All My Sins Remembered

by Aini_NuFire

Summary

A witch's curse causes all the memories Naomi erased to start coming back to Castiel. But perhaps some things are better left forgotten…

Notes

Based on a prompt by Threshie. Kind of an AU of 12x11 "Regarding Dean," but only because that's where it takes place in the timeline and I'm using the spell from that episode.

Also, the usual, Supernatural isn't mine, blah blah. Thank you to 29Pieces for beta reading! And I don't say it enough, but thank you so much to all my readers. Your comments brighten my day as much as I hope my stories do yours. (Though "brighten" seems incongruent with the angst I'm about to cook up.)

"Are you sure you're okay?"
Castiel rolled his eyes as he proceeded to answer for the fifth time. "I'm fine. The witch's curse had no effect on me."

"Really?" Dean continued skeptically, following Castiel down the bunker's front stairs. "It sounded like some bad mojo. And why the hell did you jump in front of me in the first place?"

Again, Castiel rolled his eyes, though Dean wouldn't see. "You're human. Of course any curse would be 'bad' for you. But I'm an angel."

He honestly didn't know why Dean was still harping on it. They'd finished the case, taken care of the coven, and made it back to the bunker ten hours later without Castiel suffering any ill effects from whatever spell he'd been hit with.

"Yeah, can we get a re-run of Rowena?" Dean scowled.

"Rowena was an exception," Castiel countered bitterly, still sore about that topic.

"Are there any tests we could do?" Sam put in, apparently siding with his brother. "Just to make sure?"

Castiel tried to hold back an exasperated sigh as he rounded one of the study tables to face them. "If it would make you feel better, I remember the incantation. We can search the books to find out what it was supposed to do."

Sam perked up. "Yeah, okay."

"Works for me," Dean agreed.

Castiel shook his head to himself. Not too long ago, he'd been on the 'outs' with the Winchesters, or at least with Dean, after the incident with Billie. But then came the case with Ishim and Lily Sunder, and things had flipped to the exact opposite. And Dean's admission that he was worried about those cosmic consequences was now being openly displayed with borderline overprotectiveness.

"You really don't need to worry," Castiel reiterated.

Now Dean rolled his eyes in vexation. "Well, we'll take a few days anyway."

A few days to…search for that spell?

"I need to get back out there looking for Kelly," he pointed out.

"We can do that from here," Sam quickly interjected. "Brainstorm some ideas since we haven't had any luck so far."

Castiel bit back a response. It was gracious of Sam to use the inclusive pronoun in regards to that failure, when responsibility for it actually rested solely on himself.

"Alright," he conceded. "It's late, though. I suppose we can start in the morning."

Sam and Dean traded a look, which made Castiel bristle, but neither offered up a protest.

"Yeah, goodnight," Sam said, and hefted his duffel to head to his room.

Castiel and Dean lingered for an awkward moment longer before Castiel turned and made his way down the hall to the room that had been designated as his. Now that he wasn't utterly alone in the bunker as he'd been when Sam and Dean had been missing, it was easier to pass the nights in here
rather than roam the dark hallways, library, and kitchen while the Winchesters slept. And having a space set aside for himself almost made it as though Castiel belonged.

He reclined on the bed, folding his hands over his stomach and gazing up at the ceiling. He didn't sleep, but he found it beneficial to just rest sometimes. Calm his mind. It was particularly challenging, given the enormity of the problems looming in the world.

But Castiel would give it a try. He now understood the concept of counting sheep—there weren't actually any real sheep involved—and sometimes he would focus on that, counting imaginary livestock up into the hundreds in order to pass the hours without constantly dwelling on his mistakes and worrying about how he would mess up in the future.

One sheep. Two sheep.

Forty-nine.

One hundred twelve.

Castiel blinked, and suddenly there was real livestock all around him. He started, finding himself standing in a field and no longer in the bunker. What…

He started moving, though not of his own accord. A quick glance down revealed he was without a vessel, his true form gliding up and out along a river. The sky was studded with stars, a full moon looming over a great pyramid. The view was breathtaking, but despite Castiel's efforts, he couldn't change his direction.

He'd experienced dreaming during his time as human, though he didn't remember them being this vivid. Perhaps it was different for an angel.

And yet, as an angel, he shouldn't be dreaming at all.

He banked down to sweep through the village, bypassing doors bathed in lamb's blood. Slivers of blue and white slipped in and out of huts all around him, and Castiel felt a thrill of recognition. This was…

He whisked inside a dwelling devoid of blood on the door frame. Dread flooded Castiel as he felt himself swiftly and mercilessly surge forward to strike down the first-born of that household. And then he was gone, weaving through the streets in search of the next.

No. No, he needed to wake up. He didn't want to watch this—

He slew another, this time a child no older than three. Castiel wanted to be sick. What was this nightmare?

Wake up, wake up.

But it was no use. Castiel watched himself and his brethren slaughter hundreds of first-born, many of them children. Not even the first-born of the livestock were spared.

Until Castiel came to a hut with only two occupants—a Hebrew mother and her newborn infant. And then his dream self paused, a flicker of doubt and remorse stirring within him.

The woman's husband had died a few months ago, and this was their first and only child. And Castiel knew how she had prayed and prayed in the midst of difficult childbirth for her son to survive. He knew no miracle had been dispatched in answer, yet her son lived, as had she, though
she was now barren. If Castiel slew her son now...she would be left bereft.

Why had she not adorned her door? Perhaps she was too busy caring for her child. Even now she was sitting up with him as he fussed, looking exhausted and grief-stricken already. Perhaps there had been no one to help her ready for tonight.

Castiel watched, stunned, as he slipped out of the hut and over to another where someone had a bowl of blood left over. And then he painted streaks across that woman's door. And then another. And another. The only blood he spilled the rest of that night was to mark those under God's protection—the elderly and sick, those who would have struggled to ready their homes properly.

And when dawn broke across the sky and a great wailing went up throughout Egypt, Castiel returned to Heaven, believing he had done God's will.

Two guards stepped out from an alcove and seized him as an angel with an austere mien came forward, eyes like steel.

Castiel bolted upright in bed, chest heaving and breaths coming much too rapidly. His heart was beating so fast his ribs hurt, but a quick glance around revealed he was back in the bunker. It was just a dream.

Wasn't it? It had seemed so real. And Naomi had told him he'd been in Egypt for the Ten Plagues. But she'd also taken those memories from him. So that had just been, what, his imagination filling in the blanks? Why now?

Castiel swung his legs off the bed and surged to his feet. That was enough meditating. He'd rather research that witch's spell than risk another dream like that one.

He was surprised to find that several hours had passed already. The Winchesters would also be getting up soon. Castiel headed for the kitchen first to put on a fresh pot of coffee. The caffeine did little for him, but drinking it sometimes had a placebo effect. Then he headed to the library and began writing out what he remembered of the incantation the witch had cast moments before throwing that curse at Dean. Once done, Castiel began searching the catalog for references to witch's spells with some of those key words.

He really should have been looking for Kelly, but the truth was he had no idea where to even start with that. He'd already exhausted every avenue he could think of. Besides, Sam and Dean probably wouldn't let this go until they'd confirmed the spell wasn't something to be worried about.

Sam shuffled in a few hours later, looking groggy and unkempt.

"I made coffee," Castiel offered.

"Thanks," the younger Winchester mumbled, sliding into a chair. "You looking for that spell?"

"Unless you've changed your mind about finding it."

Sam ignored the retort. "Any luck?"

"Not yet. It's actually harder to search for a spell based on its incantation, as that is usually the coveted information only found in rare grimoires. Most of the research books describe names of spells and their effects."

Sam's brow furrowed. "But we don't have any effects to search."
Castiel paused in his scanning to give the hunter a pointed look. "Exactly. This could be a much more arduous process than we anticipated." Meaning there were better things to be focusing their time on.

Sam pushed himself out of his chair. "Well, you haven't been at it very long. I'll grab some coffee and come join you."

Castiel sighed, but went back to his reading. His eyes skimmed over an irrelevant section, but as the letters 'Beelzebub' stood out, blinding pain shot through his head. Castiel gasped and bowed forward under the assault. It was gone just as quickly, yet when he lifted his head, he was no longer in the bunker.

Castiel tried to whirl around to get a look at his surroundings, but his body wasn't responding. Instead, he was sweeping across a wide plain, in his true form once again, heading for a hilltop where he could see a demon dragging a woman up by her hair. The monster's visage was terrible to behold, one of the first demons that Lucifer had twisted into something black and heinous, horns upon its head and leather-hard patches of skin adorning a bronze torso. The woman was screaming, and Castiel flew faster.

Until five bolts of lightning shot down in his path. He reeled himself in with a snap of grace.

"Stand down, Castiel."

"We cannot let this demon roam free in Israel," he protested.

"The Northern Kingdom has forfeited its right to protection. King Omri does not follow God's law."

Castiel gaped at his brothers. "But these women are innocent!"

Cold, hard expressions gazed back at him. "The demon is a fitting punishment for a land that chooses to worship other gods."

Castiel tightened his grip on his angel blade as the woman's screams echoed in the distance. No, this couldn't be right…

A gust of air behind him signaled the arrival of more angels, and he was grabbed from behind, as though they knew he was considering disobedience. But this was a demon. Surely soldiers of God couldn't just let it do this…

The other angels said nothing as they watched Beelzebub slaughter that woman and devour her entrails. Castiel had to look away from the carnage. Someone let out a derisive snort at his ear, and then he was being escorted back to Heaven, to a sterile white room where Naomi was waiting, shaking her head in disappointment…

"Cas!"

Castiel jolted awake, and recoiled sharply when he found Sam's face inches from his own. "What?" he snapped, remembered terror and horror leaving him frayed.

Sam retreated a step, revealing Dean behind him. When had he gotten up and come in?

Sam was staring at Castiel worriedly. "What happened? You looked like you were having a seizure or something."

"I wasn't." But what was going on? That experience just now may have been similar to his dream,
but he hadn't been asleep or meditating when it came on.

"Then what the hell, man?" Dean demanded.

Castiel's brow furrowed. "I think I was…reliving a moment from my past," he confessed.

Sam frowned. "A flashback? How long have you been having them?"

"I experienced some while under the spell Rowena cast on me." And then afterward, though he wasn't going to mention those. He had been ashamed at how weak and terrified they'd made him.

This was different, though. These weren't just flashbacks, but memories he didn't know he had.

"I fell asleep earlier and had a dream. Or what I thought was a dream. Now, though, each vision ended with me being taken to see Naomi, so I can only conclude these are memories she erased."

The Winchesters exchanged alarmed looks.

"And you're suddenly remembering them out of the blue?" Sam asked. "Or what triggered it?"

"Told you we needed to be concerned about that spell," Dean growled. "Damn witches."

Sam swept an anxious gaze over the books on the table. "Maybe we should call Rowena. She could give us an answer faster than trying to search through all this."

"You're jumping to conclusions," Castiel pointed out tetchily. "I doubt a witch tried to hit Dean with a curse to restore lost memories. This is probably just a coincidence."

Dean pulled his cell out of his pocket. "No such thing."

He pressed a button, and his speaker started projecting a ring tone. A moment later, the line clicked.

"I'm a wee bit occupied at the moment," a familiar Scottish lilt answered.

"Yeah, well, we need your help, Rowena," Dean replied.

"Am I saved to your contacts now? Tell me. Have I got my own ringtone?"

Dean rolled his eyes. "We need to know what this spell does. He snatched the paper with the words off the table and recited them to Rowena.

"You boys are always full of intrigue," the witch hummed. "One more time?"

Dean read it again. "So, what's it supposed to do?"

"The Obliviate spell. Intricate magic, that. Wipes the memory clean over time."

Dean quirked a confused brow. "But Cas is getting back memories that were erased."

There was a silent beat from Rowena. "You're saying the angel got hit with it?" she asked incredulously. "And he's getting memories back, you say? Which ones was he missing to begin with?"

"Long story," Dean replied gruffly. "How do we break it?"

"Dean," Castiel finally put in. "Obviously, the spell couldn't have caused this."
"You forget your angel wiring means you react differently to this kind of crap?" Dean retorted.

Castiel's jaw tightened, and even Sam winced at the poor choice of wording.

"Rowena," Dean said to the phone, "is it possible for that spell to go wonky on an angel?"

"Who knows? I do find the situation rather curious, though."

"Alright," Sam chimed in. "Let's go back to how do we break it?"

"Theoretically? Kill the witch."

"We did that."

There was a pause on the other end. "Ah. Well, then I'm afraid you're plum out of luck."

"Rowena," Dean growled threateningly.

"That concludes the free portion of this consultation," she replied cheerily. "Feel free to make an appointment when you have something to offer as payment."

There was a click as the call abruptly ended.

"Damn witches," Dean cursed again.

Castiel leaned back in his chair. He honestly didn't know what to make of this situation. Maybe Dean was right, and that spell had triggered his memories to be restored. But, that wasn't necessarily a bad thing…

"I don't think we need to worry about finding a way to remove the spell," he said.

Sam and Dean shot him dubious looks.

"What? It's a curse," Dean sputtered.

"And it's giving me back memories that were stolen," he countered. "I can finally remember everything Naomi did to me."

"Are you sure that's a good idea?" Sam asked carefully, but Castiel knew it was only out of concern for him.

"They're my memories. I deserve to have them back."

"Okay, but getting them back looked like it was causing you pain," Sam pressed.

"It's bearable."

Dean huffed. "Alright, well, once you get all your memories back, the spell will be over, right?"

"Yes," Castiel replied.

Unfortunately, he had no idea just how many memories that would be…

The next flashback wasn't as horrifying as the first two. Just an instance where Castiel had questioned the righteousness of a set of orders, and been taken to Naomi for it. Apparently his doubts had started long before the 66 Seals had been broken.
Not even thirty minutes later, he had another one, another instance of receiving orders not to intervene when Azazel slaughtered that church. Heaven knew the Prince of Hell's goal was to pave the way for Lucifer to rise, for the Apocalypse to start. Castiel had ardently spoken up that time, declaring it was their divine duty to prevent this from happening. Zachariah had been furious, but Naomi had appeared before the seraph could mete out his own punishment, and Castiel was taken back to that sterile room.

Each time, he was forced to relive the methods of Naomi’s 'correction,' which had also been wiped from his memories. And each time, the pain became more and more excruciating. Was it really worth it to regain all of these memories?

Castiel came out of his latest flashback with a gasp, only to find he'd somehow ended up on the floor, curled in on himself. Muffled voices were shouting at him anxiously, and then it was like a switch flipped, and they became loud and distinct right above him.

"Cas, dammit!"

He sucked in another ragged breath, and started to unfurl his limbs. Sam and Dean were both crouching over him, eyes wide and worried. "Wh- what happened?"

"What happened?" Dean repeated harshly. "You started screaming and fell over like someone was torturing you."

Sam ducked his head to catch Castiel's gaze. "Cas, were you remembering something like that?"

He swallowed hard, and rubbed at his aching temple. "Naomi's methods for erasing memories was… not pleasant."

Sam blanched. "You're reliving that?"

Castiel looked away.

"Okay, this has to stop," Dean said.

"It won't kill me," Castiel muttered. "And it's important I remember."

"Remember all the times she tortured you? And make us watch?" Dean shook his head angrily. "I haven't seen you look like that since we went to rescue that Wiener Hut angel from Crowley and the sigils in that place messed you up. Bad. I think you need to re-evaluate your priorities here——"

A flash of lightning speared Castiel's skull, and he saw himself drive an angel blade into his brother's chest, the dazed and hurt look of shock gazing up at him a second before that grace essence winked out…

Castiel snapped back to the present, chest heaving. "I killed Samandriel," he whispered.

Dean frowned. "Yeah, I remember." He paused and narrowed his eyes. "Don't you?"

"I- I thought Samandriel had been compromised," Castiel said shakily. "That he tried to attack me."

"Yeah, that's what you told us," Sam said carefully.

He reached up to clutch the sides of his head, shaking it back and forth. "I was wrong. Naomi changed things in my head. He- he tried to warn me about her. And I- I-"

"Cas, Naomi was controlling you. You can't blame yourself for that."
Castiel let out a choked sound. He'd killed his brother. His *innocent* brother who had tried to warn him, to help him. How could Naomi make him do that? She was punishing him for all the angels he'd killed before, and then made him take another life?

"How can I ever atone?" he whispered hopelessly.

He couldn't.

Sam pushed himself to his feet. "I'm calling Rowena back. There's gotta be something we can give her that won't be dangerous."

Castiel couldn't muster the wherewithal to protest, too fixated on the painful memories swimming through his mind. "All the things I've done...all the things I already knew about were enough to crush me, but now...I've *never* done the right thing."

Dean crouched down next to him. "That is not true," he said fiercely. "Everything you have ever done was because you thought you were doing the right thing. And yeah, sometimes it went really bad. But we've all screwed up."

Castiel shook his head, starting to rock back and forth. He would never be able to atone...

"Hey, look at me." Dean grabbed Castiel's arms and gave him a small shake. "I don't believe for one second Naomi would have tortured you unless you went against Heaven trying to *help* someone."

Castiel tried to look away, but Dean shook his arms more roughly.

"Tell me I'm wrong. Tell me one instance where you did something wrong that Heaven punished you for."

"I killed *children* in Egypt," Castiel spat, though the venom was wholly directed at himself. "If you've read Exodus, then you know. There's no forgiving that."

"Yeah, that was Heaven's orders," Dean replied, sounding oddly composed. "What got you sent to Naomi?"

Castiel blinked, finally meeting the Winchester's gaze. "I...halfway through the night, I spared some people. Painted lamb's blood on their doors when they hadn't done it themselves."

Dean nodded slowly. "See?"

"That doesn't make up for the ones I killed before that."

"You were following orders," Dean reiterated, stunning Castiel with the utter lack of anger or judgement. "That doesn't make you evil. The important thing is you realized the orders were *wrong* and *stopped*. All my time in Hell, I knew that torturing souls on the rack was wrong, and I didn't stop. You're not perfect, Cas. None of us are."

"How can you offer me absolution?" he said miserably.

Dean's eyes were full of sadness, but also understanding. "Because I've seen you at your worst. And you're still my friend. You're still family. You want to lay out the rest of your sins? Go ahead. None of that will change anything because that's not who you are now."

Castiel shook his head. No, he didn't want— The room tilted abruptly, flinging him away from the bunker and into a wilderness under a moonless night. This time Castiel was in a vessel. What...why?
"Cas!"

Fingernails dug into his arms, jolting his perception so that he was somehow both in the desert, yet could feel Dean gripping his arms tight enough to bruise a human.

"Cas, tell me what you see," the hunter's disembodied voice sounded beside him.

Castiel shook his head fervently. No, no he couldn't…

He was leading his vessel's family through the dark, until an explosion of fire behind them lit up the night with blazing orange.

"Stay with me," Dean urged. "Tell me what you're seeing."

Castiel nearly choked as he forced the words out. "Gomorrah. Burning. I…I found one man of faith in the city, and he gave me permission to enter so I could lead him and his family to safety."

Saying the words out loud somehow kept him from being completely sucked into the memory, and Dean's grip kept him anchored to reality.

"The city is burning, but we're far enough away…"

Angels appeared before them, blocking their path. Castiel pulled up short.

"What are you doing, Castiel?"

"This man has faith," he replied. "He should be spared."

"It doesn't work that way, Castiel."

He frowned. "But Lot is being spared…"

"There can only be one exception. Now, complete God's judgement, Castiel."

He sucked in a sharp breath. "We were caught by angels. They…they want me to kill the family."

Dean's vice-like grip didn't let up. "What happens next?"

Castiel tried to wrench away from the memory. He didn't want to know what happened next…what he knew it was going to end with no matter what. Hot tears streamed down his face as he watched himself leave his vessel and reveal his true form. The family screamed as they were burned out by glory.

"I didn't want to," he choked.

"I know you didn't," Dean said softly.

And because of that remorse, he was still taken to Naomi, and made to forget it had ever happened…

Castiel shot his hands up to grip Dean's arms in return as the drill pierced his brain and forked lightning through his skull.

"I'm right here, hang on. Just hang on, buddy."

And then it was over, and Castiel sagged on the floor. Dean shifted to help brace him. The hunter didn't say anything as Castiel sat there, exhausted and panting. His head was still pounding.
"Easy, easy," Dean soothed, clasping the back of Castiel's neck and rubbing his thumb into the corded muscles there. Castiel focused on the sensation, hoping to prevent another flashback from triggering. He'd changed his mind; he didn't want to endure this anymore.

Sam came back into view, expression pinched. "Rowena won't help," he said tightly. "Not unless we give her the Codex back."

Dean cursed under his breath.

Castiel shook his head wearily. "We can't do that. I- I can get through this." He had no other choice.

Dean glanced up to exchange a worried look with his brother, but then turned back to Castiel. "Alright, but you're gonna have to tell us what you're seeing. Everything. Don't tell me it didn't help keep you grounded with that last one."

Castiel ducked his gaze, but reluctantly nodded. It had helped. "Alright."

"Let's get off the floor, though," Dean added, and started hefting Castiel to his feet.

They shuffled back to the chairs, which Castiel dropped into heavily. Dean and Sam pulled two others up next to his, hemming him in so that even their knees were touching. Castiel rolled his shoulder in discomfort, but before he could say anything, another flashback struck. Both Dean and Sam grabbed his forearms and held on, giving him a tactile line back to reality, and he forced himself to start describing what he was seeing.

Memory after memory came and went. Some horrific instances where Castiel had been ordered to kill in the name of God. Other times it was just him expressing doubts or questions. All of them ended with him strapped to a chair and screaming his voice hoarse as Naomi dismantled his mind, and it felt like Castiel was being ripped apart all over again.

But Dean and Sam stayed with him, their voices urging him to hold on, reminding him they were right there. He clung to them.

Until the moment he opened his eyes and realized it was over. The blinding migraine was gone, now only a dull throbbing in its wake. Castiel inhaled sharply, and carefully tuned his senses inward to examine his grace.

"It's over," he said, voice gravelly with exhaustion.

"Really?" Dean asked skeptically.

Castiel nodded. "I have all my memories back." For better or for worse.

"Are you okay?" Sam asked.

"I'm not sure," Castiel admitted, too ashamed to meet their gazes. He had confessed all his sins to them, reminded them of the stone cold angel he had once been.

"Cas," Dean spoke up. "I told you we wouldn't think any less of you, and we don't."

"Seriously, Cas," Sam put in. "I can't imagine having gone through everything you have, and yet you're still the selfless, giving person that you are, always putting others before yourself."

Castiel's throat constricted. "Thank you for staying with me. I know it couldn't have been pleasant for you, either."
"I'm only sorry I can't gank Naomi myself for what she did to you," Dean growled. And then his eyes softened with remorse. "And I'm sorry I didn't realize the significance of it back then. Maybe you wouldn't have felt like you needed to run after Metatron if I'd been paying more attention."

Castiel's mouth turned down in thought. He honestly didn't know the answer to that. "It's in the past," he said.

Sam reached out to clasp his forearm. "So is everything else, but that doesn't mean you won't need to process it. Just know we're here for you."

Castiel nodded gratefully, somewhat astounded by the devotion they'd shown him through this ordeal. But Dean was right; they had seen Castiel at his worst, and yet they were still here. Still standing by him.

That was the only thing worth remembering.

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