned on his charm and Castiel found an excuse to touch him... sitting close enough for their thighs to touch. The night was filled with pleasant conversation and Castiel didn't say anything stupid. Dean whispered in his ear... asking if Castiel wanted to go somewhere so they could be alone...

Castiel's hand moved slowly down to his half-hard cock tenting his boxers. Reaching under the waistband, he bypassed his erection and cupped his sac. He always loved his balls being played with, but the lovers he'd had never seemed to give them the attention he craved. He rolled them between his fingers and gave a slight tug, imagining Dean's mouth sucking on them. Using his other hand, he shoved his underwear down, so they rode mid-thigh. If he was going to give in and get
himself off to visions of Dean Winchester, at least he wanted to be comfortable.

The fingers of his right hand trailed up the underside of his shaft, tracing the throbbing veins to the head until he came to the slit, a bead of precum giving him a bit of lubrication. He desperately wanted to feel Dean's beautiful mouth wrapped around him, so hot and wet. Spreading his legs wide, his other hand drifted from the underside of his balls to the puckered skin at his entrance. He closed his eyes and lost himself in the sensations, surrounding himself in the fantasy. When his orgasm overtook him, his lips parted and a softly spoken name escaped his lips. Dean.
Dean got to the reno-house early and let himself in. He frowned at the long boxes waiting in the living room. They must have arrived after he left yesterday. He broke one open. "Fuck..." He'd forgotten that he ordered the barnwood from a lumber liquidator he knew. Cas wanted it for the bedroom, but Dean knew it wasn't in the budget. After pulling a few strings and calling in a couple of favors, he was able to get a good price on it. It was too late to send it back. He meant to surprise Cas with it. Now he just wanted to shove it up the motherfucker's ass.

He moved the heavy boxes into the bedroom and retrieved the ladder and other tools he needed to get started. By the time everyone arrived, Dean had already worked up a sweat. Kate complained as she cleaned his face and ran a blow dryer over his damp hair. He hadn't seen Cas and unless Sam needed them to do a scene together, he was going to avoid the man at all costs.

Once he inspected a few of the ongoing projects and got the crew working, he stepped into the bedroom. It pained him to admit it, but Cas' idea of an accent wall of barnwood would be striking. Dean joked around with his cameraman while he hooked up the pneumatic nailgun to the compressor. Within minutes, he was putting up the first board. The hiss and bang of the powerful tool generated a steady rhythm as one by one, the wall took shape.

Taking a break at lunch, Dean walked through the house and noted that all the kitchen cabinets were mounted. They looked pretty good. Looking out the window, over the hole where the sink would go, Dean spotted Cas. He was talking to the delivery driver from one of the home improvement stores that sponsored HHTV and Designing Dreams. Today, he was in jeans, a black shirt, black jacket, and a bright red tie. The aviators he was sporting made him look like he should be on the set of some James Bond movie or something. Dean growled at himself... why the fucker had to be so goddamn hot?

Miffed at himself for wasting a minute of his life staring at the asshole, Dean turned around and made his way to the craft services truck to get himself some food. Today was taco day and he grabbed a couple, along with a Coke. He found Kate and a few of the other crew members sitting under the shade of a popup tent. Talk turned to the pilot. It was set to air in a couple of weeks. "What's up with you and Castiel?" Kate asked out of the blue and the conversation stopped. Dean knew there was speculation after both had shown up covered in hickeys, but he never expected anyone to come right out and ask.

"Nothing. He's a douche." He went back to eating his lunch, but found his appetite waning.

"Castiel? No he's not. He's a really nice guy, just quiet," Harry, the equipment coordinator, said argumentatively.

"What, you a member of his fan club or something?" Dean snapped. The table fell silent and Dean instantly regretted his tone. He stood and gathered his trash. "Sorry... the guy just rubs me the wrong way." He left the table, pulling his ball cap over his eyes, and heard whispering behind him. Let them have their gossip. Why should he care?

Getting back to work, Dean pushed all thoughts of Cas out of his head and focused on finishing the wall in the bedroom. He smelled paint and figured Cas was getting the kitchen done before the appliances were delivered. The tile would be going down tomorrow. Things were moving along quickly, but not quick enough. Dean couldn't wait to be finished with this show so he'd never have
to deal with Castiel Novak again.

When he got the last board nailed into place, Dean climbed off the ladder and checked out his handiwork. "Not bad," he said with a grin. The cameraman got a few closeups of Dean talking about the installation process and then Dean stowed his tools in the other bedroom. This time when he made his way through the house, he gave the kitchen a wide berth.

"Hey, Sammy," Dean called out, his head stuck in the doorway of the RV. "We got a date on the shipment of the bathroom fixtures?" His brother looked up from a pile of paperwork.

"Give me a second." Sam opened his laptop and tapped on the keyboard. "Looks like they'll be coming on Monday. Hey, what time are you heading over to the Roadhouse Saturday?"

Dean shrugged. "Don't know yet." The New Year's Eve party at Ellen's bar was an annual event and not to be missed.

"Got a date?" Sam looked at him speculatively.

"Not yet. I'll find someone." He'd have to go through his phone and see who he wanted to have a little fun with. Maybe that chick from the bar... Katie? No, Cassie. How fuckin' ironic...

"Should we ask Castiel?"

"No. It's bad enough that I have to put up with him here. I don't want him in my happy place." He chose to ignore Sam's frown and tried to change the subject. Sam wasn't having it.

"Did I miss something? You guys seemed fine at the station... what happened?"

"Nothing. Drop it, Sam."

"Don't even start, Dean. I'm not going to drop it. Not this time. What happens between you two affects the show and that affects me, so spill."

Dean realized there was no way he was getting out of telling Sam everything. He knew his brother at least as well as he knew himself. He was just as persistent and twice as stubborn as Dean once he set his mind to something. Dean wiped his hand over his face and leaned against the counter as he told Sam everything. It was a few minutes before Sam responded.

"I think you should talk to him, Dean." He opened his mouth in protest, but Sam continued. "I know it's the same disastrous advice I gave you before, but things are different now. You guys are actually... well, I wouldn't say friends exactly... but you both seem to like each other. Maybe it was just a misunderstanding."

"You think he likes me? What could possibly make you think that?" Dean asked with a disbelieving snort.

Sam rolled his eyes and threw out Bitchface Number Five. "Dean, come on... Maybe you haven't noticed it, but I have. You guys can't keep your eyes off each other. There's obviously some attraction there... apart from your activities that one night." Dean rolled his eyes. He wasn't going there, not with his brother. "All I'm saying is that if he tries to talk to you, hear him out. That's it."

Dean didn't say anything else, but he thought about Sam's words as he walked back into the house. The afternoon wore on as Dean worked on the outside tasks. They didn't get many cloudless days this time of year, so he planned on making use of the nice weather to oversee the exterior repairs. Before he knew it, the sun was setting and the crew began to leave. He'd heard Cas' motorcycle start
up fifteen minutes ago and was thankful the man was gone. They'd only passed by each other once the entire day. Dean scowled and Cas looked pained, like he'd sucked on a lemon.

With the house empty, Dean inspected the kitchen and couldn't find any fault with Cas' design. Once the flooring was in, the place would really take shape. Hitching up his toolbelt, he set the alarm and walked out to the truck. He got inside and noticed a piece of paper tucked under his wiper blade.

*Please wait here.*

The note was short and unsigned. What the fuck? Dean looked around at the yard, empty of vehicles except his truck and the RV. He tapped his fingers on the steering wheel debating whether or not to ignore the note. Minutes ticked by and he touched the key resting in the ignition. The roar of a motorcycle broke through the still evening air. "Oh, hell no," Dean muttered. He started the engine, but Cas' bike pulled up beside him. The dude had a large cloth shopping bag in his hand, the kind you get at those hippie markets.

He took off his helmet and motioned for Dean to roll down his window. *Christ.* "What?" Dean snarled.

Cas held up the bag, his eyes downcast. "I brought you a peace offering."

*Nope, not happening.* "You know what? Fuck you, Cas," Dean said coldly. He reached for the button to raise the window, but the devastating sadness in Cas' eyes stopped him.

"*Please.* I need to apologize for my behavior. I know I don't deserve it, but... just give me a few minutes of your time. The meal is on me. I won't even stay if you don't want me to."

"Fine, whatever." Dean's tone was dismissive, but he got out of the car anyway. He didn't bother to see if Cas was following him to the RV. He unlocked it and stepped inside. He flung himself on the bench seat, crossed his arms, and stared up at Cas with features set in stone. So the guy wanted to apologize. Dean would listen, but nothing said he had to make it easy.

In silence, Cas began to unpack the canvas bag. Dean saw two takeout containers, but Cas only removed one from the bag. The next package made Dean's mouth water. It was a thick, flaky pie from Dean's favorite bakery. How could he have known that? *Just a lucky guess,* Dean thought.

Without a word, Dean opened the container to reveal a bacon and cheddar burger with a side of thick-cut steak fries. His mouth watered, but he checked his enthusiasm and closed the container, glaring at Cas expectantly. "You had something to say?" He knew he sounded like an ass...or maybe a vulgar redneck...but he couldn't let himself care. He wouldn't let himself care.

Cas remained standing, his fingers curling and uncurling at his sides. "I wanted to say... that I'm sorry for the way I've been acting. You have been nothing but...kind...to me." Dean had to admire the way Cas met his eyes full-on. A lesser man would have found Dean too intimidating. Cas swallowed audibly and Dean sensed the man putting his walls up. He waited. "You once insinuated that I was a trust fund baby. You were mistaken. Everything I've done...everything I've built and accomplished, I've done on my own. My parents told me to leave their house the night I graduated high school." A rueful smile touched his lips. "They were very conservative and a gay son didn't fit into their social circles."

"Cas..." Dean's own family was fucked up, but he had Sam, Bobby, and Ellen to get him through the tough times. Did Cas have anyone?

"No, please, let me get through this." Dean nodded and after a few seconds, Cas began again.
"Thankfully, I was smart enough to receive scholarships, but my older brother made sure I had a roof over my head and food to eat. I studied hard. I had no friends..."

"Come on, Cas, that's hard to believe. Look at you. You're hot as fuck..."

"I was fat, wore glasses, and... and... throughout high school, I was bullied for being the chubby gay kid. Making friends wasn't in the cards for me. I didn't trust anyone. The only people who were nice to me were the ones who wanted something from me, which was either copying my homework or... some wanted me to... do things for them. Then they would laugh behind my back." Dean felt anger surge to the surface. No one deserved that. If he could get his hands on just one of the bastards, he'd ram his fist down their throats. "So, you see, that's why I couldn't accept you at face value, Dean. I was judgmental and ignorant in assuming you were just like them. I was wrong... and I'm sorry. I want us to be friends... if not friends, I would at least like to be able to work together without the animosity."

He shrugged almost in defeat and Dean felt the last remnants of his anger float away. In its place were feelings of want and need rising to the surface. The desire to protect and take care of this sad, gorgeous, intelligent man came rushing forward with the force of a tidal wave.

Dean stood up and moved forward. His fingers caressed the side of Cas' face. "Cas... I'm not like those dicks. I would never do anything to hurt you intentionally. Please believe that. I don't know what this is yet, but... I'd like to find out." He lightly ran his hands through Cas' hair and down the back of his neck, continuing down the middle of his back, slowly tracing the ridges of his spine. He heard a whimper in Cas' throat before a hand came to rest on his chest, stopping him. "Dean, we can't... I want us to be friends, but we can't be anything more. We work together and have to remain professional. That night...it was a mistake." Dean examined Cas' face and didn't see an ounce of regret or hesitation. What he saw was pure desire... the dilated pupils, the hitch of his breath, the tremor in his voice. Despite his words, the man wanted him. Dean leaned down and softly dragged his lips across Cas' jaw as he continued moving his hand down the man's back, pressing into the dip just above his round ass. Cas' hand felt so warm on his chest as Dean stroked his other hand across the hardened bud showing through the thinness of Cas' shirt. "Dean... we can't..." A soft nip to an earlobe brought the most delicious sound from Cas' mouth.

"You said we can't, not that you didn't want to," Dean rasped into Cas' ear as he gave that same nipple a pinch. He felt Cas' hands grasp onto his hips as if to hold himself up. "Tell me to stop, Cas," Dean murmured against his ear. "Tell me to stop and I'll walk away. We'll be fine, but just imagine..." Dean swirled his tongue into Cas' ear. "what it would be like..." Fingers dug into Dean's hips and he couldn't help the smile. "if we just..." Dean slid his hand down Cas' hip and palmed his obvious erection. "...let go."

He couldn't concentrate. How was he supposed to think rationally when Dean's warm body was pressed against his? When Dean's mouth was doing those things... things that were driving him wild. He should stop this. His instincts told him that an affair between them could be a professional disaster. But God, it felt so good.

"...if we just... let go." Dean's whispered words nearly took him over the edge. He bit back a moan,
his teeth digging into his bottom lip, his eyes feral. He should tell him to stop, but he wanted this. God help him, he wanted Dean.

For the first time in his life, he had opened up and bared his soul. All the old memories had resurfaced... the abuse at the hands of bullies... the straight football players who promised him friendship if he would give them head, only to call him degrading names after they got off. All of his secrets... spilled to beg Dean's forgiveness.

Dean's mouth on his neck pulled him back to the present. He moaned and Dean lifted his head, a question in his beautiful green eyes. Castiel nodded, helpless with desire, and Dean took his hand, leading him back to the bedroom. The same room where Dean had watched over him only two days ago.

They didn't bother with the lights. He let Dean undress him and reveled in the feeling of Dean's mouth and fingertips as they tenderly explored every inch of his skin. Castiel's knees threatened to buckle when Dean knelt before him. Dean's eyes held his in the dim light as he took one of Castiel's balls into his mouth. The sensation made him cry out, his fingers curling into Dean's short hair. Strong hands caressed his thighs, moving up and down, then back to cup his ass. Dean's lips and tongue teased at his sac, occasionally delving under them to lick his perineum. His cock ached to be touched. "Dean..." He tugged at Dean's hair, forcing him to stop his assault. He slowly stood and smiled.

"I was just getting started, Cas. I love the taste of you...I want more," he murmured, then left a trail of kisses over Castiel's chest before moving up to his stubbled chin where he nipped playfully.

Castiel drew from his meditation training to control his breathing as he removed Dean's clothing. He'd seen him without a shirt, but gazing at his naked body with his cock jutting out, hard and flushed with blood made Castiel's breath catch in his throat. He lunged at Dean with a fierceness he didn't know he had, tumbling both of them to the bed. The crinkle of a plastic bag being squashed made both men sit up quickly. A white bag with a drug store logo lay in the center of the bed with a bright yellow post-it note stuck to it.

Castiel didn't get a chance to see the scrawled words and looked at Dean with a frown. Dean shrugged and dug into the bag. When he groaned and blushed to the roots of his mussed hair, Castiel's erection began to flag and reservations about what they were doing kicked in. When Dean looked up, he was smiling bashfully. "Seems like my brother has ESP or something." Dean held up a box of condoms and a bottle of Astroglide. He read the note aloud. "Have fun. Be safe." Castiel couldn't help it. He began to laugh. A second later, Dean joined him, his skin pink with embarrassment. Sam must have taken Castiel's question about Dean's favorite foods earlier that day a bit further than Castiel intended.

The laughter died, leaving behind a current of tension between them. Dean looked straight into his eyes and spoke in a soft voice. "Second thoughts, Cas?" Castiel couldn't help letting his eyes roam over Dean's body. Dean's erection had wanned a bit, and his still-thick cock rested on his thigh, a smear of wetness on the darker head. Castiel swallowed hard. When his gaze returned to Dean's, the other man was wearing an amused smirk. Castiel took a deep breath and released it slowly.

"No second thoughts. Just a few... concerns." Dean tightened his lips and nodded. He threw the empty bag off the bed and then set the supplies on the built-in nightstand. He leaned back on his elbows and crossed his ankles. Seeing Dean's body draped across the bed like that made it difficult for Castiel to concentrate.

"Concerns, huh? Well, we have condoms..."
"Not those types of concerns, Dean." Suddenly modest, Castiel crossed his legs and let his hands drop to his lap. Dean noticed but remained silent. "While those things are important, I... I'm not... I've never been comfortable with casual sex. I mean, I've had casual sex, but it was never something I actively sought out. I used to date with the goal of finding someone to share my life with... but mostly I just keep to myself. This attraction between us... it's confusing to me. I do want you... and I want to 'let go', but I'm unsure about the proper etiquette for whatever this is."

"Do we have to label it? Yes, we're attracted to each other... that much is obvious. I don't know what this is either... but we can see what happens," Dean ran a hand through his hair. He looked down at the bed and seemed to have difficulty meeting Castiel's eyes. For some reason, seeing Dean's nervousness was enough to give Castiel the courage he needed to make the first move. He slid closer, boldly straddled Dean's thighs, and touched a fingertip to Dean's chin, forcing the man to look up at him.

As soon as their eyes met, something changed in the air between them. They crashed together, kissing each other like their lives depended on it. Castiel groaned as Dean's calloused hands ran up his back and dug into the back of his shoulders. He pressed his hips down, moaning when their cocks slid together. Dean let out a wanton moan as he bit down on Castiel's lower lip. He raked his fingernails up Dean's chest, then tightened a fist in his hair. Dean whimpered and reached down for Castiel's hard dick, but he stopped him by grabbing both wrists and pinning them to the bed above Dean's head. He was already on the verge of coming and if Dean touched him now, it would be all over. He'd been lusting after this Adonis for too long. This time, he wanted to explore every inch of Dean and watch him fall apart. He pushed down on Dean's wrists slightly and he got the message and stilled. Dean looked at him with something akin to awe as Castiel bent down and kissed those perfect lips, tasting every curve, every line, every moan.

He was so wrapped up in exploring Dean's mouth, it wasn't long before he noticed the man was getting impatient. He reached for Castiel, but Castiel pressed on his wrists again. "No," Castiel growled and Dean instantly froze, his eyes widened in surprise and darkened with lust. Castiel's heart sped up as he took in Dean's reaction. He liked this. With a firmly set jaw, Castiel released his hold, confident the man wouldn't move. He held Dean's gaze for a beat, then ran his hands down those strong arms, across his muscled chest, and stopped to circle the nipples with his thumbs. He pinched both at the same time and Dean gasped, arching his back, but his arms remained still. Castiel raised one eyebrow in approval and rewarded Dean with a slight smile. Castiel shifted his legs, until he was kneeling between Dean's legs. He used his knees to push Dean's thighs apart.

Dean was so beautiful like this... spread beneath him and completely pliant to whatever Castiel wanted to do. It took his breath away. He'd never felt this kind of power before... never had someone put their trust in him like this. With some unspoken understanding, he knew what Dean wanted and no longer felt the urge to make him wait for it. He reached over and grabbed the purple bottle, then snapped the lid and coated his fingers. Dean gasped as Castiel circled his entrance for the first time. He watched the other man's face as he slowly slipped one finger past the tight ring of muscle. Dean tensed around him and moaned softly. Castiel leaned down and planted kisses along his stomach, then evoked a string of obscenities from the man as he closed his lips around Dean's hardened shaft, taking as much as he could. He added another finger, gently working them in and out and side to side, loving the way Dean pressed back to meet each thrust.

"Cas... please..." Castiel's mouth moved up and down Dean's shaft, flicking the tip of his tongue against the sensitive tip. He relaxed his throat and took Dean's cock as far as he could. Dean bucked his hips involuntarily and Castiel splayed his palms over Dean's hips to hold him still. He hollowed out his cheeks and sucked him harder...deeper. Three fingers worked Dean's hole now and Dean's moans were sounding more and more desperate. He pulled off as his fingers found Dean's prostate. "Fuck, Cas... I... please..." Dean's voice sounded wrecked.
"What do you want, Dean? Tell me." He stroked the pale skin of Dean's hip and continued his assault on the man's prostate as he waited for him to answer.

"Please... I need you, Cas."

That's all it took. Castiel eased his fingers out, rolled on the condom, and stroked more lube onto his shaft. He reached down to guide his cock to Dean's tight hole. He looked into Dean's eyes as he eased himself in gradually, completely losing all sense of time. Castiel shut his eyes, trying to maintain control. The musky scent of sex filled his nostrils, making his cock throb. He felt Dean's tight heat relax around him and Castiel began to move. When he opened his eyes, Dean was staring up at him, mouth slightly open. He stretched out along Dean's enticing body and let his hands reach up to clasp his fingers with Dean's. He felt Dean's legs lock around his hips.

He lowered his head and Dean met him halfway, the kiss rough and wet... tongues entwining and teeth knocking together jarringly. They were rutting against each other, skin against skin, the only sounds were the grunts and filthy moans neither of them bothered to hold back. Castiel increased his speed, slamming into Dean at a brutal pace. Dean dug his heels into Castiel's back, urging him on. Blunt nails scratched his back, causing Castiel to gasp in pain and pleasure. He shifted his angle, nailing Dean's prostate with every powerful thrust. Dean's cock was trapped between them, leaking precum on both of their stomachs.

"Cas... Fuck, Cas... I'm close... I'm gonna..."  Dean's body tensed as he came, crying out Castiel's name as his orgasm crashed over him. The sight of Dean's cum painting his chest drove him over the edge and he felt the heat building deep in his belly. He pushed in one last time and felt his release. He cried out the name he'd whispered in the dark the night before and his heart felt like it would burst from his chest. He collapsed onto his lover and they lay there panting as their breathing slowly returned to normal. Cooling sweat and drying cum eventually made Dean shove him to the side, but he rolled with him, planting a light kiss on Castiel's lips. "Guess we need to clean up," he said softly, but didn't make any move to get up. Castiel nodded, but he was basking in the wake of his orgasm and sheer exhaustion made him close his eyes. He felt the warmth of Dean's body and a blanket being folded over them as he surrendered to sleep.

Sam was talking over the schedule with Harry when Castiel poked his head into the RV. "May I have a word, Sam?"

"Sure," he replied as he handed off his clipboard to one of the production assistants and stepped out onto the lawn. "What's up?"

The dude looked almost shy. "Could you please tell me what Dean's favorite foods are?" Sam gaped at him stupidly. Out of everything the guy could have possibly said, this was the least expected.

"Dean's...favorite foods?" Sam shifted his feet and shrugged. "Wow... um... he loves pie. And burgers."

"Could you be more specific?" Castiel seemed suddenly exasperated with him. Jeez, ask him about timing, marks, and camera angles and he could talk for hours. His brother's culinary likes and dislikes weren't a topic of everyday conversation. Still, his curiosity was piqued.
"Well, pretty much any pie...pecan, cherry, apple... hell, lemon meringue." At Castiel's smirk, he added, "There is a bakery on Fourth Avenue..."

"Dahlia Bakery?" Castiel suggested.

"That's it. He loves their pies. Mostly he makes his own, but with his schedule, he has to satisfy his craving there sometimes." Castiel nodded his understanding and waited patiently for Sam to continue. "Okay, so burgers... He loves Ellen's, of course." Castiel quirked up a brow. Right, he didn't know Ellen. Dean should invite him to the New Year's Eve party. "Ellen is... she's like a second mom to us. She owns a place called Harvelle's Roadhouse. It's a bar, but she serves food and her burgers are a staple in Dean's diet. Give him a bacon cheeseburger and he'll be eating out of your hand. Speaking of which, why do you want to know all this? Couldn't you just ask him?"

"I may have said something stupid and I want to apologize." Sam was going to ask about Castiel's confession, but he just walked away, leaving Sam staring after him.

"Fuck my life," he muttered and went back to work. Between Dean and Castiel, he was heading for an early grave.

Things got even weirder when he noticed what a foul mood Dean was in. How did those two go from laughing and making goo-goo eyes at each other to this? All Sam knew was that Dean seemed fed up and Castiel needed to apologize. Sam could get more information out of a brick wall than his brother, but he wouldn't be doing his job as a little brother if he didn't know exactly which buttons to push to get Dean talking. Realistically, he shouldn't have been surprised their truce hadn't lasted long.

Late that afternoon, he went to his car to get his charging cable for his phone and saw Castiel tucking something under Dean's windshield wiper. He ducked behind the painter's van and waited until Castiel went back into the house. He jogged over to Dean's truck and read the note. "Huh..." Sam replaced small piece of paper and slowly walked back to the RV, his mind whirling. If Castiel was going to apologize with pie, Dean would posture a bit, but he'd accept it. Dean couldn't hold a grudge for long... luckily for Sam, since he'd pulled so many pranks over the years. Professionally speaking, he should stay out of whatever this was... but it wasn't in his nature to let this kind of opportunity pass him by. Back inside the RV, he sat at the table tapping his pen against his notebook. With a grin, he grabbed his jacket and keys. "Be right back," he told the crew, practically skipping out the door.

Sam hated thinking about his brother's sex life and truthfully, he had reservations about those two hooking up. The hostility between them was bad before they did whatever they did... but if they started fucking and then got into it over something stupid, things could get really ugly, really fast. At the moment though, the tension between them was ridiculous and if finally fucking each other's brains out would fix it, then Sam was more than willing to be their personal sex concierge.

He put the two items on the counter and handed over his credit card. The clerk tucked them into a plastic bag with a knowing look. He almost blurted that the stuff wasn't for him, but it didn't matter. He smirked as he stepped out of the store.

Back at the reno-house, he quietly told the workers and crew to take off thirty minutes early. Dean was busy with something and Castiel passed him on his way out. The sound of his motorcycle told Sam he was going to get Dean's pie. He gave the man a head start before pushing everyone toward their vehicles. He was at the stop sign at the end of the street when Castiel roared by on his way back to the jobsite. Fingers crossed, he headed home. God, he needed a beer... or six.

The next morning, Sam arrived at the set before dawn. He knew he could get more work done
without everyone hanging around trying to get a piece of him. He pulled up and stared at his brother's truck...and a familiar motorcycle. Were those two already working or...?

With trepidation, he tried the door of the RV. It wasn't locked. He stepped inside and all was quiet. His eyes were drawn to the bedroom's doorway. It was dark. Maybe he'd get lucky and they would be in the house working... Dean was an early riser... it could happen... if there was a merciful God. In that moment, Sam fervently wished he could be the kind of person who could turn around and be fine not knowing for sure... but he wasn't. He flipped on the hall light and it illuminated the end of the bed, revealing a tangle of sheets and two sets of bare feet. By the position, someone ended up being the little spoon. He pulled his phone out. *Pics or it didn't happen.*

He flipped the light switch and pressed the button on his phone. Who knew Dean would be okay with being the little spoon? Neither of them even flinched at the sudden burst of light. Since their junk was properly covered, Sam let himself take in the scene before him. His brother's face looked younger and completely content, and it was nice to see. Castiel had his arms wrapped around Dean and he looked... *serene,* which wasn't a word he would've ever thought to use to describe Castiel Novak. Even when the guy smiled, he never really appeared to be *happy.* Yeah, that was it... Castiel never seemed like a happy person. Then again, Dean claimed to be, but he was a workaholic who cared for everyone's needs at the expense of his own. Sam sometimes hoped that Dean would wake up one day and realize all the one-night-stands scratched an itch, but didn't give him what he needed. But then sometimes he worried that Dean had already realized it, and was too stubborn to change... or worse, that Dean thought he didn't deserve anything better.

Leaving them be, he turned off the light and shut the door. If they didn't wake before the crew began to arrive, he'd get them up and moving. Rumors about them were already running rampant with the crew, but Sam would do his best to give them all the privacy he could.

Dean listened to the steady breathing beside him. Castiel had fallen asleep after sex... *epic sex,* he corrected. He'd let him sleep for a bit and then they'd have to get out of here. Getting caught by one of the crew or worse, Sam, while in bed with each other... well, it wouldn't be good.

He shivered. Without the generator running, the RV got cold. It took a few pushes to get Castiel off the bedding, but he finally got them both covered in a blanket. Castiel grumbled a bit but didn't wake up. Just a few minutes, that's all Dean needed. He closed his eyes and smiled.

Sure, he was worried that this thing between them could potentially cause problems. They both had volatile tempers and Cas was a control freak. Dean frowned, remembering Cas telling him about his past... no wonder the guy had issues connecting with people. He tried to imagine Cas as an overweight nerdy teen and couldn't. He was fit, arrogant and had his shit together. Dean had been a jock. His looks made him popular and he had a reputation as a stud that left a trail of broken hearts in his wake. He'd been a cocky little shit, but he was never a bully... and he could never imagine using someone like those motherfuckers used Cas.

He let the fantasy play out in his head. *They would fly back to wherever it was that Cas graduated from for Cas' high school reunion. He would escort the now nearly-perfect Cas into a gaudily decorated gym. All those assholes would be balding and fat with beer bellies. Dean would have the*
sexiest man there on his arm. It would never happen, but Dean sure would love to see their faces...maybe even punch a few.

He moved to get more comfortable. *Just a few more minutes*. He stared at Cas' profile, so relaxed in sleep. His arrogance and stubborn pride drove Dean crazy, but in bed, the man was a dream come true... a wet dream brought to life.

Dean didn't usually bottom... he wasn't a virgin to being fucked up the ass, but he was more of a top kind of guy. With Cas though, he'd spread his legs like... like he was begging for Cas' cock. He never thought he'd be the kind of guy to beg for anything, but with Cas... that's exactly what he did. And when he'd held Dean's arms down... holy fuck, that got Dean's juices going...literally. His soft huff of laughter at his bad pun seemed loud in the silent room, but Cas didn't move. He really needed to wake him.

*Just a few more minutes...*

Dean blinked awake. Where was he? Memories of the night before fell together like pieces of a puzzle. A warm body was pressed to his back and a strong arm was folded around him, resting on his stomach. How had he wound up the little spoon? *The fucker*. He stretched and yawned...and the panic set in. Early morning sunlight crept into the room. "Cas... *Cas*... wake up." He threw his legs over the side of the bed and grabbed up a pair of underwear... orange... definitely not his. *Who the hell wears orange underwear?* He found his near the closed door. Hopping on one foot, he shimmed into them. "Cas... Come on, wake up."

"No," came the muffled reply. Dean snatched off the covers and the man underneath them gave a startled squawk while still managing to look intimidating. *How on earth did he do that?*

"It's morning, Cas. *Morning*... meaning people are going to be here soon, if they aren't already." Dean found a pair of jeans and made a face. Were these his? Nope, these had some douchey name stitched over the pocket and Dean didn't do designer jeans. He threw them on the bed where Cas was starting to regain consciousness, if the scowl was anything to go by. Note to self -- Cas was *not* a morning person.

A swift knock made Dean freeze. Cas sat up, naked and adorably rumpled. They both stared at the door. "Dean, I know you're in there. You guys have about five minutes before the crew starts arriving. I'd advise you to get a move on."

"Um... yeah... thanks, Sammy," Dean called back. He closed his eyes and counted the fucks. "Fuck, fuck, fuck..." He couldn't find his goddamn boots. Cas was finally standing. Dean pointed to the orange boxer briefs and Cas casually bent down to retrieve them. *It was a downright shame to cover that amazing ass*. Dean shook himself before getting on his hands and knees to look under the bed. "Aha..." Boots and one loafer. Son of a bitch, he was dating a man who wore loafers. No, correction... not dating. Fucking. They were fucking... mutually satisfying fucking.

"Jesus Christ, Cas, can you get the lead out?" The man had his *designer* jeans on and was currently buttoning his shirt. One button at a fucking time...

Another scowl. And silence. Another button. Dean rolled his eyes. Finally... *finally*, the dude was dressed. Time to face the music... He opened the door and Sam looked up. Dean schooled his features to appear nonchalant, like it was perfectly normal to wake up in the trailer with his co-star. "Morning, Sammy."

Sam leaned back and crossed his arms. "Y'all have fun? Stayed safe?"
"Sam," Dean warned.

Cas stepped around him and calmly stated. "Sam, I would like to go home and shower. I will be a bit late for work today." He pulled Dean to him roughly and kissed him without an ounce of hesitation. "I will see you soon." And he was out the door before Dean could react. Dean opened his mouth to say something... anything... but he had nothing. Sam's mouth was trembling with the effort of holding back his laughter.

"Not a fuckin' word, Sam." Dean said menacingly.

Sam held up his hands in a placating gesture and wisely remained silent.

Defiantly, Dean didn't ask Sam's permission to go home and shower. As he drove, he kept thinking about the casual kiss goodbye. He'd have to talk to Cas about PDA and personal space. If something like that ended up on film, everyone watching would think they're together or something.

Strangely enough, the day ended up going by pretty fast. By the time he was back at the house, Cas was already there talking to the camera about light fixtures. Dean walked in and Cas grabbed his arm. "Dean, in the kitchen, I was thinking LED lighting. It's a bit more expensive, but the savings in power will offset it." Dean looked at him stupidly for a second.

When he brain came back online, he tried to sound halfway intelligent. "Oh, yeah, LEDs are a good choice. I think we can work it into the budget." Then Cas smiled at him. Really fucking smiled... and Dean just stood there grinning like an idiot.

Shit like that happened all day. Cas would just randomly come up where he was working and chat about stuff while the cameras rolled. The crew was starting to stare and whisper. Dean even saw money exchanging hands. He should tell Cas to can it, but he liked this new and improved Cas.

Near quitting time, Sam cornered Dean in the bathroom. Dean had no escape. He stood where the new toilet would be going, while Sam leaned against the door frame. "It's the twenty-ninth."

"Gold star, Sammy. You know the date. Shall we try our colors next? Work up to shapes tomorrow? Learn to tie your shoes yet?" What was Sam getting at? Dean knew what day it was.

Did Sam ever run out of bitchfaces? "Ellen wanted to know if you were bringing a date to the party."

"I told you I'd find someone," Dean told him.

"What about Cas?" Dean suddenly found his work boots very fascinating. "Dean, what about Cas?"

"Sam..." He ran his fingers through his hair and sawdust rained down around him. "I..." He what? He liked Cas. And damn, he sure as hell liked what happened last night. Dating was a different story. Dating implied you might be working up to something serious. Someone like Cas wouldn't be around for long. Sooner or later, he'd get tired of Dean and move on to someone better. He felt his stomach twist at the thought. But... Cas did say something about friendship, though. "Fine, I'll see if he wants to come." As friends. Just two friends going to a party. "Satisfied?"

Sam smiled and straightened to his full height, which had his head brushing the top of the door frame. "Good. I'm glad. Do it soon, though."

"Do it soon, though," Dean mimicked in a falsetto voice. "Go practice tying your shoes and leave me the fuck alone." He heard Sam snickering as he walked away.
Dean finished caulking the new tub and then stowed his tools away. When he walked outside to leave for the day, Cas was waiting by his truck. "Heya, Cas."

"Hello, Dean." They stood there staring at each other. It was like Cas was fucking him with his eyes. He had the prettiest... Stop. Minutes seemed to tick by. The sound of motors starting and people calling out goodbyes didn't faze them at all. It was only when Sam slapped him on the back hard enough to knock him off balance, that he remembered they were still on the jobsite.

"See you two in the morning," he said jauntily before getting into his car. The bastard.

"Hey, Sam wanted me to ask if you wanted to come to a New Year's Eve party. It's an annual thing at my... at a friend's place." He almost said his mom's place. Ellen was more of a mother than Mary Winchester ever thought of being. Over the years, he'd slipped up and called Ellen mom a few times, and the loving look he got in return let him know she was perfectly happy with the title.

Cas tilted his head to the side and his hesitation in answering made Dean ramble. "I mean... I know it's late notice. If you have plans, that's cool. It's not a big deal. It's nothing fancy like you're probably used to... Just a bunch of friends hanging out, drinking, having fun. Charlie will probably hook up her karaoke machine..."

"Okay."

"Okay?"

"I would love to come to the party, Dean." Dean found himself smiling again. Cas returned it and shifted his helmet from one hand to the other. "I suppose I will see you in the morning?"

"Yeah." Dean took a step backwards towards his truck. "See you then." He opened the door and his toolbelt caught on the handle. He'd forgotten to take the damn thing off. It jerked him and he cracked his elbow on the center pillar. He hid the wince as his funny bone zinged painfully. "Uh... I'll give you the details tomorrow. Since you got the burger there, I guess you already know where it is." He finally got his tool belt unfastened and tossed it in the truck. He looked up to see Cas mounting his bike. Fuck me, he thought as he licked his lips.

"Goodnight, Dean," Cas said with a smirk, pulling his helmet onto his head. Dean watched in fascination as nimble fingers latched the chin strap. Those fingers... He shook his head to clear it and slid into the seat, slamming the door before he said or did something stupid.
Chapter 10

Chapter by palominopup

Chapter Summary

Things might be looking up for our two angry men.

Chapter Notes

NSFW pic at the end of the chapter - pay attention to where you are and who is looking over your shoulder.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Castiel had played it cool, but waking up to Dean's manic fumbling threw him. He couldn't remember the last time he woke up with someone. If he'd been more awake, he would have been amused at Dean's behavior, but at the moment, his head was in a fog, which was normal for him until his second cup of strong coffee.

Thankfully, the crew wasn't around when Castiel got to his bike. It was only after he cranked it and was pulling onto the street that he thought about what he'd done. He'd kissed Dean goodbye... right in front of Sam... kissed him goodbye like they were a couple. Were they a couple now? He wouldn't...couldn't assume anything. He'd just have to feel Dean out and see how things went.

After coffee, a quick shower, and more coffee, he was feeling better and much more aware. He was actually smiling as he headed back to the reno-house. Throughout the day, Castiel sought Dean out for his opinions and Dean seemed to enjoy their interactions. It was a nice change from the tension they were used to, and it gave him more opportunities to be close to Dean... something Castiel was very much in favor of.

At the end of the day, Castiel waited by Dean's truck. He'd told himself it was just to say goodbye, but there was a small part of him that wanted to ask Dean out for a drink or dinner, like a proper date. He could do that now, right? Castiel wasn't sure... after all, every rational part of his brain always flew out the window whenever he was face-to-face with the sexy, green-eyed contractor. Still, he would like to try for something more...

It was Dean that had asked him to a party though, before he even had a chance to broach the conversation about a date. The way he worded it seemed like it was Sam's idea and not Dean's, but if it meant spending an evening with Dean, he'd take it. Dean appeared jittery and had almost fallen when his toolbelt at caught on the door handle. Then he'd hit his elbow and that had to hurt. Castiel thought it was kind of cute that Dean was so flustered over asking him out. He suddenly recalled the day Dean stopped by his shop. Dean had been just as nervous then... only confirming Castiel's earlier suspicions that he came to the studio intending to ask him out. Would he ever stop being surprised by this man?

He was halfway home when he caught himself smiling again. Later that evening, as he thumbed
through the latest issue of Architectural Digest, he couldn't stop thinking about his night with Dean. The sex had been amazing... maybe even the best he'd ever had. There was so much passion between them. Before, it was fueled by anger and mutual disdain... this time had been different. Last night was... profound... and it shook Castiel to his core, if he was being honest with himself. Before he could spiral into panic mode, he took a deep breath and decided that he was simply going to take this one step at a time... no expectations, no rules, just enjoying each other's company.

The next day flew by in a blur. They'd gotten several shipments of furnishings for the house, but they arrived earlier than originally planned, so Castiel spent the day shuffling items from room to room to avoid the cameras filming the work they were doing in each space. By mid-afternoon, he had enough and demanded that they rent a POD to store everything in until he was ready to bring them inside. It took him until almost seven o'clock that night before he was satisfied enough to leave for the day. He was disappointed to see that Dean's truck was no longer there. It wasn't the first time he kicked himself for not exchanging numbers with the man. How is it they'd been working together for weeks, had engaged in sexual activities on two occasions, yet they still didn't have each other's numbers?

Castiel heaved a weary sigh as he climbed on his bike to go home. When he walked in the door, his exhaustion hit him in full force, and it was all he could do to shower before falling into bed. The next morning, he woke feeling more rested than he had in a long time. He couldn't believe he'd actually slept for almost eleven hours. He stretched languidly and smiled when he remembered that he would be spending the evening with Dean.

At the reno-house, the crew was focused on filming short segments with Castiel and Dean individually, then together... mostly explaining what they had done so far, what they were working on next, and a few how-to segments. Those were his favorite... especially the painting tutorial he filmed with Dean.

They had every intention of being professional, they really did. But when Dean turned to the wall to demonstrate the proper technique for rolling paint, he accidentally brushed the roller against Castiel's cheek, leaving behind a massive streak of the Bauhaus Buff paint he'd meticulously picked out. His eyes widened in shock, but Castiel could see him straining to contain his laughter. Castiel kept a straight face, bent down to pick up his edging brush, dipped it in the paint, then slowly and deliberately dragged it up Dean's neck, continuing it all the way up the side of his face, then touched it to the tip of his nose with a flourish. He kept eye contact the whole time, then all hell broke loose and they ended up completely covered in paint. They were laughing so hard, they barely heard Sam yell 'cut' and only stopped when the laughter of the crew reached their ears. Thankfully, the dropcloths kept the new laminate floors safe from their antics.

Castiel had never had so much fun at work. Of course, the clean-up was a pain in the ass, but it was totally worth it. When they were done, Sam gave up on the day and sent everyone home early with wishes for a Happy New Year and orders to enjoy their day off. Sam tried to look disgruntled, but Castiel could see he was thoroughly pleased with how the day turned out.

As they were leaving, Dean caught up with him. "I guess I'll catch you there at seven. Ellen puts on a nice spread, so come hungry."

"Is there anything I should bring?" Castiel wasn't a very social person, but remembered his mother always bringing hostess gifts to parties. Was that still a thing?

"Just yourself." Dean turned to get into his truck and stopped. "Oh, and Cas... lose the tie." The wink he gave Castiel made his shake his head and chuckle. As he straddled his bike, Dean got behind the wheel of his truck and put his keys in the ignition.

"Dean, wait..." Dean paused before shutting the car door, his expression patient. "Would you like
my number... just in case there is a change of plans...or anything?” Castiel knew he was grasping, but he wanted to exchange numbers.

"Yeah, sure." Dean got out of the truck and came toward him, pulling his phone out of his pocket. They quickly exchanged info without making any eye contact.

Like a love-struck teenager, Castiel got to the first traffic light and smiled when he thought about Dean's name in his contact list. He nodded to himself in satisfaction and continued home.

Castiel had a few hours to kill, so he took extra time in the shower to make sure he washed all the paint out of... well, everywhere. Every time he found a spot he'd missed, he smiled. It hadn't escaped his notice that he'd laughed and smiled more with Dean in the last couple of days than he had all year.

About an hour before he was supposed to leave, he got a text from Dean offering to give him a ride to the party. Accepting the offer meant that Dean would be coming to his house. He never brought anyone here... ever. He waited for his typical rush of anxiety, but it never came. For the first time, the idea of bringing Dean to his refuge filled him with excitement and anticipation. He was smiling as he texted Dean his address, then walked through the house to make sure it was presentable.

Castiel took longer than usual on his appearance, putting on and discarding nearly every shirt in his closet. In the end, he chose a pair of tight-fitting jeans and blue button-down. He added his favorite Calvin Klein belt with the gun-metal buckle, then threw on a black leather jacket to complete the look. Checking himself out in the mirror, he thought he looked good. He'd purposely not shaved, leaving enough stubble to look good, but not unkempt. Then he meticulously hung up the pile of clothing on his bed.

When he opened the door, the sight of Dean nearly stopped his heart. He wasn't wearing his usual faded denim and flannel... he was dressed in gray jeans that hugged his body just right and a fitted, blue button-up shirt that accented his chest muscles. He, too, was wearing a black leather jacket. Castiel didn't get to see Dean clean-shaven often, and he longed to cup his palm over his smooth cheek and lean in for a... How the hell was he supposed to make it through the night with Dean looking this good? Then he looked up and saw the same appreciative look reflected in Dean's eyes.

"Hello, Dean. Would you like to come in?"

"Probably not a good idea... if I come in, there's no fucking way we're making it to the party." Dean was looking at him like he wanted to devour him, and knowing he had that effect on Dean gave him a thrill. He laughed and shook his head.

"I see your point. Let me grab my keys." He locked up and turned around to find Dean standing incredibly close to him. His breath caught in his throat as Dean backed him against the door, planting a heated kiss on his lips. He dragged his hand through Castiel's hair and tugged slightly, then pulled back, leaving him breathless.

"There. That's better," Dean said while looking at his hair. "Don't bother combing your hair, Cas. It's perfect just like it is," he said with a sideways grin, and Castiel felt an unexpected warmth spread through his chest and blushed as he gave a shy smile.

They made their way to Dean's car, and he couldn't stop himself from running his hand across the hood in admiration. He'd gotten a few glimpses of the vehicle over the last few weeks and it was even more astounding up close. He remembered the first time he'd seen it when they got off on the wrong foot... over a damn parking space.
"Dean... this car is incredible. I don't know much about cars, but this one is definitely something special." Dean was positively beaming with pride.

"She's perfect, isn't she? Wait 'til you hear her roar," he said with a wink. Castiel slid into the soft, leather seat as Dean started her up and pressed on the gas. The growling engine brought an immediate smile to Castiel's face. Dean turned on the radio and hard rock music filled the car. Dean turned the volume down to a reasonable level and they made small talk on the drive. Mostly, Dean asked questions about how he got into architecture and later, interior design. Castiel told him about loving to draw as a child and how a teacher in high school had cultivated it into something he could make a career of. All too soon, they were pulling up to the bar.

The Roadhouse was not what he expected. For the most part, it was the same as when he'd been there the other day... but now, most of the lights were turned down and it had been draped with silver and black decorations. There were baskets of noisemakers and novelty hats on several tables, and just like Dean guessed, there was a karaoke machine set up on the stage. They had barely entered when a flash of red hair came bouncing their way.

"Handmaiden," the petite woman cried in obvious excitement, flinging her arms around Dean. "I'm so glad you could grace us with your presence. Your Queen welcomes you and..."

"Hi, Charlie. I see you're as shy as ever. This is Cas... Castiel Novak." Castiel took note of the use of his full name and he gave Dean a look of gratitude before extending his hand to the girl. "Cas, this is Charlie, Queen of Moondoor."

"A pleasure to meet you, Your Majesty," Castiel said with a graceful bow, planting a kiss on her hand. She giggled and startled him by pulling him into a hug.

"Dude, hands-down, best greeting ever. I like you. You can be my Knight and loyal protector."

"Hey, what the fuck? He gets to be a knight and I have to be a damn handmaiden? How is that fair?" Castiel had no idea what Moondoor was, but he was thoroughly amused by Dean's reaction. Charlie linked arms with him and led him to the stage, and before he knew it, he and Dean were both signed up for something called Scaryoke. The participants didn't pick the songs, Charlie did... and no one knew what song they were doing until the music started. He looked at Dean in horror, and just like that, the tables were turned and it was Dean's turn to be amused. Castiel sang along with the radio and sometimes in the shower, but never in public. Never.

"Come on, Cas. We're gonna need several drinks for this, trust me." Castiel followed him to the bar, joining Sam, Benny, and a girl named Jo. The young woman was beautiful and at her easy way with Dean, Castiel wondered if there was history there. Dean then introduced him to Ellen. Castiel watched their interaction and could easily see that Dean considered her family. He felt a bit out of place for a minute, but when Dean reached over and laid a comforting hand on his shoulder, it settled his nerves and left him with a sense of belonging. This was all new to him, but he discovered that it wasn't at all unpleasant.

Dean gestured at the bar, and Castiel noticed four shots of amber liquid lined up in front of each of them. He looked up to find Dean smirking at him in challenge. He apparently thought there was no way Castiel could handle that level of drinking. He met Dean's expression with a lift of his eyebrow, then without breaking eye contact, picked up the first shot and downed it in one gulp, then the second, the third, and the fourth, not looking away once. Dean's face went from surprised to amused... then by the fourth shot, his eyes had darkened with... desire?

Castiel watched as Dean answered the challenge, and the last drops of the fourth shot trickled down his chin... to his neck... As Dean brushed it away with the back of his hand, Castiel felt a moment of
remorse. He would have loved to use his tongue to clean Dean's skin, but now wasn't the time or the place. Castiel heard Dean's name being called over a microphone and looked to the stage. Charlie was looking in their direction. He groaned. "Time to get this over with. Tell you what... you don't laugh at me and I won't laugh at you. Deal?" He nodded and Dean strode up to the stage. How had Castiel never noticed the slight bow of his legs? The memory of them wrapped around his waist, along with the four shots, made his head swim.

It turns out, Dean was right about the drinks. Once everyone was sufficiently buzzed, Scaryoke was pretty fun. They all bravely took their turns, and of course, Charlie had chosen songs for each of them that were equally embarrassing and hilarious. Dean sang a sappy song called Blue Eyes by Elton John, and when it was Castiel's turn, he drew a song from the nineties that he vaguely remembered. Nervously, he stood before the microphone and bit his lower lip. He stared out into the crowded room and swallowed thickly. He couldn't do this. There wasn't enough alcohol in a whole liquor store... He turned to step away, knowing he was going to look like spoil-sport, but Dean was suddenly there beside him. He leaned over and whispered. "We got this."

He smiled gratefully as Charlie tossed Dean another microphone and the music started. Dean's presence gave him a boost of confidence. The words appeared on the screen and they began to sing together. He knew he was a bit off-key, but then, so was Dean.

What you've been missin' in a man
I can survive, your wish is my command
I'll work hard to fill your needs
Give you lesson on what it is to

(Feel) Feel (good) good baby
Get undressed and slip on this robe
(Re) Re- (lax) lax darlin'
Just sit back would rather be stroked

As the song went on, Castiel's voice settled into a rich baritone that had Dean grinning as he sang with him. The crowd was cheering and clapping, but Castiel didn't seem to notice. He was too transfixed by his spontaneous duet partner to register anything else.

The song finally ended and Dean slapped him on the back as he leaned in and said, "I knew you could do it, Cas." Dean took his hand and led him off stage, but let go as Dean's friends surrounded them. Castiel got a lot of compliments on his voice and tried not to let it go to his head.

Before he knew it, midnight was approaching and everyone rushed to grab hats and noisemakers. Dean tugged him onto the dancefloor and they moved to the steady beat of an Adam Lambert song as they waited for the countdown to begin. Both of them wore silly hats and Charlie was taking pictures of them, laughing at Dean's silly mugging for the camera. The music stopped and numbers began to flash on the large screen behind the bar. As everyone shouted the numbers, Dean stared into his eyes and Castiel saw some unnamed emotion there. He reached up and cupped Dean's jaw, stroking his thumb gently across his cheek as Dean pulled him closer. He slid his hand up behind Dean's head and, still staring into each other's eyes, their lips met in a slow, tender kiss just as the clock struck midnight. The way Dean was looking at him sent electricity shooting through him and ignited something deep within that he'd never felt before and couldn't define. The kiss deepened, tongues exploring, hands exploring, like they couldn't get close enough. Castiel pulled back, his breath ragged.

"Dean..." Dean nodded his head once, then led him off the dance floor and out the door without saying goodbye to anyone. Luckily, Dean was sober enough to drive. Other than the four shots, they
stuck to soda and both had eaten well. When Dean said Ellen put on a spread, he wasn't exaggerating.

They didn't talk during the drive to Castiel's house. The silence was far from uncomfortable, but there was an electric feeling in the air. He was so distracted by his expectations of what was to come and Dean's closeness, he was actually surprised when the car was stopped and Dean had switched off the engine. Their eyes locked, and Castiel wanted to kiss him... badly... but he opened his door without a word. He heard Dean's tread on the wooden dock and his soft laugh when Castiel fumbled with his keys.

Dean stood in his shower and berated himself. The text he sent offering to pick Cas up pretty much made this a date. He blamed it on his curiosity to see where Cas called home. His co-star had mentioned his floating house a few times. Dean was familiar with the small communities on the coast, but he'd never had the opportunity to see one up close.

He splashed a bit of cologne on and eyed himself in the mirror. "Looking good, Winchester."

The drive to Cas' place from his own took a little under fifteen minutes, just long enough for Dean to question his sanity. Not that he and Cas had a real relationship going... but the connection he felt, combined with the insane level of attraction, was enough to scare the shit out of him. He'd broken his number one rule by sleeping with someone he worked with. You couldn't come back from that. If he fucked up now, it would impact the show and that would definitely impact Sam. What the hell was he thinking?

He strolled down the dock, looking at the house numbers nailed to posts. In the soft glow of the pole-lights, Dean couldn't see much of Cas' house, but the little bit he could see looked pretty cool. He should do some research and see if it was something he could do at Winchester Construction. He stood at the door, hands deep in his pockets. What was he thinking? He knocked and took a few steps back. What was he... holy shit. The man that opened the door was definitely Cas, but this was on a whole different level. With the tight jeans he was wearing, the top two buttons of his shirt open, and that leather jacket, he looked like he just stepped out of Dean Winchester's Sexual Fantasies Catalog. Well, almost...

Cas had styled his hair and it looked way too neat. Once Cas was out the door, Dean couldn't resist pushing him against the wall for a kiss so he could run his hand through that hair, messing it up entirely. He pulled back and looked at Cas with approval.

"There. That's better. Don't bother combing your hair, Cas. It's perfect just like it is." He enjoyed the way Cas blushed at his compliment. He led the way to the car and was elated over Cas' reaction to his Baby. On the way, he got Cas talking about his work and the ride went by pretty fast. He felt a flutter of nervousness about introducing Cas to everyone, but he was reassured when he saw the way the man interacted with Charlie.

The party was filled with the usual suspects and Dean introduced Cas around a bit. The dude had shocked the shit out of him by downing four shots like a pro. After that, things got hazy for Dean. He decided to stop drinking and start eating. Charlie's version of karaoke seemed to scare the hell out
of Cas and Dean stepped up to help. Yep, Dean Winchester riding in to save the day. And who knew Cas had such a great singing voice? His speaking voice was huskier than a three-pack-a-day smoker, and just the sound of him talking did things to Dean... *bad things*... but fuck, listening to him sing... *that* shot straight to his dick.

Wearing the stupid hats, unable to remove them without risking Charlie's wrath, Dean pulled Cas onto the dance floor. It was fun dancing with Charlie and Cas, acting silly to make them laugh. Charlie definitely liked Cas. It showed in the way she talked to him and really listened to what he had to say. Somehow that made Dean's heart ache. It would be so much harder to let the man go when he inevitably moved on from Dean.

The raucous countdown leading up to the New Year was loud, but he wasn't paying attention. All he could see was Cas as the man touched his cheek and caressed him gently. He looked into the deep, blue eyes and felt something strong surge through his heart. He couldn't look away, not even as their lips met. The kiss was soft, then turned into hot, dirty foreplay. When they broke apart, Dean felt the eyes of his friends and family on them, but he was still locked in Cas' intense gaze. "Dean..."

Hearing that voice rasp out his name like that spurred Dean into action. He wanted to get them out of there before someone tried to 'talk' to him about that little scene. It wasn't their business and he had more important things on his mind at the moment. He nodded, stopping long enough to grab their jackets before he led them out. Once in the car, Dean didn't feel like talking. There was something stirring between them and surprisingly, it wasn't the least bit awkward. Cas seemed to be in his own world and that gave Dean time to think. He should walk away now... he needed to stop this before he was too far gone. Meeting Cas' eyes, he knew it was already too late.

Cas hadn't exactly invited him in, but Dean followed him up the dock anyway. It took Cas a few attempts to get his key into the door and Dean laughed softly. At least he wasn't the only one who was scared shitless.

Inside Cas' home, a large fish tank cast a blue-green glow over the room. The floorplan was open and Dean could see light reflecting in the water outside of the wall of windows. "You must have an amazing view."

"I do. That's why I decided on living here," Cas said as he moved into the kitchen. "Would you like a drink?"

"Not now," Dean said and took a guess that the stairs led to Cas' bedroom. He took them two at a time and ran his hands over the wall until he located the switch. The room was simple and tasteful. Dean hadn't expected anything less from the designer. One wall appeared to be bamboo slats and another wall of windows looked out over the Sound. Cas came up beside him. "I like your house, Cas. It suits you."

He took Cas' hand and pulled him close. Cas didn't resist. Their eyes met briefly before Dean closed his, leaning down to meet Cas' full, pink lips. The kiss was soft, sweet even, a gentle glide. Dean grew impatient and thrust his tongue inside Cas' mouth. Without separating from each other, their hands tugged at clothing, undressing each other until they were both naked. When his hand enclosed around Cas' cock, the other man's moan shot straight to Dean's dick. Dean stroked him slowly, but firmly.

Cas' hands weren't idle. They danced across Dean's chest, playing with his nipples until they were firm nubs. He broke away from the kiss and when his mouth enclosed over one of them, Dean gasped in pleasure. The graze of teeth over sensitive flesh made his dick throb and he moved closer until he was able to wrap his fingers around both their shafts. They let out simultaneous groans at the feeling of their cocks sliding against each other.
Moving as one, they took the few steps to the bed and Cas stopped touching and kissing long enough to lay back, pulling Dean down on top of him. They continued their exploration, neither feeling the need to talk as their hips rocked together in perfect rhythm. Their touches got more heated, taking what they wanted, sucking and nibbling each other's skin. Dean made his desires known. He rolled them until Cas was on top and he ran a fingertip down the crack of Cas' ass. Cas gasped and breathed out his answer. "Yes..."

"Where..." Dean's words were cut off by Cas' mouth, but he could feel Cas reaching for something. There was the sound of a drawer opening and closing, and then a bottle was pressed into his hand. Dean dragged his teeth over Cas' earlobe as he slicked his fingers. Cas was kissing Dean's throat now, hands combing through Dean's short hair. Dean's fingers probed Cas' tight, puckered entrance. "God, Dean," Cas whispered across his lips. The pace quickened and Cas sucked himself on Dean's hand over and over. "How could he ever walk away from this?"

"Ready for more?" Dean thumb pressed against Cas' perineum, applying pressure just behind his balls as he curled his fingers to find the core of Cas' pleasure. Cas arched up, tearing his mouth from Dean's neck with a guttural cry.

He looked down at Dean, his blue eyes dark and fierce with want. Reaching down, he stroked Dean's cock a few times and without breaking eye contact, he grabbed the condom, used his teeth to open it, and skillfully rolled it down Dean's shaft with one hand. Dean watched in fascination as Cas slicked up his shaft, worshipping it with his fingers. They were panting heavily and Dean knew they were both fighting to stay in control.

As Cas rose up and guided Dean's cock to his tight, wet hole, Dean was captivated. Inch by inch, he watched himself disappear into Cas' slick heat. *Fuck.* He wondered if Cas could feel the throb of his engorged dick. Dean let out a long exhale when Cas settled the cheeks of his ass on Dean's thighs. If the man moved now, Dean would spill his load and he'd never be able to face him again. He looked up at Cas... at his toned chest, the beautiful column of his throat, the halo of dark, unruly hair...

Cas lifted up on his knees and came down slowly. "Easy... you're so tight... wanna make this last..." Dean murmured, placing his hands on Cas' hips to guide him.

The smell of sex, sweat, and cologne filled the room. Somewhere outside, the humming sound of a ship's engines broke the quiet of the night. He moved faster, driving in hard enough to make Cas grunt. Cas took his cock into his hand and matched the speed of Dean's thrusts. Dean's eyes moved from Cas' thick shaft to his face. His skin was flushed, eyes heavy-lidded, lips parted. He was the most beautiful human being Dean had ever seen. He wanted this for as long as he could have it. As long as Cas would let him stay, he'd take it all, even risk feeling his heart shatter into a million pieces.

Their movements increased and the slap of skin sounded obscenely loud. Cas' fist flew up and down his cock, the head growing a deeper shade of purple as a fine thread of precum ran from his slit to pool on Dean's stomach. "Fuck me harder, Dean." The command was sharp and distinct.

Dean gripped Cas' hips tighter and thrust up into him relentlessly. Dean felt Cas' inner muscles constricting around him as he matched Dean's pace, slamming down hard over and over again. Cas
palmed his balls and rolled them, his hand never faltering, never stopping. The wet, sloppy sound of Cas' fist jerking himself off made Dean lick his lips... he wanted to taste...

He was close... so very close. The curl of white heat in his belly... the almost physical pain...
"Cas...I'm gonna come...gonna come..." He plunged deep inside Cas and tensed, his cock pumping his load, filling the condom. Cas stared at him, panting as he chased his own orgasm. Dean saw Cas' balls, still cupped in his hand, tightening. Fingers still gripping Cas' hips, Dean dug his thumbs in harder, causing the man to cry out. "Come on, babe... show me... show me..."

With a swift intake of breath, Cas froze and cum shot onto Dean's stomach and chest. His hand slowed, giving his cock a few more pumps before he stopped, letting his body go lax. Head down, he gulped in air and his body shivered with an aftershock. Dean ran his fingers down his torso and brought them to his mouth. Cas' eyes flew upwards. Knowing how hot it would look, Dean licked the cum before sucking his fingers into his mouth. The sound Cas made was worthy of high-end porn. Dean winked and Cas shook his head, flashing a gorgeous smile. "So, that offer of a drink still good?"

Cas crawled off him and gave a disgusted look at the used condom. He picked it up with his thumb and forefinger and carried it into the bathroom. A moment later he was out, in all his naked glory, carrying a washcloth. He wiped Dean's chest clean and then turned to rummage through a dresser. A pair of pajama bottoms hit Dean in the face. As he was pulling on the borrowed pants, Dean wondered if this meant he was spending the night.

Together, they went downstairs and Dean followed Cas into the small, but efficient kitchen. "What would you like to drink?" Dean moved closer to him and snaked his arms around his waist. "Just water, nothing fancy. I don't know about you, but I'm pretty wiped." Cas seemed to stiffen and his face went blank. He was clearly trying to hide his emotions.

"I understand if you don't want to stay. I know it's late, and you probably—" Dean interrupted him with a kiss. He drew back and smiled.

"I would love to stay... if you'll have me." He looked into Cas' eyes, his heart in his throat. The grin he saw on Cas' face was the only answer he needed. "But I would give my left nut for some water."

Cas opened the fridge and took out two bottles of water. Thirst satisfied, they went back upstairs. In the bathroom, Cas handed him an extra toothbrush from the cabinet. As they brushed their teeth side by side, Dean thought about how natural it felt to be here. They finished getting ready for bed, then lay down facing each other. Even in the dark, he could see the barely noticeable smile in the corner of Cas' mouth. He reached out and ran his thumb across his bottom lip, then lowered his hand to rest on top of Cas' open palm. Without a word, he leaned over and placed a light, chaste kiss on Cas' lips, then rolled over and slid back until his back was pressed to the other man's chest. Cas moved his lower arm under Dean's head, resting a warm hand over his heart. His other arm curled around his waist and pulled him closer. For just a moment, Dean felt strange choosing to be the little spoon... but as he laid there wrapped in Cas' strong, capable arms, he didn't mind it one bit.
Chapter End Notes

The song that Cas and Dean sang during the karaoke scene was Rub You the Wrong Way sung by Johnny Gill. The songwriters were James Harris III, James Samuel Harris and Trey Lewis.
Chapter 11

Chapter by palominopup

Chapter Notes

Before you read a word of this chapter - let me prepare you. There is sex...and angst...and we humbly apologize. Trust me - we will fix it...fast. Just not in this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Castiel woke slowly. Why hadn't his alarm gone off? Oh, right... New Year's Day, a holiday. He rolled over and tucked his arms under his pillow. He could sleep for just a few more... Dean. His eyes flew open and he sat up. The bed was empty. Castiel stared at the rumpled bedding. It still smelled like sex in the room... sex and Dean. When did he leave? Sometime in the night? He ignored the stab of pain around his heart. He picked up the other pillow and inhaled Dean's scent. When he realized what he was doing, he tossed it aside. He wasn't some...

The smell of coffee stopped him from coming up with a term that was probably sexist. Coffee? The logical side of him dissected the evidence. He never set the timer on his coffeemaker because he'd never taken the time to figure it out. Anna called him technology challenged. Dean must have made it. Was he still there? He jumped out of bed with more energy than he'd felt in a long time and winced. Probably not his best plan. He was a bit sore, not just in the obvious place, but his thighs ached. Running was a bit different than using your legs to ride a partner's cock.

He slowly went down the stairs and couldn't help smiling. Dean, shirtless and still wearing the pajama pants he'd given him last night, was standing in front of the refrigerator humming. As if sensing him, Dean turned his head. "You don't have shit for breakfast, Cas."

"I usually eat yogurt and honey," Castiel replied and headed for the coffeemaker.

"That's 'lose-a-bet' food, man. Next you'll be telling me you like tofu." Dean shut the appliance door and faced Castiel.

"I do like..."

"Don't even say it," Dean growled, as he slouched against the counter. Castiel couldn't help letting his eyes roam over Dean's bare torso, then down to where the pants met his skin. The elastic waistband was a bit worn and they hung deliciously low on his hips. The dark trail of hair running from his navel and disappearing from view made Castiel's cock perk up. When he returned his gaze to Dean's face, the man was smiling wickedly. "Since breakfast is off the table for now, maybe we could..." He moved into Castiel's personal space and lowered his voice. "...get some exercise in."

"Exercise? I run every morning. Perhaps you can join me," Castiel said, purposely obtuse. Dean ran a finger down Castiel's chest from his collarbone to the waist of his sleep pants.

"Not what I had in mind, Cas...ti...el," Dean murmured and the way Dean drew out his full name made his mouth go dry. At that moment, Castiel would do anything Dean asked, including committing murder. He brushed past Castiel, letting his palm rub over Castiel's stomach, and strode toward the stairs. Damn the man, he knew exactly what he was doing. His hips swayed seductively
and Castiel forgot about his morning coffee... hell, he'd forgotten his own name.

He followed Dean up the steps, enjoying the way the man's ass filled out those threadbare cotton pants. In his bedroom, Dean took his hand and pulled him close. Dean curled his hand around Castiel's neck and tugged him in for a kiss. At least he had time for coffee, tasting it on Dean's tongue. "Morning breath," Castiel muttered against his mouth, but Dean didn't seem to mind since his hand was now rubbing at the front of Castiel's pants.

"Don't...fucking...care..." Dean said, a kiss and a stroke punctuating each word. Castiel felt the blood racing south under Dean's touch and he reached down and slid his hands under the waistband of Dean's pants. His fingertips brushed through the coarse hair and moved down to fondle his balls. He gave a slight tug and Dean groaned. Castiel gasped as Dean nipped at his earlobe. The man leaned back and gave him a knowing smile before kneeling. He dragged Castiel's pants down to his ankles and rubbed his face against Castiel's rapidly hardening cock. Castiel felt the need to hold onto the door jamb, otherwise his knees would give out.

"Dean..." Castiel whispered breathlessly.

"Shh... I got you, Cas," Dean whispered. He leaned forward and licked along Castiel's left hipbone, stopping at the top to nip the expanse of lightly tanned skin before slowly repeating the motion on the right, causing Castiel to moan rather loudly. Dean smiled as he continued to lick and kiss everywhere but where Castiel wanted it the most. It was torture... and Dean was so good at it. He paused just below Castiel's navel and sucked a mark into the skin, then sank his teeth into the tender flesh. Castiel cried out and let his head fall back as he dug his fingers into Dean's shoulders.

"Tell me what you want, Cas, and I'll do it. All you have to do is ask."

Castiel's eyes widened as he took in Dean's words. His tone wasn't teasing... it almost sounded like Dean meant every word. Green eyes met blue and Castiel found his voice.

"I want you to suck my cock." Dean let out a wanton moan at his command. He held his gaze and opened his beautiful mouth, extended his tongue, and licked the tip of his dick before wrapping his lips around the head. He continued swirling his tongue as he slowly lowered his mouth toward the base, taking in as much as he could. Castiel felt Dean's throat swallowing around him and he hissed in a sharp breath at the sensation. Dean took him deeper still, until his nose was pressed to Castiel's bush. He gripped the back of Dean's head as his hips jerked forward, then tried to hold himself in check. He didn't want to choke the man...

Dean's eyes met his and he placed his open palm on top of Castiel's hand, still holding the back of Dean's head. He gave a slight push, indicating what he wanted, and Castiel was more than happy to comply. As Dean slid his mouth up and down his shaft, Castiel planted his feet, gripped Dean's head with both hands and started thrusting into that gorgeous mouth. He thrust down Dean's throat mercilessly, grunting and groaning, the feeling the heat and wetness driving him closer to his release. Dean's throat was completely relaxed around him as he allowed his face to be fucked. He hummed...
around Castiel's cock and the soft vibrations sent shockwaves through his veins. He wasn't going to last...

"Unh... that's it, Dean... take my cock. Take it all." Dean's eyes met his, as he moaned and ran his hands up Castiel's muscular thighs, dragging his nails across the firm flesh. "Yes, Dean... Fuck, yes..." He increased his speed, plunging his cock deep into Dean's throat. The man had no gag reflex, and it drove Castiel out of his fucking mind. He felt his orgasm approaching fast and tightened his grip in Dean's hair. "Dean, I'm going to... Unh... I'm going to come..."

He started to pull Dean away, but Dean's eyes locked with his. He slapped his hands onto Castiel's ass and pushed forward, keeping Castiel's cock lodged in his mouth. That was it. Castiel's orgasm coursed through him and he came down Dean's throat. He thrust his way through his release, feeling Dean swallowing his load. He staggered, his legs barely holding him up. Dean licked every drop off his shaft and he pulled away with a smirk, looking thoroughly pleased with himself. Castiel gently cupped the side of Dean's face and pulled him up to taste himself on Dean's tongue. He felt Dean's erection press against his thigh and he broke away from the kiss to guide Dean back against the bed. Dean sat heavily on the edge and it was Castiel's turn to kneel before his lover. He gripped the waistband of Dean's pants and Dean lifted his hips, so Castiel could remove them and toss them aside.

He took a moment to take in the sight before him. Dean was so beautiful like this... naked and leaning back on his elbows, thighs spread wide open for him. He was gazing at Castiel, eyes curious and warm. Castiel moved forward and knelt between those bowed legs and began worshipping every inch of freckled skin. He kissed and licked the inside of each thigh, holding down Dean's hips when they threatened to come off the bed. He leaned up and sucked on each nipple, using his teeth to tease the sensitive buds until Dean begged him for more. His hands never stopped moving, never stopped caressing every bit of Dean he could reach. He wrapped his arms under each knee and lifted them to his shoulders, exposing Dean's puckered hole. He met Dean's hooded eyes and bent down to taste his lover. His tongue circled the tight rim as Dean moaned his name. "Cas...... Oh, God, Cas..."

Castiel dragged his tongue away from Dean's hole to mouth over his sac. He took each testicle into his mouth and gently sucked on them before moving back down to Dean's entrance. He began his assault, thrusting his tongue in as far as it would go, swirling it around before withdrawing and sweeping across the rim. He repeated this over and over until Dean was a shaking, writhing mess. The sounds he made were music to Castiel's ears. He released his hold on Dean's legs and ran his hands up the strong thighs and over his hips. He gripped them, then lowered his head to take Dean into his mouth. "Fuck, Cas... Holy fuck..."

He worshipped Dean's cock, loving the sounds Dean made... loving the sight of Dean's hands moving over his own torso, thumbing his nipples and taking even more pleasure for himself. Seeing Dean like this, Castiel wanted to give this man everything, be everything to him, share everything with him. One night, two nights, three... it wasn't enough. Castiel wanted more. He needed more.

Dean came with a sharp cry, his cum spilling into Castiel's mouth as he swallowed around him. He pulled off, then looked up into Dean's face and saw Dean staring back at him almost reverently. He held his breath as he waited for Dean's refusal.
I'm going to die like this, right here, right now. Dean's mind was a fucking mess with Cas' hot, sexy mouth on his asshole, then on his cock. He'd never felt anything like this before. The man was a goddamn genius... and when those gorgeous, blue eyes looked up at him, it was all he could do to keep from exploding from the sheer intensity of it all. It's not like this was his first blow job, far from it. But this just felt... different. Maybe because, for the first time in his life, he actually had feelings for the person currently latched onto his dick. Looking down as Cas was pleasuring him, his heart lurched in his chest and it took Dean's breath away. When he came, his vision went white and he actually saw fucking stars. Every thought was pushed out of his head as he lay back, enfolding Cas in his arms and kissing him passionately. This was so new... but it seemed right. His stomach growled loudly, and Cas suggested they get dressed and find something to eat... but Dean heard the uncertainty in Cas' voice. He drew back enough to look down where Cas was resting on his chest. "Cas? You okay?" He didn't answer, so Dean gave him a squeeze and said, "Talk to me."

Cas didn't move his head, but he answered in a clear voice. "I'm more than okay, Dean. Everything about that was... phenomenal." He paused, then cleared his throat before speaking again. "I just... I know I've said it before, but I don't know how to do this. I don't bring anyone here... ever. This is a first for me, and I find it more... pleasing than I thought I would." Dean stayed silent, stunned by how much Cas' thoughts resembled his own. He waited for Cas to continue. "I um... I want you to stay, Dean. Just for the day..." Cas leaned up on one elbow, finally looking at Dean as he smiled sardonically. "I'm not quite finished with you yet."

Dean let the smile he was holding back spread across his face and he pulled Cas in for another kiss. "Sure, Cas. I'll stay," he said in a hushed voice. It wasn't like he had plans except to watch football and toss back a few beers. Cas' entire face lit up with a bright smile and Dean thought it was something he'd be happy to see for the rest of his life. "Wait, what?" He quickly stomped down the spark of panic that suddenly shot through his chest, refusing to let it show on his face. Besides, he didn't want anything to ruin the time he was about to share with the man. He gave Cas a peck on the nose and pulled him to his feet. They threw their pajama pants back on and made their way down to the kitchen.

The lack of choices in Cas' refrigerator was downright depressing. Where were the eggs? Why wasn't there any bacon? How did he survive on yogurt and bean curd, or whatever the guy ate? Dean needed man-food, not this hippie crap. He heaved a sigh and decided to improvise, digging in the pantry for the ingredients to make pancakes. As he cooked, Cas started making fresh coffee, setting the table, and taking out several different toppings. They moved around each other in such an easy rhythm, occasionally pausing for kisses and casual touches. It felt so domestic... but instead of feeling panicked, Dean felt refreshingly peaceful. He promptly told himself that he'd done all this before with Charlie and Sam... it wasn't like he was playing house with Cas. Friends hung out like this... minus the kissing.

They sat down to eat, spreading butter, honey, and even strawberry jam on their pancakes. Dean fed Cas a bite from his own plate so he could try it. Then Cas returned the favor and accidentally smeared jam on the corner of Dean's mouth. He reached to grab his napkin, but Cas surprised him by leaning over and licking it off, which rapidly turned into a steamy make-out session right there at the
breakfast table. Eventually, they finished eating and worked together to clean up. Dean stood behind Cas and wrapped his arms around him, nuzzling his ear. "Now what?"

"Well I know this is a little bit backwards, but I’d like to give you the grand tour of the house. I know there are design elements you’d really appreciate. Then we could maybe watch a movie if you want."

"Sounds awesome. Lead the way." He followed Cas through the house as he showed him all the important structural parts of the floating house, pausing intermittently to point out some of his favorite decorative choices. The exotic fish tank was pretty impressive. He had to bite back a laugh as Cas introduced each fish by name. Even more entertaining was the fact that he did it with a completely serious demeanor, like it wasn't fucking hilarious that he named all his fish after celebrities. There was RuPaul, Cher, Hugh Grant, Oscar Wilde, and Sir Ian McKellen. Even though it was weird, Dean thought it was adorable. They moved the tour outside and Dean liked the sitting area on the deck and the way it overlooked the water. "This is amazing, Cas... It's so relaxing here. How the hell do you ever leave?"

Cas chuckled. "I don't very often. This place and my studio are my great loves."

"You've built a perfect place to get away from everything. I envy you. My house is small as fuck, my kitchen window overlooks my neighbor's bathroom, and on the other side, if the wind is just right, I get a lovely breeze full of my other neighbor's curry."

"You build such amazing houses, I imagined you living in a wonderful redwood home just on the outskirts of the city."

"That's really specific, Cas," Dean said with a laugh. His face grew more serious. "Yeah, that would be my dream house, I suppose. But..." He shrugged. "Guess I just need the inspiration to actually do it." Dean didn't feel the need to share that the inspiration he was waiting for was someone to share a home like that with. "Don't think I don't see the irony in it," Dean snorted a laugh, rubbing the back of his neck. "I don't know, I just spend so much time working and I've never really taken the time to build a place of my own..." He trailed off, realizing he was revealing too much. This was veering way too close to chick-flick territory. He clapped his hands together once, effectively changing the subject. "So... movie? What have you got?"

Looking through Cas' extremely limited and very sad collection of DVDs, they ultimately decided to binge-watch Dr. Sexy on Netflix. Dean was thrilled that he wasn't the only closet fan of the show. It turns out, they both had a thing for the cowboy boots. They settled on the couch, Cas reclining back against the arm with Dean lying between his legs, head resting on his chest. It was comfortable... nice. By the third episode, Dean noticed neither of them were really paying attention to the show anymore. Cas had been stroking his fingers through Dean's hair and his motions had grown more sensuous. Dean hummed at the feeling and trailed his fingertips across the back of Cas' hand resting on his stomach. Cas tightened his fingers in Dean's hair just a bit, and Dean leaned his head back to look up at him. Electricity sparked between them and soon they were biting and kissing their way back up to the bedroom.

They practically ripped each other's pants off, then tackled each other onto the bed. God, he couldn't get enough of Cas... He watched Cas grab the lube, slick his fingers up, and reach back to his own ass. Dean grabbed his wrist and stilled his motion, causing Cas to arch an eyebrow in confusion.

"Cas, I... I want you...this time." He watched Cas' eyes go from aroused to completely feral. The man let out a groan, then pounced on him, pinning him to the bed with a wild kiss that left him breathless. Cas licked his way up Dean's chest, then rolled him to his side and laid behind him, kissing and nipping at his neck. Cas took his lubed fingers and slicked Dean's hole, pushing one
finger into him, then added another almost immediately. Dean groaned at the intrusion and relished the slight burn. He relaxed and started grinding his hips, fucking himself on Cas' hand. He turned his head to bring their lips together, then jerked with a gasp when Cas curled his fingers into his prostate. He felt Cas' breath coming in tiny hitches on the back of his neck and Cas' hard cock pressing against the crack of his ass.

"Dean, I want to feel you... Are you clean?" Dean nodded his head, not fully understanding the question. It was hard to concentrate when Cas' fingers were buried deep in his ass. "I need you to say it, Dean. Are you clean?" *What?* Was he talking about...that?

"Y-yes, Cas. I just had a physical last month, but even without that, I've never..." He stopped talking. He didn't want to say it. Cas arched one eyebrow and waited for Dean to continue, but he clamped his lips shut. Cas pulled his fingers away immediately, refusing to continue until Dean finished speaking. *Damn the man.* He took a deep breath. "Okay, fine, I've never had unprotected sex before. I've always worn a condom. There, you happy?"

If Cas looked turned on before, it was nothing compared to the way he was looking at Dean after hearing his confession. He seemed to struggle to control his voice enough to talk. "I'm.... I'm clean as well. I know we haven't known each other long, but rest assured, my list of partners is very short and I've never barebacked either." Cas sounded absolutely *wrecked.* "May I...can we..." Seemed like he wasn't the only one who was nervous about this. This was a big deal and with any other person, Dean would have said no. Hell, he would have said no even a man or woman pulled out a doctor's note. But this was Cas. Cas was a lot of things, but he wasn't a liar... and there was just something about him that made Dean feel certain. Cas seemed to gather his composure. "I really want fuck you, Dean, with *nothing* between us."

"Fuck, Cas... Do you know how fucking sexy your voice is when you say shit like that? *Jesus...* I uh... Yeah, I want that. I want to feel you, too." Without another word, Cas slicked up his cock and teased at Dean's entrance. "Come on, Cas... I'm good. Just fucking do it already." The breath in his lungs was forced out of him as Cas pushed inside in one steady motion. "*Fuck... yesss....*" Dean hissed, savoring the mixture of pleasure and pain.

Cas dug his fingers into Dean's hips and trembled with the effort of maintaining control. "*Dean... God,* you're so tight... you feel so amazing." Dean let out a filthy moan as he reached his hand back and grabbed a handful of Cas' hair. Cas started grinding his hips back and forth, rocking his dick in and out of Dean's wet hole in a slow, torturous pace. He reached down and lifted Dean's leg, causing his body to shift at just the right angle to graze his prostate with each gradual slide. Dean's back arched as he pushed his hips back against Cas and turned his head to crash their lips together. They kissed as Cas continued his unhurried motions. Dean bit Cas' bottom lip *hard* and Cas responded by snapping his hips forward, slamming into Dean so hard he cried out. "*Fuck. Yes, Cas... fuck me hard... come on, baby.*"

Cas stilled his motions, then seemed to get with the program as he forced Dean's thigh higher and started pounding into his ass with a punishing rhythm. The sound of their grunts and bodies colliding echoed off the walls, and the air was filled with the scent of their combined arousal. Dean felt like he was in heaven and Cas was the one who took him there. Cas was holding his leg up with one strong hand as he moved his other hand up to grip Dean's shoulder, gaining more leverage as he continued fucking into Dean unrelentingly, each thrust shaking Dean to his very core. His cock was slick with precum and he felt the heat building deep within him. "Cas... I'm close... I'm... so close," he grunted out between Cas' thrusts. He was ramming into him so fiercely, Dean had trouble getting the words out. It was fan-fucking-tastic. He curled his fist around himself and set a fast pace, the need to come making him ache.
"Dean..." Cas was losing control. Dean could tell by the broken sound of his voice.

Hearing the man coming undone while fucking him so savagely was enough to send Dean over the edge as he screamed, "Cas-ti-el!" His release shot out of him, splattering in ribbons across the bed.

Cas increased his speed, plunging his cock even deeper, murmuring words of praise as he worked Dean through his orgasm. His movements stuttered and his body tensed as he came seconds later, his release hot inside of Dean. Both men groaned at the sensation, clinging to each other as their breathing returned to normal. Cas lowered Dean's leg and rubbed the thigh muscles to make sure he hadn't hurt him. He was nuzzling the back of Dean's neck, leaving warm kisses along the top of his shoulders as his hands roamed up and down Dean's body.

He grabbed a pair of discarded pajama pants and hastily wiped them down, then pulled the blanket over them. Coconooned in the warmth of Cas' bed and allowing the man to hold him close, Dean surrendered to sleep.

The nap lasted most of the afternoon and when they awoke, it was almost five. They'd skipped lunch and Dean's body needed food and water. With the pitiful state of Cas' pantry, they ordered pizza and Dean caught up on the football scores. Dallas lost and he was bummed, but being with Cas took away the sting.

Spending the day with Dean should have made Castiel feel unnerved. This was the first time he'd invited a lover over... hell, he didn't usually invite anyone to his house. Instead, Dean made himself at home like he'd always been there, and Castiel ended up viewing him as another extension of home. It was something he could get used to, but wouldn't. Outside his profession, good things didn't happen to him.

As Castiel shut the door behind Dean later that night, he didn't allow himself to dwell on the unexpected sense of melancholy that washed over him. He looked around the room, noting the rumpled couch cushions, the damp towel that somehow made it downstairs after their shower, and the empty beer bottles lining the counter. The place seemed too quiet now. The man he once considered loud and obnoxious now loomed larger than life. Dean's presence filled Castiel's home with warmth and laughter. He'd never had that before. He never realized he needed it before.

With a sigh, he set about the task of tidying the place and getting it back to its normal state. He straightened the couch and tossed the towel in the laundry room, then rinsed the bottles and put them in the recycling bin under the sink. It was only then that he let himself think back over the day.

When was the last time he'd been so at ease with another person? Dean seemed to instinctively know what Castiel needed, whether it be quiet touches while watching television or passionate sex. Sex... He sat down on the sofa and let his head fall back on the cushions. In the past twenty-four hours, he'd had more sex than he had in the last five years. Wild, mind-blowing sex... slow, fantastic oral pleasure... and the kissing. Dean was the best kisser Castiel had ever been with, hands-down.

Overall, they seemed to have a connection. Yes, that was the word he was looking for... connection. Would it get stronger the more they saw each other? He worried his lower lip with his teeth and his thoughts turned to their conversation about the condom. What had he been thinking? He blamed it on
the sexual and emotional high. They barely even knew each other. Only... Castiel honestly felt like he could trust Dean... really trust him. Obviously Dean felt the same way or he wouldn't have said yes. The feeling of entering Dean without anything between them was so intense, he almost came right then. Dean enjoyed it, Castiel was sure about that. He frowned as a memory popped into his head... Dean had called him baby. It was in the heat of the moment, but the simple endearment caused Castiel a moment of panic when he heard it. He told himself that Dean didn't really mean anything by it. He exhaled with a huff and stood up. It was getting late and he had to be at the reno-house early.

He picked up the empty pizza box from their dinner and lifted the bag out of the trashcan. When he took it out and dropped it in the large dumpster at the end of the dock, he paused to look up at the night sky. It was cloudless and he could see the stars with perfect clarity. Dean would be home by now. Before he could talk himself out of it, he reached into his pocket and pulled out his phone.

**Text to Dean/10:02 – Goodnight, Dean.**

He made his way back to his home and as he was pushing open the door, his phone pinged.

**Text from Dean/10:04 – Night, Cas. See you in the a.m. I'll bring breakfast.**

The winking emoji made Castiel chuckle. Dean had harped all day long about the state of Castiel's kitchen and the sad lack of food in his fridge. That night, he slept better than he had in ages and woke to a text from Dean. It was a picture followed by the words, 'Hurry up. Coffee's hot.' The picture was of an awake, bright-eyed Dean, holding a cup from a local cafe.

Castiel grumbled at the time. It wouldn't be hot by the time he got to the house. Dean was just too fucking chipper in the morning. He got out of bed and shuffled to the shower. He'd already turned on the water when his doorbell rang. He narrowed his eyes. Who would be here at the asscrack of dawn? He felt a little bit murderous and was fully prepared to give them a piece of his mind. He wrapped a towel around his waist and stomped down the stairs. He didn't even bother to look out of the peephole. He whipped open the door and snarled, "Do you know what fuck..." He stopped mid-sentence. Dean stood there holding out a cup of coffee, one brow raised in amusement.

"One of these days, I'm going to remember you're not a morning person. Nice towel, by the way."

Castiel looked abashed and gently took the cup from Dean's outstretched hand. "Thank you."

Dean's grin, usually infectious, just made him aware of his need for caffeine and quiet in the mornings. "Do we have anything in common?" He heard the biting tone of his own voice, and his eyes widened when he realized he'd actually said it out loud. Dean's smile faltered and Castiel could have kicked himself.

"Sorry," Dean said, backing away. "Guess I'll see you at the job site." He turned abruptly and Castiel was at a loss for what to do. With his hands thrust deep into his pockets and shoulders slumped, Dean was leaving.

"Dean, wait... please." Dean didn't turn around, but mercifully, he stopped. God, it seems all he does with Dean is apologize. "I'm sorry. I just... like you said, I'm not a morning person."

Dean did face him then, his expression blank. "I got it, Cas." He shrugged. "It's cool."

"No, it is a poor excuse..."

"But you know what? You're right. We really don't have much in common. I'm sure you can find
plenty of guys who fit into your life much better than I do." He saw a flash of hurt in Dean's eyes before he schooled his expression. "Talk to you later, man," Dean said as he walked away from him, and this time, Castiel couldn't find the words to make him stay.

He shut the door and stared down at the cup of coffee. In a fit of anger, he threw it and the brown liquid splashed across the window and dripped to the floor. The paper cup rolled sadly from side to side and came to a halt. He looked at the mess he'd made and left it behind as he went upstairs.

The shower was hotter than he could stand, as if the pain from it could sear away the emotional train wreck that was Castiel Novak. Why did he have to be such a goddamn asshole sometimes? Why couldn't he accept kindness from anyone? Dean had done something nice for him and he'd treated the man like shit. He didn't even mean what he said... not the way he said it anyway. It really didn't matter to him if they had anything in common. Distracted, he cut himself shaving and got toothpaste on his shirt, forcing him to change. Finally ready, he went downstairs and cleaned up the coffee. It put him behind and he knew he'd be late getting to the house. He sent a text to Sam informing him of his status and pulled on his helmet. The morning brought light rain and it was fitting, given his current mood.

Rush hour traffic slowed him down and his frustration only grew. The light turned green and he squeezed the throttle. The powerful bike moved forward and Castiel looked left just in time to see the dark sedan bearing down on him. His last thought before the pain and darkness enveloped him was the jumbled memory of the green light and Dean's emerald eyes.

Sam looked at Cas' text. He'd have to rearrange the first segment to be Dean's, but it was doable. He took his clipboard and found the cameramen and sound crew to tell them about the change. It really wasn't a big deal. He glanced at his watch. Dean should be getting here any minute. His phone rang just as he finished that thought.

"Morning, Dean. You close?"

"No. Something came up at the office and I have to head over there. I'll be late, so just start without me." Sam rolled his eyes heavenward and prayed for patience.

"Dean, Castiel called in, too. I need at least one of you to be here. I've got a crew standing around with their thumbs up their asses, and it costs me money when you two can't stop fucking each other long enough to get to work on time." So much for patience...

"Not that it's any of your fucking business, but I slept at home last night... alone. I'll be there when I can. I have a fucking business to run, remember?" Dean's voice sounded off... he wasn't usually this pissy without a damn good reason.

"Okay, I'm sorry. Just get here when you can." Dean hung up without saying goodbye. Sam found Harry and they walked through the house making notes and comparing them with Castiel's spreadsheet and Dean's punch list. He was heading back to the RV when Dean's truck pulled up.

His phone chose that moment to ring again and the number from the studio flashed on his screen.
Fuck, he really didn't feel like dealing with Crowley... not on top of both his stars being late on the same freakin' morning. Regardless of what Dean said, it wasn't a coincidence, so they must have been together. He realized he hadn't heard a word from Dean on New Year's Day... not a single word. The bastards. Sam didn't care if they screwed each other until doomsday as long as they made it to work on time. He had several choice words for his brother, so he started walking toward Dean as he answered his phone

"This is Sam."

"Sam, it's Eve, Mr. Crowley's secretary."

Like Sam didn't know who she was... the woman was a pitbull with lipstick. "Good morning, Eve. What can I do for you?" He asked with false politeness. Dean was hefting his toolbelt to his shoulder and avoiding his eyes.

"We've had a call from a Ms. Anna Milton. She said she was Mr. Novak's employee... Apparently there has been an accident and he has been taken to the hospital."

"Castiel?" Sam said the name and Dean's head shot up.

"Yes, Castiel Novak," she said like he was dense. "He's been taken to Northwest Medical Center."

"Is he okay?" Sam asked, trying to remain calm. Dean stepped closer, his expression guarded. Sam listened as Eve told him she wasn't Sam's personal secretary and she was just relaying what she was told.

"What's going on?" Dean asked before Sam could even end the call.

"Castiel's been in an accident. He's at Northwest. I don't know anything else." He watched as the blood drained from his brother's face, making his freckles much more prominent. His eyes were wide, showing a visceral fear. He suddenly looked like the scared little boy that stood over an eight-year-old Sam after he fell off the roof and broke his arm when they were playing superheroes.

The tool belt dropped to the ground and Dean ran for his truck. Sam tried calling out for him, but the squeal of tires was his only answer. Damn it. What else could go wrong? With both of his stars AWOL, he sent everyone home after letting them know what happened. The crew was upset and Sam promised he'd let them know something as soon as he found out anything.

As he was packing up his laptop, he thought about Dean's reaction to Cas' accident. His entire life, Sam could count the number of times he'd seen Dean react that way on one hand, and all of them happened when Sam had gotten hurt. Dean had never shown that level of concern for anyone else he'd dated. Maybe Dean's feelings for Cas were deeper than he realized.

He thought about driving to the hospital himself, but knew they wouldn't release any information unless you were family. He sent a silent prayer heavenward that Dean didn't cause a scene. That would be a PR nightmare. He sent a text, knowing his brother would see it eventually.

**Text to Dean/8:48 – Call me when you find out anything.**
I promise, we didn't break him badly.
Leaving Cas' place was harder than he expected. They'd been together an entire day and night, something Dean never did. They'd had pizza and both avoided the conversation that was coming. It was after nine o'clock when Dean finally made the announcement that he really should get home. Cas walked him to the door and they kissed... a slight brush of lips and a soft goodbye.

As he was getting into bed, Cas' text made him smile and he fell asleep thinking about seeing Cas again in the morning. He woke from a restful sleep and showered with a spring in his step. He'd planned on swinging by the office to get the crews moving in the right direction and pick up any messages from Donna, but as he passed the coffee shop, he got a wild hair and swung the truck into the drive-thru line. While he waited, he checked in with Donna, Jo, and Benny.

His new plan was to get him and Cas a coffee, swing by his place, and maybe get him moving fast enough so they could stop somewhere for breakfast. He took a selfie and sent it to Cas. He grinned as he imagined Cas' grumpy face thinking the coffee would be cold before he got to the jobsite.

When he arrived at Cas' place, seeing Cas in the towel had thrown him and he didn't pay attention to the man's bad mood. That's when it all went to hell. Dean knew it wouldn't last, but fuck, he expected a little more time after spending New Year's Day together. Dean left feeling angry and just a little hurt. Okay, maybe more than a little. Hearing Cas once again confirm his fear that he wasn't good enough had hurt him... badly.

He did what he normally did when he was feeling out of sorts. He drove. He hit the Pacific Coast Highway and headed south. It only took ten minutes before the guilt of lying to Sam ate at him, so he turned around.

The jobsite was full and Dean felt another twinge of remorse for putting Sam behind schedule. When he pulled in, he saw Sam and at the set of his features, Dean knew he was pissed off. He was talking on the phone as he came closer. Dean slung his tool belt over his shoulder and refused to meet Sam's eyes. He knew he was due an ass-chewing, but he wanted to put it off until he was in a better headspace.

"Castiel?" Sam's asked and Dean's head shot up. What was he calling about?

"Is he okay?" Okay? What the fuck was going on? Sam looked upset... really upset.

"Thanks, Eve."

Sam reached up to hit end, but Dean was already on him. "What's going on?"

"Castiel's been in an accident. He's at Northwest. I don't know anything else." No...no...no... Dean felt his stomach sink. He wasn't even aware that he'd dropped his tool belt to the ground. The need to get to Cas overrode everything. Before he even realized he'd moved, he was behind the wheel of his truck and careening through heavy Seattle traffic.

He slid into a parking spot near the emergency entrance and threw the truck into park. He'd apologize to her later. While she wasn't his baby, she was a workhorse and she'd been loyal. He ran
through the doors and looked around wildly. He saw a flash of red hair and zeroed in on it. *Anna*. He stepped over a toddler in yellow footie-pajamas and stopped in front of her, breathing heavily. She looked startled to see him. "Dean, what are..."

"How's Cas?"

"I don't know. They wouldn't tell me anything. His brother is already on a plane. He should be landing in six hours."

"So meanwhile, we don't know shit? What the fuck even happened?" Dean was agitated and it must have showed because the security guard was eyeballing him like he was going to go postal.

"All I know is that someone hit him."

"Hit him... while he was on his bike?" Fuck... Dean needed to get his head together. He couldn't think.

"Yes, Luc said someone ran the red light and didn't even stop." Christ. Someone hit Cas while he was on his motorcycle. Visions of a broken and bloody body flashed through Dean's head and he felt sick. "Dean, maybe you should sit down," Anna said softly, placing a hand on his arm. He knew she meant it to be reassuring, but it wasn't helping. He shrugged it off and began to pace. "The cops are with him," she added. Like that was supposed to make things fucking better, Dean thought bitterly.

He finally sat down to wait, his eyes not leaving the door that led to the trauma unit. His phone was pinging like crazy, but he didn't want to deal with it. Minutes ticked by and when it finally opened, two uniformed officers strode out. Dean flew out of his seat. They both looked at him warily when he skidded to a stop in front of them. "My... my friend... Castiel Novak... how is he?"

"Friend? Sorry, sir, we cannot release information to non-relatives," the taller of the two cops informed him. He looked sympathetic and Dean pulled out all his charm to play on that.

"Look, man... he's... he means a lot to me and his brother is flying all the way from Boston. It will be a while before he gets here. If..." Dean felt himself choke. "...if something happens... he can't be alone."

The shorter cop shrugged and said, "Son, he's not going to die." Dean felt the weight of the world lift from his shoulders.

"Can you at least tell me what happened?"

The two cops cut their eyes at each other and seemed to come to a decision. "Your friend entered the intersection after getting the green light. A car failed to stop on red and hit the motorcycle. The driver of the dark sedan sped away without stopping. Witnesses gave us a description, but we'll have to wait for the traffic cameras to give us a license plate." Dean felt his blood pounding in his temples. Some bastard ran a light and didn't even fucking stop. Cas could have been killed. He could have... he could have died on the road... alone. "Hey, son, are you okay?"

Dean nodded curtly. "Yeah, just great. How long until you get a plate?"

"It's in the hands of traffic investigations now. I'm sure they are doing everything they can..." Dean tuned them out. He knew just how slow the wheels of justice moved. He had to call in a favor. It wouldn't be easy. The cops walked away and Dean made his way to a quiet corner. He took out his phone and found the contact he never thought he'd have to use again.

"Chief Adamson." The voice was just like he remembered.
"Cain, it's Dean Winchester."

"Dean?"

"I need your help." Cain Adamson was the chief of the Seattle Police Department. He was also an ex-lover. Dean wasn't proud of that fact. Cain was an older man... a very married older man. In his defense, he didn't know it at the time. Cain was just smooth and the idea of being with an older man appealed to Dean at the time. It was right after he'd broken up with Bela. He wasn't heartbroken... after all, Bela had been a total bitch... but he'd been looking a change of pace. He had shut it down once he found out that Cain had a wife and a couple of teenagers at home.

"My help?" Cain's voice was cool.

"A friend of mine, Castiel Novak, was in an accident today, a hit-and-run. I need you to push for the traffic cameras to release the tag of the guy that hit him. I don't want this dragging on for months." His words were met with silence. He didn't know what Cain's problem was. Dean had kept his fucking mouth shut about them, so no one would ever know the pillar of the community, a straight, church-going man, had an affair with another dude.

"I'll see what I can do." The words were short-clipped. "And when I'm done, don't ever call me again."

"Don't flatter yourself, Cain. You weren't that great a lay. And don't worry... you do this and you have my word that you'll never hear from me again." The call disconnected. Dean didn't erase the contact information. He wouldn't until the asshole that hit Cas was behind bars.

He went back to his seat. Anna was tapping on her phone and didn't look up. Dean glanced at his watch. Only an hour had passed. Cas' brother was still on a plane somewhere over the Midwest maybe. He opened his messages. Sam wanted to be updated, but Dean had nothing and he told Sam as much. Somehow, Donna heard about it and wanted Dean to give Cas a hug from her. He smiled at that... Donna was something else. Charlie wanted to know if Dean needed her. How did all these people find out? Sam must have been really busy. "Dean?" Dean looked up and met Anna's eyes.

"Yeah?"

"I want to apologize to you for what I said that day at the studio. I was just trying to be funny... I guess I'm not very good at it."

"It's all good." It caused Cas and Dean some trouble, but Dean didn't want to dwell on that now. And there was no use in dragging it up.

"He really likes you."

"I like him, too," Dean said quietly. It didn't matter to him that Cas already seemed to want to end what they'd scarcely begun. Dean still cared about him and wanted more, even if Cas didn't. It was unsettling how attached he was... especially given how much time they spent at odds with each other. Somehow, Cas had found a place in Dean's world and he was pretty sure he didn't want that to change.

Without anything left to say, they sat quietly and watched the hands on the clock.
Castiel woke up slowly. Bright, white lights made him squint. A hum of conversation came from his right. He croaked out a soft sound and felt a hand on his wrist. "Mr. Novak, can you hear me?" He tried to nod his head, but he hurt all over. The female's voice was soft, but held authority.

"Yes," he whispered, licking his lips.

"Can you open your eyes? Someone turn off the overhead, please." Castiel blinked and was relieved the room wasn't so bright. A young-looking brunette stared down at him. She smiled. "I'm Dr. McKeon. Do you know what happened to you, Mr. Novak?"

Castiel saw the two police officers standing behind her. "I was riding my bike... going to work..." He tried to remember what happened. "The light was green." The doctor nodded at the cops, then turned back to him.

"Mr. Novak. You were involved in an accident. You have a couple of broken ribs, some abrasions on your arms and back, and you required stitches on your left thigh. Thankfully, your helmet kept your head from sustaining serious injury. You lost a bit of blood, so we're going to keep you overnight for observation. Is there anyone we can call?"

One of the cops stepped forward. "He had an emergency contact card in his wallet and we called a Luc Novak. He's on his way from Boston." Castiel groaned. Luc didn't need to come all the way to Seattle if he wasn't hurt that badly.

"My studio... has anyone..." Dean... no, not Dean. "Sam... Sam Winchester, he's my... he's the director of the show I'm on." He closed his eyes. He was so tired.

"Mr. Novak, try to get some rest." As he was drifting off, he heard the police saying something about a hit and run... then nothing.

Unable to sit still another minute in the molded plastic chair, Dean stood up and announced to Anna that he was going to get them something to eat. She tried to offer him money, but he waved her off. The hospital cafeteria was pretty quiet and he grabbed a tray. After piling it with a variety of snacks and two soft drinks, he paid the gray-haired woman at the register and made his way back to the waiting room.

Anna took the banana and a bag of low-fat, baked potato chips. Apparently, she went to the Castiel Novak School of Shitty Food. He chomped down on a Snickers bar and washed it down with Coke. She eyed her soda with disdain, but took a delicate sip anyway.

According to his watch, Cas' brother landed forty minutes ago. Calculating getting through the airport and finding a cab from SeaTac and getting here... Dean figured he would be walking through
the doors any minute now. "What does Cas' brother look like?"

"I've never met him," Anna admitted. "Castiel usually travels to Boston..."

Thirty minutes later, a sandy-haired man strode into the waiting room. He wore a business suit and had a long coat over his arm. At the desk, he said, "My brother was brought in. Castiel Novak. I need to see him." Dean allowed the man to finish is sentence before he leapt off his chair and rushed over to him.

"I'm Dean... Dean Winchester. Not sure if you know who I am..." Did Cas share shit with his brother like he did with Sam? Maybe not. Cas wasn't the 'Hey, I'm fucking a guy named Dean. He's my co-star.' kind of guy. "I'm a friend of your brother's." The guy looked at him speculatively.

"He told me about you." Well at least he didn't sound ominous about it. The man was studying Dean like he was a lab experiment or something. Dean wondered if the prolonged staring thing was a Novak family trait. Dean tried not to fidget or let his impatience show.

"Sir, your brother is in Trauma Five. I will buzz you through," the clerk said primly.

"Let me see what's going on and I'll let you know," he said before disappearing into the recesses of the building. Dean ran frustrated fingers through his hair. He paced. He sent a text to Sam updating him. Not knowing how Cas was doing was driving him up the fucking wall. He would sell his soul for a drink right now.

When the door opened, Dean tried to remain calm. Cas' brother walked over to him as Anna appeared at his side. He gave her a once-over before turning his attention back to Dean. "He's going to be fine. He broke a couple of ribs and had a severe laceration on his thigh that made him lose some blood. They are keeping him overnight, but he's okay."

Dean expelled the breath he'd been holding and felt light-headed. Cas' brother was looking at him strangely. He probably thought Dean was a total nut job. He extended his hand.

"I'm Luc by the way. Lucifer Novak." Dean stared at him stupidly for a few seconds... long enough that the guy lifted a brow and started to lower his hand.

"Sorry," Dean said, taking the extended hand. "Just... your name. And I thought Cas' name was a bit out there."

"Yes, well, our parents were nothing if not unconventional," he said dryly. "Castiel was a bit tired, but I can get you back to see him, if you want." He said it to both of them, but Dean stepped in front of Anna. Me first. If Luc noticed, he didn't say anything. He left to talk to the clerk again and the door buzzed loudly. When it shut behind them, Luc spoke. "A bit eager to see my brother, aren't you?"

"I told you, he's a friend," Dean said quickly. The emergency room was bustling with activity. Dean could hear crying, shouted orders from doctors, and the steady sounds of medical machinery. It made him queasy. His nerves were already shot and as they neared the curtain for Trauma Five, he stopped. Luc looked at him, head tilted in a parody of Cas' own look of confusion. Cas made it clear Dean wasn't good enough. What was he even doing? "Maybe Anna should be here... not me."

"You're afraid?" Luc observed and Dean bristled. He wasn't afraid...of anything. "I told you he's going to be fine." Then he smiled and Dean knew that he knew. "It's not his injuries, is it? What exactly is going on between you and my brother?"

"Nothing..." Not anymore.
Luc laughed softly. "I've been an attorney for twenty years and I've learned to read people. Let me tell you what I see." He paused for dramatic affect and Dean almost threw up his hands and walked away. He didn't need this shit. "You care about Castiel. Really care, but for some reason, you don't think he returns your feelings."

"He doesn't." One of Luc's eyebrows lifted and a knowing smirk touched his mouth.

"Are you sure about that? You have evidence to support this assumption?"

"Cut the lawyer shit. Cas said we don't have anything in common. He obviously doesn't want to be with me." Frustrated and feeling sorry for himself, Dean backed away. "Look, just tell him I stopped by..."

"Coward." That word. That single word stopped Dean in his tracks. He set his jaw stubbornly.

"You don't fucking know me." A passing nurse gave him a frown.

"No, I don't. But I know people like you. You use your looks and charm to get what you want. Castiel's been there and got the t-shirt." Dean pulled himself up to his full height. The bastard just had the gall to compare him to those jocks that used Cas. Luc was staring at him. Challenging him. Dean had enough.

"Fuck you, Lucifer. Let me tell you what I see. I see a great big bag of dicks who likes to pass judgment on people he doesn’t know a goddamn thing about. I would never do anything to hurt him like those fuckers he went to school with." Luc's eyes widened in surprise like he couldn't believe Dean knew about Cas' past. "And for the record, counselor, I want to be with him. But I'm not about to do anything Cas doesn't want. So, you can take your opinion and cram it up your ass." Without giving the other man the chance to reply, Dean reached out and pushed aside the curtain.

Tubes and monitors were hooked up to Cas, piercing his perfect skin. His eyes were closed and the lashes looked so dark against his pale skin. Dean moved closer, wanting to touch. He ran a fingertip over Cas' forearm. Cas didn't stir. Luc appeared beside him. "I need to make some phone calls. If he wakes, tell him I will be back soon."

Dean was alone with Cas. He saw drops of blood on the sheet near his thigh. Luc said he'd lacerated it. A plastic chair similar to those in the waiting room was next to the bed and Dean sat down. He watched the rise and fall of Cas' chest. He was going to be fine. His eyes drifted down to the needle in Cas' arm and followed the tubing up. God, he hated hospitals. He stared at the steady drip of the fluid and began to hum. The song was one of Charlie's favorites and he'd heard it so many times that he knew the lyrics by heart. He never knew they would actually come to mean something to him.

You say that we've got nothing in common  
No common ground to start from  
And we're falling apart

He sang the words softly.

You'll say the world has come between us  
Our lives have come between us  
Still I know you just don't care  
And I said, "What about Breakfast at Tiffany's?"  
She said, "I think I remember the film,  
And as I recall, I think we both kinda liked it"
And I said, "Well, that's the one thing we've got"

Dean swallowed around the lump in his throat and stood up. He needed to get out of there. "Dean."
His gaze flew to Cas's face. Blue eyes stared back at him, unblinking.

"Cas... I was just going..."

The second time Castiel woke up, a nurse was changing his IV bag. "What time is it?"

"It's almost four, Hon." She took his wrist and took note of his pulse. The blood pressure cuff came
next and she recorded everything on his chart. "How are you feeling?"

"Sore. What... can you tell me what's going on? I mean... I know I was in an accident and the
injuries, but what's the severity?"

"Your ribs should heal within four to six weeks as long as you're careful and follow the doctor's
orders." She eyed him sternly. "Your abrasions should be gone in two weeks, give or take a day. As
for your thigh laceration, you'll come back in seven days to get the stitches removed. I'd say overall,
you were very lucky." She patted his shoulder gently. "I'm sure you can't wait to go home, but with
the amount of blood loss you sustained, we need to keep you here until your red count is where the
doc wants it to be. For now, you need to sleep. Rest is the best thing you can give your body as it
heals."

Castiel processed what she said. Statistics usually didn't favor motorcycle riders, so he knew how
lucky he was. "Thank you." She gave him a warm smile before leaving him alone behind the thick,
gray curtain. He could hear the sounds of the busy emergency room and his eyes grew heavy. Before
he dozed off again, he needed to call the studio. He didn't know where his phone wound up, so he
used the hospital's. The answering machine picked up. Castiel wondered if Anna had been called.
Sleep overtook him again.

"Castiel?" Castiel turned his head and saw Luc standing there. "If you wanted me to come visit, all
you had to do was say so. You always were a drama queen," Luc said with a smile.

"I'm sorry you had to fly out here. My injuries aren't that serious," Castiel said quietly. Luc's face
softened.

"Don't be a dumbass. You are my brother and I will never stop being there for you. Sorry, but you
just can't get rid of me." Castiel knew their talk at Christmas meant a lot to both of them and he was
thankful he'd gone.

"Is anyone else here?" Castiel didn't want to ask because honestly, he didn't want to know the
answer.

Luc's expression turned curious. "A woman with red hair. I'm assuming she is your employee... and
a very pushy man named Dean. Your co-star, I presume."

"Dean's here?" Castiel failed to keep the happiness out of his voice.
"Yes, and from the looks of things, he's been here all day. Shall I see if they want to come back?"
Castiel's face fell.

"I don't think... Please just assure him that I'll be okay. Tell him to make sure Sam knows I will be back at work as soon as I am able." Luc nodded, his expression unreadable. When he left, Castiel stared up at the ceiling. Dean was here... he came to make sure Castiel was okay, that was it. After all, he'd blown whatever chance they had of really being together. His heart clenched as he closed his eyes and fell into a drug-induced sleep.

The first thing he was aware of was Luc saying something about phone calls, but he didn't want to open his eyes yet. The pain meds were making him so drowsy.

_You say that we've got nothing in common
No common ground to start from
And we're falling apart_

The baritone was achingly familiar. He concentrated on the words. He knew this song... what was it about? Damn drugs... The words continued, deeper and slower than the original version. Why was the voice so... "Dean." He opened his eyes and felt sure he was dreaming.

"Cas... I was just going..." Dean was leaving. No... he couldn't let him go again.

"Don't..." He stopped, facing Castiel, his face stoic. "Dean, I didn't mean it."

"Didn't mean what Cas?" There was a flash of pain and maybe even anger in Dean's eyes.

"I don't blame you for walking away. Everything I do and say around you is wrong." He looked away and concentrated on the blinking lights that flashed his vital signs.

"Cas, what you said... it's true, man. We don't have anything in common. I just build shit. I barely scraped through school. I drink beer and watch football. Fuck, Cas, you eat tofu for Christ's sake."

"We both like Dr. Sexy," Castiel offered, turning back to face Dean. "And cowboy boots," he said with a smirk. Dean rolled his eyes.

"You fuckin' exercise... and probably think salad is a meal."

"We both like sex," Castiel countered. Dean was fighting a smile, so Castiel went in for the kill. "We like each other, Dean. Our differences shouldn't matter."

"Okay," Dean muttered, but Castiel saw the twinkle in Dean's beautiful, expressive eyes.

"If we're going to give this a real shot, we have to communicate. First, I'm a raging asshole in the mornings."

Dean snorted. "Yeah, no shit..."

Castiel continued as if Dean hadn't interrupted. "You were sweet, and I loved that you brought me coffee, I really did." Dean gave a half-smile. Dean would never have to know the fate of that cup of coffee. "I just wanted you to know that. But I also want you to know that I can't promise I won't be an asshole in the morning."

"I wouldn't ask you to... I think it's cute when you're grumpy." Dean laughed at the scowl on Castiel's face. "Look, Cas... I do like being with you. For whatever weird-ass reason, we're pretty fuckin' great together. Trust me, I don't understand it either." Castiel laughed, then winced in pain.
and clutched at his ribs.

Just then, Luc returned and looked back and forth between the two of them. "Am I interrupting?"

Chapter End Notes

I will be in a class over the next few days. Chapter 13 is underway, but won't be posted until Friday or Saturday. I hope this keeps you guys going until then.

The song that Dean is singing is called Breakfast at Tiffany's by Deep Blue Something. If you haven't heard it, I recommend it.
Chapter 13

Chapter by palominopup

Castiel woke to the sound of laughter... who...? He blinked his eyes open and took in a very unexpected sight... Dean and Sam Winchester were sitting at the end of his bed. Luc was leaning against the wall. All three had coffee and they were laughing together. He didn't want to let them know he was awake yet because this was just too interesting. He wasn't surprised to see Luc getting along well with others... after all, most of his existence revolved around socializing and networking. No, this was bizarre because in his wildest dreams, he would never have expected the Winchester brothers to enjoy Luc's brand of humor. But if he'd learned anything from the past few weeks, it was that his instincts with people weren't always reliable. He felt an itch on his nose and broke his vigil to bring his hand up and scratch it. As soon as his hand moved, Dean crossed the room in two strides.

"Cas... Hey, are you okay?" Castiel looked up at Dean's face and couldn't help smiling at the gorgeous man.

"I'm okay. I could use some water though." Dean grabbed a pitcher from the bedside table and poured some ice water into a cup with a straw. He held it close to Castiel's lips and watched as he downed nearly the whole cup. He glanced around and realized he'd been moved to a private room.

"Damn, Cas... way to hydrate. Want more?" Castiel shook his head. "Hungry?"

"Starving, actually." Dean's answering grin was so bright, it made Castiel's heart skip.

"That's great, babe. I'm going to let the nurse know you're awake and Sam can see about getting you something to eat. I'll be right back, okay? Come on, Sam." He gave Castiel's hand a squeeze and left the room with Sam following behind as he listened to a voice mail on his phone. Castiel looked at Luc for the first time since he woke up and saw a strange expression on his face... was it approval? How much did he miss while he was unconscious? He met his brother's eyes and quirked an eyebrow in question. Luc just smiled and moved closer to the bed and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"I'm glad to see you more alert, little brother. How are you really feeling?" His ice blue eyes were unwavering and Castiel knew he could see through his façade. It was no use to even try lying.

"I hurt all over... and I want to sit up. Can you help me?" He braced his hands to lean up and winced sharply as pain shot through his side like daggers. Luc pushed gently on his shoulder to lay him back down, his eyes stern.

"No, Castiel. You need to at least wait for the nurse. You have broken ribs and that means you need to do everything they tell you to or you could puncture a lung. While I'm glad I'm here, I am not pleased with the circumstances. I know the accident wasn't your fault, but everything you do now is. I won't allow you to further injure yourself, so please don't be stubborn." He paused and looked down. "I don't like to see you hurt." Castiel's brows furrowed. He'd never heard Luc go on like this. His brother seemed... rattled. Luc didn't get rattled... ever. Looking at him now, Castiel could see he'd been more affected than he was letting on. He reached up and took his brother's hand.

"I'm okay, Luc. Really. And I promise I'll be a good patient and do what I'm supposed to... not that I'll like it much." He smirked and Luc finally relaxed and smiled.

"Oh, I'm sure you won't... but that's fine with me, as long as you follow the rules." He was still smiling, but his eyes made it clear he wasn't joking. Dean returned with the nurse and she took his
vitals while asking him questions from her checklist. When she was satisfied with his answers, she pushed a button and raised the bed to a sitting position. Castiel felt instant relief as the pressure on his chest lessened.

"Okay, Mr. Novak, later on this morning, we'll take you down to radiology for a head CT. So far, you're not showing any signs of concussion, but given the severity of the accident, the doctor would like to have a clear head CT to make sure there's no cerebral edema before he discharges you. Your helmet protected you from serious injury, but the impact was significant enough to warrant further tests... just to be on the safe side."

Castiel looked over at Dean and Luc, and his brother offered a reassuring smile. Dean's face had gone pale at the nurse's words. He reached out his hand and Dean took it, intertwining their fingers. He didn't utter a sound, but Castiel knew he was worried. Dean cleared his throat and turned his focus to the nurse.

"He's hungry. Can he go ahead and eat something?" The nurse assured them that Castiel could eat whatever he wanted and turned to leave the room just as Sam came back in with plenty of food and more coffee for everyone. Castiel ate ravenously, but he noticed Dean wasn't eating at all. When Luc and Sam had finished eating, Castiel handed off his empty plate and held onto his coffee.

"Sam, Luc... Can Dean and I have a minute alone please?" The two men exchanged a glance, then nodded and left the room. "Dean, why aren't you eating? What's wrong?"

Dean didn't answer and it was making Castiel nervous. Just when he was about to say something, Dean finally spoke. "It's just... I don't want..." Castiel reached over and gave his hand a reassuring squeeze. Dean looked up and the emotion in his eyes broke Castiel's heart. He finally spoke, continuing in a quiet voice. "You could have died, Cas. I... we almost lost you..." He lowered his gaze.

"Dean... I'm okay." He opened his arms and Dean leaned down and buried his face in his neck, careful not to put pressure on his chest. Castiel's hand was making soothing circles on Dean's back. They stayed like that for several minutes before there was a knock at the door. Dean stood back up, and Castiel watched in fascination as Dean rapidly schooled his features into a benign expression. Sam popped his head in.

"Hey, guys, the police are here. Is it okay if they come in?"

"Yes, it's fine," Castiel answered. Dean remained at his side holding his hand. The two officers from the day before entered the room.

"Good morning, Mr. Novak. We have some information regarding the incident yesterday. The traffic cams were able to get a clear image of both the license plate and the driver of the vehicle that hit you. Are you familiar with a Mr. Richard Roman, also known as Dick Roman?" Castiel shook his head as he viewed the photographs from the traffic cameras. He obviously knew the name from the news stories, but he didn't know the man personally. Dick Roman was the owner and CEO of Roman Enterprises and had recently come under fire for dumping toxic runoff from his factories into local water sources. So far, his lawyers had kept him safe from prosecution despite the overwhelming evidence of his involvement. Castiel felt Dean tense up, so he handed the photographs back to the officer. "Sorry, but we had to check to make sure it wasn't a premeditated incident. It seems Mr. Roman was texting when he ran the red light. He's been cited for leaving the scene of an accident with injuries. Along with his other legal issues, he'll be seeing the world through prison bars for a long time."

Castiel felt a sense of satisfaction at hearing such a horrible human being was going to finally get
what was coming to him. Maybe there was something to karma after all. He glanced at Dean, then
looked back at the older officer. "Thank you for getting back to us so quickly, officer. Your
assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated."

"Just doing our job, Mr. Novak, no thanks necessary." The officer paused and his forehead wrinkled
like he was perplexed. "Look, Mr. Novak... I don't really know if you're important or if you just
know someone who's important, but it's not exactly normal for an investigation to go this quickly. I
thought you might want to know that someone is looking out for you." He gave a nod goodbye and
both officers left the room. Castiel frowned in confusion and turned to Dean and saw a strange look
flash across his face before he rapidly masked it, clearly hoping Castiel didn't notice. Dean clearly
knew more than he was letting on. He was tempted to probe the matter further, but decided it would
be more prudent to wait until they were alone.

Sam stayed until the police left and he told Castiel not to worry about the show. Even the reassurance
that they were ahead of schedule didn't make him feel better about his impending absence.
Thankfully, he could still be on the jobsite. He would just be moving a bit slower and not lifting
anything.

Luc yawned a few times and Castiel asked the nurse to retrieve his clothing from wherever they were
stored. She opened a locked cabinet in the room and handed him the bag. Dean stared at the bloodied
pants and shirt, his jaw set so tightly, Castiel could see the muscles tic under his skin. He took out his
keys and rummaged in the bag for his phone. The screen was cracked, but it powered on. He held
out his keys and sent Luc to his house to get some sleep. Luc nodded his head and promised he'd be
back in the morning. Dean started pacing the room and it was driving Castiel crazy. "Dean, why
don't you go home, too? There's nothing more for you to do here tonight."

"Yeah... guess I'm wearing out my welcome, huh?" Dean smiled sheepishly.

Castiel reached out his hand and Dean took it. "No, you could never do that... but you've been here
all day and I know you're tired." Castiel fought back a yawn of his own and Dean nodded.

"I'll let you get some rest then, but I'll be back in the morning. Is there anything you need me to bring
you?"

"I can't think of anything," Castiel answered. Dean bent down and kissed Castiel softly. "Dean?"

"Yeah?" Dean's face was only inches from his own.

"Thank you for forgiving me." Dean kissed him again, firmer this time. When he stood back up, he
gently caressed the side of Castiel's face, a slight smile playing on his lips. Then Dean was gone,
leaving Castiel to his own thoughts.

Dean had forgiven him... again. He didn't deserve it. He had been unkind, ungrateful, and at times,
downright mean. Yet here he sat, once again in Dean's good graces. Castiel had known so many
terrible men in his life. Dean was the embodiment of every unrealistic fantasy he'd ever had about his
ideal match. He was ridiculously handsome, strong, independent, caring, passionate, and as
frustrating as it was sometimes, he challenged Castiel. How could Dean even be real?

Castiel pushed the button to lower his bed and laid his head back as he stared up at the ceiling. Dean
was real... and for some unexplainable reason, Castiel was lucky enough to have him in his life. He
closed his eyes and let himself imagine waking up beside Dean every morning, making breakfast
with him, exchanging smiles over steaming mugs of coffee... He'd never allowed himself to fall so
deeper into this kind of fantasy before. As he drifted off to sleep, his last thought was that maybe
falling wouldn't be so bad.
Dean's eyes shot open the next morning when he heard his phone chime with a new text. He bolted up and grabbed his phone, terrified of more bad news. He breathed a sigh of relief when he read Cas' message. His CT was all clear, and he was being discharged and would be home in a couple of hours. He sent a reply asking if he needed anything, knowing Cas would say no. He was right, but still felt like he should help in some way. He came up with an idea and quickly showered, dressed, and started putting his plan into action. An hour later, he was at Cas' door with several bags of groceries, a stack of board games, and a tote packed with DVDs from his own collection. He knocked and Luc answered, grinning broadly when he took in the sight before him.

"Moving in so soon, Dean?" Dean noted the teasing glint in his eye.

"Ha-freakin'-Ha, Luc. You gonna let me in?" Dean was all about some good-natured ball busting, but his arms were getting tired. Luc stood aside and held the door open for him. He set everything down on the kitchen counter, then turned to Luc. "So, I thought I'd bring over some supplies to make the next few days easier. What time are you picking him up?"

"I'm actually about to head there now. I just got up twenty minutes ago. Damn jetlag had me moving slow this morning. Did you want to come with me to pick him up? I'm sure he wouldn't mind."

"No, I thought it would be nice to get all of this put away and set up before he got home. And I was... uh..." Dean looked away and rubbed the back of his neck. "I was thinking about making lunch for you guys."

Luc smiled warmly. "That would be very nice, Dean. Thank you." He paused and Dean could sense the shift in the mood. "Listen, Dean... I'm not going to give the big brother speech threatening to kill you if you hurt my brother. He's a big boy and he knows what he wants. I respect that and wouldn't dream of coming between him and anyone he cares about. I will simply request that you never stop caring for him the way you do now."

Dean blushed, unable to meet the man's penetrating gaze. "I know Castiel has told you about his past... which incidentally shocked the shit out of me, to be honest. At first, I was concerned that you were the same. But having seen you both together, I couldn't have been more wrong. You seem like a good man, Dean. Castiel deserves to have someone like you in his life. So, don't go anywhere, okay?"

Dean was stunned and didn't know how to respond. He had no idea what the future held for him and Cas, but he was certain of one thing. "I'm not going to make flowery promises here, Luc... and I won't lie, things haven't exactly been easy with your brother." Luc snorted a laugh. "But I can tell you that when I'm with him, I'm happy. That may not sound like a big deal to you, but from my experience, happiness is pretty rare."

For a while, Luc just stared at him, weighing his words. Then he nodded his head once and turned to grab his keys. "Alright, I'm going to pick him up. We should be back here within the hour. If you're still planning on making lunch, make enough for three." Dean understood his meaning and nodded. He followed Luc to the door and the man turned. "And just for the record... If you hurt him, I'll send you straight to hell." The wink and smile softened the words and Dean rolled his eyes. He heard Luc laughing as the door shut behind him.
Sam shut the filming down until Wednesday, so Dean didn't worry about missing anything. He'd taken the time to stop by his office before hitting the grocery store and everything was running smoothly at Winchester Construction. Thankfully, this time of year was slow. When the warmer weather came, he wouldn't have time for all the television shit.

Making his way through the aisles of the local Walmart, Dean thought about what he should make for lunch. His original plan was to do breakfast, but Dean knew first-hand when the hospital says they're releasing you in the morning, it really meant just one minute before noon. He had an irresistible idea pop into his head and shoved the waffle maker into his cart with a satisfied smile. Back at Cas' house, he looked around and got to work. With the games and DVDs stashed in Cas' living room, he unpacked the groceries.

Brandishing one of Cas' knives, he sliced the chicken breasts into strips and seasoned them. After reading the directions on the box, he poured the waffle mix into a large bowl and added the egg and milk. He let the batter rest while he dug around Cas' cabinets until he located a frying pan.

He was humming to himself and taking another crisp waffle out when Luc opened the door. Cas hobbled behind him, putting most of his weight on his good leg. He looked tired and Dean caught the slight wince as he stepped into the house. When he caught sight of Dean in his kitchen, the smile alone made everything worth it. "Hey, Cas. I figured Luc wouldn't feel like cooking, so I wanted to kind of... welcome you home the Winchester way... with food."

"It smells great," Luc said, dropping Cas' bag on the couch. "Castiel, sit down here and rest," he said, indicating the couch. Dean watched as Cas eased himself down. Luc helped him take off his shoes before joining Dean in the kitchen.

"Thank you, Dean. I didn't expect this," Cas said, eyeing the stack of games and DVDs on the coffee table.

"The doc said you needed to rest and if you're anything like me, sitting around doing nothing will drive you batshit crazy. I thought Luc and I could keep you company," Dean replied, shrugging off Cas' appreciative look.

Luc set out plates on the counter and Dean placed a waffle on each one, then he topped it with a few fried chicken tenders. He picked up one of the plates and the maple syrup and took it to Cas. He set it on the table and waited for Cas' response. Cas eyed the dish carefully. "Fried chicken? On waffles?"

"Holy shit, Cas... have you been living under a rock? This is manna from heaven." Dean stepped aside as Luc brought over some utensils, a napkin, and a bottle of water. Cas looked up at his brother.

"Have you ever heard of this?"

"I've heard of it, just never tried it. I hate to admit it, but I'm a little excited to see how it tastes." Luc returned with his own plate and sat next to Cas. Dean watched as both men contemplated on how to eat their lunch.

"Jeez, guys... you just pour syrup on it and dig in."

"Syrup... on chicken?" Cas tilted his head curiously and then shrugged as he watched his brother pour an ample amount of the thick confection on his meal. Luc cut a piece of both components and crammed it into his mouth. He chewed, his expression neutral, but then his eyes widened and he nodded in appreciation. Cas looked down at his own plate. Moments later, he ate his first bite. He moaned. Once he swallowed it, he stared wide-eyed at Dean. "Dean... this is... amazing."
"I can feel my arteries hardening as we speak, but this is really good," Luc said right before shoving more into his mouth.

"Well, let this be a lesson to you... Don't ever doubt my culinary talents, gentlemen," Dean said haughtily. He got his own plate and sat on the floor on the other side of the coffee table. He had to move the games out of the way, but soon, he was shoveling food into his face as well.

They spent the afternoon watching movies and playing mindless board games. Dean had brought Sorry, Monopoly, and Scattergories. Around five o'clock, Cas started to nod off. He'd taken a pain pill, and even though he was kind of cute under the influence, Dean knew he should lay down. Together, he and Luc walked Cas up the stairs to his room. Since he left the hospital in a pair of Boston U sweats and a hoodie, Cas didn't bother changing before lying down to sleep.

Downstairs, Dean straightened the room, putting glasses in the dishwasher and wiping off the coffee table that had become Cas Central. Luc watched him for a while without speaking. It was making Dean uncomfortable, so he broke the silence. "I got some stuff for sandwiches, a few cans of soup, and a variety of breakfast foods. Cas doesn't really like eating breakfast, but he shouldn't take his meds on an empty stomach... so make sure he eats anyway. You guys should be all set for a couple of days, so I guess I'll head on home now."

"Thank you for today, Dean. Having you here meant a lot to Castiel... and to me."

Dean felt his face heat up and he shrugged. "He'd do it for me," he mumbled and grabbed his coat off the hook by the door. "If he needs anything... he's got my number."

"I'll take good care of him," Luc assured him and Dean shut the door behind him. He took a deep breath and pulled his coat around him. The temperature was dropping now that the sun had set.

He was halfway home when his phone rang. "Hey, Charlie." He hadn't seen his friend since New Year's, and she'd sent him a couple of text messages, but he hadn't had time to talk to her.

"Is this Dean? Dean Winchester? The man who never calls his friends anymore?"

"Sorry. You know how it is. With the show and keeping track of the business..." He let his words trail off. There was no excuse that she would buy.

"Well, don't leave out the best part, loverboy." Dean was momentarily confused, then he realized... Sam. He was going to kill the gossiping asshat.

"It's not like that." Only, maybe it was. What started out as simply scratching an itch had turned into something more... a lot more. He thought of the last time they were in Cas' bed... the way the man moaned his name just before he came...

"Where are you now?" Her question brought him back to the present.

"On my way to the house."

"Good, I'll meet you there. I have questions." Great. Just fuckin' great. Charlie was like a dog with a bone when her curiosity was peaked.

"I'm kind of tired..."

"It's barely seven," she interjected before he could finish his sentence. "You're gonna meet me there, and you're gonna dish, Dean... or else the Queen shall pass a most fearsome judgment upon thee." Then he was listening to empty air. Son of a bitch.
Charlie's bright yellow Gremlin was waiting in his driveway. He steeled himself for the Charlie Bradbury Twenty Question Marathon. As soon as Dean got out of the car, she was on him like a spider monkey. "I haven't seen you since last year," she pouted.

Dean did some quick math. "Yeah, it's been three whole days, brat." He unlocked his door and she followed him inside. He looked around and groaned. He hadn't been home for more than a few hours over the last several days and it showed. The place smelled musty and his laundry was tossed on the floor by the kitchen door. Charlie wrinkled her nose.

"I feel like I'm suddenly in a frat house."

"Sorry, I haven't been home much lately," Dean apologized, kicking a pair of dirty underwear out of the walkway. She came up behind him and wrapped her tiny arms around his middle.

"How is he?" Dean couldn't hide anything, not from Charlie. First of all, she was too dear a friend, and second, she would see right through him anyway. Besides, there was a small part of him that wanted to tell his best friend everything.

"Better than he was at first... still really sore and trying not to show it."

"He was so lucky."

"Yeah, it shouldn't have fucking happened at all." He felt her warmth through his shirt and leaned back into her. "I could have lost him, Charlie." She tightened her grip on him.

"But you didn't, Dean. He's going to be good as new before you know it." They stood like that for a few minutes, the petite woman holding up the much taller, heavier man. Finally, he stepped away.

"I need a beer. Want one?"

"Sure." They took their beers into Dean's bedroom and crawled into his bed. He picked up the remote, but she stopped him. "Nope. Time to dish." She smiled impishly and Dean heaved a sigh, pretending to be annoyed.

"Hell, Charlie, I don't know... he's just... smart, talented, a total asshole... but he's got this dry sense of humor that's hilarious, and he's... God, he's so fuckin' beautiful." He stopped talking and groaned as he threw his arm over his face. He felt a gentle hand on his arm, pulling it away from his face.

"Dean... you really like him." It wasn't a question, merely a statement of fact. Dean nodded, unwilling to say more. "You like him more than you're willing to admit and you're freaking out because it could all go tits up." Charlie, as always, cut through the bullshit and hit the nail right on the head. Dean stood up and walked over to look out the window, his arms folded across his chest.

"When we're together, it's... well, there aren't words to describe how fucking awesome it is. I've never... no one has ever made me feel this way. I don't know if I can do this... it feels too big, Charlie."

Charlie got up and moved next to him, and knowing Dean needed his space, she didn't touch. "I understand, Dean. It is big... and you feel like it's simultaneously the best and the scariest thing that's ever happened to you." She shifted her gaze away from Dean and stared blankly out the window. "You know I've had my heart broken before. Even with all the pain I felt after, I don't regret falling in love one bit. It was still totally worth it. You can't let your fear of what might happen keep you from feeling what is happening."

Dean turned to look at her and took a moment to appreciate the rare glimpse into his best friend's
heart. He reached out and hugged her close, kissing the top of her head. "Thanks, kid. You know I love you more than my socket wrench." She slapped his side playfully, and relaxed at his lighthearted tone. "Come on, Red. Time for video games and pork skins."

"Woohoo, I love me some pork skins," Charlie squealed as she skipped out of the room. Dean hung back and reached into his pocket for his cell phone, sending a quick text to Cas.

**Text to Cas/7:42 – Just checking to make sure you're alright.**

He didn't expect a response right away, figuring Cas would be zoning in and out on the pain meds, so he was startled when his phone chirped as he stepped into the kitchen.

**Text from Cas/7:44 – I'm fine. Disappointed that you weren't here when I woke.**

Dean smiled as he read Cas' words. _What a sap._ "Okay, that's a face I've never seen on Dean Winchester," Charlie said, her tone full of glee. Dean glanced up from his screen, his smile replaced by a confused frown.

"What are you talking about?" Dean set the phone down and opened the fridge, eyes still on his friend. She snagged the phone and read it.

"Aww, he's definitely a keeper, Handmaiden." She danced over to the pantry and pulled out a bag of her favorite snack food, something Dean kept on hand just for her. "And the face... *that* my friend, is the face of someone in love."

Dean shook his head, automatically denying it. "Love, Charlie? Seriously? Come on, you know me better than that. I don't do the whole love thing." He kept his eyes on the task at hand so he didn't have to meet Charlie's eyes. Opening two beers had never taken so much time... He felt a pang of guilt, knowing he wasn't being honest with her. She was his best friend. Was he even being honest with himself? He'd already had feelings he'd never felt before and done things for Cas he would never do for any of his other partners. For starters, he missed him when they were apart. The thought of waking up with one person for the rest of his life no longer scared the shit out of him... especially when he imagined that person was Cas. He also considered the fact that he'd forgiven more crap from Cas than anyone else in his life, with the exception of his family. It confused him and reassured him all at once. He couldn't explain why Cas was different... but the very fact that he _was_ different was enough to make Dean feel certain of his feelings for the man. Dean wasn't the type of person to always need an explanation for everything... not like Sam. And even though he didn't find it easy to express his feelings, he was aware of them enough to know what he wanted. He was certain that he wanted Cas.

"Sometimes love hits you like a Photon Torpedo and sometimes it creeps up on you like Pon Farr." Dean shook his head, not having a clue what she meant. "You know, Vulcan puberty. You, my friend, have been torpedoed." She picked up Dean's phone again and shoved it at him. "Tell him you miss him and will see him tomorrow."

"Okay, first of all... *Vulcan puberty*? Gross. Second, I'm not going to tell him I miss him." He set down the two beers he was holding and took the phone. "I'll just say that I'll see him tomorrow." She gave him a bitchface to rival one of Sam's. He stubbornly refused to bow down to it.

**Text to Cas/7:59 – I'll see you tomorrow. Miss you.**

What Charlie didn't know...

She definitely wouldn't be seeing Cas' reply.
That night, as he settled into bed, he thought back on their conversation. Charlie's no-nonsense way of saying things helped Dean put his feelings into perspective. Yes, he was afraid of being hurt. Yes, he was afraid of losing Cas. Yes, he was afraid of it all going wrong and getting his heart broken. Was what he had with Cas worth the risk? The answer popped into his head almost immediately... *abso-fuckin-lutely.*

Castiel and Dean might have a few days off, but for Sam, it was Go Time. He had twelve days until the pilot aired. It was already in the can. The advertising had been ramped up and new sponsors were already chomping at the bit for product placement as the show progressed.

Crowley sat next to him in the dark room and watched as the first episode ran through for the third time. Crowley's fingers were steepled and he tapped them against his lips. This made Sam nervous. He hadn't spoken to Sam the entire morning unless you counted the word 'again' as conversation. The credits rolled and Sam got a bit tingly when his own name appeared under Programming Director.

"Lights," Crowley shouted and the PA flipped the switch. Sam blinked as his eyes adjusted. Crowley didn't seem to have that problem. His probing stare was already on Sam. Afraid to open his mouth, Sam hoped he at least had the appearance of someone calm. On the inside, he was a mess. Then Crowley smiled. "Sam, didn't I tell you this would be gold?"

"Yes, sir. Gold. You did say that," Sam said quickly, barely stumbling over his words.

"I've already seen Episode Two and the raw footage of Three." *Shit.* Sam wanted to edit the fuck out of Three before Crowley saw the whole debacle with the matching hickeys.

"I will spend time on Three today and get with the editing team. There are a few things that we definitely don't want to be shown."

Crowley stood up. "Good." He took a few steps toward the door and turned. "And Sam, make sure you keep in the close-ups of those little love bites and the extended eye fucks... including the one where Dean has his shirt off. Don’t cut one fucking second of that." He continued to the door, chuckling to himself. Sam stared at the blank screen before him. What the hell was Crowley playing at? Sam knew Crowley wanted to play up the sexual tension... but to showcase their sexual exploits on camera? That seemed a bit too far. Although he had to admit, it would skyrocket their ratings like nothing else. Sex sells... and if it was any other show, Sam wouldn't even question the strategy. But this was his brother. It was hard to separate that loyalty from his allegiance to the station, especially when he knew his job was on the line. If he told Dean, he risked pissing his brother off enough to leave the project. And if that happened, Sam could kiss his career in television goodbye.

There was no good answer here. Sam knew Crowley would want at least one more season of the show. If he plowed ahead and used their romance on screen without consulting both Dean and Cas, he was certain they would quit. It wasn't ideal, but Sam knew he would have to just bite the bullet and talk to them. This was going to be just fucking great...
Castiel slammed the screen down on his laptop, his attempt to update his blog abandoned for the third time that morning. He’d been home for little more than a day and he already felt like climbing the walls. Luc had done his best to entertain him, but honestly, he was bored as fuck. His head fell back against the couch with a dramatic sigh. Luc was on a work call, so his only distraction was watching whatever mindless drivel was currently on television. Castiel had never enjoyed watching it... well, only when he and Dean watched movies together. Dean seemed to make everything more enjoyable... especially sex. He wondered when he would be allowed to have sex again and made a mental note to ask the doctor at his next appointment.

The knock on the door startled Castiel from his wayward thoughts. He moved to stand up, but Luc waved him off and made his way to the door, his phone still pressed to his ear. Dean strode right in as soon as it opened and smiled that gorgeous smile that never failed to take Castiel's breath away. It immediately lifted his spirits.

"Hello, Dean," Castiel said, returning Dean's smile. Dean leaned down and gave him a brief kiss, then sat down. There was something about the casual way he made himself at home that had Castiel's heart beating just a touch faster.

"Hey, Cas. How are you feeling?" Dean glanced at Luc and seemed to take note of him leaving the room to return to his call before turning back to Castiel.

"Better. I'm still a bit sore, but mostly I'm bored." Castiel moved closer to Dean, needing to touch him. Dean's lips lifted at the corner as if he could read Castiel's mind. He wrapped his palm around Castiel's neck and drew him close, sealing their lips in a sweet kiss. It was nice, but it wasn't enough. He reached up, tugged on Dean's hair, and held him steady as he took the kiss deeper. Dean let him take control, becoming pliant in his hands. The kiss became hotter, wetter... filthier. Dean drew back, laughing softly.

"Slow down, babe."

"Why?" Cas was breathless.

"A couple of reasons... The first and foremost is that your brother is in the next room, and I don't think he wants to see the 'Dean and Cas Get Freaky' show. Next reason... you are not in any shape to have sex and I would hate it if something I did hurt you." Castiel arranged his face in a pout that left him looking like Grumpy Cat. Dean shook his head, chuckling. "Don't be such a baby."

"Shut up. What did you bring me?" Castiel switched gears and looked at him expectantly and Dean threw his head back and laughed the way Castiel loved... loved? The thought surprised him, but he didn't feel his customary anxiety.

"Jeez, bossy-pants. What makes you think I brought you anything? Isn't my presence enough?"
Castiel stared at him blankly. "Okay, okay... I brought you something truly special, Cas. Now that I'm confident in your Star Wars education, we will continue to broaden your knowledge with..." Dean reached into his jacket pocket and pulled out a new DVD with a flourish. "Spaceballs."

Castiel quirked an eyebrow. "Space-what?"

"Balls, Cas. Spaceballs." Dean smirked and loaded the DVD into the player, then hit play and went to make popcorn.

"Do you want me to pause it, Dean?"

Dean snorted. "Nah, I'm good. I can quote this movie start to finish." Castiel paused it anyway before he responded.

"No, you can't." He heard Dean push the buttons on the microwave then he popped his head around the wall.

"Wanna bet?" Dean waited for his response. Castiel thought there was no way he could possibly lose this bet. Dean might know this movie, but no one could quote every word, especially with the rolling title sequence being so verbose... and random.

"You're on. What do I get when I win?" Castiel asked confidently.

"Hmm... Winner gets a pie?"

Castiel thought about it for a minute... he could really have some fun with this. And he was pretty bored... and horny. He made up his mind.

"Come now, Dean... we can do better than that, can't we?" Castiel threw him a flirtatious grin and tapped a finger to his chin. "How about instead we play for the blow job of a lifetime?"

Dean's eyes widened in surprise, then quickly resolved into a sneaky grin. "You're on," he said with a wink. He pushed play and went to the kitchen to retrieve the popcorn. He handed the bowl to Castiel and set down two sodas, then sat down on the coffee table with his back to the screen. The opening sequence started rolling. Castiel watched in fascination as Dean actually quoted every single word flawlessly. By the time the incredibly long shot of the spaceship came on the screen, Castiel knew he'd already lost. Dean plopped down on the couch beside him with a smug grin and proceeded to speak every line of dialogue. Castiel was impressed and horrified at the same time. After fifteen minutes of Dean quoting verbatim, Castiel threw up his hands.

"Fine, you win," he said laughing. "What the fuck, Dean? How the hell did you do that?" Dean laughed and then leveled a predatory glare at him. "Dean, no. You're the one who said we couldn't do anything because Luc is in the next room..."

"Yeah, but that was before you bet the blowjob of a lifetime," Dean responded, keeping his eyes locked with Castiel's. He winked and called out to Luc. "Hey, Luc? Would you mind running to the store for some ground beef and buns? I want to make some burgers for our patient." Castiel couldn't believe the audacity of the man. Luc came back into the room, his call apparently over.

"Sure, Dean. I have a couple of things I want to pick up anyway. My brother doesn't keep any decent snacks in this house. Ground beef and buns... Is that it?" At Dean's nod, Luc grabbed his keys and Castiel watched his brother saunter out the door. Dean waited a few seconds, apparently to make sure Luc hadn't forgotten anything and then he stood up in front of the couch facing him. Castiel reached up and grabbed for Dean's belt, but the man grabbed his wrist, halting his movements. Castiel looked up at him in confusion.
"The bet was for the blow job a lifetime, Cas. We never said who was blowing who." Castiel swallowed thickly. "See, the way I see it, I won the bet. And watching you come apart as I suck your cock is definitely the winning prize." His mouth went dry as Dean slowly kneeled down and hooked his fingers in the waistline of his pants. He lifted his hips and Dean pulled them down quickly, then placed his hands gently on Castiel's shoulders. "Stay still." Castiel knew Dean was doing this because of his injury and while he was very grateful, he inwardly vowed to reciprocate as soon as he was able.

"Dean, what..." Dean cut off his question with a firm kiss.

"I plan on making you see stars when you come and I won't allow you to hurt yourself. If you move, I'm going to stop. Capisce?" Castiel opened his mouth to answer, but Dean suddenly swooped down and swallowed his cock in one swift motion. He gasped and jerked in response, but Dean held him down with one arm across his chest and one hand on his hips. Dean pulled away from his dick and Castiel whimpered at the loss.

"That was your one free pass, Castiel. Move again and you don't get to come." Dean's voice was pitched low and his face was as hard as steel, all traces of humor gone. He looked downright deadly and Castiel thought it was one of the hottest things he'd ever seen. His dick twitched in response to the sudden display of dominance. He nodded his understanding and lost all sense of reason as Dean's mouth closed around him once more. Dean hummed around him and Castiel clenched his teeth, trying to focus on holding himself still.

"Dean... fuck... feels so good..." Castiel's fingers dug into the cushions, his knuckles white as he struggled not to thrust up into Dean's glorious, hot mouth. He groaned as Dean flicked his tongue up and down his shaft, pausing at the top to swirl around the tip. Spit was dripping down onto his aching balls and Dean palmed his sac and squeezed slightly, causing Castiel to moan rather loudly. Keeping a tight hold, Dean's lush lips slid down ever so slowly as he took Castiel's cock deep into his throat. Dean started swallowing around him, his throat muscles constricting and releasing over and over again until Castiel felt like he couldn't breathe. Dean let go of his balls and began bobbing up and down at a relentless pace, sucking his cheeks in every time he reached the head. It was too much... Castiel felt his stomach tightening, his toes curling, his teeth digging into his bottom lip as he trembled with the effort of remaining still. He wanted to grab Dean's hair so badly, but he knew if he did that, he wouldn't be able to hold himself back from fucking that perfect mouth.

"Dean... I'm close... I'm..." Castiel let out a guttural moan as Dean slipped a spit slick finger inside him while slurping up and down his length. Just when he thought he couldn't take anymore, Dean crooked his finger and pushed against his prostate hard. "Fuck! Dean..." Castiel shouted as he erupted into Dean's mouth, his release shooting down the man's throat. Dean swallowed it all and slowed his motions, easing Castiel through his orgasm. Dean gently pulled away, but not before placing a soft kiss on his softening cock. Dean gently pulled his pants up and tucked him back inside.

Castiel looked at Dean expecting a smug grin, but he was stunned into silence when he took in the soft, loving look on the man's face. His heart leapt and he reached out and wrapped his hand around Dean's neck, pulling him up. He kissed him lazily, enjoying the taste of himself on Dean's tongue. Dean was still kneeling on the floor beside the couch, taking care not to lean on his chest.

"That was... extraordinary... definitely the blowjob of a lifetime," Castiel whispered with a soft chuckle. He felt the breath of Dean's laughter on his neck. "I guess being a loser isn't always a bad thing, huh?"

"Well, I only love the best losers," Dean said softly. Castiel felt Dean tense the second the words left
his mouth. He tried to pull away, but Castiel only tightened his arms around him.

"No, Dean. No more pulling away. Communication, remember?" Dean relaxed slightly, but it felt like he was frozen, waiting for something. Castiel wasn't ready for this. He hadn't been able to sort through things rationally yet. But he suddenly realized that from everything he had ever heard or read, there was nothing rational about love. He knew he cared for Dean, admired him even. And whenever they were apart, he counted the minutes until they could be together again. Dean made everything better, brighter, and much more colorful. Without him, everything in his life felt...gray. Picturing his future, he couldn't imagine being happy without Dean. Shit. He loved Dean. Dean flexed like he was about to pull away again, but he refused to let him go now.

"Wait, Dean... just... wait a minute." Castiel took in a deep breath and let it out slowly. He brought his hand up and cupped Dean's face. "Me, too." He could actually feel Dean smile. They sat like that for a while before Dean shifted and his knee made a popping sound against the floor.

"Ow... I need to get up... old man knees." Dean made a comically loud geriatric grunt as he stood up. Castiel knew the moment was broken and that Dean wouldn't respond to any more talk of feelings.

"You're old and I'm busted up. We make a fine pair," Castiel said with a grin. Dean laughed and squeezed his hand.

"Yeah, we do," Dean said with a soft smile. He shifted and stretched, giving Castiel a glimpse of his abs. He really needed to find out when he could have sex again. He must have zoned out because Dean was snapping his fingers in front of his face and smirking. "Hey, my eyes are up here, mister."

They were startled by a loud banging against the door, then keys rattling in the lock. "I'm at the door," Luc called out, clearly trying not to walk in on them in a compromising position. "I'm opening the door and coming inside." The fucker had his eyes closed.

"Very funny, Luc. What on earth do you think we could possibly do with my injuries?" Dean snorted at Castiel's wording, confirming Luc's suspicions. Castiel rolled his eyes. "Smooth, Dean..."

"Uh-huh, that's what I thought. Don't mind me, I'll just go drop off these bags and make myself scarce."

"Nope. Sit and keep Cas company while I make dinner. Thanks for picking up groceries. We appreciate it."

"I bet," Luc said with a smug grin.

"Shut up, Luc," Castiel tried to sound stern, but the gleam in his eyes said otherwise.

Dean's burgers were miraculous. He knew the man could cook, but this was beyond incredible. Castiel ended up eating two whole burgers and half a plate of the homemade fries.

"Dean, I had no idea you could cook like this... I'm glad I'm wearing stretchy pants." He leaned back and patted his belly in satisfaction. Dean shrugged off the praise, but Castiel could tell he was proud of himself. After dinner, Dean helped clean up, then went home after giving last-minute orders for Castiel to get some sleep. The goodbye kiss left him wanting more and Castiel had to bite his tongue to keep himself from asking him to stay.
Dean went back to work on Wednesday, leaving a still-sore and whiny Cas safely tucked in on the couch. Luc was leaving that morning and Dean had said his goodbyes. Since the accident might find its way into social media once the episodes aired, Sam decided to address it by having Dean talk about it as they installed the electrical outlets for the kitchen.

Looking at the cameras while the electrician worked behind him, Dean began to speak. "Guess you've all noticed that Cas hasn't been around today. A couple of days ago, he was in a minor vehicle accident." The legal team and Sam had coached him on what he could and couldn't say. "He's a bit sore and a little bored." Dean's own words came pouring out. "Okay, really bored. Kind of whiny, too... like a giant toddler. He even pouts when he's mad. Can you believe Mister Grumpy Pants actually pouts? That calm exterior hides a real brat." The entire time he talked, his affectionate smile remained in place and Dean didn't seem to be aware it was there.

Over the next few days, Dean spent his time between the jobsite and Cas' place. With Luc gone, he was reluctant to leave Cas home alone... mostly because Cas was a stubborn bastard. He made the man promise on a stack of Dean's Star Wars DVDs that he wouldn't climb the stairs unless Dean was there. Dean brought food and spent the night in case Cas woke up and needed anything. Since that epic blowjob, they hadn't had any form of sex. It wasn't for Cas' lack of trying though... the man seemed to stay in a constant state of arousal, but Dean remained strong. In actuality, he jacked off in the shower daily... okay, so it was twice daily, but he couldn't help it. It was hard as hell to be this close to Cas and not be able to fuck him into the mattress. Whenever their kisses got too heated, it was Dean that pulled away. Someone had to be the adult and it seemed that Cas was thinking with his dick more often than not. Thankfully, Cas hadn't mentioned Dean's slip-up with the 'L' word and Dean sure as hell wasn't bringing it up again.

Friday, Cas finally had enough of bedrest and told Dean that if he wouldn't take him to work, the stubborn bastard would just call a cab. Dean relented, but he wasn't happy about it. On the way, he swung by for coffee and let Cas hold both cups until they arrived at the jobsite. Everyone came out to greet Cas and he stopped to answer all their questions, seeming happy to be interacting with other humans. Dean stayed close and watched diligently for any sign of Cas being in pain or getting tired. So far, he was holding his own, but Dean wasn't sure how long that would last.

Sam pulled him aside. "Are you sure he's okay to be here?"

Dean smirked, never taking his eyes off Cas. "You try to keep him at home. He goes all Jekyll and Hyde when he's bored." He felt Sam's eyes on him. "What?"

"You've been spending a lot of time with him... anything you need to tell your brother? Or your boss?" He had his 'figure out what's up with Dean' face on. Dean hated that face... it never led to anything but uncomfortable conversations about feelings and stuff Dean would rather not share.

Dean met Sam's eyes. "I'd tell my brother to mind his own fucking business." He paused for effect, then added, "I'd tell my boss the same." At Sam's wounded expression, Dean sighed. "Can you just drop it, Sam? I know you want me to share, but I want to do this on my own... you know, with just me and Cas. Look, I know you always want all the information and it's not in your nature to leave things alone... but I'm asking you to do it anyway." Sam still looked disappointed, but his eyes no
longer resembled a kicked puppy. Always the big brother, Dean decided to throw him a bone. "I promise as soon as I'm ready to talk about it, I'll hit you up first. Okay?"

Sam relaxed and smiled a little. "Okay, Dean. I'm sorry for pushing. I promise I'll stop asking." He put his serious producer face on. "But... I reserve the right to ask about your relationship if it starts affecting the show negatively. Deal?"

"Deal."

He looked back at Cas and saw that he was making his way to the RV with Kate at his side. Feeling anxious at not being close enough to help if Cas needed it, Dean mumbled something about his makeup and hurried to catch up. He kept his eyes on Cas all day, even when they were filming. When Cas looked tired, Dean brought him a chair. When he noticed the lines around Cas' eyes becoming more strained, Dean handed him a bottle of water and his pain meds. When Cas stared at something out of reach, Dean picked it up for him before he could ask. He didn't get a lot of work done, but Dean didn't mind. He suspected that Sam was perfectly fine with any footage he could get of the two of them getting along.

As the day wore on, the shadows under Cas' eyes grew darker. Dean asked him several times if he was okay and by the fourth or fifth time, Cas snapped at him. "Dean, stop treating me like an invalid. I'm fine."

Sam overheard the exchange and Dean could have kissed him when he told them that he needed to meet with them. It meant Cas would have to be still for a while. Cas eased himself down on the bench seat and Dean slid in beside him, both facing Sam. "As you are aware, the pilot episode airs next Saturday. The studio loves it." Sam hesitated and Dean narrowed his eyes. Something was up.

"But?" Dean interjected. Sam stared down at the paperwork on the table, avoiding Dean's eyes. "No buts. The studio and my boss think it's gold." Sam exhaled slowly. "The first episode was kind of intense. I'm really happy that you two worked out your differences... and... mybosswantstofocusonthesexualtension." Dean blinked and ran through Sam's rushed words again. He got it at the same time Cas did.

"But?" Dean interjected. Sam stared down at the paperwork on the table, avoiding Dean's eyes.

"Your boss wants to focus on our relationship?" Cas asked, his voice low.

"Sammy, that's not going to..."

"Dean, listen... the main focus is still the renovation of the house and giving it to a deserving family. You and Cas just make it more interesting. We aren't going to follow you guys around with cameras like some creepy reality show. Just when you're on the jobsite, he wants the sexual tension and... stuff... left in so the viewers can see." Dean looked away, his jaw muscles working with the effort of keeping calm. Sam's boss wanted to cash in on his and Cas' relationship. Well, what happens when it goes tits-up because Cas gets fed up with his crap and tells him to take a hike? Having the whole country witnessing his humiliation and heartbreak... fuck that.

"I am not opposed to the idea, Sam, but we will need ground rules." Dean swung around to face Cas and he held up his hand. "Let me finish, Dean." He turned back to Sam. "First and foremost, I will not be exploited and neither will Dean. Our relationship off camera is just that... off camera... and no one's business but our own. We will not be paraded around like some dog and pony show. You will respect our privacy."

"Understood," Sam said. "And you need to trust me when I tell you that I won't approve any footage that crosses the line." Dean remained silent. All of Sam's promises wouldn't change the fact that
when it goes south, everyone would know. Dean ran his hands over his face. What could he do? He signed on the dotted line. He owed Sam this. He nodded briskly and stood up.

"Whatever you think is best, Sam. I have to check on the installation of the new HVAC unit." Dean let the door slam behind him.

Sam sat, his expression guarded. Castiel folded his hands on the table. "Dean is upset," he said softly, in that gravelly voice of his. Sam sighed.

"Yeah, Castiel, I think that is an understatement." He ran his hands through his long hair. He needed a trim. "Can you talk to him?"

"I can try," Castiel responded.

"Castiel, Dean's my brother and I wouldn't exploit his personal life for higher ratings." Sam knew he was walking a thin line between producer and brother, but he had to find a way to do both jobs without sacrificing either. "You said you weren't opposed. Can I ask why?"

Castiel tilted his head to the side. "I am not ashamed of my relationship with Dean. If it becomes apparent to the viewers, I'm fine with it. I'm not going to flaunt it, but I won't hide it either." Was he insinuating that Dean wasn't comfortable with his sexuality?

"Dean isn't ashamed of who he is. He hasn't hidden that part of himself in a long time," Sam remembered Dean during his high school years. He hid his bisexuality because at the time, he would have gotten shit from other students and their father. All through his twenties, Dean was afraid John Winchester would find out and disown him. He'd come so far since then, and Sam knew that whatever Dean was upset about, it wasn't the fact that he was dating a man. It was something else. Getting Dean to share what that something was... well, Sam wasn't holding his breath.

When Castiel left the RV, he limped into the house, moving much more slowly than he had when he started the day. His leg was throbbing and his ribs were killing him, but he was bound and determined to finish out the work day. Inside, he and his cameraman entered the kitchen. The cabinets were up and the countertops were installed. He opened one of the boxes stacked on the island. It was marked with his name and he smiled. It had been a bit of whimsy, but he knew it would fit in this kitchen. The box was filled with antique spoons and a craftsman on the coast had bent and drilled them to use as drawer pulls. Sitting down on an upturned bucket, he began to screw them into place. As he did the simple task, he let his mind wander.

Dean had been the perfect nurse. He smiled, thinking that Dean would hate that term. Throughout Castiel's convalescence, Dean made sure food was in the house and easily accessible. He fretted
about Castiel's use of the stairs and had brought him stacks of crossword puzzle books and magazines. If Dean had his way, he'd still be at home... bored out of his fucking mind. The smile disappeared and he thought of Dean's reaction to Sam's announcement. Sam was certain that Dean wasn't ashamed about his sexuality. Was it just his relationship with Castiel that he didn't want publicized?

"Those are cute." Dean's voice startled him and he dropped one of the tiny screws with a curse. Before he could react, Dean picked it up and handed it to him. "Sorry, didn't mean to sneak up on you. Thought you would have heard me coming." Dean stomped his heavy work boot to emphasize his point.

"My mind was elsewhere," Castiel stated, repositioning the screw. Very aware the camera was rolling, Castiel smiled, though it didn't reach his eyes. "What have you been doing with your afternoon?"

Dean listed a few things on his punch list, the whole time fiddling with one of the drawer pulls. "You ready to call it quits for the day?"

"Let me finish these first." Dean shrugged and picked up another screwdriver, making quick work of Castiel's little project.

It wasn't until they were in Dean's truck that Dean spoke again. "What's wrong?" Castiel looked out the passenger side window and steeled himself for this conversation. Dean must have thought Castiel was stalling because he snapped, "I know something's wrong, Cas. Communication. Remember?"

"Are you ashamed of people knowing you and I are..." Frustration at his injuries, the constant discomfort as he healed, and his own insecurities made him snarl. "What are we, Dean? Are we a couple? Does the word relationship bother you? I don't even know where I stand with you. Are we just fucking until something better comes along? Or did you really mean what you said?" There it was. The elephant in the room.

Dean drove for another block, his hands tight on the steering wheel. When he pulled over into an empty parking lot, Castiel felt his heart grow cold. This was it. This was when Dean would see that he was broken and irredeemable. Dean got out of the car and leaned against the hood. Castiel sat frozen. Then Dean turned around and looked at him, his expression unreadable. Slowly, he got out and came to stand in front of Dean, waiting for him to speak. "I meant what I said, Cas, and I'm not fucking ashamed of... us." Castiel's downcast eyes came up.

"I don't deserve you, Dean."

"Yeah, well... maybe we both deserve something good for a change." They clung to each other in the cold, empty parking lot for a long time. When Castiel shivered, Dean was the one who stepped back. "Let's get you home." They held hands in the car, neither wanting to break thoughtful silence. When they went inside, Castiel turned to look at Dean.

"What was it then?" Dean's brow furrowed in confusion. "You were upset about something when we met with Sam. What was it?" Dean shifted uncomfortably, his eyes darting around the room. Castiel waited patiently.

"Can we sit down first?" Even stressed, Dean was still worried about his comfort. He nodded and followed Dean to the couch, then took his hand and intertwined their fingers. Dean cleared his throat. "I know we both feel the same about whatever this is... we want to be together, but don't actually know how..." Castiel nodded his head and gestured for Dean to continue. "Don't get me wrong... being with you is fucking awesome. But part of that is kind of... um... okay, fuck it... It's scary. I
don't know how to be with you and not be worried that I'll wake up one day and you'll just be... gone."

Castiel was stunned into silence. He didn't expect this at all... How could Dean be afraid of that? Castiel wanted Dean for as long as he could have him... wasn't that obvious? As he thought about it, he began to realize that no, it wasn't obvious at all. He'd been just this side of awful to Dean on multiple occasions. Of course, Dean would worry about Castiel leaving him. He sifted through his thoughts, trying to think of some way to reassure Dean. He looked over and saw that Dean was staring intently at the floor.

"Dean, look at me." Very slowly, his green eyes moved up to meet Castiel's. He reached out and tipped Dean's chin with his finger. "I'm not going to leave you. You're not going to wake up one day and be alone. Not unless you leave me.... because I'm not going anywhere."

"You say that now, Cas..."

"No, Dean. You don't get to do that. You don't get to use your fears to dictate what I feel for you. I want to be with you. For as long as you will have me." He heard Dean take in a sharp breath and exhale slowly. In some silent understanding, they leaned in at the same time and kissed each other softly.

The weekend came and went. They didn't speak of Castiel's outburst, Dean's confession, nor did they exchange any more words about love or a future. Something changed between them, though. It was evident in the small touches, the sweet smiles, and the gentle teasing that told Castiel they would be okay.

With each passing day, Castiel grew stronger... mostly thanks to Dean forcing him to rest constantly, but Castiel would never tell him that. Monday morning, Dean took him to the hospital to get his stitches removed and the doctor did another x-ray on his ribs. Dean's insistence that he remain sedentary really did pay off and they were healing nicely. Since Dean hadn't joined him in the exam room, Castiel got to ask about sex. The doctor informed him that they could engage in sexual activities as long as it didn't cause an increase in pain and wasn't too strenuous. He'd leave that last part out when telling Dean the good news. Otherwise, Nurse Ratched would take the strenuous thing to mean that Castiel didn't get to move at all.

Dean gave him a lecherous grin when he told him the edited version of the doctor's instructions. Castiel couldn't wait for the work day to be over.

On the drive from the hospital to the reno-house, Castiel was chattering excitedly about his recovery and brought up the subject of his motorcycle. "I've been looking online and found another Indian Chief. It isn't in the best shape, so I'll have to find someone to restore it for me. Or I could get a Harley Roadster this time... what do you think?"

The silence in the car was unbearable, the tension suddenly palpable. What did he do wrong this time? He tentatively looked over at Dean and his stomach plummeted at the sight. The man was gripping the steering wheel so hard, it was a wonder it didn't break. His chest was heaving with each labored breath and the veins in his neck were noticeably bulging. He realized Dean was reacting to what he said about getting another motorcycle. As he raised his eyes to Dean's face, he expected anger, but what he saw was pure, unadulterated fear. Fear. Dean's breathing was becoming more labored and Castiel started to worry about his ability to drive. Was Dean having a panic attack? He reached out and laid a hand on the back of Dean's neck.

"Dean?" No answer. "Dean, you have to calm down." Still no response. "Dean, I need you to calm down... please." Castiel wasn't sure if it was the sound of his voice or the fact that they were pulling
up to the reno-house, but Dean somehow managed to park the truck. Castiel rubbed the tension out of his neck and whispered soothing words. Dean tried to talk, but the tightness in his chest seemed to prevent him from speaking. "Shh... Dean, it's okay. I'm sorry... I didn't realize. Please, Dean, just breathe."

Castiel was outwardly composed because Dean needed him to be, but he was a mess on the inside. He had no idea Dean felt that way about his motorcycle... or about him. He didn't need to ask. He knew from Dean's visceral reaction that he was terrified of him getting on another bike. Just seeing the panic in his eyes made Castiel feel sick. He didn't understand. Other than Luc, no one had ever shown that level of concern for him before. It wasn't rational... anyone could get in an accident, even in a car. But as he'd recently learned, love wasn't rational. And there was no way he would let Dean feel like this ever again.

When Dean's breathing returned to normal, he opened his mouth to say something, but Castiel stopped him and took his hand. "You don't have to say anything, Dean. I understand. I won't get another bike if it worries you so much." He smiled, trying to convey the confidence in his decision so Dean wouldn't question his resolve. It seemed to work because Dean was reaching for him, wrapping him in a not-too-tight embrace.

"I'm sorry, Cas. I can't tell you what to do. If you...if you want another bike, I'll be okay with it." Castiel saw right through the lie. "I don't want you to resent me... so, get a motorcycle if you want to." He had no intention of putting Dean through that again, but Dean had to think this was his decision.

"I have to weigh my options, Dean, and I will take your opinions into consideration," Castiel said softly. He sat back, at once missing the warmth of Dean's arms. He gave him a smile and after a sweet kiss, they exited the truck to begin their day.

As Castiel headed to the RV for makeup, he thought about all the times he felt free riding his bike against the wind. Riding had been more than a hobby, it was stress relief... his favorite way to wind down after a long work day. He would miss it dearly. Just when the sadness started creeping through, he glanced over and met Dean's beautiful eyes, crinkled at the corners from his smile. In that moment, all the grief for what he was giving up paled in comparison to what he had gained. Dean was worth it.

Later that night, Castiel stood at the sink in his bathroom. The fading bruises, the healing road rash and under his pants, the red scar on his thigh, made him feel unattractive. Sex tonight would be with the lights out. He could hear Dean moving around in the bedroom. Today had been a day of revelations and as he stared at his reflection, he knew...really knew...that Dean loved him. He glanced to his right and saw Dean. He met his eyes in the mirror. "Hey, babe," Dean said softly, coming to stand behind him and wrapping his arms around his waist. He rested his chin on Castiel's shoulder and smiled.

"Hey, yourself," Castiel replied softly. Dean's eyes drifted down to the yellowish bruising and let his fingers ghost over his ribs. "I'm okay, Dean," Castiel said, wanting nothing more than to cover his body and shield it from Dean's eyes.

"I know," Dean murmured, brushing his lips along Castiel's neck. Castiel tilted his head to give him more access. He felt Dean's fingers at the waistband of his sleep pants. "Been waiting so long for this, Cas." He rubbed his palm over Castiel's half-hard cock. The interest in Dean's eyes and his touch made Castiel press himself into Dean's palm. Castiel met Dean's gaze in the mirror. God, he was gorgeous.

"Let's go to bed," Castiel suggested. He was more than ready to be inside of Dean. Dean's teeth
tugged at the flesh of his shoulder and his hands roughly shoved Castiel's pants down to mid-thigh. Castiel's rapidly hardening cock sprang free and Dean seized it in his right hand. "Dean..."

"Shh... Just let me..." Castiel watched their reflection in the mirror. His skin was pale against Dean's darker tan. Dean's hand moved slowly up and down his shaft. "I want you to see what I see." Castiel met Dean's eyes. He could feel Dean's erection pressing against the cleft of his ass. His other hand snaked around to cup Castiel's balls. He rolled them in his palm, squeezing gently. Castiel moaned and leaned back, letting Dean take his weight. Dean's mouth moved up and down Castiel's neck, licking, kissing, nipping softly. "Beautiful..." He whispered against Castiel's skin. He lowered his gaze to his cock. He was fully hard now, a bead of precum at the slit, the head dark against Dean's fist. He watched in fascination as Dean stroked him. "Look how perfect you are." Dean's lips were at his ear now and his tongue darted into the shell to swirl around, leaving a wet, warm trail.

Dean's hand left his sac. He took Castiel's and guided it over. Castiel's palm covered his balls and began to rub them just the way he liked. He felt Dean's smile against his throat. With his free hand, Dean tweaked Castiel's nipple, making him gasp and then moan as Dean rolled it between his fingers. "I want you to come for me, babe." Castiel opened his mouth, but no words came out. His eyes were locked on Dean's clasped fingers moving up and down... his arousal making him slick... up and down. His hips rocked as he drove himself into Dean's fist. Faster...faster... Castiel closed his eyes. It felt so good... so damn good. "No, Cas, open your eyes. You have to watch."

Castiel shivered from Dean's rough voice breathing on his neck and did as he was told. He was mesmerized by the sight of Dean servicing him this way, completely bound by the look in Dean's eyes as he selflessly devoted himself to Castiel's pleasure. The heat in his belly was building, his arousal climbing higher and higher at the image they formed together. Dean's eyes met his in the mirror, finally driving him over the edge, and he saw it all. Dean's satisfied smile... the evidence of his orgasm shooting across the sink and countertop... his own face, slack and flushed. Dean stopped moving his hand when Castiel's cock became sensitive to his touch. His warm palms moved over Castiel's stomach and chest, smearing his body with his cum. Green eyes, as rich as the color of the forest and darkened with passion, boar into him as he raised his fingers to Castiel's mouth. He wrapped his lips around Dean's fingers and sucked, his tongue lapping up the taste of himself.

He turned in Dean's arms and kissed him with everything he had, holding nothing back. He thrust his tongue deep into Dean's mouth, then pulled back to bite at Dean's lower lip, sucking it into his mouth. His hands moved up and down Dean's muscular back, fingers digging into flesh. He moaned Dean's name over and over, a prayer showing his own devotion. He felt Dean's hard cock between them and sank to his knees, the need to taste Dean overpowering every other thought. Dean's fingers curled into his hair and Castiel took him deep down his throat. His fingers gripped the cheeks of Dean's ass and he pulled forward, showing Dean what he wanted. Dean groaned and started to roll his hips, his hands holding Castiel's head still as he fucked his mouth. Setting a frenzied pace, Dean didn't last long and came with a drawn-out keening sound, pumping his load into Castiel's willing mouth. He swallowed again and again to keep from choking. It was hot and salty and Castiel had never tasted anything so good.

Dean pushed his greedy mouth away and hauled him up by his hair to claim Castiel's lips. He let Dean take what he wanted, still tasting their combined arousal on his tongue. Finally spent, Dean rested his forehead against Castiel's. "Damn," he panted and Castiel stifled a laugh. He broke away and started the shower. They took their time washing each other with loving strokes, then dressed in warm pajama pants and climbed into bed. Dean wrapped his arms around Castiel and held him close, the skin of their bare chests touching. In the silence of the night, the rhythm of their hearts beat as one as they drifted off to sleep.
I have to tell you guys that I thought we would be winding this up by this chapter, but Amanda and I are still going strong with ideas and sex scenes. Hope you guys don't get bored with the story.
Chapter 15

Chapter by palominopup

Chapter Notes

A treat for all of you fellow Gishers. Good luck this week.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"No, Sam. No fucking way. We're not doing that, so you can just fuck right off." Sitting at the table in the RV, Dean couldn't believe what he was hearing. Sam's fuckface producer, Crowley, wanted Dean and Cas to show up to the premier watch party topless... as in no shirts. He couldn't believe Sam had even asked. Dean had only just accepted the idea of the show playing up the relationship angle... no way was he going to get half-naked and whore himself out just to please some fucker with a god complex. The dude even wanted Dean to wear his tool belt. Jesus fucking Christ...

"Dean, it's only for the initial arrival at the press event..." Dean's head whipped around so fast, it's amazing his neck didn't snap.

"Are you fucking kidding me? Now there's a press event? You said it was a watch party. You didn't say anything about us talking to the press. Seriously, Sam, what the fuck?" He felt a warm hand on his shoulder and instantly felt more at ease.

"Sam, what Dean is trying to say is that you are asking a great deal more of us than what we originally agreed to. While we have no problem arriving at the press event together..." Dean started to interrupt, but Cas stopped him with a single look. "...we will be doing so fully clothed. You may tell Crowley his proposal is entirely inappropriate." Without another word, Cas took him by the hand and led him out the RV door. Once they were outside, he turned to Dean and noticed the expression on his face. "Was that okay? Did I speak out of turn?"

Dean grabbed the front of Cas' shirt and hauled him in for a rough kiss. "Are you serious? That was hot as fuck, Cas." Cas' expression went from concerned to heated in the blink of an eye. He took Dean by the arm and pulled him around to the other side of the RV, pushed him against it, and kissed him, his body grinding against his entire length. Dean moaned and clenched his fist in Cas' hair and...

"Uh... guys?" Kate was standing there, looking amused. Dean sighed and reluctantly stepped away from Cas.

"Did you need something, Kate?" She was obviously trying not to laugh.

"It's time for..." She was starting to lose her composure. "...hair and makeup." Her eyes darted up to their ravaged hair and she finally lost it.

"We will join you there shortly," Cas responded with a business-like tone. It was so absurd and out of place, Dean snorted an involuntary laugh. Kate disappeared around the corner as the sound of her giggles echoed in the air. Dean nudged Cas with his shoulder.

"Come on, you sex maniac. Let's go get pretty."
The week seemed to fly by. There was an energy on the jobsite as the countdown to the premier wound down. Sam had given everyone Saturday off and there was a catered party happening at the studio. Dean would have preferred to watch it at home in front of his big screen with a six-pack of beer, but since they were the stars of the show, he and Cas had to show up. The prospect of an open bar was the only thing Dean was looking forward to.

He glanced over at Cas, hands at the perfect positions on the steering wheel. He smirked. Cas was treating his new SUV like it was made of glass. Dean had bitched about him buying the damn thing. It wasn't a Chevy. It was a fuckin' Jeep. He'd bought a car magnet with 'Soccer Mom' emblazoned on it and stuck it to the back end, and Cas hadn't noticed it yet. Despite its lameness, the panoramic sunroof was pretty cool... and Dean would never admit it, but the sound system was fucking awesome. "Dude, the light's been green for weeks."

Cas looked at him like he wanted to smite him. "Dean, excuse me for being cautious." Dean bowed his head... God he was stupid. He should have expected Cas to be nervous around intersections. A horn honked behind them and Cas raised up his hand and flipped them off. Dean's mouth gaped open.

"What the hell, Cas?" Cas eased through the intersection and put on his turn signal at the next block. The guard at the gate waved him through after checking his ID. When he turned off the ignition, he gave Dean a mocking smile.

"You flip people off all the time, Dean."

"Yeah, but that's me. You're Mister Considerate Driver. Hell, you even drive shopping carts like a little old lady. "Excuse me, but I would like to pass you now, dear," Dean said in a sing-song voice.

"Bite me," Cas retorted and opened his door. Dean snickered and followed him to the doors of the studio. Everyone else had the freakin' day off, but Sam needed them to do some stupid photo shoot this morning. Wasn't the first one enough? And why the hell did he need his tool belt?

Cas stopped at the front desk and Dean shifted his tool belt from one hand to the next. The receptionist was openly drooling over Cas and Dean had to stop himself from stepping in and saying, "Back up, Blondie, he's mine."

Sam was coming down the hall like the lumbering moose he resembled. He grinned at them, "Morning, guys. Thanks for coming. I'll try to make this as painless as possible and we should be able to finish up in about an hour." He looked at their clothes and nodded. "Good... that's great." Dean was told to wear jeans, a t-shirt, work boots and his tool belt. He glanced at Cas. Cas was in jeans too, but they were a tight-fitting, dark denim with some douche's name stitched on the pockets. His dress shirt was neatly pressed and he was sporting a blue and white striped tie.

They followed Sam into the familiar space and Kate came over to them. "Good morning, boys. Come with me and let me do my magic."

"No magic needed to make me smokin' hot," Dean said, grinning at her. She rolled her eyes like he predicted she would and soon, he was being smeared with the usual goo. Cas sat beside him getting his sexy hair tamed... no, wait... the stylist was sexing it up. Dean narrowed his eyes.

A paunchy guy who looked like a mountain of dicks walked over to them. "Well, well, I finally get to meet my two favorite money-makers. The name's Crowley," he said in a pronounced accent, sticking out his hand for Cas to shake before turning to take Dean's. "Today is just a fun photo shoot to add to the social media sites after the show airs." Sam was standing behind the dude looking...
slightly uncomfortable and that should have been Dean's first warning.

Once they'd been slathered with makeup and had their hair fuckin' *sculpted*, Sam pointed them in the direction of a... wow... Dean stopped and Cas ran into him. Someone had taken the rendering of the finished house and made a set, complete with front porch and landscaping. Sam grinned. "What do you think?"

"Whoa, Sam, this is pretty damn sweet." Dean moved closer to inspect the materials and frowned at the shoddy workmanship. "This shit wouldn't hold up in a strong breeze, Sammy."

"It's not meant to, Dean. It's just a prop. A very large, very expensive prop." Dean lifted his eyes heavenward. Shoddy construction was a pet peeve of his. Then he saw Cas smiling at the fake house.

"It is just like I imagined it, Sam." Well, crap. Anything to keep his boyfriend happy. It wasn't until they were being positioned by the photographer that Dean realized he had used the term boyfriend. Until now, he refused to put a label on their relationship. Strange as it was, Dean didn't freak out.

Crowley stood to the side and watched as the shutter clicked again and again. They sat on the fake steps, shoulders touching... smiling, not smiling, looking at each other, looking at the camera. Dean was getting antsy. He and Cas had made plans to drive down to Tacoma to eat lunch at a cool restaurant overlooking Commencement Bay.

The clapping of hands brought Dean out of his thoughts about food... fried halibut and French fries to be more precise. Crowley was smiling and it creeped Dean out. He whispered something to Sam and the photographer and whatever it was, Sam was looking green around the gills. He nodded and walked over to them. "Um, well, Crowley wants to...um... show some more... skin." Dean and Cas both blinked at him like he had just sprouted a penis on his forehead.

"Skin?" Cas asked in his deep, whiskey and cigars voice, the voice that usually made Dean's dick hard. In this instance, that voice meant danger. Dean didn't want to be Sam right now.

"Yeah...um..."

"Quit stammering and spit it out, Sam," Dean growled, his patience nearing its end.

"We want a few shots of you two without your shirts." Dean was winding up for a scathing retort, but Cas beat him to it and he was much more eloquent than Dean would have been.

"Sam, I seem to remember a conversation about exploitation... do you? I can't answer for Dean, but I refuse to be objectified." *Way to use big words, Cas.*

Sam's expression was that of a kicked puppy and Dean groaned. He hated the kicked puppy face.

"Sam, can't we compromise?"

Cas spared him a sideways glance. "Compromise, Dean? Perhaps only one of us should strip down for the camera. Do you suggest a coin toss?" Okay, so Cas was pissed. That was pretty evident.

Crowley chose that moment to join them and by the look on his face, he'd overheard Cas. "Hello, boys. Is there a problem?" Three sets of eyes turned to him. Sam swallowed audibly and Dean couldn't let him take the fall.

"Yeah, we have a problem. Cas and I aren't swimsuit models who get paid to take our clothes off."

"Dean... can I call you Dean? Great. This is a compromise," Crowley purred, not waiting for Dean
to answer his question. "You and Cas..." Dean could feel Cas bristling beside him at the use of his nickname. "...refused to appear sans shirts at the event tonight, so..." He let the word hang and Dean felt sick to his stomach. It wasn't like he cared about being seen bare-chested, he took his shirt off on jobsites all the time because he got fucking hot doing manual labor... but that wasn't displayed on national television.

"May I ask why it's even warranted for us to appear without shirts?" Cas wasn't backing down and Dean smiled smugly. He loved it when Cas sounded like a professor.

"Sex sells. Always has... always will." Suddenly, the 'nice guy' demeanor was gone. "Listen, we can play this the easy way. I'm the boss and I say so. I'm not asking you to strip down to your pretty panties. Stop behaving like a couple of virgins and just take off your goddamn shirts for a couple of pictures." With that, he turned and stalked off, leaving Sam looking distraught. Dean placed his hand on Cas' arm, but spoke to Sam.

"We do this, but no more. This is that fucker's one chance." Since the entire room had heard the discussion, everyone seemed more subdued. Even Kate, who was usually outspoken, was quiet as she touched up the still slightly yellow bruise on Cas' ribs. The scabs on his arm from the road rash would be away from the camera according to Sam, who was standing behind them. Even though his wounds wouldn't show, Dean could tell Cas was feeling self-conscious. The whole situation sucked, but without another option, Dean made up his mind to make this as painless as possible for Cas.

They were positioned on the porch for the first shot. Dean was standing at the top of the steps with one arm propped on the column, his hand resting lazily on his tool belt. Cas was one step down, one leg on the next step looking like he was moving toward Dean. He seemed extremely tense, so Dean did what Dean does best.

"Hey, Cas," he whispered so only Cas could hear him. "Do you think I should wear the tool belt next time you fuck me?" The effect was better than Dean could have hoped for. Cas morphed into an object of desire, slightly leaning toward him with a predatory grin on his face, Dean smirking back at him. One click of the camera was all it took to capture the perfect moment.

The next shot had them sitting on the stairs, Cas situated behind Dean with one leg trailing down beside him. Dean was supposed to lean forward, elbows lazing across his bent knees, but at the last second, he took Cas' arm and laid it across his shoulder and leaned back. He looked up at Cas' face and saw him looking down at him with affection. Dean smiled softly, and for a brief moment, they were alone... until the sound of a camera clicking broke the mood. He felt Cas go rigid and rode to the rescue again, whispering only loud enough for Cas' ears.

"You know, all these cameras have gotten me thinking... I've never made a sex tape before." He wagged his eyebrows at Cas comically, and Cas burst into laughter. Dean couldn't help joining him and they were laughing so hard, neither of them noticed the camera clicking again.

Not long after, they were free to go. After taking the makeup off in the restroom, Dean and Cas got back in the Jeep and headed to Tacoma. It was still early enough for lunch. Once they were on the open road, Cas turned up the heat and opened the sunroof. "Cas, isn't it crazy to open that in January?" Dean asked, pointing up to the open sky.

"My car, my rules," Cas said loudly to be heard over the wind. Dean knew it was a dig at him from the last time they road in the Impala and Dean told him to stop fucking with the radio because the driver picks the music and Cas should shut his cakehole.

Lunch was great, and Dean was suddenly aware that this was technically their first date. Maybe it could have been more romantic than lunch at a touristy restaurant, but somehow it seemed...
appropriate for them. He looked across the table to see Cas staring intently out of the huge windows overlooking the choppy bay. "Enjoying yourself?"

Cas turned and smiled. "Very much. Thank you for suggesting this, Dean."

The ride back to Seattle went by fast and Cas dropped Dean by his house to get ready for the big party. Sam wanted them in their 'work clothes' since Crowley wasn't winning the topless battle. He pulled out the jeans he normally wore to job sites, faded with rips and holes, but tossed them aside. He wasn't going a party like that. The finished look was much better. Clean denim and a red and black plaid shirt. His one concession was his work boots. They were old and scuffed up, but they were comfortable.

As he sat down to pull them on, his eyes caught the half-opened drawer of his nightstand. When was the last time he even slept here? He got up to shut it and saw the cache of supplies. Dubbed his sex drawer by Charlie, he kept his lube, condoms, and assorted toys there. She'd opened it once, being her nosy self and he remembered her squeals and laughter at his collection. He would have retaliated in kind at her house, but...no. Just no. He pushed it closed and then an idea formed and he opened it again. He grabbed a few packets of lube and put them in the breast pocket of his flannel, snapping it shut so they didn't fall out while he was shaking hands with some network exec. His heart rate picked up as he thought about his plans... it was the premier and they had to celebrate, didn't they?

They'd agreed that Dean would drive to Cas' place so they could ride in together, since he'd be spending the night as usual. He locked up Baby and went inside, calling out "Honey, I'm home!" He meant it to be funny, but as he said it, warm feelings spread through him at the thought of coming home to Cas every day. His blue-eyed angel came into the room and Dean smiled appreciatively. He was wearing his usual attire, complete with dark jeans that accented his perfect ass. "Looking good, babe," Dean said, leaning in for a kiss. "And you smell good, too," he said, breathing in the scent of Cas' neck and taking a few bites of his delicious skin.

"Stop that or we'll be late," Cas said sternly, but Dean could see the twitch in the corner of his mouth. He pulled back and they looked each other up and down, then smiled as soon as they realized what they'd done. Apparently, they had unknowingly dressed in coordinating outfits. Dean's red and black flannel played off of Cas' ensemble perfectly. After a beat of hesitation, they shrugged and decided to just go with it.

They decided Cas would drive his Jeep to the studio. Dean would never say it out loud, but he knew Cas needed the control of being behind the wheel, especially after being forced to rely on everyone else during his recovery. Cas was a strong man, and Dean knew from personal experience how important independence and self-reliance could be after a crisis. All things considered, he thought Cas handled his incapacitation fairly well. It was an added bonus that he'd left his tool belt in Cas' car earlier... he was going to need that later.

The studio was jam-packed with cars. Sam told them to expect a crowd, but this was staggering. Hosts from other HHTV shows and execs from the network would be there as well. Dean felt anxious at the idea of making small talk with network big-wigs and he hoped they wouldn't be pressured to stay long.

As they approached the entrance, several reporters and photographers lined the walkway, creating a sort of gauntlet they had to get through to get inside. Dean stopped walking and Cas turned around and raised a questioning eyebrow.

"I'm okay, Cas. I just don't like all this attention. I know it's unavoidable, but it makes me uncomfortable...I'm sorry..." He trailed off as Cas stepped closer to him and slid his hand down Dean's arm, taking his hand.
"You don't have to apologize. I feel the same way. But I guess if we have to do this, at least we get to do it together." He leaned closer and spoke in Dean's ear. "There's no reason we couldn't have a little fun while we're at it..." His grin was wicked and Dean's dick twitched in his tight jeans.

"Cas, don't you dare say another word. I'm not walking in there in front of Jesus and everybody with a damn boner." Dean's eyes were glinting with humor and Cas chuckled. Still holding hands, they made their way through the press gauntlet and went inside.

The foyer had been transformed into an elegant showplace. Space that was once empty now held tall tables covered in white linen. A bar was set up on one side and a buffet of hors d'oeuvres was on the opposite wall. Feeling more confident with Cas at his side, Dean squeezed his hand and they went to find Sam.

Castiel was sifting through his closet and reflecting on the day's events. The photo shoot was initially a fiasco, but Dean came to the rescue and had somehow made the experience painless... more than that, he actually made it sexy and fun. Then again, Dean had a way of making everything more fun. Castiel was awed by that, but mostly he was grateful. The lunch was enjoyable as well. He wondered if Dean realized it was their first date. Probably not. While Dean could be romantic in the ways that really mattered, he wasn't a hearts and flowers kind of lover. There was a time when Castiel thought that was what he wanted. His idea of the perfect man was suave, handsome, soft-spoken... an intellectual. Castiel laughed softly as he buttoned up his grey pinstriped shirt. Dean definitely wasn't soft-spoken, but he was handsome, smart, and brought laughter into his life. Most of all, the brightness of Dean's soul banished the shadows of cruelty in Castiel's past.

He was pulled out of his thoughts by Dean shouting, "Honey, I'm home," in a weak imitation of Jack Nicholson. Home... Not for the first time, Castiel longed to make their living arrangements more permanent. One step at a time, Novak.

He went down to greet him and paused briefly to appreciate the view. Dean was doing the same and eyed him suggestively. "Looking good, babe." He strutted across the floor and wrapped an arm around Castiel's waist to pull him close. "And you smell good, too," he said, sniffing Castiel's neck and then nipping at the exposed skin.

"Stop that or we'll be late," Castiel tried to sound stern, but Dean's smirk told him it fell flat. As soon as Dean pulled away, Castiel noticed their outfits. Somehow, they had dressed in similar colors. He should have been annoyed and changed what he was wearing, but he secretly thought it was adorable and decided to leave it alone. He took the time to throw on a black sports coat before they stepped outside. Castiel headed for the Impala because Dean claimed to hate his Jeep. He knew better, but he'd go along with his charade.

"Let's take that monstrosity you call a car," Dean called from behind him, already standing at the passenger door of his SUV.

"You want me to drive?" Castiel eyed him suspiciously. Dean loved driving and was a terrible passenger. He even went as far as saying Castiel drove like old people fucked. Why didn't he want to
drive now? Dean was already inside with the door closed, so Castiel shook off his suspicions and sat behind the wheel. It felt so good to be able to drive and not have to wait for someone to take him places. That had been the hardest part of his recovery period and he was happy it was over.

Castiel was shocked at the massive crowd in front of the HHTV building. Dean stopped walking and he turned around wondering what was wrong.

"I'm okay, Cas. I just don't like all this attention. I know it's unavoidable, but it makes me uncomfortable...I'm sorry..." Castiel saw the anxiety on his lover's face and felt the need to fix it. He moved closer and took Dean's hand.

"You don't have to apologize. I feel the same way. But I guess if we have to do this, at least we get to do it together." He remembered the skillful way Dean flirted with him to ease his nerves during the photo shoot and leaned closer to Dean's ear. "There's no reason we couldn't have a little fun while we're at it..." He flashed his sexiest grin and was satisfied when he saw Dean's reaction.

"Cas, don't you dare say another word. I'm not walking in there in front of Jesus and everybody with a damn boner." Dean's eyes were glinting with humor and Cas chuckled.

Holding Dean's hand helped him feel more grounded. After all, he was just as nervous as Dean... he just hid it better. When they walked up to the press line, several reporters started sticking microphones in their faces and bombarding them with questions. Earlier, after the photo shoot, Sam and the PR team had given them a crash course in dealing with the press. To put it simply, they were supposed to smile and be nice. Despite his anxiety, Dean was a natural and answered the questions in his usual carefree way. Castiel found it difficult to stay engaged, but just when he started tensing up, Dean would give his hand a reassuring squeeze and he would relax. Finally entering the doors of the building, Castiel was overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the crowd and he was once again grateful for the calming presence of Dean's hand in his own. He knew Dean was looking for a friendly face in the crowd and Castiel spied Kate talking to two other beautiful women. He tugged Dean forward and the crowd parted for them. He caught snippets of conversation along the way.

"There they are."

"Heard they were lovers."

"Yowza, they are fucking hot."

"...big publicity stunt. Heard they actually hate each other."
"A shame they're gay, I'd love to..."

"Winchester was sweating this show. Heard he was going to get canned..."

Kate looked up and saw them. Her welcoming smile made him breathe easier. She was about to introduce them to the other women when Sam jogged over to them. "Good, you're here. Come on." He grabbed Dean's wrist and dragged them through the crowd. Castiel lost track of all the people they'd been introduced to and when the announcement was made for everyone to file into the viewing theater, he was relieved. They were shown to the front row and joined by Sam, Crowley, and a few other high-ranking network employees. The room darkened and everyone quieted.

The show’s logo flashed on the screen and the announcer's voice filled the room.

"In a world of rundown neighborhoods and empty foreclosures, two creative minds dared to dream of something better. Dean Winchester, general contractor and a visionary in his own field has built his career on creating unique homes and innovative developments with an emphasis on minimalism. Castiel Novak, an architect and interior designer has taken his field by storm with his original concepts and fresh take on eco-friendly home décor. Together, they are the perfect team.

Join our hosts, Cas and Dean, as they take a nightmare and turn it into a dream for one lucky family. Welcome to Designing Dreams."

Pictures of the house before the renovations started led into the initial interview they'd done in the studio. Castiel saw the tension radiating from them. It seemed like so long ago. As the film played on, Castiel was fascinated by the show's sophisticated production quality. He would have to congratulate Sam later. The camera angles showed the state of the home through their eyes. Their snide comments to each other were on full display as they shared their ideas and Castiel felt his face warm. He'd been a real bitch, and Dean...Dean had come across as an asshole. That wasn't who they really were. Sam warned them the first couple of episodes would be eye-opening. He felt Dean squeeze his hand and tried to relax.

"Next on Designing Dreams, Cas and Dean work on the demolition..." Castiel's attention faded as the closing credits rolled over the screen. Now, they just had to wait to see what the viewers thought. For Sam's sake, he hoped it was received well. Crowley stood as the lights came up and walked to the front of the room. Someone handed him a microphone and he waited for silence.

"I have to admit, when Sam Winchester brought me this idea, I was skeptical. But once I saw the dailies, I knew we had a hit on our hands." Beside Dean, Sam grinned. Dean was smiling proudly and he pulled his brother in for a sideways hug. "I think HHTV’s newest stars are going to make our ratings skyrocket. This is only the beginning... wait until you see what's ahead for our boys. Cas and Dean are going to turn up the heat." Everyone whistled and clapped around them. Castiel had a feeling his life was getting ready to change in a very big way.

Champagne flowed and several of the network's stars came up to congratulate them once they cleared out of the theater and congregated back in the foyer. Castiel could tell that Dean was ready to go and he pulled Sam away from his friends. "Sam, Dean and I are tired. When can we make our exit?"

Sam looked over to where Dean was talking to a woman with short, vibrantly red hair. Her hand was on Dean's sleeve and Castiel smiled when Dean brushed it off casually. "Does he still get up at the crack of dawn every day?"

"He does. It's irritating," Castiel said sarcastically and Sam laughed.
"Go rescue him from Abby. She has a hard time taking no for an answer. You guys can feel free to head out. I'll make your excuses."

"Thank you, Sam." Castiel moved through the crowd to take his place by Dean's side. The redhead's lips and nails were painted the same shade of vermillion. Castiel didn't like her predatory gaze on Dean.

"Darling, Sam said we could leave now." He possessively placed his arm around Dean's waist and brushed his lips along Dean's jaw. To the woman, he said, "If you'll excuse us, Dean and I have other plans." He got a great deal of satisfaction at her hardened expression.

Outside, in the quiet night air, Dean began to laugh. "You jealous son of a bitch. I thought you were going to claw her eyes out."

Castiel shrugged as he dug out his keys. "She was touching what is mine," he stated, his tone pitched even lower than usual. Dean spun him around and laid a very passionate kiss on his lips. When he was allowed up for air, he gave Dean a questioning look. "What was that for?"

All in all, Dean thought the episode was pretty cool. While he wasn't proud of his behavior, he was honored to be taking part in a show that would make someone's dream of owning a house come true. He and Cas got separated after the viewing and Dean had taken a few swigs of champagne. It was the expensive shit, not the cheap stuff he'd had at parties or celebrations in the past. He was getting a little buzzed from mixing the bubbly wine with the few shots of whiskey he'd gotten at the open bar. He made nice for Sam's sake, but these people weren't anything like him. He was just a contractor. Some of the other hosts introduced themselves, and though they might have been blue collar at one time, now they lived for the lavish parties that came with fame. Judging by the manicures and designer clothes, the work they did on their shows was all smoke and mirrors.

He was heading back to the bar when a scantily dressed redhead stopped him with a hand on his chest. He looked over his shoulder, still scouting the room for Cas. "Can I help you?"

"I just wanted to introduce myself. Abby Huffman, Vice President of HHTV." She held out her hand and Dean noted that her nails matched her lips, blood red.

"Nice to meet you," Dean said, shaking her offered hand. She held onto it longer than Dean was comfortable with and when she finally let go, she rested it on his forearm. Smiling, he shifted his arm and it fell away. "If you'll excuse me, I have..."

"Tell me, Dean, is it true..." She was interrupted by Cas' arrival and Dean wanted to lay one on the man for saving him from this piranha. Cas' possessive and obviously jealous tone sent shivers up Dean's spine. Once they were outside, he broke into laughter, but the humor turned to lust very quickly when Cas said, "She was touching what is mine."

Those words, said in Cas' husky voice, went straight to his dick. Thankfully, he had a plan to take care of that not-so-little problem. In the meantime, he turned Cas around and kissed him, a promise of what's to come. He pulled back, leaving the man breathless. "What was that for?"
"Let's go," he ordered. Cas raised an eyebrow, but allowed himself to be led to the SUV. He took the keys from Cas and got into the driver's seat. When they were well on their way, Cas spoke.

"This isn't the way to my house... Are we going to yours?"

"No, I just want to swing by the jobsite and drop off my toolbelt." He gestured to the back seat where he'd dropped it earlier in the day. Cas huffed his annoyance.

"Can't it wait," he muttered, his hand moving up Dean's thigh. "I want to get you naked."

"I'll only take a second, Cas. I promise I'll make it up to you." Dean covered Cas' hand with his own. He pulled the vehicle into the driveway behind the trailer and got out. Cas remained seated. Dean bent to look inside. "Aren't you coming?"

"You said it wouldn't take long," Cas said blandly, already taking out his phone to check his stupid social media crap. He needed Plan B. He opened the rear door and snatched up his belt, the tools rattled against each other. Cas looked around and glared at him. "Really, Dean... I don't see why you couldn't just bring it to work Monday."

Dean managed to keep his face blank. "Hmm... good thinking, Cas." He buckled the heavy belt around his waist and licked his lips slowly, his eyes seductive as he hooked one thumb in the belt, placed his other hand on the roof of the SUV, and leaned closer. "Sucks that I didn't think of that." Cas' expression sharpened. Dean looked at the dark house. "I guess while I'm here, I'll just do a quick inspection." He let his eyes travel down Cas' body, then back up. "You can just stay here and Twitter someone."

"Tweet," Cas corrected automatically and then his eyes widened as Dean pulled his shirt out of his pants and let his fingers skate across his stomach. Plan B was a go. Nonchalantly, Dean turned and sauntered up to the house. He unlocked the door and keyed in the code for the alarm. Cas slammed the door behind him and flipped the lock. Dean was thankful that plywood still covered the new windows to guard against vandalism, because Cas turned on the bright construction lights. "You planned this?"

"I might have," Dean answered, moving into Cas' personal space. He reached out and grabbed Cas by the belt and jerked him forward, their lips crashing together in a searing kiss. Despite the coldness of the house, Dean felt hot as his desire sent the blood pumping through his veins. Cas tasted of champagne and the chocolate truffles he'd discovered on the buffet.

"A... bed...might...be..."

"Shhh... let me have my fantasy," Dean whispered against Cas' ear. He bit down on the lobe and Cas' hands dug into Dean's hips. Eagerness drove Dean to press his groin into Cas' and he smiled when he felt Cas' swollen cock. "Want you to...fuck me...Cas...here...now..." He said the words between flicks of his tongue on Cas' neck, driving the other man wild with lust. With a flick of his wrist, the tool belt dropped to the floor with a loud clang.

"God, Dean..."Cas tone was ragged and breathless. Dean pulled back enough to remove Cas' jacket. He let it fall to the floor and went to work on his shirt. Once it fell open, he made quick work of unbuttoning his own shirt, then removed his boots and jeans as Cas watched with hunger in his eyes. Years of training on jobsites made him pull his boots back on before taking another step. Somehow, someway, they worked themselves over to the stack of leftover building materials in the middle of the room. On more than one occasion, Dean had fantasized about fucking Cas on this stack before it got hauled away. It was set to be removed next week, so no time like the present...
Standing there with only his red flannel and scuffed work boots on, he pulled Cas to him again. "Taste so good..." he murmured, letting his hands roam over Cas' chest. Cas had one hand on Dean's bare ass and the other was desperately trying to get his own pants undone. Chuckling softly, Dean battered Cas' hands away and unbuttoned his jeans with one hand. Cas shoved them down and sat on a discarded length of countertop, reaching out to pull Dean down to his lap. Dean resisted and stepped up on the stack instead, one foot on either side of Cas' legs. His hard dick was right in front of Cas' face. Dean unsnapped the breast pocket of his shirt and pulled out the small packets of lube he'd put there earlier. Cas smirked. "Were you a boy scout, Dean?" Dean laughed.

"Nope...I just appreciate the value of a good prep," he winked. He bit open one of the sample-sized lubes and squeezed the cool gel onto his fingers. He looked down and met Cas' eyes as he reached behind to get himself ready. It was hard to stay focused on what his hand was supposed to be doing while his cock was so close to Cas' face. Cas hands were cupping his ass and spreading his cheeks to help Dean with his mission. His knees buckled slightly when Cas leaned forward and closed his lips around his hardened shaft, swallowing him all the way down. The scent of their arousal combined with sawdust, and Dean knew he'd never be able to work at a jobsite again without having this image in his head.

Moments later, Dean pushed Cas' mouth away and reached down to slather Cas' cock with lube. Feet planted, he rested a hand on top of Cas' head for balance and slowly lowered himself onto his cock. Their eyes locked and held as he sank down inch by inch, his fist tightening in the dark hair. "I need you," Dean whispered as he breathed through the initial burn. "Dean, I... I... God, you're so beautiful...so perfect..." Dean braced his hands on Cas' shoulders and began to move, flexing his thighs to lift his body weight up and down... the slide of Cas' dick felt so damn good. He rocked forward and back, the different angle making his nerves short-circuit as the head of Cas' cock hit his prostate. Cas reached under him and dug his hands into the cheeks of Dean's ass, taking over the rhythm as he drove up into Dean... faster and harder, his eyes never leaving Dean's. With his left hand on Cas' shoulder, Dean fistled his cock with the other and stroked himself fiercely as Cas continued pumping into his ass. The onslaught of sensation was overwhelming and Dean lost his fucking mind when Cas began to growl deep and low in his throat. It was savage and animalistic and Dean loved it. With one final stroke of his cock, Dean screamed Cas' name as his orgasm tore through him. Cas pulled his cheeks apart and thrust in even deeper as his pace slowed. He plunged in once more and Dean felt Cas' cock throb as he filled Dean's ass with his cum. Dean lowered himself to his knees and collapsed onto his lover, panting and trying to remember his own name. Dean trembled as he felt Cas twitch inside him, and as his lover pulled out, he felt Cas' hot release run down his thighs.

They sat like that for a while as their breathing returned to normal. Dean winced when he tried to straighten his legs. He was getting too old to fuck in weird-ass places. Give him a bed any day... but damn, it was fucking hot and totally worth it. "Are you okay, Dean?" Cas asked against his neck.

"Just a little stiff..."

"I thought we took care of that," Cas said, his tone dry. Dean burst out laughing and soon, they were both giggling like a couple of kids. It took them a few minutes to wipe themselves down with the roll of paper towels left in the kitchen and put their clothes back on. As Dean reached down to pick up his tool belt, Cas stopped him by pulling him into his arms. "Dean..." Dean's heartbeat seemed to falter at Cas' serious expression.

"What is it, Cas?" Dean's fingers tightened in Cas' shirt like he was afraid he'd disappear.

Cas looked away, but kept his hands plastered to Dean's back. "God, this is... I've never said this to
another living soul." He turned back to meet Dean's eyes and gave him a small, nervous smile. "I think... I'm fairly certain I've fallen in love with you."

Dean released the breath he'd been holding and lifted the corner of his mouth. "Oh... Well, that's good."

"That's good?" Cas' eyes flashed with something akin to hurt.

"Yeah... because I'm fairly certain I've fallen for you, too," Dean whispered with a soft smile. Instead of feeling trapped or afraid, Dean felt relief at finally being able to share his feelings. The three words still felt too big to say out loud, but knowing Cas loved him was enough to give him the courage to say what was in his heart. He was a goner and for the first time in his life, he was okay with that.

Chapter End Notes

A special thanks to Amanda for the lovely graphic of Cas and Dean in front of the HHTV backdrop. Isn't she talented, everyone?
Chapter Notes

This chapter is gifted to Asliceofapplepi. Here birthday is on the 12th. Happy Birthday, Sweetness!!! Hope you like this one.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Social media exploded overnight and Sam was called into Crowley's office bright and early Sunday morning. Sunday morning... his day off. Crowley was grinning... his usual smile was like that of a shark, but this one was definitely a grin. He spun his monitor around and laughed out loud. "Sam, my boy, we officially have a hit on our hands.

Sam leaned over the desk and began to read. There had to be thousands of them. Some funny, some risqué to the point of being inappropriate, but most seemed to come from people who just enjoyed the show.

They met briefly over how the they would handle their various social media accounts and then Sam went to his small office to stare at his own computer screen. He could not stop smiling. All the headaches, all the sleepless nights, even dealing with two mercurial co-stars had been worth it. He couldn't wait to tell Dean. He was beaming as he dialed his brother's number.

"Morning, Sam." Dean's voice was so soft, Sam could barely hear him.

"Why are you whispering?"

"Hold on." He waited and then Dean was back, louder this time. "Okay, I'm here."

"You gonna tell me why you were whispering?"

"Cas was still asleep. You don't poke a sleeping bear, Sammy." Sam smiled. Dean sounded really happy. He never would have thought the two of them would be friends, let alone boyfriends. He watched them the night before, unafraid to hold hands during the party. Some of those pictures would probably make it to the internet and he wondered how his parents would handle it. John knew now that Dean was bi, but he might get pissed that his son was 'parading' around on national television with another man. Their mother... well, she probably wouldn't even notice. When they told her Dean was going to be on a television show, she said that John should have been there to share the news with her. She didn't even ask the name of the show or what it was about. Their father actually sounded proud, but with John, you never really knew.

"Are you speaking from experience, Dean? What, did Cas not respond well to your morning wood?" Sam snorted a laugh at Dean's expense.

"Did you want something or are you just calling to be a bitch?" Sam loved how his brother could side-step personal questions.

"The viewer polls are up. According to Facebook and Twitter, you and Cas are a hit."

"Seriously? That's awesome, Sam. I'm proud of you, little bro." Leave it to Dean to turn the praise around to Sam instead of taking any credit for himself. He heard a rattling sound and then a muttered
curse.

"What's going on?"

"Cas' coffeemaker is a piece of shit."

"He'll be able to buy a new one very soon."

"Oh, no, this one ain't old, you just need a degree to work the fucking thing. I probably have time to
go grab some before Mister Grumpy Pants wakes up from his beauty sleep." Sam smiled at the
affection in Dean's voice. It reminded him of the way Uncle Bobby showed his love for them.

"Okay, well that's all I had for you. I guess I'll talk to you later..."

"Yeah, sure." There was a pause and then Dean added, "And Sam, let's have dinner soon. Okay?"

Sam leaned back in his chair. "I'd like that."

After hanging up, Sam stared at the ceiling for a while. Dean deserved to be happy and he hoped
Cas would be the one to give him everything he deserved and more.

Castiel woke when someone nudged his leg. "Good morning, Sunshine. It's already eight and I have
coffee. Time to get your lazy ass out of bed." Dean's hand came down on his butt with a resounding
smack. Castiel growled and bit back his sharp retort. No, he would not ruin this. He turned over and
groaned. Dean had opened the curtains and the morning sun glared off the water and blinded him.
Wasn't it supposed to be nice and cloudy... and raining? It was Seattle, for Christ's sake.

Dean handed him a cup from their local coffee house. He wasn't awake enough to wonder why
Dean hadn't used his coffeemaker. He smiled as he took it and mumbled a thank you. Dean was
staring at him so intently, Castiel wondered if something was wrong with him. "Do I have something
on my face?"

Dean shook his head. "No, you just... who are you and what have you done with my boyfriend?"
The term made Castiel want to preen, but Dean's words brought him back to the conversation at
hand.

"I can assure you that I'm still your boyfriend."

"No, my boyfriend is a grumpy bastard in the morning until he gets at least a gallon of coffee in his
system."

"Bastard? Guess morning sex is off the table for you, Sweetheart."

An hour later, Castiel was showering Dean's cum off his back. They'd gotten a little randy and Dean
had fucked him from behind, pulling out right before he came to ejaculate all over his ass. He smiled
at the memory. "Hey, hurry up, time's wasting." How could he be so damn chipper in the mornings?
The part of Castiel that worshipped sleep really hated Dean. He smiled, remembering his confession
of love and Dean's response. Well... at least not all of him hated the man.
"For fuck's sake, Dean, it's Sunday. Is there a reason you're in such a hurry?" Castiel asked through the glass door of the shower. He could see Dean through the steam, leaning against the counter, arms crossed.

"I have plans, Cas. Big plans." This was the first Castiel had heard about plans. Dean watched him appraisingly as he stepped out and dried off. Once he got dressed, Dean followed him from the bedroom, refusing to tell him anything about their day.

Downstairs, Castiel sat down on the couch and opened his laptop. "What the hell, Cas?" Dean flounced down beside him, a pretty pout on his lips. "We need to get moving."

"I just need to check a few things, Dean. I also want to type up my blog post about the first episode. I promised my readers I'd tell them my thoughts on it." Dean rolled his eyes. The man hated social media and didn't use the internet for anything but porn and video games. He only knew about the porn because he found it accidently when he borrowed Dean's laptop at the jobsite to place an order for plantation blinds for the kitchen windows. It was eye opening. Beside him, Dean huffed and postured, but he did read over Castiel's shoulder. After he wrote a short note on his blog, he flipped over to Twitter and his mouth dropped open. He'd started following the show's newly set up account a few days ago and as of yesterday morning, nothing had been posted. Today... today, there were thousands. "Dean... look."

Dean leaned over and stared at the screen. "What am I looking at, babe?"

"All these are about us and the show," Cas said, pointing to the number of hits.

"Holy shit." Dean started reading and an hour later, they were still scrolling. "Sam said we were a hit, but I didn't have a clue... this is unreal." He kissed Castiel's cheek and grinned. "Wonder who got the most hits. Team Dean or Team Cas?"
"Are you really going to keep score?"

He smiled cheekily. "Of course."

Dean's plans turned out to be a drive down the Pacific Coast Highway in the Impala, music blaring and just being together. They stopped at small, out-of-the-way shops and even got ice cream. Castiel insisted on taking selfies of them to remember the day.

Their work week started out in a hectic way. Sam set up a few interviews with local radio stations and one with a morning show on the ABC affiliate in Seattle. They still had disagreements while they were filming, but mostly they worked in tandem. Their nights were spent together and more often than not, Dean would fix them dinner while Cas worked on his blog or Skyped with Anna about his current clients. It was all very domestic, but neither of them felt the need to talk about it.

Dean had yet to say the word love, but he showed it in so many ways. Castiel tried to tell himself he was fine with it. He even talked to Luc about it and Luc told him not to push Dean. "He'll say it when he's good and ready, Castiel. He's head over heels and so are you. Just take it one day at a time and don't obsess over it." That's exactly what Castiel was doing.

The house was coming along nicely and the remaining tasks were getting completed on schedule. The exterior painting was well underway and Castiel even got to see Dean strip down to his bare
chest, if only for a short time after an unfortunate accident with a can of red paint. Of course, he got to see his naked body every night, but there was something about that low-slung tool belt... He'd definitely developed a kink for it.

The second episode aired and the ratings continued to climb. They took Sam out to celebrate and it was a very good evening despite Dean drinking way too much champagne and getting sick. You never really know someone until you have to clean them up after vomiting.

On Tuesday, their half-days, they took separate vehicles. Castiel left the reno-house and drove downtown to his studio. After greeting Anna, he quickly went through the stack of invoices and phone messages. She had scheduled three meetings back to back for the afternoon. The publicity from the show was paying off. "Anna, I think it might be time to hire another designer." She looked at him balefully over her reading glasses.

"No shit, Sherlock." Her response had him gaping before bursting into laughter. She joined him and eventually had to wipe tears from her eyes. "With you so busy with becoming famous, I'm stuck fielding hundreds of calls. And don't get me started on the countless walk-ins who just want to see if you're here. You have groupies, boss." He had no idea it had gotten that bad for her.

After Castiel's last appointment of the day, the two of them went through the stack of resumes in the file cabinet. He was always getting requests for jobs and turned them all down before. It was different now. He had the money and the workload to hire one or two new designers. Castiel let her schedule the interviews with the five resumes they chose from the stack for the following week when he could attend the meetings.

That night, when he let himself into the house, it was empty. Dean had a key now and he'd expected him to be here. He dropped his bag by the door and shrugged off his coat. "Hi, everyone," he said to the fish as he fed them. He glanced down at his watch. Where was Dean? He checked his phone, but there were no texts or missed calls. Should he call? Or would that appear too clingy? They were still testing out their relationship and Castiel didn't want to overstep any boundaries.

Text to Dean/6:08 – Want to go out for dinner tonight?

There, that was innocent enough, wasn't it? Dean's key in the lock made him look up from his phone. Dean came in with one arm behind his back. "Sorry I'm late. I had an errand to run. And yes, we can go out." Castiel walked toward him and Dean put his hand up. "Wait." Castiel stopped, perplexed.

"What is it, Dean? What do you have behind your back?"

"Well... " Dean huffed out a breath and shoved a plastic bag of water at him. It took him a second to realize there was a fish inside. "Stopped at a pet store and got you a... fish. The dude said it was some sort of dragon-y thing." Castiel was touched and he took the bag gingerly.

"Dean, thank you. This is... awesome." Dean beamed at Castiel's use of his favorite word. "This is a Mandarin Dragonet."

"Yeah, that. His name is Jimmy Page," Dean said, hands jammed in his pockets now.

"You named him... Jimmy Page?" Castiel racked his brains. Who was that? He'd heard the name but couldn't place it.

"Cas, come on, man. Jimmy Page... only one of the greatest and most influential guitarists of all time. You've heard him a million times in my truck," Dean railed, eying Castiel like he was a complete
"Moron. "Led Zeppelin... ring any bells here?"

"Oh, yes... right." Castiel held up the bag to stare at the beautiful fish and smiled. "Come on, Jimmy, let's get you acclimated."

"Hey, no getting dirty with the fish, Cas."

"Acclimated, Dean. It means..." Castiel stopped at Dean's comical expression. "You are such an ass sometimes."

"But I'm your ass," he said, winking.

As Castiel placed the plastic bag into his tank, Dean opened the fridge and pulled out a beer. "Do you know what you want to eat?"

Dean shrugged. "Don't care. Maybe Chinese?"

"You know the garlic in the jar they use gives me... issues." Castiel refused to look at Dean.

"Issues? Cas, babe, you could clear a room. You make my freakin' eyes water. You on Chinese food is almost worse than Sam on burritos." Dean was still laughing at his embarrassment as they walked out to the car. Castiel swore he would get the fucker back... somehow.

"Cas... do I really need to be here?" Dean whined. No, Dean Winchester didn't whine, but damn it all to hell...shopping? The cameraman smirked and Dean stuck his tongue out.

"Dean, the furnishings are important and I want your input. And because, surely to God, if I came back to the house with something you hated, I'd never hear the end of it," Cas said, sashaying off toward a display of lamps.

"This is about the fart jokes, isn't it? Revenge is a dish best served cold, Cas." Dean yelled out across a fake living room complete with fake plants. Cas swung around and flipped him off. What was up with that? He was always the one with a stick up his ass and now he was flipping people off right and left. And his mouth... he actually made Dean blush a few times. He turned to the cameraman. "Did you get that? He shot me the bird." He shook his head in mock disappointment and sighed. "I think I've had a bad influence on him."

He jogged to catch up with Cas as he was looking at a hutch of some sort. "That's nice. Let's get it and get out of here." Cas glared. "Again, with the evil eye? Jeez, who pissed in your Wheaties this morning, Novak?"

"I wouldn't know because you made me late this morning and I didn't get Wheaties or any other breakfast, Winchester." Dean's eyes widened. They were usually pretty careful about what they said in front of the cameras. People were going to assume Dean made him late because... well shit, he'd assume that under the circumstances. The assistant director, the PA, and the cameraman were all looking back and forth between them. The poor salesman was just gaping like one of those bug-eyed goldfish. All of this was being filmed.
"It wasn't my fault, Cas," Dean whispered, his back to the camera. All he got for his trouble was a lifted eyebrow before Cas turned around and stalked over to a grouping of ottomans. Sighing dramatically, Dean pursued him. "Cas... it was an accident, babe. I said I was sorry." Cas turned on him with the smite-y eyes. "I'll buy you a new one, I promise."

"An accident, Dean? How is my coffeemaker sinking to the bottom of the Bay a fucking accident?" Okay, that might have been the wrong word to use. Dean was trying to refill the reservoir and used too much water... it ran all over the counters and onto the floor. He was pissed. He hated the damn thing anyway. In a tantrum, Dean hurled the small appliance out the door. It bounced once, exploded a few miscellaneous parts over the wooden deck, and then flipped end over end until it teetered briefly at the edge. Cas arrived on the scene just as it lost its fight with gravity and splashed into the water. The neighbors got an early morning show as Cas went off on him. No coffee and a side of drama made Cas one pissed-off motherfucker.

That's why they were late to work, but this shopping thing... it was totally revenge for making fun of Cas' gas. Dean snorted. That rhyme had been used several times and it would never get old. Dean snagged Cas' belt loop as he turned the corner by a huge potted palm. Cas stopped and faced Dean. "Babe, I really am sorry. Okay? Please... don't be mad at me." Dean pulled his best pitiful face out of his arsenal and Cas' face softened.

"I liked that coffeemaker, Dean. It even made cappuccinos." Dean rubbed his bicep affectionately and stepped closer.

"I know, Cas, but it was evil... probably even possessed. I'll get you a new one. One that does all that fancy stuff you like." God, Dean hated frou-frou crap like that. Cas' face settled into a stoic mask.

Uh-oh...

"You are not off the hook. Let's go pick out throw pillows," he said, smiling mischievously. Not throw pillows... for the love of God and all that is holy...

It took a lot of groveling, but Dean got back in his lover's good graces. Fucking Cas while wearing his tool belt gave him a few extra boyfriend points, too. Cas' new kink was his kryptonite and Dean wasn't afraid to use it when the occasion called for it. But even Dean had to admit... as kinks go, it was hot as fuck.

Truthfully, Dean thought their sex life was mind-blowing. With Cas, everything was more intense, and Dean even discovered a few kinks of his own. He now knew that he enjoyed having an ice cube in his ass while Cas was riding him, and he was fairly certain he would never have discovered that particular kink on his own. His favorite was discovered on his birthday. Cas surprised him with a special night in. After an especially romantic candlelight dinner, Cas led Dean upstairs, tied his arms and legs to the bed, and edged him for what seemed like hours. By the time Cas let him come, Dean's orgasm was so powerful, he actually blacked out. He couldn't decide which part he liked better... being tied down or being completely dominated by Cas. He suspected it was the latter because seeing Cas like that turned him on more than he would have ever expected.

January turned into February, and the ratings got better and better. What started out as a side job making a few extra thousand a month turned into a full-time gig. Benny and Jo were taking the brunt of the business and Dean gave them both a hefty pay raise in appreciation. He was still in the office every Tuesday afternoon and Thursday morning. Most of his duties were signing checks and dealing with inspectors these days, though.

Other than a few minor disagreements, Cas and Dean got along great on camera, but it was off-camera that Dean loved the most. He was all but living with Cas even though they hadn't talked about it. He had a key, his clothes were hanging in the closet, and little by little, his stuff migrated to
the floating home. His lease was up in April and he wondered if he should broach the subject or just leave it alone.

The biggest drawback to the show was their privacy. They couldn't even go out to dinner without someone coming up requesting autographs or pictures. Even Donna had gotten in on the social media madness. Cas and Sam would stand around with their phones and laugh. Dean didn't even want to know... not after the episode with their matching hickeys aired. People were just... just... sex-crazed. Cas laid in bed next to him for over an hour reading that shit. Viewers were even taking bets on who bottomed. Wasn't anything sacred anymore? Dean was by no means a prude, but he drew the line at strangers openly discussing his asshole.

The house was almost complete. Furnishings had been selected and ordered. While they were only airing Episode Five, the home itself would be complete by the end of February. The studio had gotten tens of thousands of letters from viewers, and each story seemed sadder than the last. Dean was glad he didn't have the job of picking the winner.

Realistically, Dean knew he and Cas were good, but a small part of him was afraid of them growing apart after the filming was done. Sam said Crowley wanted to sign them on for another season, but Dean wasn't sure how Cas felt about it. For some reason, he couldn't make himself bring it up.

"What are you getting your man for Valentine's Day," Charlie asked from the barstool next to him. He shrugged and took another gulp of beer. She eyed him curiously. "You are getting him something aren't you?"

"You know I don't do the hearts and flowers crap, Charlie." He used his thumbnail to peel at the label. Cas was out of town on a consultation over in Spokane and wouldn't be back until late the next day. He missed him.

"But it's Valentine's Day, Dean. You love him and you should do something special." She kicked at his shins with her tiny, sneakered feet. "You only have two more days to figure it out."

"I just don't know, Charlie," he growled irritably. Last night had been the first episode they hadn't watched together. Cas had called him right before it came on and they sat on the phone while the show played out, but it wasn't the same. After Cas said goodnight, Dean wandered around the house and had even talked to the damn fish. He was so pathetic.

He spent his Sunday sitting around Cas' house until he drove himself batshit crazy. That's how he ended up at a bar drinking with his best friend. They sat in silence for a few minutes and finally, Dean couldn't stand it anymore. "What do you think I should get him?"

She tapped her finger against her lips, eyes squinted as she hummed the theme song from Jeopardy. Dean shook his head at her behavior. She was the best friend he ever had, but she was certifiably nuts. In the end, she very helpfully asked, "I don't know, Dean... what do you want to get him?" Dean was definitely on his own for this.

Monday's workday was half over by the time Cas got back from his trip. He'd driven straight to the reno-house and found Dean in the back of a semi overseeing the unloading of the furniture delivery. Cas hauled himself up and Dean went right to him, pulling him in for a long hug. "I missed you," he whispered in Cas' ear and he felt Cas' lips on his neck. Cas pulled back to look at him, his hands still grasping Dean's hips.

"I missed you too, Dean. So much." They stared into each other's eyes until someone coughed and they realized where they were. Cameramen and crew stood around them, amused expressions on their faces. "I will go see Kate and then meet you inside," Cas said, seeming reluctant to let go of
Dean grinned and gave him a quick peck on the lips.

"See you in a few, babe." Dean finished marking the boxes and helped the crew bring the bigger pieces into the house. "Hey, let's just leave it all here until Cas gets in to oversee placement." While he waited for Cas to get his pretty face and hair done, Dean was being filmed as he went through his punch list for each room. "And in the guest bath, we still need to install the hardware. You know, those things you take for granted like towel racks, soap dishes, faucets. This afternoon's do-it-yourself tip will be installing a new faucet."

At four o'clock, Sam rounded up Cas and Dean for their segment. With a cameraman in the bathtub and one at the door, Dean set out the tools needed to do the installation. "Changing out a faucet isn't difficult at all, Cas. The typical homeowner will buy sinks that already come pre-drilled," Dean said, pointing to the three holes in the top of the sink.

"With all the different styles on sites like Pinterest, Instagram, and even Facebook, if a homeowner wanted to have something drilled like this, where would they go?" Dean looked up at Cas' question and frowned.

"I know what Facebook is for, but I don't know anything about the other two..."

Cas looked directly into the camera and said, "Sorry... Pops here has trouble with new-fangled things like the Internet." There were a few snickers from the crew and Dean narrowed his eyes.

"To answer your question, dear... you can take the sink, or whatever item you want to turn into a sink, to your local plumber. They have the tools to do the drilling. Now..." Dean went step by step until he turned the water back on and then had Cas push the lever for the faucet. "Ta-da," Dean said with the proper amount of enthusiasm. Cas just smiled at him and they once again got lost in each other until they heard the sound of a throat clearing. This time, they just chuckled as they turned and left the cameras to follow behind.

Sam clapped them both on the back when they were done with the DIY segment. Castiel wandered off and Dean was cleaning up his tools, so Sam decided to hang with his brother for a few minutes.

"So... Got Cas' present yet?"

Dean didn't even pretend he didn't know what Sam was talking about, and that itself was nothing short of a miracle. "Guess by now you've heard the coffeemaker story." At Sam's smirk, Dean pursed his lips and continued. "Yeah, well, I got him a new one. It does everything but give blowjobs. Cost an arm and a leg, but..." He shrugged. "I think he'll like it. Charlie hooked me up with some coffee club thing, too. They ship a pound of beans from all over the world every month."

Sam grinned. Castiel already approached him last week to enlist his help for Dean. He'd given him a box of old photographs, ticket stubs, newspaper articles, and a stack of vintage books Bobby had been keeping for years. He wasn't sure what Castiel was going to do with it, but Dean was a sentimental fool. Whatever it was, Sam was sure Dean would love it.

"That sounds perfect, Dean. Are you guys celebrating at his place or yours?" His question was met with silence. He looked at Dean and noticed he was noticeably more subdued. "Dean? What's
Dean sighed. "I don't know, Sam... Just having some doubts, I guess."

"What do you mean? I thought things were going well with Cas."

"They are... things are amazing actually. That's the problem. I feel like I'm all in, but I'm not sure he is. He hasn't even said anything about moving in together. I'm practically living there anyway, but it's nothing official. What if he wants to keep things as they are so it's easier when..."

"Dean, no, stop right there. Cas isn't going to leave you. You have something special... we can all see it. Hell, even Crowley went all shmoopy over you two at the photo shoot, and he's as soulless as they come. Seeing you together in some of those photos was just... Hang on, I've got something to show you..." Sam took out his phone and scrolled through his photos until he found what he was looking for. "Look at this, Dean."

Dean leaned in and his breath caught. "Sam... How did you..."

"I took this in the RV, the morning after you first slept together. This is what you look like sleeping in each other's arms, Dean. Look at your faces... really look. This is what happiness looks like. If you ever start to doubt what you are to each other, I want you to remember this photo." Expecting Dean to be pissed off, Sam was shocked at his brother's expression. It was soft and full of affection. He'd never seen that look on his brother's face, and it took him a minute to figure it out. \textit{Holy shit, Dean was in love.}

Dean took the phone and stared at the picture for a while. He handed it back, not meeting Sam's eyes. "Could you send it to me?"

"Sure, Dean." Sam tapped his screen a few times and the photo was on its way.

Later, when he watched Castiel climb into Dean's truck, Sam smiled to himself as they drove away. Dean Winchester, the man who avoided chick-flick moments at all costs, had finally given in and fallen in love.
gishwhes is taking a lot of my time right now, but Amanda and I are still on schedule and hope to have the next chapter ready on Monday. Fingers crossed.
Chapter 17

Castiel had been livid over the destruction of his beloved coffee maker. To add insult to injury, Dean seemed to think his tantrum was justified. Castiel was certain Dean didn't regret his actions one bit, but he also knew Dean didn't like it when Castiel was upset with him. He milked it for all it was worth, including getting Dean to fuck him while wearing his tool belt. Some might consider that manipulative, but Castiel thought it was worth it. As part of his penance, Dean got up early every morning to drive down to one of the many coffee shops for their morning caffeine fix. Yes, Castiel had been mad, but it didn't stop the warm feeling that filled him when Dean called him Sunshine and woke him up with his liquid breakfast.

On Monday, the day before Valentine's Day, Castiel watched as Dean fitted the faucet in the bathroom while the cameras rolled. He tried to keep his mind on what was going on, but he was concerned about what he was going to do about the fast-approaching holiday. He hated it with a passion. It was fabricated by the greeting card companies to increase revenue and was only significant because the industry said so. He didn't want to acknowledge the fact that the men he'd dated before never cared enough about him to give him flowers or chocolates... or whatever couples did when they celebrated the meaningless day. So far, Dean hadn't even mentioned it, so Castiel was in a quandary. If he gave Dean something and Dean didn't get him anything, he'd feel bad... and Castiel didn't want that. On the other hand, if Dean gave him a present and he didn't get anything for Dean... It was such a fucking nuisance, and he cursed the Hallmark gods for the stress headache he was developing.

It was Tuesday and Dean still hadn't mentioned any special plans for the evening, but he promised to call Castiel later in the afternoon. He picked up the shadowbox on his way to his studio after leaving the reno-house. The gift was beautiful. He commissioned one of the custom furniture builders he knew to construct it according to the design he had drawn. With the pictures and other items Sam had given him, he was sure Dean would like it. Dean's high school football jersey was folded and placed prominently in the center. Ticket stubs from various sporting events were fanned out around photographs of Dean with Sam and various friends. Sam didn't include any pictures of their parents and Castiel had a feeling he shouldn't ask.

Castiel had total confidence that his first gift would be well received. It was the other one that had his heart pounding. It had only been two months since they first met, and what started out rocky had turned into something he'd only ever dreamed about. But how would Dean feel about this grand gesture?

He finished up the interviews that Anna set up and they had narrowed it down to four potential designers. Two of the candidates were very young and could be molded into what he wanted, and the other two were more experienced. It would be a hard choice. He was locking the door after Anna left when his phone rang.

"Hello, Dean."

"Hey. So...um... it's Valentine's Day." Castiel smiled at Dean's obvious discomfort.

"Yes, my first clue was the tacky red hearts and fat, naked angels plastered all over the city." There was silence and Castiel was worried that his snarky comment might have hurt Dean's feelings.

He breathed a sigh of relief when Dean chuckled softly. "Thank God you weren't expecting a big box of candy."
"Who says?" Castiel couldn't resist. When Dean sputtered, Castiel laughed out loud. "I'm just teasing, Dean."

"Asshat. Just for that, I won't give you your present."

"You bought me a present?" A sense of relief spread through him.

"Duh." Castiel heard the sound of the Impala's engine through his phone's speakers.

"Are you on your way home?"

"Yeah. Do you want to go out to eat somewhere?"

"Would it be weird if we just have pizza at home?"

"Cas, you're a man after my own heart." Dean had his heart. He liked to think that he had Dean's, too. "See you in thirty."

Castiel got into his SUV and looked in the back seat. The large gift wasn't wrapped... it was too awkward for that. A smaller gift wrapped in red sat on top. He took a deep breath and headed home.

Dean's baby was already parked near the dock and Castiel decided to leave the gifts in the car for now. When he walked into the house, Dean was on the phone ordering their pizza. A huge box sat on the dining room table with two envelopes, one padded and the other the size of a greeting card. Castiel could have slapped himself. He forgot to get a card.

After he hung up, Dean came forward to pull him close. He touched his forehead to Castiel's. "Presents first or wait until after we eat?"

Unsure how to answer, Castiel shrugged. "I have two for you."

"Ha," Dean crowed. "Beat you. I got you three." Castiel didn't think cards counted as gifts, but he wasn't going to argue.

"I need to get yours out of my car," Castiel said, reluctantly letting go. He went out to retrieve the shadowbox and noticed his trench coat in the seat. He threw it over the gift, pocketed the smaller box, and went back inside. He set it on the table and gestured for Dean to remove the makeshift cover. Dean frowned with curiosity as he reached down to grab the lapel. He pulled it back and stepped closer for a better view. The look on Dean's face made every bit of Castiel's stress worth it.

"Cas, this is... wow..." Dean held it out in front of him and sat down heavily in one of the dining chairs, never taking his eyes off of it. When he finally looked up, he was smiling. It was a smile Castiel had never seen before. Sam said Dean was sentimental... he was right. Dean carefully set it back on the table and held out his hand. "Come here, you." Castiel sat on Dean's lap and, wrapping his arms around him, placed a firm and lingering kiss on Dean's lips.

When they finally broke away from each other, Dean stood and tugged Castiel by his hand to the other side of the table. He pushed the large box toward him. "This one first."

Castiel carefully unwrapped the gaudy paper. At first, he thought they were misshapen hearts but he looked closer... were those penises? Dean laughed at Castiel's expression. When he peeled the paper away, he gave an excited gasp at the very expensive coffeemaker. "Dean, this is a Beville." Dean stood proudly by as Castiel read through all the features. Not only did it grind the beans, but it made cappuccino and espresso as well. It was a very nice machine... much nicer than the one it replaced.
Dean tossed the smaller envelope on the table next to him. "This goes with it." Castiel was surprised to find that it wasn't a card... it was a Gift Certificate in bright red ink for a One-year subscription to Coffee of the Month Club.

"Dean, this is too much." The custom shadowbox was pretty pricy, but not nearly as costly as the two gifts combined.

"Shut up. We needed a new coffeemaker. It's my fault the other one is now sleeping with the fishes." Castiel snorted a laugh at Dean's horrible Italian accent, but his mind immediately focused on the way Dean said we instead of you. It gave him hope that Dean would respond favorably to his other gift. They spent a few minutes just gazing into each other's eyes. It was something they did quite often... whether it was intentional or not, Castiel couldn't say. But he knew when he was connected to Dean that way, he felt like there was nowhere else he would rather be.

Dean was sweating bullets when he called Cas Tuesday afternoon. He hadn't mentioned Valentine's Day at all... he wasn't even going to acknowledge the lame-ass holiday until Charlie shamed him into it. Now his palms were clammy as he tried to talk to Cas without letting his nervousness show in his voice. Cas' comment about the tacky decorations threw him for a second, but he understood Cas' dry sense of humor and in all honesty, it eased Dean's mind. Cas didn't need all the cheesy nonsense associated with the pretend holiday. They agreed on pizza, much to Dean's delight, and he was happy not to have to face all the crowds and forced romance. After all, in their own way, he and Cas were romantic every day, not just today.

He got home—well, to Cas' home—before Cas, and he set the large box, wrapped in the tackiest paper he could find, on the dining table. He got ready to slide the gift into the large, padded envelope, but paused to appreciate it. He had taken the print to a local shop and had it matted in a black walnut frame, giving it a polished, elegant appearance. He swiped his shirt across the glass to remove any dust, and glanced at the photo. They were just sleeping, but they looked so good together. Dean narrowed his eyes at that stray thought. Next thing he knew, they'd be picking out china patterns. He stuffed the picture into the protective sleeve and set the gift card on top of the box. He checked his phone. Cas should be coming in any minute. He scrolled through until he found their favorite pizza place and was in the middle of ordering when Cas walked through the door.

Nothing could have prepared him for Cas' gift. A lifetime of memories framed in beautiful, hand-carved redwood. He must have hit Sam up for all the stuff. It was obvious that a lot of thought went into the gift, and now he felt like he'd short-changed Cas with things he just used his credit card for.
Cas' look of excitement when he saw the new coffeemaker and gift card eased some of Dean's negative thoughts that his presents weren't enough. They worked together and set up the new machine where the evil coffeemaker previously sat. Cas was in the process of reading the directions for making cappuccino when the doorbell rang. Dean paid for the pizza and they sat side by side on the couch to share their meal. Cas picked up his bottle of beer and touched the neck to Dean's.

"Happy Valentine's Day, Dean."

It was heartfelt and Dean found himself blushing. "Back at you, Cas. I know it's not a fancy dinner or anything, but to me... this is fucking perfect." Cas' broad grin told Dean he felt the same. They both took a drink, eyes filled with warmth and affection as they stared at each other. When the pizza was gone, they leaned back on the couch with their feet on the coffee table. Property Brothers was playing on the television and Dean nudged Cas' shoulder with his own. "We're way better looking than those two."

Cas tilted his head, studying the show for a few seconds. "I don't know, Dean. They're pretty hot."

"Yeah, but they aren't smokin' like me and you."

"Do you have a modest bone in you?" Cas entwined his fingers with Dean's and squeezed. Dean leaned closer to Cas like he was about to share a secret.

"Nope. Your bone is anything but modest," he said with a wink. Cas busted out laughing.

"I can't believe you just said that," Cas said as he took another drink. Both men smiled and kept
watching for a while. Cas finally got a bit fidgety and stood. Dean watched him go get two more beers and then swing by the coat rack. He came back with a small, nicely wrapped box. Before he could sit back down, Dean got up and grabbed the plain envelope that held the picture.

Standing in the middle of the room, they exchanged their gifts. "You first," Dean said quickly. Cas looked like he wanted to protest, but it didn't stop him from tearing open the envelope and sliding the frame out. He stared at the photo and Dean rushed to fill the silence. "Sam took that. It was kind of an invasion of privacy... or not really, since the studio owns the trailer, so I guess we were technically the ones invading—" He was stopped by Cas' warm lips against his own. He closed his eyes and leaned into the kiss. They lingered in a loose embrace for a moment and then Cas whispered a soft thank you before he handed Dean the small box.

Dean wasn't nearly as careful with wrapping paper as Cas was. He ripped it off and tossed the shreds onto the table. It was a plain white box, only a few inches square. He took the top off and his brows furrowed in confusion. "What's this?" He asked, holding up the key on a silver keychain engraved with his name.

"The key to my house," Cas said quietly.

Digging into his pocket, Dean pulled out his plain keyring and rattled the keys around. "Cas, you already gave me a key. The keychain's cool though." Cas closed Dean's palm around the new one and held it.

"This one comes with an invitation, Dean." Dean cocked his head to the side. What was he talking about? Cas took a deep breath and in a soft voice said, "Will you move in with me? I know it hasn't been that long, but I know that I love you. We can just try it out... you don't have to let your house go if you're not sure about..." Cas let his voice trail off and Dean stared down at the key in his closed fist, with Cas' hand still covering it. This was what he wanted, but were they ready for such a major change? He must have waited too long because Cas dropped his arm and backed a step away. "It's too soon. I'm sorry, Dean. I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable."

Dean shook his head and opened his palm. "No, Cas, that's not it at all. It's a big step... but I want this, too."

"Really?" Cas looked incredulous and Dean smiled, reaching to grab the back of Cas' neck and haul him forward. This kiss held more passion than the previous one, and Dean hoped Cas would feel how much he needed and loved him. He didn't know why it was so hard to say the words out loud like Cas had done twice already... but he wanted to make sure Cas knew how he felt, so he poured his love into every place they were touching. When they broke apart, Cas' eyes were dark with desire. Dean tossed his keys onto the table, then he gently laid his new keychain down, touching it almost reverently with one finger before stepping away. He took Cas' hand and led him up the stairs.

When they reached the second floor, Cas stopped and put his hand on the knob of his office door. Dean had only been in it once before. He thought of it as Cas' space, so he respected the boundary and didn't go in there. From what he remembered, it was a cozy room with a design table, a few bookcases, and a desk. A rack of various design materials had been against one wall, making the space even more crowded. It wasn't exactly disorganized, but considering how much was in there, it wasn't spacious either. Cas turned to him. "I did this hoping you would say yes." The door swung open, but Dean's mind was stuck on the way Cas had worded that sentence. It almost sounded like Cas had asked Dean to... nope, stop right there. The M-word ghosted through Dean's mind and he pushed it aside, shoved it into a box, and slammed the lid on it. Living together was huge, but marriage? He didn't know why the hell his mind went there. "Dean?"
Dean broke out of his own traitorous thoughts and peered inside. The room had been cleaned out. The rack of materials was gone along with the carpet and wallpaper samples that had crowded one of the bookcases. A second desk joined Cas' and was bare except for a nice reading lamp. "I thought it would be nice to give you a space of your own," Cas said, watching Dean's reaction warily.

"Cas, this is... thank you." He ran his hands over the empty shelves imagining his books there. He stepped over to the desk and switched the lamp on and then off again. He turned and grinned. "Guess I need to pack my stuff, huh?" Cas smiled at him with tears in his eyes, his emotion spilling over. Dean folded his arms around him and stroked his hair, knowing what a huge deal this was for Cas. He didn't let others into his life, so the fact that Cas had welcomed Dean into his heart and his home meant more than he could ever say. He pulled back and led Cas to their room.

They slowly undressed, keeping their eyes locked as though trying to memorize each other's faces. They laid on the bed face to face, neither feeling the need to break the silence. Dean leaned in and pressed his lips to Cas' as he tightened strong arms around him. He felt Cas' erection against his hip and grabbed his ass, pulling him closer. They rutted against each other, panting and gasping into kisses that quickly became more intense. Dean rolled on top of Cas' lean body and slid his hand down to sharp hipbones, digging his fingers in enough to leave marks. He felt Cas reach over to the nightstand and heard the clicking of the cap on the bottle of lube. As he continued grinding their hardened dicks together, Dean bent his knee up to rest on the bed, opening himself to Cas' slick fingers. Before long, he was ready and more than willing to accept his lover.

Cas withdrew his fingers, spread the remaining lube on his shaft, and waited for Dean to reposition himself above him. Dean looked down into Cas' beautiful eyes as he slowly lowered himself onto that glorious cock, both of them letting out long, drawn-out groans of pleasure. When he was ready, Dean began to move, gradually lifting up, then lowering himself back down until his ass rested on Cas' muscular thighs. It was good, but it wasn't enough. He wanted to be closer. He slid off and Cas practically whimpered when the cool air hit his wet dick. Dean moved to lay down on his stomach, his body flat against the bed. He reached out a hand to guide Cas where he wanted him and thankfully, Cas understood. He felt the warmth of Cas' body spread along every inch of his backside as he pushed his cock into Dean's ass. Dean moaned, his mind completely overwhelmed at the sensation of their bodies being so close, the feeling of Cas' cock inside him, and the near-constant tingling he felt from the way his prostate was being stimulated. It was perfect and exactly what Dean wanted.

Cas ran his hands along Dean's body, then up his arms until their fingers were entwined. He lavished unhurried kisses on Dean's shoulders, his arms, his neck, anywhere he could reach. Dean turned his head to bring their lips together and Cas didn't disappoint. He licked inside Dean's mouth, his tongue exploring and curling around Dean's. Dean canted his hips back in invitation and Cas groaned, dropping his forehead to Dean's shoulder. He raised his head and placed his cheek next to Dean's and began to slide his cock in and out of Dean's tight hole, their faces so close they were sharing the same breath. Cas pulled out slowly, then rammed his cock inside in one fast motion, punching the air out of Dean's lungs. He did this over and over, never increasing his speed and driving Dean out of his fucking mind with want.

Dean squeezed Cas' hand, then tried to pull his own hand away so he could get the leverage to push back against Cas more easily. Cas wasn't having it. He tightened his hold on Dean's hands and fucking growled in warning as he stilled his hips and refused to keep going. This time, it was Dean's turn to whimper. He nodded his head in submission, then relaxed his body so Cas could have his way with him. It was so freeing... to just be able to give in and let Cas pleasure him, trusting that Cas would give him what he needed. Cas rewarded his submission with a series of powerful thrusts that left Dean breathless. He could feel Cas trembling, and knew he was trying to maintain control. He braced himself against Dean's hands and raised up slightly, then started fucking into Dean
relentlessly with movements that caused them to skid toward the headboard. Still holding Dean's hands, Cas slammed Dean's palms against the headboard to brace against the onslaught of his thrusts.

Dean felt his orgasm building... his cock rubbed almost painfully against the bed as Cas fucked him without mercy. The steady slap of skin against skin and their soft grunts and moans, combined with the smell of sex filled Dean's senses, making him feel lightheaded and euphoric. He could barely catch his breath as the heat in his belly built to a raging inferno. "Cas..." he breathed out. Dean's muscles tensed and his nails raked into the wooden headboard. He felt Cas' teeth on the back of his neck and Dean came so hard he screamed. Propelled by the sound, Cas lost all restraint and drove into him even harder... his ragged breaths hot against Dean's flesh. Suddenly, Cas went still and Dean felt his cum pumping inside of him, filling him with warmth. Sex with Cas was always amazing, but this time, it felt important somehow... like all doubt had washed away and all that was left was the profound bond between them.

Cas went lax, and Dean found he didn't mind the weight of his lover on him. As his heartbeat slowed to a normal rhythm, Dean felt safe and loved. He closed his eyes and focused on Cas' fingers, now moving in circles on his arms. Cas hummed in satisfaction, placing a sweet kiss on his cheek and Dean smiled. He could feel Cas softening inside of him and the wetness between his thighs. They'd have to get up soon to clean up, but he was content to lay there for a few more minutes.

After a hot shower together, they lay in bed talking until almost midnight... nothing of any significance, just random shit about their lives and how to handle the upcoming move. Dean made the decision to put the few nice pieces of furniture he had into storage and get rid of the rest. Cas' house wasn't huge by any stretch of the imagination, and Dean never wanted him to regret asking him to move in. He'd rather ditch his mismatched crap since he was certain it wouldn't appeal to the designer's taste. Cas assured him they would find a place for his TV, though.

They were both tired the next day, but Kate worked her magic with makeup. The house was painted inside and out, the landscaping was almost complete, and everything else was ready to move in by the end of the week. Not for the first time, Dean wondered what life would be like once they were done filming. It seemed strange that only a few months ago he was against the whole thing. Now, he couldn't imagine his day any other way than spending it alongside Cas doing what they both loved.

Saturday was spent at Dean's house going through his stuff and boxing it up. He collected a lot of junk over the years and a lot of it got tossed or set aside for charity. They got home in time to watch Designing Dreams and for the first time, Dean really noticed how they looked at each other. What had Sam said? Happiness... yeah, he saw it reflected in their eyes. After the episode, Cas took a few minutes to read the tweets, many of which still implied Dean was the bottom in the relationship. Not that he minded... in light of recent revelations, he was more amused by it than angry. They shared a few laughs at Dean's expense as they headed to bed. Thoroughly exhausted, they fell asleep after nothing more than a brief kiss.

Sunday, Sam, Jo, Charlie, and Benny showed up at Dean's to help him load the truck that would be taking his furniture and a few other things to the storage unit he rented. Everything he was taking to the new place fit into the bed of his pickup. With Cas' help, Dean got most of his stuff put away before they took a break for dinner. In bed, after sharing a languid kiss goodnight, Cas whispered, "Welcome home, Dean." The words were spoken so sweetly, Dean's heart melted.
Sam sat in the conference room with Crowley, the public relations staff, and the network’s in-house counsel. They had gone through thousands of videos and narrowed it down to less than a dozen applicants. Sam looked at the screenshots of the young couples and small families. Each story was heartbreaking in its own way, making it even more difficult to choose. The group sat around and hashed out the pros and cons of each one, attempting to keep their decision objective. It wasn't easy. If Sam had his way, he'd build homes for all of them... but in his position, he couldn't afford to think like that.

In the end, they chose a Veteran of the Army. Sergeant First Class Victor Henriksen was wounded in action during a conflict in Fallujah. An injury to his spine left him unable to perform his duties, so he received a disability discharge with honors. For his sacrifice and valor, he received the Purple Heart and the Silver Star Medal, then was shipped stateside to his wife, Meg, and their six-year-old daughter, Trixie. Victor received a small monthly check from the Army that included a disability payment, but it wasn't nearly enough to cover their expenses. Meg worked as a nurse at a local hospital, but she was underpaid and overworked. They currently lived in a cramped house in Renton, a small town just south of Seattle, with Victor's parents who had submitted the video on their behalf. It was the general consensus that this war hero deserved a home for his family, so the decision was unanimous.

Now, it was the legal department's turn to take over the process. The couple would be contacted this week and they were scheduled to film the last episode in mid-March, barring any unforeseen complications. The season finale was scheduled to air the second Saturday in April. At that time, the Henriksens would receive the deed to their new home, but they would be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement stipulating they would not share the news with anyone until the finale aired.

Sam walked outside and shivered. The temperature was dropping with the sunset. He thought about all the things he still had to do before the show wrapped its first season and was momentarily overwhelmed. He took a deep breath and a new thought popped into his head. The legal team would take care of everything required to hand the house over, but what then? Giving a house away was not without a downside. The family would still have to pay taxes on it, and with this family’s situation, that wasn't going to be feasible. As he walked to his car, an idea started to form. A devious grin spread slowly across his face. He was pretty sure Dean wouldn't like it, and absolutely certain that Cas would hate it. Still, if he could convince them to do it for a good cause...

He sat behind the wheel of his car and fastened his seatbelt. He was supposed to meet a woman at Ellen's bar tonight... some friend of Jo's. He hated blind dates. He thought about Dean and Cas... it would be nice to have what they had. He was shocked by Dean's whispered announcement the day after Valentine's. He knew his brother was in love with Castiel, but he didn't expect Dean to move in with him... not yet anyway. He had to admit, he was scared for his brother. Dean had never really lived with anyone before. There was the one chick, but that only lasted a few months, and Dean never even considered getting rid of his own place during that time. It worried Sam that Dean was moving too fast. After all, he'd only known Cas for a few months, and the first couple of weeks Sam thought they were going to kill each other. Could two people really fall in love that quickly? Sam was more than a little depressed that he couldn't answer that.

His phone rang just as he turned off his ignition. It was Dean. With lingering doubts still in his head,
he assumed something bad had happened. "Hey, Dean. What's wrong?"

"Nothing, jeez... can't I just call my little brother to check in?"

"Yes, you can. Sorry... just had a lot on my mind."

"It's okay, Sammy. I just thought you might want to grab a bite. My treat." Dean sounded happy... carefree. In Sam's whole life, he couldn't remember hearing Dean ever sounding that way. He had always been the big brother that worried constantly, his life filled with so much stress over making sure that Sam had everything. It made him sad to think that Dean hadn't been able to experience the worry-free existence he had cultivated for Sam. Now, hearing his brother's voice sounding so untroubled made him realize he didn't need to worry about the safety of Dean's heart at all. He was confident that Castiel would gladly take on the role of guardian in Sam's place.

"That sounds great, Dean, but I can't. Uh... I have a... um... fuck, don't you dare make fun of me..."

"Jesus, Sam, what the fuck? Just tell me. I promise I won't laugh." Sam didn't believe him, but he didn't see a way around it.

"Fine. I have a blind date, okay?" He could practically feel Dean straining under the weight of his promise. "Jo set me up with a friend of hers and no, it's no one you know. So just go ahead and get your laughs out of the way now. Not all of us have perfect dream relationships..." Sam clamped his mouth shut. He didn't mean to lose his temper or sound so bitter... especially since Dean hadn't done anything but find happiness. How could Sam make him feel bad for that? He felt like a shitty brother. Dean's silence was deafening, and Sam couldn't take it. "I'm sorry, Dean. I didn't mean to..." He paused and then sighed. "You have every right to be happy. You deserve it more than most, and I'm glad you have Cas. I'm just... lonely."

After a beat of silence, Dean finally spoke, his voice calm and... kind. "I wasn't going to make fun of you, Sam. I was just gonna say good luck... and not sarcastically. I mean it, I hope this girl is awesome. Jo's not really the matchmaking type, so if she says you'll like this girl, maybe you should give it a chance. You never know... love can bitch-slap you out of nowhere when you least expect it." Sam was stunned into silence at Dean actually using the L-word.

"Who the fuck are you and what have you done with my brother?" He heard Dean laughing, so he joined in. It felt good. "Seriously, Dean... thank you. I'll... keep an open mind, I guess. And just so you know, I really am happy you found love with Cas." Predictably, Sam had gone too far and Dean was done sharing feelings.

"Whatever, Samantha. Go change your fucking tampon before you meet your date. You don't want her to know you have a vagina."

"There's the brother I know and love." Sam smiled.

"Stop talking about love, you pussy. Get the fuck off the phone and go get laid."

"Classy, Dean." He felt a rush of satisfaction when Dean huffed and hung up on him. A little brother's work was never done. His phone beeped a reminder that his date was starting in five minutes. He took a deep breath, got out of the car, and went inside.

Jo met him at the door and walked him over to the bar to make the introduction. Sam was relieved. Jo reached out and tapped a young woman on the shoulder. She turned around and Sam could have sworn it happened in slow motion. She had long, silky, auburn hair that framed a lovely face. Eyes the color of whiskey stared back at him with wisdom well beyond her years. There was a smile
hidden in the corner of her full, pink lips and her hands were moving gracefully through the air with purpose. Sam was speechless. He couldn't think. He only noticed the expectant look in her eyes when Jo elbowed him hard in the ribs.

"I'm sorry, what?" He waited for her to repeat whatever question she had asked, then suddenly noticed... she was deaf. Sam could have punched himself in the dick for how stupid he was being. He must have waited too long to reply because a flash of uncertainty was in her eyes. Sam couldn't allow that and had never been more grateful for the ASL elective he had taken in college. He brought his hands up and hesitantly signed his response. "Sorry. You're just so beautiful."

Her cheeks went pink as she blushed, then the most gorgeous smile he had ever seen lit up her face. Sam knew without a doubt that he had just been bitch-slapped.
Castiel walked beside Dean as they made their way through the finished house, the camera crews following closely. They talked about the changes they made and he knew when the episode aired, the editing department would splice in some 'before' pictures. For Castiel, it seemed like a long journey was coming to a close. He glanced over as Dean was running his hands over the reclaimed barnwood wall and expounding on his incredible craftsmanship. Seeing the green eyes he'd grown to love as they lit up with pride made his heart skip a beat. Castiel had been brave enough to let Dean into his life, and yes, sometimes it felt like he did it kicking and screaming, but he had no regrets. It had only been a couple of weeks, but their new living arrangement seemed to be working out nicely. Dean was surprisingly fastidious, especially in the kitchen, and it helped with Castiel's slight issue with OCD. Dean still brought him coffee every morning while he laid in bed grumbling about having to face another day. Dean seemed to get along better with this coffeemaker... meaning Dean had given it his demon-free stamp of approval. On Tuesday afternoons, the days Dean went to his various jobsites to check in, Castiel made sure he was there when Dean got home to start the shower for him. When he was done, Castiel always had a towel waiting, hot from the dryer. This was the type of romance he had grown to love...the simple, small gestures they did for each other. Every single one brought him joy.

When the walkthrough was complete and the cameras were shut off and locked away, Dean strode over and leaned into his personal space. "Hey, hot stuff. What do you say we go home, shower, and go out to eat? It's Saturday night and I want to show off my sexy boyfriend." He winked and smiled that crooked way that melted Castiel's heart.

"Sounds like fun. I wouldn't be averse to you showcasing my sexiness," Castiel replied with a cocky smirk. They usually avoided public places because their fame had grown, but it would be nice to dine out for a change.

An hour later, Dean led him into one of the best restaurants in Seattle. "Dean, we need reservations for this place," Castiel whispered as the hostess came toward them.

"Mr. Winchester, nice to see you again. It's been a while." Castiel stared at Dean, who just shrugged and followed the tall brunette to a table set for two. "Your server will be Paul this evening. He will be with you shortly." As soon as she walked away, Castiel lifted an eyebrow. Dean grinned.

"I helped with their renovations last year. The owner liked my work, so I always get a table whenever I want a good steak." Paul arrived and he took their drink order. Castiel ordered a glass of red wine, but Dean told the server to bring the bottle. Dean asked for a Jameson, neat.

Castiel took his time looking over the menu and was about to ask Dean what he was having when Dean's eyes locked on something or someone across the crowded dining room. His laser glare didn't look happy, so Castiel turned his head slightly. He recognized Cain Adamson, Seattle's Chief of Police, from the news. He was standing with his hand on the lower back of an attractive middle-aged woman and looking right at their table. After a brief staring battle, Adamson turned away and exited the restaurant. Castiel met Dean's gaze. "What was that about, Dean?"

Dean's eyes went directly to his tumbler of whiskey and Castiel watched as Dean downed it in one go. That was something you did with rotgut, not top shelf. Castiel waited patiently. Dean rested the glass on the table and finally met Castiel's eyes. "A few years back, I met a guy at a bar. He was..."
older and had this way about him, ya know?" Dean blew out his breath. "We had a thing for a short
time and then I found out he was married, bi-curious, and had a high-profile job. We always met at
my place. He never answered his phone when I called, but he always called me back later." Dean
shrugged. "The signs were there, I just didn't want to see them."

As if sensing the worst possible time to interrupt, the server returned to take their order. Dean
predictably chose a ribeye, rare, and Castiel gave the server his choice. When the server was gone,
Dean continued. "Anyway, I found out the truth and we parted ways. End of story." Castiel didn't
know what to say. There was a flare of unwarranted jealousy, but it was over as quickly as it started.
Dean reached across the table and laid his hand over Castiel's. "Cas, babe... I don't want to keep
anything from you, so I'm just going to tell you straight-up." Castiel didn't like where this was
headed and felt dread course through him. "He's the one I called to find out who hit you. I wanted to
speed up the process because I wanted that fucker to be punished."

"You... called him." The flame began to smolder. "Your ex?"

"Honesty... that's what we've based our relationship on, Cas. Yeah, I called him, and it wasn't easy
for me to ask that bastard for anything. But I needed to help you more than I needed my pride." Dean
stared into his eyes, unwavering. Castiel swallowed and took a sip of his wine as he tried to collect
his jumbled thoughts. The primal feeling of possessiveness wouldn't go away, but he stifled the
jealousy.

"Thank you for telling me, Dean," Castiel said just as the server brought their meals. They ate quietly
for a time and Castiel hated the awkward tension simmering between them. Dean, usually an
enthusiastic eater, was pushing food around on his plate. "Dean?" He looked up at him. "Since you
chose to be honest with me, allow me to do the same." Castiel set his fork down and took Dean's
hand. "For a moment, I was jealous. I hate feeling that way, but I assure you I'm good now. It was in
your past, and I understand why you called him. You did it for a good reason, and I'm truly touched
that you would set aside your pride for me." He smiled at Dean to drive the message home that he
wasn't upset.

"It's a part of my history that I'm not proud of, Cas. I'm glad you're not mad." Dean squeezed his
hand and smiled briefly before growing solemn. "I just have to know that you trust me."

"I do." Castiel gave him a tentative smile and Dean returned it. "I will try to restrain my possessive
tendencies."

"Hold on, I like your possessive tendencies. It's kind of hot," Dean said, his voice lowered so it
wouldn't carry to the other diners. The remainder of the meal was spent trading sexual innuendos that
had them both laughing uncontrollably until the manager came up to ask them to tone it down or
please leave. Castiel had never been thrown out of a restaurant before and he felt a bit reckless. Dean
tossed a couple of hundred-dollar bills on the table and took Castiel's hand. They stepped out into a
steady drizzle and raced toward the Impala.

Once inside, they playfully shook off the droplets and then Dean's face became serious. He wrapped
his fist around Castiel's collar and yanked him across the seat to kiss him. Time stopped. Dean
growled into his mouth and dragged a hand through Castiel's hair, holding him in place. Dean's teeth
nipped at his lower lip, causing him to moan and reach for Dean's clothing. He wanted him. Dean
huffed out a bark of frustrated laughter. "Need to get home... it would be very bad if we got arrested
for indecent..." Castiel's lips stopped his words. "Cas...got...to...stop..." Castiel drew back, his breath
sounding harsh in the quiet of the car.

"Drive," Castiel commanded. Dean swallowed and positioned himself behind the wheel. The drive
home was silent. Castiel's zipper dug into his erection and from the way Dean fidgeted, he was in the
same state. Slowly, trying not to startle the driver, Castiel reached over to cup Dean's straining cock. Dean whined softly and shook his head, hands fisted on the wheel. Castiel wasn't in the mood to be deterred. He slid across the seat and used both hands to get Dean's jeans undone.

"Cas... no..." Dean hissed, grabbing one of Castiel's wrists and pushing it away.

"Let me," Castiel's voice was dangerously low and unmistakably possessive. Dean shivered at his tone as he briefly met Castiel's eyes, then let go, returning his hand to the steering wheel. He fumbled for the opening in Dean's boxer briefs and made a pleased sound when he found what he was looking for. He pulled Dean's cock from the confines of his pants and lowered his head.

"Jesus, Cas... You're going to fucking kill us both," Dean growled, but he adjusted his position to give Castiel more room.

Castiel licked the tip and hummed as he tasted his lover's arousal. He inhaled the scent and closed his mouth around the head. Dean's hips bucked and a small gasp escaped his mouth. Castiel relaxed his throat and engulfed Dean's length, only stopping when his lips were stretched tight around the base of his swollen cock. He felt Dean's hips jerk involuntarily, but Castiel still didn't move. Instead, he began swallowing around Dean's shaft, his throat constricting over and over again until Dean was trembling and panting above him.

The car veered to the right and Castiel had to grip Dean's leg to brace himself. The thigh muscle below his hand tightened as Dean applied the brake, bringing the car to a sudden stop. He felt Dean's fingers in his hair. "Cas... baby, you're gonna make me come." Castiel pulled off and looked up at him.

"That's the goal, Sweetheart," he responded dryly before returning to his task. Dean was close, he could tell by the way he was breathing and the way his hips canted up. Every muscle in his body seemed to harden as he fought to maintain control. It was a fight Dean would lose, and Castiel loved how powerful it made him feel. He bobbed his head up and down rapidly, his tongue undulating along the hardened length. He allowed his teeth to scrape the velvety skin, knowing how much his lover enjoyed walking the fine line between pleasure and pain. He felt Dean pulse in his mouth and prepared himself as the rush of Dean's cum flowed past his tongue and down his throat. He swallowed all of it and then released Dean before he became oversensitive. He sat up and carefully tucked Dean back inside his jeans. Dean stared at him, and Castiel licked his lips, knowing the picture he painted. Dean's eyes widened before he put the car in gear, shaking his head with a dazed look on his face. Castiel's mouth curled into a satisfied grin, then he spoke with mock seriousness. "Drive safely, Dean."

Dean breathed a sigh of relief when Cas let the thing with Cain go. He had been shocked to look up and see Cain's steely eyes on him across the restaurant. There was a challenge in them, like he expected Dean to start something. Like Dean would hurt the woman at the bastard's side... she didn't deserve to be lied to and cheated on. He thought he did a good job of covering the brief exchange, but Cas was observant and he found himself explaining the whole affair. He watched the different emotions shift across Cas' face, and he hated knowing it was his sordid past that haunted them. Cas surprised him by making an off-color joke and Dean burst into loud laughter. Soon, they were both guilty of disturbing the peace and they were asked to leave. Dean noticed Cas' pleased reaction to
being kicked out and thought it was hilarious. He had certainly come a long way from the stuffed shirt he used to be.

It was raining and they ran to the car, still giggling like children. Then Dean looked across the car at Cas, his hair wet, his eyes bright, and God, that smile... that sweet, sexy smile. He had to kiss that mouth right freakin’ now. He only meant to give him a quick one, a promise of things to come, but Cas took it a step further and Dean had to rein him in. He should have known better than to think he could.

His boyfriend shocked the shit out of him when he went down on him in the car. He put up a half-assed protest, but Cas’ mouth felt so fucking good... and when he started swallowing around his cock, it took all his willpower to not to come right then and there. He tried valiantly to concentrate on the traffic, but the feeling of Cas’ tongue and hot, full lips drove him insane. He saw an office building that was closed for the night. The tires squealed on the wet pavement and he brought the car to a jarring stop in the parking lot. Foot still on the brake, motor running, he let his head fall back and let Cas have his way. His head bobbing up and down in his lap was a beautiful sight and Dean would never get tired of the view. The man made giving head a fucking art form. God, it felt so good. He closed his eyes and let his hand curl into Cas’ hair. He was already close to coming... sex in a public parking lot was such a fucking turn-on.

The second he felt Cas’ teeth scrape his skin, he came hard and Cas swallowed every bit of his load. Then the cocky little shit looked at him, licked lips wet with his cum, and told him to fuckin’ drive safely. Dean was still dazed when he pulled back onto the road and turned the Impala toward home. He was very aware that Cas hadn’t been satisfied and he inwardly vowed to make it up to him when they got home. What he didn't expect was what Cas did as soon as they crossed the threshold and the door slammed behind them. "Knees, Dean." His voice was low and commanding and sent a shiver down Dean's spine.

Dean didn't even think about hesitating. He dropped to his knees before him and looked up expectantly, his hands resting on his thighs awaiting the next command. Cas unbuttoned his jeans and pulled the zipper down. He pushed them, along with his boxers, down enough to let his balls swing free. Dean leaned forward to take Cas into his mouth, but Cas' fist in his hair stopped him. "No." Dean locked eyes with his lover as Cas started jerking himself off. Dean was riveted by the sight and stared wide-eyed, his shapely lips slightly parted. Cas cupped his sac with his other hand, and Dean watched as he worked it with his palm, tugging and pulling on it as he stroked his shaft. A thick bead of precum leaked from the slit and Cas' fist spread it down his length. He had the perfect cock... long, thick, and cut so the head showed the flush of arousal.

He was so caught up in watching Cas take his own pleasure, the sound of Cas' moans didn't register at first. The hot spurt on his face caused his mouth to drop open in excitement and he tasted it on his tongue, his lips... It splashed over his cheeks and he felt it running down his neck in warm rivulets. Dean was frozen, his head tilted up toward Cas' face. Cas knelt down, his eyes locked on the sight of Dean bathed in his release. He grabbed Dean by the back of his hair with one hand, tilting him back further, then slid the other hand down his throat, rubbing his cum into Dean's freckled skin. Dean whimpered, then he was being kissed and licked and goddamn, it was one of the hottest fucking things they'd ever done.

Cas sat down beside him on the throw-rug by the door and eventually, Dean stood and pulled him to his feet. Cas tucked himself back into his pants and Dean couldn't resist smacking him lightly on the ass as he headed for the kitchen. Cas wet a towel and gently wiped the rest of his cum off Dean, then got them both a bottle of water. In between sips, they traded a few soft kisses. "Dean?"

"Hmm?" Dean leaned against the counter, hooking his finger around one of Cas' beltloops, keeping
"Was... was that alright?" Cas' skin was tinged a delightful pink and Dean was stunned to think his boyfriend was embarrassed by what they had just done.

"Alright? That was hot as fuck, Cas." He pulled Cas closer until he was leaning against Dean's chest, then wrapped his arms around his waist. "It was a first for me, but I definitely don't want it to be a last." He saw the relief in Cas' eyes and brought their foreheads together. "Cas, seriously, you can't do anything that would turn me off." At Cas' raised brow, Dean amended. "Okay, there might be one or two things..." Cas snorted a laugh and relaxed into Dean's embrace.

Morning brought more rain, but it was Sunday and as far as Dean knew, they didn't have any plans. He looked over at Cas' tousled head on the other pillow and smiled. He kissed a lightly tanned shoulder and eased out of bed. After taking a piss, he went to their shared office and opened his laptop to check his emails. He was behind and knew Donna would rip him a new one if any of their billing slipped through the cracks. He answered a few before going downstairs to start the coffee. He liked this time of morning. It was quiet on the water and he enjoyed the view immensely.

When there was enough in the pot for his first cup, he poured it into his favorite mug and took it back upstairs. The emails from Donna came to an end and he saw one Sam sent to both him and Cas. He opened it and saw that the network had chosen the winning family. Sam wanted the two of them to meet him at the studio on Monday morning to watch the video and talk about the final two episodes.

Hands on his shoulders made him look up. "Morning, Sunshine. You're up earlier than usual."

"Your bad habits are rubbing off on me," he mumbled as he picked up Dean's mug and took a healthy swig. He grimaced. Dean liked his coffee black. Cas had to have sugar, cream, and sometimes even flavored syrup in his.

"Getting up early to watch the sunrise isn't a bad habit, Sweet-cheeks," Dean responded, standing to take Cas' sleep-warm body into his arms. He cupped his ass and gave it a squeeze through his pajama pants. "How about I make you breakfast and we go to the hardware store?" Cas placed his hands on Dean's chest and gave him a playful shove.

"The hardware store? That's the last thing I want to do on my day off, Dean." After feeding Cas a wonderful breakfast, Dean got his way and they browsed through the huge warehouse that smelled of freshly-cut lumber and fertilized mulch. The next thing Dean knew, he had a honey-do list. He didn't really mind it, and he would never admit to the warm and fuzzy feeling he got whenever they did anything domestic together.

Since Dean had to sign off on a project for Winchester Construction, they took separate cars to work on Monday. When Dean got to the studio, Cas' Jeep was already in the parking lot. He went inside, eager to see the family who would be living in their house. He waved to the receptionist and headed down the hall.

Crowley, Sam, Cas, and a few other people Dean couldn't name, sat around the large conference table. Everyone looked up and he waved before taking his seat next to Cas. Sam updated them on the family chosen and Dean couldn't be more pleased they'd chosen a veteran. After watching the video, Dean was proud he'd had a hand in this project. A dude from the studio's legal department lectured them on non-disclosure issues and Dean wanted to role his eyes. Did he think he and Cas were stupid?

Thinking the meeting was over when everyone started filing out of the room, Sam surprised him by
grabbing his arm. Cas shrugged and they both sat back down. Sam told them the reason he felt they needed a fundraiser and Dean slapped his brother on the back. "That's great, Sammy. What did you have in mind?"

"Well..." Sam's hesitation caused alarms to go off in Dean's head. "I've discussed it with our attorneys and I'm free to approach our sponsors for additional funding... but my original idea was for you two to do a calendar. We can do the shots here at the studio, and I already have Crowley's blessing. They would be ready for sale by the time the finale airs."

"A calendar?" Cas looked from Sam to Dean, his expression quizzical.

"Yes. I would like pictures of you and Dean in a different scene for every month... maybe a monthly DIY theme. Nothing explicit..."

"Explicit... I hope not, Sammy. I ain't strippin' down for a bunch of housewives to check out my junk." He reached over for Cas' hand. "Besides, my boyfriend is a possessive motherfucker." Cas grinned at him and then they looked back at Sam. He looked kind of pale. Dean blinked. "Sam... tell me you don't want us to get naked."

"Not completely naked..."

"Son of a bitch, Sam," Dean bellowed, raking his fingers through his hair. He thought about how uncomfortable Cas had been at the last photo shoot. He couldn't agree to this when he knew how Cas felt about it.

"Dean, it's for a good cause. You won't be showing your junk. We wouldn't be allowed to advertise something like that on TV anyway. It's just a few shirtless shots." Dean leaned back in his chair with a huff and noticed Cas hadn't said a word. He was probably stunned into silence and pissed off that they were being asked to do such a thing.

"Cas? What are you thinking?" Cas sat forward, his elbows on the table, holding his chin in his hands. Dean could tell he was gathering his thoughts. His boyfriend surprised the hell out of him by asking about profit margins, tax benefits, and printing discounts. Dean just stared dumbfounded as Sam answered every question with spreadsheets and a lengthy dissertation. Cas looked suitably impressed. "Cas, you aren't seriously considering this, are you?"

Cas met his eyes. "Dean, this family is on a fixed income. Giving a new home to them is great, but what will they do a year from now when they have to pay taxes and homeowner's insurance? We can't just hand over the keys and say good luck. I agree with Sam that the best solution is to use the proceeds from calendar sales and gifts from our sponsors to feed an escrow account. If we can do something to help them long-term, I'm all in."

Dean gaped at him like a fish. "But..."

"I'm sure Sam will make the photos tasteful," Cas said, his eyes going to Sam to fix him with a pointed look. Sam nodded.

"Yes, Dean, tasteful. We aren't shooting porn for Christ's sake."

Dean wasn't convinced. He wasn't sure why Cas didn't have a problem with this all of a sudden, but he was certain his boyfriend was not okay with being exposed to the public. "I don't like the idea of objectifying Cas... and me."

"Dean, how often do you take your shirt off at your construction sites? You don't seem to have a problem with that. Are you implying that you only feel comfortable taking your clothes off for free?
Because if it makes it easier for you to adjust, I can always start paying you to get naked.” Dean's eyes widened in outrage as he took in the sight of Cas smirking at him and Sam hiding a smile behind his hand. Cas looked so thoroughly pleased with himself, Dean didn’t have the heart to object anymore... especially since the infuriating man was making such valid points. Still, Dean was concerned that Cas had given in too easily and would come to regret his decision. For now, he decided it was a lost cause and sighed dramatically, resigning himself to his fate.

Castiel had seen porn. He wasn't a prude. He loved sex. But... what he did to Dean went far beyond his experience. He'd seen videos of facials, but seeing his cum dripping off Dean's face was almost too much of a turn-on. It was the ultimate gesture of possession and appealed to Castiel's more dominant side. It unnerved him, and he immediately started to second-guess himself. Thankfully, Dean reassured him that he thought it was hot, too. He even said he wouldn't mind doing it again. Castiel's pulse raced at the thought, and it occurred to him that he wouldn't mind being on the receiving end since Dean was so turned on by it.

He found his mind replaying that image over and over again at the most inopportune times... like while they watched the winning couple's life play out on the huge monitor in the conference room, for instance. He had to force his eyes away from Dean's face to nip the fantasy in the bud before he got a hard-on and embarrassed himself.

That was why he was caught off guard with Sam's proposal. The old Castiel... old meaning three months ago... would have been outraged. Today's Castiel had a very active sex life with a partner who was willing to try just about anything, and the thought of parading him around half-dressed seemed enticing at the time.

Driving home alone, the Impala following behind him with said partner at the wheel, he had a clearer mind and doubts were overtaking his confidence. Because of him, Dean had agreed to show some skin and by extension, he'd committed himself to the same. He knew how Dean felt about it. He'd made his thoughts very clear, but Castiel had sided with Sam... for good reason and with the best intentions, but he still should have considered Dean's feelings. All his insecurities surfaced. He needed to fix this. By the time he stopped his Jeep at the dock, Castiel was sick to his stomach and he felt the start of a headache.

Dean pulled in beside him and looked concerned when Castiel didn't immediately get out of his vehicle. Castiel knew he couldn't sit there forever, so he opened his door. "Cas? You okay? What's wrong, babe?" Dean wedged between him and the door, leaning into Cas' space.

"Dean, did I bully you into agreeing to do the calendar? You said you weren't okay with it and I didn't even listen. I can't believe I did that... You know I would never—"

"Whoa, Cas, breathe for a minute. Fuck... Where's the cheeky bastard from the conference room?" Dean tried to laugh, but he stopped the minute he saw Castiel's expression. "Jesus... You're really upset about this, aren't you?"

"Yes, Dean. I don't want you to do anything you don't want to do, and I pretty much pushed you into going along with it." Castiel pulse was racing and he was feeling light-headed. What was wrong with him? Why was he like this? How could Dean love him? Maybe he didn't. He'd never said it...
"Castiel..." Hearing Dean use his full name got his attention. "As long as you've known me, have you ever once seen me do anything I didn't want to do?" Castiel shook his head. "Exactly. I may piss and moan and be a cranky little bitch sometimes, but I'm also stubborn as hell. I would never go along because someone coerced me. And Cas, you didn't. You get that, right?" Dean cupped Castiel's face with both hands. "Now, listen... are you listening to me?" Castiel nodded. "I only objected because I didn't think you would want to do another photo shoot half-naked."

Castiel let that sink in. Dean only argued because he didn't want Castiel to feel uncomfortable. Dean thought of Castiel's feelings before his own, and Castiel hadn't thought of Dean's feelings at all. It should have made him feel better to know Dean didn't have a problem with the calendar, but all he could think about was how selfish he'd been. "Come on, Cas, let's go inside," Dean said, glancing around to see if any of their neighbors were around. Castiel nodded and allowed Dean to take his hand and pull him along.

Once inside, he hung up his jacket, toed off his shoes, and went to the kitchen and poured himself a glass of wine. Castiel couldn't look at Dean, but he felt Dean's eyes on him. He needed to talk to him, but how could he find the words to say he was a selfish asshole? In the end, he didn't need to. He felt warm arms slide around his waist and Dean's chin resting on his shoulder. He kissed Castiel lightly behind his ear and took a deep breath. Castiel set down his glass and folded his arms around Dean's. They stood in silence for a few minutes before Dean spoke.

"Cas... I know you're feeling guilty, and I can guess why. You think you were selfish. You feel bad because I was worried about your feelings and you weren't worried about mine. I can't stop you from feeling bad about that, but I can tell you how I feel right now." He paused and Castiel tensed as he waited for Dean to continue. How did the man know him so well... better than he even knew himself? "I feel loved. Every day, every minute, you make me feel wanted and like someone gives a damn about me. That's all that matters, Cas."

"I don't deserve you, Dean."

"Yes, you do. So shut the fuck up and kiss me."

Castiel turned in Dean's arms and showered him with kisses... on his forehead, his eyes, his cheeks, his nose, and finally, his lips. They held each other tightly, just breathing in each other's air. Castiel leaned back and brought their foreheads together, a gentle gesture that grounded them. He was comforted by Dean's words, but he still made a promise to himself that he would be more mindful of Dean's feelings in the future... even if Dean didn't think it was necessary. "I'm a mess, Dean. I'm trying so hard to be the kind of man you could..." He stopped himself before he used the L-word. "...share a life with. I just... sometimes, I feel so unworthy."

Dean shook his head, laying a finger across his lips. "Don't you dare say anything like that ever again, Cas. You are not unworthy. You, Castiel Novak, are the best thing to ever happened to me. We're both gonna fuck up sometimes, but I'm not worried because I know we'll be okay."

Cas stared into those beautiful green eyes and fell in love all over again. He was the luckiest man alive. Dean kissed his nose quickly and then pulled away. "Okay, so if we're done with this Dr. Phil session, I'd like to make dinner now," Dean joked. Castiel smacked his ass as he walked away, smiling at the undignified yelp Dean let out.

Dean was cooking while Castiel typed the latest entry on his blog when the doorbell rang. The two men looked at each other and Dean shrugged. Castiel wondered who would be here at seven o'clock on a Thursday night. He opened the door and was surprised to see a sheriff's deputy standing there.
"Good evening. I'm looking for Ca-steel Novak." The man butchered Castiel's first name, but he was used to it.

"I'm Castiel Novak. What's the problem, Deputy?"

"No problem, sir." He handed Castiel an envelope. "Just a subpoena. Have a nice day." He touched a fingertip to his hat and walked back down the dock. Dean was beside him in an instant.

"A subpoena for what?" Dean asked incredulously, his protective side coming through loud and clear.

"We shall see," Castiel murmured and tore open the envelope. He read the title out loud. "State versus Richard Roman." He was to appear in court the following week to testify in his hit-and-run case. Dean had been after him to sue the man, but Castiel left the legalities to his insurance company. He had plenty of money and didn't need to seek revenge against the man that almost took his life. With Dean reading over his shoulder, he skimmed the page. The case would be tried on the day they were supposed to film the final walkthrough before announcing the winner. He'd have to ask Sam to rearrange the schedule.

Sam took the interruption to filming in stride. Castiel talked to both a private attorney and the network's lead counsel about the proceedings and both agreed to accompany him on the day of the trial. Dean wanted to be there to face Dick Roman, but Castiel, Sam, and the lawyers vetoed the idea. Since he was denied access, Dean had been snippy with him and everyone else in his path, but Castiel let him have his temper tantrum. He knew Dean wasn't mad at him, just the situation.

The courtroom had been crowded with the media due to the high-profile defendant and Castiel felt all eyes on him as he took his seat. He thought nothing of the millions of viewers that now watched him every week, but this level of attention was more than he was comfortable with. He sat and waited as the bailiff called the room to order. The whole trial took a mere six hours. The State had traffic camera footage, photographs taken at the scene of Castiel and his motorcycle, and much more. Castiel's testimony was brief. After all, he was hit and that was all he remembered. Both sides asked him about his injuries and the State's attorney even had pictures from the ER. The entire time Castiel was on the witness stand, Roman stared at him with hate-filled eyes, then sat stone-faced as the jury left the room to deliberate.

Thankfully, the jury didn't remain out long. Dick Roman was found guilty of a Class C felony hit and run. The judge passed down the maximum sentence of five years in prison and a fine of ten thousand dollars. The punishment seemed light, but was the most the law allowed. Compared to the ongoing trial for all the other shady dealings Roman was involved in, this was a drop in the bucket. The State's attorney informed Castiel that Roman would be spending at least fifteen years in prison. Today's verdict would just add to it.

As Castiel drove away from the crowded courthouse steps and the relentless questions from the media, he called Dean and told him the news. Dean wanted to celebrate the victory, but Castiel told him he just wanted a quiet night at home with his boyfriend. Looking at the pictures of the wreck and his injuries had taken quite a toll on him, and he only wanted to feel safe tonight. Seeing the photos, Castiel found he was glad he hadn't bought another bike. It took a lot of self-control to refrain from speeding home to Dean.

When he got home, he was met with the delicious aroma of Dean's cooking and the warm glow of candles throughout the room. Closing his eyes, he took in a deep, cleansing breath and released the day's tension with his exhale. When he opened them, Dean was standing in front of him, holding his arms out in invitation. Castiel all but collapsed into him and buried his face in Dean's neck. He smelled like home and love and everything Castiel needed. Dean might not have said the words, but
in that moment, Castiel could feel the love Dean had for him. It was enough.
Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

Jealousy rears its ugly head.

Chapter Notes

Okay, this chapter was hard. There is a bunch of angst, but it ends well. Hopefully, it is smooth sailing for our boys after this.

Dean tugged on Cas' tie as they waited for the crew to get in position. This week had been easy for him. He only had a few items left on his punch list, but Cas had to move all the furniture and arrange them according to his designs. By the time Thursday came around, the house was looking more like a home.

"Cas, what are your plans for getting the house ready for next week," Sam asked, peering over his clipboard.

"I want to spend today hanging the pictures, installing the window treatments, and placing the accessories," Cas answered, also looking up from his tablet. Dean felt left out without something to hold in his hands, so he fidgeted, drumming his fingers on the table instead. "Tomorrow, I plan on getting the little girl's room ready. I placed the order for the furniture, but I still need to go out in the morning to shop for the rest." Dean rolled his eyes. Shopping. Nope, not again.

"Hey, what about me? I'm done. Can I take the afternoon off?" He asked cheekily as he increased the speed of his tapping. Both Sam and Cas turned reproachful eyes on him. Cas slowly reached over and laid his hand over Dean's to silence his drumming. It had a calming effect.

"Cas is probably going to need your help," Sam threw over his shoulder as he walked away. Dean lifted a brow.

"He's joking, right? You don't need me here to fluff the pillows..." Cas' expression told him all he needed to know. "Babe...seriously? Hey, if you don't make me fluff pillows, I'll fluff something else." He wagged his eyebrows suggestively. Cas just stared at him with one of the bitch-faces he'd obviously borrowed from Sam. Dean knew he was beaten... and not in the fun way.

Fifteen minutes later, Dean found himself with a level in one hand and a hammer in the other. Cas was half across the room staring at the wall like it was a turd in a punchbowl. "Dean, please... pictures should be hung at eye level. You put the nail too high." Dean gritted his teeth as he pulled the nail out and moved aside to let a crew member spackle and blow-dry the hole. Dean brushed a bit of paint on the area and remeasured. He grumbled about nailing Cas' ass as he moved to the next room. "I heard that, Dean Winchester," Cas called out from behind him.

Cas was a fucking perfectionist and by the end of the afternoon, Dean was ready to lose his shit. "Cas, you're driving me fucking crazy, man. They're just candles. Who gives a flying fuck if it's an
"Dean, stop acting like a brat," Cas sniped as he rounded on him and Dean bit back a retort. He knew he was being an asshole, but he was bored with this crap. He was a contractor. He demolished and built things. He didn't arrange throw pillows. He nodded curtly and stomped outside to cool off. Cas knew him well enough to give him a few minutes before following him. Thankfully, Cas must have told the cameramen to take a break because he was alone.

Dean was sitting on the back of his truck when Cas stepped in front of him. Dean pursed his lips and shrugged. "Sorry. I just...fuck, Cas..." He waved his hand at the house. "This is your thing. Give me a power saw and a pipe wrench and I'm good, but start asking my opinion on colors and... and place settings and I'm outta my depth. I know it's important to you. I get that... but Cas, I'm bored out of my fuckin' mind. It would be like me asking you to watch hockey." Cas hated hockey. He would go straight up to his office to blog or something whenever Dean wanted to watch a game, so he knew it was a good analogy. He ran his fingers through his hair and looked into his boyfriend's eyes. Cas gave a resigned sigh and nodded.

"I'm sorry, too. I can't expect you to enjoy the same things I do..." The conversation was reminding Dean of the blow-up they had over Cas saying they didn't have anything in common. That was dangerous territory and he didn't want to go through that ever again.

"We're different, Cas, but that's okay. I think our relationship would get kind of boring if we both liked the same things all the time." Dean pulled Cas between his legs and rested his hands on his waist. "I'll do better."

Cas placed warm hands on Dean's thighs and planted a soft kiss on his lips as he smiled. "Me too."

With their attitudes adjusted, they managed to finish the house before the crew shut down. Cas was with Kate getting his makeup taken off when Dean's phone rang. It was the number for the Network.

"Hello?"

"Mr. Winchester, this is Eve, Mr. Crowley's secretary." Dean frowned into the phone. He disliked the cold bitch, but he had to remain polite.

"Hi, Eve, what do you need?"

"Mr. Crowley wants you to stop by the studio after you leave the reno-house today." Dean's face squinted in confusion. What the hell?

"Me? Why me?"

"He didn't say, Mr. Winchester," she said coolly, like Dean was beneath her. He pictured her staring at her long fingernails while she waited for the dumb contractor to verify he'd be there.

"Does Cas need to come, too?" At her negative response, he hung up. He couldn't imagine what Crowley wanted with him. He pocketed his phone and stepped into the trailer. Cas was just standing up, face scrubbed clean. Dean smiled at him and Kate. The three of them chatted for a few minutes and then Kate said goodbye to get ready for a date with her new boyfriend.

"Are you ready to go home?" Cas asked, linking his fingers with Dean's, their little fight forgotten.

"Yeah, about that... Crowley's evil secretary called. He wants to see me for some reason."
"Crowley wants to meet with just you? What about?"

"I don't know, but since he pays the bills, I can't exactly say no," Dean replied. He didn't think anything of it, but for some reason, Cas seemed quiet. "Unless we have other plans... Should I try to reschedule?"

"No, it's fine. Anna wanted me to come by the studio anyway. We've got our final two candidates coming in for the last round of interviews. I can meet with them and give her the night off. I'm sure she would appreciate the break."

"Cool. I'll text you when we're done." Dean kissed Cas goodbye and headed to his meeting. He had no idea why Crowley would want to talk to him. So far, all their interactions had been somewhat cold, bordering on hostile. Maybe the network had finally had enough of Dean swearing on camera.

At the studio, Dean checked in with Eve before she waved him through to Crowley's office. He felt weird just walking in, so he knocked first.

"Come in," Crowley bellowed. Dean felt like he was in sixth grade again, opening the door to the principal's office. He took in the sight of Crowley sitting in an enormous leather chair, large enough to look like a throne from which the king surveys his kingdom. "Dean, my boy... Come in, come in," he called out jovially.

Dean stepped into the room cautiously, a little surprised at the friendly tone of Crowley's voice. "Uh... Hi, Mr. Crowley. How's it going?" He sounded like an idiot...

Crowley chuckled. "Please, just Crowley. All is well. I just had a business proposition for you. Have a seat." He gestured to a chair on the other side of the desk. Dean sat down, feeling more at ease now that he realized he wasn't in trouble. "Dean Winchester, I've been looking through your work, and I have to say it's remarkable. Really, you have quite an eye for detail."

Uncomfortable with the compliments, Dean shifted in his chair. "Th—thanks, Crowley. I'm sure you didn't call me here to gush about my work, so what can I do for you?"

Crowley's eyes sparkled with mirth. "Direct. I like that. I'll get right to it, then. My daughter, Amara, is attending college here this Fall. My demon of an ex-wife thinks the dorm will be good enough, but there's no way in hell I'm letting my princess live in such squalor. I want her to have the best of everything and she just loves the idea of owning a tiny house. Since you're the best, I want to hire you to build it for her." Crowley leaned back in his chair after he finished his pitch. Dean was stunned into silence, but then he realized he wasn't dealing with Crowley the Network Boss. This was Crowley the Father, and he was just like every other concerned father who wants the best for his kid... maybe with a bigger budget, but still the same. It was a relief to see the human side of the man and Dean found himself feeling more relaxed.

"I don't think it'll be a problem. The show's almost wrapped up, and I don't have anything major on the horizon that my staff couldn't handle. I don't usually do private commissions, but I'd be honored to build a house for your daughter, Crowley. Do you have a location in mind?"

"Yes, but would you mind if we discussed the details over dinner? I skipped lunch and I'm bloody starving."

Dean laughed, completely surprised at the sudden change in tone. "Actually, I could eat. Lead the way." And with that, the two men left the studio, Dean driving his old work truck behind Crowley's very expensive Bentley. They pulled into a restaurant that was two doors down from Cas' studio. He was about to text Cas to let him know he was close by, but then Dean smiled as he thought about
surprising Cas after his meeting. Maybe if Cas' studio was empty, they could have some naughty fun. Dean pocketed his phone, his mind made up. He exited his truck, grabbing his notebook before he shut the door.

Dinner was surprisingly fun. Away from work, Crowley was actually pretty fun to hang out with. He had this dry sense of humor unique to the British, and Dean thought he was hilarious. It was only partly by accident when Dean let it slip that Sam's nickname in high school was Moose. He had a sneaking suspicion Crowley wasn't about to let that one go any time soon. When they finished eating, the dishes were cleared, leaving space for their planning session. Sitting side by side, they went over the details of the project, Dean making notes and sketching ideas as quickly as they came. Crowley had no concept of personal space and didn't hesitate to lean closer when he had questions. When the discussion turned to the interior design, Dean asked if he could bring Cas in to handle the décor.

"I think that's a brilliant idea. You know, Amara is hopelessly in love with both of you. Once she hears her favorite stars designed her home, she will never stop worshipping me. I think I might end up owing you two for the rest of my life." They shared a laugh, then Crowley looked at him with a shrewd eye. "I'm curious, Dean... this thing you have with Castiel... is it for real? I don't mean to imply you're faking it all for the camera. It's obvious you're genuinely into each other. What I want to know is... are you in it for the long haul?"

Dean felt his cheeks grow hot at the invasive questions. "Wow... you really went there." He fidgeted under the other man's unwavering gaze, suddenly feeling like he was being asked the age-old question of whether or not his intentions were honorable. "Yeah, I am... we are. I mean, we moved in together a couple of weeks ago, so we're definitely in it for the foreseeable future." Dean let out a weak laugh, then got serious. "He's not like anyone I've ever met. He's... special."

"Do you love him?"

Dean froze. He'd never said those words to anyone. He didn't know why. But the question had been asked and he wouldn't lie about this. "Yeah, I do."

Crowley leaned closer like he had secret wisdom to share. "Make sure he knows it. Life is short, and if you're not careful, you'll end up like me... balding, divorced, and living with a cat named Satan."

Dean threw his head back and laughed wholeheartedly. It felt good to finally say out loud what he had been feeling for a while now. It was odd that all it took was a simple question from someone he hardly knows... but for the first time in his life, he was absolutely certain that he loved Cas with all his heart.

Dean left the restaurant feeling lighter and practically bouncing on his feet. He couldn't wait to see Cas. He got to the studio and was surprised to find it dark and locked up for the night. He frowned and checked his phone. No calls, no texts. It was strange that Cas hadn't texted him, but Dean tried to shake the feeling that something was wrong and walked to his truck to head home. He called Cas, but there was no answer. His stomach clenched with uneasiness. Something was wrong. He couldn't explain how he knew, he just did. Sam used to jokingly refer to it as his 'spidey-sense' but Dean knew it stemmed from years of living with parents who weren't completely stable. As a result, he could always feel it when something was wrong, and this was no different.

His fears were confirmed as soon as he walked in the door. He stopped in his tracks when he saw Cas sitting on the couch with his arms folded and looking pissed. Dean had no idea why his boyfriend was so upset, but it felt like he was missing something. He opened his mouth to ask what was wrong, but Cas spoke first.
"Well? Do you have something to say to me, Dean?" Cas' voice was sharp and full of wrath. Dean's face must have shown his confusion because Cas rose to his feet and kept talking. "Seriously? You have no idea why I'm angry with you?"

"What the hell is going on? Why would you be pissed at me?" Dean was completely lost. All he wanted was to find Cas and tell him he loved him. He was disappointed that wasn't happening right now, and it was starting to make him angry. Cas got in his face and glared at him. "What the fuck is your problem, Cas?"

"I saw you, Dean. You and Crowley. I saw you together, laughing and getting close. He even had his arm around you. I never thought you'd be the cheating kind, Dean, but—" Cas' volume had risen to the point where he was shouting.

"Now, you wait a goddamn minute... I don't fuckin' cheat. Ever. And I don't give a shit what you think you saw. Crowley hired me to build a house for his kid and we were going over the plans." Dean tried to keep his voice even and steady, but he was on edge now and knew he'd grown louder.

"Really, Dean? In a dimly-lit restaurant? How stupid do you think I am?"

"Right now, very stupid. Truth is, Crowley and I had a good time, and he's not the asshole I thought he was. I couldn't wait to tell you about it. That, and I wanted to come home and share some awesome news with my boyfriend, but he's too busy being a jealous bitch to listen." Dean's voice was laced with sarcasm and he didn't care how loud he was being.

"You're damn right I'm jealous. I don't share, Dean. I don't want anyone touching you but me," Cas growled fiercely. Dean was moving rapidly from surprised to hurt to angry. He'd had enough of this.

"You're unbelievable. I told you trust was important to me. You clearly didn't listen because you sure as fuck don't trust me." Dean was panting and his head was starting to hurt. Cas was clenching his fists at his sides, completely gone in his rage.

"Why the fuck should I trust you, Dean? Tell me... why?"

"Because I love you, you dick," Dean screamed and staggered backward, thrown by his admission and reeling from the fight. Keys still in hand, he flung open the door and ran to the safety of his beloved Impala. He heard Cas calling his name, but he couldn't respond. He threw the car into gear and spun out, leaving only a cloud of dust in his wake.

He drove aimlessly, his only goal to get away. His heart lurching painfully in his chest and he felt like he couldn't get air to his lungs. He pulled the car into the liquor store parking lot and took a few minutes to calm down. Before he could change his mind, he went inside and bought a bottle of Jack Daniels, then returned to his car. He didn't know where to go. He briefly thought about going to Sam, but he didn't want to deal with twenty questions or talking about his feelings. He needed to be alone. Driving on autopilot, he found himself outside his old house. He still had the place until April, so he hadn't relinquished the key yet. He grabbed the whiskey and unlocked the front door. He took in the empty room, left bare from his move to Cas' place. The way he was feeling, it was perfect. He closed the door behind him, leaned against it, and slid down to the floor.

He drank. He was on a mission to drive thoughts of Cas out of his head, but the more he drank, the more he thought about him. How had things gotten so bad so quickly? Less than an hour ago, he was ready to open the last door to his heart. Now, he felt like it had completely shattered. Cas didn't trust him. Not only that, but the man accused him of cheating. Just the mere thought of being with anyone other than Cas made him feel sick. How could he think Dean would ever do that to him?
His phone rang. Then beeped. Then rang again... and kept beeping. He turned it off and took another long, deep swig of whiskey, then noticed his vision was blurry. He didn't think he could be drunk already... then he felt the wetness on his cheek. He raised a hand to bat away the tears, then remembered he was alone and it didn't matter if he cried because no one would see it. He lowered his head and let the tears flow.

Castiel listened to the older designer drone on incessantly about her experience and how much easier she would make his life once he hired her, blah blah blah... She was competent, but he honestly thought she was one of the most boring people he'd ever met. The only time the woman perked up was when she was comparing houndstooth drapes with jacquard drapes. Like he would ever allow anyone who worked for him to use houndstooth fabric for a window treatment... His mind was made up. He wanted to hire the young designer, Kevin Tran. After meeting with him earlier, Castiel knew the kid would make a perfect addition to the team. Castiel wrote down his recommendation and left it on Anna's desk once Ms. Boring was gone.

He shut off the lights and checked his phone to see if Dean texted him yet. Nothing. He locked up and started walking to his Jeep, idly looking in the storefront windows as he made his way to the public parking lot. When he came upon the restaurant, he glanced inside and stopped dead in his tracks. Crowley... and Dean. Sitting next to each other... laughing... leaning closer... heads bent together... he couldn't breathe. This couldn't be happening. Dean wouldn't do this. It had to be a mistake. As soon as his heartbeat slowed, he saw Dean throw his head back and laugh. Castiel felt it like a punch in the stomach. He gripped the keys in his palm so tightly, they began cutting into his skin. He had to get home. He got behind the wheel and pulled out as fast as he could and floored it all the way to his house.

By the time he got home, Castiel wasn't feeling hurt... he was angry. How dare Dean do this to him? He should have seen it coming... the man couldn't even say he loved him. Probably because he didn't... the thought hit him hard and once again, he found it difficult to catch his breath. His phone rang, but he didn't even bother to look at the screen. He sat on the couch and wrapped his arms around himself, trying to get control. His head was spinning. The more he thought about it, the angrier he got, and when Dean walked in, the floodgates opened and all of his rage spilled out. He could tell by Dean's reaction that he wasn't guilty of what Castiel accused him of, but it was too late. Castiel's fury over the presumed betrayal had been consumed by his insecurities and ultimate fear that Dean didn't love him. Then something broke through the cloud and he heard it as clear as a bell.

"Because I love you, you dick." The words that should have been said with reverence were spat out in anger. Then Dean was stumbling out the door, running away. Dean was leaving him. Castiel shouted for him to come back, but he didn't. Dean drove away. No... Castiel drove him away. His stupid doubts, irrational fears, and petty jealousy had driven away the only man Castiel had ever loved. He braced his hands on his knees and tried to stop the world from spinning. He had to think. He needed to find Dean... where would he go? Sam. Call Sam.

Castiel ran back inside and picked up his phone to dial Sam's number.

"Castiel? What's up, man?"
Castiel's words choked off in his throat. He coughed. "Sam... Sam, I fucked up. Dean is gone. I fucked it up so bad, Sam... I can't... I'm going to lose him now. He isn't coming back..."

"Cas," Sam's calm voice stopped his downward spiral. "Stop freaking out and tell me what happened." Castiel told him the whole horrible story, leaving nothing out. Why bother? Sam had every right to hate him after what he did to Dean. When Sam spoke, his voice was soft and compassionate. "Cas... Dean didn't leave you. He may have left the house, but he didn't leave you."

Castiel broke down, crushed under the weight of Sam's kindness. "Sam, you don't understand. I've never seen him this hurt... and I've done it enough to know. Fuck, what is wrong with me? Why can't I just let him love me?" He might have been mortified at his own words in other circumstances, but he was too devastated to care. He swallowed the sob in his throat. "I have to find him, Sam."

"Look, if Dean ran, then that means he needs space. As much as I know you want to go to him, I really think you should leave him be for now. Let him lick his wounds and come back when he's ready. If it makes you feel better, I'll try to call him. But I know Dean... he's not going to answer his phone tonight."

"Thank you, Sam. Please let me know if you hear from him." Castiel ended the call feeling even more hopeless. Ignoring Sam's advice, he called Dean repeatedly. He texted apologies and promises, hoping that something would prompt a response. Dean never answered. He sat down heavily on their bed and buried his face in Dean's pillow, breathing in his scent and wishing with all he had that he could go back in time and stop himself from fucking up the best thing that had ever happened to him. But he couldn't. And the realization that he had damaged Dean's beautiful heart was more than he could bear.

Dean said he loved him... only it wasn't like he imagined. It was as though Castiel had yanked it out of him against his will. Castiel had lived his whole life not knowing what it felt like to be loved. Now that he knew, he could feel his heart breaking.

He didn’t sleep. He spent the entire night alternating between pacing the floor and sitting down in despair every time he looked out the window and failed to see Dean striding down the dock. It was the worst night he can remember, including the night his parents kicked him out. Being without Dean hurt so much more. As the sun came up, Castiel checked his phone again, but Dean hadn't responded. All he could do was wait, and it was killing him. Too many questions were flying through his head. Where did Dean go? Did he spend the night with someone else? Was their relationship over? Was Dean ever coming back? What would Castiel say when he did?

He finished yet another cup of coffee... he'd lost count of how much he drank during the night. He texted Sam to let him know he would not be at work today and reminded him once again to let him know if he heard from Dean. With nothing left to do but wait and see if Dean came home, he grabbed a blanket and curled up on the couch, finally giving in to exhaustion.

Dean woke to the clanging of a garbage truck. The sound shot right through his throbbing head. His eyes were swollen from crying, his mouth was dry, and his back was aching from sleeping on the hard floor after he passed out. He forced himself to sit up and took in his surroundings. Oh. He was at his old house. Then he remembered why and his stomach twisted. Feeling sick, he stood and
quickly made his way to the bathroom, stumbling over the empty whiskey bottle on the way. He barely made it to the toilet before throwing up the contents of his stomach. When there was nothing left, he dry-heaved until he started to shake. He felt stupid for drinking that much... it was completely pointless anyway since it didn't even come close to making him forget. Standing on wobbly legs, Dean rinsed his mouth out and splashed cold water on his face. He went back out to the entryway and picked up his mess, then went out to his car.

As he sat with his hands on the wheel, he didn't know what to do or where to go. He didn't want to see Cas... he couldn't handle it right now and he knew working in this state wasn't an option. He took out his phone to call Sam and was met with a black screen. He forgot that he turned it off last night. He powered it up and it started beeping notifications right away... missed calls, texts, voice mails, almost all of them from Cas. Instead of calling Sam, he decided to listen to the voice mails first. Cas' voice sounded completely broken and filled with remorse.

Call from Cas 9:22PM: Dean, I'm so sorry. You will never know how much I regret what I have done. Please call me back... or come home. I love you.

Call from Cas 9:28PM: Hello, Dean... I was an asshole and treated you horribly. I told you before that I'm unworthy... and I understand if you don't want to be with me anymore. I deserve that and more for the things I said to you. Please, just... I love you.

Call from Sam 9:37PM: Hey, Dean. I talked to Cas earlier. He's freaking out over what happened. I told him you need your space, but he begged me to call you just in case. So that's what I'm doing... Look, I know I have no business telling you what to do. From what Cas said, you have every right to be pissed. Just don't write him off yet. I still think there's hope for both of you. Okay, that's all I wanted to say. Be safe, Dean.

Call from Cas 9:56PM: Hello, Dean... Do you remember all the things I told you about my past? I've always thought I was strong enough to move past them and overcome the adversity. But I wasn't. Not until I met you. You made me strong, Dean. You healed me. No matter what happens, I will always be grateful to you for that. I love you.

Call from Cas 10:17PM: Hello, Dean... Do you remember all the things I told you about my past? I've always thought I was strong enough to move past them and overcome the adversity. But I wasn't. Not until I met you. You made me strong, Dean. You healed me. No matter what happens, I will always be grateful to you for that. I love you.

Call from Cas 11:03PM: Hello, Dean... You're still not home and I haven't heard from you. I hope you're alright. I would never forgive myself if my actions caused you harm. I'm truly sorry I hurt you. I love you.

Call from Cas 12:09AM: Hello, Dean... I know I should stop calling, but there's so much I want to say to you. I could never adequately express what I feel for you, but I will try. You are my first love... the only man I've ever loved. It's crazy, considering how much we hated each other in the beginning. But looking back, the anger I took out on you had nothing to do with you. It was all me... just like what happened earlier. You say you don't know how to do this relationship thing, but you do, Dean. You have always been kind to me, cared for me with all your heart, and made me feel like I'm...
worthy. I, on the other hand, have failed spectacularly. I am not patient, I am not understanding, and I am not always kind. But despite all of those things... I know I love you.

"Cas, you stupid, loveable son of a bitch." Dean closed his eyes as the next one began to play. The anger was gone just as quickly as it came.

Call from Cas 2:32AM: Hello, Dean... I keep walking through the house and looking out the window hoping you will come home... The thing is, this isn't a home without you. It's just a house. I love you.

Dean finished listening to the last voice mail and his eyes burned with unshed tears. He set his phone down and put Baby in drive. It was time to go home.

When he walked in the door, he saw Cas on the couch, huddled in a blanket and looking small. He stepped closer and reached out his hand to smooth a strand of hair from Cas' damp brow. Tear tracks stained his cheeks and there were dark circles under his eyes. Dean swallowed the lump in his throat. Last night hadn't been easy on either of them. He sat down on the coffee table and touched Cas' shoulder. "Cas," he whispered. He didn't know how they were going to fix this, but he did know he wasn't leaving until they were good again. "Cas," he repeated louder.

Cas jerked awake and shrank back. "Dean?" Dean watched as the confusion turned to wariness.

"Guess we need to talk," Dean said, leaning to prop his elbows on his knees and clasping his hands together. His gaze never left Cas' bloodshot eyes. Cas simply nodded and then ran his hands over his haggard face. He pulled his knees up to his chest and wrapped his arms around them. It was a defensive posture and it upset Dean. How did they get here? "You don't trust me," Dean stated softly. "And that fucking hurts."

"That isn't true. I do trust you..." Dean opened his mouth to disagree, but Cas held up his hand and Dean snapped his lips shut. "I do trust you... but I let my insecurities get the better of me. You have been patient with me, but Dean, I clearly have a lot of baggage that I still need to deal with." When Dean didn't speak, Cas took a deep breath and his next words shocked Dean. "I cannot allow my past to ruin my future. I think it is time for me to seek help."

"Cas, you don't need..." Again, Cas threw up his palm.

"Yes, Dean, I do. I love you more than life itself, but I have to do this for me. If I don’t, I'll always have these issues and I won't be able to have a healthy relationship with you. And I want that, Dean... so much." Dean nodded and didn't pull away when Cas took his hand. He stared down at their entwined fingers.

"I'll do whatever I can to help you, babe." Cas' smile was a little lopsided and not nearly the one Dean loved to see, but it was a start. They stared at each other as the seconds ticked by. Dean knew it was now or never. "Cas, there's something you need to know..."

"I know nothing happened with you and Crowley. You would never cheat on me." Cas' words were soft, but sure.

"You're right, I wouldn't, but that's not what I was going to say." Cas tilted his head to the side and squeezed his hand, silently telling Dean to go on. "I... uh..." Dean took a deep breath and exhaled, his eyes closed. He opened them and looked into Cas' eyes. "I love you." Cas' face was immediately transformed. The stress lines and the sorrow disappeared and his eyes widened.

"Dean..."
"No, let me finish..." Dean bit his lower lip and the words rushed out. "I love you. I love the fact that you're a bitch in the mornings before you have your coffee. I love the way you look at me when we're having sex. I love how you still expect goodness from people in spite of the way you've been hurt. I love the way you gripe at me when I leave toothpaste in the sink." Once he started, Dean couldn't seem to stop. "I love it when you sing in the shower. I love your hair... the way it always looks like you've just been fucked. I love the taste of you. I love waking up beside you every morning and looking into those gorgeous blue eyes, knowing I can't imagine my life without you."

As the words tumbled out, Cas' face softened with each new endearment, and he had that 'I love you' look in his eyes... the one Dean had grown increasingly familiar with. It was the look that told him Cas was it for him. Dean opened his mouth like he was going to say more, but his words were lost when Cas' kiss silenced him.
Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

After the angst in the last chapter, we have given you fluff. Fluff sweet enough to make your teeth hurt. Enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

If Sam was curious about what transpired between them, he didn't mention it the next day. Since they lost eight hours of filming, Castiel and Dean tried to make up for it by rushing through the child's room, arranging furniture after the soft pink trim was added to the walls. According to the video, the little girl loved horses. While Dean took care of the small amount of painting involved, Castiel was online ordering a bedding set fit for the budding equestrian. By ten o'clock, he was ready to do some shopping for her. Surprisingly, Dean didn't complain about it. Castiel guessed that it probably had a lot to do with the fact that so far, Dean had been a little too agreeable after their fight, but he thought it was best not to say anything about it for now. On the way to the store, their jeep was followed by a van holding their cameramen, the assistant director, and the other crew members needed to make the segment run smoothly.

Castiel knew which shops he needed to visit for the things he wanted and soon, his cargo space was packed with framed posters of horses, stuffed ponies, and themed books and figurines. He made one last stop at a giant toy store and Dean actually grumbled a little. Maybe they were getting back to normal after all. Castiel only came in for Barbie's Dream Horse, but when he turned around, Dean and one of the cameramen were missing. The assistant director shrugged and pointed. Castiel, followed by his entourage, looked up and down the aisles until he spotted Dean. He was in the baby department. "Dean, she's six years old. This section is for infants." Dean looked up as Castiel neared and he saw what had Dean so enthralled. The nursery display had a rock 'n roll theme. Castiel fingered the embroidery on the quilt. "This is very cute, but not what we're here for today." Dean looked at the items again and set down a tiny piece of clothing in his hand.

"Yeah, I see you have your Barbie doll, Cas. She's hot, but I didn't think you were into boobs," he joked. He knew Dean was using humor to cover his real thoughts, but Castiel didn't have time to analyze it now. He set the doll and the horse playset inside the cart and steered it toward the checkout. While they waited in line, Dean made a few lewd comments about Ken and his inability to satisfy Barbie's needs due to his lack of junk. The editing department would have a field day cutting out the inappropriate language and content.

Once they were in the car alone, Castiel laid his palm on Dean's denim-clad thigh. "Something's wrong." Yesterday, they talked, made love, and talked some more. Castiel made the difficult decision to seek therapy for his insecurities and Dean had been so supportive. Now, those same insecurities were coming back. What put that look on Dean's face? What did it mean? And why did he cover it up with humor?

Dean turned his face toward him. "No, babe, not really." He covered Castiel's hand with his own and squeezed it briefly.

Castiel persisted, "Not really?"

"It's nothing." But it was, Castiel could sense it. His analytical mind began to add the pieces together
and he slammed on the brakes, tugging his hand away from Dean's to grip the steering wheel. His eyes sought Dean's, and disregarding the angry honks behind them, he blurted out his question. "Dean, do you want children?" He was blindsided. If Dean thought of children in his future, where did that leave Castiel?

The shrug of his shoulder was slight. "We should probably move before someone gets a bad case of road rage," Dean murmured, his eyes drifting to the rear of the SUV.

Taking a deep, steadying breath, Castiel drove forward, his mind racing. Last night... things had been so good between them. Now, the thoughts of Dean leaving him were back and sending him tumbling into darkness. He didn't remember getting them to the reno-house. He'd driven on auto-pilot and that was scary in itself. He turned off the ignition, his hand trembling. The sound of Dean's voice reached through his panicked mind.

"I know we haven't talked about it, but I've thought about kids. I know it's still kind of early to be planning shit like that, but... I don't know..." Dean shrugged again. "Maybe we should start smaller... like a dog or something." Castiel blinked. He opened his mouth, but no words came out. Dean's brow furrowed. "Cas?"

His mind finally engaged. "You want children...with me?"

Dean narrowed his eyes. "Eventually... wait... who did you think I wanted kids with?"

"Um...a woman?" God, he definitely needed therapy.

"Cas, I love you, but sometimes you are such a dumbass," Dean said, pulling him across the center console to kiss him, laughter dancing in his eyes. A knock on the window broke them apart and Castiel looked over Dean's shoulder to see Sam pointing at the non-existent watch on his wrist. Dean flipped off his brother, but his face was serious when he returned his eyes to Castiel. "We good?"

"Yes. Yes, we're good," Castiel stated firmly. They separated and got out of the car. It took a couple of trips to get their purchases into the house, and Dean leaned against the doorway watching Castiel put the finishing touches into Trixie's room. Castiel gave the camera a running commentary about what he was doing and sometimes, Dean would chime in with a joke. He'd have to leave the bed unmade until the bedding set came, but when he stepped back, he was happy with the way the room turned out. Would he be decorating a nursery for their child one day? He'd never thought about having kids before... not until today. Add that to the list of things to talk about whenever he found a therapist.

Sunday morning found him waking in an empty bed. That wasn't unusual. Dean was and probably always would be an early riser. He smelled coffee and pulled on a pair of sweatpants. Looking down at the Dallas Cowboys logo emblazoned on the legs, he grinned. Dean's clothing had gradually gotten mixed with his and he was more than okay with it.

He stopped at the door to the office. Dean's back was to him as he typed on his keyboard. "Good morning," Castiel said, taking a step into the room. Dean slammed the laptop closed. Castiel was not going to jump to conclusions. He just arched a brow. Dean's cheeks turned pink.

"Morning, Sunshine. I didn't hear you get up."

"Obviously," Castiel said dryly, waiting for Dean to either fess up to what he was doing or try to joke his way out of it. He decided to have some fun with it first. "You know, Dean... I like to think I'm enough to satisfy you in bed, but if you would like to incorporate some porn into our sex life—"
"No, I wasn't... wait, what?" Dean shook his head, completely flustered. Castiel was highly amused. "I was just... It's a surprise, okay?" Dean's expression was sheepish. A surprise?

"Surprise porn? What's the occasion?" Castiel smirked, coming closer.

"It's not porn, Cas. Damn, get your mind out of the gutter, you perv." Dean stood up and pulled him close. He kissed him gently on the lips and smiled. "Do I need a special occasion to surprise you?"

With strong hands, Dean spun him around to face the door and shoved him forward, slapping him on the ass playfully as he followed. "Come on, Sunshine, let's eat. I have a sausage and egg casserole in the oven."

Dean got bored watching Cas looking at Barbies. Barbies, for fuck's sake. This is what his world had turned into. Rolling his eyes at his cameraman for the third time in as many minutes, Dean wandered off. He passed the games and puzzles, but kept going. Model cars had to be in here somewhere...

When he got to the baby department, he almost turned around, but something caught his eye. The display had a crib and matching dresser, but what drew his eye was the quilt hanging over the rails. Tiny guitars, drums, and microphones were appliqued on a blue background. The whole set-up was rock 'n roll themed. He picked up a throw pillow with music notes embroidered on it, then he spied the... what was it they called those things--onesies? It said My Daddy Rocks. He picked it up and visions of a dark-haired, blue-eyed baby filled his head.

"Dean, she's six years old. This section is for infants," Cas' voice brought him out of his rambling thoughts about babies. That was the last thing he needed to be thinking about. He just got the balls to say the L-word. Babies? Nope. But still... "This is very cute, but not what we're here for today."

He looked around once more and carefully set the little garment back in the crib. To cut off any questions Cas might ask, Dean did what he did best. He made a few jokes about Barbie dolls and Ken's lack of a dick. He really thought he played it off successfully, but when they got into the SUV, Cas just knew. He was annoyingly perceptive like that.

The conversation that followed after stopping traffic and getting the stink-eye from other drivers, was uncomfortable, to say the least. He wasn't keen on discussing his private thoughts to begin with... he definitely didn't want to do it in front of several road-ragers and cameramen. Then Cas had to go and get all sad again. He actually thought Dean would want to go off and make a baby with some woman. Dean wasn't thinking about the logistics of two men having a baby. So far, he was just enjoying the idea of raising a kid with Cas someday. He knew he was putting the cart before the Barbie Dream Horse. Hell, they hadn't even talked about getting married... not that they had to get married. Alright, Winchester, calm the fuck down.

The rest of the afternoon was spent watching Cas make the room a little girl's dream. His boyfriend was a perfectionist and everything but the bed was ready for the reveal.

The two men spent the evening at home. Dean reheated some lasagna from earlier in the week and they sat side by side on the couch watching reruns of NCIS. Dean had two celebrity crushes... the dude that played T.C. from The Night Shift and Mark Harmon. When Cas found him drooling over
Jethro Gibbs, it led to a discussion about their one free pass. Dean was hard-pressed to pick between his two, but if he absolutely had to choose, it would be T.C. Cas was adamant about his pick. He took the remote, flipped to their Netflix List, and started his favorite episode of Night Shift. It was from Season One when Drew's boyfriend, Rick, returned from the war in Afghanistan. During the scene where Drew kisses Rick in front of everyone, coming out for the first time, Cas paused it.

"I choose him," Cas said with conviction. It didn't escape Dean's notice that the guy looked a lot like him. Now that he thought about it, T.C. was a lot like Cas... dark unruly hair, emotionally intense, ridiculous sex appeal... he'd have to be blind not to notice the similarities. Dean thought it was hilarious and kind of heartwarming that they had essentially chosen each other. Cas turned and met his eyes. "Actually, I wouldn't mind having both of them."

"Cas, you kinky son of a bitch," Dean laughed. "Although, I can totally see what you mean... Drew and Rick are hot." The conversation only got dirtier after that, and they wound up on the floor, grinding against each other until they both came on Cas' stomach. Dean had rug burns on his knees, but it was well worth it.

As usual, Dean was up early and after starting the coffee, he threw together a breakfast casserole. He made enough so they could eat it throughout the rest of the week. Once it was in the oven, he padded back upstairs and sat down at his desk. He booted up his laptop and answered the few emails he'd gotten yesterday. He had his hand on the top to close it when he thought of what he said to Cas the day before. Humming to himself, he typed in 'what breed of dog is right for me' in the Google search bar. He answered a series of questions and blanched at the results. No way was he getting a Yorkie. He wanted a manly dog... maybe a Great Dane or a Doberman. He retook the test, fudging on the answers about their home and lack of a yard. This time, the picture showed a large, black dog... a Newfoundland. "Yes," he crowed with a fist pump. Now, that was a real dog.

Dean was in the middle of reading all about how the breed was used in water rescue when Cas' morning greeting startled him. He slammed the laptop shut and tried his best to look innocent. Thankfully, Cas thought he was looking at porn. Dean managed to distract him with food and coffee, and he didn't question any further about the surprise.

Tuesday afternoon, instead of going to his office, Dean was on the road to Normandy Park, a small town southeast of Seattle. He found a breeder there and unbeknownst to Cas, had called about puppies. With the way the older woman was asking questions, you'd think he was adopting a kid. He even had to sign a contract. The puppies were cute as hell though and Dean settled on a female who kept chewing on his boots. He loaded the puppy and a small bag of food into the truck and headed home. He played Led Zeppelin and couldn't help but grin when she curled up on the seat with her head on his thigh and went to sleep.

As he drove into the city limits, he called Cas. "Hey, Babe, can you meet me at Madrona Park in about fifteen minutes?"

"Madrona Park? Why?"

"Remember that surprise I mentioned?" Dean absently rubbed the puppy's velvety soft ears.

"Yes..." Cas sounded suspicious. Dean grinned.

"See you there," Dean said quickly and hung up. Knowing his curiosity would get the better of him, Dean had no doubt Cas would be there. His plan was simple. Show Cas the puppy, Cas falls in love with said puppy, and boom-- Dean is the best boyfriend ever.

Dean parked the car and lifted their new baby out. He rubbed his face against her black fur and then
took her over to the grassy area near the playground. At this time of day, it was pretty quiet in the park. A few joggers were out and a few teens were tossing around a frisbee. Dean put the puppy down and she began to sniff around. Keeping one eye on her and the other on the parking lot, Dean waited for Cas. The Jeep pulled up and parked next to his truck. Cas hadn’t seen him yet and Dean watched him scan the area. From his vantage point, Dean saw the moment Cas found him... and the newest addition to their family. Cas’ stride wasn’t as happy as Dean imagined in his head. "What have you done?"

Dean scooped up the puppy before Cas could hurt her feelings and held her close. "Congratulations, Cas, it's a girl."

"Dean, it's a dog." Cas was looking at her like she was a hellhound or something. Dean was making a concerted effort not to lose his temper.

"Good job, Cas. Guess we learned the same things in kindergarten. Want a sticker?" Dean tried to use humor to lighten the mood, but this wasn't going at all like he planned. Cas looked exasperated.

"What were you thinking, Dean? We can't have a dog. We live on a glorified boat. We both have jobs..." He stopped when the fur-ball whimpered. Dean called up all his years of experience with Sam and gave Cas the full power of puppy-eyes. He couldn't resist two sets, could he?

"Wanna hold her?" Dean stepped closer and held her out. Even at ten weeks, she was already a hefty thirty-five pounds. Cas hesitated for a second and then reached out a tentative hand to pet her. She raised her fluffy head and licked his hand. Cas chuckled softly and she looked at him, tilting her head inquisitively, a response far too familiar to ignore. Dean could see the wheels turning in Cas’ head as he extended both arms and took her, holding the pup close to his chest. She nuzzled his neck, then licked his face, and Dean knew Cas was a goner.

When he finally looked back at Dean, his eyes were twinkling as he asked, "What's her name?"

"She's your surprise. I thought you could name her." Cas seemed to be thinking really hard about it, so Dean ruffled her fur. "We should hit the pet store before it closes. The breeder gave me some food, but we'll need bowls and lots of other stuff." Cas wasn't paying attention anymore. Dean smiled and silently steered his little family toward the parking lot, his hand resting on the small of Cas' back.

Castiel was ass-deep in a design project when Dean called. Why did he want him to go to Madrona Park? What was his surprise? A picnic in the park would be romantic during the summer, but it was still pretty cold outside. Then again, Dean wasn't a typical boyfriend. It could be anything. He closed out his files and told Anna she was on her own for the rest of the day. Her sarcastic "What's new?" was met with his middle finger. Dean was such a bad influence.

He parked beside Dean's truck and glanced around the park. There weren't that many people around and he spotted Dean's black leather jacket right away. His smile turned into a frown when he saw the small black ball of fur at his feet. No, he didn't. A dog? Castiel was never allowed to have pets growing up and as an adult, the only kind of pet he had time for was his fish. Their busy lifestyle and yardless home wouldn't work for a dog.
As he got closer, Dean's expression turned fretful. "What have you done?"

Dean picked up the huge puppy. Was it a Newfoundland? Good God, they were huge dogs. There was no way they could keep a pet that large. "Congratulations, Cas, it's a girl."

"Dean, it's a dog," Castiel stated, doing his best not to look at the cute thing in Dean's arms. Instead, he focused on his boyfriend's face and Dean didn't look very happy with him. But this was a major decision. A decision that should have been made by both of them.

"Good job, Cas. Guess we learned the same things in kindergarten. Want a sticker?" Dean's words were laced with sarcasm, but Castiel knew he was attempting to lighten the tension.

"What were you thinking, Dean? We can't have a dog. We live on a glorified boat. We both have jobs..." The puppy made a soft whining sound and then Dean and the damn dog were giving him pleading looks. Damn him and his beautiful green eyes.

"Wanna hold her?" Dean moved closer and held the puppy out. Castiel hesitated briefly before reaching out to touch her. She was so soft. A tiny, pink tongue licked his hand and Castiel couldn't help it. He laughed softly. Mind made up, he took her. She weighed more than he thought. He pulled her close and she licked his face. Damn you, Dean Winchester.

"What's her name?"

"She's your surprise. I thought you could name her." Castiel looked down at her again. She would have to have the perfect name. "We should hit the pet store..." Castiel tuned Dean out. They had a puppy. He nuzzled her as Dean guided him toward their vehicles. "She can ride with me," Dean said, reaching out to take her and Castiel narrowed his eyes.

"She can ride with me. She's my surprise." Dean stepped back, hands up in surrender. Did he look jealous? Surely not. Castiel settled the puppy on the front seat and after a swift kiss, got behind the wheel. "Where are we going?"

"Guess the PetSmart over on Aurora Avenue," Dean said glumly, his eyes fixed on their new baby. "Maybe she should ride in the back, Cas. You've got airbags and if something happened..." He stopped abruptly at Castiel's expression.

"She will be fine, Dean." He closed his door and then wondered if Dean was right. What if he was in an accident? The airbags could possibly kill something that small. He rolled down the window and called to Dean as he was opening his truck door. "Didn't she ride in your front seat?" Dean looked up.

"Yeah, but I don't have airbags in this old thing. Sorry, Sweetheart," he said to the truck, stroking her roof. "She can ride in the cargo area, Cas. She'll be fine." Castiel looked over at the puppy, currently sitting in the passenger seat staring up at him like he hung the moon.

"She'll be lonely, Dean." Dean's look was indulgent and Castiel blushed. "Well, she's just a baby."

It took some finagling, but the puppy—they really had to find a good name for her—was finally ensconced in the cargo area. He had barely pulled out of the park when she began to whine. His heart was in pieces by the time they pulled into the PetSmart parking lot. He rushed to the back of the SUV and opened the hatch. "Oh, sweet, sweet, baby girl. Daddy is so sorry," He picked up the trembling puppy and held her close.

Dean jogged over. "Is she okay?"
"She was crying and now she's shaking," Castiel murmured softly, not wanting to upset her any more than she already was. Dean leaned in and wrapped his arms around both of them. He kissed her head and whispered nonsense to her until she calmed down and licked his face. "I can't put her through that again, Dean. We have to come up with another plan."

Inside the huge store, Dean got a cart and they looked at the ceiling to find the sign indicating the area for dog supplies. They bickered over the bed, the crate, and the type of collar to get. Dean wanted everything to look hardcore and Castiel wanted everything to be cute. Ultimately, they compromised on mostly neutral things. Dean chose a red leather collar, but Castiel managed to get his way on the bed. It was a lovely, black walnut finish and raised off the floor like a human bed, which Dean thought was hilarious. He complained about the cost, but hefted the huge box into the cart anyway. They loaded what seemed like hundreds of toys and teething aids into the cart and agreed on stainless-steel bowls in lieu of ceramic or plastic ones. Castiel spent most of the time asking Dean all kinds of questions about the addition to their family. Dean filled him in on her breeder, her age, and the names of her parents.

"How about Molly?"

"No," Dean shook his head.

"Daisy?"

"No."

"Sophie?"

"No, Cas, come on..."

"Dean, you said I could name her, but you keep vetoing every name I come up with."

"Because they're cheesy. She's our princess. She needs a great name... like Princess Leia." Castiel rolled his eyes to indicate how he felt about that idea. Dean took her from Castiel's arms and danced her down the aisle, Castiel pushing the cart behind them. They were getting smiles from employees and shoppers alike. As he watched Dean, he came to the realization that this man, currently speaking in baby talk, would be an amazing father. He smiled at the thought and tossed yet another bag of treats on top of the rest of the supplies.

Dean found a seatbelt harness and the two new dads buckled their precious furbaby into the backseat of Castiel's SUV after dropping several hundred dollars in the pet store. She was given several toys to play with for the short drive to their home.

It was hard to keep his eyes on the road. He kept looking in the rearview mirror to see how the puppy was doing. At every red light, Castiel would try a new name out on her. She was gnawing on a stuffed rooster and barely looked up. "Maggie?" Nothing. "Candy? No, that's a stripper name... Xena? No, Dean would hate it. Calliope?" She looked up and gave a soft woof. Castiel grinned. "You like that one?"

When they got home, Dean carried everything in while Castiel unstrapped their pup and carried her inside, cradling her in his arms. Not long after, Dean was standing proudly next to the dog bed, which closely resembled a baby crib, now that Castiel thought about it. He sat down on the floor next to their newest piece of furniture and set her on it, but she jumped right back into his arms. Dean watched the scene, then snapped his fingers as he got an idea and left the room. He came back holding two of their t-shirts from the dirty laundry hamper and laid them on top of the bed.
"It's not pretty, but she'll like that it has our scents. It should comfort her," Dean said with a shrug. Castiel raised his eyebrows, impressed by Dean's quick thinking. They sat together, petting her and playing with her for a while before Dean finished setting up the rest of the supplies. While Dean prepared dinner for the humans, Castiel fed and watered the puppy, laughing at the sound she made when lapping up the liquid.

"You're such a good girl, Calliope," Castiel said as he stroked her fur.

"Say what now? Who said that's what her name is?"

"She did. We had a nice chat about it in the car, and she decided that her name is Calliope. Can't really argue with that, Dean."

Dean smiled and sighed dramatically. "Okay, fine... but can I at least call her Callie? I'll feel like a tool calling her Calliope at the damn park."

"Well, you shortened my name, so I guess it'll be alright to do the same with hers." Castiel smiled at him fondly. "Thank you, Dean. She's perfect. As usual, you know me better than I know myself."

Dean had a proud grin on his face and Castiel felt like his heart was going to burst. Being part of a loving family was a new experience for him, and Castiel was pleased to discover how much he liked it.

Chapter End Notes
This chapter is dedicated to my friend, Angi. She's having surgery today. Please keep her in your thoughts.
Chapter 21

Chapter Notes

For all of you that have been leaving awesome comments, I am so sorry I'm behind in responding to them. They mean the world to me, but between GISH week, work and real life, I haven't been able to catch up. Hopefully, things will slow down soon. Just know that I appreciate each and every one of you.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The puppy was supposed to be for Cas, but Dean found himself falling head over heels for the fluff-ball. His favorite part of all was watching Cas become completely enamored with her... especially since the guy was adamant that getting a dog was a terrible idea. The first night was rough on them. As soon as they got home from the pet store, it took them a while to set up the crate and baby-proof the house. He was glad Cas had insisted on those gates. It was after they put her in her new crate that things took a turn for the worse. They barely made it up the stairs when Calliope began to cry and howl. What kind of name was Calliope anyway? Cas said it was a Greek name meaning beautiful voice. Right now, that beautiful voice was like nails on a chalkboard.

They finally managed to get the crate up the stairs and she still cried like someone was killing her. Cas grabbed his pillow and the comforter off the bed and settled in beside her while Dean got on his laptop to see what would help calm her down. "It says here that if you baby her, she'll think she can control you. We're supposed to tell her no and leave her alone." Okay, so the look he got from Cas pretty much said 'motherfucker, I will smite you.'

When he woke up, his neck and back ached. He was on the floor next to Cas, and Calliope was whimpering pitifully. "You need to go potty, princess?" Dean whispered so he wouldn't wake Cas since he was curled up next to the crate. With the skill of a ninja, Dean opened the latch and picked up the squirming puppy. He slid his feet into his old slippers and went downstairs and out the door. The only grassy area was at the end of the dock, so he set her down to do her business there. She sniffed around before squatting. "Such a good girl," he cooed. "Daddy's princess is so smart. Your Papa's going to be so proud of you, yes he is."

Dean thought Cas was going to have a complete meltdown when they had to leave their baby to go to work. Before they even left the parking lot, Cas was glued to his phone trying to find doggy daycares. Dean didn't know there was such a thing. They got about a mile down the road before Dean's own dark thoughts of their new baby all alone got the better of him and he turned around to head back to the house.

"Dean, what are you doing? We're going to be late."

"We're going to take Calliope to work today. I'm sure we can find an intern to watch her while we're filming." He glanced over at Cas and saw his eyes light up under furrowed brows. It was a strange combination and Dean had to fight the urge to laugh.

"That's not very practical..." It was a weak protest, and Cas damn well knew it. Dean could see how relieved he was though.

"It may not be practical, but it's the smartest thing to do here." Cas looked at him in disbelief. "Look,
we have to film all day today. If you're constantly freaking out about Callie, you won't be worth a damn on set. And I have to admit, I think it's a dick move to drop the baby at the house and leave all day. We have to figure out a better way to work and take care of her. In the meantime, we'll just take her with us. What are they gonna do, fire us?"

Cas breathed a laugh and turned to him with the sweetest smile in the whole world. "Thank you, Dean." Dean reached over and squeezed his hand as they pulled up by the dock. They could hear Calliope from the parking lot and Cas took off running to get to her. Dean sent Sam a text to let him know they'd be a few minutes late, then he helped Cas pack a bag of supplies for the day.

Twenty minutes later, they were walking into the studio, Callie practically prancing at the end of her leash. It didn't take long for everyone to start gushing over how precious she was and Dean watched Cas puff out his chest with pride. It was adorable. The party was broken up when Crowley poked his head into the hallway to see what the commotion was.

"What the bloody hell is going on here? Winchester, Novak, why aren't you filming?" His eyes darted down and noticed the puppy at their feet. Dean noticed a sappy look briefly flash in his eyes before he put his Boss Face back on. He straightened his tie, walked right over to them, and took the leash. "Obviously, you have this confused with some sort of daycare. We have a lot to get done today, so I will take care of the little dear while you two get your money-making asses to makeup. The family is waiting."

Cas started to protest, but his jaw dropped when Crowley bent down, picked up their pup, and cradled her gently to his chest, custom tailored suit and all. The little diva tucked her head under his chin and heaved a contented sigh, making Crowley smile broadly in triumph. "See? She can't help loving me. Now move your asses, daddies. Time is money." With that, he snatched the bag of supplies and swept back down the hall to his office, making cooing sounds along the way. Everyone standing in the hallway was so dumbfounded, you could have heard a pin drop. Sam broke the spell and sent everyone off to get back to work.

As they headed to makeup, Cas reached for his hand and gently tugged it to get his attention. "Okay, I see what you mean... I concur that he's not an asshole, and I understand why you like him." Dean grinned and noticed a smile playing at the corner of Cas' mouth. He decided it was best to leave out the 'I told you so' stuff. Instead, he gave Cas' hand a firm squeeze before they split up to get their makeup done. A few minutes later, they were led to the new set for the day's taping.

The Henriksens were already styled and seated in the fake living room when Cas and Dean walked in. The cameras filmed their initial meeting and they gathered together on the couches to watch the winning video. Meg, a strong, feisty woman, teared up at seeing the footage of her husband in his uniform limping as he got off the plane. Victor reached over and clasped her hand, murmuring into her ear while she wiped her eyes. Trixie was an observant, clever kid, and Dean was fairly certain they would all end up working for her one day. She was pretty cool and very talkative, and clearly not intimidated by her surroundings. He caught Cas grinning at her with admiration when Trixie informed him she planned on being the President of Mars when she grew up.

It only took a couple of hours to get the footage the network wanted and they broke for lunch. In the afternoon, the family would finally get to see their house for the first time. Dean was really looking forward to it. He went to the bathroom and when he came back, Cas was showing Sam a video on his phone. Sam was doing the 'Aww' crap, so Dean knew Cas was showing off the video of Calliope eating and drinking. Cas loved the little sounds she made, despite what a messy eater she was. When he walked up to them, his brother slapped him on the back. "Congrats on the new baby, Dean. She looks just like you... especially when she eats."
"I think I'm adorable, so screw you, Uncle Sammy." They started to laugh, then abruptly stopped when an ashen-faced intern came stumbling out of Crowley's office. "Dude, are you okay?"

"He's insane... all I did was offer him coffee. I must have been too loud because Mr. Crowley said if I didn't shut the fuck up so the princess can sleep, he's going to take my soul and the souls of my children and my children's children and drag them to hell to burn for all eternity. I didn't even see anyone in there..." The intern shook his head and walked down the hall. The second he disappeared around the corner, they burst into uncontrollable laughter.

Dean wiped his eyes and clapped a hand on Cas' shoulder. "Well, Cas, I think Nanny Crowley is doing a fine job with Callie, don't you?" Cas nodded his head, unable to speak due to the fresh wave of hysteria over the network boss' new nickname. That one was definitely going to stick. After quietly checking in with Nanny Crowley, they made their way to the house for the big reveal.

The Henricksens loved the house, which resulted in a lot of great footage. Victor got a bit choked up when they entered the master bedroom and he saw the American flag in a place of honor on the barnwood wall. Cas rubbed Dean's back because it had been his idea.

The plan was to film some more candid shots on Thursday, then Sam wanted to fill in a few of the episodes with some outtakes. Their last day of filming would be Saturday. Dean still wasn't sure how he felt about that.

On the drive home, Callie was asleep in her safety harness and Cas was unusually quiet. Dean tapped his fingers with the music, and before long, Cas switched the radio off. Dean glanced over. "I made an appointment with a therapist today," Cas said softly. Dean reached for his hand. "It's on Monday."

"You've got this, babe. And I've got you." Dean pulled Cas' hand up to his lips and kissed it tenderly. Cas squeezed his hand in gratitude, and Dean knew he would do whatever it took to make sure Cas felt supported. Cas was doing this because he loved Dean and wanted to make their relationship better. Dean appreciated Cas making the effort, but he also admired him for it. It wasn't easy to face your demons, but he had total faith in Cas that he could do it.

Callie began to whimper just as they were parking. They took her for a walk so she could relieve herself, then headed inside. Dean made dinner while Cas got on the phone to make appointments for Callie's vet check and touring doggy daycares. For the veterinarian, Dean suggested an old girlfriend of Sam's, but Cas preferred to research Yelp reviews so he could choose the best. Dean didn't care who it was as long as they took good care of their girl.

The next couple of days were chaotic. Between the vet appointment, the daycare visits, and work, Dean was beyond exhausted. They didn't even have the energy for sex... it was what Dean imagined having kids was like. Cas was being a little over-the-top with spoiling her, but given the stress he was facing on Monday, Dean let it go. After all, he got the puppy for Cas, and if doting on her made him happy, it was still a win.

The morning of Calliope's first day at doggy daycare, Cas packed a bag for her with her favorite toys, her blanket, and a few treats. Dean watched indulgently as his boyfriend buckled the pup into her harness and stowed the bag. "You're spoiling her," Dean observed when Cas gave her a piece of gourmet cheese as a treat. He got the look and, like all mates who knew better, promptly shut his cakehole.

Central Bark was a trendy, bright green building with ample parking and an inviting appearance. Dean got Calliope out while Cas gathered her things. Both looked at the front door with trepidation. Dean thought this would be easy. He wasn't worried about her welfare... the place was awesome and
had several play areas, a private outdoor park, and even did birthday parties for dogs. When the time came, they could sign Callie up for puppy training and grooming appointments. The place had it all... he just didn't want to leave her. He felt Cas' hand on his back and he took a deep breath.

The staff cooed and loved on their pup, but Dean could tell Cas was getting emotional. *He* wasn't... that would be stupid. It wasn't like they were giving her away. It was only for a few hours... eight, to be exact... eight long hours. One of the young women had to gently pry the leash from his hand, and he couldn't move until Cas pulled him out the door.

Having spent the weekend with his new baby girl, Castiel was mentally ready for his appointment. After leaving Calliope at daycare, he thought Dean might need therapy as well. Dean tried to act like she was *just* a dog, but he was the one who insisted on leaving work early to pick her up. He was also the one who scanned the internet for training tips and talked to her like she was a human child. When Castiel left for his appointment, Dean gave him a soft, loving kiss and wished him well. Now, he stood before the frosted glass door and read the name Dr. M. Moseley for the third time. Dean's words from earlier echoed in his head. *"You can do this, Cas."* It gave him the courage he needed to push open the door.

One hour later, Castiel stepped out into the late afternoon drizzle and looked up at the sky. He felt better. He didn't expect all his problems to be cured in one session, but he was confident that, with Dr. Moseley's help, he was well on his way. The woman had a way of seeing into him and getting right to the heart of whatever issue they were discussing. Surprisingly, he wasn't put off by her invasiveness... he found it comforting. Dr. Moseley was definitely the right therapist for him.

Instead of heading home, he drove past the reno-house. He already missed working on the project. As he turned the corner, he saw Dean's truck parked in the driveway. That was strange. He pulled the Jeep up behind the old Chevy and cut the engine. He stepped out and pulled the collar of his trench coat up around his neck. He tried the door and found it unlocked. "Dean," he called out.

Dean's voice came from the kitchen. "Back here." Castiel stepped into the dim room. The sun was dropping below the horizon and it would be dark soon. Dean stood at the window looking out into the backyard. He gave Castiel a soft smile before returning to the view.

"What are you doing here, Dean?" Castiel asked, moving closer to his boyfriend. He leaned against him, chest to back, and rested his hands on Dean's waist. When was the last time they had sex? Not since they brought Calliope home... having a new baby in the house put a damper on romance. He rested his chin on Dean's shoulder, following his gaze to the nicely landscaped yard.

"Just wanted to see it once more before the new family gets the keys. I kind of miss this place, ya know?"

"I know, I miss it too. I fell in love with you in this house." Dean turned his head and kissed Castiel on his cheek.

"Sap," Dean muttered, but his expression was filled with affection. He threaded his fingers through Castiel's and turned to face him. "I love you, Cas." Castiel closed his eyes and brought his mouth to
Dean's. Now that Dean said the words that first time, he wasn't shy about telling Castiel every time he got the chance. Their kiss started sweet and tender, but heated up quickly. Dean growled low in his chest as he wrapped his fist in Castiel's hair and held him tight. Castiel felt the heat rush through his veins and matched Dean's intensity, licking deep into his mouth... he tasted of peppermint. He could feel Dean's hands on his back, his ass, then boldly cupping his hardening cock.

"Dean," Castiel hissed as Dean pressed along the ridge of his shaft. Dean's answer was a nip to Castiel's lower lip as skilled fingers unfastened the button of his pants. "We shouldn't..." Castiel whispered, but let his head lull back to give Dean access to his throat. Dean's teeth skated over his overheated skin and Castiel's knees went weak.

"I want you," Dean said against the sensitive area under his ear, his hands moving up to brush the coat from his shoulders and Castiel heard it slither to the floor. God, he needed this. Groaning loudly, he lifted his own hands to unbutton Dean's flannel shirt. He cursed when he felt the undershirt instead of his warm flesh. Dean, meanwhile, was making short work of getting Castiel out of his clothes.

His slacks gaped open and his shirt was untucked and half-unbuttoned. "We can't..." Castiel protested weakly.

"Don't care... I need you..." Dean shoved his hand into the waistband of Castiel's boxers and wrapped it around his cock. Castiel gasped and bucked into the strong grip, his fists clenching the front of Dean's shirt. "Yeah, that's it... that's it," Dean encouraged as Castiel's hips snapped forward and back. It felt so good. Rough. Intoxicating. Forbidden.

Dean bit his neck hard and Castiel cried out and lost control as he yanked Dean's shirt over his head, finally doing away with the wretched thing. Moaning his appreciation at Dean's gloriously naked chest, he lowered his lips to the left nipple, using his teeth as he sucked it to a hard bud. Dean's mewling whine spurred him on and he moved to the other one, wanting so badly to mark his man. He let his blunt fingernails dig into Dean's back. They should stop... take this home to the comfort of their bed. But then again, the forbidden aspect was the sexiest part...

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Dean pulled away, his eyes glazed. He toed off his boots and yanked down his jeans. Castiel could see the outline of his cock in dark blue boxer briefs... the wet stain at the head. Castiel let his eyes rake over Dean's body, never tiring of the view. He was so beautiful.

He laughed softly as Dean impatiently tugged Castiel's slacks and boxers down to his ankles. He kicked off his own shoes along with the bunched clothing, until all that was left was his dress shirt hanging open exposing his stomach and chest.

With a playful push, Dean steered him to the built-in desk on the far side of the kitchen. Dean sat down on the cold granite and spread his legs. Castiel stepped between them and moaned when his cock brushed against Dean's. Wantonly, his intense eyes on Castiel's, Dean sucked on his fingertip, getting it wet before reaching behind Castiel. He inhaled sharply when he felt Dean rub his spit-slick finger around his hole, applying pressure until Castiel was on the verge of screaming with want. "Do it," he pleaded.

Dean looked up into his eyes and shook his head, a slight smile on his face. "Can't hurt you, babe." Castiel was almost out of his mind with the need to feel Dean inside of him. He opened his mouth to argue... to beg for it, but Dean drew his head down and kissed him. It was a wet, filthy kiss... the kind that went straight to Castiel's cock, making him ache.

When he broke the kiss, Dean licked his lips and pulled Castiel closer until his cock slotted between Castiel's legs. He moved his hips back and forth, the painful drag of Dean's shaft across the dry skin
of his inner thighs was almost unbearable. Dean's finger continued to rub at his rim and Castiel inhaled the heady scent of their combined arousal. Dean's cock was wet with his need and he slid into the tight channel more easily now. This was different. The feeling of pressure at his hole, the friction of Dean's length against his perineum, his own erection caught between their stomachs... the combination was making his blood run hot. He ground his hips against Dean, his speed increasing as he chased his orgasm. He looked down at Dean, wondering if he was as undone by this as Castiel was. His eyes were closed and his face showed a look of intense concentration... almost like he was struggling to keep it together. His lips were slightly parted as he panted with each thrust. Castiel could feel each breath against his chest. "I love you, Dean... so much..." Castiel felt the coil of heat in his belly, bolts of electricity shooting all the way to his toes.

He moaned when he felt Dean ejaculate. Dean swiped his hand through his own cum then dipped between Castiel's cheeks to smear it against his hole. When he pushed two fingers inside, fast and hard, Castiel cried out and dug his nails into Dean's shoulders. Castiel's own release shot between them, coating their stomachs with warm spurts. Dean's forehead came to rest on his chest. They both gasped for air as their bodies trembled with the aftershocks of their shared passion. Dean started laughing. Castiel leaned back, grimacing at the sticky mess that covered him. "What's so funny?"

"We straight-up *defiled* the Henriksens' house," Dean said, stifling his mirth for a second before it burst out of him again. Arms still wrapped around Castiel, Dean threw his head back, his laughter loud in the quiet house. It took Castiel a few seconds to understand why that was funny, but once he got it, he joined in and laughed until his stomach hurt.

It took them several minutes to calm down enough to clean themselves off using one of the pretty hand towels Castiel bought for the home. They got dressed and Castiel used a corner of the cloth to polish the granite desk top. That towel would be coming home with them. With one last look at the desk, Dean winked and took Castiel's hand to lead him out of the house. They set the alarm and locked up before getting into their separate vehicles.

Dean volunteered to pick up Calliope at daycare, while Castiel drove to their favorite pizza place to order dinner. On the way, he couldn't keep the smile off his face. His inner thighs felt raw against the brush of his pants, but he didn't mind... he kind of liked it. He just hoped Dean's dick wasn't equally sore because he fully intended to go for round two later. The need to be filled with Dean's hard cock wasn't even close to being sated.

Later that night, he came on all fours with Dean's cock buried deep in his ass, his clenched fist holding Castiel's head back by his hair. Still gasping through his orgasm, he felt Dean come as he shouted Castiel's name. They collapsed on the bed, both men thoroughly satisfied. As an added bonus, Calliope hadn't whimpered once. The second that thought crossed his mind, the sound of a tiny yelp floated up the stairs and they huffed a laugh in response.

"Well, at least she was polite enough to wait until we both finished this time," Dean said with a smirk. Castiel moved to get up, but Dean halted him with a warm hand on his chest. "I got it, babe. You can get the next one."

Castiel watched as Dean threw on some sweats and a hoodie to take the baby out. Moments like these always left him feeling overcome with happiness and warmth. If this was any indication of what a future with Dean would be like, then Castiel was all for it.
Filming was complete. The crew might be off, but the network execs, including Sam, were still working. With the ratings, HHTV decided to continue the show with another season. Dean and Cas were both given contracts to look over and they talked about it long into the night. Cas was more excited about the prospect than Dean. Sure, the idea of working with Cas again was awesome, but he missed the daily grind at Winchester Construction. Jo, Donna, and Benny didn't even seem to realize he was gone half the time and that was a real blow to his ego. The company was running smoothly and Dean still made all the decisions, but did he really want to make a career of reality TV?

Cas gave him space to figure things out, which meant a lot to Dean. He spent the morning driving up the coast with Zeppelin blasting through the speakers. He crossed the border into Canada and stopped in Vancouver to watch a television show being filmed for a while. He'd never watched the show, but judging by the crowd of teenage girls, it must be popular. The star, a hot-looking guy carrying a bow and dressed like an Emo Robin Hood, waved to the fans. It got him thinking... he was somewhat famous. He and Cas got recognized now, and he had to admit it was pretty damn cool. He took a picture of the actor to show Charlie because she was such a freakin' nerd, and then turned to leave. The sound of someone calling his name stopped him in his tracks. He turned back around and saw Emo Robin Hood strolling toward him with a huge grin on his face.

"Hey, I'm Stephen." He reached out to shake Dean's hand. "I just wanted to say I love your show. My wife and I watch it religiously."

Dean stood there speechless for a moment, then found his voice. "Wow, uh... thanks. It's still kind of surreal to get recognized... but I bet you know all about that, huh?" Dean wasn't about to mention that he didn't know who the hell the guy was.

"Dude, you have no idea," Stephen laughed, ignoring the cameras clicking around them. "So... what brings you up this way? You guys thinking about doing something in Vancouver?"

"No, it's nothing work-related... well, not really. I'm kind of mulling over the decision to do a second season and needed to go for a drive to clear my head." Dean gestured for him to step further away from the crowd before he continued. "Uh... if you don't mind me asking, how did you know this is what you wanted to do? I mean, how did you know for certain that you wanted to continue doing this show?"

"Well... it wasn't some big epiphany or anything. When they approached me about doing a second season, I was pretty banged up from the stunt work. I wasn't exactly jumping at the idea. Ultimately, it came down to the simple fact that I like the people I work with. The cast, the crew, even the network guys... we're all one big family and that means a lot to me. Most people assume people like you and me do this for the fame and glory, but at the end of the day, we just want to enjoy our jobs like anyone else."

"I never thought about it like that... thanks, man."

Stephen clapped him on the shoulder. "No problem... but if you really want to show your gratitude, you could take a selfie with me for the wife." He smiled and Dean laughed because he couldn't believe someone famous was fangirling over him. He moved in so they could snap the photo and just
for good measure, Dean recorded a personal message just for her. Stephen was over the moon with excitement and joked about all the brownie points he would get. Not long after, a PA came to usher him back to the set.

"It was nice meeting you, Stephen. Thanks again for the advice. If you and the wife are ever in Seattle, look us up."

"Thanks, Dean. The same if you and Cas are ever up in our neck of the woods." They shook hands and parted ways. As Dean got behind the wheel, he reflected on what Stephen said. Getting along with coworkers was a fairly basic expectation, but actually liking them was a rare thing. Dean had no doubt that he liked the people he worked with... one in particular.

Dean sent Cas a text letting him know when he'd be home before turning the key in the ignition. After hitting up a drive-thru for a late lunch, he turned the car south. His mind was made up. He loved filming the show with Cas, he enjoyed the work, and it was important to Sam's career... so he would sign the contract.

As he passed through the border checkpoint again, he called Sam and told him the news. His brother hadn't pressured him, but Dean knew a lot was riding on his answer. As predicted, Sam was ecstatic over the news. In less than an hour, he'd be home. He settled back in the seat and tapped his fingers to the beat of *I Can't Quit You, Baby* and smiled. *Home*...to Cas and Callie.

On Monday, they went to the studio for the calendar photo shoot. Dean stripped down to his jeans and tool belt as instructed and was stretching out a cramp in his neck when Cas came toward him. Holy fuck. They had him in dress slacks, with his white shirt untucked and unbuttoned, his tie hanging loose around his neck. It reminded him of their first time...the angry sex that almost wrecked the house. Kate was following him and she snorted when she saw Dean's expression. "Hey, Pretty Boy, you get to see him naked. This shouldn't get you all hot and bothered." Cas looked at them both and grinned.

"Shut up. I like to show appreciation for my man's hot body." As if marking his territory, Dean hauled Cas in for a hard kiss.

"Don't mess up my work," Kate chided, pulling something out of her bag and turning Cas' face toward her to touch up his makeup.

The afternoon wasn't as bad as he thought it would be. The photographer was very good at his job and made it fun. Kate and a few of the staff joked around with them to make the time go by faster. They did the months in order and when December was done, Crowley clapped his hands. Dean didn't remember seeing him earlier. "Great job, boys. If I wasn't straight, I'd add these pictures to my spank bank." Dean rolled his eyes at the man's weird sense of humor.

With the contract signed and the filming over, Dean caught himself driving to the reno-house the next morning before he realized what he was doing. Shaking his head, he took the next left and looped back toward his office. Cas was still in bed when he left... the lazy-ass didn't open his studio until nine o'clock. By that time, Dean had gotten up, walked Callie, made the coffee, placed the puppy on the bed to snuggle with her Papa, and was hammering a stud in place on a jobsite.

"About time you started doing real work again," Benny said, setting a load of two-by-fours on the plywood subflooring. "Don't break a nail, boss."

"Kiss my ass, Lafitte," Dean said, taking the ribbing in stride. He knew Benny was just teasing.

"No, thanks. Even if I was so inclined, your boyfriend would kick my ass." The two men laughed
and worked side by side to finish the large renovation project. When they took a break, he noticed he
had a missed call and a couple of texts from Cas. With all the noise from the power tools, he didn't
even hear it. He needed to remember to turn it on vibrate from now on. Not working with his
boyfriend every day would take some getting used to. He went outside and sat on a pile of lumber.

**Text from Cas/8:20AM – Calliope loves you.**

Their pup's cute face stared back at him from the screen. He smiled. Cas must have taken the picture
before he left for work. They talked about letting her come to work with them once she was older
and had obedience training, but for now, she had daycare.

**Text from Cas/9:03AM – Do all parents hate leaving their children at daycare?**

Dean chuckled. Since Cas didn't leave a message when he called, Dean dialed his number to make
sure everything was okay. "Hello, Dean."

"Hey, Babe. Sorry I missed your call. I've been on a jobsite all day. I didn't realize how much I
missed my power tools."

"Our vibrator not enough for you?" Dean sputtered and looked around as if one of the crew could
hear. He felt foolish and laughed.

"I would make a joke about drilling, but I need to get back to work. Did you need me?"

"I just wanted to see how your first full day back at work was going. And to tell you that I love you
and I miss you."

"I love you and miss you, too. It feels weird not seeing your crazy bedhead around the corner. Makes
me anxious to start season two." Cas chuckled and for a minute, they just sat in silence together. "I
have to get back to work. I'll see you later, babe." They said their goodbyes and hung up. Dean must
have had a dreamy expression on his face after the call because Benny and a few of the guys started
in on him and didn't let up until it was time to knock off for the day. It seemed like every time he
turned around, someone was obnoxiously singing some cheesy love song. If he heard that goddamn
Titanic song *one more time*...

After spending thirty minutes in the office going over stuff with Donna and signing off on the crew's
timesheets, he headed to pick up Callie. They had to buy a second safety harness so they could keep
one in each vehicle. Now that they were back at their regular jobs for a few months, they worked out
a schedule. Cas dropped her off in the morning, and Dean picked her up since he left work earlier
than Cas did.

Once she was safely buckled in, he drove to the bank to make a deposit and loved how the tellers all
gushed over his pup. She got a dog biscuit from them and munched it as they headed for home. He
let her run around and do her thing, praising her for the small pile of poop he had to clean up. This
was his life now and he wouldn't trade it for the world. No one could say that Dean Winchester
would shirk away from diaper duty.

Dean smelled the pork roast the minute he walked into the house. Thank heaven for crockpots. He
set the table and then eased himself to the floor to play with Callie until her Papa got home. He was
sore. Maybe he'd take a hot shower while he waited. "Daddy's getting old, Sweetpea." She followed
him up the stairs and sprawled out on the bath mat with one of her stuffed animals while he stripped
down and got the water to the right temperature.

He was rinsing the shampoo out of his hair when he saw Callie's dark shape run out of the bathroom.
A moment later, Cas was outside the glass door. "Hey, babe. Be out in a sec."

"Dinner smells wonderful," Cas called out over the sound of the shower. What was he doing? Dean watched through the fog as Cas bent over and threw something across the small room. The door opened and his very naked, very sexy boyfriend got in with him.

"Mmm, damn you're hot. Don't tell my boyfriend though. He's kind of possessive," Dean teased as his hands went up to ghost over Cas' chest.

"I've heard that about him. This will be our little secret," he whispered against Dean's lips before he kissed him. Dean surrendered to the feeling of Cas' mouth on his. He let his hands slide down to Cas' hips as blood rushed to his cock. When he pulled away, Dean whined, but Cas' seductive little smile promised he'd enjoy what was about to happen.

Cas placed his palms against Dean's chest and pushed him to the tiled bench. Dean sat and Cas sank to his knees before him. Dean ran his fingers through Cas' wet hair and guided his head down. A few seconds later, Dean was fucking Cas' hot mouth. "Fuck, Cas... suck me, babe... that's it, take it all..." Dean couldn't take his eyes off his lover. God, Cas didn't seem to have a gag reflex. Dean's balls were already tightening up. It wouldn't be long. "Gonna come, Cas... that what you want? Wanna taste my cum?"

Dean saw Cas' left hand moving faster as he jerked himself off. Cas got off on sucking dick and Dean had zero complaints about that. "God, I love fucking your mouth... Mmm... come for me, Cas." Dean was close. His fist tightened in Cas' hair in warning. He was on the edge now. His muscles seized and he thrust deep into Cas' throat. "Fuck..." he cried out as his orgasm hit him with the force of a freight train. He leaned back against the shower wall and tried to catch his breath. Cas looked up, a small trail of cum running down the side of his beautiful mouth. Dean got to watch as Cas brought himself to his own release, his head thrown back, mouth open, eyes wide and trained on Dean's. He leaned over and kissed those lips, licking up the drops of his cum as Cas groaned in response. Fuck...no one could ever compare with Cas.
Chapter End Notes

We've almost reached the end of the line for these two. Only one chapter to go. Amanda and I want to thank each and every one of you for reading this.
Epilogue

Chapter Notes

This chapter has a bit of homophobic language. Sorry about that, but our boys take care of it.
We tried to cover up all the loose ends and give Cas and Dean their happily ever after.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The final episode aired on the eighth of April. The network wanted to do a wrap party, but Cas and Dean said no. Interestingly enough, after the ratings and the social media frenzy, the folks in charge listened to what they had to say. Castiel was happy to be at home, sprawled on the couch, with his boyfriend and their pup.

"I have to admit, the editors did a great job, and they couldn't have picked a better family," Dean said, his arm nestled around Castiel's shoulders. "I'm glad we did this, Cas. I'm proud of us."

"We made a difference in their lives. At the end of the day, I'm thankful for Sam's vision. Think about it, Dean... if it wasn't for Sam, we wouldn't be here right now." They sat in silence, each deep in their own thoughts for a long time after the credits rolled and another show started. Calliope got them moving again, breaking their trance with a soft bark, as she padded to the door.

"Potty time," Dean said, shifting Castiel off of him and standing. Together, they walked to the end of the dock and the puppy ran right over to the patch of grass and squatted. Dean's hand was warm in his. It was balmy out, but after the harsh rain and cold winter weather, Castiel relished not having to
bundle up in a coat every time they left the house.

It had been a little over four months since Dean stormed into his life, but standing here watching their dog romp around, Castiel felt like he'd known this wonderful man forever. He couldn't imagine his life without Dean... and he wouldn't want to. "Dean?"

"Yeah, babe?" Dean didn't take his eyes off Calliope.

"I know we've talked about..." Castiel paused and Dean glanced over at him in question. "...our future, but..." Again, he hesitated. His vast knowledge of the English language seemed to fail him. Dean tugged his hand to pull him into his arms.

"What's going on inside that noggin of yours, Cas?" Dean's patient tone grounded him and gave him the courage to say what was on his mind. He took a deep breath and went for it.

"We've never talked about marriage." There, he said it. He rushed on before his bravery deserted him. "We don't have to do the traditional ceremony... I know we love each other, and that's enough for me." He looked into Dean's eyes. "But... do you ever..."

Dean smiled. "Yeah, I do," Dean answered the unfinished question easily. "I do want to get married... to you, in case you were wondering. And I'd like to revisit the subject of kids, too...one day."

Castiel brushed his lips across Dean's and felt his smile. "One day," Castiel repeated. Dean whistled for Calliope and they turned back toward the dock. Halfway to the house, Dean abruptly stopped walking, and since he was connected by their linked hands, Castiel came to a halt as well.

"Was that a proposal, Cas?"

"What?" Castiel was stunned and his heart began to race. "No... I hope I would be a bit more romantic than that when I propose."

Dean pursed his lips and shrugged. "Okay, that's cool." He started walking again and Castiel fell into step beside him. As they reached the door to their home, Dean turned to him with a sly grin. "But just so you know... the answer would have been yes."

"Yes? Really?" Castiel's mouth widened to a matching grin. "Really?"

"Yes, really. You are such a dumbass sometimes, Cas. After all we've been through together, you have to know you're it for me." He gently carded his hand through Castiel's hair.

"I love you."

"I know," Dean quipped and Castiel laughed. Calliope barked at her two dads, clearly perturbed over the lack of attention.

June...

When the proposal finally did happen, Dean was the one who asked. Like the two of them, it was simple and without fanfare. Castiel came home from work to a candlelight dinner. Calliope met him at the door with a red bow around her neck. Attached to it was a small white box. Castiel looked at Dean in confusion. It wasn't his birthday. Dean leaned against the counter in the kitchen and gestured with his beer bottle. "I thought we already established that I don't need a special occasion to surprise
you.” Castiel smirked and opened his mouth, but Dean interrupted, "Still not porn, Cas."

He sighed dramatically and bent down to retrieve the box. With Calliope's excitement to have her other daddy home, Castiel had to practically put her in a half-Nelson to take the bow off her neck. He dropped the ribbon onto the coffee table and peeled the tape back. Inside was a black box... the kind that usually held a ring. Castiel stared down at it for a long time before looking up at Dean. Dean was trying to pull off a casual pose, but Castiel knew better and could see the tension in the way he was holding himself. Carefully, Castiel opened the lid and gasped at the beautiful band etched with Celtic knots. "Dean... is this..." He let his eyes meet Dean's.

"I just thought I'd make an honest man out of you..." Dean couldn't finish his sentence because Castiel launched himself into his arms. He was vaguely aware of the sound of the beer bottle hitting the floor. Dean laughed heartily as he returned his kisses. "Is that a yes?" He finally asked when Castiel let him come up for air.

"Yes... definitely a yes."

**August...**

"This one will be a monster to undertake, Sam," Dean said, lips tight as he inspected the outside of the two-story house.

"I ran the numbers and with what we're paying for it, you'll have a hundred-grand for the renovation budget," Sam responded, looking up at the second-floor balcony that was listing ever so slightly to the left.

"Where's Cas?" Dean looked around him. His fiancé was just there a second ago. Sam turned his head to peer around the corner of the house.

"There," he pointed and Dean followed his finger. Cas was standing on the empty wooded lot next door. It butted up to a rocky strip of coastline.

"Give me a sec," Dean called out to Sam as he jogged toward Cas. As he got closer, Cas looked up. "We need your opinion on the house, babe."

"I was just enjoying this incredible view," Cas said softly, his eyes returning to the bay as Dean evaluated the property with a contractor's eye. Taking in the placement of the surveyor's stakes, the lot was just over an acre and had close to two hundred feet of shoreline. All in all, it was a great piece of property.

"What are you thinking, Cas?" Cas turned to him and gave him a small smile.

"Nothing, just daydreaming." He gestured toward Sam, who was standing in the front yard of the dilapidated house they actually came to see. "Have you made your decision?"

Dean was going to say no to the remodel until he saw the light in Cas' eyes while he watched the dark blue water. "Yeah, I think it's a decent house. Solid. Good bones, if you're speaking hipster." Cas rolled his eyes and started walking back to the house like he knew Dean would follow him. Dean smiled to himself at the thought because yeah... he'd follow Cas anywhere.

**November...**
Sam could keep a secret. The house for the new season was bought and paid for, and the lot next to it had a 'sold' sign hammered into the ground by the road. When he saw Cas' disappointed look, he wanted to spill the beans, but he promised Dean he wouldn't.

Filming wouldn't start for another month, but Cas wanted to go over the place again to take measurements so he could start laying out plans. As the designer ran the tape measure around a window in the dining room, Sam shot Dean his best what the fuck expression. Dean gave him the shut the hell up face and Sam threw up his hands and stomped out of the room. Cas had been quiet since he saw the damn sign. It was breaking Sam's heart.

Ever since things became more serious between his brother and Cas, Sam had grown to consider him a good friend. In spite of their hectic schedules, the three men made it a point to get together at least once every couple of weeks. They would hang out at home, go out for a beer, or do something more dangerous like challenging each other to a round of miniature golf. It didn't sound very dangerous, but not many people knew what they were like when competing against each other... especially Cas. The guy was usually the calm, collected one in the bunch, but when it came to a challenge, his competitive side had no equal. Once when Dean tried to cheat, Sam thought Cas was going to shiv his brother with a golf club in front of God and everybody. It didn't help that Dean was smirking because he thought it was hilarious to make Cas lose his shit... it was like he did it on purpose just for the entertainment value. Sam didn't even want to know what happened whenever they made it home. Considering the fireworks he'd seen between the two men on camera when they were pissed, he could guess.

Keeping a secret this big from his friend wasn't easy, but it really sucked now that he could see how sad Cas was. The fact that they were going to be brothers soon made it even worse. He only hoped that Dean would tell him soon.

When Dean followed him outside, Sam rounded on him. "Dean, you need to tell him you bought the land."

"I know... I just haven't found the right time," Dean mumbled, glancing over his shoulder to make sure Cas didn't walk up on them.

"The right time needs to be now," Sam stated firmly. At Dean's downcast look, he relaxed and ran a hand through his long hair. "Look, Dean... I know how much you like surprising him with the grand gestures, but this time, you have to change your approach. He saw the sign and was devastated. You can't let him feel like that, and I really don't want to keep this secret anymore. Just tell him." He squeezed Dean's shoulder and held up his keys. "I'm out of here... gotta meet Eileen for dinner. Make sure you lock up."

Sam passed the sign and sighed. When Dean told him that he wanted to buy the land to build their dream home, Sam felt a little envious. He was still dating Eileen and they were happy, but nowhere near discussing marriage and homes together. Dean and Cas were so freakin' in love, it made everyone around them jealous. He'd never seen his brother so happy. It shocked the hell out of him when Dean told him about the ring. Then Crowley found out and was all over it. He even suggested filming their wedding as part of the next season, but Cas nixed that idea. They assured Crowley that he was invited to wedding, and that was enough...for now. But Crowley was nothing if not stubborn.

The drive back to the studio took him close to thirty minutes... plenty of time to think about Dean's plan. While Dean and Cas were busy with the new reno-house, Benny would be next door supervising the building of their new home. Dean thought it was great that he could walk over and keep an eye on the project while still pulling a paycheck from the network. Sam knew it was only a
matter of time until Crowley caught on and used that little fact to turn their dream home into a PR stunt.

Not that he blamed him... it would make a great angle for Season Two. He could see it laid out in his head... In Season One, they met and fell in love. In this season, they would build a life together. It was the kind of thing television awards were made of, and Sam couldn't help feeling excited about it. He was pretty sure he could talk Dean and Cas into it. After all, he and Crowley succeeded in getting two of the most private people Sam had ever known to get half-naked for a calendar that was now a top-seller. This couldn't possibly be more difficult than that...

December...

"Dean, let's go. We're going to be late." Castiel was ready to strangle the man. If they didn't leave for the airport soon, they wouldn't make it in time to greet Luc when he got off the plane. Not that Luc needed it... but Castiel wanted to have that moment with his brother since it was his first time hosting Christmas. He had always been the single one, so it became tradition for him to fly to Boston and celebrate the holiday with Luc. But this year, he had Dean... and it was the first time Castiel had ever felt excited about the holidays. Of course, at the moment, the only thing he was feeling was annoyance. "Dean," he shouted again as he closed a very disappointed puppy in the laundry room. Otherwise, they would come home to find their Christmas tree in shambles.

"I'm coming, Cas, Jesus. Hold onto your panties."

Castiel finished pouring his travel mug of coffee and set it down. He calmly turned and crowded Dean against the refrigerator. He noticed a flash of arousal cross Dean's face. He moved close to his ear, lowered his voice, and rumbled, "Panties... now there's something we haven't tried...yet.

He backed away and felt a rush of satisfaction when Dean leaned in, trying to close the distance between them. Castiel stepped toward the door with a smug look, knowing full well the effect he had on Dean.

"Goddammit, Cas... What the fuck am I supposed to do with this?" Dean gestured at his half-hard cock helplessly. Castiel could see the outline in Dean's snug-fitting jeans.

"Well, first you're going to move your sexy ass out the door so we're not late. Then later, if you're a very good boy, I'll fuck you against the wall until you come screaming my name."

"Okay, okay, shut the fuck up. No more talking for you." Dean palmed his erection with a pained expression on his face. Castiel laughed in triumph as they left at the exact time he had originally planned.

That evening, they took Luc to the Roadhouse where they met Sam for a casual dinner. Before they knew it, their evening turned into an impromptu wedding planning session with Ellen and Jo. Castiel was grateful both Luc and Sam were there... it made it easier to sync up their complicated schedules. It took a lot of effort and alcohol, but by the end of the evening, they not only had the date nailed down to the second weekend of February, but a pretty detailed outline of everything else as well. He didn't know if it was genetic, but Ellen and Jo turned out to be savants at planning a wedding. Halfway through dinner, Charlie swooped in and informed them that she was going to perform the ceremony. Castiel's mouth dropped open.

"What? I can totally perform the ceremony." At their disbelieving looks, she continued. "Seriously. As Queen of Moondoor, I get petitioned to preside over weddings all the time. I became an ordained minister so I could do it legally. It's actually pretty good money."
Dean threw his arm around her and pulled her in for a hug. "Charlie, you're awesome."

"I know, Handmaiden. I know." Everyone laughed and Castiel shrugged, striking that task from his to-do list.

Between Christmas and the wedding, Castiel was up to his ass in plans. They decided to keep the ceremony small. Unfortunately, Crowley leaked it to the press and social media was going crazy. To keep rumors from getting out of control, the two men decided Castiel would write about it in his blog to let the fans feel like they were part of it. He honestly didn't mind... it was rather heartwarming that there were so many people invested in their happiness. It also made him feel good to know that young gay fans looked up to them as an example of love and acceptance.

Season Two of Designing Dreams started filming a couple of weeks before Christmas. Castiel could barely keep his attention on the new reno-house when his own home was being built next door. The foundation was poured just last week and it wasn't much to look at yet... but in a few short months, the plans they'd painstakingly drawn up would become reality. At almost ten months old, Calliope was huge and the three of them barely fit in their place without bumping into each other around every corner.

He was sifting through flooring samples when his mind returned to the day before Thanksgiving. They were at the new reno-house taking measurements and planning their individual tasks before filming began. Sam left for the day and Dean was uncharacteristically quiet afterward. Castiel had been feeling depressed ever since he saw the sign on the lot next door. That property seemed to call to him... like it was meant for him and Dean. He stood there, picturing Calliope racing along the rocky shore and jumping into the water. He envisioned a child with freckles across his or her nose laughing and running behind the big dog. But all those dreams were dashed with one simple word... Sold.

When Dean told him that they were the new owners, Castiel almost cried. How was it possible that he found a man as warm and giving as Dean Winchester to share his life with? When they got home that night, they spent hours in their office brainstorming and drawing the plans for their new home. Right off the master bedroom, they drew a slightly smaller room that Castiel labeled the nursery. He still remembered the look of adoration on Dean's face as he traced the word with his finger. When they were finished laying out their plans, they went to bed and made love slowly and tenderly, eyes locked and hands clasped as they climaxed together.

He pulled himself from his musings and returned to the task at hand. Dean would be finished with the demolition work soon and Castiel still had to configure the kitchen the way he wanted it. He decided on a tile countertop, but he was certain Dean would hate it. Castiel chuckled. When the cameras were rolling, they still bickered like an old married couple... and the fans loved it.

February...

Dean tried to help with the wedding plans... he really did. But Cas and Charlie just gave him the evil eye every time he questioned anything. Charlie and his fiancé were thick as thieves and sometimes, Dean felt left out. "At least, I have you, girl," he murmured, ruffling the big dog's ears.

Between work on the reno-house and their new home, Dean was worn out. They were taking two weeks off after the wedding for their honeymoon and Dean couldn't wait. Cas told him in no uncertain terms that he was taking care of the travel plans since Dean surprised him with the land for their house. He had to admit, he was apprehensive. What if Cas wanted them to go on a long plane ride somewhere? Dean didn't do planes. But in the end, he had to live up to his promise to trust Cas,
so he tried not to think too much about it.

He was pulled out of his thoughts by two faces staring expectantly in front of him. "I'm sorry, what?"

"You weren't listening... again. Big surprise..." Cas looked annoyed with him, which Dean thought was unfair. They didn't really care about his opinions anyway. Charlie seemed to notice something was brewing, so she quickly made her farewells and left before either of them could protest. Cas just stood there waiting for Dean to say something, but Dean had no clue what that could be.

"What, Cas? What'd I do wrong now?"

"Do you even care about our wedding? You've hardly contributed anything. Charlie and I have done all the work and I'm starting to wonder if you even want to get married." Cas was getting himself worked up and the smart side of Dean knew he should diffuse the bomb before it exploded. The problem was, he was too pissed to be smart at the moment.

"Are you freakin' kidding me right now? I've been trying to help, but you two don't give a shit what I think or what I want." Dean was standing now and his hackles were raised by his righteous fury. Cas seemed to be waiting patiently for the blast wave and it was pissing Dean off even more. "Every time I ask a question or share one of my ideas, you and Charlie just shoot me down and look at me like I've got a dick growing out of my forehead." Dean waited for the inevitable explosion from Cas, but it never happened. He just stared back at him and then the fucker laughed. That was the last straw.

Dean turned to leave before he said something he would regret. He was stopped by a hand on his arm.

"Dean, honey, wait... I'm sorry. Please don't leave. I didn't mean to laugh at you..." Dean narrowed his eyes at Cas, trying to gauge his sincerity. Cas pulled him closer and wrapped his arms around him. "Really, Dean. I'm sorry. You're right... we haven't been very accommodating, have we?"

"No, Cas, you haven't. And I do care about the wedding, but all I want is to marry you... I don't need all the fancy stuff. I just want it to be about you and me, not about everyone else. I feel like I'm not part of anything... like I'm just supposed to sit here like a good boy until I say I do." Dean looked away, not able to meet Cas' eyes. Cas touched his chin and gently tugged until Dean turned back to make eye contact.

"Dean... I love you so much. You really are a wonderful man..." Cas brought their foreheads together. "I just got caught up and turned into a bridezilla. So... let's fix it. I think we should sit down, just the two of us, and make a list of all the things you'd like to see in our ceremony. Because you're right... this day is about you and me. That's all that matters, love."

Dean smiled for the first time all day. "Yeah, Cas... I'd like that," he said softly.

In the end, the wedding was a perfect combination of both of them. Once they chose the colors they both liked, Cas called Anna and Kevin in to take over handling the design elements and theme. The event would be held at the Edgewater Hotel in the Olympic Ballroom, which had a breathtaking panoramic view of Puget Sound. It was one of the few things they both agreed on immediately. The spectacular view of the blue water and green forests would complement their chosen colors perfectly. It took some work on Anna's part, but she was eventually able to find linen napkins to match the shades of their eyes so the tables would be set with alternating colors.

For the music, they hired Dean's friend, Ash. Cas was skeptical when he eyed the epic mullet Ash was sporting, but when he heard Ash had graduated at the top of his class from MIT, he decided the guy would be more than capable of handling some wedding music. It turned out to be an excellent
decision because Ash was an incurable romantic, judging by his taste in music. When Dean and Cas walked into the room from opposite sides to meet at the wedding arch in the middle, it was to the song *Grow Old With Me* by Tom Odell. Their vows were said reverently as they gazed at each other with eyes overflowing with love. Dean couldn't help but notice the sounds of sniffles echoing throughout the room. And as Charlie pronounced them husbands, the joy in Dean's heart made him feel like the luckiest man in the world.

Dean and Cas held hands as they entered the Ballroom to the sound of their friends and family cheering them on. When Dean saw the Groom's Cake, he couldn't stop grinning. It was actually a gigantic apple pie, complete with a batman symbol baked into the pie crust. The wedding cake was a work of art. It had square layers, each plain white with thin strips of blue and green fondant along the bottom of each layer, then topped with two silhouetted groom figurines. It was simple, yet elegant... just like the two of them. When it came time to cut the cake, Dean expected Cas to feed him politely. Instead, he stood there in shock as Cas slowly smeared the entire slice of cake on his face. Dean returned the favor and they ended up kissing most of it off each other, much to the photographer's delight.

The honeymoon was awesome. Cas led Dean out to the Impala and told him to drive north. Dean had no clue where they were headed, but he loved driving with Cas no matter where they went. It didn't take long to arrive at the Secret Cove Treehouse resort in Vancouver. Cas rented a private treehouse and even booked a personal chef to cook dinner for them three nights a week. Having Cas all to himself with nothing to distract them from each other was a dream come true for Dean. Since the day they met, life had been filled with deadlines and phone calls and obligations. It was nice to focus solely on each other and Dean loved every minute of it.

On the first night, Cas asked him to wait at the bottom of the stairs for a few minutes, then called him up. Dean walked into a room filled with the soft glow of candles and the faint scent of rose petals. It might have seemed cheesy any other time, but on their wedding night, Dean found it romantic. He set their bags down and drew Cas into his arms. They didn't speak a word as they began undressing and devouring each other, completely caught up in the euphoria of being newly married.

*Married.* Even as Dean's lips caressed his husband's naked shoulder, he still couldn't believe Cas was his. He pulled away to look into the blue eyes he adored so much and the love he saw shining back at him made his breath hitch. "*Cas,*" he whispered.

"I know, love... I know." Cas pushed Dean gently back on the bed and lay down next to him, fingers trailing lightly along each curve of his body. Dean ran his fingers through Cas' disheveled hair and pulled him in for a deep, penetrating kiss. Dean caught a glimpse of their rings as they flashed in the candlelight and felt a surge of warmth and pride.

When Cas entered him, Dean held his gaze and let out a breath he didn't realize he was holding. Every touch, every kiss, every sigh was the same as before, but meant so much more now. They held onto each other tightly as Cas continued pushing into him, their hearts sharing the same rhythm. And when Cas came inside of him, Dean held him close to his chest as he followed him into the abyss. Lying in each other's arms, both men sighed deeply and fell asleep breathing as one.

*March...*

Their home was almost done. It was everything they dreamed of and more. Castiel's floating home was put on the market and sold within a few weeks. They had until the end of the month to vacate and Dean assured him the new house would be ready in plenty of time. They spent their weekends hunting for the right furnishings and accents to make it just right. From next door, Castiel watched as
the landscaping crew took a rough, craggy coastline and turned it into a beautiful, picturesque yard. Sighing, he turned back to the reno-house to finish arranging the master bedroom for the new winning family.

The Mills family would make excellent neighbors. The single mom was the Sheriff of Everett, a small town that was twenty-five miles north of Seattle. Her two teenage daughters were snarky and fun, despite the hardships they had encountered in their young lives. Jodi adopted both of them after losing her husband and son in a tragic car accident. She met Claire and Alex four years ago when they turned up at the sheriff's station looking bruised and half-starved. They had nowhere else to go and she couldn't bear the thought of turning them over to get lost in the foster care system. So, she opened her heart and her small rented home to the girls, building a strong family from the ruins of their past lives. Dean had taken to them right away. Castiel thought it had a lot to do with what Dean had gone through in his own childhood. As for Jodi, Castiel liked her immediately and was impressed with her sharp mind and inherent ability to sniff out bullshit from a mile away. He thought Jodi and the girls would make great babysitters when they decided it was time to adopt or get a surrogate.

He'd been seeing Missouri, his therapist, for almost a year now and she helped him learn how to deal with his insecurities in a healthy way. He no longer had doubts about Dean's love for him. He looked down at the ring on his finger and smiled. She had recently asked for Dean to join in one of Castiel's sessions. They talked about wanting a child, but they weren't sure if they were ready yet. Missouri had them list their fears about becoming parents and they discussed them one by one, labeling them as rational or irrational. By the time the session was over, Dean met Castiel's eyes and grinned. Missouri jotted down a note, a knowing smile on her wise face.

After a lot of research, they settled on an adoption agency and started the rigorous process of adopting a child. The questions were endless, but Dean didn't shy away from helping him fill out the stacks of forms. By the time the first home visit happened, they were already living in their new home. The two women that came to inspect their living arrangements were impressed with the house and gave it their stamp of approval. Now all they had to do was wait...

April...

Dean was sealing the windows on one of the Winchester Construction projects when Cas called. "Hey, babe," he said, dragging his hand across the leg of his jeans to get the caulkling off. Cas would be pissy when he found them in the laundry, but he didn't want to get the sticky stuff on his phone.

"They called." Dean's breath caught in his throat. Cas didn't have to elaborate, Dean knew exactly who they were.

"Already? It's only been a few weeks." They had filled out mounds and mounds of paperwork, their friends and families had been interviewed, and the agency sent someone to check out their home... but they were told it could take months, even years before a child became available for adoption. Cas didn't respond and Dean knew his husband well enough to know he was freaking out in the usual Cas way... quietly. "Okay, not going to look a gift horse in the mouth. When?"

"This afternoon...at three." Okay, now Dean was freaking out, too. This afternoon. That was sudden. No time to prepare themselves. Dean looked at his watch. If he left now, he'd have time to run to the house and shower. He rubbed his hand over his face...he needed to shave.

"I'm leaving now. I'll meet you at the house." Cas wouldn't have to clean up... he would be wearing a suit and tie already. With the filming for Season Two over, they were back at their respective jobs...
until Season Three started filming. This year, the network decided the show was successful enough to occupy one of the coveted primetime slots in the Fall lineup. Dean was looking forward to filming in warmer weather. It was an added bonus that it would coincide with the school year when their kid was old enough to go. *Holy shit, they were about to get a kid.*

A few hours later, Dean parked the Jeep in front of the large brick building. He took Cas' hand and squeezed it briefly. "We've got this." He heard Cas exhale and saw the small nod of agreement. "They're going to love us."

The adoption agency they chose was diverse and had several openly gay clients. Their caseworker, Pamela Barnes, had been supportive and kind. She was waiting for them at the reception desk. After a quick greeting, she led them down a hallway to her office.

Once they were seated on the large sofa, she opened a file. "I know you stipulated that you wanted a newborn, but I also know how eager you both are for a child. I have a three-year-old boy who was placed with us this week. He has been in foster care for the past six months, but the family decided he was...too much to handle." Dean frowned. Who would do that to a kid? "His birth parents were killed in a car accident last year and there were no living relatives willing to take him." She looked up at them and closed the file. "Micheal is deaf. He lost eighty percent of his hearing as infant." Before either of them could speak, she slid a photograph across the desk.

Dean stared at the glossy picture. The child was beautiful. Dark hair, dimpled cheeks with freckles, blue eyes, and his smile was...**perfect.** He felt Cas grip his thigh. "Can we meet him?" Cas' voice was husky with emotion.

"Do you want a few minutes to discuss this first? Taking in a deaf child is not without risk and it's more than you both asked for..." Ms. Barnes was sincere and sympathetic, making it clear that she would not judge them no matter what they decided. Cas and Dean looked at each other and grinned, eyes shining with emotion.

"No, we're good. We want to meet him," Dean answered for both of them.

She smiled. "I knew you'd say that. I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't present the other side, but something tells me you're the perfect parents for Michael." She led them through a maze of hallways and they found themselves in a playroom with child-sized furniture and toys scattered everywhere. "I'll be right back." She shut the door behind her and the two men faced each other.

Cas beamed at him. "Dean, we're about to meet our child." Dean's stomach was in knots. *Our child.* God, that sounded so...awesome. Dean sat down on one of the small chairs and Cas sat on the floor next to him. Dean rested a hand on Cas' shoulder. This meeting would change the rest of their lives.

Ms. Barnes entered the room holding the boy's hand. His eyes were wide and he looked around nervously. "Does he know ASL?" Cas asked softly.

"He does. His birth parents worked with him. Unfortunately, the foster family wasn't proficient and he's lagged behind some." Cas began to sign and speak. Since Sam and Eileen had been together for a while now, Dean learned quite a bit from her, but Cas was a natural. He remembered to speak out loud as he signed, a common tactic for teaching deaf children to function more easily in a hearing world.

"Hello, Michael. My name is Castiel and this is Dean. Would you like to play with us?" Cas picked up a basket of building blocks and set them on the floor in front of him.

The child clutched tighter to Ms. Barnes and shook his head. Cas looked crestfallen and Dean
couldn't have that. He got down on his hands and knees and began building a tower, making sure he
didn't look at the boy. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Michael edging closer. Cas squeezed his
arm, but didn't move.

Michael worried his lower lip, but sat down next to Dean to watch. After a few minutes, Dean heard
the door shut and he knew Ms. Barnes had left them alone. Keeping a relaxed appearance, Dean sat
back and signed, "Please help me." Michael nodded and picked up a red block. He handed it to Cas,
his little blue eyes searching. Cas smiled warmly and signed, "Thank you," earning the first happy
 grin from their son.

May...

"Michael, finish your cereal. We need to walk Calliope before we leave for school," Castiel signed.
The boy began to shovel his food into his mouth, more milk and Lucky Charms landing on the table
than in the kid's mouth. "He eats like you, Dean. I'm doomed."

Dean grinned and gulped his coffee. "You love us slobs." He bent to kiss Michael's cheek and
signed, "Have a good day at school. I love you." Then he kissed Castiel. "See you later, babe. Love
you."

"I love you too," Castiel said as he picked up the cloth to clean up the mess left by his husband and
his son. Taking Michael by the hand, they walked the huge dog down to the shore together. Since
they brought Michael home, Calliope had taken her role as his protector very seriously. She wasn't a
trained service dog, but she was just as diligent. With her leash in his chubby hand, Michael led
Calliope to the water's edge. Castiel released his hold and snapped a few pictures. He probably had
thousands on his laptop by now and dozens of them already lined the walls of their home.

After Calliope did her thing, she tugged Michael to where Castiel was standing. "Papa, ready for
school," the boy signed quickly.

"Then let's go," Castiel responded. With Calliope secured inside her dog run, he buckled Michael in
his carseat and drove to the private school for the deaf. Michael was learning so much from them,
Dean and Castiel knew they made the right choice. His kissed his son goodbye and promised him
that Daddy would be picking him up that afternoon.

In the studio, Kevin, Anna, and their newest employee, Ruby, were waiting to go over their design
jobs. Castiel found his mind wandering to his husband and son, and the weekend they had planned.
Saturday, they were going to the Woodland Park Zoo and Sunday, Jodi's daughter, Alex, was
babysitting while they attended Sam and Eileen's wedding shower. So much had happened in the last
year and a half, and each day was happier than the day before.

June...

The envelope was too fancy to be junk mail, so Dean checked out the return address. Boston. It was
for one Mr. Castiel Novak. Guess whoever it was didn't know he was now Castiel Novak-
Winchester. He tossed the other crap in the trashcan and set the important looking envelope on the
table along with their power bill.

Michael was sitting in the kitchen floor playing with his Legos and Dean was cooking dinner when
Cas came in from work. He kissed Dean first and then scooped up their son to blow a big raspberry
on the kid's cheek. His giggle was freakin' awesome. Calliope bulldozed her way into the fray and Cas gave her a greeting as well.

"Set the table, babe. Dinner's in ten." Cas sat Michael down in his booster seat before gathering the plates and flatware. He set them on the table and picked up the mail.

"What's this?" He stared at the envelope.

"My nonexistent psychic powers tell me you should open it to find out," Dean said, plating the pork chops. Cas rolled his eyes and used a steak knife to open the envelope, then unfolded the official looking letter. He frowned and made a huffing sound before tossing it into the trashcan. Dean, being nosy, set the food on the table and plucked it out of the garbage. He skimmed over it. "Hey, it's your high school reunion. Damn, you're old," he teased.

"Let's eat," Cas didn't respond to his joke and Dean set the letter on the counter. For a time, the only sounds were their forks and knives scraping against plates. Even Michael was watching them intently.

"Cas, what's going on?"

"Nothing. Why?" His answer was short, but he was trying and failing to mask his emotions. Dean knew him too well.

"You suck at lying. You know that, right?" Cas gave him a smitey look, but Dean wasn't going to let this go. "When my reunion comes around, we're definitely going because I want to show off my incredibly hot husband and brag about my awesome kid," Dean said, ruffling Michael's hair.

"Your high school years were probably not as traumatic as mine," Cas said shortly and stabbed a green bean with more force than necessary. Dean opened his mouth to comment and then stopped. He remembered Cas telling him about the jerks he went to school with.

"Cas?" Dean said tentatively, knowing he was going to have to handle this delicately. "Have you talked to Missouri about that time in your life?"

He watched as Cas' jaw clenched and he pushed his plate away. "Yes, it has come up in our discussions."

"Not sure what she had to say about it, but I think facing your fears might help..."

"I'm not afraid," Cas shouted and stood abruptly, the legs of the chair scraping loudly over the wooden floors. He stomped out of the room and Michael's lip began to tremble.

"Hey, kiddo. It's okay." He said and signed to the boy, before taking him into his lap. "Papa just isn't hungry right now, but you have more mashed potatoes to eat."

While he cleaned up the kitchen, he could see Cas through the window. He was down by the shore, staring off into space. "Callie, watch Michael," Dean called to the dog and stepped out onto the deck, leaving the door ajar so he could hear if Michael needed anything. If Cas heard him coming, he didn't let on. "You done pouting?" Dean knew Cas was looking for a fight and Dean was just the man to give it to him.

Cas rounded on him. "Don't you dare. You have no right..."

"Oh, really?" Dean interrupted, his voice just as angry as Cas' was. "I think I have every right to call out my husband when he's acting like an asshole."
"Oh, I'm the asshole? While you were Mr. Popular with the perfect face, playing football and fucking cheerleaders, I was ridiculed and humiliated. I shared that part of my life with you. I told you how it..." Cas was shouting now and Dean glanced over at the Mills' house and was glad none of the cars were in the driveway. "Fuck you, Dean." Cas was breathing hard and his face was flushed with anger. Dean knew the signs. They didn't fight often, but when it happened, they were both capable of saying shit they didn't mean. He didn't want to go there, but he needed to tell Cas things he'd never told anyone. Cas had to know...

"Yeah, maybe I was popular and fucking cheerleaders, but don't make the mistake of thinking I led a charmed life. Because when I left the cheering masses and got home, my old man would take his drunken tempers out on me. It was me, always me. I took the beatings so that Sam and my mother wouldn't have to. My life wasn't great either, Cas. And my face might have been perfect, but that's only because my fucking father knew how to hit me where no one would see." They stood there, neither willing to back down, but he could see his words had struck a chord with Cas. Calliope's bark broke them out of their staring match. Dean looked up at the house and saw Michael at the back door. "I'm going to give Michael his bath. You can stay here until you calm down enough to stop being a dick to us." Dean hated leaving it like this, but their son was his main concern right now.

He wasn't sure how long Cas stayed outside. He bathed Michael and put him to bed, promising that his papa would be in soon to kiss him goodnight. Cas might be pissed, but he'd never forget their nighttime ritual. Despite the early hour, Dean got ready for bed and leaned against the headboard to read. He couldn't concentrate and wasn't sure how to fix things. He didn't regret sharing his past with Cas... but he did regret how he did it. He knew he should apologize for losing his temper. Then Cas would apologize and everything would be copesetic...right?

He was reading the same paragraph for the third time when he heard Michael's door shut. A few seconds later, Cas stood in the doorway of their bedroom. His hair was windblown and his eyes looked haunted. Dean put the book in his lap. "I'm sorry. I wanted you to know all that stuff... but I didn't want to yell it at you. You deserve better..."

"Dean, no... I'm the one who's sorry. The only thing you're guilty of is telling me how amazing I am, and I repaid that by accusing you of..." Cas turned away and rubbed his palms over his face. Dean moved to stand, but Cas held up a hand to stop him. "I'm so sorry, Dean. I didn't know... I never thought..."

Dean was across the room in an instant and wrapped his arms around his husband. "You don’t have to apologize, Cas. I'm okay, I promise. I shouldn't have pushed you about your reunion. I just want you to know how proud I am of you. I always want to share that with the world... even the dicks you went to school with. And if I happen to punch one of them in the teeth..." Cas laughed into Dean’s neck and gripped him tightly, then got quiet.

"I'm not the same fat kid anymore," Cas said, his voice small.

Dean smiled and led Cas by the hand to sit on the bed. "No, you're not. You are a beautiful, intelligent, loving man who has made something of himself. You should be proud of that.”

"Will you come with me?"

"Always... Where?" Dean asked, confused.

"Boston. I think it's time for me to face my past."
The plane touched down in Boston and Castiel had to pry Dean's hand off the armrest. Even with all the guest appearances they did, he was still afraid of flying. Luc was waiting for them in the baggage claim area and after hugs all around, they piled into Luc's car. Luc gave him a few apprehensive looks, but he didn't bring up the reunion until Dean stepped away from the dinner table to get to the bathroom.

"Are you sure about this?"

"I am," Castiel answered confidently. Luc nodded and slapped him on the back.

"I'm proud of you, Castiel."

"I couldn't have done this without Dean...and months of therapy," Castiel said truthfully.

"He's been good for you. You still have my blessing," Luc teased, touching his wine glass to Castiel's.

"I would hope so, since divorces between celebrities can be so messy," Castiel joked right back.

That night, they Facetimed with their son. They had never spent any time apart from him, and they were both missing the little guy terribly. "Are you being good for Uncle Sam and Aunt Eileen?" Castiel signed as their son squirmed in front of the camera. Michael nodded happily and began to sign about the new electric train his Uncle Crowley bought him when he visited Uncle Sam's work. Shortly after Michael lost interest in the conversation, they signed off and fell asleep as soon as their heads hit the pillows.

Pulling into the parking lot, Castiel could see that the old high school had changed a lot in twenty-five years. He shut off the engine of their rental and stared at the brick façade, his hands sweaty on the wheel. Dean touched a reassuring hand to the back of his neck. "Hey... You are sexy, famous, and you have a hot trophy husband. Those assholes can fuck off."

Castiel looked at Dean's earnest face and smiled. Dean was right. He nodded and leaned over for a kiss, then took his husband by the hand and practically sauntered in. The next thirty minutes were insane. From the moment they signed in at the registration desk, they were mobbed by all the pretty people who didn't give Castiel the time of day in high school. Now, suddenly they wanted to be his best friend.

"Paula. Remember me? I was in your biology class. Mrs. Harris?" Castiel politely shook his head. Of course, he recognized that stuck-up cheerleader, but she didn't have to know that. Dean stayed at his side the entire time as Castiel smiled and signed autographs, but he made it a point to remain aloof.

When the music stopped, a nicely dressed woman took the microphone. After a short welcome speech, she introduced the disc jockey and told everyone to visit the bar and have fun dancing. They found a table near the back of the tackily decorated gymnasium and Dean asked if he wanted a drink. Castiel asked his husband to bring him something with vodka, watched Dean weave his way through the crowd, then settled in to people-watch.

"Well, well, look who's here, boys." The voice hadn't changed. It still made his blood run cold and his spine turn to steel. Gordon Walker was the ringleader of the jocks that had it out for him. "Cas-tiel Novak." He drew his first name out and Castiel turned to face his tormentors for the first time in twenty-five years.

"Gordon." Castiel stared into the sneering face of one of the school's star football players. Several of
the other team members stood around him. He looked the same, just older and more bitter.

Castiel gave a perfunctory nod to the rest of them.

He stepped closer to Castiel and in a defensive move, Castiel stood. "Looks like the little fag's all grown up now."

"He's on some TV show, too," Alistair Wheeler interjected. Gordon narrowed his eyes.

"What are you talking about?" Well, not everyone watched HHTV. Gordon probably spent all his time watching sports and dreaming of his glory days.

"Yeah, him and some other faggot are on television. The wife watches it," Wheeler said, not picking up on his friend's confusion. "He's kind of famous," he rambled on. Castiel watched as Gordon's eyes grew even colder.

"Famous? That right, Novak?" Gordon asked, his voice taking a different tone that Castiel couldn't place. Where was Dean? Castiel's hands clenched into fists.

"Yes. My husband and I have our own television show," Castiel stated as calmly as he could manage.

Gordon's mouth spread in a mocking smile as he shook his head. "Guess they'll let anyone on TV nowadays... even disgusting fuckers like you." Gordon took another step closer and leaned in. He lowered his voice so only Castiel could hear it over the dance music. "You still suck cock like a pro? You sure were a slut for it back then...maybe you can—" Castiel watched with a mixture of horror and fascination as Dean's fist connected with Gordon's right cheek. The man spun around, but didn't fall. His hand came up to his face and Castiel could see the rage in his eyes.

He touched Dean's arm. "Let's go, Dean." He could feel the tense muscles vibrating under his palm.

"This the queer you married?" Gordon was still addressing him and Castiel's own temper flared. He could handle the guy calling him names, but no one was going to insult his husband.

Castiel drew himself to his full height and stepped into Gordon's personal space. "Listen, you miserable piece of shit... I'm not a pathetic teenager anymore, and I'm not a fucking victim. I have my own business and I'm very successful, which is more than I can say for you. Tell me, Gordon... does working at Walmart pay much, or are you saving all your energy for your pro career? Oh, that's right, you were a stupid motherfucker who flunked out of college your first year and the NFL didn't want your sorry ass. And yes, I am gay. But at least I'm not ashamed to admit it." Castiel's voice was steely and pitched low, but it carried. All of Gordon's buddies melted away, leaving just the three of them. Dean's hand was resting on his back, giving him courage to face his demons. He felt a fire burning in his belly now that he started, but Gordon wasn't backing down.

"Why you stuck-up little cocksucker... You think you can talk to me like that? I bet if your butt-fucking husband wasn't here, you'd shut the fuck up and put your mouth—"

This time, it was Castiel's fist that shut him up... except Gordon didn't get back up. Castiel knocked him out cold with one punch. He'd be lying if he said it wasn't an amazing feeling. Dean brought him back down to earth by ushering him away from the scene before anyone noticed. They stepped out into the hallway and before he knew what was happening, Dean shoved him against the wall and was kissing him fiercely.

"Holy shit, Cas... that was hot as fuck." After a few more heated kisses, Castiel and Dean walked back into the gym with their heads held high. Gordon was nowhere to be
seen, and everyone else was standing around pretending like nothing happened. Castiel suddenly
found himself surrounded by some of the others that were bullied as kids. The nerds, the potheads,
and those who weren't members of the popular crowd and never felt like they had a voice. It made
him feel proud and strangely at peace.

"Hey, Cas, how did you know he worked at Walmart?" Dean asked a short time later as they
slow danced to some pop song that was popular when Castiel was in school.

"I had Luc do a background check on him and a few others. I wanted to have ammunition if I
needed it. Turns out, my knight in shining armor came to my rescue."

"Fuck, Cas. I just put you on an even playing field. You won that game all by yourself." Dean
nuzzled closer and Castiel felt a soft kiss on his neck. "How's your fist, Rocky?"

"It hurts like a motherfucker," Castiel complained. He felt Dean laughing silently against him. "But it
was so worth it."

"Yep. I've definitely been a bad influence on you, babe."

Chapter End Notes

We have had the best time writing this story. I hope you liked it.

Amanda and I are already talking about doing another story real soon, so stay tuned.
FROM AMANDA:

I just wanted to give a shout-out to Fran... my dear Unicorn... my Pally. You have taken this fledgling writer and given me the ability to soar. Without you, I would never have had the courage to share my words with the world. You inspire me and I want nothing more than to keep writing by your side, my love.

And to all of our readers, THANK YOU from the bottom of our hearts for following our story and giving us so many kind, encouraging comments. We had a blast writing this together, but it was just as much fun watching your reactions to each part of our boys' story. Until the next one, darlings! XOXO

End Notes

By the way, G33kDiva is also awesome at photo-shop and graphic design. She did the logos for the boys' businesses. Aren't they great. I am jealous of her talent.

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