Creatures of nightmares

by Dancingdog

Summary

Castiel Novak had a simple life. He worked at the local library whilst trying to become that best-selling author he'd always dreamed of being. His parents were supportive and he had his own apartment.

In reality, Castiel Novak had a boring life. He was lonely and had no friends. His last two history novels flopped and he was drifting through life without really experiencing it.

Enter Dean. He's a demon. He feeds off human fear and sets out to make Castiel's life a living (horrifying) nightmare.

Except, Castiel isn't like other humans...
Chapter 1

Castiel Novak had never believed in any kind of God. He had never believed in the supernatural or in prophets and disciples. He had never believed in almighty deities of any form. There was no afterlife, no Heaven or Hell or samsara or moksha or even Valhalla.

Once dead, you were buried in a hole in the ground and that’s where you stayed until you rotted down to nothing but ash.

It wasn’t a happy outlook on death, but in Castiel’s mind, it was the most logical one.

Castiel was an average twenty-nine-year-old. He lived alone in a flat with no family, had earned a joint degree in History and English and was now struggling to make ends meet as an aspiring writer who worked part time at the local library.

He had no siblings and his mother and father were half way across the country, working as a nurse and a doctor. They had been good to him during his childhood and sometimes visited him when they were given holidays. Unlike what most people believed, they were very supportive of his efforts to become a writer; it had been his dream since being five.

He’d published two books so far; both non-fiction, history books, but neither had really taken off so he hadn’t gained much revenue from them. He didn’t have the imagination for science fiction or fantasy or any kind of fiction really, so he never tried writing any and that’s where he was now; holed up in his flat, hunched over his laptop and trying to remember what he’d learned about Incan civilisation in University, seven years ago.

All in all, he had a rather boring life.

Until one day, he didn’t.

His apartment block had five floors; six flats on each. He was on the top floor at the furthest end from the stairs and closest to the usually broken lift. Whilst he was making his way towards the stairs, after having pushed the non-functioning ‘down’ button four times with varying degrees of frowns, Castiel noticed the couple at the opposite end of the floor had moved out. This in itself wouldn’t have been unusual except for the fact he hadn’t heard of them planning to depart. Then again, he didn’t often speak to his neighbours so he supposed he could have missed it.

Two weeks later, the flat opposite them was also empty.

Castiel frowned at the sight but thought nothing of it.

Over the next six months, one-by-one the whole fifth floor moved out without warning, leaving Castiel alone and confused, but not inclined to find out about the strange phenomenon. It wasn’t his business anyway.

Then objects started moving around his flat.

He noticed it when he was looking for his car keys one Monday morning. He’d searched his coat pockets and his usual draw and when he couldn’t find them there, he’d searched the washing machine in case he’d left them in his shirt or trousers by accident. Then he spotted them.

In the oven.
Fortunately, the oven wasn’t on, but it was still a strange place for them to be hiding. He scowled and grabbed them and thought nothing of it for the rest of the day.

Tuesday rolled around and Castiel was relieved to find his keys in his coat pocket, where he left them. The he noticed his shoes were missing. He searched under the bed and in his wardrobe, but came up with nothing and it was only when he trudged into the kitchen for a cup of tea did he notice the shoes in the oven.

Melted.

He cursed and turned the oven off and stared glumly at the solidified puddle of leather.

Looks like he was going shopping after work.

He bought some new shoes when his shift ended and made sure to place them carefully in his wardrobe when he got home. Then he returned to his laptop and wrote all of six lines in four hours before having a bowl of soup for dinner and tumbling into bed.

The next morning, it was obvious what had changed.

His laptop was floating in the bath tub.

He swore violently and retrieved his smoking laptop, drying it and praying to a deity he didn’t believe existed that it would still work. It didn’t, of course.

He smashed his fist against the countertop in frustration and ran a hand through his hair. He didn’t have the money to keep replacing his belongings and now he’d lost all his work and planning and research he’d saved. He could try to salvage his hard drive, but he doubted he would be able to.

As he bagged his laptop and started his journey to the bin, he swore he heard someone snickering.

By Thursday, he’d installed double locks on his doors and windows. Somebody was obviously breaking in to move his things; a bored teenager maybe, and he was certain these measures would stop them. His flat was old anyway; it probably did need a bit of an upgrade.

When he returned from work on Thursday afternoon, all the windows and doors to his apartment were wide open, the new locks ripped off.

Castiel stood at his front door with round, confused (and slightly scared) eyes and pocketed the key he hadn’t needed to use. He pulled out his phone and called the police.

Who were useless.

They found no fingerprints or any traces of DNA. He was given free locks to replace the damaged ones and told to think about investing in CCTV, which again, he didn’t have the money for.

On Friday morning, he found all his plates and cups smashed on the kitchen floor. He fell to his knees with a sob and began clearing away the shards.

He didn’t believe in poltergeists, but he began to read up about them.

He bought the cheapest dining set he could find (which was bright purple with yellow polka dots) and when he went for his afternoon shift at the library, he pulled out a book on spirits, scoffed at the blurb and located the chapter on poltergeists. He found himself snorting at every other sentence and when he came to the part about salt circles and iron pokers, he shook his head at himself and
closed the book, never to be opened again.

When he returned home that evening, he tossed a bowl of noodles in the microwave, only for the appliance to catch fire and set off his alarm. He grabbed his fire extinguisher and tried to calm the flames but yelped when the extinguisher spewed more flames instead of CO2.

He threw damp towels and cloths on both the microwave and the extinguisher and flinched at the sound of soft chuckling somewhere behind him. When he whirled around, he was greeted by an empty room.

That night he placed a salt circle around his bed and an iron cane against his night stand.

On Saturday he opened his eyes and rolled over to find the words ‘TRY AGAIN’ scrawled over the wall in something that looked like blood.

(He later found out it was ketchup, but it had the same effect.)

Castiel asked the landlord if he knew why the other residents on his floor had moved out. The older man shook his head with a gruff snort.

“Said they were haunted or something. Kept hearing things and hallucinating. I thought they meant they had an insect infestation but I got the building checked and there’s nothing here.” The man, Bobby, narrowed his eyes suspiciously at Castiel. “You’re not seeing things too, are you?”

Not wanting to sound a complete lunatic, Castiel shook his head. “Just curious.”

When Sunday rolled around, he turned on the shower and screamed as hundreds of tiny cockroaches crawled out of the plug. He sprinted out of the room and closed the door, chest heaving and when he finally had the courage to return to the bathroom so he didn’t flood his house, he paused upon realising there wasn’t a single insect in the room, just water.

He was greeted with something different every day and he began to spend less and less time in his flat, dreading going home and waking up in the morning. He had few friends and no one he was particularly close to so there was no one he could talk to or stay with unless he wanted to go running to his parents and considering he wasn’t supposed to believe in apparitions or the supernatural, he didn’t consider that an option.

The cycle continued for three months and Castiel realised he’d come to accept being terrified of his own home. He would’ve moved out, but he didn’t have the funds so he suffered through the torture and decided to keep an iron switch blade and a few packets of salt in his pocket at all times.

After another month, he’d grown accustomed to the loud banging on walls or the creaks of doors opening and closing during the night and whenever he saw rodents or insects crawling around his flat, or even blood oozing from the walls, he would shut his eyes and when he opened them, they would vanish.

The hallucinations and sounds and objects moving around became predictable and he merely sighed when he found all his shirts dumped in the overflowing bath, or all his food missing from his kitchen (the poltergeist was particularly drawn to taking pie, which amused Castiel for some reason).

Sometimes, he even spoke to the creature.

“Can you please stop writing in ketchup? Red is such a difficult colour to paint over.”
“I hope that’s chocolate leaking out of that faucet and not anything else.”

“Did you really have to blunt all my knives by lodging them in the wall?”

He never received any reply, but if he did, he would have a few choice words for the prankster.

Then, one Monday morning, the fairly harmless tricks turned into something more horrifying.

Castiel woke up with a cry of panic, barely able to breathe and not quite sitting on the bed, but rather hovering above it.

He clawed desperately at his throat and looked around wildly to find himself hanging from the bed headboard by his tie. He yanked the material off the new nail in his headboard and gasped in lungfuls of air as he ripped the tie off his neck.

He remained nervous for the rest of the day.

Tuesday morning saw him being dropped from the ceiling onto the tiled floor of his bathroom. He limped out of the room with a bruised knee and chin.

Wednesday afternoon began with him washing his hands under supposedly cold water, only for boiling water to thrash out of the tap, leaving him with terrible burns.

When he stepped on a knife, barefoot on Thursday evening, slicing his foot open, he began to cry. He hated his flat and was terrified of it killing him and he wasn’t ashamed of how fearful he’d become. He no longer believed there was no such thing as ghosts.

Friday was quiet. Deceptively so.

Castiel was suspicious all day, flinching at every sound and brandishing his iron switchblade whenever he got the strange feeling of someone watching him, and when he retired to bed he squeezed his eyes shut and forced himself to sleep.

He awoke at two in the morning to find a pair of deep black eyes staring back at him, a wicked grin with sharp canines framed by a handsome face and what appeared to be two large horns protruding from the creature’s skull. It was sat in the corner of the room.

“Hello, human,” it whispered, voice like silk, raising the hairs on the back of Castiel’s neck.

When Castiel blinked, he was gazing at an empty room.

He let out a little cry of fear and buried himself under the blankets, tears dripping onto his sheets.

Everything stopped after that; no pranks, no hallucinations, no noises and that made Castiel even more terrified. Had he dreamt the entire encounter with the creature? Had it gone away? Was it preparing to kill him and was luring him into a false sense of security?

Was it even a poltergeist?

He’d never heard of a poltergeist having black eyes, horns and fangs. Weren’t they supposed to be unfriendly spirits?

He began researching spirits and ghouls, his new book forgotten.

A week later, he found himself being startled awake at two in the morning once again and he let out a scream when he realised the thing was straddling him; it’s face barely three inches from his.
It grinned cruelly, eyes an unnerving jet black and Castiel whimpered when the creature spread two leathery, bat-like wings wide beside itself; a scaly, reptilian tail swishing menacingly behind it.

“Not a ghost,” it breathed. “I’m something far worse, Castiel Novak.”

Castiel squeezed his eyes shut, knowing the creature would vanish once he reopened them.

Except it didn’t.

It chuckled darkly and brushed a hand down his cheek.

“I’m not going away, little human.”

And with that, it morphed into a horrible beast; dragon-like with claws and black scales and shark teeth. Smoke billowed around it as it snarled at Castiel; the short horns littering its body rustling and shaking as its cold tail coiled around Castiel’s wrist tightly. It aimed the huge horns on top of its head towards Castiel’s face and roared ferociously before rearing up like a manic horse.

Castiel cried and covered his face with his hands, eyes shut but when no impact came, he cautiously peered upwards to find himself alone.

He raced to his new laptop to research what he’d just witnessed.

It had to be a demon. It was the only other explanation.

He armed himself with salt and learned a blessing to produce holy water and he penned demon traps around his flat. He read up about possession and bought a necklace with a pentagram on it.

Three nights later, the demon appeared just as he was retiring to bed, looking furious and murderous. It pinned him against a wall, grabbed him by his necklace until the chain was choking him and snarled into his face, wings high and teeth bared.

“You think you’re clever?” It hissed. “You think you can beat me?”

Castiel reached into his trousers and grabbed his hip flask of holy water and splashed it at the creature’s face.

It howled in agony, scrabbling at its face as it released Castiel and the author ripped open his salt packets and threw them at the demon.

The demon bubbled and smoked, roared in fury and vanished.

Castiel smiled. Finally, he’d beaten the creature and it would plague him no more. He retired to bed with a smirk.

The next morning, he realised he was sorely mistaken.

He was cooking breakfast; bacon sandwiches to be precise. He saw the knife rack fall over and his initial instinct was to duck.

Sure enough, the knives flew over his head and launched themselves into the cabinet behind him, clearly aiming for his face. With wide eyes he turned and scrambled backwards at the sight of the demon narrowing its black eyes at him.

He blinked and suddenly, the creature had its hand around his neck, his wrists pinned above his head.
“...I’m impressed,” it said quietly. “Most people run for the hills when they see me. You’re... stubborn.”

Castiel choked and the demon released his throat.

“What are you?” Gasped Castiel fearfully. The creature smirked.

“I think you already know.”

“Why are you here?” Castiel breathed, eyes wide and nervous. The creature chuckled.

“Because I want to be.”

“Why me?”

“Why not?”

Castiel clamped his mouth shut and the creature laughed.

“You’re a boring human, Castiel Novak. You have few friends, no one you’re close to, no family and parents who live hours away. You’ve never accomplished anything great in your life; a failed author with nothing but dreams that you’ll never achieve and you live in a run-down apartment block that’s only one grade up from being homeless.” The demon raised a condescending eyebrow. “Who cares about your pathetic life? If you die, if I kill you right now, what difference will it make to the world? Whose life have you changed?”

Castiel licked his lips and realised he didn’t have an answer.

“I like you though,” continued the creature. “See, you’re stubborn. You’ve never believed in anything your entire life and even now you want to pretend this is all some hallucination or maybe a sign that you’re going crazy. You want to believe none of this is real.

“That’s good for me. I need to feed, Castiel. I need you so I can survive. I need you to keep crying and screaming and being terrified of me. I need you to be stubborn because the longer you stay in this house, the longer I can feed off your fear and nightmares.” His face contorted into an ugly smirk. “I know you can’t leave. I know you can’t afford to move and you have no idea how much that thought thrills me.”

Castiel whimpered, body trembling and the demon chuckled.

“You’re mine, little human. You’re mine to torment and torture and I won’t stop until you leave this place.”

And with one last smirk, the demon vanished in a puff of black smoke.

Castiel sank to the floor, panting and heart racing. He let his head fall into his hands as he tried to forget about what had just occurred. Then his face hardened into a scowl. If the demon needed his fear to survive, then he would have to be strong.

He would beat this creature one way or another.

* * *
Two weeks later and Castiel had managed to control his terror. He kept a cool façade and remained politely disinterested in the occurrences around him as he focused on writing his book. It helped that the demon had returned to moving objects around the house and making him see things that weren’t really there.

His coffee cup suddenly burst into flames and he ignored it until the embers died down. His laptop screen was filled with a picture of the girl from ‘The Exorcist’; her face flashing up accompanied by a blood-curdling scream and Castiel merely tutted and waited for the image to disappear. All the drawers and cupboards in his house flew open and he decided to deal with them later, too immersed in his latest book about Incan civilisation.

As time passed, it became clear the demon was growing frustrated as his attempts to frighten Castiel grew more elaborate. When Castiel realised this, he smirked in triumph and grew more confident; even adding the odd sarcastic quip after certain events.

A pen was fired at his face and he smoothly caught it with a huff of “Try harder.” He ducked after a glass was launched at his head and when it shattered against the wall, he glanced at it with a sigh.

“I hope you’re going to clean that up.”

(Give the demon his due, he did clean it up.)

When there was banging on his bedroom door in an evening, he would grumble and yell “Come in!” and then laugh when the banging slowly quietened down.

Then the demon blew up his laptop whilst he was working on it and Castiel hadn’t saved his work, so he was fuming.

“Allright, if you’re going to insist on breaking things, at least give me your name so I can swear at you,” Castiel growled at his ceiling and he blinked when the demon appeared in his living room, scowling and arms crossed.

“You’re not like the others;” it almost pouted and Castiel sneered at it.

“My heart bleeds for you. Now, what’s your name, abomination?” He demanded and the demon growled warningly.

“Watch your tone with me, human.”

“My name is Castiel,” snapped the author. “Now give me yours.”

The demon narrowed his eyes and vanished once more and Castiel huffed petulantly before his eyes widened as letters appeared on his wall.

In ketchup.

Stupid demon.

He squinted as the letters formed fully and tilted his head.

‘DEAN’.

He shook his head and returned to his laptop before glaring at his smoking screen.

“Are you going to fix this laptop or not, Dean?”
His laptop suddenly flashed to life, all his unsaved drafts returned and Castiel chuckled, unable to believe that had worked. He tried to focus on his book, but curiosity got the better of him and he began to research the demon’s name instead.

As the scriptures would have it, Dean was a fallen High angel; cast out by the archangels for disobedience and for threatening humanity. He was close to an angel named Sam; his favourite brother of all of Heaven, but the two had parted ways when Dean had been cast down into Hell. As penance for his crimes against Earth, Dean had been transformed into a powerful demon and made to serve Lucifer; the highest disgrace that could be bestowed upon an angel. The passage said ‘his once beautiful wings were stripped of feathers, replaced by terrible black monstrosities created from smoke and brimstone, and the halo that shone so bright around his crown was torn from him and two heavy horns were crafted from his skull as a reminder of the weight of his sins.’

Castiel shuddered and wondered what Dean had done to deserve such humiliation. In his mind, the demon deserved his punishment for all the horror he’d subjected him to, but he was curious so he stayed up until one A.M. researching his tormentor.

When he retired to bed, he ignored the pair of black eyes studying him from the corner of the room.

* * *

After another week of sassy remarks from Castiel, Dean grew irritated and Castiel groaned on Friday evening as he was slammed into a wall by an invisible force half way through Doctor Sexy.

With a shake of his head, Castiel returned to the couch and ignored the demon.

So, Dean catapulted him into the ceiling.

Castiel groaned and clutched at his bruised elbow before grimacing at his aching jaw. He scowled. “Throwing me around isn’t going to make me frightened, abomination. You’re just pissing me off.”

Before he had time to turn around, Dean had appeared behind him and wrapped a hand around his throat. Castiel scrabbled at his hand but the demon gripped tighter and suddenly sprinted towards the window. The human flinched as he crashed through the glass and Dean held him above the ground, five stories below.

Then he let go.

Castiel screamed as he plummeted towards the pavement.

He landed on his bed.

He pried his eyes open, still frozen in shock and found Dean smirking at him from across the room, looking somehow more energised.

“Guess I’ll just have to up my game, huh, little human?”

Castiel’s mouth drew into a thin line.
“Guess I’ll just have to buy more salt, huh, abomination?”

The smirk slipped from Dean’s lips and he vanished with a scowl.

Castiel wondered where he could find the incantation for an exorcism.

* * *

So far, Castiel hadn’t found anything about teaching oneself to exorcise a demon and he had scoured countless resources from books to the internet. He was currently squinting at his laptop and scanning through his ninth page of Google results.

“You can’t exorcise me unless you’re a bishop or a priest granted with a permit to exorcise. To be either of those you have to train for years and possess the correct qualities such as knowledge and integrity. That’s why there’s only fifty of them in the entirety of the United States,” sighed a voice behind him and Castiel whirled to find Dean leaning against the wall, arms crossed and tail swishing lazily.

Castiel scowled. “And why should I believe you?”

“Because I’m billions of years old and have a lot of experience in these sorts of matters,” huffed Dean impatiently.

Castiel pulled a face before turning back to his computer.

“Well, there must be some way to get rid of you.”

“Well, you’re already doing a better job than most,” Dean snorted. “I haven’t felt this weak in centuries.”

Castiel cocked an eyebrow. “Then why don’t you move on and torment someone else?”

Dean narrowed his eyes. “Because I’ve tied myself to this flat and since you won’t leave, neither can I.”

Castiel frowned in confusion and turned to face the demon.

“You moved through each of my neighbours well enough.”

“Because they all left after a couple of months,” said Dean. “And since no one bought those flats, I was freed from them. I need at least one human to survive.”

Castiel cocked his head. “Wait, so you can’t move on to another residence because you have to tie yourself to a building? But you can only do that if there’s someone living there?”

Dean nodded and glanced into the kitchen, obviously searching for something. Castiel watched him rifle through his cupboards before his face lit up and he pulled out a piece of pie he’d been saving for later on. The author watched in dismay as Dean scarfed the entire slice.

“So, why don’t you tie yourself to a person?”

“Thought I’d just explained all that,” huffed Dean, licking his fingers. “You got any more pie?”
Castiel ignored him and contemplated this new information.

“And you need fear to survive?” Asked Castiel slowly and Dean nodded again. “Is there anything else you can feed off?”

Dean snorted. “Like what, exactly?”

Castiel tilted his head. “Well, you were an angel once. What do they thrive on?”

Suddenly, Dean’s face darkened and in under a second, the demon’s nose was inches from Castiel’s own.

“Unless you want me to kill you, choose your next words very carefully.”

Castiel narrowed his eyes. “Thought you couldn’t kill me? You need me to survive, right?”

Dean smirked. “Little human, if I kill you, I’m free from this house. I can finally move on, so don’t think you have any form of advantage over me just because you know a few titbits about my life.”

Castiel gulped quietly. He hadn’t thought about that.

…Wait… why hadn’t the demon killed him already? Hadn’t he just admitted he felt weaker than he ever had in centuries? Why not kill him and move on?

Dean smirked, showing off his sharp canines before he skulked away and leaned against the wall once more. Castiel eyed him cautiously. Obviously, angel talk was off limits and he didn’t want to sway the demon’s hand by confessing his musings.

“Why are you here?”

“Because you haven’t-”

“I mean why are you here at this very moment?”

Dean hesitated before shrugging. “Bored.”

Castiel narrowed his eyes. “You have nothing better to do than pester me?”

Dean crossed his arms again. “I told you; I’m tied to this house.”

Castiel blinked. “Wait… you can’t leave at all? Not even for a few hours?”

The demon flicked his tail. “What part of ‘tied’ don’t you understand?”

Castiel looked at his lap. That was… lonely. No wonder the demon tormented him so often; it was the only social interaction he had.

“Oh,” Castiel murmured, surprised at himself for feeling a slither of sympathy for his torturer. Dean blinked at him, expression stunned for a moment before he glanced away.

“…Yeah… so… how’s the book coming along?”

Castiel bit back a startled laugh. Now they were doing small talk? Really?

“Umm… not great. I’ve completed fifty-three pages and can’t get any further.”

“…What are you writing about?”
“The Inca Empire.”

Dean pulled a face that was so humanistic, Castiel smiled.

“Sounds riveting,” he muttered. “Why don’t you write about something more interesting? Everybody loves a good sci-fi novel.”


Dean quirked an amused smirk at that and Castiel failed to understand what was so funny.

“I see. Well, then… good luck with the many rules of Incan marriage and gender ranking system.” Then, he vanished.

It occurred to Castiel that Dean had seen the rise and fall of thousands of civilisations and that was just on Earth. Imagine the sights he’d seen beyond that…

As Castiel stared at his computer screen, he wondered if the demon would be willing to share some of his experiences.

Then he realised how ridiculous that sounded so he switched his computer off and decided to have some dinner.

* * *

Castiel sighed when he turned the shower on and it poured blood instead of water. He waited for it to clear before stepping under the hot spray and made sure to throw the bottle of bleach Dean had replaced his shampoo with on the floor before continuing his shower.

“Take a picture; it’ll last longer,” muttered Castiel as Dean sat on the sink counter, gaze roaming over his naked body. He’d grown accustomed to the demon popping in on random occasions in an attempt to startle him. At first, he’d been embarrassed when Dean pulled stunts like this, but now he merely rolled his eyes and continued whatever task he was doing.

Dean pouted. “You’re no fun.”

“Good,” huffed Castiel. “Go away.”

Dean did.

Dean appeared every day without fail now and Castiel wasn’t sure what to make of it. The demon often tried to scare him, but after that initial attempt to invoke fear, he usually lingered to chat to the author about anything that came to mind. It was strangely domestic and Castiel noticed he was beginning to enjoy their light conversations.

“…You must have seen a lot in your time,” began Castiel carefully as he typed at his computer. He was growing weary of this book and he wasn’t getting anywhere with it.

Dean glanced at him silently before sighing.

“You have questions?”
“I’m in the presence of a being who claims to be billions of years old. Of course I have questions.”

Dean quirked a small smile. “You get three.”

This pattern continued for weeks. Every day, Dean would allow Castiel to ask him three questions about any subject he pleased and the author looked forward to the demon’s visits, just so he could expand his knowledge about anything from the life of a star to the dodo.

The horrifying pranks and hallucinations still frequented the flat, but Castiel found he didn’t mind them as much anymore. Besides, Dean always fixed what he broke, now.

It was a Friday evening when Castiel awoke to his fire alarm blaring and smoke seeping through his door.

Disorientated, Castiel rushed to his door and recoiled when the hot metal of the knob burned his hand. He saw the flames licking underneath the door and coughed as the smoke invaded his mouth and nose. His eyes widened as flames suddenly enveloped his bedroom door and he skittered backwards as the fire tore into the room.

He coughed again and scowled.

“Dean!”

No answer.

“Dean!” He yelled in frustration. “This isn’t frightening; it’s irritating!”

The flames lapped at his carpet before finally taking hold and Castiel began to sweat as he realised they weren’t dying down.

“Dean! Stop this!” He shouted.

The fire chewed through his wardrobe and headed towards his bed.

“Dean!” He panicked, heart beating faster and sweat pouring.

The flames swallowed his bed and backed him into a corner, surrounding him and make his skin turn red.

“DEAN!” He begged fearfully. “Please! Stop!”

Dean appeared in front of him, wings spread wide and protective to shield him from the flames and the demon clicked his fingers, making the fire disappear and the flat return to normal from its charred and blackened state.

Castiel felt his breathing even out and he glared at the demon only for Dean to scowl right back.

“That one wasn’t me,” he growled. “You left the gas running on the hob.”

Castiel blinked in shock, lips parting.

“The gas…”

“I’ve turned it off,” grumbled Dean. “Stop focusing on that damn book and start taking better care of yourself.”
Then, he disappeared.

Castiel stared at the place he’d been standing in for several minutes.

Dean had just saved his life.

He crawled into bed and whispered a quiet ‘Thank you’ into the darkness.
Chapter 2

Castiel found himself leaving slices of pie or other sweet treats in the kitchen for Dean’s enjoyment. He rarely saw the demon take the offerings, but there were never any crumbs left; just an empty plate placed in the sink.

For a couple of weeks, it was amusing. Then Castiel noticed how lonely he was, holed up in his empty flat with nothing but the TV and a meal for one.

One Saturday evening, he flicked disinterestedly through the channels and paused when he came to Star Wars episode IV. He’d never seen any of the movies despite their hype and he idly wondered if Dean had.

“Dean?” He called softly, uncertain as to why the demon was his first port of call when it came to requesting company. “Would you be interested in watching a movie?”

The light scent of sulphur wafted to his nostrils as black smoke dispersed behind him and he turned to find Dean watching the TV, arms crossed.

“Star Wars, huh?” He murmured. “It’s been a while since I watched one of these.” He glanced at the author. “You got any popcorn?”

Castiel shook his head apologetically and Dean snorted in disapproval before snapping his fingers. A large bowl of toffee-flavoured popcorn appeared in Castiel’s lap and Dean slowly rounded the couch, eying the human oddly.

Castiel said nothing as he shifted to make room for Dean and the two sat side-by-side on the couch, a little awkwardly but strangely comfortable at the same time. Castiel watched as the demon folded his wings behind his back delicately, his tail draped over the arm of the couch as he took a handful of popcorn.

He quirked a smile when the lights suddenly dimmed with an elegant wave of Dean’s hand.

He settled down to watch the film.

Half an hour in, Dean flicked his tail.

“Thanks for the pie,” he murmured quietly and Castiel was silent for a long time before he finally replied.

“Thanks for saving my life.”

“You’ve said that once,” commented Dean softly and Castiel arched an eyebrow in surprise.

“I wasn’t sure if you’d heard,” he admitted and Dean fell silent for a few minutes.

“I did.”

Castiel didn’t look at the demon, but he felt a small smile tugging at his lips. They didn’t speak again until the credits rolled.

“How’s the book?” Asked Dean, refusing to look at the author and Castiel pulled a face.

“Boring.”
Dean’s wing twitched. “Oh?”

“I hate what I’ve written,” Castiel huffed. “And I can’t seem to write any more. I’ve come to the conclusion I despise the Incans and their history.”

Dean tipped his head to one side. “So, what will you do now?”

Castiel deflated. “I have no idea.”

“Why not try something out of your comfort zone?” Hummed Dean. “Something to get those creative juices flowing again.”

Castiel pondered the idea for a few moments. “Like what?”

“Fantasy, horror, action, thriller, gay fanfiction. Take your pick,” smirked Dean and Castiel rolled his eyes without any heat.

“What was that last one?”

“Thriller?” Dean asked innocently and Castiel felt a huffed laugh escape his lips.

“Right.”

He was surprised to find the demon smiling gently at him. Not a grimace or a sneer; a genuine expression of affection. It was pleasant.

The smile faded as Dean rose to his feet and his tail swished over the floor as he scratched the back of his neck uncomfortably.

“I’ll let you get to bed,” he muttered. “You’ve got an early shift.”

Castiel stood and tilted his head, a strange feeling of disappointment settling in his gut.

“…Right… Thanks.” His mouth drew downwards. “You’ve got an early shift.”

Castiel stood and tilted his head, a strange feeling of disappointment settling in his gut.

“…Right… Thanks.” His mouth drew downwards. “Dean… where do you go when I can’t see you?”

“Around,” the demon answered vaguely. “A place humans can’t see.”

“…Like another dimension?”

“If it helps you to think of it like that, then yes.”

“…But I thought you couldn’t leave the flat?”

“Who says I leave the flat? I’m still here; you just don’t know it.”

Castiel found that answer oddly comforting. It meant he was never really alone, even if it was a demon who was accompanying him. The thought should probably terrify him, but it didn’t.

“Oh,” said Castiel softly. “I see.”

Dean quirked an eyebrow at the response but said nothing more as he vanished, smoke quickly dissipating in the empty space he’d left.

The following few weeks saw Castiel and Dean falling into a routine.

Every day, Dean would appear to answer Castiel’s three questions and on Fridays and Saturdays,
the pair would settle down in the late evening to watch a movie together. At first, it had begun with Castiel tentatively calling out Dean’s name to ask whether the demon would be interested in being his company for the night and it soon became apparent that Dean never refused. After a few weeks, Castiel stopped asking and Dean would automatically appear just as the author was selecting a film.

They would converse idly sometimes and often they would share a snack that Dean had created out of thin air. Castiel found himself looking forward to the weekends so he wouldn’t have to be alone and he had a feeling Dean was just grateful for any social interaction he could get. It had to be lonely for the demon to be tied to one residence until Castiel left. He couldn’t leave the premises.

“No, come on! What?!” Dean exclaimed glaring accusingly at the TV screen. “How can you kill one of her dragons? They’re her children! Why did she even go back for him? What’s so special about Jon Snow anyway? Her dragons are way more important!”

Castiel smiled to himself. He’d already read the Game of Thrones books but he wasn’t going to spoil it for the demon. He shook his head at how ridiculous that sounded.

Dean glanced at him before narrowing his eyes. “You know what’s going to happen, don’t you?”

Castiel smirked but said nothing until the episode was over and Dean was left gaping at the screen in disbelief.

“What?!”

Castiel chuckled and stole a handful of gummy bears as the demon tried to process what had happened.

“How are they supposed to fight that?!”

Castiel wiggled his eyebrows cheekily and Dean huffed in amusement, tail swiping over the couch lazily.

“I hate that you already know what’s going to happen. I want to ask you but at the same time I really don’t want to know.”

Castiel grinned silently and Dean quirked a smile. The expression was oddly heart-warming.

They stared at each other for a few minutes before Castiel tilted his head.

“Have you ever seen any creatures like that?” He asked quietly. “Like dragons or creatures of ice? Are any of those things… real?”

Dean cocked an eyebrow. “Haven’t you had your three questions today?”

Castiel glanced at his lap sheepishly but Dean merely made himself more comfortable on the couch as he focused on the human.

“I’ve seen a lot of things. I’ve seen Tricksters and ghosts and yes, I’ve seen dragons too. I’ve seen souls come back from the dead and I’ve seen mermaids and sirens and all the other creatures you’ve heard of in myths and legends and folklore.”

Castiel’s gaze snapped up to him as the demon smiled. “Although a lot of them are nothing like you humans describe them as. Mermaids aren’t pretty girls with fish tails; they’re ugly creatures that live in deep abysses and they have gills in their necks and needle-like teeth and they can’t
blink. Vampires can turn into bats but a lot of them like garlic and sunlight won’t kill them; they just prefer to hunt at night so their prey can’t see them coming.”

Castiel perked up in curiosity.

“What about dragons?”

Dean chuckled. “They’re rather disappointing actually. They’re about three feet in length and whilst they can blow fire out of their mouths, they’re hardly going to burn down a city. They live in the desert and other hot places like Australia. Why do you think there are so many bush fires in places like that?”

Castiel huffed out a laugh and shook his head.

“So, all the creatures from folklore are real. What about religious figures? Ganesh, Kali, Neptune, Thor… all the demi-gods and goddesses… are they all real?”

Dean nodded and snagged a handful of gummy bears. “Yup. They’re all real too. I’ve met quite a few of them in my time.” He grinned mischievously. “A lot of them don’t like me.”

“Why?”

“Because I’m a dick.”

Castiel laughed at that and Dean smiled with him.

“I won’t argue with that,” smirked Castiel and Dean winked and refilled the bowl of gummy bears.

“Hey, at least I’m honest.”

“What did you do?”

“Made one too many ‘elephant in the room’ jokes in the presence of Ganesh. Asked Kali how many men she could get off at once with all those hands. Hid Thor’s hammer. Stole Pegasus and told Zeus I’d cooked him.”

Castiel’s eyes blew wide. “…You ate Pegasus?”

Dean snorted. “No. Had a few rides around the universe on him. He was a chill horse. Told me he prefers to be called ‘Impala’ but Zeus chose the name ‘Pegasus’. He’s actually pretty annoyed about it.”

“I didn’t realise Pegasus could speak,” said Castiel, frowning slightly as he tried to recall his mythology lectures. Dean shook his head.

“He can’t. I speak horse.”

Castiel clamped his mouth shut and stared at Dean. He wasn’t sure what to say to that.

Dean smirked. “Contradictory to popular human beliefs, he’s also stark black. Not a patch of white on him.”

Castiel’s eyebrows rocketed upwards. “Huh.”

Dean grinned and stretched, wings fluttering slightly in contentedness. Castiel found himself staring at them for a few moments and Dean didn’t rebuff him.
“…Dean?”

“Hm?”

“Why were you turned into a demon?”

The atmosphere suddenly cooled and Castiel could feel the tension in the room as Dean turned black eyes upon him. Dean’s mouth was a thin, irritated line and he scowled at Castiel as he sat upright.

“I’m sorry,” murmured Castiel. “That was insensitive of me.”

“Yes. It was,” growled Dean. “Don’t ever ask about that again. In fact, don’t ever ask about angels or my past. It’s none of your business anyway.” Then, he vanished.

Castiel was left staring at an empty spot, wondering if he’d just made life difficult for himself.

* * *

The demon didn’t visit for an entire week. Castiel wasn’t given his three questions and Dean didn’t sit with him on Friday and Saturday evening to watch a movie. There was one attempt to scare the human each day, but other than the Burmese python in his bed, the other pranks fell flat; little effort put into them.

On the Sunday night, Castiel realised how lonely he suddenly felt.

He was bored and a little depressed and he ate a watery bowl of chicken soup and trudged to bed with a sigh, groaning at the thought of a dull day at work the next morning.

Something felt off though. The room seemed colder than usual; more silent and eerie. Castiel glanced around in the dark, hoping to catch a glimpse of black eyes and leathery wings (even if he refused to admit it), but was greeted instead by a soft rustling from what sounded like the kitchen.

Castiel shot upright. “Dean?” He asked tentatively, hoping not to anger the demon further but there was no reply and Castiel tilted his head with a frown.

“Dean, is that you?” He called when he heard quiet footsteps on a tiled floor. Once again, he received no reply so he clambered out of bed and shuffled into the living room.

“Look, Dean. I’m sorry for asking you about the demon thing. I won’t do it again, I promise.”

There was some desperate scrabbling and Castiel frowned as he neared the door.

“If you’re going to scare me, just do it already. I want to go to sleep.”

He opened the door to the kitchen and froze when he saw a strange man rifling through his drawers; a ski mask obscuring his face. The man whirled to face him and Castiel gasped as a gun was pointed at his head.

“Give me your phone, car keys, cards and cash,” growled the burglar as he clicked the safety off his weapon. “I won’t ask twice.”
Castiel gulped and raised his hands slowly and the man growled impatiently.

“Get on with it!”

Castiel startled and made towards the drawer where he kept his bank cards. As he neared the burglar, the man pressed the barrel of the gun to the back of his skull and Castiel had to take a deep breath to stop himself from whimpering. He reached into the drawer to find his car keys and just as he was about to turn around, the thief snarled.

“Over your shoulder! Don’t turn around!”

Castiel slowly did as asked but as the thief’s fingers brushed his hand to snatch the keys, he whirled around and kicked the man in the crotch.

The burglar groaned and tried to aim his gun at Castiel’s temple, but the author grabbed his wrist and a bullet struck the door. They wrestled for a few minutes, each trying to grab the gun, but Castiel staggered backwards when the man landed a heavy blow to his jaw with the butt of the weapon. He lost his grip and stumbled and before he knew what had happened, he had crumpled to the ground, a second shot still ringing in his ears.

He clutched his leg in agony and gasped at the deep red blood pouring from his thigh and he turned fearful eyes upon the criminal as the man trained the weapon on him again, grabbing the fallen car keys.

Castiel remained silent as the man rifled through his drawer to grab his phone as well and he backed out of the kitchen, keeping an eye on Castiel as he went in search of his wallet.

There was a deep growl from the living room and a few seconds later, the man scrambled back into the kitchen, eyes wide and fearful as shaking hands pointed the gun towards something Castiel couldn’t see.

Then a creature prowled in; all black scales and covered in horns with two long gazelle-like horns protruding from its skull. It was around five feet tall with an impossibly-long reptilian tail and jet-black, soulless eyes and it bared shark-like teeth at the burglar as it advanced on him. Two huge bat-like wings splayed wide as it stalked into the kitchen and when its tail swished, it made a hair-raising hissing sound, like a rattlesnake warning off a predator.

Its talons clicked against the tiles and it rumbled again, making the thief whimper. He aimed his weapon at the horrifying creature and when he pulled the trigger, Castiel’s heart jumped into his throat.

He reached out instinctively towards Dean but paused when the bullet ricocheted off his scales.

The thief whined and backed himself into a cupboard and shot at Dean again, only for the bullet to bounce off him once more.

Castiel watched in fascination as Dean stood on his hind legs, towering over the man at around ten feet tall and the man cried out in terror, covering his head with his arms.

Dean grabbed the thief with one clawed hand and threw him across the room into the wall. The thief groaned in pain and when he tried to move, Dean leaped at him. He clawed the man across the face and used his tail to fling him against a cupboard. The thief cried out and tried to drag himself away, but Dean pounced on him again and opened his jaws as he lunged for his neck.

“Dean!” Yelled Castiel desperately and the demon stopped and glanced at him curiously.
“Let him go,” Castiel pleaded. The man had shot him but he didn’t deserve to die.

Dean narrowed his eyes and scrutinised the thief for a few seconds before slowly backing off. The criminal looked up in horror, glanced at Castiel fearfully and managed to stagger out of the apartment, leaving Castiel’s belongings behind.

Dean eyed the phone and keys in distaste and batted them along the floor towards Castiel.

Castiel released a soft sigh and let his head fall against the cupboard as he closed his eyes, grip tight on his bloody leg.

Suddenly, there were gentle hands moving his own away and Castiel’s eyes flew open as a humanoid Dean kneeled beside him and placed a palm over the wound. He said nothing as the wound began to sting and Castiel hissed in discomfort, but then Dean moved his hand away and the wound had healed; vanished as though it was never there.

Castiel stared up at the demon with wide eyes and Dean’s mouth drew into a thin line.

“What?”

Castiel felt his jaw drop but when no words were forthcoming, he snapped it shut again.

“No point in being in pain,” huffed Dean, crossing his arms defensively, as if he was trying to reason why he’d just helped the human. “It’s annoying when I have to listen to you humans gripe about a bit of blood,” he added as if this explained why he’d been so gentle whilst tending to Castiel’s wound.

“…Thank you,” murmured Castiel softly, sincerely and the demon grunted and glanced away.

“I did it for my benefit. Not yours.”

A small smile touched Castiel’s lips.

“And I suppose you caught that thief for your benefit too?”

Dean blinked and squared his shoulders upon the realisation Castiel was smirking.

“Well, I have to survive somehow and you’re getting harder to scare. You never have guests over either, so yes; I terrified him so I could feed.” He glared at Castiel when the human’s smile grew slightly. “What? I was hungry and he was just… convenient.”

Castiel said nothing more as he climbed to his feet. It hadn’t slipped his notice that Dean had fixed the cupboards and the wall after having thrown the burglar into them, but if Dean didn’t want to admit that he’d been kind, then Castiel wouldn’t push it.

Dean frowned and turned to leave but Castiel caught him by the wing.

The demon tensed and whirled sharply to face the human, but when he realised Castiel was watching him curiously, he scowled and crossed his arms, refusing to speak.

“…Dean… I’m sorry. For what I said last week,” Castiel confessed. “I didn’t mean to cause any distress; I was merely curious. I promise I won’t ask about it again, but please… don’t be angry with me. I… as strange as this may sound… I… miss your company.” Castiel looked away embarrassedly.

Dean’s gaze softened and he sighed quietly.
“Fine. One more chance. No more questions about angels though.”

Castiel nodded eagerly. He hadn’t expected the demon to give up so easily.

“…You’re not too bad for a human, yourself,” Dean huffed, refusing to meet Castiel’s gaze and the author smiled.

“Thanks.”

The demon allowed a tiny smile before frowning sternly at the human.

“You have an early shift tomorrow. Go to bed, human.”

Castiel chuckled and held his hands up. “Yes, mother.”

Dean’s tail wiggled as Castiel made his way to the bedroom. He poked his head out from behind it one last time.

“Thank you, Dean. I mean it,” he murmured gratefully and the demon dismissed it with a wave of his hand.

“Not for you.”

Castiel smiled and retired to bed.

* * *

Castiel noticed the scares were fewer and far between. He barely received two per week and sometimes they weren’t frightening at all; just irritating. Like the time Dean put his laptop in the microwave.

(He’d sheepishly returned it when he’d received a thorough chewing out from an irate Castiel.)

The demon had re-established their movie nights and question-time and Castiel noticed he wasn’t bored anymore. In fact, there was a bit of a spring in his step as he worked around the house.

Although he’d tried writing several different history books and they’d all been dull and uninteresting, so he’d scrapped all of them.

He dipped into the latest bowl of cinnamon popcorn and chuckled as Molly Weasley’s Howler ripped into Ron for stealing the car.

He’d had a long day at the library as Charlie had asked him to cover her shift because it was the anniversary of her parents’ deaths and, knowing the younger woman was going through a lot, he hadn’t wanted to tell her he was already working that day, so he ended up slugging through a twelve-hour shift. Now he was exhausted, but it was Friday, which meant he was off tomorrow and he was enjoying Dean’s company tonight.

His eyelids were beginning to droop and he blinked when Dean gently poked him with his tail.

“You okay?” Asked Dean and Castiel swore he sounded concerned. “Would you like to go to bed?”
Castiel shook his head. He didn’t want to kick Dean out because he was a bad host and couldn’t keep his eyes open.

“No, no. I’m fine. I’m watching the film,” he said as he sat a little straighter. Dean eyed him disbelievingly but said nothing more.

When Castiel next opened his eyes, he was horizontal. Harry Potter had long finished and an old Star Trek movie was playing, the audio soft. He noticed the lights were off and whatever he was using as a pillow was extremely cold.

He glanced around and his eyes rounded as he realised he was lying on a very awake Dean.

The demon had one arm draped lightly over his stomach, his wings tucked out of the way so as not to disturb Castiel and he was slouched awkwardly so as to allow Castiel to rest his head comfortably on his lap.

He glanced at the human when he realised he’d woken up and Castiel shot upright with an apology plastered over his face.

“Dean, I’m so sorry. I didn’t realise… you should have woken me.”

Dean tilted his head. “You were tired. There’s nothing wrong with that. You’re human.”

Castiel stared at the little patch of drool on Dean’s jeans.

“You should have said something,” he groaned and Dean glanced at the wet patch and smirked.

“I’ve had worse bodily fluids spewed over me,” he winked and Castiel covered his face with his hands as his cheeks warmed.

Dean shifted into a more comfortable position.

“Seriously, Cas. I don’t mind.”

_Cas?_ That was the first time Dean had given him a nickname.

“Well I do,” muttered Castiel. “I’ve been sprawled over you for…” he checked his watch. “Three hours? You didn’t say anything for three hours?”

Dean shrugged. “You looked exhausted.”

Castiel paused and briefly wondered why the demon would care if he was tired. He wondered why the demon had stayed when he was asleep; had he not wanted to disturb him?

Castiel decided not to broach the subject.

“Why are you so cold?” He asked instead. “The heating’s on, but I can turn it up if you’d like?”

Dean chuckled. “I could probably sit in a fire and still be freezing. Trust me, Cas; it’s nothing to do with your heating. All demons have icy skin. Contrary to popular belief, Hell burns cold.”

Castiel tilted his head. “And… you’re accustomed to that? You can’t feel how cold your skin is?”

Dean snorted. “You kidding? I’m frozen! The only reason I don’t wear fifteen woolly jumpers every day is because I’d get more laughs than screams. Can you imagine my alternate form wrapped in a scarf, bob-cap and fluffy mittens?”
A huff of laughter escaped Castiel and the demon grinned. “Exactly. Can’t be having people laughing at me. It’d ruin my reputation.”

Castiel shook his head with a smile. “You realise you could just ask me for a blanket? You don’t have to be uncomfortable when you’re watching a movie with me.”

Dean looked a little surprised. “Oh. Well… that’s… kind of you.” He sounded confused and Castiel realised the demon had probably never had anyone be decent to him in centuries.

Castiel cocked his head to one side.

“Wait… is that why you let me sleep on you? You’re cold?”

Dean grinned sheepishly. “You’re toasty.”

Castiel laughed and shook his head. He rose from the couch and wandered into his bedroom, ignoring Dean curious gaze and returned to the living room with a thick blanket. He threw it at Dean’s chest and settled beside the demon again, snorting in amusement at Dean’s quiet purr of delight.

The demon ducked his head, face red and mortified when he realised Castiel had heard the sound, but the author said nothing as Dean unfolded the blanket and tucked it around him.

Castiel grinned at the sight of the demon-burrito beside him, suddenly feeling a lot more awake and they turned their attention to Captain Kirk and Spock.

On an impulse, Castiel wrapped his arm around Dean and tugged him into his side, warming him up further and the demon froze in shock for a second before gingerly cuddling into his side.

Castiel bit back a grin as a wing carefully slipped around his back.

It wasn’t long before Castiel dozed off on the demon’s shoulder.

* * *

Castiel closed his front door carefully and slid down it, tears streaking down his face as he sobbed silently into his hands.

His parents were dead.

A fire. Accidental, the police had informed him. They’d died in their sleep; the smoke killing them before the fire even reached their door. It seemed a faulty lamp was to blame.

Castiel’s body shuddered with every sob; his throat was long dry and hoarse and he barely had any tears left to cry, but he kept going because he didn’t know what else to do. He had no family left.

He was utterly alone.

He smelled the slight tang of sulphur before feeling a cool hand on his shoulder.

“Cas?” Dean asked quietly and he huffed out a hysterical laugh upon hearing the genuine concern in the demon’s tone. The only person concerned about him was a demon. Was his life really that
lonely and unimportant?

“Cas,” Dean insisted and before the author knew what he was doing, he’d thrown himself into Dean’s cold arms.

The demon stiffened in surprise as the human cried into his neck, warm hands clutching desperately at his back, but he didn’t push the author away. Instead, he cautiously gathered him to his chest and stroked an uncertain hand through his hair.

Castiel immediately pressed closer and Dean curled his wings around him almost protectively, holding him tighter.

They sat like that for half an hour, neither speaking until Dean finally guided Castiel to the couch and clicked his fingers. A mug of hot tea appeared on the coffee table, just the way Castiel liked it and the author took a sip before wrapping his hands around it and leaning into Dean again. The demon carefully slipped his arms around him and rested his chin on the human’s head.

They didn’t say anything but Castiel didn’t really want to speak and Dean wasn’t sure what to say. It was obvious the demon knew what had happened; he was a demon afterall and Castiel was thankful he didn’t have to explain. He was grateful for Dean’s presence.

Once the mug was empty, Castiel placed it on the table and pressed into Dean’s chest and the demon leaned back and tugged him closer, letting the human hide his face in his neck as he began crying again. He arced his wings around the author and draped his tail around his waist and they lay there for two hours in silence, only broken by Castiel quiet cries.

“They’re in Heaven,” Dean whispered finally and Castiel’s sobs stopped. That wasn’t just a phrase Dean had used to comfort him; it was a fact. The demon had been tracking the progress of their souls into the afterlife for him.

Castiel squeezed him lightly in appreciation and the demon smoothed a supportive hand over his back.

“Stay with me tonight,” whispered Castiel and Dean was quiet for a few moments before nodding. Castiel slept on the couch that evening, Dean’s strong body beneath him and holding him tightly.

He expected to wake up to an empty flat the next morning, but he was pleasantly surprised to find Dean still wrapped around him, his head tucked under the demon’s chin and Dean stroking his back gently.

“You okay?” Asked Dean softly and Castiel nodded and tightened his grip on Dean’s body. The demon understood and slid his wings around him more securely.

He refused to leave Castiel’s home for the rest of the day. Castiel was grateful.
Chapter 3

Dean was getting thin.

Castiel had noticed a couple of weeks ago. The demon appeared to have almost given up on scaring him, for reasons unknown and now he was skinny and dull-eyed and his wings drooped low and limp behind him. His tail didn’t swish playfully and he always seemed to be leaning against something to keep himself upright. After all of this though, he still managed to smile for Castiel and he’d taken to leaning into Castiel’s warmth when they settled down for movie night.

Castiel was growing concerned. What was wrong with the demon?

The author couldn’t hold his tongue any longer when one day, Dean appeared in his living room and staggered forwards, nearly collapsing to his hands and knees from being so weak.

Castiel managed to catch him and he sat the demon on the couch with a stern frown.

“You need to feed,” he said, leaving no room for argument and he was surprised when Dean shook his head sluggishly.

“Can’t leave the flat.”

Castiel’s frown deepened. “You don’t need to leave the flat. I’m still here; feed off me.”

Dean pulled a face. “I’m fine.”

“You’re clearly not,” huffed Castiel. “Feed off me.”

“Invite someone ‘round,” countered Dean.

“Who? The neighbours you scared off? The friends I don’t have? Dean, what’s the problem? Just scare me and get on with it,” insisted Castiel but Dean’s mouth drew into a thin, irritated line.

“You’re hard to scare,” he muttered and Castiel shook his head in disbelief. Why was Dean making excuses?

“Bull. You have a fantastic imagination. I know you can think of something. Get on with it.”

“Maybe I don’t want to,” snapped Dean, crossing his arms and Castiel blinked in shock.

“Why not?” He demanded. “You’re weaker than usual. You need fear, right? Frighten me.”

“I don’t want to, Cas!” Hissed Dean.

Castiel snapped his mouth shut in surprise as the demon scowled at him.

“I don’t want to frighten you, okay?” Said Dean a little softer this time as he averted his gaze in shame. “I thought you would’ve got that by now.”

“…Why?” Breathed Castiel and the demon refused to answer.

The human glanced over Dean’s body with a pained expression. Dean was far too thin and now it had been revealed he was refusing to feed.
“So, what? You’re going to let yourself wither away?” Huffed Castiel, heart dropping. “You’ve suddenly decided to develop human emotions or empathy or maybe pity and now you’re refusing to feed off me? What’s wrong with you? Do you want to die?”

“Of course not!” Growled Dean. “And I’m nothing like a human,” he scoffed. “I certainly don’t pity you.”

He glanced away and remained quiet for a few moments as a troubled expression crossed his face.

“I just… I don’t want to scare you anymore, alright? You don’t deserve half the things I’ve put you through.”

“Since when do you care about what I deserve?” Snorted Castiel and Dean clenched his fists.

“Since you became the only friend I’ve had in millennia!” He shouted.

Castiel gaped at him, falling still.

“I like you,” Dean admitted quietly. “You’re the only human who’s put up with everything I’ve thrown at them. You were brave enough to sass me, even when you were terrified. You made it clear you weren’t going to let me win our ‘game’ and you fought back with salt and holy water when I tried to intimidate you. Despite everything I’ve done to you though, you still had the courage to ask questions and learn. You encouraged me to visit and spend time getting to know you and these past few months, you’ve treated me… you’ve treated me as a friend.

“For the first time since becoming a demon, I was treated like something other than a monster and I… I’d almost forgotten what it felt like to be looked upon with something other than fear or disgust or pity.” He shook his head with a hollow laugh. “You even tried to warm me up. You actually gave me a blanket and hugged me. Do you know how long it’s been since someone touched me without wanting to kill me?”

Dean closed his eyes. “I don’t want to feed off your fear, Cas, because I don’t want you to look at me like I’m a monster.”

Castiel stared at the demon for a few minutes, gaze stunned.

“I’m not going to look at you like you’re a monster, Dean. But you need to feed. I want you to use me. Please… I… I don’t want to lose you,” he confessed softly and he realised he meant it.

“Friendship goes both ways.”

Dean looked pained. “I can’t. I can’t keep doing this to you. You don’t deserve it.”

“You’ll die,” Castiel said in frustration. “You have to.”

Dean shook his head stubbornly. “No.”

Castiel looked away and wracked his brain for ideas.

“Use my dreams,” he said abruptly. “I can cope with a few nightmares. It means nothing will be real and I won’t actually be living it. You can scare me without me having to be conscious.” He stared at Dean expectantly and the demon paused as he contemplated the idea.

“I don’t know, Cas… dreams are weird things… they affect your sleep patterns and if I play around with them, your behaviour could be affected…”
“Do you have any better ideas?” Huffed Castiel and Dean fell silent, so the human crossed his arms.

“Then it’s settled. You’ll scare me when I’m sleeping and I’ll get on with my life by day and you won’t starve.”

Dean dropped his gaze and clasped his hands together over his lap.

“Thank you,” he murmured softly, gratefully and Castiel allowed himself a small smile as he reached out and squeezed the demon’s shoulder. He pretended not to notice the way Dean leaned into his touch.

“I’ll see you in my dreams,” he winked and Dean snorted in amusement, wings perking up slightly.

Dean didn’t leave for the rest of the night. They chatted for a little while about the universe and everything in it and later, when Castiel retired to bed, the demon waited an hour before creeping into his room and laying a palm over his forehead.

He glanced at the human, torn for a few seconds, before sighing and closing his eyes as he wormed his way into Castiel’s mind.

He watched the author’s dream play out for a few minutes; time ran slowly in dreams. In the dream, Castiel was a young child of maybe seven or eight – Dean had never been good at guessing ages of humans – and he was at a rescue kennels, playing with some of the small dogs. Dean couldn’t help but smile as the child wandered over to the larger dogs; this was clearly one of Castiel’s childhood memories and the author obviously had a gentle touch when it came to animals. Every dog he met loved him and they all wanted to play; even the older, grumpier ones.

The young Castiel laughed as one Great Dane pounced on him and licked his face, tail beating from side to side in excitement and Castiel scratched the dog’s ears happily.

Dean watched the scene with a strange sense of contentment, but a sharp tug at his battered and twisted grace told him that his powers were weak and being drained further from the effort of invading Castiel’s mind undetected.

With a sense of dread bubbling in his gut, Dean snapped his fingers.

The huge, black Great Dane that was initially so excited to play suddenly started foaming at the lips, its eyes wild and teeth bared in a terrifying snarl.

The young Castiel froze in horror and screamed as the dog’s claws grew three inches longer. The animal growled viciously and swiped a paw at Castiel’s face, leaving four deep, bloody gashes in his cheek and Castiel cried and tried to wriggle free of the beast.

Dean winced at the child’s sobs and he felt his grace turn a little blacker to add to its already-horribly-mutilated state, but he also felt energy pour into it from Castiel’s fear and he was ashamed at the relief he experienced from being starved for so long.

The dog’s eyes dilated until there was nothing but black and his fur grew long and thin, exposing the scar-littered skin beneath it. The animal was rabid and it tore at Castiel’s clothes, clawing at his chest and leaving more wounds as it bared its teeth in his face and Castiel cried desperately, begging for someone to save him.

Dean flinched and quickly ended the dream; grace vitalised enough to get him through a couple of days. He pulled out of Castiel’s mind and grimaced when he realised the human was tossing and
turning in discomfort, rolling around the bed in search of peace.

Dean carefully placed his hand over the human’s chest and using an old trick from his time as an angel, he pulsed a burst of reassurance from his grace into Castiel’s soul. The human immediately calmed.

A light smile tugged at Dean’s lips and he silently disappeared in a puff of smoke.

* * *

The next morning, Castiel was exhausted and grumpy. It took three cups of coffee to get his brain to function, he wore mismatching socks and tried to don his slippers to go to work in before realising that wasn’t normal. He put his cereal in the oven instead of the microwave and sprinkled salt in his coffee instead of sugar.

Dean watched worriedly from the corner of the kitchen and said nothing as Castiel made mistake after mistake.

When he returned home that evening after his shift at the library, the human collapsed onto the couch with a groan.

“I snapped at three customers and made a child cry,” he offered as Dean appeared in front of him. The demon took a seat beside him and glanced at his interlocked fingers.

“It’s my fault. I shouldn’t have played with your dream.”

“You have to feed,” sighed Castiel. “It’s only a dream. I’ll get used to it.”

“You won’t.”

Castiel glared at him irritatedly. “Don’t tell me what I can and can’t do.”

Dean raised an eyebrow. “It’ll get worse.”

“I’ll be fine.”

“You won’t. I can’t mess with your dreams.”

“Then die!” Snapped Castiel, throwing his hands up. “But if you have any shred of self-preservation in you, you’ll use my nightmares to feed!” And with that he stormed off into his bedroom and slammed the door.

Dean stared at the floor unseeingly. He didn’t understand why Castiel was so concerned about his well-being, but it was nice to know someone cared. It had been a long time since anyone cared about him. Not even Sam searched for him after he fell…

He closed his eyes. He knew he would have to return to Castiel’s dreams at some point; if not tonight, then tomorrow or the day after. Demons couldn’t sustain life for long without encouraging fear and suffering; it was their burden to carry.

He vanished and refused to disturb Castiel that night.
Four days later, he was hungry again. He traipsed into the sleeping human’s room with a guilty expression and nearly turned around when he spotted how peaceful Castiel looked. There was a sharp pain in his grace though and he sighed and stood beside the bed. He needed sustenance.

He gently lay his palm flat against Castiel’s forehead and sunk into his mind.

The human was older this time. A teenager maybe. He seemed to be at a friend’s house for a party and there were a dozen teenagers settling down into what appeared to be sleeping bags. Castiel looked happy as he chatted to a school friend and they laughed at an in-joke before slipping into their sleeping bags. They lay beside each other and Dean watched fondly as the others fell asleep, leaving Castiel and his friend whispering and giggling with each other.

“Goodnight, Balthazar,” whispered Castiel after a little while and the other boy smiled and ruffled his hair playfully.

“Night, Cassie.”

Sleep swallowed the pair and Dean closed his eyes and tried not to think about the horror he was going to cause.

He snapped his fingers and watched as Balthazar shot upright, eyes blank and face devoid of emotions. The boy climbed to his feet silently and wandered into the kitchen robotically, in search of a knife. He found a long, sharp meat knife and paced back into the living room. He kneeled down beside Castiel and tapped the teen on the shoulder until he blinked awake sleepily.

“Balthy?” Castiel grumbled in confusion, eyes not quite focused.

Balthazar sliced the knife through his own throat.

Castiel screamed as his friend slumped to the floor, blood pouring from the tear in his neck and Dean grimaced as Castiel jumped out of his sleeping bag to press his hands against the wound, desperately trying to stop the blood flow in an attempt to save him.

Castiel was sobbing, shouting Balthazar’s name over and over in an attempt to wake him, but the other teen was already dead, his grip around the knife slack.

“Help!” Castiel screamed to the other teens behind him but with a snap of Dean’s fingers, Castiel turned to find the rest of his friends in the same state as Balthazar, blood pooling around them and eyes open and vacant.

Castiel sobbed hysterically and Dean felt his blackened grace pulse with extra energy from the panicked and fearful author.

He ended the dream abruptly and withdrew from Castiel’s mind, wings low and ashamed.

The author was breathing heavily, sweat slicking his face and he tossed and turned restlessly, a frown creasing his brows.

Dean placed a hand over his heart and pulsed a burst of comfort into his soul and the author
settled.

After one last guilty glance over Castiel’s form, the demon vanished.

* * *

The next day, Castiel was frustrated and angry for apparently no reason. Dean knew it was his fault and when the author smashed a glass after a surge of emotions, the demon placed a hand on his shoulder and tried to soothe some of the negative emotions.

Unfortunately, he was a demon, which meant he was supposed to cause those emotions, not soothe them. He was able to calm the author’s anger, but his frustration and exhaustion were a little more difficult and once again, Castiel returned to work and snapped at his customers to the point where someone filed a complaint against him.

This cycle repeated itself for a few weeks, where every four or five days, Dean would slip into Castiel’s dreams to feed and the author would be exhausted and irritable the following day. Dean tried to get Castiel to understand he would never grow accustomed to the nightmares, but the human wouldn’t have it and insisted Dean needed to survive somehow.

“This will ruin your life, Cas!” Shouted Dean in frustration but the author narrowed a glare at him.

“What life? You said it yourself; I mean nothing to anybody! My life is unimportant, boring! I’ve not even got my parents now! What does my life matter?”

Dean growled, tail thumping the floor and wings splaying wide in anger.

“You think your life is unimportant? I’m a demon! My sole purpose is to make people miserable and I appear to be succeeding with you! I don’t understand why you won’t fight back!”

“Because I don’t want to!” Snarled Castiel. “Because you’re my friend and I don’t want to lose you!”

Dean’s gaze turned desperate. “And I don’t want to hurt you! I don’t want you to lose everything because of me!”

“Well, is there any other way you can feed?” Hissed Castiel. “Any other method at all? Do you really think I enjoy having terrible nightmares? Of course not! But it’s the only way to keep you from starving, so I’ll endure them!”

Dean ran a hand through his hair, mind racing. Was there really no other way he could feed other than fear?

Castiel’s gaze softened after a few moments and he approached the troubled demon carefully.

“Dean, it’s okay,” he murmured quietly. “Let me do this for you. You could have been so much worse; if anything, you’re being kind by only haunting my dreams once every few days. You could’ve been like the other demons you’ve told me about. The ones that kill and torture, but you’re not.”

“You shouldn’t have to do any of this,” muttered Dean. “You shouldn’t have to come home to a
demon at all. I shouldn’t have tied myself to this apartment.”

Castiel chuckled lightly. “Honestly? I kind of enjoy the company.”

Dean couldn’t bring himself to smile. This human hadn’t deserved him.

Castiel gently squeezed his arm. “It’s okay.”

Dean sighed and nodded in defeat before taking a seat beside Castiel on the couch and snapping up a bowl of jelly beans for the latest movie.

The next time Dean ventured into Castiel’s dreams, he pulled out immediately and paced the room, ignoring the sharp pains of hunger in his grace. It was like someone tearing his insides into tiny shreds.

Castiel was dreaming about his parents. He was at their house in the evening, chatting contentedly and Dean knew where this dream was heading. He couldn’t make the author witness his parents’ deaths. He couldn’t do that.

But he knew he had to if he wanted to feed.

A burst of agony in his grace made him stumble. He’d tried to last six days without feeding and now he was paying the price for it.

Throat dry, Dean placed his hand on Castiel’s head.

It was Christmas in the dream. The Novaks were laughing about past Christmases in between admiring the dinner Mrs. Novak had prepared earlier and discussing the decorations littering the house. Mr. Novak thought his wife had gone overboard again, but Castiel assured her they were perfect.

It was late when Castiel slipped his trench coat on and kissed his parents’ cheeks. They smiled and hugged him farewell and he told them he’d see them on Christmas day in two days’ time.

He sauntered out of the house, humming a jolly tune and Dean waited for him to slide into his car before snapping his fingers.

The house burst into flames.

He watched Castiel adjust his mirror obliviously before a dancing flame caught his eye and he froze. He swivelled and his eyes widened in horror as he noticed the flame-filled house.

He scrambled out of the car and cried out desperately for his parents, breaking through the front door and looking around frantically. He shielded his face from a blast of heat and coughed at the barrage of smoke.

Part of the ceiling caved in and he yelped and leaped backwards.

“Mother! Father!” He cried out and was greeted with an agonised scream from upstairs.

Castiel raced up the stairs, jumping through vicious flames and keeping his nose and mouth covered with his sleeve as smoke billowed around him. Part of the banister collapsed, nearly taking Castiel with it and the author gasped and dropped to his knees before crawling the rest of the way up to the landing.

The top floor was worse than the ground floor, with thicker smoke and hotter flames and Castiel
followed his parents’ screams towards their bedroom. His stomach dropped when their cries fell eerily silent and he tried to open the door, only to recoil from the heat of the door knob.

He hissed at his burnt hand and kicked at the door instead until it splintered and when he saw his parents’ charred bodies, he fell to his knees with a cry. He dragged himself towards them, tears blurring his vision and cradled his mother’s body close to his chest as he sobbed hysterically.

The flames grew hotter and hotter around him and it was only when another part of the ceiling fell onto his leg, trapping him, did he realise he was in trouble.

He gingerly placed his mother’s form on the floor and tried to shove the fallen ceiling off him. He eventually shoved it away and panicked when he realised the flames were licking at his clothes, burning holes into them and singeing his skin.

He hissed as the smell and feeling of his own roasting flesh and glanced around wildly for an escape route to find there was none.

His eyes widened and he cried out for help, knowing there was no one there to hear him.

Then a horrifying creature with black eyes, horns and bat wings appeared before him with a pained expression. It cupped his face with both hands until Castiel could barely see the flames around him; the creature filling his view instead.

“I’m sorry,” it whispered.

* * *

Dean staggered backwards as he ended the dream, chest heaving and wings flapping, but he didn’t fall far because Castiel was upright, staring at him in panic and gripping his wrist.

They gazed at each other in shock for a few moments before Dean shook his head.

“I’m sorry,” he whispered. “Cas, I’m so sorry.”

Castiel was having trouble getting his brain to work without having flashbacks to the dream and he ran a hand through chaotic hair.

“Is that… is that what happened?” He breathed, unable to think and Dean shook his head hurriedly.

“They didn’t suffer. They didn’t even know. It was the smoke that got them, remember?”

Castiel nodded slowly but didn’t loosen his grip on Dean’s wrist. The demon flinched and placed his hand over the human’s heart as he tried to soothe his turmoil.

Castiel watched him blankly before releasing his arm and rolling over without another word. Dean grimaced as the author forced himself to sleep and this time, he sat in the chair in the corner of the room and watched over the human all night.

* * *
The following night, Castiel stormed into the apartment and flung his trench in the general vicinity of the coat hook, uncaring when it crumpled to the floor.

He marched into the kitchen and poured himself a whisky, downed it and poured himself another. He stared unseeingly at the counter for a few minutes before his face scrunched into an expression of anger and he smashed his fist against the hard top, bruising the bone. He did it again, just to feel the ache.

He downed his drink again and poured himself another.

“Cas?” Dean asked worriedly as he appeared behind him but the author ignored him and moved onto his fourth drink.

Dean frowned and snapped his fingers, making the bottle disappear.

“Don’t drink yourself into liver failure,” scolded Dean but the author whirled on him.

“Shut up,” he snarled and Dean’s eyes widened at the swirling pit of emotions in Casiel’s eyes. “…What happened?” He asked quietly and the human clenched his fists.

“I lost my job for snapping at my boss.”

Dean winced. “This is my fault.”

“Yes,” growled Castiel. “It is.”

Dean flinched again. “Cas, I’m sorry-“

“Don’t apologise, demon. I’m sick of your apologies.”

Dean averted his gaze. “…What do you want me to do? How can I fix this?”

“You can provide an outlet for my frustrations,” ordered Castiel and Dean frowned in confusion.

“…What do you mean-“

Dean gasped as he was slammed into the wall. He’d been expecting Castiel to fight back at some point, but the suddenness had caught him off-guard.

He was even more shocked when the human’s lips crashed into his.

Castiel tangled his fingers into Dean’s hair, his free hand slipping around the demon’s back to clutch at the base of his wing.

Dean groaned softly as Castiel pressed their bodies flush. It had been so long since someone had wanted to be close to him.

However, he gently pushed the human away.

“Cas, stop. You’ll regret this. You don’t really want this; you’re just… upset,” he sighed but Castiel snarled and smashed their mouths together again.

“I’m sick of being boring,” he hissed. “I’m sick of living cautiously and feeling lonely all the time.
I’m angry about the dead-end job I’ve been fired from and the fact I’m a failed author who hasn’t been able to write in months. I’ve got no family, no friends and no one to share my life with and for once, I’m horny and slightly drunk and I want to make some horrible mistakes, alright?”

He tugged at the base of Dean’s wing and the demon closed his eyes with a soft moan.

“Don’t pretend you’re not touch-starved,” whispered Castiel beside Dean’s ear. “Don’t pretend you don’t want someone who’s not terrified of you; someone who won’t look at you like a monster as you pound them into the mattress. I want sex and if you don’t give it to me, I’ll just find the nearest bar and bring someone home.”

Something possessive and jealous rolled around Dean’s grace at that and he growled and tugged the human to his chest.

The action made them both pause in surprise and Dean realised Castiel hadn’t actually expected the demon to want him. Then again, it was news to Dean too.

Castiel lunged for his lips again and Dean rumbled deeply and wrapped his wings around the human. A thought niggled at Dean’s brain though and when they separated for air, Dean wedged his hand against Castiel’s chest, eyes wide.

“I’ll tarnish your soul,” he blurted. “If you sleep with me, I’ll tarnish your soul. It’ll ruin your chances of getting into Heaven.” He glanced at Castiel's bright white soul; already there were spots of red beginning to form from the irritation Dean had caused him these past few weeks. He couldn’t let Castiel’s future be Hell because of him.

“Do I look like I care?” Hissed Castiel, tugging pointedly at Dean’s wing and the demon wanted nothing more than to rip his clothes off.

“No,” he admitted quietly. “But I do.”

Castiel hesitated and this time when he leaned up to kiss the demon, it was softer, more tender.

“Please, Dean,” whispered Castiel. “I need this. Just one night. I need something. Someone.”

Dean gazed into baby blue eyes for a long moment before sighing and nodding. He was rather disturbed by how easy it was to give in to the author.

He snapped his fingers and suddenly, they were in the bedroom, Dean straddling Castiel on the bed.

Castiel blinked, disorientated at the abrupt change in location but he quickly got with the program and began undressing Dean, the demon silently helping him when it came to slipping the clothing over his wings and tail.

Dean pressed their lips together as he unbuttoned Castiel’s shirt and unzipped his trousers and it wasn’t long before they were both naked and kissing frantically.

He cupped the human’s cheek as his other hand roamed over miles of skin, exploring and savouring and Castiel kept a firm grip on the base of his wing as his other hand wrapped around a long horn curiously. It hadn’t slipped his notice that his bruised hand was suddenly healed.

Dean curled his tail around the human’s waist and Castiel shuddered at its coldness before shifting awkwardly and wrapping his duvet around them both and splaying his warm hands over Dean’s back.
The demon’s grace pulsed with an emotion Dean couldn’t identify but he didn’t dwell on it for long because Castiel hooked his legs around his hips and began grinding against him.

Dean’s tongue forced its way into Castiel’s mouth, tasting him and claiming him and the demon purred when fingernails scraped down his back lustfully.

Then Castiel grabbed his tail and squeezed it hard and Dean tugged him to his chest with a growl, grinding their erections together slowly.

Castiel hissed and smoothed his free hand over a wing, scraping his nails lightly against the cool leather. The wing leaned into his touch and Dean pulled away from his mouth to lick hotly at his throat, nipping the delicate flesh until Castiel tugged at his tail again.

His gaze flicked to Castiel’s eyes, desire curling in his belly as primitive demon instincts began to well within his grace and the human gazed back, arousal pooling deep in his gut at the deep black eyes. They were supposed to invoke fear by looking so inhuman, but Castiel was getting harder the longer he stared into them and he wondered if it was the thought of what he was with and how taboo it was that was making him experience these feelings.

Dean thrust a hand into his hair and yanked gently as he kneeled upright and pulled the human into his lap and Castiel curled his arms tightly around the demon, warming him as their teeth clashed during their harsh kiss.

Dean squeezed his rear and slapped it lightly and Castiel pulled back to suck at the demon’s throat. Dean growled animalistically and a bolt of arousal shot down Castiel’s spine as the demon’s hands roamed roughly over his body, nails scraping over his nipples and back and palms squeezing at his hips hard enough to leave bruises.

He pressed further into the demon’s body, rolling his hips and bucking into Dean’s erection until the demon snarled and slapped his rump in scolding.

Feeling rebellious, Castiel scowled and he shoved Dean onto his back and spread the demon’s legs apart, much to the surprise of the demon. Then he ran his tongue over the demon’s testicles before wrapping his lips around his stiff length and Dean groaned and gripped the human’s hair as Castiel swallowed him expertly.

“You’ve done this before,” Dean accused, voice a husky growl and Castiel pulled off him with a lazy smirk.

“I did a lot of things in college.”

Then he returned his attention to the demon’s erection.

Dean moaned and thrust his hips upwards, unable to help himself and Castiel splayed his hands over his hips in encouragement, making the demon whine with want.

After a few minutes Dean snarled and pinned Castiel beneath him, bodies flush once more.

“Rule one,” hissed Dean, baring his sharp canines. “Never tell a demon you’ve been with other people. It makes us jealous.”

“Oh, I did a lot of things in college that may surprise you,” drawled Castiel. “I found out I was bi by being sandwiched between two horny guys in the shower from the gym.”

Dean rumbled possessively and nipped at Castiel’s shoulder, sucking a line of bruises all the way
up to his neck. One hand clutched at his back whilst the other fondled his testicles and Castiel gasped when a tail teased at his hole.

He tugged at a wing, the other hand smoothing over Dean’s back in an attempt to warm him and Dean claimed his mouth greedily. The tail began dipping in and out of Castiel, stretching him as they ground against each other roughly and Castiel heard the familiar snap of fingers and smirked when he felt cool lubricant line his hole.

“Impatient,” huffed Castiel and Dean growled softly.

“Mine,” he rumbled and Castiel shivered with anticipation.

“Prove it.”

He arched when Dean sunk into him.

Dean had no mercy as he pounded into Castiel, barely giving him time to adjust and Castiel threw his head back in a moan at the thought Dean’s demon instincts were driving him now. The demon was rough with him, nipping and rumbling hungrily as he scraped his nails over flesh and wrapped his tail around Castiel’s hard length.

Castiel loved every second of it and it didn’t escape his notice that the demon was careful in keeping his horns away from his face. Nor did he miss the fact that Dean was probably ten times stronger than he was, yet wasn’t causing him any damage.

“Harder,” hissed Castiel as he squeezed the base of Dean’s horn.

Dean was quick to oblige and even though Castiel knew he’d be aching in the morning, he didn’t care. He needed this.

Although Dean didn’t need to breathe, he noticed the demon was copying the progression of his increased breathing rate and the thought that Dean was trying to make himself seem at least a little human for his sake, warmed Castiel. He nipped the demon’s lip erotically and slid his legs more securely around Dean’s waist.

“Stay with me tonight,” he panted and Dean smirked and made a rough, throaty sound that had Castiel sucking at his jaw.

“By the time I’m finished with you, little human, it’ll be morning.”

Castiel’s heart fluttered and another bolt of arousal shot southwards. He lunged for Dean’s lips and let the demon have his way with him.

* * *

It took four hours before they finally flopped off one another. Castiel wasn’t egotistical enough to believe his stamina lasted that long and he knew Dean had subtly re-energised him after each round just so he’d be able to get the stress of the day out of his systems.

Now he was exhausted but oddly content.

Dean locked his hands behind his head and smirked lazily at the human as he lounged on his back.
and Castiel was still for a few minutes as he tried to catch his breath. He ached in all the right places.

Dean ran an idle finger over a bruise in his own neck; a large love bite Castiel had sucked into his flesh earlier. Castiel was sort of honoured the demon hadn’t healed himself.

The demon’s tail was swishing happily, one leg cocked over his knee as he purred quietly, seemingly without realising. Castiel rolled onto his side and studied the demon carefully. He looked… brighter than usual. More vibrant. Even his wings were vibrating.

“You look… healthier,” observed Castiel and Dean raised an amused eyebrow, assuming the phrase was a part of Castiel’s strange pillow talk.

“You look more relaxed,” hummed Dean, oddly chipper. “Was I a good outlet?”

Castiel nodded slowly, a light frown creasing his brows as he tried to work out why Dean looked so different.

“Seriously, you look healthier. Brighter than the past few weeks.”

Dean chuckled and shook his head. “Thank you?” He said with a smile before reaching out and gently trailing his fingers over the love bites in Castiel’s neck.

“I can heal them if you want?” Dean asked softly and Castiel placed a hand over the one Dean was brushing his neck with.

“No,” he said. “I… I like them.”

Dean grinned and Castiel watched in surprise as the demon’s wings fluttered and his tail wiggled.

He propped himself up on one arm and scrutinised Dean.

“…Do you feel any different?”

Dean tilted his head in confusion. “Are you okay?”

“Answer the question.”

Dean huffed in mild amusement and tried to work out what Castiel meant as he checked his grace. His eyes widened.

“…I fed,” he whispered, stunned before scrambling upright and turning horrified eyes onto Castiel.

“Were you frightened of me? Did I force you into that?” He cursed, shaking his head violently. “Why didn’t you tell me? Dream-walking is one thing, but rape?! Cas, why didn’t you say someth-”

Castiel suddenly pinned Dean to the bed, straddling him with an unimpressed glare.

“Do you honestly think I didn’t want any of that? I’ve admitted I like the bruises on my neck and you’re concerned you’ve forced me into pleasuring you even though I’ve asked you to stay the night with me? Think, Dean. I wasn’t frightened by anything we did.”

Dean frowned, puzzled.
“…But… why is my grace nearly up to full charge? Fear has to be involved somewhere.”

Castiel pulled a face in contemplation.

“…Are you sure fear is your only method of feeding? You are a demon… isn’t lust a part of
your… programming?”

Dean stared blankly at the human.

“No, Cas. I’m not a succubus. I can’t feed off sex.”

Castiel’s face flushed pink and he glanced away. “Well, do you have any better ideas?”

Dean hated to admit it, but he didn’t.

“…No.”

They stared at each other awkwardly for a few moments before Castiel perked up.

“Wait… if you were fed by us sleeping together…”

Dean’s eyes widened and a grin slid across his face.

“No more nightmares.”

Castiel smiled and impulsively, Dean leaned upwards to kiss the human tenderly on the lips.

When he pulled away, Castiel was watching him in surprise and it was Dean’s turn to glance away with heated cheeks.

“…Sorry.”

Castiel climbed off him and lay beside him, tucking them both under the duvet as he wrapped a
warm arm around the demon’s cold chest and buried his face into his neck.

“Don’t be,” he whispered and Dean felt his grace pulse with an extra slither of energy.

Uncertain as to what it meant, Dean ignored it and gingerly rolled onto his side and tugged the
human closer, tucking him under his chin. With a click of his fingers, the lights switched off and
Castiel snuggled into him as he wrapped his wings around the author.

Just because he didn’t need sleep, it didn’t mean he couldn’t and for the first time in centuries,
Dean dozed off with a smile.
Four weeks later, Castiel was working as a waiter at a bar called ‘The Roadhouse’. He’d decided it was time for a new beginning and he made an effort to befriend the owner, Ellen Harvelle and her daughter, Jo. The chef was a stocky man named Benny and Castiel took an immediate liking to him. The bartender who worked alongside Jo was a placid guy by the name of Garth. He was quiet and always wore a smile and Castiel found being around him oddly comforting. Working behind the scenes on finance was Ellen’s adopted son (or maybe a customer who walked in one day for a drink and got lost on the way out) by the name of Ash. He was eccentric and Castiel didn’t really understand his sense of humour and pop culture references, but he was nice enough and always up for a chat.

The hours were awful because there were so few staff and the patrons could get a little rowdy sometimes, but one glare from Ellen shut them up and Castiel found himself smiling more and using something called ‘emojis’ on his phone whenever he received a text from one of his new friends.

Dean seemed genuinely happy for him and whenever he returned home after a long shift, the demon would have a drink ready for him and sometimes a meal.

It was strangely domestic and Castiel realised Dean was spending more and more time at the apartment with him, sometimes merely chatting, sometimes watching a movie, sometimes just happy to go about their own business in one another’s company.

Dean looked healthier and he was certainly more playful now they were having “casual” sex nearly every other night. The demon insisted he couldn’t feed off sex, but Castiel was inclined to disagree.

Castiel was also beginning to notice other things about Dean, like his warm smile and the little flutter his wings gave every time Castiel kissed him, or the tail flick whenever he came home from work. Their arrangement was supposed to be ‘friends with benefits’ but Castiel was finding it harder and harder with every passing day to keep his hands to himself.

Whenever the demon was on the couch, he would sit beside him until their legs brushed. If the demon was reading, Castiel would fiddle with his tail without really paying attention. When the demon was making coffee in a morning, Castiel would stroke a wing and kiss the back of his neck sleepily.

The odd thing was, Dean seemed to be having the same troubles.

When Castiel was cooking dinner, Dean would slide his arms around him and press into him with the excuse that the human was warm. When Castiel was researching for a possible new book, Dean would play footsie with him or curl his tail around his ankle. When Castiel was brushing his teeth, the demon would strip him of his shirt and smooth his hands over his back and stomach, sometimes even pressing kisses to the knobs of his spine.

Castiel often forgot Dean was a demon and Dean forgot he was supposed to be a monster.

One night, after a hot bout of sex that left Dean bursting with energy, Castiel rolled over to share a
long, slow kiss with Dean before resting his head against his shoulder and tracing a finger over his chest.

Dean’s tail swayed lazily and Castiel nuzzled his neck before Dean laced their fingers together over his stomach.

Neither of them seemed to be able to stop touching one another tonight and Dean arced a wing around the human as his free hand brushed against the latest love bites on Castiel’s neck.

“Leave them,” hummed Castiel and Dean purred in a gesture Castiel had come to recognise as deep-rooted contentedness.

“I love it when you say that,” growled Dean softly, nipping teasingly at the human’s ear and Castiel chuckled and kissed the demon again.

“Makes me think you’re mine,” Dean whispered into his mouth. “And you know how possessive we demons get.”

Castiel hummed in agreement and silenced him with a passionate kiss, one with tongues and teeth and all those other filthy things they both loved.

“Cocky talk for someone who merely five minutes ago was begging for me to go faster and deeper,” smirked Castiel and Dean huffed out a laugh and let the human pet his wing.

After a few minutes of rough kissing, Dean pulled away to gaze at his lover fondly.

“How’s the book?” He asked and Castiel settled against his shoulder again.

“I’m bored of History books. I’ve got no ideas.”

“Why don’t you try something different?” Asked Dean. “Maybe fantasy?”

Castiel raised an eyebrow. “Thought I told you I don’t possess the imagination for it?”

“Who needs imagination when you’re living it?” Winked Dean, squeezing his shoulder for emphasis and Castiel tilted his head, puzzled.

Dean rolled his eyes. “Not everyone lives with a demon in domestic bliss, Cas.”

Castiel blinked and Dean cocked an eyebrow before an amused grin overtook his face.

“I’m a demon, remember?”

Castiel’s face heated and Dean laughed fondly before Castiel shut him up with another deep kiss.

“You don’t mind me writing about this?” Castiel asked quietly and Dean shrugged.

“As long as you change the names to protect the innocent,” he winked. “Otherwise people might start thinking you’re crazy if you tell them you’ve been sleeping with a demon for over three months.”

Castiel huffed and nuzzled the demon’s jaw.

“A demon who feeds off sex.”

“I don’t feed off sex!”
“I beg to differ.”

Dean stole another kiss, which Castiel deepened and when Castiel finally pulled away, he startled at the sight of forest-green eyes staring back at him. When he blinked, they were black again.

“You okay?” Asked Dean worriedly as he brushed his knuckles down the human’s face and Castiel opened his mouth only to clamp it shut again.

Dean tilted his head. “I sense a question.”

Castiel frowned. “…One you’ve told me not to ask.”

The smile slipped from Dean’s face. “Maybe I feel differently about that now.”

Castiel studied him carefully for a few moments.

“Alright… if I’m to write a fantasy novel about you… I want to know what happened. What happened to you?”

Dean sighed quietly and Castiel stroked a thumb over his cheek.

“It changes nothing, Dean.”

Dean smiled at him gratefully before brushing the hair from his lover’s forehead.

“I was one of Michael’s soldiers. A seraph of high rank amongst an army of many. I had many brothers and sisters but Sam was my favourite; the brother I was closest to. We did everything together; flew, healed, battled, explored… then Sam got transferred to Raphael’s charge. We didn’t see each other as often, but we were still close. We got into a lot of trouble for sneaking out to be with each other.

“Then Lucifer fell because of his hatred for humanity and Heaven was torn. Some angels sided with Lucifer and we battled; killed hundreds of our own to keep humanity safe. Gabriel had left us years before; too distraught at the idea of choosing over his brothers and Raphael was cold and distant, ignoring us when we needed him most.

“Michael was upset and furious at losing his brother and he became like a drill sergeant, his orders leaving no room for argument.

“We were all so lost. Our Father was missing and the archangels were divided, failing to give us proper guidance.

“We were worked to the bone; all the lower angels being bossed around by the higher ups, who knew as little as everyone else and more arguments divided us, breaking us into smaller factions. I stayed by Michael’s side like I always had, and I have no idea where Sam went when Raphael started ignoring us. I think he got bossed around by the others, or maybe Michael took him in and gave him a job like he gave me.

“My job was to protect humans from anyone or anything that tried to harm them. I smote demons and cleansed the Earth of vampires and werewolves and all those other monsters Michael had informed me were abominations and because of that, I spent a lot of time on Earth learning about you humans.

“I started to realise not everything was as black and white as Michael had led us to believe when I was ordered to kill a Nephilim; a combination of human soul and angel grace – an abomination by
all accounts. They have the power of an angel with the emotions of a human and that means they
could lay waste to human civilisation with a mere thought. It had to be destroyed.

“But the Nephilim was just a baby; barely five months. The father was human and the mother was
a ‘rogue’ angel who’d fallen for this man. The angel begged me to spare their child and her mate
and when I saw the human produce an angel blade, ready to die for his small family, I realised not
everything Michael said was just or fair.

“I told them I’d spare them as long as they kept off angel radar and they thanked me and ran.
When Michael heard of my disobedience, he shamed me in front of my siblings. Turned me into a
hideous monster for my betrayal and cast me out of Heaven, banishing me to Lucifer’s realm,
where I was made to serve him for all eternity with the knowledge that I’d failed Heaven.”

Dean glanced away, eyes closed in sadness and pain and Castiel scowled.

“You were cast into Hell for refusing to slaughter an innocent child?”

Dean sighed. “I was cast into Hell for disobeying orders and allowing a threat to humanity roam
the Earth. I argued that it was the upbringing of the child that determined its future as I’d seen its
parents willing to die to protect it, but Michael called me foolish and said once it learned of the
power it was capable of, it would use its abilities to destroy.”

Castiel scrunched his face up in disgust. “Michael sounds like an assbutt.”

“He later destroyed the child himself.”

“Michael sounds like a psychopathic murderer.”

Dean chuckled and stroked Castiel’s hair and the human laced their fingers together once more.

“So, you were punished for doing the right thing?” Muttered Castiel sadly. “And you’re still
suffering? I thought angels were supposed to be good?”

Dean heaved a sigh. “Like I said… not everything’s black and white.”

“What about Sam? What happened to him?”

Dean shrugged bitterly. “He never looked for me. I never saw him after I fell. I assume he was
ashamed of me.”

“Your family doesn’t sound very caring,” mumbled Castiel and Dean shook his head.

“Eventually, angels will overcome demons because good always has to overcome evil. Michael
told me if any of his soldiers ever see me again, they’ll cut me down like the traitorous
abomination I am.”

Castiel scowled and squeezed the demon protectively. “I don’t like the sound of these angels very
much.”

“…Now you know my story.”

Castiel pressed his lips against the demon’s collar bone. “One you don’t deserve.”

Dean’s grace pulsed with more energy and Dean tilted his head at it in confusion. It didn’t only
respond to sex with Castiel. A kiss or a tender touch or a fond word or even just a warm gaze from
the human sent his grace pulsing with energy as though it was being fed and Dean didn’t
understand it.

It was a few minutes before Castiel squeezed the demon gently.

“Thank you, Dean. For telling me all that. I understand how difficult that must have been.”

Dean offered him a small smile. “You’re the first person I’ve ever told my past to.”

Castiel grinned and snuggled into his side. “I’m honoured.”

“You should be,” teased Dean before clicking his fingers and plunging the room into darkness.

* * *

They were in the shower when the answer came to Dean.

Castiel had attempted to have a quick shower to start his weekend, but Dean hadn’t seen much of him all week from his long shifts and nights out with his friends (which he had encouraged the human to go on) and what was supposed to be ‘casual sex’ ended up as long, passionate, needy love-making from both parties.

The water should have run dry twenty minutes ago, but Dean was turned on by the sight of Castiel glistening with water, every crevice slick and shiny for him and the demon was somehow keeping the water warm and flowing above them as they panted and rutted against each other.

Castiel cursed as Dean pressed him against the wall and began thrusting into him deeply and he wrapped his legs around the demon’s waist as Dean ravished his mouth, wings cracking the glass of the shower door in his desperation to be close to Castiel.

Castiel paid it no heed as he knew the demon would fix the damage later; right now, he was focused on massaging the base of one of those giant wings, just to hear Dean groan throatily.

He already had two love bites on his chest and one on his neck and he was looking to litter Dean’s body with some as well. He’d never felt such attraction and want towards anyone before, but he couldn’t think of anything better than this; being wrapped up in Dean’s body, their hands exploring and squeezing as they tasted each other’s mouths.

He pulled back to suck a bruise into Dean’s wing and the demon growled in approval, thrusting harder into Castiel to hear the human groan lustfully. When Castiel was satisfied with the mark, he turned to claim Dean’s mouth again and the demon purred loudly for him, knowing Castiel loved the sound.

Castiel gasped when Dean hit the perfect spot and the demon smirked and tightened his grip on the human’s body, quickening his pace until Castiel was an arching, moaning mess in his arms.

“I love you!” Castiel blurted through a harsh gasp and Dean’s grace flared with an overpowering amount of energy that had the demon’s knees giving way. He didn’t get a chance to crash to the floor though, because Castiel quickly caught him with wide, shocked eyes.

They stared at each other for a moment, Dean still buried deep inside the human, but then the demon carefully tangled his fingers in the nervous Castiel’s hair.
“Say that again,” breathed Dean and Castiel’s pulse picked up as he wrapped his arms more securely around the demon. Dean didn’t sound angry or disgusted…

“I love you,” he whispered, still not quite able to believe those words were coming from his own mouth, yet he had no intentions of taking them back.

Dean’s grace flared again and the demon had to support himself against the wall. When he next looked up at Castiel, his eyes were green. Human.

Castiel’s chest was heaving in a mixture of exertion and anticipation and he gasped at the demon’s gaze.

“Were your eyes green when you were an angel?” He breathed and Dean nodded slowly in realisation.

He smashed his lips against Castiel’s and the human whimpered and clawed frantically at his back, desperate for Dean’s touch.

“It’s you,” hissed Dean in between messy kisses. “You’re in love with me.”

“What’s me?” Asked Castiel, sentence trailing off into a heated groan as Dean continued thrusting and nipping at his throat.

“You once asked me what angels thrive off,” whispered Dean. “Angels thrive off love. I’m a fallen angel.”

Castiel laughed breathily. “How cliché.”

“I knew it wasn’t sex!”

“Just my heart,” teased Castiel and Dean kissed him tenderly.

“You love me?”

“Evidently,” grinned Castiel and Dean kissed him again.

“For the record, I think I’ve fallen for you too, little human.”

“Ba-dum-tis.”

“Shut up.”

Castiel groaned loudly when Dean hit his sensitive spot again and he tugged the demon’s wing.

“I wasn’t expecting my first declaration of love to go like this,” laughed Castiel after a few moments and Dean chuckled and nuzzled his throat.

“I wasn’t expecting to have a first declaration of love.”

Cas kissed him roughly. “Can’t say I’m surprised about any of this though,” he grinned and Dean nodded and rubbed their noses together.

“Your eyes are beautiful,” whispered Castiel before he climaxed, Dean soon following suit.

They slid down the shower wall, Dean keeping his lover wrapped around him as he settled on the floor, his human in his lap.
He allowed Castiel to catch his breath, tugging him to his chest and nuzzling his soggy hair with a happy purr and Castiel laughed breathlessly and toyed with the demon’s tail.

When he glanced at the demon’s face, his eyes were black once more.

Castiel smiled and relaxed into Dean’s strong arms, hugging the demon to warm his permanently cold body. Dean sighed contentedly and nestled into his lover’s warmth.

“So… love, huh?” Hummed Castiel. “The big, evil, scary demon just wants to be loved?”

Dean nodded with a smile. “Looks like.”

“I can do that,” commented Castiel. “As long as you tell me more about yourself,” he winked and Dean chuckled and hugged him tight.

“I’ll tell you anything you want to know.”

“How do angels feed on love?”

“Similar to how pagan demigods do. They need followers or worshippers. The more people who pray to them or follow their religion, the stronger they are.”

“So why can demons feed on fear?”

“Because not many people will willingly follow a demon. Demons are usually evil, whatever the religion, which means people are frightened of them. Nobody prays to a demon so they survive on the victim’s fear.”

“But you can also survive on love?”

“It would make sense considering all demons are fallen angels. We retained some remnants of our past lives; our ability to survive on love.”

“And that’s better than fear? Stronger?”

“A bond built on fear will easily bend and shatter. A bond built on love grows strong and true.”

“Poetic.”

“You can use it in your book.”

Castiel closed his eyes and lay his head on Dean’s shoulder, smiling when the demon stroked his back gently.

“We should probably get cleaned up,” murmured Castiel after a few peaceful moments.

“And we’d better be quick because I’ve almost run out of apartments to reroute the water pipes from.”

“…Dean!”

* * *
Castiel frowned as he blinked awake sleepily. Dean was wrapped around his back like usual but he swore he’d heard a noise from the living room. Maybe he’d smelled something strange? Maybe the atmosphere had suddenly turned colder? He wasn’t entirely sure, but something had woken him.

He carefully slid out of bed, attempting not to disturb Dean and he treaded quietly into the living room, pausing when he saw a figure huddled in the corner of the room.

He scowled and glanced into the kitchen, wondering how quiet he could be in grabbing a knife, but startled when he turned again to find the figure standing at its full height, at least ten feet tall.

Not a burglar then.

It was shrouded in darkness and Castiel flipped on the light switch and smelled the sulphur before he even whirled back around.

When his brain finally registered what was happening, he was on the floor, a sharp claw pressed into his throat and a scaly grey head staring directly at him, wings wide and teeth bared. Unlike Dean’s, its horns were curled like a ram’s and its white eyes were cold and unfriendly. It snarled intimidatingly.

Then it opened its jaws and lunged for Castiel’s neck.

“DEAN!” Screamed Castiel, squeezing his eyes shut in terror.

There was a yelp and an unearthly snarl, followed by thumping and hissing and claws tearing into scales and Castiel opened his eyes to find Dean in his alternate form battling with the other demon, claws and teeth and blood everywhere.

They snarled and roared in some foreign language no human had any hopes of understanding and the grey demon bared his teeth at Castiel again, only to get a claw to the face from Dean.

Dean made sure to stand in front of Castiel at all times, protecting him from view of the other demon and when his enemy lunged at him to take a chunk out of his neck, Dean swung his horns at him and the demon yelped as they pierced his side.

Dean snarled in challenge once more and the demon launched itself at him, rolling him onto his back and wounding him with sharp teeth and claws, but Dean was determined to protect his lover and he threw his enemy into a wall before morphing into his humanoid form with a hiss.

“This is my territory, Alastair,” he snarled. “Get out!”

The grey demon morphed into a smug-looking male with a scruffy beard and a bony face and he chuckled at Dean condescendingly.

“You’re sleeping with it,” he drawled, gesturing to Castiel and Dean stiffened, tail beating the floor.

“Leave!”

“I saw you,” goaded Alastair. “Lucifer won’t be pleased, Dean-o.”

Dean growled and took a step towards the other demon, brandishing a silver blade he’d seemingly created out of thin air.

“I said: get out.”
Alastair produced his own blade, similar to the one Dean held.

“It’s soul’s looking a little battered there,” grinned Alastair. “Does it know what you’ve condemned it to?”

Dean flinched but didn’t move from his position in front of Castiel.

“Blood red,” taunted Alastair. “Like the rack it’ll be tortured on for all eternity.”

“Over my dead body,” hissed Dean and Alastair smirked.

“That can be arranged.”

Alastair leaped at Dean, blades clashing and Castiel gasped when Dean cried out in agony as the weapon sliced into his arm. The human raced into the spare room where he kept the salt and barrel of holy water he’d used when he first met Dean. He filled a flask of water and grabbed a small bag of salt before running into the living room to find the two bloody demons wrestling for dominance.

“Move!” Yelled Castiel and Dean’s eyes widened when he spotted what Castiel had in mind. He snapped his fingers and appeared on the opposite side of the room.

Alastair glanced around in confusion and screeched in burning agony when Castiel threw the salt over him, splashing the holy water at his face. His flesh bubbled and smoked and melted down to the muscle and bone and with a snap of his fingers, he was gone.

Castiel rushed over to his wounded lover, but Dean jumped backwards, holding his arms up in fear.

“Wash your hands!” He yelped and Castiel froze and stared at the concoction of salt and water on his palms.

He winced in embarrassment and rushed to the kitchen to wash his hands before returning to his lover.

“Can you heal?” Asked Castiel softly as he inspected some of the nastier wounds. Dean shook his head.

“Quicker than a human, but some of these were caused by angel blade. They’ll take a while.”

“What about the claw marks?”

“Slower than usual but quicker than the ones caused by blade.”

Castiel’s mouth drew into a thin line.

“Let me suture them.”

Dean raised an eyebrow. “Do you know how to do that?”

“I read a lot. Besides, it’s just like stitching clothing.”

“That makes me feel so much better,” Dean muttered drily and Castiel rolled his eyes.

“I’ll be annoyed if you bleed over the carpet or white bed sheets.”

Dean pouted and let Castiel drag him towards the bathroom.
He sat on the toilet seat lid like a petulant child and remained silent as the human sutured the deep slice in his arm.

“What did he mean when he said my soul was ‘cherry red’?” Asked Castiel quietly and Dean closed his eyes in shame.

“…It means I’ve been selfish,” whispered Dean. “I let you sleep with me, knowing the consequences of what it meant for your soul.”

“You mean… when I die, I go to Hell,” murmured Castiel and Dean flinched and nodded, gaze not meeting the human’s.

“What colour should my soul be?”

“White. A bright white that shines with innocence and generosity and goodness.”

“…It’s all red?”

Dean nodded guiltily. “Being in the presence of a demon for so long does that to you. The fact you’ve slept with me only quickens the effects.”

“But you’re not evil,” frowned Castiel and Dean blinked in surprise.

“…I kind of am. I’m a demon, Cas. Comes with the job title.”

“Then why did you say you wouldn’t let me go to Hell?”

Dean glanced away. “Because I’m going to do everything in my power to make sure the angels realise you’re a good person. I’ll break you out of Hell myself if I have to. I’ll carry you to Heaven even if it means my wings will be burned off.”

Castiel’s heart ached in longing and he leaned his forehead against Dean’s.

“You’re not evil, Dean.”

“…Thanks, Cas.”

Castiel sutured the rest of Dean’s wounds in silence.

* * *

Castiel felt guiltier with every passing day. He left the flat for work and occasionally went on a night out with his new friends, but Dean was tied to the house until the day Castiel moved out. The demon couldn’t leave and that had to be a boring life, no matter how many invisible dimensions he could disappear into.

“But how can you spend the rest of your existence jumping from house to house and doing nothing until the owner arrives home? Aren’t you bored?” Castiel asked as they cuddled on the couch, Dean holding his human as the author read ‘To kill a mockingbird’.

Dean splayed his hand over his lover’s belly and Castiel shivered at first before placing his palm over Dean’s cold hand and shoving it up his shirt to warm it.
“Sometimes. But it’s not like I have a choice. I can’t just wander free; Lucifer made it so we have to tie ourselves to something. That way, he can keep track of us.”

“Can you tie yourself to anything or does it have to be someone’s home?” Asked Castiel with a frown and Dean squeezed him gently.

“Has to be a building with people in it, but they don’t have to live there. As long as it’s used frequently by humans, otherwise, we starve.”

Castiel huffed childishly and snuggled into his lover’s chest.

“So, you can’t tie yourself to an object? Or a person?”

“Only spirits can tie themselves to objects,” murmured Dean before falling quiet and it didn’t slip Castiel’s notice that the demon had failed to mention anything about his other suggestion.

“What about a person?”

Dean shifted uncomfortably.

“There are… methods.”

“Such as?” Castiel perked up, turning to his lover and Dean glanced away, troubled.

“There are two methods. Number one is possession, where you take over the human’s body and suppress their soul, but it’s painful for the human and draining for the demon. Not to mention there’s a high chance of killing the human. I’ve never done it and I don’t plan on trying it.”

“What’s the second option?” Asked Castiel curiously and Dean fiddled with his tail.

“Number two is… ah… bonding.”

“Bonding?”

“As in binding grace to grace or grace to soul. It’s like transferring a bit of yourself to your partner and vice versa.”

Castiel sat upright.

“So, if you were to do that with me, would that mean you’d have the freedom to go wherever I go?”

“It would mean I’d have the freedom to go wherever, full stop.”

Castiel smiled. “Then let’s do that.”

Dean huffed in amusement. “Woah, Cas. Bonding is… bonding is quite the commitment. It can never be undone. It’s a permanent link to each other’s true self and there are no secrets kept between either party because the bond reveals all. It’s a show of trust and love and those who choose the wrong mate can go crazy from it. The bond reveals emotions and thoughts and if you’re not one-hundred-percent certain you’re in the right relationship, a bond will slowly kill you whilst making you despise the person you’re tied to. There are few beings who share mating bonds.”

Castiel frowned and slumped back onto the demon’s chest.

“Why is everything always death and eternity with you guys?”
Dean chuckled and kissed his lover’s hair.

“It’s not all bad. If you get the right mate, it’s the most intimate, rewarding and sacred connection you can share with someone. Every angel’s dream is to share themselves like that with someone who fully accepts and loves them.”

“That’s probably every human’s dream too,” commented Castiel and Dean smirked and hugged his lover tightly.

“We have time,” he hummed and Castiel’s heart back-flipped in joy at the hope that comment filled him with. Dean hadn’t ruled the option out.

His smile faded.

“…Dean?”

“Hm?”

“If I move out… what happens to you? Will you move on to a new house? Will you go back to scaring people?” He glanced away. “Will you follow me?”

“I’d follow you,” answered Dean smoothly. “Unless you didn’t want me to for some reason. You’re not getting rid of me that easily.”

“…And when I die?”

Dean’s smile vanished as he pressed his lips gently to Castiel’s head.

“We’ll cross that bridge when we get there.”

“…I won’t live forever, Dean.”

“No, but you’ve still got a long way to go, little human.”

Castiel smiled at the nickname and returned to his book as he settled back against Dean’s body.

Chapter End Notes

I realised I've been spelling Alastair's name wrong in every fic I've ever written. I'm not going back to change it though because I'm lazy.
Chapter 5

It had been three years since Dean had first started haunting Castiel’s home.

Castiel was three quarters of the way through writing his novel and Dean had settled into his life quite comfortably. The only thing wrong was that Dean was tied to the house, unable to leave.

Castiel knew Dean wouldn’t be able to go out in public with the wings, horns and tail giving his true nature away, but the demon had admitted he could hide them for a short time, even if it expended a lot of energy.

That didn’t mean they couldn’t travel by night, when no one was around. Castiel adored the idea of relaxing in a park with Dean at midnight, watching the stars or doing anything with him really, as long as it was away from the apartment.

Dean never complained though. If he was bored, he never showed or voiced it and Castiel just wished the demon could live out a normal life without all the curses the angels had cast upon him.

Then one day, Dean finally admitted what he wanted.

Dean was nervous; that much was clear.

Castiel was cooking; a taco mix he knew Dean enjoyed the flavours of, and the demon was hovering behind him, watching him silently. It was unlike Dean to be so quiet and Castiel had to wonder if everything was alright.

Then the demon slid his arms around Castiel’s waist and pressed his lips to the back of his neck and the human smiled because that was more in character with his lover.

“Smells good,” murmured Dean softly and Castiel placed a sweet kiss against his cheek before focusing on their meal. Dean didn’t need to eat but that didn’t mean he didn’t like to.

“You look gorgeous,” whispered Dean, nuzzling his hair and Castiel huffed a quiet laugh.

“I’m in my work clothes.”

“You always look gorgeous.”

The demon’s cool hand skittered down his side and up the front of his shirt to rest against the bare skin of his chest. Castiel shivered at first at the temperature change, but he soon acclimatised.

Dean kissed his jaw tenderly and Castiel leaned into him. His demon was very affectionate today.

Dean said nothing more as Castiel finished cooking and started scraping the mix of chicken and peppers and onions into a bowl to be placed onto the table with the taco shells, cheese and salsa.

Just as he was about to move the bowl, Dean gently spun him around and snaked his arms around his middle, leaning their foreheads together.

“I really love you, Cas,” he whispered. “I’ve never felt this way about anyone.”

Castiel frowned lightly in concern and he cupped the demon’s cheek.

“I love you too, Dean. What’s brought this on? Is everything okay?”
Dean gulped in a steadying breath before taking a step backwards so Castiel could see all of him.

“I… I love you, Cas… and that’s why I… I’m asking you to be my mate.”

Castiel froze as Dean stared at him nervously, tail twitching and writhing as his wings flicked restlessly.

“Before you answer,” continued Dean as Castiel opened his mouth, “you need to think carefully about what this means. You need to take a long look at what I am, at what I’m capable of, at what I’ve done. You need to understand the danger you’ll be in because of me; from angels and demons and other supernatural beings.

“And you need to understand what this means for your soul. If we bond, a part of my grace will be transferred to you. You’ll have a piece of demon inside you and that means you can never go to Heaven. This bond is permanent. It can never be broken, except for by death. If we fall out of love… if we end up despising one another… the bond will drive us both to insanity. It may well kill us if we don’t take our own lives beforehand.

“You’ll know everything about me just as I’ll know all your innermost secrets. We won’t be able to hide from each other and it will be difficult to control at first. We’ll be able to feel each other all the time.”

Castiel clamped his mouth shut as Dean closed his eyes, letting that sink in. Finally, he allowed himself a small smile.

“However… if you choose to go through with it… know that this is the most sacred and intimate connection any two beings can share. Few humans, if any, will get the opportunity to experience a bond so deep. If done correctly, the bond will deepen our trust and love for one another. We’ll each be able to draw strength from it and I can assure you it’ll be the most beautiful experience you’ll ever have.

“The bond will grow over time, strengthening the longer we care for each other and it has been said that in some rare cases… some bonds are so strong that not even death can sever them and the mates will always find each other, no matter what separates them.

“I trust you, Cas. I want to show you everything. I want to share myself with you… but you’ve got to be absolutely certain that’s what you want too. There can’t be any doubts.”

Dean spread his wings wide either side of him and focused his inky gaze on the human, shifting his tail into view.

“I’m a demon, Cas, first and foremost. You have to remember that when you make your decision. You can take as long as you want to decide; years if you wish… but when you answer, you have to be absolutely sure of yourself, whatever you decide.”

Castiel nodded slowly and drank in the sight of Dean. Even with his wings raised and tail swinging, Castiel wasn’t afraid of the demon. He hadn’t been afraid of the demon in years. His inhuman appearance didn’t bother Castiel in the slightest; if anything, it made Dean far more interesting than any human lover. Dean’s past was what it was. Castiel couldn’t change it and neither could Dean and if anything, Castiel thought Dean’s punishment was cruel and unfair. He hadn’t deserved to fall.

And as for his soul? It was already tarnished. Why not make it a masterpiece?

It wasn’t as if he wanted to be with the angels who mutilated Dean anyway. Why would he want to
go to Heaven if angels were like that?

Castiel already trusted Dean; he’d protected him enough times in the past, so trust definitely wasn’t an issue.

Neither was love. They both had that one down to a T.

…So, what was it he was supposed to be worried about? A lifetime spent with Dean? Maybe an eternity?

Sounded like paradise.

“I’ve decided,” Castiel announced and Dean blinked in surprise.

“You shouldn’t rush into-”

“Dean. Stop. I understand you have a tendency to think so little of yourself, but for once can you try to observe things from my perspective?” Huffed Castiel. “I can barely go an hour without thinking of you. When I’m at work, I wish you were with me. When I go out with my friends, I leave early so I can come home to see you. I feel safe when I’m with you. My favourite hobby is reading in your arms. I refer to you as ‘my demon’ in my head. I can’t stop telling my friends about you and then I have to cover my mistakes when I realise they don’t know you’re not human. Sometimes I forget you’re not human. I’m writing a book about you, for goodness’ sake!”

Dean snapped his jaw shut and Castiel padded over to him, lacing their fingers together.

“I’ve never been more sure of anything in my entire life. I want this. I want you. I want to spend the rest of my life with you. I want to be able to show you more than this tiny apartment.”

“Cas, you can’t make this decision lightly-”

The human brushed a thumb over his demon’s cheek.

“I’m not. I want to know all of you Dean; your happiest moments and your saddest. Your mistakes and your kindness. I want to know what your grace feels like. I need you.”

Dean was quiet for a few moments, searching Castiel’s face for the truth behind his words and when he saw it, his eyes widened and he gulped, not quite able to grasp the fact that this was really happening.

“Cas… will you bond with me?” He whispered and a smile blossomed over the human’s face.

“Yes.”

Dean’s wings fluttered excitedly, tail wagging like a happy puppy’s and a grin crawled over the demon’s face as he took a step forwards and crushed their lips together.

“Leave the chicken,” Castiel mumbled, tangling his hand in the demon’s hair and Dean chuckled quietly as he hoisted the human onto his hips.

“It’ll go cold.”

“I’ll reheat it!” Hissed Castiel. “Now get on that bed and mate me, demon!”

Dean rumbled and with a click of his fingers, they were naked and sprawled over the bed. Dean was taken off-guard when Castiel suddenly pushed him onto his back and ravished his mouth like a
man starving for air and he clutched the human tightly, wrapping his wings around him in a show of possessiveness that turned Castiel on more than he’d like to admit.

“It’ll hurt,” warned Dean as Castiel began rolling their hips together. “You’ll be losing a piece of yourself.”

“And gaining part of you,” countered Castiel. “I can endure a little pain.”

Dean attacked his human’s lips again, desperate and needy and Castiel massaged the bases of his wings, making him groan softly in approval.

Dean could feel himself warming up beneath Castiel’s body. He loved being in bed with Castiel because the human always found a way to keep him warm, especially during sex, where Castiel’s hot hands would roam over every inch of his skin. He would wrap his body around Dean whenever he could; legs around hips, arms around his back or stomach, with his front plastered against the demon’s spine or chest and Dean adored every second of Castiel’s skin against his.

Their frantic movements calmed until all that was left was love and adoration and tenderness and they set up a steady rhythm for the grinding to follow. Dean tugged his lover into his chest, mouths still attached until the entire length of their bodies were sliding against one another.

Dean petted his human’s hair, his other hand splayed over his back and Castiel tightened his grip on the demon’s wings, smiling when he felt a tail coil around his leg.

Dean performed his lube trick on himself and Castiel chuckled.

“Is that a request?” He asked and Dean winked, a groan escaping his lips when Castiel carefully opened him up.

They kissed lovingly for a few minutes as Castiel worked his fingers inside the demon, then Dean grew impatient and threw his legs around the human’s waist.

“Cas,” he whined and the human’s hand trailed up to Dean’s erection instead, teasing at it for a few moments until the demon nuzzled his cheek.

“C’mon, Cas. Need you.”

The human kissed him gently. “You’re being impatient today,” he breathed but lined himself up, ready.

“Excited,” Dean admitted quietly as he cupped his lover’s cheek and Castiel grinned at the answer, heart fluttering.

He slid into Dean and the demon closed his eyes with a quiet moan, holding his lover close.

Cas’ thrusts were deep and slow and he worked Dean’s stiff length as he moved, watching his expression of bliss and admiring his full lips and short stubble. Dean opened his eyes until they were half-lidded and Castiel felt a thrill shoot through him at the sight of that inky gaze. He pressed their lips together dotingly.

“I love you, Cas,” breathed Dean and the human buried his nose into the demon’s neck, focusing on Dean’s panted breaths and the fingers carding through his hair.

“I love you too, Dean,” whispered Castiel, nipping at the demon’s neck when his lover arched off the bed after a particularly deep thrust.
“You sure you want this?” Panted Dean. “You sure you want to be tied to me for the rest of your life?”

“Yes,” growled Castiel, sucking a love bite into Dean’s shoulder. “I want to belong to you. I want you to belong to me. I want all of you; everything you were, are and could be.”

Dean gulped and captured his lips hungrily and Castiel felt something… prod his… mind? No, not his mind… his heart? No, that couldn’t be right either.

Was that his soul?

Whatever was poking it was smooth like silk… warm and gentle and tender. It sort of… brushed Castiel’s soul… a request maybe? It slid over his soul like a caress and Castiel relaxed and somehow granted it access. It gingerly prodded at the exposed inside of Castiel’s soul and at first, the touch stung, but it stroked his soul again and Castiel grinned because Dean’s grace was poking curiously at his soul… trying to work out what to do.

He continued his thrusts inside the demon as Dean figured out how to merge their beings and their lips sought one another out again as they neared their climax. Castiel pumped Dean’s erection, making the demon growl in want and he knew Dean was reaching completion when his lips parted slightly, back arching and muscles tensing.

Castiel quickened his pace, feeling his own muscles beginning to tense and he aimed for Dean’s sweet spot, making the demon whimper in pure pleasure.

A few seconds later, they growled each other’s names, Dean clutching Castiel’s back and hair as the human tugged the demon’s wings and Dean’s grace nose-dived into Castiel’s soul.

The pain blinded every sense Castiel had and he cried out in agony, his body feeling as though it was trying to tear itself in two. It was as though someone had taken a power-drill to his brain and had thrown a party with an assortment of other power tools. He squeezed his eyes shut and saw colours flash behind his lids, dazing him and his ears were deafened by white noise.

He heard Dean whine in similar agony and only realised he was crying when the demon held him tight and tucked his head into his neck.

He couldn’t think clearly. His head was pounding and his body felt like a hundred knives were tearing through it. He sobbed into Dean’s neck and the demon whined louder in distress, knowing he was causing his lover pain as well as himself. Two leathery wings cocooned Castiel and his grace was torn between recoiling from the source of its pain or soothing Castiel’s agony.

He pushed through with the bonding though because he knew the pain wouldn’t last forever.

Eventually, Castiel’s senses cleared even though his mind and body were in turmoil and he felt Dean nuzzling his cheek, tears rolling down his face as he tried to comfort Castiel.

“I’m sorry,” whispered Dean. “I’m so sorry. It’ll be over soon. Don’t cry. Please don’t cry. I’m sorry. I love you so much. I’m sorry,” he babbled frantically and Castiel pressed further into his neck, focusing on Dean’s voice rather than the pain.

The tearing and banging subsided after a few seconds which felt like hours, leaving a couple of aches behind and for a few minutes, neither human nor demon moved, holding each other and taking comfort in each other’s presence.

Then Dean stroked Castiel’s hair worriedly.
“Cas?” He breathed. “You okay?”

The human nodded slowly and Dean let out a relieved huff of air, hugging him tighter.

“I’m sorry. I should’ve given you a warning.”

Castiel pressed a careful kiss to Dean’s jaw.

“Are you okay?”

“Yeah,” sighed Dean resignedly.

Something gingerly caressed his raw soul and Castiel melted into the touch, trying to snuggle as close as possible to the soothing object.

“You feel that?” Asked Dean breathily, tone awed and Castiel nodded, a grin crawling across his lips.

He tried to offer Dean the same comfort, but he wasn’t accustomed to being aware of his soul and he was clumsy and heavy-handed at first, making Dean grimace. Castiel winced and tried again and this time, Dean relaxed, his grace leaning into Castiel’s soul.

They comforted and calmed each other like that for a few minutes until Dean kissed his lover’s forehead.

“We’ll have to renew the bond every so often to keep it strong at first.”

Castiel’s eyes widened and he glanced at Dean nervously but the demon brushed a hand over his cheek.

“It won’t feel like that. It’ll feel good because the bond has already been forged. Pleasurable.”

Castiel relaxed in relief and nestled into the demon’s body, ignoring his lingering aches.

Dean frowned lightly and touched his forehead and suddenly, the pain disappeared entirely.

“How did you—”

“Bond hides no secrets, remember? I can feel you. I can feel what you feel. If you concentrate, you’ll be able to feel me,” murmured Dean.

Castiel fell silent and focused on the bond, gasping when he felt a slither of amusement that definitely wasn’t his own. He latched onto it and used it to explore the bond further and cocked an eyebrow when Dean closed his eyes, head falling backwards in what appeared to be pleasure.

Curious, Castiel wrapped his soul around Dean’s raw grace, healing it with as much tender care as he could offer and the demon’s lips parted in bliss, a smile touching his face.

When he opened his eyes, they were a sparkling green.

Castiel gazed into those human eyes in wonder, hand reaching up to cup his lover’s cheek.

“You feel amazing,” breathed Dean with a toothy grin and Castiel could see his little fangs. “You have no idea how long it’s been since…” he trailed off as he tried to mould his grace around Castiel’s soul.
Castiel smiled as he peppered kisses over Dean’s jaw.

“Since…?” He prompted and Dean leaned their foreheads together.

“Since anyone has touched my grace,” he murmured. “Angels used to grace share all the time… it was how we expressed our love for one another. When I was cast out…” He closed his eyes sadly at the memory before smiling softly at Castiel, eyes still green.

“But this is so much better than anything I’ve ever had before. Your soul… it’s not just touching my grace… it’s a part of it. I can feel all of you…”

They shared a long, loving kiss as they explored each other and that was when the first memory hit Castiel.

He was surrounded by creatures with wings and halos. They were frowning at him, judging him and Castiel felt ashamed for some reason.

Before him stood a stern-looking creature with six huge silver wings and a matching halo. His silver eyes narrowed into a glare and his white and gold-robed body seemed to glow with his anger.

“You have disobeyed me,” stated the silver-winged angel and his voice was crisp and precise; unearthly.

Castiel shook his head. “A mere child. A fledgling. It was innocent.”

“An abomination,” bellowed the silver-winged angel. “Whose fate is to destroy humanity. And you offered it your aid and support.”

“No,” Castiel found himself saying desperately. “Its parents will guide it. They will teach it the rules of good and evil. It doesn’t have to be destroyed.”

“Traitor,” seethed the other angel as cries of “Betrayer!” and “Deceiver!” rang out behind him from those gathered to bear witness.

“No,” Castiel begged. “Its grace was pure. It has done no wrong!”

“On your knees,” sneered the silver-winged angel and Castiel’s wings trembled in fear.

“Please, Michael. It doesn’t have to be this way!”

“On your knees, Dean!” Snarled Michael boldly and Castiel found himself dropping to his knees, afraid and alone as Michael produced a mighty silver sword, long and heavy with flames dancing down its length.

“You’re charged with the betrayal of the Host and are proclaimed an enemy of Earth. You will suffer for eternity for your crimes and will be banished from Heaven and cast into the Pit to serve Lucifer, where you will live out your disgraced existence until you are found by one of our siblings and slaughtered. Do you understand?”

Castiel whimpered, wings shaking as he shook his head.

“It was an innocent child,” he pleaded, but Michael would have none of it.

He brandished his sword and slashed at something above Castiel’s head and Castiel cried out in burning agony as his halo was torn into two pieces, vanishing without a trace.
As he was recovering, Michael slammed his palm onto Castiel’s forehead and he screamed as two long horns were dragged from his skull to replace the shattered halo.

A wooden bowl of black powder appeared in Michael’s hand and he took a handful and scattered over Castiel’s body before chanting low and ominously in a way that had Castiel’s wings plastering themselves to his back.

He could smell the faint aroma of sulphur and he gasped when he felt a tail extend itself from the base of his spine. It was black and scaly; reptilian and a few surrounding angels eyed him in disgust.

Michael leaned in close to his face.

“Now you can be like the abominations you so valiantly protect.”

Then he tore a hole in the ground with his flaming sword and shoved Castiel into it.

Castiel cried fearfully as he fell through the atmosphere. He felt the beautiful feathers from his wings burning away and when he plunged through the depths of Hell, they were replaced by a black, leathery substance; ugly and cold.

He slammed into the ground and remained there for a few minutes, body burned and battered from his fall and when he finally looked up, another angel stood before him with a twisted smirk and six tattered, bronze wings.

“Well, well, well. What kind of toy have they sent me now?” The other angel chuckled darkly and Castiel was hoisted off the ground by his throat.

“What pretty green eyes,” hummed the other angel. “We’ll have to do something about that.”

A piercing pain shot behind Castiel’s eyes and his vision suddenly dulled as black dilated his eyeball, hiding the green forever.

The angel abruptly dropped Castiel and he slumped to the floor with a grunt.

“You’ll have to pick out your new form,” smirked the angel and Castiel’s eyes widened.

“No. Lucifer, please! Brother, have mercy,” he begged desperately but Lucifer merely grinned wider and clicked his fingers.

A pair of Hellhounds took to his sides; huge and black with glowing red eyes and too many rows of teeth. They snarled at Castiel before lunging for him and dragging him by his wings and tail to wherever Lucifer was taking him to create his alternate demonic form.

Castiel was suddenly dragged out of the memory by a wary Dean.

“You don’t want to go any further,” he murmured. “Things get… messy after that.”

Castiel’s eyes widened and he slung his arms around the demon’s neck, tears he didn’t even know he was crying rolling down his cheeks as he pressed their foreheads together.

“How could they do that to you?” Hissed Castiel. “Your own family? How could they hurt you like that?”

Dean snuggled into his lover, holding him close.
“What’s done is done,” he whispered. “Things are different now.” He cupped the human’s cheek and Castiel leaned into his palm.

“They’ll never hurt you again. I won’t let them.”

Dean smiled in amusement but kissed the human’s head anyway.

“I know you won’t, mate.”

Castiel blinked at the term before a small smile tugged at his lips.

“I’m your mate?”

Dean grinned and poked at the human’s soul playfully. “What do you think?”

The demon purred happily when Castiel peppered sloppy kisses over his face.

“You’re stuck with me now,” chuckled Dean and Castiel nuzzled his cheek.

“Good.”

They stayed up for another three hours, exploring the bond and each other and when Castiel finally needed to sleep, he wrapped himself around Dean protectively (to the endless amusement of the demon) and cuddled close to his grace. When he drifted off, Dean was so content that he decided to follow suit.

Neither of them noticed the bit of blackness that flaked off Dean’s grace.

* * *

As Dean had predicted, the bond presented many challenges but also a lot of pleasure. They were privy to each other’s memories and emotions at the most random of times, which was sometimes problematic and sometimes the greatest thing ever because when Dean caught the memory of Castiel moaning beneath another male college student as he thrusted into Castiel fast and rough, a woman beside them trailing her tongue over Castiel’s body hotly as she worked his erection, the demon had grown possessive and jealous and Castiel hadn’t been allowed to leave their bedroom for five whole hours until Dean had sufficiently proven the human belonged to him.

There was also the bonus of Dean being allowed out of the flat.

The pair had spent nearly every night for the past month exploring different parts of the world at night. Dean was a talented flier and he was ecstatic to finally be allowed out the stuffy apartment; he wanted to show Castiel everything and the human was all too happy to be held in his arms as they soared around the skies under the stars.

When they learned to control their bond a little better, Castiel asked if Dean wanted to accompany him on a night out with his friends.

Dean agreed.

His eyes had returned to their demonic black the morning after he and Castiel had bonded, but neither minded. Dean would cover them with a pair of sunglasses on the night out and he could
make his wings, tail and horns disappear for a few hours; it was a ‘gift’ Lucifer had given demons to allow them to blend in more with humanity, but it was energy-draining so they couldn’t keep it up for long.

Castiel’s friends were excited to finally meet the man Castiel had wittered on and on about. He’d made the excuse that their relationship was long-distance and that’s why Dean could never come out with them, but he had a feeling his friends didn’t buy the explanation. When Dean showed up to The Roadhouse, mindful to keep his fangs hidden when he smiled, Castiel’s friends grinned and welcomed him with a flourish and a whole lot of fussing.

“I can certainly see why you’ve been hiding him from us, Cas,” smirked Jo, gaze roaming over Dean’s handsome face and muscular body. “I might have stolen him from you.”

Dean chuckled and took a seat beside his mate.

“You must be Jo. Castiel had told me many things about you.”

“All good things, I hope?”

“ Mostly,” Dean smirked as Ellen bustled over with a tray of drinks.

“Well, if it isn’t Castiel’s mystery man. You gonna wear those ridiculous sun glasses all night or will we actually get to see all of your face at some point?” Teased Ellen and Dean smiled.

“Ah, sorry. Eye strain. My doctor told me to keep the lights low, hence the shades,” he said smoothly and Ellen nodded in understanding.

“I can dim the lights if you want?”

“No need, ma’am, but thanks for the offer.”

Ellen smiled, pleased by his politeness and she shuffled away again to grab some bar snacks.

“Cas tells us you’re from out of town,” hummed Garth. “Where abouts?”

Dean chuckled as Castiel smiled knowingly.

“Ah… a long, long way away from Kansas, I can tell you that.”

“…What like… Europe?”

Dean bit back a grin. “Something like that.”

“Don’t leave us in suspense!” Demanded Jo and Dean shook his head with a smile.

“Um… well, it’s extremely cold and everyone’s just dying to go there.”

Castiel choked on his drink and Ash snapped his fingers.

“Norway.”

“…Got it in one,” smirked Dean as Castiel bit back his laughter.

“You don’t sound Norwegian,” commented Benny idly before offering his hand. “Sorry, where are my manners? Benny Lafitte.”
Dean nodded and clasped his hand firmly, but the moment their skin touched, both men’s eyes widened in surprise before narrowing at each other.

Dean slipped his hand out of the other man’s freezing grip and subtly pressed closer to his mate as the others watched in confusion at the sudden hostility between Benny and Dean.

“Y’know,” Benny began as Ellen returned to their table with a bowl of pretzels, cheesy nachos and an assortment of other snacks. “I’m real curious about what you’re hidin’ beneath those glasses. One peek won’t strain your eyes, will it?”

Castiel stiffened as Ellen frowned at Benny.

“Benny, I thought your manners were better than that?” She scolded but the other man merely narrowed his eyes further.

“C’mon, Dean. Give us a glimpse.”

“I’d rather not,” warned Dean lowly and Castiel squeezed his arm in confusion.

Benny crossed his arms as he leaned back in his chair.

“Alright. Why don’t you show us your wings then? Or maybe your horns? How about the tail? You’ve not strained them too, have you?”

Ellen, Jo, Garth and Ash whirled to face Dean in shock and Castiel’s eyes widened, heart racing as he realised Benny knew what Dean was.

Benny huffed and opened his mouth and Castiel gasped as human teeth suddenly extended into long, needle-like things, perfect for puncturing flesh. Castiel plastered himself against the back of his chair and Dean slung a protective arm around his shoulder as he cast his gaze to Ellen.

“Didn’t know you were in the habit of employing vampires,” he commented and Ellen scowled at him.

“What are you?”

Dean slowly removed his glasses to reveal his inky gaze, his horns, tail and wings sprouting from his body. He stretched his wings and ran his tongue over his sharp canines as he glanced at Castiel’s colleagues and suddenly, there was a whirlwind of movement.

Sweet, placid Garth snarled viciously at Dean and Castiel yelped as the man morphed into a huge brown and white wolf, hackles raised and teeth bared at Dean. Benny jumped to his feet, needle-like teeth exposed and sharp claws extending from his fingertips. Ellen grabbed a gun from her hip, aiming it towards Dean’s head and Jo uncapped a flask full of holy water from a pocket in her jacket. Ash grabbed the salt shaker from the middle of the table.

Dean stared at them all, barely blinking and he tapped his fingers over the table as he assessed the
“I wasn’t expecting wolf-man. I’ll give you that,” he commented and Garth growled louder at him.

“Get out of my bar, you filthy abomination,” hissed Ellen, clicking the safety catch off.

Castiel angled himself in front of her weapon with wide, shocked eyes.

“Wait! Dean won’t hurt anybody; he’s not like that-”

“Whoever ‘Dean’ was, he’s gone now,” said Jo as she glared disgustedly at the demon. “I’m sorry, Cas, but your boyfriend’s been possessed by this… monster. I doubt he’s still alive.”

“Just back away slowly from the demon,” said Benny. “He won’t hurt you so long as we’re here.”

Dean cocked an amused eyebrow as Castiel scowled at his colleagues.

“Why would he hurt me? I’m his mate!”


Dean chuckled and Garth snarled again as Jo narrowed her eyes.

“You think it’s funny you’re about to die?”

Dean smiled at her cheerily. “Nope. I think it’s funny how you’ve not noticed Cas is the only one who didn’t flinch when I showed you my pretty wings.”

The group paused and their gazes flicked over to the fuming Castiel, his arms crossed over his chest as he scowled at them.

“I’m well aware my mate is a demon,” he snapped. “I’m well aware I’ve been living with a demon for three whole years. What I wasn’t aware of is the fact that I also seem to be working with a werewolf and a vampire!”

Garth’s ears lowered as Benny blinked in surprise.

“When was anyone going to inform me of that fact?” Seethed Castiel. “Because it looks like the rest of you knew.”

Ellen frowned. “And when were you going to tell us you’re in a relationship with a demon?”

Castiel glared at her gun pointedly.

“I’m rather glad I didn’t.”

Ellen slowly lowered the gun.

“Not like it could’ve killed me anyway,” commented Dean.

“Shut up, Dean,” growled Castiel.

“Yes, love.”

Ash and Jo shared a shocked glance before lowering their respective ‘weapons’. Garth stopped growling and tilted his head in confusion as Benny retracted his claws.
“Dean won’t harm anyone,” said Castiel. “I assure you. He’s not evil or cruel. He’s actually saved my life twice. We share a grace-to-soul bond.”

The others eyed the demon distrusting but Dean merely grinned at them and laced his fingers with Castiel’s.

“You don’t think Cas would’ve brought me here if he thought I was going to harm you, do you? Even if you don’t trust me, surely you can trust him?”

The others mulled this over for a few moments before slowly nodding and taking their seats, Garth morphing back into his human form warily as Benny retracted his teeth.

Castiel slowly sat down and there was a long, awkward silence before Castiel glanced at Benny.

“So, do you drink human blood?” He blurted and Benny blinked as Dean snorted.

“That is a very good question,” he grinned as he turned his gaze upon the vampire, tail flicking in amusement. “Do you take the odd customer into the back room so you can bite their neck?”

Castiel stared in horror as Benny folded his arms.

“Of course not. Animal blood does just the same job as human.”

Dean raised a disbelieving eyebrow and Benny glanced away.

“…And I sometimes steal blood packs from the hospital,” he admitted sheepishly. “But only enough to tide me over!”

Dean chuckled and Benny began to relax when he realised no one was glancing at him in disgust.

“…Do you ever drink from anyone?” Asked Castiel curiously and he was surprised when Jo pulled her sleeve up to reveal a faded bite mark.

“Mom and Ash have them too,” she supplied and Benny glanced away guiltily.

“Sometimes it’s too risky to break into the hospital and animal blood isn’t enough to keep me alive. I try not to but when I’m very weak, it’s hard to refuse when they offer to help.”

Dean raised his eyebrows, impressed. “Must take a lot of control to stop.”

“It does,” confirmed Benny. “That’s why I don’t like doing it. I never know if one day, I’ll keep going and…” He trailed off and Ellen put a gentle hand on his shoulder.

Dean tilted his head and after a moment snapped his fingers.

A black can appeared in front of Benny with an elaborate red label reading ‘The Vampire Juice Box’. Benny stared at it, puzzled before carefully cracking it open and sniffing it. His eyes widened and he took a small sip before staring at Dean in shock.

Dean winked and a slow smile spread across the vampire’s face.

“Thanks, brother.”

“No problem.”

“…Is that…?” Began Castiel and Dean slung his arm around his shoulder.
“Yup. Comes in eight flavours. That one’s O negative.”

“How…?”

“Perks of being a demon.”

Jo huffed out a startled laugh as Ellen and Garth offered Dean hesitant smiles. Ash grinned and leaned back in his chair.

“I think Benny has a new best friend,” he commented as Benny nearly went cross-eyed swigging his drink.

“What about you, wolf-boy? You ever eaten a person?” Hummed Dean “Someone offered a finger and you took an arm?”

Garth shook his head.

“Unlike vampires, werewolves really can survive on animals. I eat the same as humans with maybe a little extra meat.”

“What about full moons?” Asked Dean and Garth ducked his head.

“I… uh… Apparently, I ate a whole live cow once. I don’t remember it because things get a little fuzzy on a full moon when I’m a wolf, but… it was in the newspaper that a giant brown and white wolf had slaughtered a few animals from a farmer’s herd… I guess that was me.”

Dean snickered as Castiel gaped at the usually gentle man. Then the demon glanced between Jo, Ash and Ellen.

“You weren’t frightened of me like humans usually are. The salt and the flask of what I assume is holy water implies you’re not regular humans. Let me guess… hunters?”

Ellen quirked her lips. “Ash is just a staff member who eavesdrops on a lot of our conversations and who learns very quickly. But other than that… got it in one.”

“You’re not a regular demon either,” stated Jo with a frown. “What kind of demon willingly bonds with a human?” She wrinkled her nose. “What kind of human agrees to being terrified for the rest of his life and bonds to a demon?”

Dean draped a wing around Castiel’s shoulder as the author sought out his tail without noticing.

“Dean hasn’t tried to frighten me in years,” said Castiel. “We found out that he doesn’t only have to feed on fear.”

“What else can a demon feed on?” Asked Benny and Castiel smirked as Dean’s face heated.

“Love,” the author drawled.

There was a pause before Benny and Jo burst out laughing, Ellen cocking an eyebrow as Garth’s gaze softened. Ash nodded lazily as if this answer was to be expected.

“Love?” Wheezed Benny.

“That’s precious,” teased Jo but Ash leaned back in his chair.

“Well, he is technically an angel, just a fallen one. The pagan demigods need worshippers to keep
them alive so I suppose angels need people to follow Christianity, Islam, Judaism, whatever to keep them strong. The underlying message beneath all these religions is love towards a higher being, A.K.A God. You love God, then by default you love angels. Demons were cast from Heaven meaning they can’t draw strength from it. They have to have someone love them personally.”

The others blinked, stunned and Jo frowned.

“That… actually makes a lot of sense.”

“Love really can save the world,” hummed Ash.

“So, what you’re saying is… Cas made you soft?” Grinned Jo and Dean shrugged, a small smile touching his lips.

“I wouldn’t say ‘soft’, but… yeah. I guess he did.”

Castiel stroked the demon’s tail soothingly and Dean squeezed his shoulder.

“When do we get to see your alternate form?” Smirked Benny. “Or do you turn into a sparkly unicorn, lover-boy?”

Dean grinned. “Think you can handle it, Twilight?”

“I don’t glitter in sunlight.”

Dean chuckled and stood, moving away from the table.

There were a few impressed stares and a grin from Benny as Dean morphed into his beast-form.

“Now there’s a set of teeth,” Jo teased, winking at Benny and Castiel was certain he was dreaming. No way were his colleagues fine with the fact that Dean was a demon. They couldn’t be. Normal people would have had a heart-attack by now or sprinted away screaming.

Then again, he’d never expected to be working alongside a friendly vampire and a shy werewolf either.

Dean returned to his humanoid form once more and wrapped his wing around Castiel again and Castiel smiled at the happiness he could feel radiating from the demon’s grace. It occurred to him that Dean hadn’t been accepted by a group of people in millennia and he was probably excited at the prospect of new friends.

Jo’s lips curled into a sly grin. “What kind of scares did you give Cas when you first met him?”

Dean smirked mischievously and leaned forward.

“Well… it all started with the car keys…”

And so, the conversation continued into the early hours of the morning and Castiel was pleased that Dean had found a group of people he genuinely liked and who genuinely liked him back. The demon was bouncing with excitement even when they returned home and Castiel listened quietly with a fond smile and fell asleep with the demon curled around him and their soul and grace snuggling close.

Once again, the black that flaked off Dean’s grace went unnoticed.
The strange man approached Castiel six months after his and Dean’s mating.

He was behind the bar, serving drinks since Garth was on lockdown for the night because of the full moon. It was eleven o’clock in the evening and there was a bit of a lull in orders, so Castiel was drying some glasses when the man slid onto a bar stool and clasped his hands together.

The guy was tall; six-three or six-four and he had long, wavy chocolate hair that tickled his shoulders. He was a little stiff, mouth not quite a grimace but something approaching it and he didn’t blink as often as he probably should do, yet his eyes were bright… unnervingly so.

He stared at Castiel unblinkingly and the author approached him with a small smile despite the wariness at the back of his mind.

“What can I get for you, Sir?”

The man stared at him a little longer and Castiel cleared his throat because it was obvious his question hadn’t been received.

“Can I get you anything, Sir?” Castiel repeated and the man blinked and glanced at the bottles of liquor lining the back wall.

“An alcoholic beverage, please,” said the man and when no further description was forthcoming, Castiel cocked his head to one side.

“…Any specifics?” He asked and the strange man stared at him a little longer before his gaze flicked to further down the bar where two pretty young women were sipping fruity cocktails and comparing nail polish.

“One of those,” the man said and Castiel would’ve laughed at the joke except for the fact that the broad, tower of a man was deadly serious.

“Certainly,” Castiel replied quietly and got to making the strawberry daiquiri.

The man scrutinised him for the duration of the preparation of the daiquiri and Castiel began to grow uncomfortable to the point where Dean poked at his soul in query.

‘Weird customer,’ he sent back to soothe the demon’s worry and Dean caressed his soul once before receding into the background.

The strange customer narrowed his eyes briefly before his face straightened out into his unnerving blank stare.

Castiel slid the drink in front of the customer and returned to drying glasses.

“Are you in a relationship?” Asked the customer suddenly and Castiel nearly dropped his glass, startled. Instead he lifted an unimpressed eyebrow.

“Is that a flirtation?”
The customer stared at him with a light frown, seemingly dissecting his own words before his mouth drew downwards.

“No.”

Castiel wasn’t sure how to respond to that.

“Uh… yeah. I am.”

The customer nodded. “What’s his name?”

Castiel turned his full attention to the strange man with a frown.

“Why do you assume I’m in a relationship with another male?”

The man didn’t blink.

“An assumption. What’s his name?”

Castiel’s scowl deepened.

“Dean. His name’s Dean.”

“And you’re Castiel.” A statement, not a question.

Castiel took a subtle step backwards. “How do you know my name?”

The man tilted his head before his gaze flicked to his breast pocket.

“It’s on your name tag.”

Castiel’s cheeks flushed as he realised the customer was quite correct.

“Are you in a happy relationship, Castiel?” The guy persisted and Castiel’s mouth drew into a thin line.

“I don’t think this is an appropriate line of questioning.”

“Are you happy in your relationship with Dean?”

Castiel narrowed a glare at the customer.

“If this is an attempt to ‘get into my pants’, I assure you you’re making a fool of yourself. Yes, I’m happy in my relationship.”

“Does he hurt you?”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Hissed Castiel, offended. “Are you implying my partner abuses me? I don’t know you and you certainly don’t know me and if that was your version of a ‘pick-up’ line, I can guarantee you’ll be thrown out of this establishment within the next twenty minutes.” Castiel narrowed his eyes as a thought hit him. “Wait… is this a homophobic joke or something? If it is, I-”

The man held his hand up.

“My apologies. My people skills are a little… rusty. I… ah… don’t frequent these sorts of places. I didn’t mean to offend you; I was merely attempting ‘small talk’.”
Castiel frowned. “…You’re not very good at it.”

The man offered him a tiny smile.

“I’m aware.”

After a few moments of awkward silence, Castiel took pity on the man.

“Shall we start over? Castiel,” he introduced as he offered his hand and the man took it with a grateful smile.

“Sam.”

“I’ve not seen you around before, Sam. You new here?” Asked Castiel, beginning to reload the dishwasher.

“My partner and I are just passing through.”

Castiel cocked an eyebrow in amusement.

“You’re in a relationship?”

Sam’s eyes twinkled with affection as he shook his head.

“He can be… a bit of a handful.”

‘He’? Castiel bit back a grin as he realised the absurdity of the situation.

“I know exactly what you mean,” winked Castiel and Sam quirked a lop-sided smile.

“Your Dean is a handful too?”

“And a half,” chuckled Castiel, starting the dishwasher.

“How so?”

Castiel’s eyes sparkled secretly. “You wouldn’t believe me if I told you,” he smirked and Sam glanced at his drink with a knowing smile.

“You’d be surprised what I believe.”

There was a pause before the taller man glanced back up at him.

“This ‘Dean’… you love him?” Sam asked, genuinely curious and Castiel nodded with a sincere smile.

“Very much so.”

The other man blinked and Castiel swore that was surprise on his face before he covered it over with a smile.

“…Good.” The customer’s gaze flicked once to his chest before he averted his gaze and when it was clear Sam wasn’t going to offer any further conversation, Castiel shrugged and bustled about the bar, forgetting about the strange man.

Last orders were announced and slowly, people began to file out of the bar. When midnight came and passed, Castiel couldn’t wait to return home to see his mate. He teased Dean over their bond
with images of what he was going to do to the demon when he got home and Dean tried to make him feel guilty by being overly affectionate with him; stroking his soul and pulsing love and fondness over their bond.

He finished cleaning the empty bar and was finally free a little before one. He hummed cheerfully as he sauntered to his Lincoln Continental (or the ‘pimp mobile’ as Dean had christened it) and unlocked the doors. He climbed into the driver’s seat and started the engine, but paused when something didn’t feel quite right.

He turned to the backseat to find a man staring back at him.

He tried to scream but the man lifted a hand and Castiel found his voice silenced.

The man leaned forwards and Castiel realised it was Sam who had broken into his car.

Castiel’s arm shot out towards the door, but Sam blinked and suddenly, all the locks clicked into place and no matter how much Castiel hammered on the handle, there was no budging it.

Subtly, so Sam couldn’t see what he was doing, Castiel reached out to Dean through their bond.

“I’m not here to harm you,” said Sam firmly.

“You have a strange way of showing it,” growled Castiel. “Who are you? Or better yet, what are you?”

“You already know my name,” said Sam calmly. “As for your second question…”

Castiel gasped as a white halo flickered into view above Sam’s head. It glowed dimly for a second before brightening until Castiel had to squint to protect his eyes and his jaw dropped when two impressive chocolate-feathered wings appeared behind him, taking up every inch of the back seat and most of the floor. Sam’s eyes glowed hazel for a moment, as if something was lighting them from behind and then, just as quickly as all these unearthly features appeared, they vanished and Castiel was left gaping at what appeared to be a human.

“…You’re an angel,” breathed Castiel with wide eyes and Sam nodded once before frowning lightly and leaning closer to the human, making Castiel gulp.

“We need to talk about Dean.”

* * *

Dean had been reading when he’d received Castiel’s panicked plea for help. He’d dropped his book in shock, springing to his feet and pressed the human for details of what was attacking him, only to receive a strange order from his mate a few moments later.

‘Don’t leave the flat.’

Dean frowned and queried his lover’s command, but Castiel was adamant; forcefully so.

‘Do not leave the flat, Dean.’

‘What’s happening? What’s going on?’
‘Angel,’ Castiel replied curtly and Dean froze, face draining of colour.

Was Castiel being attacked by an angel? What was an angel doing at the bar? Was it looking for Dean to destroy him, so had decided to torture Cas for information?

‘Cas, what’s happening? What’s it doing?’ Dean asked frantically, tail thrashing and wings flapping. If it even laid a finger on Castiel, he would fly over there to fight it. He didn’t care if it would destroy him in the end; he had to protect his mate. He would give his life for Castiel’s.

‘Talking,’ replied Castiel. ‘Now lay low… I think he’s beginning to catch on there’s something wrong with my soul.’

Dean quickly silenced the bond. He didn’t need Castiel in any more danger than he already was. He trusted his mate would contact him if he needed help.

He paced the floor anxiously, tail writhing and wings twitching in worry as he waited for his mate to contact him or come home and it was a heart-stopping thirty minutes before Dean heard anything. The carpet had a long dip in it from where he’d been pacing.

The bond cautiously opened up and Dean’s grace was ready to burst in panic when he felt Castiel prod carefully at it.

‘Dean? Could you… could you come get me?’

Dean was in the front seat of the Continental before Castiel even had chance to close the bond again.

The human seemed surprised as Dean quickly checked him over with both his grace and eyes and he leaned into his mate’s touch when Dean cupped his face with both hands.

“What happened? Are you okay? Did it hurt you? What did it want? Is it coming back?” Dean rushed out in one breath and Castiel gulped drily before flicking his gaze to the backseat and leaving it there.

Dean slowly turned to find an angel staring back at him with wide eyes.

For a moment, nobody spoke and then Dean broke the silence with a hoarse, disbelieving whisper.

“Sam?”

Sam nodded slightly before a small smile overtook his face and he leaned forwards and reached out towards Dean.

But Dean suddenly threw the door open and slid out of the car with a scowl, mouth drawing into a thin line when Sam eventually followed, far more gracefully and elegantly.

Dean waved his hand and Castiel’s eyes widened when the door locks clicked into place, keeping him inside the car.

Sam tilted his head in confusion at the action before turning to face Dean fully.

“It’s good to see you, Dean,” he said softly, but Dean’s scowl deepened.

“If you’ve come to kill me, then kill me. But leave Cas out of it,” he growled.

Sam blinked in surprise as he took a step forwards.
“…I’m not here to kill you.”

Dean stiffened, clenching his fists. “If you’ve come to punish Cas for sleeping with a demon—”

“I’m not here to hurt your mate,” Sam said, a trifle annoyed. “I’ve come to talk.”

Dean crossed his arms, splaying his wings wide in a show of challenge, which Sam immediately scowled at.

“Somehow, I find that hard to believe, brother,” Dean spat the last word in mocking and the angel’s mouth drew into an irritated line.

Castiel banged on the window but Dean ignored him.

“I really have come to talk, brother,” Sam parroted Dean’s tone. “I’ve already spoken with your human and he was at least willing to listen. Now I need to speak to you, preferably with him by your side.”

“Not interested,” huffed Dean.

“I thought you’d be happy to see me,” grated out Sam. “It’s been so long.”

Dean scoffed condescendingly. “Happy to see you?” He mocked. “Happy to see the brother who was too ashamed of me to even come to my trial? Happy to see the brother who let me fall without even a word of support? You were my favourite brother, Sam. You knew that. Yet when Michael summoned me to humiliate me in front of all our siblings, you didn’t even show your face! So, no. I’m not happy to see you. I’m pretty pissed off actually.”

Sam’s face didn’t harden like Dean thought it would; he didn’t narrow his eyes or flare his wings or spit insults like ‘abomination’ and ‘betrayer’ at Dean like he assumed the angel would.

Sam’s expression fell into one of heartbreak.

“You really believe that’s what happened?” He choked. “You really believe I was too ashamed of you to appear at your trial?” He swallowed thickly. “Do you think I wanted you to fall?”

Dean frowned in confusion, wings lowering slightly and Sam shook his head frantically.

“I never knew you were being trialled,” said Sam. “Michael kept it from me. I didn’t even know you’d disobeyed orders. Michael had stationed me on Earth to protect a prophet so I had no idea what was going on in Heaven.”

The angel looked down. “The first time I realised what had happened was when I felt you… when I felt you fall. Your grace was tarnished when you were cast out and I felt your fear and pain as you fell and that’s when I knew you were no longer… no longer an angel.”

He glanced up at Dean, millennia of agony and sorrow engraved into his dimly glowing eyes.

“I immediately raced to Heaven to get Michael to reconsider. I tried so hard to fight for your halo; tried to get the Host to understand you didn’t deserve to fall. They didn’t listen though and Michael told me to return to my post. I kept returning to Heaven for nearly a century; attempting to make him reconsider your punishment, but he grew weary of my attempts and told me if I could prove you were unlike the other demons in Hell, only then he would reconsider your case.

“I began tracking you; searching for any hint that you were still the caring, protective angel I knew
you were, despite being tortured by Lucifer and other demons. I looked for anything that showed you still loved humanity; anything that would convince Michael you belonged in Heaven…”

Sam looked away and Dean felt his grace constrict with painful memories. His time in Hell hadn’t been kind to him; his grace had twisted and blackened and he had become like every other angel that fell into Lucifer’s domain. He hadn’t loved humanity or remained caring or protective; he’d hurt humans, insulted and taunted other deities, tortured souls in Hell, picked fights with other demons until Lucifer had stationed him on Earth and condemned him to tying himself to houses to make the lives of innocents a living nightmare. He’d become the antithesis of everything he’d been as an angel.

Sam shook his head. “I… I couldn’t find anything-”

“I’m sorry to disappoint,” snapped Dean, tail coiling in distress as he clenched his fists. “I’m sorry for becoming a disgusting abomination after spending so long being tortured by Lucifer. I’m sorry for wishing for the pain to stop every time a demon tore into my grace or ripped into my wings. I’m sorry for finally giving in and becoming the monster everyone thought I already was anyway. I’m sorry for saving an innocent child who’d done no wrong!” Hissed Dean, upset bubbling in his grace.

“Until now,” Sam continued as if Dean hadn’t spoken and the demon clamped his mouth shut in shock.

Sam stared stoically at him for a few moments before waving his hand carelessly towards the car. Castiel finally climbed out and stood by his lover’s side, tangling their fingers together and gaining Dean’s attention.

“Listen to him, Dean,” Castiel whispered softly. “He wants to help.”

Dean slowly slid his gaze over to Sam and the angel took a cautious step forwards.

“He’s right. I want to help,” he said quietly. “Like I said, I couldn’t find anything until now. Your relationship with Castiel,” he glanced at the human, “has had some… striking effects to not only your personality, but also your grace. You’re kinder, gentler, more caring… The fact that Castiel loves you as much as you love him has only strengthened your case. Your bond is proof that you’re nothing like the other demons you believe yourself to be. You’re protective of one another and not because Castiel is suffering from some form of ‘Stockholm syndrome’, but because he genuinely cares for you and because you can’t bear to see him hurt.

“I’ve been watching the progression of your mating and I’ve seen nothing but strengthening love from both of you. You’ve saved Castiel’s life twice and Castiel trusts you; he was willing to sacrifice his soul and his future in Heaven for you.” He smiled gently. “You’re far from the average demon, Dean. Castiel has proved that.”

His smile faded slightly as Dean frowned lightly in confusion.

“I tried to present your case to Michael the second you mated, but he told me it wasn’t enough,” sighed Sam. “He said you could have forced Castiel into mating you even though he knows full well the feelings Castiel has for you cannot be forced.”

Dean’s lips turned downwards. Of course Michael wouldn’t want to reconsider his case; he was a filthy abomination and he didn’t deserve his halo back.

“I’ve argued with him a few times over it but he’s stubborn and keeps rejecting the claim that
you’re not a true demon,” huffed Sam and Dean could see the irritation in his eyes. It made the corner of his mouth quirk upwards slightly because at least one of his brothers still cared about him. Maybe he’d been too quick to judge Sam without knowing all the facts; it seemed the younger angel had fought for him tirelessly these past millennia.

“I didn’t know what else to do when my mate gave me an idea,” Sam said and Dean’s eyebrows shot up to his hairline.

“You’re mated?” He asked and Sam blinked before ducking his head with a small smile.

“Uh… yeah. Have been for quite a few centuries now.”

Dean whistled lowly and a grin swept over his face.

“Congratulations.”

Sam chuckled quietly and scratched the back of his neck. “I would’ve come to tell you but… uh…”

“You’re an angel and I’m a demon,” sighed Dean. “And I sort of had it in my head you were ashamed of me. Right.” He glanced up at Sam guiltily. “I’m sorry about that. Truly… I didn’t realise how much trouble you’ve gone through for me. If I’d have known…”

Sam shook his head in dismissal. “Can’t change the past, but we may be able to change your future.”

He looked up excitedly. “My mate says he’ll return your halo if you complete one task. A final display that you really deserve to be an angel. I know you can do it, Dean.”

Dean snorted. “Your mate will return my halo? I somehow find that hard to believe. Unless you’re mated to Michael, I doubt he can do anything for me. No offense.”

“Well, I’m not Michael, but that doesn’t mean I’m useless,” commented a new voice and both Castiel and Dean startled and whirled to face the car, where a shorter man with glowing golden eyes was sucking a lollipop, arms crossed lazily.

Dean’s jaw bottomed out as Castiel scrutinised the new addition.

The demon rounded on Sam, eyes wide and voice squeaky.

“You’re mated to the archangel Gabriel?!” He managed and Sam blinked at him.

“…Yes?”

Gabriel chuckled and sauntered over to his mate, closing Dean’s jaw as he went and pulling Sam into a sweet kiss once he’d removed the lollipop.

Sam gazed fondly at him as Dean stared at them both with varying degrees of mortification.

Castiel squeezed his arm lightly, snapping Dean out of his thoughts.

“You’re not gonna smite me, are you?” Gulped Dean and Gabriel rolled his eyes and leaned against his towering mate, who didn’t budge.

“Not unless you want me to?”

Dean shook his head frantically, taking a step backwards.
“I thought you vanished from Heaven a long time ago, before Lucifer fell?” Asked Castiel calmly as he addressed the mighty archangel. “I’ve been informed most of the Universe believes you’re dead. How are you here now?”

Gabriel smirked at him. “My own personal witness protection program. When I skipped out of Heaven, I had a face transplant; carved out my own little corner of the world as Loki the Trickster until Sam came along and screwed it all up.”

Sam rolled his eyes and Gabriel winked at him, leaning a little further into him.

“He’s been trying to convince me to stop hiding behind pagan rituals and parties for some time now, but I’ve never been able to take the leap. I’ve been gone for a long time and the Host are gonna want answers I’m not ready to give them…” He trailed off, his expression losing some of its smugness and gaining something akin to sorrow. Sam placed a hand on his shoulder.

“But that doesn’t mean I don’t have all my archangel powers at my disposal,” smirked Gabriel, pained expression vanishing as he glanced at Dean. “From what I’ve heard, big bro’s forgotten what it means to be compassionate. He’s become top dog and without any other archs to oversee his decisions, he’s grown cold and heartless, which means bad news for you, Dean-o. Leave it to Michael, you’ll never get that halo back.”

Dean pursed his lips. “But you’re willing to give me a chance?” He asked warily and Gabriel nodded.

“Sam let me in on his little mission quite a while back. I’ve watched him fail time and time again and this time, I’m taking things into my own hands since Michael’s too stubborn to listen. I have a task for you. One to prove you truly belong in Heaven.”

Dean stiffened. If Sam didn’t believe he deserved to fall in the first place, why did he have to prove he belonged in Heaven?

Oh, right… because he’d tortured a lot of humans in his time as a demon.

“What kind of task?” Asked Dean reluctantly and Gabriel’s lollipop vanished.

“Another Nephilim has recently come into creation,” he began and Dean’s wings flared wide and angry, his tail thumping the floor as he bared his teeth.

“I will not kill an innocent child!” He hissed and Sam winced as Gabriel raised an unimpressed eyebrow.

“A Nephilim has been born,” he began again, ignoring Dean’s outburst. “One angel has already been down to kill it, but the human mother gave her life to protect it. I’ve been watching over them for a while now and I managed to steal the baby before the angel found it.”

Dean snapped his mouth shut in confusion.

“You saved—”

“The child now has no family to take care of it,” interrupted Gabriel calmly. “Its father is out of the picture and it can’t look after itself. It needs someone to raise it and teach it how to use its abilities safely.”

Dean paused and scrutinised Gabriel.
"Why did you save a Nephilim?"

Gabriel was silent for a few moments before sighing. "Because, like you, I’ve seen the intricacies of humanity. The child is still a child; even if it’s unnatural, it didn’t ask to be born. It shouldn’t be punished for its own existence." He focused sharply on Dean. "You told Heaven it was the upbringing of the child that mattered, not its biology. Then prove it. Prove that you can raise this Nephilim to be good and I’ll return your halo."

Dean blinked, stunned. "You’re asking me to raise a child?"

"Raise it, protect it, care for it, teach it… I’m asking you to do all these things."

Dean frowned. "Why can’t you do it? You saved the child in the first place."

Gabriel narrowed his eyes. "Because this is your task, Dean."

“And what if I refuse? What happens to the child then?" Huffed Dean.

Gabriel sighed. "I can’t take care of the child. I move around too much and it would be at high risk from the pagans if it was to stay with me." Gabriel dropped his gaze. "Not to mention I’ve been hiding for far too long. Michael has been left unchallenged and Heaven needs stability. I need to face my cowardice at some point and I can’t deliver the child to Heaven’s doorstep."

Sam inhaled sharply as he turned to his mate with wide eyes.

…”Gabriel… does this mean…?" He breathed and Gabriel offered him a small smile.

“I’m tired of being separated from you all the time. You keep tending to your Heavenly duties and I have to watch you leave and wait months, sometimes years for you to return. I want to spend more time with you. I don’t want our mating bond to be our only method of contact. I should be with you, not hiding from our family.”

“You’re returning to Heaven?" Whispered Sam, eyes dancing joyfully and glowing brighter with every word from Gabriel.

“I think it’s time,” murmured Gabriel softly and Sam pulled his mate into a deep, passionate kiss, whole body glowing in happiness. Gabriel chuckled quietly and pushed his mate away gently, gesturing to their audience.

Sam flushed pink but didn’t let go of Gabriel’s hand.

Dean’s gaze softened as the archangel turned to him and he coiled his tail around Castiel’s ankle.

“You want me to be a father to this child?" Asked Dean quietly and Gabriel nodded.

“Considering who his biological father is, it would be fundamental to everyone’s safety that you keep a close eye on the boy.”

Dean frowned. “Who’s the father?"

“Lucifer.”

Dean choked as Castiel’s eyes blew wide.

“As in…?" The human trailed off in horror and Gabriel donned a bitter smirk and nodded.
“I can’t look after Lucifer’s child!” Hissed Dean. “If he ever found out… Who knows what kind of damage he’d inflict? Not only to me, but anyone around me!”

“All the more reason for you to raise the child. It needs protection from Lucifer’s clutches,” said Gabriel sternly. “Imagine the kind of power this child possesses. There is a reason both angels and demons have been searching for it non-stop.”

“I’d be painting a giant target on my back!” Protested Dean. “On Cas’ back! I can’t put him in danger!”

“So, you’re going to let the boy die?” Asked Gabriel, raising an eyebrow. “I might as well deliver him to the Host now for destruction.”

Dean winced and glanced to Gabriel pleadingly. “I can’t put Cas at risk.”

“Dean, this is the only way of getting your halo back,” begged Sam. “Please, it’s not forever. The boy will be able to look after himself in a few years.” His shoulders sagged. “I miss you.”

Dean’s wings drooped as he slowly shook his head.

“Maybe… maybe I don’t want my halo or my wings back. Maybe… I’m happy here on Earth with Cas. I don’t have to take orders down here, I can do what I want. I don’t have to be separated from my mate for years whilst I run around after Michael’s demands,” he glanced between Sam and Gabriel pointedly and the younger angel looked away.

“…Maybe I’m happy being a demon,” shrugged Dean and Sam looked lost and broken. Gabriel scowled.

“You don’t really believe that, do you?” He scoffed. “You’re not actually free, you know that, right? Lucifer’s got a tight grip on you and when he realises you’ve gone soft on him, he’ll smite you without a second thought. Even if he doesn’t, you’ll be running all your life from angels and demons and other creatures that want to kill you. Who knows? You might even be offed by a hunter. And what happens when Castiel dies, huh? You can’t follow him to Heaven and something tells me you’re not going to let him go to Hell. You willing to give him up to stay as a demon?”

Dean froze. He hadn’t thought of that. He clutched Castiel’s hand a little tighter.

“I can’t fight off Lucifer if he comes looking for the kid,” whispered Dean defeatedly. “I don’t even know if I can fight off an angel.”

“But would you try?” Demanded Gabriel. “Would protect this child and your mate if it came down to that?”

There was no question of whether he would protect Castiel.

“Yes.”

Gabriel turned to Castiel. “How about you? If it came down to that, would you protect this child and your mate?”

“Woah! Cas has nothing to do with this; leave him out of this!” Interjected Dean but Castiel frowned at him and turned back to Gabriel.

“Of course.”
Gabriel quirked a half-smile and tilted his head. “This kid is half-human. It may be beneficial for him to have at least one human in the family to learn from. He needs to explore both sides of his heritage.”

Castiel nodded in understanding. “I will do my best.”

Gabriel smirked at Dean. “It seems your mate’s on-board with the idea. What about you? Do you accept this task? You’ll receive your halo in reward.”

Dean hesitated, searching Castiel’s face for any doubts or fear but when he found none, he slumped in defeat.

“Yeah. I accept.”

Gabriel grinned cheerfully. “The kid’s name is Jack. He’s six months old.”

Dean nodded slowly as Sam smiled gratefully.

“We’ll check on you when we can, but we don’t want to draw too much attention to you.” He turned to Castiel. “If you experience any problems, just pray to one of us.”

Castiel nodded as Gabriel took a step towards Dean.

“Guard this child with your life, demon,” he warned, all joviality suddenly vanishing from his face, replaced by archangel command. “Don’t make me regret giving you a chance.”

Dean squared his shoulders and stared defiantly at the archangel. Gabriel smirked, pleased before winking and straightening.

“A deal’s a deal,” he hummed before snapping his fingers. A golden trumpet appeared in his hand and his audience glanced at it curiously.

Gabriel raised the instrument to his lips and played two long notes, the second one higher than the first and Castiel marvelled at the instrument’s pure tone; rich and smooth like silk and so unlike any brass instrument that existed on Earth.

Dean suddenly staggered backwards and Castiel’s eyes widened in alarm as the demon clutched at his chest. He was about to round on Gabriel, but his voice cut off at the sight of Dean’s horns and tail vanishing. His inky eyes slowly cleared and Dean blinked a few times to reveal an emerald gaze, human except for the fact his irises were glowing dimly.

Dean frowned in confusion and ran his tongue over his teeth to find that his fangs had receded, leaving human teeth in their place.

He glanced up to Gabriel in shock and raised an eyebrow at the small silver bell Gabriel was now holding. The archangel grinned and shook it twice and Dean gasped as the black leather of his wings slowly melted away to reveal a new layer of feathers; the same shades and patterns as a tawny owl, like his original wings had been. He felt a smile creep across his face at the sight of them and as he was admiring them, he felt a familiar warmth rush through his body, from his feet to his crown and when he raised a hand in curiousness, he stumbled at the feeling of his halo floating above his head, white and pure.

His gaze snapped to Gabriel.

“I thought… I thought I only got these back after I raised the child?” He choked, overwhelmed and
Gabriel shoved his hands into his pockets with a smile and a shrug.

“Why suffer for a few more years when I can restore your powers now? Besides, you have greater ability to protect the child now. And your mate.” He raised an eyebrow. “Just don’t let me down.”

Dean nodded, throat dry. He had no doubts that Gabriel could also condemn him to life as a demon again, but right now Dean thought the archangel was the kindest brother he’d ever had. Well, besides Sam.

“Thank you,” he whispered and Gabriel’s gaze softened as he nodded and took a step backwards.

Suddenly, Sam ploughed into him, wrapping his chocolate wings around Dean as he hugged him tightly and pressed his face into his neck with a few tears of joy.

Dean huffed out a laugh and held his little brother close, whispering grateful ‘thank you’s into his ear. Eventually, Sam pulled away and took his mate’s side and from the corner of his eye, Dean spotted Castiel staring at his wings in awe, desperate to touch. Dean smirked; Castiel had a lot to explore and Dean had a few new tricks to teach him.

“Why a bell?” He heard Sam ask softly and Gabriel chuckled and showed him the small, silver bell; elegant feathers engraved into its surface.

“Every time a bell rings, an angel gets its wings,” he quoted and Sam rolled his eyes but wrapped his arm around the archangel’s waist anyway. “I always was the musical one in the family,” Gabriel winked and Sam pressed an amused kiss to his forehead. The archangel eventually smiled and turned to his lover.

“Could you…?” He asked softly and Sam nodded and vanished. He returned a few moments later with a small baby, bundled in blankets and sleeping soundly.

Castiel quietly padded over to Dean’s side and startled when Dean’s warm hand took his. The newly-restored angel grinned at his mate and Castiel smiled at his green eyes and leaned into his side. Dean slipped a fluffy wing around him and the human cuddled closer.

Sam made his way over to the pair and offered them the child and Dean took it, cradling it gently to his chest. His grace felt weird.

As Sam returned to his mate, Gabriel arched an eyebrow.

“I can’t fully restore your grace; only you can do that. It has a few black spots still swirling around in there but the more you act like an angel, the purer it’ll become. As for your mate…” Gabriel cast his gaze to Castiel.

“His soul is a deep red. I can’t do anything about that but since he’s no longer mated to a demon, I have a feeling it won’t stay that colour for long.” He frowned at Castiel. “Just don’t die before it has a chance to return to white.”

Castiel raised both eyebrows. “I’ll try not to?”

Gabriel quirked a smile before glancing at Dean once more and pointing his finger at the restored angel.

“Sooner or later the Host are gonna figure out a new angel has risen. Do me a favour and stay off their radar for as long as you can. I’ve got enough things to sort out upon my return without having to explain why I’ve acted against Michael’s command.”
Dean nodded obediently and Gabriel smiled and lowered his arm.

“Protect the child,” he said. “We’ll probably see you soon.”

“Good luck,” offered Sam sincerely and Dean glanced to him.

“Thank you, Sammy,” he murmured. “For not giving up on me.”

His brother beamed and when Castiel next blinked, the pair had vanished. He glanced over to Dean.

“You look… different,” he commented and Dean snorted in amusement before wiggling his wings, making the feathers puff out.

“Can’t think why,” he huffed and Castiel grinned before his gaze fell to the baby cradled in Dean’s arms.

“I hope you realise I have no idea how to take care of a baby,” said the human and Dean chuckled.

“That makes two of us.”

“We’re going to have to baby-proof the house.”

“And remember to change diapers and feed him milk.”

“…Will he… will he sprout wings?” Castiel asked curiously and Dean cocked a lop-sided smirk.

“He won’t ‘sprout’ wings. He already has them. He just can’t manifest them yet. I’ll have to teach him how. I’ll also have to teach him how to fly and control his powers.” Dean was gazing at baby Jack fondly, a smile tugging at his lips as he brushed the hair from Jack’s face and Castiel could feel the affection oozing from the restored angel’s grace. It made his soul warm with love for the angel and suddenly, all he could see was how happy Dean looked holding their child; how proud he was of his little family.

His soul must have given his thoughts away because Dean’s gaze snapped to his face in surprise before he beamed and dragged Castiel in for a long, passionate kiss.

When they parted, Castiel cuddled into Dean’s side and they watched Jack sleep for a few minutes before Dean snapped his fingers and a beautiful wooden cot appeared in the corner of the living room, engraved with swirling feathers and elegant trees.

“He can have the spare room once I tidy it up,” promised Castiel and Dean kissed his mate softly before carefully placing Jack in the cot.

“You’re going to be an excellent father,” hummed Castiel as he watched Dean smile at Jack once more, face lighting with a sort of adoration that suited the angel.

Dean finally turned to Castiel and slipped his arms around him.

“So will you,” he murmured, stealing another sweet kiss. “I’m kind of warming to the idea of having a family,” he whispered after a moment and Castiel’s soul fluttered and tried to leap at Dean’s grace. The angel felt it and smirked.

“We should renew our bond whilst Jack is sleeping,” he whispered. “I have some new tricks to show you.” His tawny wings wiggled for emphasis and Castiel stared at them in wonder.
Then his face lit with excitement as he let Dean lead him into the bedroom.

Chapter End Notes

Just the epilogue to go now! Hope you've enjoyed this little fic ;}
Castiel groaned, back arching off the mattress as Dean thrust into him, rough and deep and nothing like anyone would expect of an angel.

Then again, Dean wasn’t a regular angel, was he?

The human clutched at Dean’s silky feathers, bunching handfuls of them into his fists as he tugged at them with soft moans and whimpers of need. Dean attacked his mouth with lips and tongue and enough heat to make Castiel’s skin burn with desire. Wings splayed wide and possessive above him and one of Castiel’s hands released Dean’s feathers in favour of tangling desperately into the angel’s hair.

Hips rolling slowly and eyes glowing a vibrant emerald, Dean pulled off Castiel’s mouth to trail his lips down his throat and the human threw his head back with a whine, begging for more.

Soul and grace danced in and around each other, merging in a flash of colours before returning to respective white and blue once more, only to start the whole act again with more intensity and desire.

With panted breaths, Castiel gripped the angel tighter, rocking his hips up to meet Dean’s thrusts and the angel nipped his throat in approval, one hand buried in his hair and the other palming lustfully at his rump, squeezing and scraping the soft flesh with his nails.

Castiel’s legs hooked around Dean’s waist and the angel surged upwards again to claim his mouth with a demonic growl of possessiveness and Castiel shivered at the feral sound, wanting more.

After a few more defence-shattering thrusts, Dean grasped Castiel’s aching erection and began to pump it mercilessly until Castiel’s fingers left bruises in their new grip on his back. The angel smirked into their kiss and jolted his hips harshly, hitting Castiel’s sweet spot and the human keened pathetically, clutching Dean’s wing tighter.

“Dean,” he choked brokenly, voice sounding wrecked and weak and Dean’s smirk widened as he repeated the action, burying himself into Castiel’s tight heat.

“Yes?” He growled because he knew it would drive his mate insane and on cue, Castiel whimpered and blew out a shaky breath.

“More,” begged Castiel shamelessly and Dean’s body heated with lust and love and possessiveness and he growled again to get his human even more riled up, before wrapping his hands around Castiel’s sides to keep him still.

His mate cried out in pleasure when Dean began jerking his hips at an animalistic pace; like a dog focused on mating a bitch in heat and Castiel sprang upwards to capture Dean’s lips almost frantically, as if he needed it to survive.

Coupled with Dean’s milking of his erection, Castiel didn’t last much longer and Dean was quick to follow, snarling a demonic sound of pleasure as he curled his wings around Castiel, hiding him from the world.
He flopped to his side and Castiel immediately snuggled into his arms, mewling when the angel wrapped his wings around him more securely.

After a few moments of holding one another and sharing stolen kisses, Castiel smiled and carded his fingers through the downy feathers on the base of Dean’s wing.

“That was a wonderful way to wake up,” he hummed and Dean grinned and nuzzled his mate’s cheek.

“You looked so beautiful, I couldn’t help myself.”

Castiel chuckled and cupped his lover’s cheek, staring into still-glowing forest eyes. He could get lost in their depths; he often did.

Dean stroked a gentle hand down his body and all the lingering aches and pains from their roughness faded and Castiel hummed in approval and kissed his mate’s lips. Dean always took such good care of him.

It had been four years since Dean had been reinstated as an angel. They had their ups and downs like every couple and there were times when the stress of being in a human-angel relationship coupled with having a child was just too much for them both. However, they always managed to work things out between themselves without Dean blowing too many windows or bulbs with his immense power and honestly? Neither Dean nor Castiel could imagine a life without their mate and adopted child.

There had been a couple of irritating demons who’d shown up uninvited, but Dean had sent them packing. There had been no angels after them to date, but they knew there would be in time.

Castiel smirked as he noticed the lamp behind Dean had shattered and he massaged the angel’s wing base for a few moments before nodding to the broken light.

“There goes another one.”

Dean ducked his head sheepishly and snapped his fingers and suddenly, the bulb was replaced and the light working once more. Castiel shook his head in amusement and settled into his mate’s chest.

Sam and Gabriel had visited a few times to check on their progress with Jack and so far, both angels had seemed pleased. Castiel enjoyed the pair’s company; Sam was quiet and curious about humanity and Castiel saw a part of himself in the angel. The seraph loved learning and sharing his knowledge with Castiel and their lovers tended to roll their eyes at them due to the amount of times they were found sitting on the floor with an array of books scattered around them, telling stories about constellations and Gods and the wonders of ‘Doctor Who’.

In Gabriel, he saw Dean. The archangel was fun and mischievous and childish at times, but he loved his mate dearly and would do anything to protect him. He cared about humanity more than he let on and Castiel knew that Dean was thankful to have someone who saw things the way he did; a brother who understood why he’d disobeyed Michael’s orders.

Gabriel’s return had caused quite a stir in Heaven and things were chaotic; angels torn between siding with Gabriel or Michael even though the youngest archangel didn’t want to divide his siblings. Michael was furious with Gabriel, but the youngest archangel was adamant his brother was out of control in his leadership and it was obvious relations between the two and their soldiers would take years to heal. Gabriel had told Dean and Castiel to lay low for another few years, but
with Jack growing up, that was growing increasingly difficult.

The young Nephilim was just discovering his powers and it wouldn’t be long before angels started catching onto the fact Dean was no longer a demon. Castiel and Dean would cross that bridge when they got there.

For now though, they were happy with their little family and their new house bought from Castiel’s royalty cheques.

Dean brushed his knuckles over Castiel’s cheek with a smile.

“Your soul’s pink,” he whispered and Castiel’s lips quirked upwards as he pressed them to his mate’s throat.

“Yours feels pure,” he countered quietly.

“We’re both healing,” Dean murmured as he wrapped his arms around his lover. “We’ve still got a long way to go, but we’re getting there.”

Castiel brushed his hand through soft feathers and the wing leaned into his touch.

“Jack’s gonna want breakfast soon,” Dean commented and Castiel nodded and watched the wing press into his hand as he stroked a few tawny feathers.

“Once we’re washed, I’ll groom you until he bounds into the room and bowls us both over,” murmured Castiel and Dean chuckled.

“That sounds awesome.”

Castiel stuck to his word and once he was out of the shower and dressed, Dean sat on the edge of the bed and splayed his tawny-owl-like wings wide, humming in approval when Castiel perched behind him and buried his hands deep into the angel’s feathers; stroking and massaging and peppering kisses over the huge appendages.

A finger slipped into an oil gland, teasing at it gently to encourage sweet oil to be released and Dean groaned and closed his eyes, leaning into his mate as Castiel smoothed the shiny liquid into his feathers, making them glimmer under the sunlight.

Hands clawed through feathers, shifting them into order or plucking out damaged ones and Dean’s grace felt content and relaxed as he let his mate take care of him. Once satisfied, Castiel slipped his arms around Dean’s stomach and held him close for a few minutes, just breathing in his warm scent. They let their grace and soul mingle for a few minutes, enjoying each other’s comfort and affection and just as Castiel was beginning to pepper kisses over Dean’s neck and shoulder, the bedroom door flung open and a young boy with blue eyes and dirty blond hair sprinted through with a grin.

“Dad!” Exclaimed Jack as he threw himself into Dean’s lap and began pawing at his wings in excitement.

The angel chuckled and placed a palm over the nephilim’s back to stop him from sliding off his lap.

“Hey, kiddo. Sleep well?”

Jack nodded enthusiastically before crawling off Dean’s lap to launch himself at Castiel. The
human fell back against the mattress with a chuckle (the boy didn’t know his own strength yet) and wrapped his arms around him, trapping him to his chest.

“I’m thinking pancakes,” Jack grinned cheekily and Castiel raised an eyebrow at the innocent face.

“What a fantastic idea. Call me in when you’ve made them.”

Jack pouted but giggled when Dean lay beside Castiel and whined like a pathetic puppy.

Castiel stared at them both unimpressed but eventually rolled his eyes and kissed Jack’s head before sharing something a little more romantic with Dean, ignoring Jack’s noise of disgust.

The young boy wriggled frantically to free himself and just as he thought he’d escaped, Dean curled a strong wing around him and wrapped him up with a smirk. Jack grunted in protest and tried to pry Dean’s wing off him, but the nephilim wasn’t strong enough and he eventually flopped in defeat.

“You guys are gross,” he huffed and Dean grinned and ruffled his hair playfully.

“Would you like to help me make some pancakes?” Asked Castiel as he stretched and stood, smirking when Dean’s eyes roamed greedily over his body. Grooming always made Dean a little frisky.

Jack nodded eagerly and Castiel smiled at him and held his hand out for the boy to take.

When they left the room, Dean clicked his fingers and suddenly, the bedroom and bathroom were clean and tidy; bed made and towels hanging on the rail once more. He smirked and fluttered his wings. He loved being an angel.

“Don’t forget to submit your book today,” called Dean as he ambled down the stairs and into the large living room. “The guys are coming at seven for movie night, so don’t leave it too late.”

“I won’t,” replied Castiel from the kitchen. “Did you get that film Benny told us about?”

“'The Room’?” asked Dean, nose scrunching in distaste. “I read the synopsis for it; I think Benny’s trying to prank us. It was voted the worst movie in the history of movies.”

“I thought he was vague when he was describing it.”

“I’ve got it anyway, but I don’t think we’re gonna like it.”

Jack piped up then. “Can I watch movies with you guys, too?”

Dean chuckled as he made his way into the kitchen and leaned against the door frame, watching his mate and son flip pancakes.

“Have we ever said ‘no’?”

Jack shook his head with a grin. Dean winked and turned his gaze to Castiel.

“Is your book all printed and ready to go?” He asked and Castiel nodded.

“It’s on the coffee table. I’ll take it after breakfast.”

Dean grinned and gazed at his lover fondly.
“You have no idea how proud I am.”

Castiel’s cheeks heated and he returned his attention to their breakfast, refusing to respond to the angel’s affection, so Dean padded into the room and wrapped his arms around Castiel’s waist from behind.

“Everybody loves your ‘Creatures of nightmares’ series; so much so that you’ve just penned a fifth instalment. You’ve written four short stories and each have been more popular than the last and there’s rumours of certain producers wanting to base a TV show off your books. How can I not be proud?” He glanced down at Jack. “Are you proud of your father?”

Jack beamed and nodded. “Best Dad ever!”

Dean kissed his mate’s jaw. “Hear that? ‘Best Dad ever.’” He kissed his shoulder. “I’m allowed to be proud.”

“I will flip this pancake on to your face,” warned Castiel and Dean snickered and stole another kiss before moving away to allow his mate to set their breakfast onto plates.

Dean didn’t need to eat, but that didn’t mean he couldn’t appreciate the flavours and blueberry pancakes had to be one of his favourite foods. Coincidentally, they were also Jack’s and it hadn’t taken long to realise that Dean and Jack had very similar personalities.

Once breakfast was finished, Dean opted to stay home to clean the dishes whilst Castiel dropped off his latest book at the publisher’s office. He took Jack with him with the promise of visiting the pet store to view the newest rabbits (both Castiel and Jack adored little furry things) and Dean knew he’d be on his own for the next couple of hours.

Once he’d tidied the kitchen and cleared the plates away (he may have cheated a little with his grace), he found himself wandering to their bookshelf and plucking out Cas’ first novel.

‘The car keys in the oven’ the title read.

Dean smiled at the cover, brushing a hand over the artwork created surprisingly by Garth. For a moment, his mind flashed back to his and Castiel’s first meeting and all the pranks he’d played on the human in those first few weeks. Whilst he hated the idea that he’d terrified Castiel in those first months, he couldn’t help but be grateful that Cas hadn’t been able to afford to move out. Castiel had set him free from his demon curse and he’d given the author something to write about. Now, they were both happy.

With a fond smile, he opened the book, admiring the small, handsome portrait of his mate on the inside cover, before turning to the first page.

‘Misha Collins had never believed in any kind of God. He had never believed in the supernatural or in prophets and disciples. He had never believed in almighty deities of any form. There was no afterlife, no Heaven or Hell or samsara or moksha or even Valhalla.

Once dead, you were buried in a hole in the ground and that’s where you stayed until you rotted down to nothing but ash...’

Dean settled onto the couch and began his mate’s book once more. He never tired of reading his mate’s perspective on their meeting (or at least his protagonist’s perspective: Misha) and he’d read this book so many times he could probably recite it word for word. Castiel didn’t understand why Dean loved reading his books so much; he believed the angel read them just to make him happy,
but the truth was Dean read these books because they told the story of how one supposedly insignificant human raised him from Hell and became his salvation, before finally resurrecting him as an angel.

Castiel meant everything to him and these books proved it.

He read for an hour and probably would’ve continued until his mate and son returned home had he not heard the swish of powerful wings behind him.

He frowned and closed the book, setting it on the table. Gabriel and Sam usually let him know beforehand if they were going to visit and if they didn’t, Gabriel wasn’t exactly subtle about announcing his presence.

He turned and froze at the red eyes glowing back at him.

Dean scrambled to his feet, summoning his blade.

The other angel glanced at his weapon before splaying six battered, bronze wings either side of him and summoning his own blade. He smirked at Dean and the younger angel gulped because there was no mistaking the barely concealed fury in that gaze. Still, he couldn’t back down. He knew why this angel was here and there was no way he’d let him get what he wanted without a fight.

He had to protect his mate and son and he would do so to the end of his existence. With thoughts of his family solidifying his courage, he tightened his grip on his blade.

“Lucifer,” he growled, eyes glowing a dangerous green. “You’re not welcome here.”

Lucifer smirked; the expression twisted and cunning. He glanced around the room curiously, eyes landing on a few of Jack’s toys heaped in the corner of the room before his gaze skirted to a family photo of Dean, Castiel and Jack at a theme park.

“Dean,” he drawled, attention finally drawing back to the younger angel and Dean puffed his wings out threateningly. Lucifer raised an eyebrow, obviously not having expected him to have regained full angel status. His surprised expression soon faded and a smirk replaced it, this one cruel and angry.

He stepped forwards, making Dean tense.

“I think we need to have a little chat about my son…”

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed this 'short' story. It was fun to write so I hope it was fun to read! Thanks for the lovely comments :)

By the way! If you want to add me on Facebook for a chat about anything (flowers, animals, fics etc. etc.) look up 'Dancing Dog' and pop me a message that you're from AO3! (I've been getting some very strange friend requests, so please do pop me a message first!)

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