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**The Great Brexit Destiel**

by [Cerdic519](http://archiveofourown.org/users/Cerdic519)

**Summary**

In 2016 Cas and Dean hit the Old Country where they find themselves on opposite sides in the Great Brexit Vote. There are threats, theatrics, coffee, kilts, waistcoats, war-paint, drool, doom-mongering, plants, presidents, bare chests, Brexiteers, Marmite, militarism, grannies, garlic bread, and a bet in which the guy from the winning side.... well, let's say it isn't just the British Establishment that could end up getting thoroughly shafted!

**Notes**

Updated daily.
Castiel stared incredulously at his brother.

“Say that again”, he said, thinking (hoping desperately) that he must have misheard.

Michael Novak sighed.

“Now that those morons have selected the blowhard with the bad hairdo, the odds on them winning the White House are a billion to one”, he said. “But there's always a chance and we'd be dumb to take victory for granted. Balthazar over in England wrote me the other day, and said that he fears we could be victim to the same sort of thing he claims he's seeing over there with their Brexit vote.”

“What sort of thing?” Castiel asked.

“A high turnout of those who hate the status quo”, his brother said.

“They can't win”, Castiel said dismissively. “The whole weight of the government is against them, and the rest of the Establishment.”

“You do not see, Castiel”, his brother said exasperatedly. “People have reached the point in society that when the Establishment says 'do X', they will do Y out of sheer cussedness. If we get anything similar over here....”

“People over here would not be so dumb!” Castiel said roundly.

“Nevertheless we cannot take the chance. I want you to monitor this Brexit vote with Balthazar.”

It finally dawned on Castiel just where his brother was heading with this.

“You're not talking about a live video link, are you?” he said crossly. Michael slid an envelope across the table.

“Your plane leaves JFK tomorrow evening”, he said. “Business class.”

Castiel scowled, but accepted his fate. He'd get back at Michael for this somehow.

<>

Across town, a tall blond man was staring dolefully at his computer, and wondering if letting Charlie set up this Skype thing had been a bad idea after all. Not that he could have stopped her as he valued his life!
“Sammy!” he not-whined. “You know how I feel about planes. Hell, they changed my flight once already!”

“I know, Dean”, his brother grinned. Behind him a very pregnant Sarah waved at Dean, and collapsed inelegantly onto the sofa, earning a barely-hidden wince from her husband. “Don't you want to be here for the birth of your first nephew, Uncle Dean?”

Dean scowled.

“That's dirty pool!” he grumbled. “All right. I'll be on that damn plane.”

“I spoke to Charlie”, Sam grinned, “and she's secured an upgrade to business class on your new flight. Don't ask me how; it's Charlie. Just remember...”

“Bring all that rabbit food with me”, Dean sighed.

“And the Reeces!” Sarah called out from the sofa.

“Free upgrade”, Sam reminded him in his annoying sing-song voice.

His elder brother scowled and ended the conversation. In truth he was looking forward to seeing his first nephew, and maybe even the moose and his moosette. There was just the small matter of getting into a metal death-trap that was almost certainly going to fall out of the sky at the first opportunity.

As it happened, that was going to be the least of Dean's problems.
“American Airlines Flight 633 to London is now ready to board. Would all first and business class passengers please make their way to the departure gate?”

Dean sent out another wave of hateful thoughts towards whichever bastard had invented flying. He’d set the alarm off going through security and had been patted down by a huge TSA woman who looked like she was intent on keeping MacDonald’s in business on her own. And now he was about to get onto a metal tube of death and be hurtled skywards, followed some time later by his stomach. What could be worse?

Which probably went to show how much Dean was prone to underestimating the Universe’s ability to fuck with him more than once a day. Because at that moment the guy in front of him reached the woman checking the boarding passes.

“Mr. Novak”, she beamed (Dean was sure she was batting her eyelashes at the guy). “Business class, seat C1. Welcome aboard.”

Novak... Novak... why was that name familiar from somewhere? Dean frowned as he tried to remember. Then the guy turned to move round the desk, and....

Oh fuck no!

Castiel Novak. The nerdy guy from Dean’s school who had always looked down on him, and who had been unfairly and insanely hot. Sammy had teased him endlessly about his ‘Cas crush’, and worse, the Fates had rubbed it in by his brother and this guy ending up as roomies in Stanford (he was sure that Charlie had been behind that, the cow!). And now Cas - Novak was on the same flight as him?

“Sir?”

The woman behind the counter was looking expectantly at him. Dean realized he’d been standing there like a complete doofus, and shuffled forward to present his pass. Unfortunately his dithering had caught the attention of the guy in front, who looked curiously at him.

Somehow, Dean knew the exact minute that the razor-sharp mind behind those impossibly blue eyes got it.

<>

The guy by the walk-through to the plane was looking expectantly at him, and Castiel realized that
he was standing there like a complete moron. He swallowed hard, forced himself to put one foot in
front of the other and made his way onto the plane.

Dean Winchester. The sexy, sex-mad bastard from school, the original good time had by all,
handsome, muscular, gorgeous-looking.....

Castiel had to adjust himself as he involuntarily remembered that video one of Dean's team-mates
had posted. From the shower-room. The school had of course got it almost immediately taken
down but luckily the internet was forever.

He had three copies, just in case. One was on the laptop now in his holdall.

He had hated Dean at school, so of course had ended up being room-mate to Dean's younger
brother Sam at college (sometimes, God had a lot to answer for). But his time there had shown a
different side to Dean, one who cared for his brother and was working two jobs so that Sam could
afford to go to college.

Castiel had suspected that Sam, who was pretty much a genius, had guessed that he had some
feelings as regarded Dean despite his efforts to make clear that those feelings were all utter
loathing. The fact that Sam had changed his picture of his brother that he kept in his room to one of
Dean bare-chested and wearing some impossibly tight shorts.... that had been just mean!

Thank the Lord for one-hour photo reprints. He had three copies of the picture now. His laptop
wallpaper, since you ask.

He sighed as he shuffled onto the plane, before a horrific realization hit him. Dean had come
forward when they had called for first and business class passengers. Surely not....?

“Mr. Winchester, seat C2.”

Rats!

<>

At least Castiel had the pleasure of seeing Winchester suffer as the plan taxied and took off. Sam
had told him of his brother's pathological fear of flying, and Castiel did not now smirk at his
neighbour's obvious discomfiture (abject terror).

Dean glared across at him. Apparently he did smirk after all. Oh well.

<>
It did not surprise Castiel in the least that Balthazar had chartered a private jet for the trip from the airport to where he was staying in the north of the country. It was fortunate that he himself never seemed to suffer from jet-lag, so he enjoyed seeing England from a new angle. He smiled to himself as he thought of how Dean would have reacted to a second flight. Probably have screamed like a girl.

Seeing his cousin had noted his distractedness, he quickly asked why they had not taken the train, especially as he knew Durham was on a main passenger route from London.

“Quicker this way, Cassie”, Balthazar grinned. “We can be there and get started pronto.”

“Why the rush?” Castiel asked, frowning at the nickname. “You were surely not being serious when you told Michael you thought we could lose this?”

To his surprise, his cousin looked uncertain.

“The polls haven't shifted as much in our favour as expected”, he admitted with visible reluctance. “We're slightly ahead but there's still close to twenty per cent who say they're undecided. Though with the weight of the entire Establishment with us….”

“Surely the government is supposed to be impartial?” Castiel asked.

His cousin looked at him incredulously.

“Remind me what you do for a living, cous?” he scoffed. “Ways and means, cous; we've got everyone who matters on our side of things. As I told Micky the only possible danger is those cretins who will vote against us just because they always do the opposite of what they're told is good for them, but they're few in number at least this side of the Pond. Besides people tend to go for the safer option once they're faced with putting a cross on a bit of paper.”

“No electronic voting?” Castiel asked, surprised.

“I think they saw those hanging chads in Florida and thought better of it”, Balthazar grinned. “Probably wise, bearing in mind what America got as a result. Let's go!”

<>

The Radisson Hotel in Durham was... functional (or as Balthazar called it, 'a concrete-
manufacturer's idea of heaven'). At least the view from Castiel's room over the nearby River Wear was pleasant enough and he was close to the city centre; this place had a whole lot of historical sites that he wanted to see before he left. He had refused his cousin's offer of a hire car for his stay as he planned to explore by train and bus, partly for environmental reasons and partly because he knew it would confuse the hell out of Balthazar.

“Why Durham?” Castiel asked as he looked with pleasure around his room. It was definitely better inside than out although that was a low bar. “I mean it's alright, but why nearly three hundred miles from London? I thought you liked it in the big city?”

“Once we knew the set-up of the vote, Micky decided that the best place for me to monitor things from would be somewhere like here”, Balthazar said. “Ground zero, so to speak. I'm working off a London university but I managed to get transferred to a college up here for the run-up to the vote; they gave me a small flat, which I suppose will do for the duration.”

“But why here?” Castiel pressed. His cousin sighed.

“It's to do with these voting areas”, he said. “In a regular election they use constituencies which are pretty much the same size; whoever gets the most of them usually wins. But the voting areas this time are all different sizes, which makes things more difficult to forecast.”

“Why not use 'constituencies', then?” Castiel asked.

“I'm sure the government had its reasons”, Balthazar said airily. “Anyway, as I was saying.....”

Castiel stared suspiciously at him. His cousin growled in annoyance.

“I hate it when you do that!” he snapped. “Okay. If the prime minister had used constituencies, then barring a miracle the other side would have win more of them because their vote is more spread out. Apart from Scotland and Northern Ireland, our vote is concentrated in the big cities. So that would have undermined his victory on actual votes cast.”

“It would”, Castiel agreed. “And I suppose that since the last vote was over forty years ago exit polls are useless, as they use comparisons?”

“Exactly”, Balthazar said, “Hence the use of algorithms; they worked out which types of people tended to vote in or out, then did a set of predictions for all four hundred or so† areas. But not how they would actually vote; instead how they would vote to achieve a fifty-fifty final result as a whole.”

“I see.”

“Wish you'd explain it to me, then”, Balthazar said cheerily. “Point is, we knew the best place to monitor things would be somewhere set to be close to an even split. That's this place, County Durham‡. Nearly four times the size of the average voting area; if they've got their figures right it'll go to us by half of one per cent, or a few hundred votes. Any more and we're home free.”

“But what if it votes Leave?” Castiel asked.

“Well, the predictions will be a bit wrong one way or the other in most places”, his cousin said. “But a win here greatly improves our odds. Though with any luck we'll be home and dry by then; it's timed to come in about halfway through the night.”

Castiel sighed. Politics this side of the Pond seemed about as dirty and corrupt as back home.
Dean was glad to leave the plane (and a certain blue-eyed someone) behind him, and even gladder when he came out of the gate to find a moose waiting for him. But then Sammy had to go and ruin it by telling Dean they were travelling north by train.

“Passenger trains are the thing in this country”, Sammy said as they boarded an underground train that would take them across the capital, “and....”

“If you use the words 'environmentally' or 'friendly' in that sentence, I'm telling Sarah about the time you broke your hand when jerking off.”

“I never did that!” Sam said hotly.

“I can be very convincing!” Dean grinned. “I suppose at least I'll have the chance to sleep off the jet-lag.”

Dean was able to nap for nearly an hour on the Underground and for most of the three hour journey north, his brother waking him with a coffee about twenty minutes out. Their destination was a station called Durham, a largish place with an impressive cathedral, and Sammy had driven (“ugh, a Prius!”) them a couple of miles to one of the suburbs, a place called Neville's Cross. After greeting Sarah they went to a pub called the Duke of Wellington; she was feeling a little nauseous and wanted a nap.

“There was a famous battle fought here in 1346”, the moose explained over a tolerable pint of beer, “so there's little building allowed. And we're only a couple of miles from the city centre.

“Surprised someone like you is against the government on this one”, Dean observed. “From what little I read, the young generation are all for this EU thing.”

“I sent you pages of information”, Sam said.
“Words on paper, or a date with a hot brunette”, Dean grinned. “Guess which one I chose?”

“Well, you're gonna help me this time”, Sam said firmly.

“What makes you think that?” Dean asked.

“Because we have a dinner-guest tomorrow evening”, Sam said with a grin. “My old college roomie is over here to visit his cousin, and as the guy is staying in town, I'm gonna drive over and fetch him.”

Dean could feel his spirits sagging.

“How’s it going?” he said weakly.

“Cas!”

Someone up there truly hated Dean Winchester!

Notes:
† Officially there were 382 voting areas; 326 in England, 32 in Scotland, 22 in Wales and one in Gibraltar (an Overseas Territory at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea, which had joined the EU along with the UK back in 1973). They varied in size from the Isles of Scilly with about 2,000 voters up to Birmingham with 700,000. The 382nd area was Northern Ireland; on the night however it had the eighteen parliamentary constituencies each declare separately, which is why there were 399 declarations on some results shows and 382 on others.
‡ There are two 'County Durham's. The wider definition is the traditional one of the pre-1974 county, in both area and population a little more than 80% that of the state of Rhode Island. The voting area here, population 522,000 of whom about 392,000 were eligible to vote, is the bulk geographically (85%) and population-wise (63%) of the old county. Principal towns in both are the City of Durham (48,000), Chester-le-Street (37,500), Peterlee (28,000), Newton Aycliffe (26,000), Bishop Auckland (25,000), Consett (25,000), Seaham (22,000) and Stanley (21,000). It is part of the North-East and bordered in that region by Darlington, Gateshead, Sunderland and Hartlepool (all part of the wider county), Stockton-on-Tees (parts of which are in the wider county) and Northumberland. It also borders Eden (North-West Region) and Richmondshire (Yorkshire & The Humber Region).
Sarah looked up expectantly as her husband came back in, dropping three bars of chocolate on the couch for her. All family-sized, luckily for him.

“I swear, the kid is sucking the stuff right outta me!” she grumbled grabbing the first bar. “So. That went better than expected.”

He looked at her incredulously.

Better than expected?” he exclaimed. “They nearly killed each other!”

“Yes, that fake baby move came in real handy”, she grinned. “Otherwise it would have been dessert at ten paces.”

“Never thought I'd see my own brother choose arguing over pie”, Sam mused.

“Cas got back safely?” Sarah said. “The local news said there was flooding with all this rain.”

“Lots of puddles but no blockages”, Sam said. “He's staying at the Radisson, and we both know how pricey that place is. I didn't realize just how rich his family are.”

“Did you meet the cousin?” Sarah asked.

Sam pulled a face.

“Unfortunately”, he sighed. “Goes by the name of Balthazar, and looks like one too. Ghastly guy; I thought he was gonna proposition me until I flashed my ring at him. And even then he said he was up for multiple choice.”

His wife seemed unusually thoughtful.

“Sare!”

“Just teasing”, she grinned. “What with Junior here and your brother looking like he's gonna murder your old roomie, my next few weeks will be busy enough as it is! Maybe later though....”

He glared at her.

<>

“And it didn't surprise me in the least to find he was on the other side!” Castiel said scornfully. “Plus he obviously read up about this whole vote thing, because he actually knew what Brexit was,
which I suppose was more than I'd expected. Then again, empty vessels make the loudest noise.”

“So you want to sleep with him?”

Castiel looked at his cousin in horror.

“Have you not listened to a single word that I have said?” he exclaimed angrily. “The man is a headcase! He's so full of himself, I can't stand him. How someone relatively normal like Sam ended up with a brother like that – well, genetics has a lot to answer for!”

“But you'd like to fuck him?” Balthazar pressed.

Castiel threw a book at him.

Dean was still seething after what had seemed like an interminable evening. That stuck-up, pretentious, overbearing, self-righteous know-all had been even worse than he remembered! Sarah had had to let her brother-in-law retire to his room afterwards with a large slice of her home-baked pie to calm him down. With custard!

Sammy was an idiot for befriending such a moron, but at least he had married well.

Dean stared balefully at the empty pie-dish, wondering if he might risk a trip to the kitchen to get seconds. Better not. He had heard the moose come back, and Sammy would only tease him about what he called the UST between him and Cas.... Castiel. There was no UST; Dean hated the guy. And what was with wearing a waistcoat out to a meal with friends? Especially such a tight-fitting one.

Dean glared down at his crotch area.

“You can shut the fuck up too!” he muttered. Little Dean had to be being affected by this British climate. Yeah, that was it.

He could almost hear Sammy muttering about a long river in Africa, dammit!
Saturday 21st May

Castiel scowled as he noted the display Dean was working on. The government had come out earlier in the day and suggested that a Brexit vote would trigger a collapse in house prices, affecting millions. Unfortunately they hadn't been able to explain how, and the bastards in the press had, most unfairly, mocked them for it. He stayed behind a red phone kiosk so he could continue to watch.

He was about to move away when it happened. A red-headed girl walked boldly up to the stall and addressed Dean by name. The man looked shocked to see her, and came round still looking stunned – and then she promptly threw herself at him, the hussy!

It was just a recognition of bad manners in public. Nothing to do with jealousy at all, and his conscience could shut the fuck up!

<>

“Dean!”

Dean looked at Sam in surprise.

“What?” he asked.

“Don't look now but we're being watched.”

Dean narrowly resisted the urge to look all around them.

“Who by?” he asked.

“Cas, over behind the... holy shit!”

Dean stared at his brother in confusion, but further conversation was prevented by the arrival at the stall of a short redhead who grinned at them both.

“Not pleased to see me?” she chirped.

Dean rushed round the stall and pulled her into a hug.

“Charlie!” he exclaimed. “What the hell are you doing here?”

“Well, this Brexit thing sounded great fun, so I invited myself over to lend a hand”, she grinned. “First class, of course.”
“How did you manage that?” Sam asked.

“Let's just say that a certain airline head knows to provide me with the best in case I accidentally leak his pecadilloes to the world.”

“How which one?” Dean demanded.

“V... very unlikely that I'd tell you!” she grinned. “I've a few people I want to see over here, plus of course I'll pop by to see your new kid when he's here.”

Dean led her away into the shop, still talking nineteen to the dozen. Sam noted that the figure observing them behind the phone kiosk was walking away and even at this distance, looking far from happy.

Interesting.
“And so it continues.”

“So what continues?” Dean asked, looking across at his brother. Charlie had shot off to do whatever she had to do in the Old Country, although not before leaving behind three different *Star Trek* onesies for the baby in red, gold and blue. Of course Samantha had blubbered over them, and Dean had not taken pictures.

Six was not that many!

“Project Fear”, Sam said. “That moron of a prime minister has said that the National Health Service will come under threat if we leave the EU.”

“How?” Sarah asked. “We'll have more money when we leave, and we won't have to spend it on crap either.”

“People like the Cam-Moron don't explain things to plebs like us”, Sam said. “We're expected to nod in agreement and vote like he tells us. Fortunately after the expenses scandal, no-one really trusts MPs any more.”

“What was that about?” Dean asked.

“Some seven years back”, Sarah said. “There was a whole set of revelations about them fraudulently claiming thousands of pounds on expenses. They tried to hush it up, then brush it off.”

“Surely they weren't all at it?” Dean said.

“True”, Sam said. “Of six hundred and fifty, they did find a list of those who hadn't fiddled the system in any way. It ran all the way to nine, so nearly double figures!”

“The polls are mixed”, Sarah said, looking at her tablet. “Remain has a lead of about eight per cent in the phone polls but the online ones are even. Though people say they're less reliable because they're self-selecting.”

“That's a weak argument”, Sam countered. “I know they say Leave voters are more committed, but you're not going to tell me that the government isn't ordering their lackeys to log in to all of these polls and vote Remain, probably multiple times. Still I bet Cas and his friends are worried. They probably expected to have it in the bag by now.”
“I’m not worried”, Balthazar said loftily. “Especially when we have the experts forecasting fifteen years of chaos if we leave.”

“The same experts who 'forecast' the last financial crisis?” Castiel asked dryly. “When the bankers who caused it and who back our side took huge sums of public money and suffered no consequences. That's what the papers are saying”

His cousin scowled at him.

“As one of America's slimiest politicians so rightly said, it's the economy, stupid”, he said, sipping at a glass of wine. “At the end of the day people will say bugger principles and vote with their wallets.”

“I still think you're far too relaxed”, Castiel said. “I've been looking back at the election from last year. All the polls got that wrong because they followed the narrative. And when one poll did actually forecast the right result, they kept quiet because they didn't want to be seen as being so far from the crowd.”

“The one thing I do worry about is turnout”, his cousin admitted. “For all their failures, Leave voters are much more likely to turn out on the day; I bet some will even be queueing outside the polling stations when they open at some ungodly hour of the morning, the morons. The hard part will be getting our vote out. Worst-case scenario, it could come down to something as dumb as whether or not it rains on the day, though I doubt that.”

“You still seem far too confident”, Castiel said.

“You're forgetting the safety factor”, his cousin said. “In any change or no change scenario there's always a swing back towards the status quo at the death. We saw that in the Scottish independence vote two years ago; the Nats were leading till close to the end but people backed away from the edge of the cliff when faced with an actual ballot paper.”

“What about the media?” Castiel asked.

“Unfortunately the BBC is still having to be fair, for once”, Balthazar sighed. “They're on our side because of all the money they get from the EU, but they know that they're being being watched like never before over this. Any bias will be all over the web faster that a picture of a naked Hollywood starlet!”

Castiel winced, but had to agree that his cousin was probably correct.
¶ MPs’ claims included a duck house, porn DVDs, moat-cleaning services, a Remembrance Day wreath, swimming-pool maintenance, a garlic press, a set of padded coat-hangers, two toilet seats (for the same MP!), an ice-cube tray, a 59p (75c) chocolate Santa and a ride-on lawnmower, plus copious examples of tax evasion and mortgage fraud. Much worse was ‘flipping’; using taxpayers’ money to fully furbish a London pad, then re-designating their normal home as their second one and having that done up too. It did not help that MPs had also tried to change the law so their misdeeds stayed secret; House of Commons Speaker Michael Martin, who had colluded in this attempt, was forced to resign.
† In fact the British economy has grown in every quarter since the vote, and unemployment has fallen sharply. The ‘experts’ did however revise their forecasts in 2018 (from apocalyptic to doom-laden), although mysteriously they ‘forgot’ to mention the reasons as to how they had been so totally and utterly wrong before. A mystery!
‡ Eighteen months after the vote the BBC was presented with a list of over fifty programs it had put out since that had all been anti-Brexit, and invited to provide evidence of just one that had been pro-Brexit. Naturally their response was to stick their fingers in their ears and shout ‘la la la, can't hear you!’
Sam threw down the newspaper in disgust.

“What is it?” his wife asked, sitting carefully down across from him.

“A group of charity leaders has said that Brexit would threaten donations to them!” her husband said scornfully.

“Will it?” Dean wondered. “How?”

“They get a lot of their money from the government these days”, Sam pointed out. “Naturally they're gonna parrot whatever line Cameron tells them to. It's disgusting!”

“But people will listen”, Sarah said. “That's all he's got, our un-esteemed prime minister. Project Fear.”

“At least the polls are better this morning”, Sam sighed. “I promised Debbie down at the shop I'd go and help out with campaigning today, but.....”

Dean rolled his eyes.

“Spare me the puppy-dog eyes, Sammy”, he said resignedly. “You can stay here and await the arrival of Junior and I'll go and hand out leaflets to the locals.”

“I knew there was a reason I had an elder brother!”

“Or I could stay here and tell Sarah about that time you injured your hand when you were.....”

“Dean, dammit!”

“Do tell!” Sarah grinned.

“You can't trust anyone these days!”

Castiel looked at his cousin as they walked through the precinct.

“What about?” he asked.
“I tried to call in a favour from the town clerk about getting the rent on the Leavers’ shop increased, but she said that she couldn't because her boss was pro-Leave, and he's veto it”, Balthazar grumbled. “All she could get was the promise of a permanent stand opposite theirs 'in the interests of fairness'. Cow!”

“Whereas you, trying to use your position to unfairly handicap the other side, are as pure as the driven snow?”

Balthazar was about to reply when he suddenly pulled up.

“Hullo!” he grinned. “Beefcake at eleven o'clock.”

Castiel followed his line of vision, and groaned. There was Dean Winchester, stood outside the Brexit shop handing out leaflets. He was currently charming some young girl who, to Castiel's intense discomfort, was doing the lovestruck bimbo routine on him. Some women these days had no class, but then that matched with the half a dress she was barely wearing.

“Maybe that's their game now he's here”, Balthazar mused. “Get the visiting hunk to woo all our youngsters to vote for their side.”

“I thought you said that young people preferred our side?” Castiel asked.

“They do”, his cousin said, “but historically they're much less likely to go out and actually vote. They just tweet about it and think that'll do, then whine about it on Twitter the day after. Older people in this country are the ones who vote more and they're mostly for Leave. If Cameron had had any sense he would have delayed the vote a couple of years so more of them could have done the decent thing and died off†.”

“But you still don't think they will win?” Castiel asked. He looked across to where Dean Winchester, wearing an open-necked t-shirt that showed his broad chest off rather nicely, was saying goodbye to his admirer.

The day was unusually cold, he thought.

“Oh, we'll win”, Balthazar said confidently. “It'll be closer that I would like but people know which side their bread is buttered on. I think we'll get home by about ten per cent, myself.”

Castiel was not so sure.
Remoaner merchandise on sale after the vote included tea-towels with the faces of older and presumably Leave-voting people who, it claimed, were all dead now so their votes no longer counted. They was also a 'Deatherendum' website counting down to when enough Leave voters would have died off to allow Remain to win a second/third/seventy-eighth vote. Strangely the BBC 'missed' both these stories.
Tuesday 24th May

“So it was less the arrival of Junior and more the return of the curry”, Dean grinned. Sam scowled at his brother.

“Sarah had a sudden craving for spicy food”, he said. “I did not panic!”

Dean just looked at him.

“Shut the fuck up!”

Dean’s good start to the day was set to continue. Once Sarah was out of ‘danger’ (and Samantha had stopped being such a girl!) the elder Winchester went into town to help out at the Leave stand in the precinct.

He was less than pleased to see a familiar tousle-headed figure only a few dozen yards away at the rival Remain stand; seriously, did Castiel sleep in that coat?

An untimely image of someone fucking Dean while wearing only a certain item of apparel wandered across his mind and took far too long to depart. He sent it a mental scowl.

“Uh oh.”

Dean looked up at Debbie, who was with him on the stand.

“What's up?” he asked.

She gestured to where a dark-haired woman with what could only be described as a predatory expression was walking towards the two stands.

“Best hide if you value your family jewels”, she grinned. “That's Rowena MacLeod, the terror of the North. Male and breathing are her two requirements for a bed partner, and that's about it.”

Dean looked uncertainly at the woman. Fortunately she was headed towards the clothes store on the other side of the precinct, so was nearer the Remain stand. To his surprise she approached Castiel and started talking to him.

“Bet she wants more than just a leaflet!” Debbie sniggered.

They both watched, and Dean could see when the guy realized what the woman was after. Even at
this distance he could see those blue eyes widening before Castiel turned and fled into the shop.

“Jealousy's a terrible thing, you know”, Debbie muttered.

“Shaddup!”

“Why didn't you tell me?”

Castiel started angrily at his cousin.

“That the town trollop was out for you?” Balthazar grinned. “I was just enjoying the show. Didn't know you could turn that shade of red.”

Castiel blushed again.

“She wasn't the least bit interested in my arguments”, he said crossly. “And she actually tried to kiss me!”

“An attractive woman, even if it was Randy Rowena, tried to kiss you”, Balthazar grinned. “Woe indeed, you had a terrible day!”

Castiel scowled. While the woman had been attractive in her own way, he did not like the idea of someone taking control like that. He would much rather have had.....

Balthazar sniggered. Castiel scowled at him. His annoying cousin had guessed, correctly as it happened, just what he really wanted in a bed partner. Someone who looked like an underwear model, had impossibly deep forest-green eyes, and wasn't a complete dick.

Coincidentally someone, who may or may not have been connected to the first someone, scored two out of three in that test.
Wednesday 25th May

Castiel was back at the stand in the precinct when he saw his rivals - in particular, one bow-legged, green-eyed rival who was wearing red shorts that were far too tight for anyone with morals – setting up a new display poster. He watched incredulously as Dean finished writing it and caught the bastard definitely wiggling that tight butt (seriously, he could have bounced a quarter off of it) to the visible approval of several passers-by.

Castiel strode over to the annoying idiot.

“You can't say that!” he protested.

Dean just grinned at him.

“Why not?” he said. “Collect your free facts leaflet here – oh sorry, the Cameroid spent ten million quid of your money on a pro-Remain leaflet and nought million quid on a pro-Leave one'. Seems perfectly fair.”

“That was an information leaflet”, Castiel snapped. “To help people make their minds up.”

“Information from only one side”, Dean countered. “Besides, Sammy said they'd already had a leaflet – a balanced one from the guys organizing the vote – telling them everything they needed to know about how to put a cross on a piece of paper. And we've put in a note next to the donation box, apologizing that all that money was stolen from them by your Great Leader.”

“He's not my.... leader!” Castiel said crossly. “I'm as American as you are, in case you hadn't spotted it.”

“Oh yeah, the Acela tax-accountant”, Dean sneered. “What's the problem? Afraid of us telling the truth about your side's cheating?”

Castiel stormed off.

<>

“The damnable thing is that he may be right for once”, Balthazar admitted later. “People have a strong sense of fair play in this country, and even among our side the feeling is that that bloody leaflet was not cricket. Worse, Cameron just looked sulky when that journalist asked him to confirm that thousands of people had posted theirs back to Downing Street in protest, so now everyone knows that was true.”

“I'm sure the government send out information all the time”, Castiel said.
“But these are not normal times”, Balthazar pointed out. “Everyone is watching everyone like hawks, waiting for any bias or cheating. It's a damn nuisance! I'm very much afraid this has backfired on us.”

“Here you go, Sare”, Dean said, passing over three more large bars of chocolate. “Unlike some mooses I could mention, I know how to buy the right stuff.”

That earned him a relatively mild Bitchface #8.

“I was tired after a hard day, and didn't want to go out in this downpour”, Sam said. “I heard you had another run-in with Cas?”

“He was so mad!” Dean chortled. “Red-faced and hopping up and down, trying to defend the indefensible.”

“The reaction is better than I expected”, Sam said. “The Cameroid seems to think that if he says something must be so, then it must be so because he says it. Like King Charles the First.”

“Nerd!” Dean said affectionately. “What happened to old Charlie?”

“He plunged the Three Kingdoms into a set of civil wars, as a result of which his head was cut off in 1649.”

“Ouch! We don't want that to happen this time - do we?”

Sam seemed to consider that prospect for rather too long, before Sarah let out an exclamation that had him leaping from his chair.

“Oh my god! Is it coming? Sare, are you alright? Should I get the car out?”

“Just pins and needles”, she said. “Sorry.”

Sam sank back into his chair and tried to regulate his breathing, while Dean caught what was definitely a smirk from his sister-in-law. He liked her even more.
“Another damn thing”, Balthazar grumbled, “is that people are no longer afraid to talk about immigration. A few years back we could shout them down as racists, but that no longer works.”

“I see you're still into reasoned debate, then”, Castiel snarked.

“This is too important for reasoned debate!” his cousin snapped. “The polls are tightening, and our information tactics aren't working as they should.”

“People don't believe their so-called betters”, Castiel said.

“It's not just disbelieving them”, Balthazar sighed. “Most of the stupid morons think that even if the experts are right, then given the news today, it's a price worth paying.”

“What news?” Castiel asked. Balthazar passed him his tablet.

“Immigration up another 330,000 last month”, he sighed. “That's half a per cent per year, or a city the size of Greater London every twenty years. People are seeing large parts of the country being cemented over for all the houses needed to home these people and are having to wait longer to see their doctor or dentist. The idiots blame the EU.”

“Which won't let the country control ifs own immigration”, Castiel pointed out.

“It's that stupid Cameron's fault”, his cousin moaned. “When he went for the renegotiation of our deal the polls showed a clear lead and he told them he was all but certain to win. So naturally Brussels didn't feel any need to give him anything; hell, even I thought he came back empty-handed. I bet those champagne-quaffing officials are regretting that right now.”

“I'm glad it's still on paper”, Sarah said.

Both brothers looked at her in confusion.

“The voting process”, she explained. “I don't like those infernal machines they have in the States. Even if they aren't being interfered with, people on both sides don't trust them. And I think no matter how much you badger people about being racist for mentioning immigration, when they get into that voting booth with just a pencil and a piece of paper, quite a few will do the right thing. Machines always leave the impression that the vote could be tracked back to them.”

“Can't that be done on paper?” Dean asked. “Sammy said that you mark the ballot papers over
“Not individually”, Sarah said. “They have to have an official mark, otherwise there would be nothing to stop a whole load of people each taking in a dozen fake votes and depositing them into the box. You'll hear when they announce the votes that there might be one or two with no official mark; it's rarely more than that.”†

“I'd like to think the Cameroid won't try to fiddle the result”, Sam sighed. “But his actions so far – well. I see the papers have gotten hold of confirmation that he pressured the charity heads to come out against Brexit last week, although he just called it 'a recommendation’.”

“As 'I recommend that if I push you off the edge of a cliff, you splatter on the rocks far, far below?'' Sarah laughed. “Yeah right! So, Dean.... how's the great romance going?”

Dean scowled at her.

“There is no romance”, he said sulkily. “Cas is a dick.”

“Oh, it’s 'Cas' now?” Sam teased. “Don't forget your tissues tomorrow when you're on the stand, by the way.”

“Why?”

“Because 'Cas' may be wearing the waistcoat”, Sam grinned, “and you need something to wipe away all that drool.”

“I do not drool! And especially not over nerds like that!”

“So you haven't got any pictures of him on your laptop, then?”

“No I have not!”

Sam looked at him in surprise, but Dean held his gaze confidently. He was telling the truth, after all.

He had the pics on three separate pen drives, two with him and one locked in his safe back home.

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Chapter End Notes

† In fact only 232 ballot papers (across 399 voting areas) were rejected for this reason.
“You know dam well that that's a lie!”

Dean quirked an eyebrow at the gorgeously annoying figure in front of him.

“Says who?” he asked.

“The EU does not cost this country £350 million a week†”, Castiel said. “You're lying!”

Dean folded his arms and sighed, as if it was stretching his patience to have to deal with the annoyance before him.

“Look, dorkulus”, he said rudely, “that's how much the UK sends the EU every week. Yes, it gets some of it back – but it gets told what to spend it on, and has to put up big signs saying 'funded by the guys in Brussels'. How would you like it if some guy took £350 from your salary every week, then gave you half back only on condition that you spend it how they wanted – oh yeah, and you also had to tell everyone what a wonderful guy they were for 'giving' you back your own damn money?”

Castiel scowled. He knew that there was a perfectly reasonable argument to counter what the irritating know-all in front of him had just come out with.

Somewhere.

“And at least our figures are based on reality”, Dean went on, grinning at the shorter man's inability to come up with a reply. “You've got that snooty chancellor‡ of yours telling everyone they'll be over four grand worse off every year – that's about £350 a month, Sammy said – if they dare to vote Brexit.”

“George Osborne knows what he's doing”, Castiel said starchily.

“He just wants the Cameroid's job”, Dean retorted. “Titanic Mark Two!”

“You don't think you're actually going to win?” Castiel asked incredulously. “Hah! If England votes for Brexit I'll kiss your lily-white butt!”

He walked calmly away, failing to see Dean's smile.

<>

Castiel scowled at his cousin, who was rolling around on the floor with laughter. It was ten
minutes since he had told him the outcome of his argument with the annoying dick, and the other annoying dick was not letting it go.

“I'll be alright in a minute”, Balthazar wheezed. “What did you promise to do again?”

Castiel glared at him.

“I said that if England voted Brexit, I would kiss his butt!”

His cousin froze, then looked hard at him.

“Well that was stupid!”

“Well?” Castiel demanded.

“Because there's a chance that England might vote for Brexit”, Balthazar said. “You forgot this is a vote of the whole UK, cous. We may end up needing the big majorities we're gonna get in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – maybe even Gibraltar - to win the overall vote.”

Castiel cursed under his breath. Dean could not have known that when he had been so damn provocative.

_Could he have?

Balthazar chuckled.

“I wonder if those freckles go all the way round the back.....”

“You're no help at all!” Castiel snapped. “I'd get more sense out of Dean.”

“You'd like to get something out of him alright!” his cousin teased. “I bet you've been fantasizing about him ever since I first called him an underwear model.”

Castiel hesitated a fraction of a second too long, which set his cousin off again. The younger Novak huffed and left him, deciding that there were few problems in the world that could not be at least made better by a large intake of caffeine.

Damn underw.... annoying idiot provoking him like that!

Chapter End Notes

† One of the most talked-about claims from the Leave side as if was painted on the side of the famous red Brexit bus. In fact the UK paid the EU closer to £400 million per week then got half back, but had to spend it only on EU-approved projects and put up signs stating that it was 'EU money'. Subsequently the BBC made much play of the claim being tested in the courts, but strangely lost interests when the courts said that it was quite correct.

‡ Born Gideon Oliver Osborne, he later added 'George' as his first name. He was Chancellor of the Exchequer, basically the UK's chief finance minister. Clearly angling for the top job himself, he was not asked to continue by David Cameron's replacement Theresa May, so left politics before the 2017 election and took up several private jobs, including running an anti-Brexit newspaper which snipes constantly at his
former colleagues. He once said that Theresa May should be bagged, chopped up and out in his freezer, although given her behaviour in office.....
“I’m worried about Nigel.”

Sarah was helping herself to what was definitely not a tenth roast potato if either her husband or brother-in-law knew what was good for them. Neither Winchester said anything; for a small woman she could be scary when challenged. And she had a fork.

“That’s the guy in charge of the party that wants out of the EU, isn’t it?” Dean asked. “Why the worry?”

“Because he’s a Marmite guy”, she said.

Dean was confused. Sam chuckled.

“It’s not common in the States, but Marmite is a rich yeast spread with a very strong taste”, he explained. “People tend to either love or loathe it; hence any politician who inspires the same extreme reactions is said to be a Marmite guy or gal.”

“There was no way he was going to end up leading the officially funded Leave† campaign”, Sarah said, “especially the way the government hate him so much.”

“Why’s that?” Dean asked.

“Because the EU is the issue that’s bedevilled the Conservatives for decades”, Sam said. “You see, when Farage’s party was making ground a few years back and actually won the EU elections in 2014, the Cameroid was pressured to promise this vote. Of course the slimy git added a caveat; only if he won an absolute majority at the election we had last year.”

“Which he did?” Dean asked. His brother nodded.

“I laughed at the time”, he said. “You see, the exit polls on the night said he’d win but fall a few seats short of an absolute majority. If they’d have been right, then I’m a hundred per cent sure that he’d have used that as a cop-out. But a few extra votes in the right places pushed him over the line and he had no choice. Bet he hated that!”

“Politicians!” Dean muttered. “Like diapers, both sides of the bloody Pond!”

<>

“Cassie! You're ignoring me!”
Castiel scowled at his cousin.

“Only because you keep calling me that”, he retorted.

“Not because you're dreaming of a pair of tight buns in faded jeans?” Balthazar teased. “Keep your mind on the game, cous. The polls are still going the wrong way and we need your input.”

“What's wrong with these people?” Castiel grumbled. “The arguments are straightforward enough. Can they not see what's good for them?”

“We even got the Governor of the Bank of England‡ to come out and say that Brexit would be a disaster”, Balthazar sighed. “No effect; the story just became that he was wrong to say anything.”

“Arguably he was”, Castiel admitted. “He's supposed to be politically neutral.”

“Not if it helps us” Balthazar snapped back. “I will give you one thing that git Farage was right about; his supporters will walk over broken glass to vote. I bet those out of the country have already posted theirs in. The government has got this all wrong.”

“How do you mean?”

“They thought that, by projecting that a Remain vote is all but certain, Leavers would have been discouraged”, Balthazar sighed. “They underestimated their enemy. Those people will vote whatever they say. They should be targeting the soft fringe; the twenty per cent or so who said they were undecided when the campaign started, many of whom might abstain on the day. We should be winning the vast majority of them to our side but it's not happening.”

He stopped in his rant and sighed.

“Can you please get your mind out of the underwear model's jeans for one moment?” he asked plaintively.

Castiel blushed fiercely. That was exactly where his mind had been, as it happened. Quite pleasurably engaged, too.

† Vote Leave. There were three major campaigns to leave the EU so naturally the government chose the weakest of the three to be the official campaign that received public funds.
‡ Mark Carney, appointed in 2013. He refused to back down over his claims despite
the fact that they clearly breached the neutrality clause in his terms of employment, but after the vote announced that he would not serve his originally planned full eight years. He left the post early in January 2020, his allies' efforts to stop Brexit having been frustrated by those pesky voters.
Sunday 29th May

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sam chuckled as he read his tablet at the breakfast table.

“What is it?” Dean asked.

“The PM has backed away from giving sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds a vote in the referendum”, he said. “Too late in the day, probably.”

“Not surprising”, Sarah said, sitting herself carefully at the table (Dean did not smirk at his brother's black eye; his sister-in-law had found it impossible to get comfortable the night before and had lashed out in her sleep).

Sam scowled at him. Alright, Dean may have smirked just a bit.

“What?” he asked. “Aren't they expecting the young† to vote Remain and the old to vote Leave?”

“Politics”, Sam grinned. “The Cameroid is scared that if he allows them to vote in the referendum, he'll find it hard if not impossible to resist calls for them to vote in the next general election – and most of them would vote against him.”

“In Victorian times, they considered giving university graduates extra votes”, his wife said, “to balance the votes of the middle class' great unwashed. Then again, when I look at today's students, I frankly think they're too dumb. I suspect most of them will tweet about it on the day and think that's all it takes†. Although bearing in mind they're mostly for Remain I can live with that.”

“They're not that dumb”, Sam objected.

“Please!” she retorted. ‘Remember those essays I showed you last year? 'I know this is what's right and I don't have to justify it to anyone.'. Hah!”

“Sounds a right idiot”, Dean agreed.

“She whined for ages when she got her paper back”, Sarah remembered. “I just told her that I didn't have to justify her 'F' to anyone, and she was damn lucky it hadn't been a 'G'!”

<>

Castiel could feel himself losing it. And that green-eyed smirker over there at the rival stand was Not Helping!
“I do not need telling how to vote by a young whippersnapper like you!” the elderly lady barked at him, prodding him with her umbrella. “Asking the young to ‘grab a grannie’ and tell them how to vote? Who do you think you are?”

“Madam, be reasonable....”

“Reasonable?” she snapped. “That slimy git” (Balthazar had long fled before her onslaught) “said that the likes of me shouldn't be allowed to vote because according to him, 'we would all be dead soon and wouldn't have to live with the consequences'. Let me tell you this young man; I and everyone in my house will be outside that polling station at seven in the morning ready to vote for freedom! You tell your Mr. Cameron to shove that in his pipe and smoke it!”

She stalked off in a huff. Dean chuckled.

“Another one for us”, he called across. “Keep on upsetting the voters, Cas. We'll get so many more votes that way.”

He turned and went back behind his stand. Castiel did not follow his butt in those impossibly tight jeans all the way there.

He had to blink at least once.

Chapter End Notes

† Contrary to the 36% turnout among 18-24s that was later widely reported, the actual figure was an unusually high 64%. Turnout did however rise steadily across the age groups until among the over 65s it was over 90%! Balthazar was not the only one to say that these people should not have been allowed to vote because they would all be dead soon. What a deplorable remark!
Monday 30th May

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Castiel had thought that by coming to this town of Chester-le-Street, he could have avoided Dean Winchester for once. Apparently the Gods had had other ideas. He quietly seethed as he looked across the street to where his arch-nemesis was again wearing those impossibly tight jeans... being a total dick.

His treacherous mind immediately started wondering about Dean's dick. Maybe if he did end up kissing Dean's but....

He shook himself back to reality.

“Very clever”, Olivia muttered as she sorted out the leaflets on their own stand. “A cardboard cut-out of our very unpopular Chancellor, and a random number generator.”

Castiel's scowl deepened as he watched some little old lady (with Dean's help) pull the lever. The six digits span round to display '346,809 jobs lost according to St. Gideon The Supercilious'.

“No lucky seven”, the lady sighed.

“Oh, everyone's a winner here”, Dean grinned. “Have a sweet just for trying, madam.”

She giggled and actually simpered at him – Castiel swallowed what was most definitely bile – before taking a sweet and ambling away. Honestly, she had been old enough to have been his mother!

“Those jeans ought to be illegal”, Olivia muttered from behind him. “He's doing it deliberately, you know. Bending over the stand like that, and knowing people'll stop just to ogle him. Women and men!”

“The man's a slut”, Castiel said dismissively.

There has been nothing in his tone, he was sure, but she still looked sharply at him.

“Aha!” she said. “You want to get in those jeans, don't you?”

“What? No!”

He had spoken too loudly. From across the street, a green-eyed smirk told him that someone had heard him. Dammit!

<>
“Excellent idea of yours, Sammy”, Dean said that evening. “Is Sarah alright?”

“Just the result of a whole box of Milk Tray†”, his brother sighed. “I can't believe someone as unpopular as our Gideon came out with such a palpably made-up figure like 'leaving the EU will cost this country at least half a million jobs'. I bet he wishes things were different right now.”

“How so?”

“He's always wanted the top job for himself”, Sam explained. “Because he expected a Remain vote the Chancellor chose to tie himself to that side. If they win he'll be Cameron's likely replacement when he steps down, probably before the next election in 2020. But if the PM loses, Cameron will have to either go or at least announce when he's going. His replacement won't want a potential rival like Gideon hanging around like a bad smell.”

“I'm surprised this prime minister of yours didn't demand all his ministers back his side”, Dean said.

“He tried that”, his brother said. “He told all the Leavers in the Cabinet that they would have to resign their posts if they wanted to campaign against him. Stupid idiot forgot he was only sitting on a majority of twelve; they countered with a threat to resign en masse and force a whole set of by-elections, which could have brought the government down.”

“Nice to know it's not just home politics that's dirty and underhand!” Dean grinned.

† Popular UK chocolate assortment of milk chocolate sweets. It became famous because of a set of ads in the 1970s in which a James Bond-type braved all sorts of perils and dangers to deliver a box to his lady love; today he'd probably be accused of being a sexist!
They were at it again, damn them! And double damn the green-eyed hunk in those jeans that should have been illegal....

“Tissue?”

Castiel jumped, and stared at his cousin.

“What?”

“For the drool!” Balthazar grinned. “Honestly, I thought you were about to start panting there for a minute, Cassie.”

“Don't call me that!” Castiel said automatically. He stared again at the rival stand, where Dean – quite deliberately – was leaning over and making those pants stretch even more.....

He took his cousin's tissue, and ignored the sniggers that came with it. It was a hot day, and he was sweating.

<>

“She's a little cluck!” Dean proclaimed, keeping one eye on the scruffy yet annoyingly attractive fellow across the street. “Pick a country, pay a pound, and then write your reason as to why they're gonna attack England.”

“The United Kingdom!” one elderly lady starchily corrected him. Dean beamed at her and she visibly softened; Castiel was sure that she sighed at the ignoramus! Ugh!

“Sorry, madam”, he grinned. “The United Kingdom; I stand corrected by your good self.” (Castiel winced as she was not simpering at his rival). “Even an American should know the difference between those terms.”

Castiel was sure that Dean was looking straight at him when he said that. He did not blush.

He did not blush much.

“All proceeds to the local hospice”, Dean said, “after the best reason wins twenty quid. That's... a lot of euros. And thanks to the Great Leader, we now know that Vlad over in Russia is already lining up his tanks in case y'all dare to vote the wrong way!”

Castiel sent a scowl his way, but with all the people around the stand his intended target probably did not even see it. Rats!
“Definitely not one of the PM's smarter moves”, Sam said later as they reviewed a most successful day's takings. “But at least I'll be taking over two hundred quid to the hospice tomorrow.”

“I can't believe even the Cameroid was dumb enough to threaten World War Three if people voted Leave”, Sara mused as she eased herself carefully onto the sofa, watched anxiously by both Winchesters. “I mean, even the reporters there – and they're usually about as effective as a chocolate teapot – called him out on it and demanded details. Little wonder he dropped the subject like a hot potato.”

“Vladimir Putin might prefer a Leave vote for the potential uncertainty”, Sam said, “but it came over as yet more scare tactics. And you were just bad today, Dean.”

“What? Why?”

“You knew that Castiel was watching you, yet you deliberately wore the tight jeans and shook your booty at him.”

“Booty?” Dean sighed heavily. “I raised you wrong if you use words like that, Sammy.”

“But you were teasing him, weren't you?”

Dean grinned.

“Oh yeah!” he said with a smile. “Stuck-up establishment know-all; he's an easy target. And I've got something even better lined up for tomorrow!”
Wednesday 1st June

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Balthazar groaned as he looked at his tablet.

“What is it?” Castiel asked.

“They’ve done an interview with one of the bods from the Electoral Commission”, he sighed.
“Some blabbermouth went to the papers claiming that Cameron had tried to rig the wording of the referendum question, and they felt 'compelled to respond’.”

“What did they say?”

“The classic non-denial denial”, his cousin groused. “The government was, and I quote, 'extremely helpful when it came to the wording of the referendum question’.”

“But that's a good thing, isn't it?”

Balthazar sighed.

“The point is”, he said heavily, “that Cameron wanted a straight yes/no question to 'do you want to remain in the EU?' But quite a few in his government think the Electoral Commission, who after all are running this damn vote, were biased.”

“Are they?” Castiel asked.

“Yes, but in our favour so that's alright”, Balthazar said. “Trouble is, like all in their positions they put their own job security first so they're having to at least appear to be fair-minded, a bit like the BBC I suppose. So they insisted on testing all sorts of questions, and they found that Yes/No to that gave us an advantage. Someone leaked that out to they insisted on a Leave/Remain question that they said was fairer†. Obviously Cameron tried to pressure them to change their minds, and some bastard at the Commission went and told the press.”

“I don't see....”

“Those damn Brexiteers will run this for all it's worth”, Balthazar sighed. “They'll claim that this is another example of the government trying to rig the vote.”

“Which they were”, Castiel pointed out.

“Yes, but we don't want the enemy to know that!” Balthazar snapped. “That's politics, cous, as you should well know.”

<>
Castiel's day was about to get worse (or better, depending on one's viewpoint). He was sorting out leaflets on the stand when Beth came up to him.

“Seen the news?” she grinned. “Those Leavers are really fighting dirty now.”

Castiel looked at her in confusion. The woman passed over her phone – and Castiel gulped. It was an article about a medieval tournament being held at Raby Castle, which presumably was somewhere nearby. The main interview was with a visiting American student who had been photographed wearing – well, war paint and very little else. And surely those leather shorts weren't allowed to be that low on a family website?

He must be coming down with a cold, as he suddenly had difficulty breathing.

“That's a sight worth seeing!” Beth said with a smile. “I'm happily married with three kids, but I'd tap that!”

“Shameless!” Castiel muttered.

“Me or him?” Beth asked. “Do you want me to send a link to your phone?”

Hell yes!

“I suppose you could.”

“Or I could just delete it and see if you forget the website....”

He glared at her, and strode off in a huff.

Yes, he Googled it later. Yes, he saved all the pictures of Dean. Yes, he checked other websites in case he'd missed any.

Shut up!
“Loads of good publicity today”, Sam grinned as they made their way back to the house. Though I can't wait to see Charlie's reaction when she finds you've been doing medieval re-enactments behind her back.”

“It's LARPing”, Dean said haughtily. “Besides, who's going to tell her?”

“She'll find out”, Sam said confidently. “She finds out anything people try to keep from her; surely you of all people know that.”

“Yeah, right!”

“She does.... handmaiden!”

Dean flushed bright red. That had been one time, dammit!

† Remain clearly had some supporters at the Electoral Commission; a set of guides were supposed to be half showing a Remain box marked and half showing a Leave one marked – but they were all Remain! And you might think that only idiots could fail to get an 'X' onto a ballot paper – but nationwide, over nine thousand people somehow contrived to vote for both options!
“The BBC are making a lot of play about this dratted MP”, Sam sighed as they sat over breakfast. “Anyone would think she was actually important!”

“What MP?” Dean asked, plating up a full English breakfast. It always amused him that his health-conscious brother loved this sort of meal, but Dean was not the sort to make too much of that.

“Shut up with the smirking and give me food!” Sam growled. “Doctor Sarah Wollaston†. She's a Conservative MP who has said she's changed her mind, and will now be campaigning for Remain instead of Leave 'because she's been convinced of their arguments’.”

“Doesn't sound much of a loss”, Dean observed.

“Somehow the dear old BBC 'missed' the fact that her 'massive contribution' to our side over the last few weeks comprised a sum total of one tweet”, Sam groused. “She was obviously a Cameroid plant.”

He fell on Dean's offering as if it was his last meal on this earth. His elder brother grinned and set to work on finishing Sarah's food; at least she had being pregnant as an excuse for her suddenly liking cooked breakfasts.

“Why did you say this place was 'ground zero’?” Dean asked once the moose was done and staring forlornly at his empty plate.

“The pollsters looked at how different sex, age, culture, ethnic and other groups tended to vote”, Sam said. “Then they looked at how each one of those was represented in the nearly four hundred counting areas and calculated how each area would need to vote to produce a fifty-fifty outcome. County Durham came out as being only slightly pro-Remain so yes; if it votes heavily one way or the other, that gives that side an advantage. But it's not decisive.”

Dean was confused.

“Take the American election”, Sam said patiently. “Douglas County back home was 35% Republican last time out. The calculations would be that for the USA to have an even split the Republicans would need to gain three points, so they would be looking for 38% later this year. Anything more than that would suggest a Republican victory was possible, and anything less a Democrat one. But not necessarily; that one result could just be an outlier.”

“I think he wants to know when we'll have some idea of how things are going”, Sarah said, emerging into the kitchen and seating herself carefully at the table. “I should've married the Winchester who could cook.”

“I can cook!” Sam said hotly.

They both just looked at him. He huffed indignantly, and sent Bitchface #27 at his brother.

“The first result in will be Gibraltar‡”, Sam said. “They'll vote massively in favour of Remain because they're afraid of the Spanish, so they don't really matter. We should get the results from the first big English areas, Newcastle and Sunderland both near here, some time after midnight;
they always compete to be first in general elections. If Remain don't win by at least twenty per cent in Newcastle then they're in deep trouble, because that's a big student town. Leave are expected to win Sunderland by about ten per cent, so anything more is good.”

“I foresee a long night with figures”, Dean sighed.

“Bet you'd prefer a figure in a waistcoat!” Sarah teased.

Her brother-in-law glared at her. Worse thing was that she was right and she damn well knew it!

“This Dutch trawler thing is annoying.”

Castiel looked across at his cousin.

“What Dutch trawler thing?” he asked.

“They were caught overfishing their quota in UK territorial waters”, Balthazar sighed. “Using an illegal method, too. And of course, those bloody Leavers are saying this wouldn't happen if the country controlled its own waters rather than allowing ships like that to register and, they claim, 'steal' England's fish.”

“Britain's fish”, Castiel corrected.

“Technically the United Kingdom's fish”, Balthazar sighed. “The Leavers will get a lot of support in fishing communities along the east and south coasts who have been hit hard by the EU's fishing policies. That includes places like Seaham, on the coast in this dump. They might even push us close in Moray, the one Scottish area I'm concerned about.”

“So the article was correct, then?” Castiel asked.

“Yes but there was no need for them to go and publish it”, Balthazar said hotly. “Thank God the BBC is ignoring it completely and going all out over Cameron's planted MP. Besides, how many times has some politico you've been in charge of said something dumb and you've had to work the media to stop them letting on?”

“Hardly ever”, Castiel said, perhaps a shade too smugly. “The American media is well-trained from our point of view. Short of Hillary stabbing someone in broad daylight she has it in the bag, and even then, they'd make it look like it was someone else's fault. Most probably the victim's.”

“A pity the media over here aren't so well-trained”, Balthazar sighed.
† In an effort to bring down the government of the party that she was elected for, Doctor Wollaston first joined a splinter group called Change UK (among other things) and then moved all the way over to join the Liberal Democrats. She was thoroughly defeated in the 2019 election.
‡ A small peninsula of some 2.6 square miles (about one-third the size of the District of Columbia) and a British Overseas Territory, important because of its strategic position at the narrow entrance to the Mediterranean Sea. Spain covets it, but in the last referendum in 2002 the Rock’s inhabitants voted 99-1 in favour of staying with Britain. Gibraltar mostly runs its own affairs (apart from defence and foreign relations) and is not part of the United Kingdom.
“I don't understand it!” Balthazar yelled. “What is wrong with these bloody people?”

“They're your people”, Castiel pointed out, not at all smirking that his cousin was limping slightly. Apparently Balthazar's date the evening before had been a Leave supporter, and she had not taken kindly to his attempts to 'put her right'. And she had been wearing stilettos.

“I'm one-quarter French”, Balthazar said loftily, glaring at his cousin.

“And one-half Scottish”, Castiel added. “At least the Scots seem to be on board, even if nationally things are looking less than ideal.”

Balthazar poured himself a large whisky. Castiel forbore from looking at the clock, but it was close.

“We're reliant on the safety factor now”, his cousin said eventually. “Like the Scottish independence vote two years ago; people pulled back from the brink when faced with a ballot paper that they had to actually put a cross on.”

“Most people will vote on the day?” Castiel asked. “I thought you said that a lot had voted already?”

“There's postal voting, which is a lot more common than it used to be”, his cousin said. “That will most likely favour the enemy, which is why I'm anxious about these polls, but I doubt it'll be more than 20% of the total. The voting papers have to be in sometime before the election and the last thing we need is for those Leavers to get far ahead in that area.”

Castiel felt privately that constantly referring to your fellow countrymen as 'the enemy' was not a good thing, but he said nothing. His cousin was clearly upset.

“And you said they'd be more committed to voting on the day”, Castiel pointed out. “Yes”, Balthazar sighed. “Still, the fact that people are generally more conservative – with a small 'c' – over here means I think they will do the right thing eventually. I just don't like these polls at all. If they get a consistent lead over five per cent, I'll really start worrying.”

“Anything in the news?” Dean said.

“The dear old BBC has been caught lying again”, Sam said. “That 'independent' economics
“professor they interviewed and who said food prices would shoot up? She works for the EU – and
dear old Auntie 'forgot' to mention that rather interesting fact. And now they're claiming on social
media that she really was impartial and they didn't know!”

“Auntie?” Dean asked, confused.

“Affectionate name for when it could be trusted”, Sam sighed. “Hopefully they'll think twice
before trying it again. Or more likely, try to be more careful!”

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“No hunk for you to ogle today”, Olivia greeted him cheerfully an hour or so later. “He's gone to
Bishop Auckland.”

“Where's that?” Castiel asked.

“A town south-west of here”, she said. “Way out in the sticks.”

“Are we not campaigning there?” he asked. She grinned.

“What, can't go a day without Mr. Tight Jeans?” she teased. “We're focussing most of our efforts in
the big towns, where people are more likely to vote for us. If we can get enough of them to turn out
on the day, we'll wing it.”

Castiel nodded but said nothing. She smirked.

“You're thinking about those tight jeans, aren't you?” she teased.

He scowled at her. She didn't have to be so.... right!

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Castiel was scowling again that evening over the online paper, which had Dean Winchester
pictured at a tea-room leaning over to serve a simpering female (were there any other kinds when
he was around, Castiel wondered acidly?) and wearing an impossibly tight shirt that really
accentuated that broad muscled chest......

Castiel gulped, and was glad that his cousin was not yet back. He quietly saved the photo onto his memory stick.

Because.
Saturday 4th June

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“I wonder what turnout will be like”, Balthazar mused. “That's your fourth coffee, by the way.”

“You said high turnout would benefit us”, Castiel said. “I suppose the prime minister might like a low turnout because it would enable him to declare the vote invalid, although the speculation is that it will match that of the last election. Oh, and if you're counting my coffees, I might start commenting on your early morning sherries.”

Balthazar scowled at him.

“We had 66% of the electorate vote at the election”, he said, “and a right mess they made of that! The smart money was on turnout at the referendum being lower, both because the election was so close and with some people just sitting on their hands because they were too confused as to which way to vote. Cameron made another mistake there.”

“In what way?” Castiel asked.

“He feared that a win with a low turnout would encourage those damn Breixteers to keep on moaning”, Balthazar sighed, “so he encouraged postal voting. Bad move; their sort are more likely to do that than ours. I do wonder though....”

“Wonder what?” Castiel asked.

“Well”, his cousin said, “with constituencies, many of them just aren't competitive. It's like standing as a Republican in Maryland or a Democrat in Montana, the losing side know they're going to lose so many don't bother voting either way. But this time every vote counts and the predictions are still close. I wonder if that will push turnout higher and.... hello.”

Castiel was looking longingly at the coffee-shop across the road, but turned his gaze back at his cousin's pause.

“Here they come now”, Balthazar grinned, pointing up the road to the approaching float. “The Zimmer Brigade; average age one hundred and two. On a good day.”

“Confetti, it's a parade!” Castiel smiled.

“Well, you'll be smiling on the other side of your face soon enough”, Balthazar said. “It seems that the average age may have lowered a bit.”

Castiel's eyes widened as he saw who was on the float drawing near them. Holy fuck!

<>
“I'm worried”, Sam said.

“I hope that's at least partly about me”, his wife said plaintively. They had both had another rough night.

“Of course, love”, Sam smiled, ignoring an eye-roll of epic proportions from some wiseacre of a brother. “But I'm also worried about how well things are going. We've managed to get a small lead in the overall polls and this thing with Nissan has helped no end. All this good luck....”

“Who's Nissan?” Dean asked.

“Japanese car manufacturers with a big factory in Sunderland”, Sam said.

“That was the place you said would be among the first to declare, wasn't it?” Dean asked. “Just up the coast.”

“Yeah. They've gone and pretty much told their workers that it would be 'in their interests' to vote to Remain. Telling people from the North-East what to do is pretty high up when it comes to the List of Dumb.”

“If Remain do win in Sunderland, then it's over]], Sarah agreed. “But this will help. I really think that the Cameroids of this world don't get it that all the experts who keep getting everything wrong are actually being ignored for once. They want everyone to just nod and agree with whatever they say.”

Talking of wanting”, Sam said with a knowing look, “you should've seen Castiel's face when he saw Dean all but bare-chested on the float earlier. “Twenty quid says that they're having sex before the result is official.”

“Dean is not that much of a slut”, Sarah said.

“Thank you.”

“At least not where his true love is concerned.”

“Hey!”

“Besides, they're both too worked up over this”, Sarah said confidently. “True love conquers all, even someone as much of a sex-maniac as your brother.”

“Wanna bet?”

Sam and his wife shook hands on the wager, while Dean just rolled his eyes and did not think of Castiel moaning beneath him in bed, writhing around and.... nope, not going there!
Too late. His mind was settled in with popcorn and a soda, enjoying every moment in high-definition. With surround sound.

Dean coughed. For no reason.

¶ Technically she was right. The prediction for the country to be an even split called for Sunderland to go Leave by about 10%, but there was a margin of error of about 7% either way. Hence anything below a 3% Leave win implied an almost certain Remain win nationwide, while anything over 17% meant an almost certain Brexit. Note the 'almost'.
Sunday 5th June

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Although he was named after an angel Castiel Novak had little in the way of religion. Especially when the Gods were playing dirty pool.

“It's times like these that shake my confidence”, Balthazar muttered as he joined his cousin. The rain had apparently tired of just coming down vertically and was now beating hard against the window. “Those bastards had a perfect day for Mr. Gorgeous Pecs to shake his booty around the county while we get Ark-Building 101.”

Castiel was silent. His cousin grinned.

“You're thinking of Dean Winchester in wet clothes, aren't you?” he teased. “Those tight muscles, that ass you could bounce a quarter off, tight wet clothes showing off every muscle in that luscious body?”

“How are we related?” Castiel asked testily.

“It's a pleasing enough image”, Balthazar grinned.

Castiel said nothing. At least he thought that he said nothing.

“I heard that growl!” Balthazar teased. “Don't worry, cous. He's all yours.”

“Thank you so much!”

His cousin went away, and Castiel sighed at the rain outside. What made Balthazar's teasing even more annoying was that he had been right, damn him!

He wondered if there were any more online pictures.....

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“False alarm.”

Sam Winchester stared woozily at what remained of his hand. He was sure he'd be able to use it again. Maybe next week some time.....

“Sorry love”, Sarah said, easing herself onto the settee. “It was less the arrival of Junior and more a bad reaction to dinner.”
“I told you that salad was a bad idea”, Dean put in.

“Anything green on your plate is ‘a bad idea’!” Sam scoffed. “I’ve often thought that to balance the pie fetish you're allergic to vegetables!”

“I’ve got Rabbitfoodaphobia”, Dean smirked.

“Lachanophobia”, Sam corrected. “The wonders of the American educational system – for some people.”

“Hey!” Dean protested. “I'm educated!”

“Talking of those who claim to be educated”, Sarah said, “a group of scientists claim they will have to leave the country of we vote for Brexit.”

“Will they?” Dean asked. His brother snorted.

“More likely that the growing list of 'slebs' as they call them these days back in the States will quit if Trump wins in November†”, he said scornfully. “Both full of hot air.”

“The so-called educated”, Dean agreed.

“Bet you'd like Castiel to teach you a lesson or two”, Sarah teased. “Pity his float was rained off today otherwise perhaps you'd have seen him dressed up as a professor, in a tight waistcoat.”

Dean said nothing. His brother looked at him suspiciously.

“You're thinking of that image right now, aren't you?” he asked.

Dean blushed. So what if he had been? It was a very appealing image – almost as good as the one with Castiel out of the waistcoat and all his clothes piled in and around Dean's bed while they......

“Dean, dammit!”

The elder Winchester sniggered.

† Over fifty of them. The number who actually left was also a round number.....
Monday 6th June

“Both barrels”, Balthazar muttered crossly.

“What?” Castiel looked at him.

“Once again, our fearless leaders let loose both barrels against the enemy”, his cousin sighed. “And bang! - they succeed in shooting themselves squarely in the foot!”

Castiel said nothing. He was still looking across an almost empty precinct in Durham, the shops now shutting up for the evening.

“You do know that Dean Winchester probably hasn't got a drop of Scots blood in him?” his cousin asked.

Castiel was busy not-drooling over the sight of his rival wearing a kilt. Alex, one of their co-workers, came up behind them.

“That's the Campbell clan tartan”, he said knowledgeably. “My mother's family; I wore it to my wedding. I wonder where he got the kilt from?”

“I know someone who's like to be in it with him!” Balthazar grinned.

Castiel swatted at him.

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“You do know that he's staring at you?” Sam said.

His brother grinned.

“Uh huh”, Dean said with an easy smile. “He still drooling?”

“More likely imagining what you've got under there”, Sam smiled. “Thank God only true Scots have to wear nothing.”

His brother's smirk unnerved him. Sam went pale.

“Please tell me you're not....”

“Our mother was a Campbell, remember?” Dean grinned. His brother just shook his head at him.

“The Cameroid's argument would probably have worked a few years back”, Sam said. “But what with the Scottish parliament and the independence vote many English are frankly fed up with their
Celtic cousins nowadays, especially as they get more out of the UK than we do. And saying that
their votes would keep us in the EU was just plain dumb.”

“But didn't you say they might?” Dean asked.

“Oh, it's true”, Sam said. “We in England may well vote narrowly to leave but it could be close
enough for the Celtic countries to be able to counter that, even though there's over five times as
many voters in England as the three of them put together. But actually putting it out there – it'll
annoy the English and motivate our side, which is just what we wanted.”

“So that's why you got me wearing a kilt today”, Dean said.

“That and seeing Cas drool”, his brother grinned. “You ready to pack up now your arch-nemesis
has seen you? There's been no people for a while.”

Dean grinned.

“Almost”, he said, looking around. “Anyone else about?”

Sam looked around.

“No”, he said. “Why?”

Dean fiddled with his belt, and suddenly the kilt slid away to the floor. Across the precinct, there
was the sound of a strangled yelp followed by a splash as someone dropped their coffee. Then
Dean bent down to pick up his kilt....

Sam was so billing his brother for all those future therapy sessions!

<>
“What is wrong with these people?” Balthazar groused. “Utter morons, the lot of them!”

“Yes, call the people you want to win over by derogatory names”, Castiel said calmly. “That's bound to get them over to our side!”

His cousin stared at him.

“There's a whole lot riding on this vote”, he said angrily. “People have invested heavily in the European Union, you know.”

“As I said, being told how to vote by the same experts who failed to foresee that financial crisis some years back is not going to go down well”, Castiel said reasonably. “And according to the polls, many of the undecideds feel that those advocating for a Remain vote have their own self-interests. For example, that rule that anyone who gets money from the EU – and we all know that includes the BBC - is not allowed to publicly criticize it.”

His cousin scowled but said nothing. Castiel looked at him curiously.

“Balthazar”, he said sharply, “what are you not telling me?”

“I hate it when you do that!” his cousin scowled. “Alright. I occasionally do some minor work for an EU-funded body, and I may get a small bonus as a result.”

Castiel just looked at him.

“A fairly small bonus.”

The look continued.

“Dammit, it was sixty thousand last year!” Balthazar all but yelled. “But I'm doing this on principle.”

“Of course”, Castiel smiled sweetly. “And because you would not want your 'principles' to be tarnished in any way, to which charity did you give the bonus this past year?”

His cousin scowled, and gestured to the flame-red sports car that was parked outside. Castiel smirked, but said nothing.

“Shut the fuck up!”
It had been a trying day for Sam Winchester, not helped by his brother and wife tag-teaming him with repeated jokes about flashes in the pan, wardrobe malfunctions and moon sightings. The latest news from the campaign was not helping.

“Well, colour me surprised.”

Dean looked across the table at his brother.

“What?” he asked.

“The government voter registration website just happened to crash when too many people tried to register at the last minute”, Sam said. “A few hours down at most. But the Cameroid says he'll reopen registration for two whole days to get those extra people onto the voting register.”

“Can he do that?” Dean asked.

“He's banking on a higher turnout favouring his side”, Sam sighed, “and most of the Commons is pro-Remain, so yes. Totally unethical, but he gave up any pretence at fairness a long time ago.”

“He's scared of all these polls turning against him.”

“And like all shysters, he resorts to cheating”, Sam said. “Honestly, politics these days is less who do you trust to run the country and more which crook will do the least amount of damage once they're in power!”

“Some things are the same both sides of the Big Water”, Dean agreed.
Castiel glowered across the precinct at his rival's display stand.

“'The most annoying thing'”, Pete said coming up behind him, “is that they're right. And it'll hit home. The English are a fair-minded race, and they don't like the idea of this 'stealth lying' as the papers are calling it.”

“The prime minister isn't lying!” Castiel said defensively.

“But he's hardly playing by the rules”, Andy countered. “The reopening of the register was bad enough – some on his side are boasting that this will win them the vote for sure - but arranging it so that all government information websites only link to our side? It looks wrong.”

It was wrong, Castiel thought privately, although some green-eyed hunk had no right to make so much of it, nor to keep bending provocatively over his stand in those far too tight jeans that made people just forget themselves and stare at his......

Castiel moved behind his own stand and covertly adjusted himself. Then he saw that his nemesis was receiving a phone call. Whatever it was, Dean had a few words with the girl behind the stand and hurried away.

It was a very pleasant departure, Castiel thought, before snapping himself out of it. Really, it was like he was back at school again, having his first crush on the hunky, green-eyed god of a.....

Damn, he had it bad!

Dean hurried into the hospital ward, earning himself a sharp glare from one of the nurses who was filling out some form at a table. He ignored her and hurried up to his sister-in-law's bed.

“Where's the moose?” he asked, surprised.

“I sent him down for some food and a bar of chocolate or four”, Sarah said, easing herself up. “Another false alarm though they think it's only a few days away, or a week at most. He was panicking, as per usual.”

She looked approvingly at Dean.

“God, you wore those jeans?”

“I did”, he said. “Had to lever myself inside the bloody things; if you get no nephews or nieces as a
result, it'll be your damn fault.”

“I don't think science has progressed enough for either you or Castiel to get each other pregnant”, she smiled. “Did he stare?”

Dean grinned.

“Oh yeah!” he said. “Debbie said she could even see drool.”

“I bet the stand annoyed him”, she said. “I'm surprised he didn't come across and challenge you. Unless of course he was so hard he couldn't put one leg in front of the other....”

“Sare!”

Well, you two need to get a move on”, she said plaintively. “The vote is two weeks tomorrow and he'll be heading back to the States soon after. We need action to make sure you get laid – but just do it after the national declaration from Manchester, so I can win my bet.”

Dean shook his head at her, but smiled. At that moment Sam returned.

“Hi, brother mine”, he said. “Did the jeans work?”

Dean sighed. His family was terrible!
Castiel was experiencing that feeling of *déjà vu* as he stared angrily across the road at the Leave display. He had thought that by going to this 'new town' (which looked pretty old to him) called Peterlee, he could have a day without green eyes and impossibly tight pants. But someone up there obviously had it in for him.

“The pollsters are experts at their job†”, he called to Dean. The taller man grinned.

“Oh yeah”, he said mockingly. “Like when they forecast the Scots voting for independence, last year's election result – no wait, they got both those wrong.” He hesitated for effect before adding, “expertly wrong, of course.”

Several bystanders sniggered. Castiel was not going to lose his temper. He was not.

“All the top businesses back staying in”, he pointed out.

“Yeah, and many of them get huge grants from the money we pay to Brussels”, Dean said. “Hey you give me enough of your money and maybe I'll spout off about how wonderful the EU is!”

Castiel scowled.

“They have their own money on the line”, he said.

“They have British taxpayers' money on the line”, Dean said with an annoying smirk. “None of their own. Wonderful how generous they all are with other people's money, eh?”

Castiel scowled.

“They have the country's best interests at heart”, he said haughtily.

“They have their future bonuses' best interests at heart!” Dean said mockingly. “Your only argument is Project Fear and people are seeing through that, according to the polls.”

“They might be”, Sam said later, “but not by enough, yet. We need a lead of five per cent on the day to counter the natural 'safe bet' tendency when voters are faced with a yes or no decision. We have that in the online polls but not the phone ones.”
“We're getting there”, Dean said confidently. “Thanks for coming and picking me up by the way; Sandra wanted to go to see her boyfriend in Washington.”

“We'll take you there once this is all over”, Sam promised. “That's where old George Washington's ancestors came from, taking their name from the place. It was good to see you measuring up against Castiel. I see that he's still wearing that terrible trench-coat.”

“He calls it a pip-coat, whatever that is”, Dean said.

“So you've imagined him having sex with you while wearing it, then?”

“Hell no!”

“Aha!”

Sam smirked annoyingly.

“You hesitated”, he grinned. “So you have been thinking that!”

“Have not!” Dean said hotly. “You've just got a filthy mind.”

“And now you're blushing”, Sam grinned. “Wait till I tell Sarah!”

“If you do, I'll tell her about you and the Carlton twins.”

“That never happened!”

“As I said, I can be very convincing!”

His brother fell silent, which was good. Because Dean had, if truth were told, had certain thoughts about that coat. Certain horizontal thoughts.

Okay, and vertical ones too.

Scotty might have actually been wrong about not being able to break the laws of physics....

“Dean!”

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Chapter End Notes

¶ Some 26 'new towns' (mostly expansions of older ones or even villages) were built
under the New Towns Act of 1946, to cope with the post-WW2 housing shortage. Peterlee was unique in that it was requested by local people; it was also fortunate in that local mine-workings meant the original plans for huge blocks of flats were deemed impossible. The most (in)famous of the New Towns is the ghastly Milton Keynes, which in barely fifty years has gone from a small village to a city of some 230,000 people, about the size of Richmond VA.
† A cruel person would mention the Huffington Post’s prediction that a certain candidate would win a certain election later that year as an 98.1% certainty. Fortunately I would never do that.
“I don't get it”, Dean said, frowning as he browsed his brother's tablet. “Why would anyone want to move a jungle?”

“You're hopeless!” Sam sighed, reaching for his tablet. “‘The Jungle’ is the nickname given to the illegal camp set by immigrants who got into southern Europe and want to get into our country. They set up a huge refugee camp at Calais and attacked British lorry drivers in their attempts to cross the Channel.”

“If it was illegal then why did the French allow it?” Dean asked.

“Because they don't want them in France, of course”, Sarah said, easing herself onto a chair. “The last time it happened, the British government folded like a deck-chair and agreed to let them in if the French closed the camp.”

“And did they?” Dean asked.

“Of course not”, Sam scoffed. “The French merely got rid of one camp and allowed another to be set up just down the road. Now they're saying that if we dare to vote leave, they'll end reciprocity.”

Dean just looked at him.

“Sorry, Sam grinned, “I forget that your computer skills don't extend much beyond that folder you keep on your laptop marked 'Car Manual'.....”

“Sammy!”

Sarah sniggered.

“We have a deal in which the French station their customs officials in Dover and we station ours in Calais”, Sam explained. “That way people can clear customs before leaving, allowing them more time in their destination. It works for us both but now the French – and of course that slimy Cameroid – are claiming that it will have to end. Bollocks as per usual; that deal had nothing to do with the EU.”

“So”, Sarah said with a knowing look, “tell me about that car folder of yours, Dean. Is it anything like the one Sam has on that secret pen-drive marked 'Archaeology' that I don't know about?”

“Sare!”

It was Dean's turn to snigger. Girl could cook pie and she had his brother figured. Sammy had married well!
“What on earth is it going to take to stop this leeching away of our support?” Balthazar grumbled as he read the paper. “The reaction to this Jungle idea has been awful.”

“How?” Castiel asked. Balthazar had explained the thing to him earlier but he still did not see what all the fuss was about.

“The whole Leave argument comes down to immigration”, his cousin said. “Cameron thought that by suggesting a Leave vote would cause the Jungle to be moved over here, that would sway people. But the reaction has been the opposite; they just won't be told!”

“Or bullied?” Castiel suggested.

“People only ever vote in their own self-interest”, Balthazar said primly. “If we can destroy the immigration argument then they've got nothing except the sovereignty thing, and no-one cares about that these days. But at the moment they're holding together. Ye Gods, they might actually win the vote!”

“And the UK will leave the EU”, Castiel said.

“We'll see about that!” Balthazar said firmly.

Castiel stared at him in surprise.
“What went wrong?” Castiel wondered as he and Balthazar sat over drinks that evening. “It should have been a sure-fire winner.”

“Former prime ministers a hit and miss affair, I'm afraid”, his cousin sighed. “And the public reaction to the so-called 'Three Wise Men' was to pretty much laugh at them. It would have been better for them to have kept quiet.”

Castiel just looked at him.

“What?” Balthazar asked.

“If you ever find a way of keeping a politician quiet, let me know and I'll get it patented!” Castiel said. “They're all inordinately fond of the sound of their own voices, which they see as God's gift to lesser humans. I doubt even superglue could keep their lips together!”

“You'll have to ditch words like 'inordinately' if you want to get into the trousers of one Dean Winchester”, his cousin said. “I bet he only deals with grunts.”

Castiel said nothing. Balthazar looked hard at him.

“Can you yank your mind from Dean Winchester's trousers and get it back on the game?” he grumbled. “There is the very real prospect that we could lose this vote and places like my London university would stop getting their generous EU grants.”

“Which are paid for by the UK taxpayer”, Castiel reminded him.

Balthazar threw a boiled sweet at him.

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“I take it from the reaction on social media that former leaders aren't well liked in this country?” Dean grinned.

“'Britons given ABC on how to vote by an adulterer, a buffoon and a criminal'”, Sam quoted. “That's one of the kinder headlines; better than 'Brown, Blair and Bonk-a-lot as The Three Stooges!'”

“I still find it incredible to think of John Major as an adulterer”, Sara sighed. “That any woman – even Edwina Currie – would find him attractive is a sad indictment on my sex.”

“Power is an aphrodisiac”, Sam said sagely. “Are you alright?”
“Junior is moving about a lot”, she grumbled. “Thank heavens we already voted.”

“Why?” Dean asked.

“Because the due date is the day before the vote”, she said, “and I won't be going anywhere around that time except to hospital. I bet the Cameroid wishes he'd cracked down more on postal voting.”

“Early voting is a big thing back home”, Dean said.

“We don't really have that here”, Sam said. “Postal voting only caught on under Blair when he wanted certain ethnic groupings to vote en masse without it being detected that the head of the household was filling in all the voting slips for Labour. He would have done his side a lot more service by keeping schtum; opinion is that he dragged us into an illegal war and lied about it. And as for his replacement joining him.....”


“Have you got a name for the kid yet?” Dean asked.

“Yes”, they both said.

“But you're not going to tell me”, he sighed. “Fine.”

“We do, however, have pie”, Sarah said.

“See?” Dean said to his brother. “I told you there was a good reason for marrying her!”

He only narrowly dodged the cushion. Pregnant or not, girl could pitch for the Mets!
Dean stared curiously at the TV.

“Does this Corbyn guy sleep in a hedge or something?” he asked. “I thought Bernie was bad!”

“No, he always looks like that”, Sam said, watching his wife sit down and trying not to be seen watching his wife sit down. “Just think; he could be running the country some day.”

“I'd hope the British people weren't that stupid”, Sarah said as she joined them. “Though after the last election and looking at the alternative, who knows? That's why people aren't trusting the pollsters this time round.”

“I bet the Cameroid would be trusting them if he was the one with an average four per cent lead”, Sam said. “You okay, darling?”

“Can you fetch me that chocolate bar from the kitchen?” she asked. “If I move again it's gonna have to be in the direction of the bathroom. I think I have a rugby player in here.”

“I've never seen rugby”, Dean said.

“Like football American style but for men”, Sarah said. “Sam sulked for days when I put up the England rugby team calendar, even though there was no nakedness in it.”

“Only a lot of strategically placed towels and balls”, Sam said, handing his wife the chocolate bar. She frowned.

“The Bournville one, not the Tesco's own brand.”

He sighed and went to get it. Dean smirked.

“Our Great Leader has also trotted out that old canard about London losing its place as Europe's leading financial centre†”, Sarah said. “And thousands of job losses, of course; he's got several of his banker buddies to come out and say they might have to disinvest in the UK. Actually, I want the Tesco one as well, love.”

Sam sighed and went back to the kitchen.

“Whipped!” Dean muttered under his breath.

“I heard that!”

<>
“I’m worried about Corbyn.”

Castiel looked across at his cousin.

“That’s the Labour leader, isn't it?” he asked. “The one who looks like he slept in a haystack.”

“He can look like Attila The Hun for all I care!” Balthazar snapped. “No, his latest speech. He's equivocating again.”

“Well, he's going to upset some of his supporters whatever he says”, Castiel said reasonably. “They reckon that a third of his supporters will vote Leave, just as a third of Cameron's will vote Remain. This thing cuts across party lines.”

“That's the problem”, Balthazar sighed as they walked back to the hotel. “We need the Labour voters to push us over the line in the huge voting areas like here, in London and the big cities. So far they don't seem fully engaged.”

“Tut tut, how very dare they!” Castiel smiled.

“At least some of them have their mind on the ball”, his cousin said curtly, “rather than the balls in the trousers of a certain green-eyed someone I could mention. You were openly ogling him yesterday.”

Castiel blushed fiercely. The worst thing was that Dean – who very unfairly had been wearing a running vest that had emphasized his broad shoulders perfectly – had looked up and caught him. And the bastard had then openly smirked, damn him.

“Mind out of the gutter and back on the game, please”, Balthazar said pointedly.

Castiel blushed again.
† In fact 2017 was a record year for outside investment in the City of London, and there was actually a net increase in jobs. For some inexplicable reason the BBC 'missed' this story.
“If those bastards are going to do well anywhere”, Balthazar said as he poured himself another sherry, “it'll be in the provinces. So this dumb threat that all the eastern European immigrants might leave will only make them grunt, 'yeah, and?'”

“There's an interview with a guy here”, Castiel said, forbearing from any remarks concerning sherry before nine a.m. “His local shopping area now has three Polish shops and one Bulgarian one and, he says, it doesn't feel like England any more.”

“Immigration is a fact of life”, his cousin said, scowling as Castiel moved the sherry bottle away from him. “You can't stop people wanting to come to a country.”

“Unless you 'build a wall'?” Castiel asked mischievously.

His cousin's scowl was epic!

“That bewigged blowhard has about as much chance of winning the presidency as these so-called Brexiteers have of winning this election”, Balthazar said dismissively. “These internet polls are all fixed anyway.”

Someone else was hitting the bottle at an unseemly hour, albeit with rather better cause. Dean moved the whisky away from his brother who was still shaking.

“Sarah is fine”, Dean said, privately wondering which of the two was actually having the baby. His sister-in-law had been a model of cool, calm collection when she had had some minor stomach pains in the small hours of the morning, unlike the useless moose quivering before him. “She'll stay in hospital until the baby comes but she needs you to hold it together.”

His brother could scarcely hold his glass, so Dean took it away from him and passed him his tablet instead. Sam sighed but switched it on.

“Well, colour me astonished. It's Justin The Joker.”

“Who?”

“The Archbishop of Canterbury, head of what's left of the Anglican Church after he's driven out all those who believe in God”, Sam snipped. “Bang on schedule, he and his fellow bishops have come out in favour of Remain.”

“Will that convince people?” Dean wondered. His brother shook his head.
“The few people who still go to church are mostly Brexiteers”, he said. “Like Martina down the road; she says that every time she hears the idiot has said something these days, she prepares for the worst. And she's rarely disappointed. Oh, and in other news the Great Leader is trying to suggest that the NHS will collapse because all the doctors and nurses who have come over from eastern Europe will leave if we Brexit.”

“Will they?”

“There'll be some sort of deal to let them stay if we win”, Sam said dismissively, “or at least those here up to the vote. As usual the Eton toff didn't think his argument through. They're a lot tougher on unemployment benefit now; if there's a job out there they expect you to take it, or you lose your money. Those on the scrounge won't want to pick flowers or the like but they'll have no choice, and many people who are in paid work will be all the gladder to see them having to work for their money.”

“Your leader sounds totally out of touch”, Dean said.

“I'm still amazed he won the election last year”, Sam said. “He was lucky really; the rise of UKIP in England surprised the pollsters because they took more Labour votes than Tory ones, which just got him over the line. But I still bet he secretly wishes he hadn't actually have secured an outright majority so he could have ratted on his promise to hold this vote. If he loses I can't see how he will survive, whatever he says now. I just worry that if we somehow pull this off, he'll go all out to sabotage it.”

“You really think he'd ignore a democratic vote?” Dean asked, surprised.

“Like a shot!” Sam said firmly.
“I'm just grateful that the old media no longer have the clout they once did”, Balthazar sighed. “Time was when the print newspapers could swing an election by coming out against someone, but not any more. And we can rely on our friends at the BBC not to report morons on our own side who call their opponents 'swivel-eyed loons'. That's what £700,000 a year in EU funding gets you.”

“UK taxpayers' money is what they'll say”, Castiel said, “and insulting the opposition never ends well. I know it's tempting in the heat of the moment, but the one thing you never do is motivate the other side's supporters to actually come out and vote. We're lucky in the states that we have a candidate who doesn't do deplorable things like that.”

(Castiel would have cause to remember that particular statement not too far into the future).

“Unless all those superdelegates have a sudden attack of democracy, and decide to vote for your equivalent of Jeremy Corbyn?” Balthazar teased. Castiel scowled.

“I wonder why most of the popular press have supported Leave?” he mused. “The outcome is going to be not far from fifty-fifty so they're going to upset half their readership either way.”

“The important newspapers that count are on our side”, Balthazar said confidently. “The Guardian, of course, and the Times. The people who matter read those papers.”

“Maybe”, Castiel said, “but they also each have the same one vote that each reader of the Sun and the Daily Mail has, and there are rather more of them.”

“More's the pity”, Balthazar sighed. “I still have this uneasy feeling that the weather may play a part. A lot of rain on the big day may put some of our supporters off. I'll be looking at the long-range forecasts soon.”

“Don't you think that we deserve to lose if that happens?” Castiel asked.

“We'll win”, Balthazar said confidently. “One way or another.”

Castiel wondered just what he meant by that.
day. Eight more days of looking across at someone who should not have been allowed to wear an
athletic top that stretched far too tightly over his muscled chest....

He covertly rearranged himself.

“A Famous Five poster”, Andy said, coming up behind him and making him jump. “Very
effective. That'll strike a chord with the older generation, their natural base.”

Castiel looked across to where Dean was setting up a new display, showing quotes from five suited
people who, if the drawings were accurate, were none of them in any danger from dying of hunger
any time soon.

“What?”

“The Famous Five were a set of child adventurers in a series of books by the author Enid Blyton”,
Andy explained. “Very politically incorrect nowadays, but criticism of them has angered many
who grew up loving them. So five bankers, all of whom failed to forecast the 2008 banking crisis,
all of whom got taxpayers' money to bail out their own incompetence, and all of whom back
staying in..... I have to admit that it's a clever link.”

Castiel scowled and strode across to his rival's stand.

“You can't claim things like that!” he protested.

Dean just smirked at him.

“Why not?” he demanded. “They all said those things, they all took other people's money to cover
their own asses, and they all back your side. We're just showing the sort of people who say that
staying in is a good idea – for their own financial reasons.”

Castiel scowled.

“It's misrepresentation”, he protested. “For all they know, you've taken these quotes out of
context.”

He was uncomfortably close to the other man just now. Dean smirked again.

“See something you like?” he teased.

Hell yeah!

“No!” Castiel said, a little too forcibly. “You just stick to the facts.”

He was sure, as he returned to his own stand, that he heard Dean mutter 'I know where I'd like to
stick something'. He blushed fiercely. Although he'd have quite liked it if Dean had.....

He sent a mental glare at his crotch. Not helping!

<>
† A term used in 2013 by a certain Mr. D. Cameron to describe his Eurosceptic opponents within the Conservative Party.
‡ Around five times as many (2.9 million against 600,000).
Castiel scowled mightily as a certain plaid shirt-wearing personage placed a cut-out figure next to the stand opposite. He really pitied the people of Durham, being so dumb that some of them were actually giggling at the figure of the Chancellor of the Exchequer dressed up as a dominatrix, mouthing 'bend over and take your Euro-medicine!'

"The worst thing is, they're right", Balthazar sighed, bringing him a coffee from Starbucks which Castiel sank almost immediately. "And how can you do that without setting fire to your innards?" "Because I needed the caffeine", Castiel said. "And people were warned that there would be a price for voting stupidly; the governor of the Bank of England sounded off about it again the other day."

"Trouble is, experts like him have lost all credibility in this godforsaken country", his cousin complained. "And the government is following suit; Cameron was asked at a presser this lunchtime if he agreed with Osborne's plans for an emergency budget if the vote went against them, and he prevaricated. Very bad."

"Why did he do that?" Castiel asked.

"Because he's sitting on a majority of barely a dozen in a 650-member parliament", Balthazar pointed out. "Several of the prominent Leavers, including that rat Boris Johnson, have already said they would vote down such a move, and that would mean an election for certain. I wonder....." He stopped.

"What?" Castiel asked.

"I wonder if that's his actual plan?" his cousin mused. "We know Cameron's put his leadership on the line over this. Say the worst comes to the worst, and we somehow lose the actual vote; unlikely I know, but go with it. He could introduce an emergency budget, make sure a few strategic absences means he gets defeated, then call a snap election. With luck the actual implementation of the vote could get deferred to never."

"And the will of the people?" Castiel asked.

"Bugger the will of the people!" Balthazar snorted. "This is more important!"

<>

"He's looking at you again."

Dean grinned at Mabel as she stood behind their stand.
“I have no idea who you mean”, he said loftily.

“Oh please!” she snorted. “That young man in the Columbo coat over there is drooling all over the pavement, and you're just leading him on.”

“What young man?” Dean asked innocently.

“The one you keep shaking your backside at every time you adjust that model for no good reason”, she said, looking severely at him. “Not that I don't mind that particular view....”

“Control yourself, woman!”

“Boy, I'm seventy-four years old”, she said. “I'll take whatever pleasures I can get at my age. No, I would worry about the other fellow over there, the tall supercilious looking one. He reminds me of young Bert Weston, who used to do the garden next door where I was growing up in Kendal. A right nasty piece of work he was.”

“What happened to him?” Dean asked.

“Ran off with their eldest daughter, got her pregnant then abandoned her”, she said. “Fortunately he got run over by a tram on his way to the docks, heading for America with her money. Your leering admirer's friend has that same look about him; I bet he would do anything if he felt he might gain from it.”

Dean was to remember those words quite soon.
Thursday 16th June

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Dean was alone in the house, as Sam was visiting Sarah in hospital while they waited for Winchester Junior to put in an appearance. He stared at the news numbly, thinking on the conversation that he and his brother had had before Sam had rushed off.

“I don’t like to even think it”, Sam had said. “Poor Jo Cox; I didn’t like her politics – those terrorist links were disgusting - but no-one deserved that. I really want it to be what they say; some extremist lunatic who killed for some perverted idealism. But the fact this happened when it did with the government falling further and further behind in the polls.....”

“No government would stoop that low”, Dean had said, although thinking of his own government back home... well.

“I’d like to think that too”, Sam had sighed, “but there are many in the Establishment who would do anything to keep their meal ticket. The Swedish euro referendum in 2003; a popular female campaigner for the EU was murdered just days before the vote and the polls wobbled, but the Eurosceptics still won. Things are much closer in our vote. And even if we do still somehow win next week, we know they’ll use every trick in and out of the book to deny the will of the people.”

No, Dean thought, they didn't do things like that over here in Merrie England.

Or did they?

<>

Two hours later and two miles away, someone else was thinking much the same thoughts, ones which were only reinforced by what had happened earlier that day. Castiel had been frankly disgusted that his cousin had rejoiced at the killing and had even gone out for a celebratory drink (at least that had prevented Castiel from strangling him although he was not sure whether that had been a good thing or not). When Balthazar had praised the BBC’s coverage of the whole ghastly business as 'screwing those Brexiteers for sure', Castiel had wondered briefly if this country allowed fratricide.

No. Probably not. Although he could always do it just before he left.....

He wondered what Dean was doing just then.

<>
At that precise moment in time Dean was slapping his brother's face hard. Sam had arrived home at the exact moment that the hospital had rung – the idiot moose had left his phone behind so Dean had answered it – and it was the long awaited news. He was about to become an uncle.

Oh yeah. Sammy was gonna be a dad. That was probably important, kinda.

Naturally the moose had taken this development with all the cool, calm collection that Dean had expected of him (see under chickens, headless) hence the slap. Sam stared at him in shock.

“You pull yourself together!” Dean said sternly. “You're all prepared, and I'll drive you. You'd probably crash on the way there.”

“You will drive me in the Prius?” Sam asked. Dean rolled his eyes.

“Seriously?” he said. “You're about to become a father, and you're worried about saving the bloody planet?”

Sam looked hopefully at him.

Dean had to drive the damn Prius!
¶ Helen Joanne Cox (b. 1974), Labour Party MP and Remain campaigner, was shot and then stabbed by unemployed gardener Thomas Mair. Despite his having a long track record of mental health problems his court-appointed defence offered no plea of diminished responsibility (as would have been expected and was legally required) at his subsequent trial, and even more unusually the case was handled under the 2000 Terrorism Act, which meant that on being found guilty Mair was sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole.
“So”, Dean grinned, “how’s the hand?”

His brother scowled at him across the hospital cafe table, and would quite probably have swatted at him had his right hand not been in a mini-cast.

“I forgot how that girl can grip”, he grumbled. “And yelling “push!” didn’t go down too well; I think even the nurses were surprised at the language she used and they do this for a living.”

“Well”, Dean said, “I suppose it's like Rachel said on that *Friends* episode. When you're trying to push something the size of a watermelon through a hole the size of a pea....”

“Hey! Eating here!”

Dean just grinned. Sarah had given birth just after midnight to a healthy baby boy weighing eight pounds and six ounces, which probably explained why she'd broken a small bone in the moose's hand.

“You gonna tell me the name yet?” he asked.

“Yes, we decided shortly after we knew it was going to be a boy”, Sam said. We didn't put it out there because we didn't want to jinx things. But I spoke with Sare before she sent me down to get some food and we agreed to keep to it.”

“And?” Dean prompted. His brother grinned.

“Dean Joshua Winchester”, he said proudly. “Possessor of the worst-dressed uncle in the whole wide world.”

Dean had to grab a napkin. Because. He wondered if he could get a plaid shirt onesie..... or an AC/DC one.... or maybe Chewbacca....

<>

Alex the hotel barman looked up in surprise at his new customer.

“Mr. Novak”, he said. “We haven't seen you down here much.”

Castiel sighed.

“It's my cousin Balthazar”, he sighed. “He's being insufferable, especially over this poor woman’s death.”
The barman poured him a drink. Castiel looked at it dubiously.

“What’s that?” he asked. It looked rather… orange. And syrupy.

“Try it”, Alex urged. “But don’t drink it too fast; it’s very strong.”

Castiel sipped the drink. It was very sweet but quite nice.

“What is it?” he asked.

“Honey Mead”, the barman said. “You were wearing that bee top when you came in that one time which was quite…. distinctive, so I guessed you might like it. It’s a traditional English drink.”

Castiel took another sip. He liked this, although th barman was right about the sweetness.

“I suppose your cousin is quietly pleased at the fact the death has suspended campaigning”, Alex said shrewdly. “It was looking very black for him before that.”

“Not so quietly”, Castiel sighed. “It’s sickening!”

“Never mind”, Alex said consolingly. “It will all be over in six days' time, and then you can head back home.”

He left to serve another customer, and Castiel tried not to think of a broad muscular chest and a pair of sparkling green eyes that he would be leaving behind him.

Unsuccessfully.
Saturday 18th June

Castiel jumped as his cousin banged the table in frustration.

“What is it?” he asked.

“Those bastards are cheating again!” Balthazar fumed. “There’s no campaigning until tomorrow because of the death so their scummy friends in the media are raising that idiot Obama’s intervention from over two months ago. And bloody Boris’ reaction to it.”

“It was perhaps unwise”, Castiel said carefully. “To be fair, Americans do not like it when other countries try to interfere in our elections back home; remember when a British newspaper tried it the one time?”

“Obama was only telling the truth”, Balthazar said firmly. “And we all know that Boris is only after the party leadership, anyway.”

“But he was right when he said that Obama won't be around to enforce it”, Castiel pointed out. “Someone else will decide if Britain really does get sent to the back of the line, as he rather unfortunately put it. It sounded like a threat and went down badly; the reaction from what I read was one of annoyance all round. Even the prime minister found it hard to defend him.”

“Well, Hillary will decide”, Balthazar said confidently. “Same thing.”

“Unless Trump wins”, Castiel said. His cousin laughed.

“That’s as likely as a Brexit vote now”, he snorted. “If they still win after all we've done I'll give up cigarettes, whisky and wild, wild women!”

Castiel wondered about that 'all we've done'. He really did.

<>

Sam blinked in shock.

“You slapped me again!” he managed eventually.

“You needed it”, Dean said firmly. “Big brother privileges. My nephew had a slight spike in his temperature – the sort of thing the nurses said could happen with newborns – and you immediately lost your shit.”

“I did not!”
Dean just looked at him.

“I'll go up and see her”, Sam said. “Castiel should be finished by now.”

Dean tensed immediately.

“What?”

“Castiel asked to come by and see her”, Sam said far too casually. “Here he comes now.”

He shook hands with his friend and hurried away to see his wife and son. Castiel stared coolly at Dean.

“Dean”, he said politely.

“Castiel”, Dean echoed. “I see that our president is in the papers again.”

“Raking over old news”, Castiel said dismissively. “Campaigning will resume tomorrow and we will win.”

Not for the first (or, as it would turn out, the last) time in his life, Dean Winchester's mouth set off out the station while his brain was still in the ticket line.

“Wanna bet?” he said cockily.

“That reminds me”, Castiel said. “It seems I may have erred slightly over that England bet, but we never decided what I would get if – when - I won....”

Ah.
Sunday 19th June

There were, Dean Winchester would have admitted, just a few things about his brother that annoyed him greatly. One or two.

Okay, he had made a list. And top of it was the moose's annoying habit of somehow knowing when the elder and superior Winchester brother was possibly not quite being one hundred per cent truthful over something. Given a recent conversation which still had him reeling, it was the last thing that Dean needed right now.

But when had the universe ever been fair?

<>

Little DJ was progressing so well that he and Sarah were to go home today (and not, Sam had quipped, because the National Health Service desperately needed the bed, no sirree!). With his arm out of the cast Sam had wanted to drive her, but the new father was in such a state that his wife vetoed that, so it was Dean who – very carefully – drove her and his new nephew.

Damn Prius always brought on his allergies!

Finally they were home, and Sarah and DJ were comfortably ensconced on the couch.

“So”, she said expectantly. “Spill!”

Dean looked at her in confusion.

“What?”

“You've got that look about you”, Sam said, joining his wife. “Either you just got laid – and I really, really hope even you wouldn't have been that inconsiderate...”

“Hey!”

“Or you did something similar”, he finished. Then his eyes widened. “Ohmigod!”

“What is it?” Sarah asked.

“The last person he met before the birth was Castiel”, Sam said while Dean silently cursed the ever-efficient Moose Memory™. “I left them talking together and.... oh please tell me you didn't do it in the hospital where I had my kid!”

“Sammy!”
“Sorry, Dean, but that's very you”, said a sister-in-law he no longer liked one little bit. “You didn't, did you? Cas brought me a book I asked for later but with his hair it's hard to tell if he's just had hot gay sex!”

“I am not a manwhore!” Dean said not at all defensively.

“Vet clinic!” Sam coughed behind his hand. "Drugstore. Two local churches. Farmer's market....."

“Not that much of one”, Dean snapped, glaring at him. “We talked, we parted, and we agreed to meet up on the night of the vote.”

“You not seeing that with us?” Sarah asked.

“I doubt either of you will be staying up for it”, Dean grinned. “DJ there will see to that. Hey, from the look on his face....”

Sarah promptly handed the baby to her husband.

“Hey!” Sam protested.

“Better start now”, his wife said. “You'll be seeing a lot of shit in the next few years.”

Dean silently thanked his new nephew for the distraction. And he had not lied to his brother and sister-in-law. He would indeed be spending the night of the vote with Castiel.

In Castiel's hotel bed, to be exact.
“I never thought you followed soccer?” Dean asked as they sat at the breakfast table that morning.

What was left of his brother stared at him through bloodshot eyes.

“When do babies sleep?” he muttered. “Every hour, on the hour, like clockwork. I'm sure he's putting out more than we're putting in....”

“Sammy! Making food here!”

His brother yawned.

“They call it football over here”, he said. “And you're right; like in the States it's a bunch of self-centred prima donnas falling over and acting badly. But in this case it would affect the vote, which is already looking bad.”

“There's been a reaction to that MP's death?” Dean asked.

“One witness – one, dammit! - claimed that the attacker yelled out the name of a nationalist group, and of course the BBC and the Establishment immediately label all Brexiteers as racist killers”, he grumbled. “The soccer thing is the European football tournament, or the Euros.”

His brother stared at him blankly.

“If England hadn't qualified from the group to the tournament knockout stage, that might have depressed the country”, Sam explained. “Patriots are much more likely to vote Brexit.”

“And did they?”

“Sort of”, he said. “They drew their last match but the Welsh won theirs, so they finish top of the group and England finish second.”

“But they still qualify?” Dean asked, lost already. Sam nodded.

“It means a more difficult match in the knockout rounds”, he said, “but that's not important.”

“Why not?” Dean asked.

“Because that's after the vote!”

<>

“The gap is closing”, Balthazar grinned as he poured himself another sherry. “It's in the bag despite
this stupid football result.”

Castiel bit back a comment about drinking at this hour of a morning. It would have been a wasted effort anyway.

“How did Scotland do in this tournament thing?” he asked. His cousin scowled.

“We didn't qualify”, he grumbled. “But we'll have our great moment on Thursday. Even if the hicks in the English provinces vote for this stupid Brexit, votes in London, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will swing it for us.”

“You seem very confident”, Castiel said.

“As I said, it's in the bag”, his cousin said. “Pity that poor MP had to go and get herself killed but we all have to go sometime.”

Once again Castiel wondered just how he and Balthazar Roche were related. And was it possible to revoke a 'cousin-ship'?
“Dean?”

“Uh huh?”

“You, er, haven't seen a bottle of Sarah's perfume, have you?”

“Yeah, I took it.”

A kinder big brother would not have revelled in the visible discomfort that that answer brought his junior sibling. But this was Dean Winchester, so.

“Er, why?”

“For DJ.”

Sam just looked confused.

“Remember Leanne who we helped out in Nebraska that time?” Dean said. “Her kid rarely woke up during the night and she told me it was because she used the trick of scenting the baby’s pillows with a spray of her own perfume. The baby felt its mother was near so slept more easily.”

“That's so......”

Dean levelled him with a look.

“Considerate?” Sam offered.

“I'll take considerate.”

Sam yawned and opened his tablet. After a few moments he groaned out loud.

“What is it?” Dean asked, keeping one eye on the hob.

“The Cameroid has pledged that if we vote Brexit, he'll go to the EU’s meeting a week today and trigger Article 50.”

Dean just looked confused.

“They didn't want to make leaving the EU any easier than possible”, Sam explained. “So they invented this thing called Article 50. If a country wants to leave they inform the others formally – that's 'triggering the Article' – and everyone then has two years to negotiate the departure.”

“Didn't I read somewhere that the result of this vote isn't binding?” Dean asked, plating up some sausages and bacon.

He knew he would have to wait some time for an answer as his normally health-conscious brother fell on the offering as if it was his last meal on earth. When he had only narrowly stopped short of licking the plate clean, he spoke.

“Not legally binding”, he admitted, “but after everything he's said and done, he'd be toast if he tries to ignore a defeat.”
“But from your tone, you don't think he will be defeated?” Dean asked.

“I don't think he'd have come out with this final scare tactic unless the polls were telling him something good”, Sam sighed. “For him, that is. They may have switched back to even but as I said there's still the safety factor, people who will back away from putting their cross in the Leave box on the day. On the other hand it may come down to those postal votes which would be a joke on him.”

“Why?”

“Because he encouraged those to increase turnout, so as to make the vote more valid”, Sam said, “and they were all lodged before the death of poor Jo Cox. His own scheming coming back to bite him.”

“Huh.”

“Just don't let Castiel bite you or anything.....”

“Sammy!”

Thankfully Dean's wonderful nephew saved the day by announcing his being awake. Sam ran from the room looking hopefully behind him.

“A plate ready when you come back!” Dean called after him.

“You're a good brother!”

“And thanks, Deej”, Dean muttered under his breath.

“I heard that!”
“Damn and blast!”

Dean looked up from his pie. Sarah had been grateful for his assistance these past few days and had sent (ordered) her husband out to get said pie. Definitely not because “if he starts mithering one more time I'll empty the next dirty nappy over him!”

“What is it?” he asked.

“The weather forecast for tomorrow is good.”

Dean looked at him expectantly.

“And?” he asked.

“I was hoping for a bad day”, Sam sighed. “That was one reason the Cameroid chose the start of summer; he knew us Brexiteers were far more likely to come out and vote while his Remainers need good weather to get off their arses.”

“So the future of the country comes down to the weather?” Dean mused.

“Remember the Spanish Armada”, Sam said primly. “That was finished off by late summer storms.”

Dean just looked at him.

“In 1588”, Sam added helpfully.

“How are we related?”

Sam just scowled at him.

“The Cameroid has also ruled out a second referendum”, he said. “That's very bad.”

“Why?” Dean asked. “I'd have thought you'd be afraid of them wanting a do-over if we win tomorrow.”

“Because he wouldn't be cutting off that road of escape unless his private polls were telling him something good”, Sam sighed. “And he's also come out and denied that the EU will ever have its own army.”

“Gruesome thought”, Dean said. “An army run by officials, for officials. 'If you do not do things da vay ve vant, den ve shall send in ze army!”

“It will happen”, Sam sighed. “All they're waiting for is a Remain vote tomorrow, and they'll announce plans for it within the week.”
Balthazar narrowed his eyes at his cousin.

“But you've got to attend”, he whined.

“Lots of people milling about with smug looks on their faces”, Castiel said. “Bad wine, worse beer and the sort of cheap snacks that you need a ton of to make a half-decent meal. No thank you; I'm having an early night.”

“Suit yourself”, his cousin shrugged. “At least the forecast for tomorrow is good. I was worried that heavy rain would depress the vote but it seems all set fair.”

“You think it's a done deal?” Castiel asked.

“With the polls even going into the big day, I can't see otherwise”, Balthazar said. “There's bound to be the last minute swing to the safe option just like there was in the election and over Scottish independence. People might say they'll vote for change, but confront them with a bit of paper that they have to put a cross on, and some will back away.”

“Well, I'll leave you to your bite-sized snacks”, Castiel said, “and see you tomorrow. It's been a trying campaign, and I'm looking for a good night in. You can celebrate all day Friday – if you're sober enough!”

“I fully intend not to be!” his cousin grinned.

Chapter End Notes

‡ Sam was being too cynical here, or possibly Brussels was still in shock. They waited two weeks after the vote before announcing the one thing that Remain supporters had assured Britons would never ever happen.
08:45

Dean looked up as his brother came in from his morning run.

“I just spoke to Maggie”, Sam said.

Dean just stared at him.

“And?”

“She lives opposite the polling station”, his brother explained, taking one of his disgusting 'healthy' yogurt drinks out of the refrigerator (Dean had tried one the other week and had had to have a large slice of pie and custard to rid himself of the taste, or at least that had been his excuse). “She said that there seemed to be more people waiting when it opened than at the general election last year.”

“But that's a bad thing”, Dean said, “because you said high turnout favours the other side?”

Sam looked thoughtful.

“Yeah, but she did say that she saw some people there who she knew were for our side”, he said, “and who she's fairly sure didn't vote last year. Especially the likes of Old Fred Jameson who hasn't voted in decades because he hates all politicians.”

“Smart guy”, Dean said.

“Perhaps that's our only chance now”, Sam said, “to get out people who wouldn't normally vote just to give the Cameroid a bloody noise. Oh well. Less than twenty-four hours from now we should know – unless, God forbid, someone 'finds' some extra votes somewhere!”

And, Dean thought, he should be...... well, he should know too.

<>

10:10

Balthazar was frowning as his cousin called in at the house to get the phone he'd left behind.

“What is it?” Castiel asked.

“Bad news from London”, Balthazar said. “The weather down there is terrible; floods and all sorts.”
“So?”

“We need those millions of votes in London to get us over the line”, Balthazar said. “But that's not the worst of it. Some dick in the PM's office told the breakfast shows that his forecasts were for a ten per cent win.”

“And that's not good news?” Castiel asked.

“Seriously Cassie, how on earth are you a political operative?” his cousin snapped. “Do you not see? How many of our supporters, hearing that and seeing the weather outside, might decide it's not worth them braving the elements if it's a done deal? We need those votes, dammit!”

“Surely people won't be put off because of the weather?” Castiel asked, more than a little annoyed at the slight.

“It might deter some of the undecideds who would have swung back to us at the death”, Balthazar fretted. “We'll still win but we need to crush these damn vermin once and for all.”

Castiel thought quietly that perhaps he might send his cousin back to the States in his place, as Balthazar's attitude seemed more attuned to American politics than British. Then again, that would mean that he, Castiel, might miss the chance of travelling back with a certain green-eyed plaid-wearing bow-legged.....

“Cassie?”

Castiel pulled himself together.

“Just thinking about green issues”, he hedged. “Gotta go. Busy day ahead.”

He fled before his cousin could question him further.
“Apparently the police have spoken to some woman outside a polling station in our namesake town, Winchester”, Sam told Dean after his brother had come back from a walk. “She was offering voters a pen so that their votes couldn't be rubbed out.”

“Where exactly is that?” Dean asked curiously. He had always wondered.

“Three hundred miles south of here”, Sam said. “I've arranged for us to spend the night there before you fly back; it's barely an hour from Heathrow. Very historic place.”

Dean quirked an eyebrow at his sister-in-law.

“Yes, I've given my permission”, she grinned back.

“Hey!” Sam exclaimed.

“I'd like to think the government wouldn't be that duplicitous”, Sarah sighed. “But given everything they've done to win this I wouldn't put forging a few thousand ballot papers past them, especially as we still don't have to show voter ID in this country. I know some people round here who took pens with them into the booths.”

“But you don't think it's gonna be close?” Dean guessed. Sam nodded.

“I think they'll win by somewhere around five per cent”, he said ruefully. “Sarah and I have already talked about it and we're considering making a new life for ourselves in the States.”

“Well, settle near me and you'll have free babysitting on hand”, Dean grinned. “And I can tell Sarah even more stories about growing up with you, like the time you jumped into the creek.”

“That doesn't sound very interesting”, Sarah said, cuddling DJ.

“Wait till I tell you what he was wearing at the time!” Dean grinned. “One thing for sure - it got him chucked out of the Scouts that same day!”

“Dean, dammit!”

“Language!” Sarah scolded. “Not in front of the baby!”

Sam just pouted.
14:35

Castiel was feeling increasingly confident as he took a walk along the River Wear. It was a pleasant day and he sat down on one of the many benches. Michael had texted him earlier, saying he was not urgently needed for another couple of weeks so could stay in England and see the sights. And an added bonus; Balthazar's 'reassignment' to this area was only for the vote and he would be headed back to London tomorrow. Or more likely Saturday or Sunday, whenever he was sober again.

A good riddance, part of his brain suggested. He did not disagree.

There was a weird piece of modern art nearby, the sort which, Castiel suspected, had probably cost a huge sum and had taken the 'artist' about ten minutes to knock out, probably when either drunk or high. Possibly both, by the look of it. The curves at the base made him think for some reason of Dean Winchester's bowed legs. He smiled to himself.

Very useful, they might turn out to be.
18:30

Under Sarah's direct instructions (and a suggestion that she might resort to severe physical harm if he didn't stop being overly protective of both her and DJ, whose latest sniffle Sam had treated like the kid had picked up the Black Death!) Dean had dragged his brother out to a restaurant. Sam had whined that he was too stressed to eat and had then proceeded to devour both his and half of Dean's fish and chips meal. Fortunately the route to Castiel's hotel lay past the place so he could stop for more once he was moose-less.

“It's not looking good”, Sam sighed as he stared forlornly at his empty plate. “It never is when the other side start acting as if they've got it in the bag.”

“They showed the Great Leader voting on the bar screen while you were using the restroom”, Dean said. “He sure looked confident.”

“It's all very depressing”, Sam sighed. “I don't suppose.....”

“I ordered rocky road ice-cream for you”, Dean said. “And this place even does pie for men who like real desserts.”

Fortunately the arrival of said desserts prevented any snarky comeback from the moose, although Dean did get a Bitchface #82. He wondered how his own evening was going to end once he had dropped Sam off back and the house and joined Castiel.

His brain immediately started to run through the various possibilities as to how they could 'join', and he edged closer to the table. Because.

<>

21:00

An hour to go at the polling stations, Castiel thought, and surely it was in the bag now. All the newscasts were talking about higher than expected turnout which would only benefit his side. The prime minister had certainly looked confident.

He checked the room, grateful that the bed was so absurdly large. He planned to use every bit of it later on.

This would be worth that horrible, balding, overweight TSA guy giving him that knowing look when he'd found the extra-large tube of Astroglide. And the guy had somehow contrived to slip his phone number in alongside it! Cas had thought to bin it, but instead he had slipped it onto the desk
of a scowling fellow TSA worker. Serve the guy right for leaving his name on it; he and 'Raul' deserved each other!

22:02

Dean was not taking a drink in the hotel bar to fortify himself against the night ahead, where he would.... well, where he would.

There was a TV on behind the bar, and the scrolling news at the bottom claimed a poll that day was predicting a Remain win by about four per cent. Dean sighed. Looked like he'd be taking it like a man after all.

He wondered if he could persuade Cas to wear the coat...
22:15

“I'd always hoped to get you naked in bed.”

It was damn unfair of Dean Winchester to say something like that while they were both undressing. Despite having had a big meal only a short while ago, his visitor was obviously pleased to see that there was a pizza from the hotel kitchens, which were staying open for the big night.

Castiel eyed the younger man's body lasciviously.

“Bearing in mind how this night is likely to go”, he quipped, “I feel quite honoured to be the man voted to take Dean Winchester's gay virginity.”

And yes, the flush ran all the way down. Dean was reduced to just his boxers and slid into bed before using the remote to turn the TV on. He looked askance at Castiel as the man pulled out a laptop.

“What's that for?” he asked dubiously.

“There's this guy on the web who's done predictions for nearly all the voting areas”, he said. “Everywhere except Gibraltar, Northern Ireland, the Isles of Scilly and Anglesey. I've applied a basic mathematical algorithm to account for those, so I know what to expect from each and every result.”

Dean just looked at him.

“How the hell did I end up with someone who uses words like 'algorithm' in a sentence?” he said at last.

Castiel swatted at him.

“One thing to note”, he said, “is that there'll be more Leave wins because your voting areas are much smaller.”

“Be the only thing about me that is smaller!” Dean smirked. Castiel allowed himself an eye-roll.

“The first big results will be Newcastle and Sunderland”, he said, “both near here. They're also both nearly double the size of the average voting area so they're important. Assuming the high turnout we're expecting from the news so far, I've extrapolated....”

He stared hard at Dean who put on his most innocent expression. Castiel did not believe it for one minute but he carried on. “I've extrapolated that Newcastle, which has a large student population, will vote for us by about 23,000 or just over twenty per cent.”

“So we listen out for that?” Dean asked. Castiel shook his head.

“The Returning Officers won't announce the majority”, he said. “They'll state the turnout first, then the Remain vote, and finally the Leave one; the BBC will only put the majority up once the result
has been declared. If the higher than expected turnout is across the country the Newcastle Returning Officer should say their turnout is close to 130,000. Then we would be looking for somewhere about 78,000 if the country was headed for a fifty-fifty split. As we're more likely to win I expect our actual vote to be well past eighty.”

“You don't always get what you expect out of life”, Dean said.

“The thing is, you have to allow for outliers”, Castiel went on. “In Newcastle our win could be anything between 69,000 and 87,000. But things should settle down once we're some way in.”

“And when we win, I'll be settling some way in too!” Dean smirked.

Castiel shook his head at him and reached over to turn on the bedside light rather than the main one in the room. He was sure he heard Dean mutter 'extrapolated!' as he did so.

Adonis would be laughing on the other side of his face a few hours from now!

<>

23:59

Castiel was worr.... ever so slightly concerned. The Gibraltar result had been good – 96% Remain, as expected - but initial soundings from around the UK were worrisome even if these were, as the woman on the TV had said, people just gazing over the counters' shoulders as they worked. Highly unscientific. Well, they would soon know the way things were going as the Newcastle Returning Officer was approaching the podium.

“Vox populi”, Castiel muttered.

"Nerd!" Dean muttered back.

Both men watched anxiously as the clock on the screen ticked past midnight to show that a new day had begun. The woman began to speak.....
Chapter End Notes

¶ The figures Castiel has are based on those I used on the night, posted on the Net by one Chris Hanratty. I adjusted them slightly to account for the 21 missing voting areas (mostly in Northern Ireland), which is why Castiel does not concern himself with those during the evening.
Friday 24th June (I)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

00:00

“She nearly said 'referandum'!” Dean sniggered. Castiel ignored him as the woman ran through her official spiel.

“The total number of ballot papers counted was 129,072.”

“Roughly what I expected”, Castiel said, keying it in. “78,000, please.”

“The total number of votes cast in favour of Remain was 65,404.”

Castiel stared in shock. That was impossible!

“The total number of votes cast in favour of Leave was 63,598.”

Okay it was possible. A complete and utter clusterfuck of the first order, but possible.

“What the fuck!”

“What happened?” Dean asked as the majority of 1,806 was flashed onto the screen and the woman went into her spiel about invalid votes. “You said it would be over 20k!”

“Someone must have miscounted!” Castiel said, not panicking.

“Well, there were those sixty-nine rejected ballots”, Dean grinned. “Sure that makes all the difference.”

“There must have been a mistake!”

“Maybe you're not heading for that sure-fire victory after all?” Dean suggested, beginning to smile. “Maybe – just maybe – both you and the Cameroid are gonna get shafted!”

Castiel stared at the screen as the Remain supporters made what were clearly half-hearted attempts to celebrate their 'victory' while the Leave ones just looked thoughtful. He knew full well that they had to be jubilant inside; if that result was anywhere close to typical of the country as a whole then he was done for!
“The BBC guy at the Remain victory party says it's all gone a bit flat¹”, Dean observed, still smirking far too much for someone who didn't want to be pushed out of bed any time soon. “Everything was fine until those bastards went out and actually voted. Don't you just hate it when that democracy thing happens?”

Castiel was rechecking his calculations frantically in case he had made some horrible error. Unfortunately for him he had not.

“Orkney² is about to declare”, he said. “Turnout is a bit lower there.”

“And Scotland was where you expected to win big”, Dean grinned. “Looks like the place is off the map.”

“They're a group of islands just off the north coast of Scotland”, Castiel said, sighing in relief. “Much closer to what I expected; we expected to win by 3,200 and we won by 3,000. Newcastle was an outlier.”

“But we only need to get most of the results better than your fifty-fifty expectations and we've won”, Dean grinned. “My, oh my. It looks like it's gonna be a bumpy night for someone.”

Castiel glared at him then went back to checking the Newcastle result again. This was one of the rare times he actually wished he was his cousin. Balthazar was probably already drowning his sorrows over that damn result.

Chapter End Notes

1) A bit like another 'victory' party some five months or so later. The difference with Brexit was that the narrative was well and truly shot from the second result out of 399.

2) If you want somewhere that's both different and not too tourist-y, go to the Orkneys. They and the Shetlands further out were latecomers to the Scottish kingdom, and have Norse rather than Celtic roots. If Scotland does ever achieve independence, there is a movement in the Northern Isles to remain in the UK – and they have most of the North Sea oil!
00:15

The third result, Clackmannanshire up in Scotland, had also been disappointing for Castiel. He had fallen short of his 4,000 target by some 700 which, given the small size of the area, was worrisome. Now for the critical second big result – was Newcastle a one-off amid the cities or was he really doing that badly? Sunderland, up now, was a city that was expected to vote Leave – would it?

“The total number of ballot papers counted was 134,400.”

Castiel stared anxiously as the Sunderland Returning Officer swayed slightly on the stand – or maybe he was the one swaying? - as she announced the result. The city was only thirteen miles away from here; he expected to lose it especially after that dreadful Newcastle result, but by how much?

“Good turnout again”, he told Dean. “We need around 60,000 here.”

Worst case scenario we drop to 54,000, he thought. I could live with that. We could make that up elsewhere....

“The total number of votes cast in favour of Remain was 51,930.”

Castiel cried inside.

“Ooh, only 8,000 down!” Dean grinned. “Big improvement on the 12,000 you fell short by in Newcastle!”

“The total number of votes cast in favour of Leave was eighty-two thousand....”

She got no further as delirious Leave supporters erupted in front her, to her visible annoyance.

“Well, another big win for us”, Dean grinned as the huge Leave majority flashed up. “Missionary position?”

Castiel rolled his eyes. Not that he wasn't considering it......
Castiel glared crossly at the expert¹ that the BBC had brought in to analyse the results as they came in. Unlike his own figures, the organization had forecasts for all the voting areas, and the guy had just remarked that Remain had done better than expected in its first one. He had then gone on to quip that this had been in the Isles of Scilly², the smallest counting area of all, where Remain's better than expected victory had been a massive 182.

Sarcastic bastard!

“The British pound has hit the floor!” Castiel said glumly.

“Nice try with the scaremongering”, Dean countered, “but Sammy said to expect that when all those banker bods came out in favour of their bonuses – oops, I meant in favour of the EU; I ‘mis-spoke’ there. They all talked up the pound because they expected and wanted a Remain win so there was bound to be a correction when they caught up with the rest of us and realized how dumb they were. It'll be back up soon – like something else round here!”

Castiel rolled his eyes, but found time to send a silent curse in the direction of Sam Winchester for being so smart. And to his bedmate for being so annoyingly accurate about certain things being up. He sipped again at his coffee, then brightened when he saw the TV screen.

“Aha!”

“Mind the coffee!” Dean snipped. “Honestly, I've never seen anyone who can put away as much of the stuff as you can.”

“We've done a lot better than expected in Swindon”, Castiel said triumphantly. “That's a town in the South-West. You should have won it by over 16,000 but your majority was barely 10,000.”

“So what?” Dean scoffed. “You shipped way more than that across the two biggies.”

“But there are five times as many voters in the south compared to the North-East”, Castiel said, his confidence beginning to return, “and that doesn't include London where we'll do even better. This region, the North-East, is just an outlier.”

“We'll soon see who's out-lying”, Dean grinned.
1) Sir John Curtice
2) A group of islands, population 2,200, half of whom live in the capital Hugh Town. They lie about thirty miles off the south-western tip of England, of which they are the most southerly and westerly part. St. Mary's, the largest island, is barely two square miles in area. They would later play a major role in Castiel's life, oddly enough.
3) Although Leave did better in two other areas (East Midlands and West Midlands), the North-East was where they most exceeded the fifty-fifty expectations. In only one of its twelve areas (Darlington) would they fail to beat their expected figures by at least 10%.
00:58

“Broxbourne is about to come in”, Dean said. “London? Looks like it from the map.”

“The South-East¹, just outside London”, Castiel said. “If we do well there it'll show that we’re sweeping the South and that Swindon was the start of our march to victory. It'll be... almost dead even? That can't be right! No, that's Broxtowe; Broxbourne will be about 13,000 to you.”

“Looks like you were right”, Dean said ruefully. “The march to victory starts at Broxbourne.”

“Aha!”

“For us!” Dean suddenly grinned. “We won by over 16,000 - *in the South!*”

Castiel thought a bad word. But maybe Broxbourne was another outlier... and London with its huge population had over thirty areas none of which had declared yet. There was still hope.

And someone could stop with that smirking *right now!*

<>

01:05

2.5% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 18,778

<>
“We won by over 10,000 in West Dunbartonshire”, Castiel said. “Scotland is coming through for us.”

“But you needed to win by 9,000 there anyway”, Dean pointed out. His bedmate glared at him, but was distracted by the TV screen.

“Still above expectations”, Castiel said as another result flashed onto the screen. “The Shetland Isles. That's an important one.”

“Doesn't sound a big area”, Dean remarked.

“The most northerly Scottish islands and it's not”, Castiel said, “but in 1975 it was one of only two areas to vote No to the Common Market as it was then. A good 1600 in favour this time. They've seen the light.”

Dean leaned over his laptop.

“Nice try”, he purred, “but those figures of yours show you should have won it by over 3,000. That 'light' is just the approaching train!”

Castiel glared at him. Again.

“Can't wait to see how you spin that as a success!” Dean teased.

His bedmate silently cursed as the South Tyneside² result rolled across the screen.

“The calculations clearly somewhat underestimated your side's support in this region”, Castiel said loftily.

“Somewhat underestimated'?” Dean scoffed. “Your spreadsheet thingy said it would be 7,500. It was over 19,000!”

“We'll make up that elsewhere”, Castiel said dismissively. “As I said, the North-East is the smallest region in England with just twelve voting areas. London and the South have 137 between them!”

Dean nestled closer to the smaller man but said nothing.

“And stop with the damn smirking!”
"Nope!"

Chapter End Notes

1) The most populous English region (nearly 6.5 million voters), a cumbersome L-shaped area almost totally surrounding Greater London.
2) 'Tyneside' is the generic term for the Newcastle conurbation (population 775,000), split into four council areas. North of the River Tyne are Newcastle itself and North Tyneside (Wallsend, North Shields, Tynemouth and Whitley Bay), while opposite them are Gateshead (including Whickham and Blaydon) and South Tyneside (Jarrow, Hebburn and South Shields). The conurbation is joined by almost continuous housing to Sunderland some twelve miles from Newcastle, and the relationship between the two cities is a love-hate one. Minus the love.
0124

“As I thought”, Castiel said smugly. “Scotland is strongly supporting us.”

“But your running total is still down”, Dean said, pointing most unhelpfully to the bottom of the screen. “Over sixty thousand to us, now. And as a certain Cameroid said only recently, a victory by one vote is still a victory.”

Castiel glared at him.

01:31

Scotland was actually a bit of a disappointment, Castiel thought (but did not say), especially the turnout which was appreciably lower than from the English seats in so far. Dean had passed him the Dundee result – a solid 13,000 win – but had annoyingly gone and pointed out that it should have been 19,000.

The fact that he had been right had made it even more annoying.

“Where the fuck is 'nallen sire'?” Dean asked, passing over another result.

Castiel winced at his bedmate's mangling of the Gaelic¹ tongue and keyed in the latest result, then swore silently. Apparently not silently enough, judging from the grin emanating from the wiseacre next to him. A man who might very soon be...

Down boy, down!

“Na-h Eileanan Siar² is the Gaelic name for the Western Isles, off Scotland's western coast”, he said. “That's the other area which voted No in 1975.”

“I'm guessing it's 'no' good news from your point of view?” Dean grinned.

“We won by 1500”, Castiel said.

Dean looked expectantly at him.

“Okay, it should have been nearly 5,000”, Castiel admitted.
“And the Cameroid is kicking the cat”, Dean said.

“I've seen Larry”, Castiel said dryly, “and he's one mean-looking cat. Not if the prime minister values his pants.”

“In that case, the Cameroid is probably kicking George Osborne!”

01:41

Castiel stared glumly at the screen. Northern Ireland was starting to declare and, although it did not feature in his calculations directly, the reporter had said that both the turnout and the Remain vote there were lower than expected. He had won by nearly 10,000 in East Ayrshire in Scotland but that had been pretty much what he had needed from there anyway. Three results slightly ahead of expectations but ten below, including big hits from this damn region.

Which had just gone and provided another one.

“Hartlepool, just east of here”, he sighed. “Poor ground for us anyway, but instead of being 10,000 down it's 18,000.”

Dean not-smirked. Far too loudly.

“That BBC guy³ said that there were people turning out to vote who hadn't seen the inside of a polling station for over thirty years”, he said. “That seems to be what's happening; all those experts were wrong about high turnout favouring your side. Seems the Cameroid did inspire people to get out and vote – all those who wanted to vote against him!”

Castiel was silent.

0142
5% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 21,069

Chapter End Notes

1) Given their drive towards independence it's perhaps surprising that the Scots have not made more of their native language, Scots Gaelic or Erse. The Western Isles (or Outer Hebrides) is the only place it is commonly spoken; many of the signs there are in both languages.

2) 'nuh-helen-en-she-uh', a chain of islands some 130 miles long, two hours ferry ride out from the nearest road-linked island (Skye). The largest island by far is Lewis and Harris (it was formerly split between two counties, hence two names), about two-thirds the size of Rhode Island. The Isles has a population of some 26,500, of whom over 8,000 live in the capital Stornoway (Steòrnabhagh). Tong (Gaelic: Tunga), a village of just over 500 people near the town, was home to one Mary Anne Macleod who emigrated to the United States when she was seventeen, married a developer called Fred Trump and had a moderately well-known son....

3) Nick Robinson, BBC political commentator. He later tweeted how relieved he was that the campaign was finally over as that meant he and the Corporation did not need to be fair and balanced any more. Said tweet disappeared soon after – but the Internet is forever, Nicky boy!
Friday 24th June (V)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

01:43

Castiel was still (silently) cursing the latest disaster to come out of this accursed region – 23,000 down in Stockton-on-Tees, more than double what he had expected – when Dean spoke up.

“Basildon?”

“A town east of London”, Castiel said, glaring at the TV screen. “It's a bellwether in British general elections or at least was until they messed around with the boundaries, but in this vote it's predicted for you by 25,000.”

Please be good, please be good, please be good... fuck it!

“I guess 36,000 to us was not what you wanted to hear, then”, Dean mused, as one of the jubilant Leave supporters on screen crowed 'Goodbye Brussels!' “And our march to victory continues. Maybe I should take you while facing you. What do you think?”

“I'm actually flexible enough to suck my own cock”, Castiel said absent-mindedly.

Dean choked on his drink and took some time to recover. His bedmate did not gloat. Much.

“How the hell can you just come out with things like that?”

<>

01:46

Dean had just got his breathing back to normal when the next result came through.

“Merthyr Tydfil!”, he said. “Or Merthyr Tudful. Two names and on the left bit of the map so it must be in Wales, right?”

“That's an important one”, Castiel said, finishing off Dean's last few results. “The first Welsh result and I know that we'll do well there. I've got that down to go for your side by 350.”

“Almost spot on”, Dean said.

His bedmate sighed with relief.
“Just add a zero!”

Castiel blinked in shock.

“You're joking!” he gasped.

“Nope!” Dean smirked. “I'm guessing Wales might not be in the bag for you after all.”

That was really bad, Castiel knew, and not just because of this one small voting area. Balthazar had once suggested that in the event of a narrow loss, one possible fallback position for the prime minister might be if, as had seemed likely, the three Celtic countries all voted Remain, he could use the ‘divisive and polarizing’² argument to get a second vote, especially as the Scots might otherwise use their Remain vote for another push towards independence. But if Wales didn't come through....

That smirk was getting even more annoying, as well.

<>

01:54

7.5% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 75,939

<>

Chapter End Notes

1) murther tidvil' (English pronunciation virtually the same). It means 'where St. Tudful was martyred').

2) Two words that suddenly became very popular with some people later that morning,
along with the phrase 'we suppose that we should respect this extremely marginal decision BUT....'.
01:55

“Two more good Scottish results”, Castiel crowed. “Wins of 26,000 in Renfrewshire and 10,000 in Inverclyde¹. The Glasgow area is delivering.”

“That’s 36,000”, Dean countered. “I’ll see your 36,000 with the 17,000 we beat you by by in Rochford – that good ole South-East - and the 19,000 pounding you took in Middlesbrough, another thumping from this lovely region. Not forgetting the 8,000 you lost by in Brentwood – or was that Weymouth & Portland? Oh yeah - it was both!”

He was jotting down some more results from the screen so he missed the death-glare sent his way. He passed over his latest slip.

“Another 8,000 win to us in Blaenau Gwent² and we beat you by 11,000 in Flintshire³”, he said. “Both in Wales. You remember, the Wales that you said you were certain to win.”

Castiel groaned inwardly as he inputted the figures; both those last two had fallen short of his expectations by over 5,000. Dammit!

“bly-now', not 'blainer”’, he corrected.

“Same difference”, Dean grinned. “Our lead is now settled into six figures. And soon I’ll be comfortably settled into you!”

“London and the South will swing it”, Castiel said, with a confidence he did not really feel. Especially after those Southern losses.

He recognized the tune Dean was humming and scowled. Someone was not getting lucky in the morning!

Probably.

<>

02:01

Ups and downs, Castiel thought. Take the last two Leave wins, 15,000 in Southend-on-Sea and 10,000 in Wellingborough, both in the South-East. Southend had been slightly better than expected
but Wellingborough had been slightly worse. At least the disasters in this excuse for a region did not seem to be being repeated elsewhere.

“Swansea is about to declare”, Dean said. “Or Abertawe⁴, which I suppose is the Welsh name for it. Very different.”

“Wales' second-largest city”, Castiel said, wincing again at his bedmate's assault on the Welsh language, “and it's pronounced 'abbuh-towie'. I was disappointed about those smaller Welsh results but we'll do better in the cities and big urban areas. I've got it.... yes, a majority of 10,000 for us.”

“Not 10,000”, Dean said, watching the TV screen. “Just short of four.”

“That's disappointing.”

“More than disappointing, I'd say”, Dean smirked. “4,000 to us!”

“What the hell!!"

That was so not good, Castiel thought. Losing ground in places he’d won was bad enough, but when he started losing areas that he had expected to win – well, he needed his areas to come through big time now. Especially London, with Scottish turnout looking so relatively poor.

“Bury”, he said, gathering his wits. “First result from the North-West, across the country from here. 8,000 down is a bit more than I had hoped for...”

“Two and a half thousand bit!” Dean coughed. Castiel ignored him.

“But at least it's not as bad as the North-East. We're doing better as you move south and that's where most people live in this country.”

“Like you did in Basildon, Brentwood, Broxbourne, Rochford and Weymouth, all in the South, Dean snarked. “And you're still failing to hit those fifty-fifty expectations. Time will come when you've lost so much you can't get up again.”

Getting 'up' was not a problem just now, Castiel thought as he shifted his laptop slightly.

<>

02:02

10% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 134,706

<>
Chapter End Notes

1) Greenock, Port Glasgow and Gourock, three towns at the mouth of the River Clyde.
2) 'Blaenau' refers to the upper reaches ('heads') of the various valleys in Monmouthshire/Gwent, south-east Wales, and includes the towns of Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar.
3) Flintshire (Sir-y-Fflint) is a mostly English-speaking area in north-east Wales that rarely uses its Welsh name.
4) Swansea means 'Sweyn's Island' and is Viking in origin; Abertawe means 'place at the mouth of the River Tawe'.
02:07

Another 'loss against expectations', Castiel thought in annoyance. Eden¹, a small area that adjoined this one but was over in the North-West, had been a forecast win by barely 100 but those bastard Brexiteers had gone and stolen it by 2,000. Northerners!

“East Renfrewshire”, he said, cheering up again. “That's the area south of Glasgow, in Scotland. We won by 25,000 there, nearly 12,000 more than we expected.”

“But you lost by 23,000 in the result before it, Redcar & Cleveland”, Dean pointed out, again quite unnecessarily. “This region again. And you admitted – only because I could see it on your laptop – that that was 10,000 worse than you needed. Not counting the 16,000 you went down by in Harlow, 6,000 worse than you'd hoped. In the South. The experts may have been wrong but it seems they mostly underestimated our vote, not yours.”

“We just won by 15,000 in West Lothian”, Castiel countered. “Scotland again.”

“Yet once again your laptop tells a different story”, Dean grinned. “That 'win' was actually 1,000 less than you expected for a fifty-fifty break. We're gaining ground overall even in places like that.”

Castiel scowled. Okay, so he was right. But he didn't need to be so damn smug about it!

<>

02:13

Castiel frowned at his reflection in the bathroom mirror. Angus², another Scottish result, had come in just before he had left the bed (with its free smirking Adonis!), and the pattern had continued; a 6,000 win but again slightly short of what he had needed for an even split. And Denbighshire in Wales, which he'd expected to come close in if not take, had eluded him by some 4,000.

He returned to find his bedmate jotting down another result.

“St. Helens”, Dean said, openly leering at his bed partner (Castiel may have waggled his hips more than was strictly necessary). “I missed the map bit. Where's that?”

“The North-West”, Castiel said, getting into the bed. “That's the second result we've had from
there; Bury showed we're doing.... relatively well. I'll just check.”

He picked up his laptop.

“Should be sixteen hundred to us”, he said. “What was the result?”
Dean sighed heavily.

“Sixteen thousand.....”

“Yes!”

“To us!”

If there had been any justice in the world, a certain someone would have imploded from the look he was getting just then. Apparently there was not. Castiel folded his arms and huffed.

“I don't like you any more!”

“Aw honey, sometimes you just have to take it like a man!”

Castiel glared at him. He knew that if things kept on going as they had been so far, 'taking it like a man' would be exactly how his evening ended.

And now he had to adjust his laptop again!

<> 02:16

“Now there's a guy who doesn't want his fifteen minutes of fame”, Dean grinned, as the Returning Officer for North Warwickshire sidled onto the stage almost apologetically. “Wouldn't be surprised if he makes a run for it once he's announced the result.”

Castiel rolled his eyes at him.

“That's the first result we've had from the West Midlands”, he said. “The North has been a bit disappointing for us.....”

He ignored the snorted 'a bit!' from someone next to him.

“But as I said, we'll do better as we move south. I've got it down to go to you by about 7,000.”

They both watched as the figures flashed onto the screen as the guy was speaking. He did not run off afterwards as Dean had said he might, but he did manage to sidle off and look very awkward while doing it.
“Not as awkward as that result, though”, Dean grinned. “13,000 to us! So much for us you 'winning' further south; that horse has been well and truly shot!”

That was bad, Castiel knew. He had expected to run Leave close in the Midlands, and larger than expected losses like that did not bode well.

He shifted his laptop again. For no particular reason.

02:17

12.5% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 166,733

Chapter End Notes

1) Named for the river running through it, a very attractive area east of the more famous Lake District. It comprises the towns of Penrith, Alston, Kirkby Stephen and Appleby-in-Westmorland, as well as the totally not famous village of Eamont Bridge where the treaty that created the first unified English state was signed in 927.

2) Named for an ancient Pictish king, this area lies about halfway up the east coast between Edinburgh and Aberdeen and includes the towns of Arbroath, Brechin, Carnoustie, Forfar, Kirriemuir and Montrose.
02:19

A 7,000 loss in Fareham and big wins of 17,000 in Stirling and 6,000 in Exeter – all better than expectations - had lifted Castiel's mood, and he bit happily into the garlic bread that had come with the pizza. He had been a bit concerned that the early results had been (disastrously) short of expectations, but things were improving.

“I knew that London would come through for us”, he said triumphantly. “We won by over 81,000 in Lambeth; that's 26,000 better than expected, and it slashes your lead in half. And there are over thirty London boroughs.”

“But that blonde piece¹ on the TV claimed that only a few of them are in central London”, Dean pointed out. “She said that she expected us to do much better in the outer areas, where most people live.”

“You can't call her 'that blonde piece’!” Castiel protested.

“Oh come on!” Dean said. “She's clearly as dumb as a brick. I bet if you stood close enough to her, you could hear the sea!”

“You're objectifying!”

“I like attractive people”, Dean grinned. “But she's no competition, baby. I'll soon be all yours – or rather, you'll be all mine!”

“Not if there's many more results like Lambeth!” Castiel said primly.

<>

02:22

“We've retaken the lead”, Castiel said, trying to sound confident (judging from the mile-wide smirk in the vicinity, he failed). “28,000 in Oxford, 11,000 in South Ayrshire and a huge win in Glasgow, the biggest city in Scotland.”

“A huge win alright”, Dean said, looking over his bedmate's laptop. “But those first two were pretty much what you were expecting, and you had to win Glasgow by 97,000 just to break even. You only won by 83,000. Short again, Cas!”
Castiel glared at him.

“I really wish you weren't suddenly so numerate!” he grumbled.

“I'm not just a pretty face”, Dean grinned. “As your butt will soon find out!”
comeback. Although the smirk told him that anyway. He glanced back at the TV and his mood brightened.

“Another big win from London”, he smiled. “79,000 in Wandsworth; that's a massive 27,000 better than expected. It looks like the experts underestimated just how big each side would win by in their own parts of the country.”

“Sammy said that might happen”, Dean pointed out. “And he said that of the 400 counting areas, about 300 are in England outside London where we'll do better.”

Castiel allowed himself another quite uncharitable thought about Sam Winchester.

“That still makes our lead over 130,000”, he pointed out. “And they predicted earlier that Birmingham³ could come in for us sixty-forty. Assuming a good turnout, that would be a win of nearly 100,000 for us in just one area – plus we'll do just as well in the other big cities.”

He grinned. Dean was suddenly the worried one now.
Friday 24th June (IX)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

02:29

Castiel’s good mood did not last.

“Burnley just came in”, Dean said. “The North from the map, so I suppose you’ve done badly again. What was your forecast?”

“A town in the North-West”, Castiel said, ignoring the snipe. “Should be about 4,000 to you.”

Dean just grinned.

“Out with it”, Castiel snapped.

“What, before the counting is even done”

Castiel moved to swat him and the bastard sniggered.

“Not four but fourteen!” Dean said, passing the exact figure over with a look that was perilously close to gloating. “And they’re about to declare Tamworth.”

Castiel scowled as he inputted the Burnley result. Ugh!

“Tamworth is in the West Midlands”, he said, trying to sound confident. “8,000 to you?”

“If by ‘eight’ you meant ‘fifteen’, then yeah”, Dean grinned. “Oh, and you just lost Torbay¹ as well. By nearly 20,000!”

“We’re still over 70,000 ahead”, Castiel countered.

“And falling”, Dean said. “You’ve also gone and lost Caerphilly by 14,000, and Wrexham by 12,000.”

Those two were bad, Castiel knew. Not only were they Welsh losses, but he had expected to come close in Wrexham and to narrowly win Caerphilly. The Principality as he knew it was called was letting him down bog time.

“Caerffili² and Wrecsam³”, he said automatically.

“I love it when you talk Welsh!”

Castiel scowled, and wondered - just how ‘justifiable’ did justifiable homicide have to be?

<>
02:30
17.5% of voting areas declared
REMAIN ahead by 62,592

02:31
“We won East Lothian by 16,000 and North Ayrshire by 9,000”, Castiel said. “More Scottish successes.”

“But those wins were about what you expected anyway”, Dean said. “And you've gone and lost somewhere in London.”

Castiel glared at the smirking bastard beside him.

“We never expected to do well in that area”, he said dismissively. “As the presenter said, Barking & Dagenham is just... different from London.”

“18,000 down and you only expected six”, Dean grinned. Castiel glared at him.

“We're still over 50,000 ahead on the night!” he muttered mutinously. “We won East Dunbartonshire in Scotland by over 26,000 and that was more than expected. North Tyneside is up next; that's right next to Newcastle so we'll do well there.”

“Newcastle as in where you fell short by 12,000 'do well'?”, Dean teased. Castiel ignored him.

“Should be 3,000 to us”, he said. “Not a large area. Come on!”

They both watched as the figures flashed up on the screen. Castiel’s heart sank.

“A majority of 7,716”, Dean announced unnecessarily. “To us! Again!”
Castiel could see the headlines. 'American student found dead after being hit repeatedly by falling laptop'?... no, the British wouldn't buy that.

Would they?

02:36

20% of voting areas declared

REMAIN ahead by 61,555

Chapter End Notes

1) The 'English Riviera' around Tor Bay in Devonshire, comprising the resort towns of Torquay and Paignton and the fishing port of Brixham. The 'palm trees' seen along the seafront are in fact New Zealand cabbage trees.

2) 'car-filly' (English pronunciation 'care-filly'), famous for its castle and its cheese.

3) 'rek-sum' (English pronunciation stresses the first syllable slightly), famous for the fact that quite a few English people think it's in England and quite a few Welsh people wish that it was.

4) David Dimbleby, renowned for somehow always getting audiences of his own political persuasion 'self-selected' for his 'Question Time' TV show. England's answer to Rachel Maddow but with even more pomposity (incredibly that is possible).
Friday 24th June (X)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

02:40

The results were now coming in thick and fast, and Castiel was on an emotional roller-coaster. His hopes fell when he went down by 13,000 in Gosport (the South-East again, dammit!), rose when Scotland delivered a resounding 42,000 win in South Lanarkshire, fell again when he lost Blackpool by 23,000 along with both Hyndburn¹ and Pendle² by 13,000 each (all three in the North-West, ugh!), then rose again when he won by 32,000 in Hammersmith & Fulham (good old London!). The 2,000 loss in Craven³ was small but annoying, both as he had expected to narrowly win there and because that was the first result from the Yorkshire & The Humber region where he needed to do well to help counter the disaster of this area. That region adjoined this one, and he did not need the bad voting habits here to spread.

“We've won Moray”⁴, Castiel said, relieved. “That means we'll win every voting area in Scotland.”

“But as Sammy said, five million kilties up there against thirty-nine million people down here”, Dean countered. “And you only won Moray – weird pronunciation by the way – by barely a hundred when it should've been over 5,000.”

Castiel was rapidly revising his opinion of Sam Winchester downwards.

“We're still well ahead”, he said, with a confidence he did not feel. “We'll win.”

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02:41

22.5% of voting areas declared

REMAIN ahead by 84,854

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02:50

Castiel's could feel his hopes beginning to fade. Watford, a town just north of London that he should have won by 4,000, had gone narrowly against him. He had won another Scottish area, the 36,000 win in North Lanarkshire having been a bit better than expected, but England's North-West now seemed bent on rivalling this region in sheer awfulness. The 45,000 vote hiding in Wigan had been well over double what he had had feared, and the 9,000 loss in Allerdale was nearly three times as bad as expected. His lead was dropping fast.

Unlike something else, his treacherous (upper) brain added. He shifted his laptop surreptitiously.

“Welsh or Scottish?” Dean asked. “8,000, and I'd pronounce it 'ronder synon taff’.”

Castiel sighed, at both the result and Dean's attempt at Welsh.

“Rhondda Cynon Taf is a group of valley towns, mostly former coal-mining communities”, he said. “The sort of people the psephologists call 'the left-behinds'.”

“Selfie-what?”

“People who study opinion polls”, Castiel said, keying in the result. “The 'left-behinds' are those economically disadvantaged in comparison to others at a time of general national growth, like those in the Rust Belt back home. I've got that down as a 10,500 win so we're only a bit short, thankfully.”

“Oh.”

Castiel looked at him.

“'Ah?'” he said testily.

“I meant 8,000 to us”, Dean said, looking wide-eyed and innocent. “Did I not put that down? Oopsie!”

Castiel glared at him but secretly he was very anxious. That was yet another area that he had been supposed to win but which had treacherously gone Leave, and this time by a huge margin. And in Wales, which was looking more and more like a lost cause. And they were now a quarter of the way through. And that 12,000 loss in North-West Leicestershire meant he had just lost the overall lead!

And someone could really stop playing with his hair like that! No matter how good it felt!
02:51

One-quarter of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 653

Chapter End Notes

1) The town of Accrington (on the River Hyndburn) and the nearby towns of Clayton-le-Moors, Great Harwood, Oswaldtwistle and Rishton.
2) A beautiful area of west Yorkshire, around the towns of Skipton and Settle. The name goes back centuries but no-one is quite sure where it came from.
3) The towns of Nelson, Colne and Barnoldswick, situated around Pendle Hill. The area was once famous for witch trials.
4) 'murry' (English pronunciation 'morray'), a beautiful but rarely-visited area of north-east Scotland around Dufftown, Elgin, Forres, Keith, Lossiemouth and Rothes. Historically semi-independent from the rest of Scotland.
5) A diverse area close to the Scottish border. The Lake District towns of Cockermouth and Keswick, the post-industrial ports of Workington and Maryport, the seaside resort of Allonby, and Bowness-on-Solway, the western end of the famous Hadrian's Wall.
6) 'ronda kinnun tarf', the names of three valleys in south Wales, the key towns being Aberdare, Llantrisant (home of the Royal Mint), Mountain Ash and Pontypridd.
Friday 24th June (XI)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

02:53

The trouble was, Castiel fretted, that while the current results were holding things fairly steady they were still mostly a bit short of his expectations. That meant that when the more pro-Leave results came in later he would be in trouble. Over 22,000 down in Nuneaton & Bedworth was twice as bad as expected, and in the West Midlands again. 31,000 in North-East Lincolnshire and 9,000 in Corby were also both worse than expected defeats. Thank God that the equivalent thing back home this November would be so much more straightforward; Americans could be trusted not to make this sort of unholy mess, or the presenters on MSNBC would be having kittens!

“I thought you'd be pleased”, Dean said. “33,000 ahead in Liverpool and over 50,000 in Islington puts you back in the lead on the night. Though they said Islington is in London so no surprise there.”

“The Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn's area, and it is”, Castiel said, inputting the figures. “But it's only about 15,000 up on expectations for the pair, and that's nothing like enough at this stage. That doesn't even make up for those losses in Ceredigion², Rugby, Wyre Forest³ and Lincoln.”


“He's a prime minister, not a president”, Castiel said crossly. “And he'll stay on. He has to, in order to implement Article 50 like he said he would.”

“And you're the one with a job in politics?” Dean asked mockingly. “You think a democratic vote of the whole country will stop the likes of him? He'll find some way to block it, you'll see.”

Castiel really wished that he could tell his smug bedmate he was wrong. But he had a nagging suspicion that he was all too right.

The smugness was still annoying, though.

<> 27.5% of voting areas declared
REMAIN ahead by 54,968

02:57

“Well, your lead on the night lasted” - Dean looked at his watch - “five minutes. 23,000 in Castle Point⁴, 20,000 in Cannock Chase – oh yeah, and both way above expectations. And Havant⁵ puts us back ahead with a thumping 17,000 win, so thanks, Havant. Weird name.”

“It's a town in the South-East”, Castiel sighed. “There are way too many Havants in this country!”

“Never mind”, Dean purred. “I'll be taking your mind off things soon enough, and I'll make sure you 'Havant' a care in the world.”

Dean could actually feel the disapproving look! Meh, it had been worth it.

02:59

30% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 33,622
“Hey, my area! Or one of them; I haven't seen Winchester yet, though Sammy said that'd be a late one. 9,000 up in Dean Land.”

Castiel looked up in surprise.

“The Forest of Dean is in Gloucestershire, in the South-West”, he said. “A very rural area so we expected to do badly there, although that's bit worse than I'd hoped. We're still only trailing by 25,000 or thereabouts.”

“But you've shot nearly all your bolts”, Dean pointed out. “Most of the areas you were relying on for have declared now, like when there's only states of one colour left at home.”

“There's still some London places to come”, Castiel said defiantly. “We just won Richmond by 41,000; that was 13,000 better than expected.”

Dean frowned.

“Didn't I say we won that by 3,000 a few minutes ago?” he asked.

“That was Richmondshire⁶, another area that borders this one”, Castiel said. “The London one is named after its key town. We're doing better in the big cities, and we still have that big win to come in Birmingham.”

“Don't want to rain on your parade”, Dean said. “Okay that's a lie but let's pretend it isn't....”

His bedmate scowled at him.

“But the old guy from Birmingham was on while you were getting the door for the last pizza”, Dean said, “and he said the city was now neck and neck. That six-figure haul you were expecting to boost you to victory 'aint coming, pardner!”

Castiel's heart sank. He was losing out on expectations in far too many areas, and that did not bode well for him.

Or his butt.

32.5% of voting areas declared
Chapter End Notes

1) Indeed. In that totally hypothetical situation, they might commit such egregious errors as hypocritically attacking people of one race for backing side A while berating those of another race for not supporting side B. Or describing one’s political opponents as ‘white supremacists’ because they hold different opinions to What Me The Smart Presenter Knows Is Correct. Or absent-mindedly referring to one of the campaigns as ‘we’. Or even forgetting that microphones can pick them up muttering ‘Jesus!’ or ‘that’s a bitch!’ when results don’t go their way. They would have to be spectacularly dense to have made - oops, I meant to say to make mistakes like that.

2) ‘kerry-diggy-un’ (English: Cardiganshshire), a beautiful but rarely visited area of west Wales around Aberystwyth, Aberaeron, Cardigan, Lampeter and New Quay. It voted Remain by around 4,000 but had been forecast as a 9,000 win.

3) A rural area to the west of Birmingham, comprising beautiful Bewdley, charming Stourport-on-Severn and concrete Kidderminster.

4) Sneered at on the night for being ‘the whitest area in England’ by David Dimbleby (clearly a massive crime in his eyes), this area lies 30 miles east of London and comprises the towns of Canvey Island, Hadleigh and South Benfleet. It takes its unimaginative name from two landmarks in the area, Hadleigh Castle and Canvey Point.

5) Derived from Hamafunta, meaning ‘the spring of Hama’. A nondescript commuter town in Hampshire, beloved by... well, someone has to like it somewhere, surely? The race would be close for a while, but Leave would subsequently lead all the way home.

6) Not a county as the name might suggest; the suffix ‘-shire’ was used in the past for sub-divisions of counties but that practice mostly died out. The modern council area is about twice the size of ‘old’ Richmondshire, and contains Richmond (surprise!), Catterick, Hawes, Leyburn and Middleham, along with some beautiful Dales countryside.
Friday 24th June (XII)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

03:07

Castiel winced at the 23,000 loss from Oldham, nearly double what he had expected. Seriously, what was wrong with people in the top part of this country? He'd gained 30,000 across Westminster and 26,000 in Merton, both in London, and had come close to taking back the lead but a 11,000 loss in Redditch followed by an 8,000 one in Eastbourne had stopped him, and a slew of small- and medium-sized losses had proceeded to undo all the good work. The latest results were a lot closer to those fifty-fifty predictions but he was not making any inroads into the shortfalls from earlier.

“Oh fuck!” he exclaimed.

“Language!” Dean said reprovingly. “Save all the swear words for when you're on your back with me between your legs!”

“Bridgend, or Pen-y-bont-ar-Ogwr¹, has just gone to you by nearly 7,000”, Castiel sighed. “I had that down to go to us by 2,500. I did not need another Welsh loss!”

“Never mind, baby”, Dean said consolingly. “I'll soon be giving you exactly what you need!”

He passed over the two latest results he had written down, a 23,000 loss in Telford & Wrekin and a 14,000 one in South Somerset. Keying them in, Castiel winced as he saw both were some way worse than expected. He was so fucked!

Well, he soon would be!

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03:08

35% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 68,701

<>
Castiel bit viciously into a slice of pizza. The bad news just kept on coming; 15,000 down in Erewash, 21,000 in Rochdale, 11,000 in South Ribble, 6,000 in Darlington – Northern disasters the whole lot of them - and worse, he had lost two more Welsh areas that he had expected to win; Carmarthenshire by 7,000 and Pembrokeshire by 10,000. The only (very slight) upside was that at least those two areas used their English names so Dean had not had the chance to mangle any more Welsh pronunciations. True, Aberdeen in Scotland had gone for him by 23,000 but that had been no consolation; he had needed to win it by at least thirty-six if not more.

“We won by 11,000 in Scottish Borders”, he said hopefully.

His bedmate just looked at him.

“Okay, we should've won by twelve”, he admitted. “Just shut up, okay?”

Dean didn't say anything. He just smirked, which in a way was worse.
03:12

“Tea-Party!” Dean said. “Boston⁴ has declared, and it's a win of over fifty per cent to.... guess who?”

“Not what we needed”, Castiel said bitterly. “One of the most Leave-inclined places in the country, although it still beat expectations by 6,000. Oh fuck it!”

“What now?” Dean asked.

“Neath Port Talbot. And don't you dare go and murder another Welsh pronunciation!”

Dean grinned and zipped his lips.

“Castell-nedd Porth Talbot⁵ is the fifth place in south-west Wales that's we've lost when we should have won”, Castiel sighed. “6,000 to us it should have been, but it turned out more than 10,000 to you. The experts got that country totally wrong; it has to be that your people just turned out more on the day.”

“Like the Marmite guy claimed”, Dean grinned. “I bet old Nigel can't wait for everyone to tell him how right he was.”

“Hell will freeze over first!” Castiel muttered.

Chapter End Notes

1) 'pen-eah-bont-ah-o-guh' (the Ogwr or Ogmore is the river that flows through the town).
2) An East Midlands area named for a local river, comprising Ilkeston, Long Eaton
and Sandiacre. Unexciting except for the dull parts.
3) An area of central Lancashire in the North-West, just south of Preston. It includes Leyland, Penwortham and Walton-le-dale. Named for Preston’s river, a 2017 survey labelled it as the best area in England for young people to live in and (perhaps not coincidentally) one of the five best-run councils in the whole country.
4) At 51.1%, the home town of several prominent colonists on the “Mayflower” was the largest percentage win for Leave. The largest win in terms of votes cast was in Dudley (near Birmingham), some 61,666 or 35.2% and nearly double what had been predicted – but that came in nearly an hour after the vote had been called.
5) 'cas-tel-nayeth-porth-talbot' (Talbot is the name of the family who developed the port). Oddly enough the two largest towns are.... Neath and Port Talbot.
Friday 24th June (XIII)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

03:16

The last run of results had been even more painful for Castiel to have to key in. Out of twenty results only one, Forest Heath¹, had been better than expected. 17,000 down in Coventry and 14,000 in Scarborough – ugh! He had almost been relieved that the 7,000 loss in Darlington, another part of this nightmare area, had been only slightly worse than expectations. Thank God for the capital!

“54,000 to you in Haringey”, Dean said. “London?”

“North London”, Castiel said, “and that's better than expectations by some 20,000.”

He may have forgotten to mention at this point that the dreadful run of recent results had, collectively, been over 120,000 worse. It must have just slipped his mind.

“That bod on the BBC just said that unless the second part of the night turns out very different from the first, it looks like Brexit”, Dean said. “And people like him never say that unless they're pretty sure.”

“He may be right”, Castiel conceded.

“Aren't we halfway through yet?” Dean asked. “It seems to have been going forever.”

“It just feels like that”, Castiel said. “Plus this BBC coverage is appalling. I'd almost think they're doing their best to confuse things with all their 'heat maps' and 'slide-rules', barely taking any notice of the actual results.”

Or, he added silently, they too have seen that against those fifty-fifty predictions Leave are now miles ahead, and they know that barring a miracle it's game over.

<>

03:17

40% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 146,914
“Hah!” Castiel exclaimed. “We won Wirral².”

Dean just looked at him.

“A fair-sized mostly urban area in the North-West, on the River Mersey near Liverpool”, Castiel said. “It was forecast to you but we won it by 6,000 more than expected.”

“Halton³”, Dean grinned. “You said it was on that river too, and we won that by – how much? Oh yeah, 6,000 more than expectations!”

Castiel glared at him.

“That still takes your lead down to barely 140,000”, he said, not at all petulantly.

“Ooh, barely 140,000!” Dean said dramatically, fake-swooning. “Woe is me! We're only ahead by six figures and you're almost out of ammo. Alas, alack, call the cavalry!”

He leaned over the other man's shoulder. Castiel did not shudder. Much.

“You did win Fife by 31,000”, Dean grinned, “but you needed to win by at least thirty-nine to break even and way more to make up all the ground you keep losing everywhere else. We beat you by 9,000 in Crawley, 8,000 in Rushmoor⁴, 6,000 in Sevenoaks – should've been seven, really – 11,000 in Lichfield, 13,000 in Ashford and a whopping 30,000 in Wolverhampton. That last one was in the West Midlands area; you remember, the area where you were gonna do better as you headed south? And the cherry on the pie? Gateshead in this region – you should've won that by 2,000, and we swept in and took it by 14,000. That selfie-whatever guy was right; unless someone finds a shit-ton of Remain votes in the back of a car somewhere, the Cameroid is toast!”

“I still say he will stay on”, Castiel said defiantly.

“He's about as done as you'll be by the end of tonight”, Dean grinned. “Ready to settle up, or are you gonna wait for the fat lady to sing?”

“We're still not halfway through yet!” Castiel protested.

“But she's practising those high notes in her dressing-room”, Dean grinned.

Castiel was very much afraid that she was.
03:21

42.5% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 204,740

Chapter End Notes

1) The area around the famous horse-racing town of Newmarket in West Suffolk, some 65 miles NNE of London. Like Castle Point it takes its unimaginative name from two geographical features; Thetford Forest and Breckland Heath. The 8,369 loss was indeed better than predicted for Castiel – he made back 693 of those lost 120,000 votes!

2) Despite the name this is only the northern half of the Wirral Peninsula, jutting out into the Irish Sea between Liverpool and north Wales. Birkenhead, Wallasey, Bebington, Heswall, Hoylake and West Kirby are the main towns. The name comes from two Anglo-Saxon words meaning 'a myrtle tree near the corner (of land)'.

3) The towns of Runcorn and Widnes, not far south of Liverpool. Halton, once the largest settlement, is now just a suburb of Runcorn.

4) The area around Aldershot and Farnborough in Hampshire, southern England. Perhaps surprisingly the name (from a former military arena) is popular; a 2000 referendum voted 4:1 to keep it.
03:26

There was no let-up in the bad news, Castiel thought bitterly. A 35,000 thrashing in Thurrock, 8,000 in Barrow-in-Furness, 14,000 in Shepway¹, 21,000 in Great Yarmouth, 7,000 in Colchester and 17,000 in New Forest. He sighed heavily. Surely it could not get much worse.

Ah. Apparently it could.

“I can't believe you took Sheffield!” he grumbled. “Over a quarter of a million voters there; that was one place in Yorkshire I was sure we'd win.”

“A 10,000 forecast win to you becomes a 5,000 real-life win for us”, Dean grinned. “At least you won Monmouthshire by nearly 500 – would have been good except you needed 2,000! Meanwhile our lead on the night sails past 300,000 with no sign of stopping.”

Castiel scowled at him.

“Perhaps I'd better send down for another pizza”, Dean said, looking at the empty pizza box. “I'll even let you have your damn fruit on it if you must.”

“You can't be hungry again already!” Castiel said incredulously. Dean waggled his eyebrows at him.

“Thinking I'm soon gonna be burning off plenty of energy!” he said lasciviously.

Dammit, but he was so nice when he smiled!

<>

03:28

45% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 314,338

<>
Castiel stared anxiously at the Edinburgh² result. On the surface it looked good; a 124,000 win that cut Leave's lead nearly in half. But he knew that it was only 5,000 better than expected and that that was nothing like enough. Worse, even that tiny gain on expectations had been more than wiped out by the disastrous result in from the other end of Scotland where he'd won Highland³ by 15,000 but had needed to win it by nearly double that.

“You're still falling way short on those fifty-fifty targets”, Dean smirked after Castiel had reluctantly admitted the Highland result to him, “so that means we're still headed for victory overall. Your Cameroid must be having a fit; the bigger our win, the harder it'll be for him to ignore it.”

“He would never do that!” Castiel said hotly.

“Didn't Sammy tell me the EU ignored votes against it in France, Ireland and Holland?” Dean asked innocently.

“The Irish Republic and The Netherlands”, Castiel said testily. “Get the countries' names right!”

“Temper, temper!”

He deserved that epic eye-roll, Castiel decided. He brightened as he won Ealing by 31,000 – London again, and better than expected – then winced when it was immediately followed by losses of 41,000 in East Riding of Yorkshire, 24,000 in Tameside⁴ and 19,000 in Epping Forest. But at least he'd won North Hertfordshire by 7,000!

He had a nagging feeling that he was more than some way up a certain river in north-east Africa. Didn't make the Smirk next to him any less annoying, though!
47.5% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 233,667

Chapter End Notes

1) An area covering the Kentish towns of Folkestone, Hythe, Lydd and New Romney in the South-East. Tired of no-one being able to find 'Shepway' on a map (the name was from a crossroads where an ancient court met), the council later changed the name to 'Folkestone & Hythe'.
2) 'eddin-bruh' (definitely not 'eddin-burrow' unless you are an American with a large wallet).
3) Geographically the largest region and about the size of the state of Maryland, but Highland's population of around 235,000 means it is comparable in population density to Idaho. 46,000 people (20% of the region's population) live in the city of Inverness; the next largest town is Thurso (8,000). Highland is home to one of the famous 'ends of Britain', John o' Groats. If you've ever wondered what Mars might look like when it's eventually settled, take the train to the Far North and see.
4) A suburban area to the south-east of Manchester, comprising Ashton-under-Lyne, Dukinfield, Droylsden, Hyde, Mossley and Stalybridge. The River Tame runs through it, quickly if it's got any sense.
“Where's Doncaster?” Dean asked. “In this region?”

“Just south of here, over the border into Yorkshire and The Humber”, Castiel said. “Definitely one of yours; I've got it down to go Leave by about 25,000.”

“You were right”, Dean said.

Castiel sighed in relief. He had been expecting something much worse given the generally dismal performance in the North. Maybe there was still some hope.....

“Definitely one of ours”, Dean grinned. "By over 57,000!"

Castiel glared up at the ceiling. When he had silently prayed for a sudden dump of extra votes, he hadn't meant for the other side!

“You've also gone and lost Bolton by 22,000. Barnsley by 45,000, East Staffordshire by 16,000, Ipswich by 10,000 and Walsall by 48,000”, Dean said off-handedly. “But at least you only went down by 1700 in Canterbury. Wowsers!”

It was even worse than it appeared, Castiel saw as he inputted the results, as the Barnsley result was 13,000 worse than expected and the Walsall one 26,000. And even worse, wishing did not make your smirking bedmate fizzle out of existence. Dammit!

<>

03:39

Half of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 439,773

<>
Another good London result in Waltham Forest¹ – a 19,000 win, over double what had been expected – had temporarily lifted Castiel's mood. But he had a bad feeling that it might not last.

“This area is about to declare”, he said nervously, as the Durham Returning Officer mounted the stage. “We've done not as well as hoped in the Midlands and North.”

Dean failed to stifle a snort of laughter, and looked pointedly at his watch.

“Since we retook the lead at Havant, we've soared to nearly half a million up in an hour and a half”, he said with another smirk. “Not as well as hoped?” That's like the captain of the 'Titanic' saying that minor bump against that iceberg had gone 'not as well as hoped'! You're losing everywhere; you just went and lost Nottingham where you expected to win.”

Castiel shot him a dirty look – he had only lost Nottingham by a couple of thousand, dammit! - but turned back to the TV to await the Durham result. Thankfully the penultimate one from this disastrous region.

“The total number of ballot papers counted was 267,398.”

“High turnout for a semi-urban area”, Castiel said anxiously. “We should get a shade over half that,134,000 or so.”

“The total number of votes cast in favour of Remain was 113,521.”
Castiel did not cry, but it was close. He did not even need to look across the bed to see the Smirk.

“The total number of votes cast in favour of Leave was 153,877.”

“A majority of forty... thousand... three... hundred... and... fifty-... six”, Dean grinned. “If that presenter guy's face gets any longer it's gonna disappear under the desk; the blonde piece looks just as miserable. And you said earlier – what was it? Oh yeah, this place would be a narrow win to you. That takes our lead past the half a million mark; next stop, the full million!”

Castiel thought a Bad Word.
03:41

52.5% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 511,878

03:43

The South was better than his predictions in parts, Castiel thought, but by nothing like enough to undo the disaster that was the Midlands and the North, let alone Wales. He was chipping away at that humongous Leave lead and had got it back below half a million, but that was it; he was only 'chipping away'. 10,000 up in both Vale of White Horse² and Rushcliffe³, 12,000 in Reading, and all three slightly better than expected – great.

He then blew the whole 32,000 in Tendring⁴ as well as over 9,000 each in both Bournemouth and Chorley. He sighed unhappily. When Dean got back from the restroom the Smirk would be as wide as ever.

It was.
55% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 475,924

Chapter End Notes

1) The towns of Leyton, Leytonstone, Walthamstow and Chingford in the northeastern part of Greater London. Named for the forest which once stood there.
2) A dumb modern (1974) creation, consisting of the rural Vale itself (Wantage and Faringdon, both quite attractive) and the commuter town of Abingdon (at least better than nearby Oxford, though that's a low bar).
3) The southernmost part of Nottinghamshire in the East Midlands, named after an old wapentake (sub-division of a county) that covered a similar area in the ancient past. Comprises the towns of Bingham and West Bridgford, the latter home to 'Ye Olde Trip To Jerusalem', the oldest (1199) pub in England. A nice area, except it has repeatedly elected one of the most insufferable, self-serving prigs ever to disgrace the British parliament, one Kenneth Clarke. After doing his best to block Brexit he finally quit parliament in 2019.
4) Like Rushcliffe, except Tendring is also a village after which the ancient hundred (subdivision of a county in the south) was named. The principal towns are Harwich (ferries to the Continent that get you away from it, thankfully), the seaside resorts of Clacton-on-Sea, Frinton-on-Sea and Walton-on-the-Naze, and the rare jewel that is Brightlingsea, one of those quiet out-of-the-way places that most people miss out on.
03:47

Castiel sighed again as he looked at the latest London results to come in. He had won Hackney by 60,000 and Kensington & Chelsea by 20,000, and even better, they had together been over 30,000 above expectations. Perhaps, just perhaps.....

“Hounslow”, Dean said. “2,500 to you.”

And that just made things worse again, Castiel thought angrily. Hounslow was in Outer London and he'd needed to win it by at least 9,000. The capital would definitely vote Remain but those outlying areas were far too pro-Leave. Balthazar's confidence that the huge wedge of votes in the capital would prove decisive¹ was looking ever more wrong. He wondered whether his cousin was drunk yet.

He wondered when he'd taken to asking himself such dumb questions.

“You just won South Hams² by 4,000”, Dean pointed out. “That's where the MP you planted in our campaign came from.”

“She was not 'planted'”, Castiel said crossly. “And we didn't expect to win there so that's another unexpected gain for us.”

And it makes the tiniest of dents in your lead, he thought but did not say. Though judging from the Smirk (which definitely needed a capital letter now), he didn't have to. Instead he keyed in the other result Dean had given him, a 9,000 Welsh loss in Torfaen³.

It should have been only 1,000. He was so screwed!

<>

03:50

57.5% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 427,198

<>
03:55

“We seem to be doing better in a swathe across the South-East and South-West”, Castiel said. “The turnout is set to be highest in those two regions, which is good. Lewes just came in for us and that was expected to go your way, so that's our third surprise gain on the night.”

Dean looked pointedly at him. Castiel huffed.

“Okay, you've gained fifteen places that we were set to take”, he admitted. “They're smaller on average, though.”

“Like the small city of Swansea?” Dean grinned. “How much did you win Lewes by?”

“Just over 2,000.”

“And that makes our lead?”

Castiel hesitated, but had to answer.

“Still over 450,000”, he admitted.

“Lay, baby, lay”, Dean crooned under his breath.

“You have sauce on your face”, Castiel pointed out.

“If you're good, I'll let you lick it off later!”

Castiel turned away to look at the screen, just in time to see Bexley go against him by over 31,000. Another Outer London borough; he knew that was way worse than expectations even without keying the result in.

12,000 worse. He cried inside.

“Nearly 42,000 to us in Manchester, though”, he said with a smile. He keyed the result in and his smile faded.

“And you expected what?” Dean asked.

Castiel did not want to answer, but he had to.

“42,750”, he admitted.

The Smirk contrived to get even wider.

<>
60% of voting areas declared
LEAVE ahead by 461,070

Chapter End Notes

1) Inner London voted Remain by 43.4%. However there were about two and half times as many people in Outer London, which only voted Remain by 7.9%. If it had matched the centre then the final result would have been very close, although Leave would still just have won.

2) The towns of Totnes, Dartmouth, Ivybridge, Kingsbridge and Salcombe, who settled on a neutral name ('the southern hamlets') for their part of Devonshire in the South-West. The traitor doctor was actually MP just for the Totnes constituency, part of the area, and predictably would later repeat the lie that 'her area' voted Remain (her own constituency was later shown to have gone 54-46 Leave) as an excuse for her blocking Brexit.

3) 'tor-vine', an area in south-east Wales comprising Abersychan, Blaenavon, Cwmbran and Pontypool.
Friday 24th June (XVII)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

04:01

Of the last ten results, Castiel thought, he had won by a (slightly) better than expected 33,000 in Cardiff, the Welsh capital, and......

And that was about it. 14,000 down in Poole, 20,000 in South Staffordshire, 16,000 each in Portsmouth, Dartford and Dover, and a smattering of smaller losses including Broxtowe¹ and Derbyshire Dales, both of which he should have won.

Someone did not need to leave the box of condoms out on his bedside cabinet when he went to the restroom. Double Extra Large indeed!

<>

04:01

62.5% of voting areas declared
LEAVE ahead by 514,138

<>

04:07

A 37,000 win in Tower Hamlets, Castiel thought. London was doing well – but not well enough; that was only 5,000 above what he had needed for that ever more elusive fifty-fifty break. A 27,000 win in Cambridge, but that had been close to expectations, and the 22,000 loss in nearby Fenland² had been painful. The 53,000 win in Bristol down in the South-West had however cut the
Leave lead back to just 455,000.

*Just* 455,000! And he didn't need Outer London to let him down. Again.

“We lost Sutton”, he sighed.

“Where's that?” Dean asked. “The South-East?”

Castiel took another sip of his coffee before answering.

“South London”, he said. “Only meant to go to us by 1,000 but you won it by eight. ‘That blonde piece’ as you called her was right; outer London was generally much better for you. If only it had all followed central London we might have won.”

“If only!” Dean said mockingly, fake-swooning. “Where's a hanging chad when you need one?”

“That politician on TV has just said that he sees a good reason to have a second vote”, Castiel said.

“Oh yeah, Sammy said to expect that once your side knew the game was up”, Dean mocked. “You will vote again and again until you get it right, and only then will we accept it. We have ways of making you vote the way we want!”

“There might still be a.....”

“Not trying to welsh on a bet, are you?” Dean teased. “Because I don't remember any 'best of three' or 'best of sixty-seven' clause when we made that wager. In fact, Sammy has a vid of the Cameroid saying there definitely *wouldn't* be a second referendum. Bet he regrets that now!”

Castiel sighed, and keyed in the 23,000 loss in Mansfield. Over double what he had expected. Dammit!

<>

04:07

65% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 423,975

<>
04:10

Castiel stared glumly at the screen in front of him. True, the voting in the second half of the night was better than in the first....

Well, if he was being honest it was not so much better as less awful. A run of four good wins in South Cambridgeshire, Warwick and South Oxfordshire, topped of by an unexpected one in Sefton² from the North-West, had reduced the Leave lead back down to within sight of 400,000 – but then the slow drip of small- and medium-sized defeats in the damn provinces had promptly taken it back up again. He was not losing any more ground on expectations but he was not making up his earlier losses either, and they had now had two-thirds of the results in.

04:11

67.5% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 417,363

04:12
Dean was jotting down a sudden slew of results, and passed the slip over.

“The idiot with that weird long graph of his said that Chesterfield and Salford are in what he calls 'the middle forty' of results”, he said. “Among the must-wins for either side. And the map says they're both in the North. I'm guessing you haven't done that well there.”

Castiel winced. Surely they could not be that bad....

Oh. Apparently they could.

“11,000 to us in Chesterfield which you should've won by 750”, Dean said far too cheerily, “and nearly 15,000 to us in Salford which we were supposed to take by only 500. Not to forget the 17,000 in Gravesham⁴, the 9,000 in Daventry, the 11,000 in North Norfolk, and the 26,000 in Plymouth. Oh, and Blackburn with Darwen⁵ – why not 'and Darwen'? - another 8,000 win for us.

Our lead is back past half a million again, just in case you hadn't noticed.

“I had!”

<> 04:13

70% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 564,151

<> 04:13

Chapter End Notes

1) The Lancashire coastal plain between the towns of Bootle and Southport, plus some
areas of east Liverpool. The Earls of Sefton were once the most important landowners in the area. The title became extinct when the last earl died childless in 1972.

2) A generally uninspiring area of west Nottinghamshire in the East Midlands, comprising the towns of Beeston, Eastwood and Stapleford. Again named after a former wapentake, rather curiously it does not include the Broxtowe Estate, which lies within the City of Nottingham. The local MP was the noxious Anna Soubry, another Remoaner who would spend the next three years blocking Brexit but who would pay the price when finally turfed out by her annoyed constituents at the 2019 election.

3) An area north of Cambridge, comprising the towns of March, Chatteris, Whittlesey and Wisbech (pronounced 'wiz-beech'). Unusually flat and eerily beautiful.

4) The town of Gravesend, a little way down the Thames from London. Gravesham was the old name for the place; someone with a macabre sense of humour apparently thought Gravesend was better.

5) Traditionally most places used ‘with’ rather than ‘and’; it just didn't get changed here. Blackburn is in the North-West and, with or without Darwen, is somewhere to recommend to people you really, really do not like.
Friday 24th June (XVIII)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

04:14

“South Holland?” Dean asked, surprised. “Didn't know the Dutch were taking part in this vote.”

Castiel rolled his eyes at him.

“Holland is a district of Lincolnshire around the town of Spalding, in the East of England”, he said. “The name just means flat land, much like the largest province in The Netherlands. Not far from Boston so I don't expect much from there. I've got it down to go to you by 12,000.”

They both watched as a 23,000 majority flashed up on the screen. Castiel bit back a sigh.

“Go the English Dutch!” Dean smirked. “And we just won Newark & Sherwood by 14,000 – you remember, the one you said we'd only win by nine?”

Visiting American found dead after being smothered by pillow in mysterious hotel accident, Castiel thought acidly. Leave the 'Do Not Disturb' hook on the door; he was sure he could make it to the airport in time....

04:23

72.5% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 593,445
Castiel was a realist and he knew that it was pretty much all done bar the shouting (or screaming on his part; judging from the bulge in those boxers when Dean had returned from the restroom, those XXL condoms might be needed after all!). The most recent results were not helping matters; he had gained three more areas that had been expected to go Leave – East Hampshire, Wycombe and West Berkshire – but their combined wins of just over 7,000 had been obliterated by the 23,000 he’d lost by in Bassetlaw¹ and the 29,000 mauling from North Lincolnshire. Perhaps Birmingham, the largest voting area, might manage a 100% turnout of its 700,000-plus electorate and be 100% Remain?

Perhaps that honey mead from earlier was finally getting to him.

“Sandwell² is a group of towns in the West Midlands”, he said as he scanned his laptop in the hope it might suddenly find the odd million extra votes he needed to turn things round. “West of Birmingham; I have it down to go to you by about 22,000.”

They both watched as the result flickered up onto the screen, followed by the majority of nearly 50,000. Castiel keyed it in in silence.

“Well, all good things must come to an end”, Dean grinned. “And such a delicious end, too!”

Castiel yelped in shock.

“How did you get your hands so damn cold?” he demanded.

“Iced soda”, Dean said. “I ordered it with the last pizza. Just think – those hands will soon 'Leave' no part of you untouched, baby!”

Castiel glared at him, then back at the TV screen, which promptly flashed up another 57,000 defeat in Wakefield. Northern England hated him!

<>

04:28

Three-quarters of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 737,944

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04:30

Despite his heart of hearts telling him that it was all over (and some other part of his anatomy telling him that it was just about to begin!), Castiel desperately scanned the remaining results for any sudden last-minute miracle. He had won by 47,000 in Camden, 16,000 in Enfield and 11,000 in Harrow, all London boroughs, and in the South-East by 13,000 in both Waverley³ and Wokingham. Great!

Okay, losses of 49,000 in Rotherham (twice as bad as expected), 12,000 in Calderdale⁴, 11,000 in Luton, 9,000 in Stafford, 17,000 in Wyre⁵, 9,000 in Selby, 20,000 in Kirklees⁶ and 12,000 in Wychavon⁷ had perhaps not been quite such good news. And a certain someone did not need to be humming the Jeopardy theme as Southampton, where Castiel had expected a narrow win, went Leave by some 8,000!

04:31

77.5% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 743,085
1) Like Rushcliffe, named for a former county sub-division. A mostly rural district with only two large towns, Retford and Worksop, it once formed the nucleus of a much larger Sherwood Forest.

2) A horrendous creation from the 1974 boundary massacre that, for some inexplicable reason, has survived. Named for a small suburb, it comprises Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich. The area is better known as the Black Country, from all the industry that used to dominate the area.

3) A commuter area of Surrey, comprising Godalming, Farncombe and Haslemere. Named after a former abbey.

4) An area of west Yorkshire, covering Brighouse, Elland, Halifax, Hebden Bridge and Todmorden, around the river Calder. The countryside around the latter two is beautiful. It is named after a former priory that is, reputedly, the burial-place of Robin Hood.

5) A semi-urban area of Lancashire in the North-West, consisting of Fleetwood, Poulton-le-Fylde, Preesall and Thornton-Cleveleys. Named for a local river. Fleetwood and Cleveleys are seaside resorts adjoining Blackpool, but considerably less tacky (although again, that's a low bar).

6) An area of southern Yorkshire, also named after a former abbey. Its chief towns are Batley, Cleckheaton, Dewsbury, Heckmondwike, Holmfirth (famous as the setting for the TV series 'Last of the Summer Wine') and Mirfield.

7) An area of south-east Worcestershire in the West Midlands, around Pershore, Evesham and Droitwich Spa. The Avon is the river that runs through it (and famously onto Stratford), and 'Wych' derives from Hwicce, the ancient Anglo-Saxon kingdom that covered this area.
Chapter Summary

March 29th, 2018 – what should have been exactly one year until the UK leaves the EU but, thanks to the machinations of politicians who can't understand democracy, was not. Thankfully most of the detritus got cleared out of the House of Commons in the 2019 election, when the experts were astonished to find that, for some strange and inexplicable reason, voters did not like being lied to. How odd!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

04:39

It was hopeless, Castiel thought resignedly as the BBC broke for news. A 14,000 win in Croydon being countered by a 13,000 defeat in Hinckley & Bosworth. 5,000 back in Dumfries & Galloway in Scotland, only for South Derbyshire to come in with an 11,000 mauling. And that 40,000 in Kingston-upon-Hull – ugh! Just as the news ended came Ashfield¹ – the North again, dammit! - and as Castiel was looking at another 26,000 pasting, the elderly presenter gravely forecast a Leave win.

“And the fat lady sings!” Dean crowed. “That old guy has got to be a Remainer 'cause he looks so damn miserable. About seventy results to go but there's no way back for your side. God alone knows how but we bloody won!”

Castiel was silent.

<> 04:39²

79.5% of voting areas declared

LEAVE ahead by 780,315

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05:35

Castiel stared morosely at the screen. Birmingham, the biggest voting area and his last (semi-)realistic hope for a miracle, had come in. The city had originally been forecast to go Leave but he had had hopes, especially given the good signs earlier in the evening, that its 700,000 possible voters might deliver a huge Remain win. Instead the 450,000 who had got off their fat asses and gone out to vote had killed off his one remaining hope, even if the Leave win was smaller than had been predicted.

“See?” Dean grinned. “I told you I’d deliver!”

Castiel just looked at him in confusion.

“The city of Winchester just declared”, Dean said. “And it was a net gain to you. You won it by 13,000, which was a massive 250 votes better than expectations. So you only need another million or so to catch up! Yay!”

Unfortunately looks could not kill!

06:01

“I suppose it's fitting that it became a certainty with Northumberland³”, Castiel said, as the number of outstanding counts dropped to just eight. “Last result from the North-East and right next to Newcastle where it all began to go wrong. 14,000 to you, some 10,000 worse than expected. Your side has got over half the total votes cast now so there's no way back.”

“It's not really our fight”, Dean pointed out. “We'll have our own fun and games when we elect a president in five months' time. I suppose you'll be involved in that?”

Castiel nodded.

“That was one of the reasons for my coming over here”, he said, “to see if there really was an
insurgent vote against the Establishment. Apparently there was, dammit! That bewigged blowhard will be gloating mightily about this on Twitter before very long if he isn't already.”

“Can't want to see what you do if he actually wins the presidency!” Dean teased. Castiel scoffed.

“Yeah, like that's gonna happen!”

He didn't notice Dean looking rather thoughtful.

07:00

“The last result”, Castiel said softly. “Cornwall⁴, at the far end of England, and another Leave win. Fitting, I suppose.”

“The Cameroid will need a big car to find one and a quarter million 'missing' votes!” Dean scoffed. “Probably a whole damn fleet of the things!”

“You really think all politicians are so self-serving?” Castiel sighed. “I bet that until this, you never got into politics at all.”

He suddenly realized that Dean, moving incredibly stealthily for such a big guy, had positioned himself between his legs.

“You're damn right!” the taller man growled, his green eyes suddenly almost black with passion. “I've never gotten into politics. But I guess I'm just about to change that.....”

Castiel gulped.

2) TV coverage of individual results stopped for about twenty minutes once the vote was certain, in favour of telling us over and over that we had voted Leave. I remember this moment vividly; the joy of winning soured by the knowledge that the politicians would play foul to try to overturn a democratic decision (yes, very cynical, and proven correct in under four hours).

3) The rural rump of England's northernmost county, as the southern conurbations of Newcastle and North Tyneside have their own councils. It is home to Alnwick Castle (Hogwarts in the Harry Potter movies), some beautiful countryside and many other historical buildings. Interesting fact: the county is England's most sparsely populated, yet its population density compares to that of South Carolina.

4) England's most southerly and westerly county, culturally different as it is part of the Celtic Fringe that includes Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It has its own flag (white St. George's cross on black), its own language (rarely used) and is home to the ghastly 'end of England' tourist trap that is Land's End (avoid at all costs).
Final Results

Unlike most official tables, I have separately counted both Gibraltar (it was officially listed as part of South-West England) and the eighteen Northern Ireland constituency declarations. Hence some of the figures here will differ a little from those elsewhere. Many figures are rounded for convenience.

**Overall Result**
Total electorate: 46,500,001
Total votes cast: 33,577,342
Leave 17,410,742 (51.89%); Remain 16,141,241 (48.11%)
Rejected ballots: 25,359¹ (0.08%)
Leave win by 1,259,501 (3.78%)
Turnout²: 72.2%

1) Comprising 15,204 voided for uncertainty, 836 containing writing by which the voter could be identified, 232 having no official mark and (ost depressing of all some 9,084 with both answers voted for!
2) The highest for a national vote since the 1992 general election. At the 1975 vote to decide whether to stay in or leave, the turnout was 64.7%, and the country decided by 67.2% to 32.8% (more than two to one) to stay in. The electorate then was just over 40,000,000; curiously the In vote was 17.3 million (close to the Leave vote 41 years later) whilst the Out vote was only 8.5 million.

Turnout

**Leave areas**
South-East: 76.8%
South-West: 76.7%
East of England: 75.7%
East Midlands: 74.2%
ENGLAND: 73%
UNITED KINGDOM: 72.2%
West Midlands: 72%
WALES: 71.7%
Yorkshire: 70.7%
North-West: 70%
North-East: 69.3%

**Remain areas**
GIBRALTAR: 83.6%
Greater London: 69.7%
SCOTLAND: 67.2%
NORTHERN IRELAND: 62.7%

The low turnout in Scotland was later ascribed to ‘voter fatigue’, as the Scots were facing their third national vote in three years (och no!). More realistically, the fact that almost every major political party there had backed Remain meant there had not been much of a campaign, so people may have felt less inspired to go out and vote. Glasgow, the largest voting area, recorded the lowest turnout there (56.2%), and was one of 25 of Scotland's 32 areas to come in lower than the UK national average.

In Northern Ireland the vote ran predictably along Unionist-Nationalist lines, the former likely to vote Leave and the latter very firmly Remain (the EU has always pushed for a united Ireland). This was partly countered by the Nationalists having poorer than expected turnout. Belfast West, which voted 74% Remain, was the only voting area in the whole country where turnout was below half (48.9%), while five more areas in the Province all had lower turnouts than the lowest Leave-voting area nationwide, Slough (62.1%).

Wales was the big surprise on the night, as it had been predicted to go narrowly for Remain but was not far short of England in its Leave vote. The former mining valleys above Cardiff and south-west Wales were two areas where Leave beat expectations by some distance, while the capital Cardiff, the largest voting area which Remain had hoped would ride to its rescue, voted for them but by nowhere near enough.

People aged 65 and over were significantly more likely to vote than those aged 18-24 (92% against 64%), and this more than countered the fact that the older group voted 60% Leave and the younger 73% Remain. Other groups more likely to vote Leave were non college-educated, people identifying as English rather than British, poorer people (social classes C2, D and E) and those born in the UK. These facts led to calls for a second vote on the grounds that 1) those who had voted the wrong way would soon all be dead and 2) the stupid people voted against their best interests. For some inexplicable reason remarks like these did not win people over. How (ahem!) deplorable of them!

As the story suggests, postal ballots were an important but not a decisive factor in the Leave victory. They were not counted separately but a survey afterwards estimated that while they had constituted about 20% of total votes cast, they had been disproportionately (54%-46%) pro-Leave, while votes on the day had only a very narrow Leave majority. Ironically postal voting had been encouraged by David Cameron in an effort to give the vote some validity – there had been fears some months earlier that turnout would be dismal – but all these votes had to be registered before the killing of Jo Cox MP one week before the vote, so were unaffected by that tragic event.

An unexpected discovery that emerged later was that the 'extra 6%' of turnout – expectations at the start of the night had been for it to be around the 66.4% of the previous year's general election – had been disproportionately (about 75% to 25%) pro-Leave. This explained the failure of the opinion polls (again) to correctly forecast the result. The pollsters duly promised that they would never make such a monumental blunder again, especially with an important presidential race coming up in the US later that same year.... nice weather lately, eh?
Who Won: Nations And Regions

ENGLAND (28.5M voters) – Leave by 1,939,909 (6.8%)
SCOTLAND (2.7M voters) – Remain by 642,869 (24%)
WALES (1.6M voters) – Leave by 82,255 (5%)
NORTHERN IRELAND (800,000 voters) – Remain by 91,285 (11.6%)
GIBRALTAR (20,000 voters) – Remain by 18,499 (91.8%)

Northern England
North-East (1.3M voters) – Leave by 215,508 (16.1%)
Yorkshire (2.7M voters) – Leave by 422,639 (15.4%)
North-West (2.7M voters) – Leave by 267,905 (7.3%)

Midlands and East
West Midlands (3.0M voters) – Leave by 548,512 (18.5%)
East Midlands (2.5M voters) – Leave by 442,443 (17.6%)
East of England (3.3M voters) – Leave by 431,751 (13%)

Southern England
Greater London (4.2M voters) – Remain by 750,287 (19.9%)
Inner London (1.2M voters) – Remain by 513,502 (43.4%)
Outer London (3.0M voters) – Remain by 236,785 (7.9%)
South-East (5.0M voters) – Leave by 388,438 (3.6%)
South-West (3.2M voters) – Leave by 165,408 (5.3%)

England comprised 83.8% of the total electorate, Scotland 8.6%, Wales 4.9%, Northern Ireland 2.7% and Gibraltar 0.05% (figures rounded). In US terms this would give England roughly the same electoral college vote proportion as for the Lower 48 excluding Nevada, the West Coast states, Alaska and Hawaii. Some politicians, particularly the Scottish Nationalists, had called for a 'quadruple lock' which would have enabled any of the four home nations who voted against to veto a Leave vote, but despite the obvious appeal of this move to David Cameron (it would have guaranteed victory) he knew that he would not have had the support for it.

In the thirty largest voting areas (8.8M voters, mostly cities), Remain won by 917,215 (11.4%). In the 369/352 other areas (24.7M voters) Leave won by 2,186,716 (8.8%). Leave also won in England outside London (24.5M voters) by 2,690,196 (9.5%).

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Who Won: Voting Areas

A reminder here that the average Remain voting area was about double the size of the average Leave one.
ENGLAND: Leave 246; Remain 80
Northern England: Leave 61; Remain 11
Midlands & East: Leave 109; Remain 8
Southern England: Leave 71; Remain 33
Greater London: Leave 5; Remain 28
CELTIC FRINGE: Remain 48; Leave 24
SCOTLAND: Remain 32
WALES: Remain 5; Leave 17
NORTHERN IRELAND: Remain 11; Leave 7
GIBRALTAR: Remain 1
Total: Leave beat Remain 270-129 (was 196-92 when result called).

Who Won: Parliamentary Constituencies

Later studies generally agreed that, had the count been done by the 650 parliamentary constituencies, Leave would have won by around 406-244. Perversely the stated positions of MPs representing those seats at the time was the opposite and more, 483-162 in favour of Remain (one vacant seat; four MPs undeclared). Naturally our democratic representatives bowed to the will of the people and did not try to block or delay the implementation of their democratically-expressed will..... bwahahaha!
Voting Areas Against 50:50 Forecasts

319 areas declared before the BBC called the result (298 had forecasts).
Areas won above expectations: Leave 174, Remain 95
Areas won by 10% or more above expectations: Leave 63, Remain 11
Areas won by 20% or more above expectations: Leave 7, Remain 1
Areas won against expectations by any margin ('gains'): Leave 22, Remain 7

Leave made the most 'gains' in Wales (eight areas won that had been forecast to go Remain) and
the East Midlands (five areas), plus a further seven across the three Northern areas. The North-East
was the area where they most exceeded the 50:50 forecasts; eleven of the twelve voting areas
reported significantly larger than expected wins. Although it won no areas in Scotland, it did much
better than expected in some areas there, seemingly due to lower than expected Remain turnout.

Five of Remain's seven unexpected gains were in the South-East or South-West, regions that
overall performed much as predicted. They did a lot better than expected in Inner London but not,
critically, in Outer London and the large cities/voting areas. They also did better than expected in
what might be termed the Greater Thames Valley, and area extending from Surrey to
Gloucestershire. However they performed very badly in those areas Castiel had described as the
'left-behinds', as he said the equivalents of the US Rust Belt.
Friday 24th June (XX)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

18:30

It was dark by the time Dean drove the short distance back to Neville's Cross, having remembered (without needing reminding by anyone with blue eyes, thank you very much) to text Sam and Sarah that he was okay and would be home for dinner.

The fact the two of them were eagerly waiting when he walked in through the front door was more than a little creepy, even for them.

“Well?” Sam demanded. “Did you do it?”

“You really want details, Sammy?” Dean grinned, smirking at his brother's sudden discomfiture. “Because I can tell you, Cas has an incredibly long.... memory!”

Sarah cheered.

“I knew you wouldn't have sex with him!” she crowed, turning to her husband. “Pay up, loser!”

Dean stared incredulously as a sulky Sam handed over a £20 note to his wife.

“I thought you were joking over that bet!” he said indignantly.

“I was sure you wouldn't change your ways”, Sam groused. “Trust you to show restraint for the first time in your life.”

“Actually Cas did mention restraints”, Dean grinned, “but he said we'd keep those till.... oof!”

And there it was, the rarely seen Bitchface #1!

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19:10

“You don't see that happy”, Dean said. “I suppose the Great Leader resigning like that has taken the gloss off everything.”

“It's as I feared”, Sam sighed. “We've won a battle but not the war. The Cameroid hasn't actually resigned, just announced his intention to. There will be a leadership campaign for the new prime minister that will take months, then the new PM – whoever it is – may delay things even more.
“Don’t you have to have an election?” Dean wondered. Sam shook his head.

“The government has a majority”, he said, “if a small one. But the attempts to stop it are already up and running; so-called experts claiming that a one and a quarter million vote win was ‘virtually a dead heat’, and some tit of a Harvard professor saying we should ignore the vote because he doesn’t like it. Poor dear. And as for the Cameroid, so much for his promise of implementing Article 50 next week; that was about as honest as the rest of his claims!”

“It’s like we expected”, Sarah agreed. “The Establishment is reeling but the EU have ignored votes against their wishes before. They’ll pull every trick in and out of the book to overturn this result, or to water it down so much that people will say we might as well have stayed in†. Although if I see that rat Alistair Campbell‡ mouthing off for a second referendum one more time, we’re gonna have to buy a new TV because I’ll have thrown a brick through the old one!”

“How’s DJ doing?” Dean asked.

As if bang on cue, a wailing sound interrupted their meal. Sam sighed and hurried away to deal with it.

“You’ve got him well-trained”, Dean said admiringly. “Where’s his leash?”

“Why, do you want to borrow it for Castiel?” she grinned.

Dean just shook his head at her.

† Sarah’s cynicism was to prove entirely.... accurate.
‡ Think a pile of excrement made semi-human form, but with less charisma. The sort of sub-human who makes snake-oil salesmen want to take a bath, and the rest of humanity want to take a horse-whip.
“So”, Castiel said loudly, “are you looking forward to getting back to London?”

Balthazar winced, and glared at him.

“Must you be so loud?” he grumbled. “Oh my head!”

“Don’t know why”, Castiel said unsympathetically as his cousin eased himself into his ridiculous sports car. “It’s not as if you had anything to celebrate recently. Sure you’re sober enough to drive?”

“Someone left me in a police cell all day”, his cousin snapped. “Despite my phoning someone to come bail me out, someone couldn’t be bothered. Bastards in blue wouldn’t release me till my blood alcohol level had gone down enough. Can’t wait to leave this hole!”

“Well, we tried”, Castiel said diffidently. His cousin looked sharply at him.

“You’re far too chipper for someone on the losing side”, he said thoughtfully. “You and the underwear model…. you didn’t…..”

“A gentleman never tells”, Castiel grinned.

“I’d tell you if it was me”, Balthazar said.

“Which proves my point!” Castiel grinned. “Oh, and don’t forget your promise.”

His cousin looked confused.

“What promise?” he asked suspiciously.

“That you would give up cigarettes, whisky and wild, wild women if the country voted for Brexit”, Castiel reminded him.

“That’s okay”, his cousin smirked as he started his car. “I’ll settle for cigars, sherry and only semi-wild women. I’m back to London Town; there’s already a project coming up to investigate Russian interference in our democratic processes†. We’ll be having a do-over before you know it!”

The car roared off, but not before its driver saw one epic eye-roll.
“I see the Remoaners haven’t lost any time”, Sam quipped as he sank into the chair. “They’ve already got a petition for a second referendum up and running.”

“No chance of it succeeding?” Dean asked anxiously.

“Not unless the Cameroid wants seventeen and a quarter million people marching on Downing Street”, Sam said. “Or Chipping Norton; we all know where he lives, the lying bastard. And I see the dear old BBC have resumed their normal service; they're refusing to cover the fraud involved.”

“Fraud?”

“Forty-two thousand signed the petition from internet addresses in the Vatican City”, Sam grinned. “Impressive, considering only a thousand people live there. Not forgetting the twenty-four thousand who signed from that bastion of freedom called North Korea. Or the widely available internet messages calling on Remoaners to sign up as many times as they could. But from Broadcasting House, crickets.”

“You were right about them trying to stop it”, Dean sighed. “So much for respecting the will of the people.”

“And gotta love all these young people marching ‘for democracy’ in London”, Sam scoffed. “They had democracy but apparently that was the wrong sort, when the precious little diddums didn't get what they wanted. If Trump pulls off a miracle this autumn you'll be seeing the same thing over there, but worse.”

DJ chose that moment to start up again, and Sam fairly sprinted off to the next room. Dean did not snigger until he was gone.

“I heard that!”

† Balthazar was of course right. The Russians spent 71p (just under a dollar) on Facebook ads supporting Brexit, so that quite clearly made over 600,000 change their minds on the day. Shocking!
“Why the hell are we here?” Dean not-whined.

“Because we've got the best part of two weeks before we go back home, and I want to use it to immerse myself in this country's heritage.”

He knew even as he said that what Dean's response would be.

“If you make some snarky comment about who you'd like to immerse yourself in....”

“Don't need to”, Dean grinned. “You said it anyway.”

Castiel rolled his eyes at him but concentrated on looking round the old Roman fort. He had persuaded Dean to join him in visiting Hadrian's Wall, nearly two thousand years old and well-preserved in some parts. Kissing may or may not have been involved but nothing more, although from Dean's happy (and still slightly dazed) expression that had been enough. The taller man was even holding Castiel's hand. Without complaining!

“Now that he's running off like a stroppy kid who didn't get their own way”, Dean said, “your Great Leader is threatening us with the dangers of what happens if the country has what he calls 'a hard Brexit'.

That so obviously set up another rude remark, but to Castiel's surprise the other man just smirked. Although that was nearly as bad.

“He just wants to do what's best for the country”, he said defensively.

“He's probably already got the likes of your cousin working on how to scupper the whole thing”, Dean said. “Sammy says that 'hard Brexit' is his way of saying that he forced us to vote for all or nothing, we voted for all, so now he's turning round and whining, you didn't really mean all so I'm gonna water it down to nothing.”

Castiel wanted to deny that remark about Balthazar but it had an annoying (as in one hundred per cent correct) ring about it, especially considering the email he had got from his cousin yesterday. Instead he just huffed and looked across to where a distant hill was swathed in mist.

“Scotland is pretty much that way”, Dean said. “I'd say I should've worn the kilt but in these temperatures I'd freeze my vitals.”

“You looked good in that kilt”, Castiel smiled. “Better out of it, even if you were committing indecent exposure at the time.”

“Like you could tear your eyes away from me!” Dean grinned.

“Well, those bowed legs were certainly worthy of my attention”, Castiel said. “There's a pub in the village down there that serves meals and I thought we'd go there for lunch.”

“Bet they don't serve pie out here”, Dean sighed.

“Actually they do”, Castiel grinned. “That's why I chose this particular fort rather than one nearer.”

“Aww!”
“And then you can drive me back in Sam's Prius.”

Dean's face fell. He'd forgotten that bit of their excursion. Ah well, maybe there would be another kiss later to make up for it.

There was. And yes, it was again only a kiss - or three – ish - so Sammy had no right to throw Bitchface #17 at him like he had... well, like he had.
“Sammy?”

The Winchesters had driven to see Sarah's sister who lived on the coast just south of Sunderland, after which Dean and Sam had gone on to see the town of Washington. Despite his general disdain for things historical Dean had been impressed by 'George's Pad' as he called it, especially by the Fourth of July party – with pie! - that they had run into there.

“What is it?” Sam asked, snapping out his reverie.

“You were off in la-la-land again”, Dean grinned. “DJ keeping you up all night?”

“No, he's slept right through for once”, Sam sighed. “Just thinking about you.”

“Huh?”

“You're different”, Sam said, staring so hard at his brother that it actually made Dean uncomfortable. “Ever since the vote, you've been..... less you.”

“What're you talking about, Sammy?” Dean asked, confused. “Less me?”

“Less of a manwhore”, Sam said. “That woman at the entry desk flirted at you, and you blanked her.”

Dean grinned.

“I'm sorta taken now”, he said. “Or soon will be.”

“I still find it hard to believe that you and Castiel haven't..... you know.”

“Haven't waved our arms about like that?” Dean asked, pretending to be confused. Sam swatted at him.

“Haven't done the beast with two backs”, Sam said. “If I didn't know differently, I'd think you've been replaced with another Dean Winchester. Where is Castiel today, by the way?”

“I'm seeing him tonight”, Dean said. “He's flying back home soon.”

His brother looked hard at him.

“On Thursday, by any chance?” he asked.

“Maybe.”

“From Heathrow?”

“Maybe.”

“You two are such a cliché!” Sam chuckled. “Next thing you'll be joining the Mile High Club.”

“Oh yeah.... I mean maybe!”

That deserved – and got – a Bitchface #11.
“Sammy?”

The Winchesters had driven to see Sarah’s sister who lived on the coast just south of Sunderland, after which Dean and Sam had gone on to see the town of Washington. Despite his general disdain for things historical Dean had been impressed by ‘George's Pad’ as he called it, especially by the Fourth of July party – with pie! - that they had run into there.

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“Oh yeah.... I mean maybe!”

That deserved – and got – a Bitchface #11.
Epilogue: Thursday 7th July

Sam yawned as he woke up – six a.m., ugh! - and glanced across at his brother. Or to be more exact, his brother's empty bed. That had very clearly not been slept in.

He did not have to wait long before there was a slight sound at the door, and Dean slipped in. Even facing the other way and pretending to be asleep, Sam knew a walk of shame when he heard one.

“Morning Dean!”

The girly shriek was most gratifying, as was the red face he witnessed when he turned over.

“Thought you were asleep”, Dean muttered, staring fixedly at the seemingly fascinating orange carpet.

Sam donned the patented Bitchface #3 – he had gotten a lot of practice at it when they were growing up – and stared pointedly at his brother.

“I thought you were with Castiel now”, he said disapprovingly. “Seems you haven't changed your ways after all.”

Dean seemed to be trying to stare a hole in the floor. A horrible idea crossed Sam's brain, pulled up a chair and started munching on the popcorn.

“Oh you didn't.....”

“He's doing a tour of the country for his last week”, Dean said. “I said you were bringing me here so he kinda arranged.... you know.”

Sam hid a smile. His big brother was going to hate him for this. Oh well.

“He arranged what, Dean?”

“He's down the road in the Winchester Hotel”, Dean muttered. “We, uh, spent the night together.”

Sam gasped. His world view was under some stress just now.

“Oh my Lord!” he exclaimed. “You still didn't have sex!”

“A bit louder, Sammy”, Dean grumbled. “Don't think the people two doors down quite heard you!”
Sam grabbed his phone.

“I'm texting Sare”, he said. “And the Guinness Book of Records!”

“Bitch!”

Having said goodbye to his still smirking brother at check-in, Dean had some time before his flight home. And now that he came to think about it, the one person he had not seen much of in his time in England was Charlie. He hadn't asked what she was about because if it was anything to do with those computers of hers, it would be further over his head than the bloody International Space Station! She had dropped in to see DJ last week (and of course ribbed Dean about his Raby Castle venture, damnit!) before shooting off again.

As if to prove that thinking about someone conjured them up he ran into her in one of the airport shops. He asked what she had been up to and she blushed.

“Remember that English exchange student I met last fall?” she said.

“The one with the weird red shoes”, Dean recalled. “Dorothy something-or-other.”

“Baum”, she said. “Well, I tracked her down to England and came to visit her. She lives in the Lake District, a couple of hours across England from your brother.”

“Not at all creepy, chasing four thousand miles after someone!” he teased.

She punched him hard and he yelped indignantly.

“Remind me why I gave you self-defence lessons?” he grumbled.

“She was kinda pleased to see me”, she said, staring hard at the fugly airport carpet. “I, uh, may be coming back soon. So, how did your thing with Cas work out?”

“Met him on the flight over”, he said. “Pure chance and he was as annoying as ever, but we both got into this Brexit thing, and....”

He stopped and stared sharply at her, the pieces finally falling into place.

“Wait a minute”, he said. “That email from the airline changing my flight – that was you, wasn't it? Setting me up with Cas?”

“Did it work?” she asked eagerly.

“Y'all are way too keen to get me laid”, he said. “No, we didn't have sex.”
She just looked at him.

“What?”

“I know you're not telling me something”, she said. “You have that guilty look about you, like when you've sneaked an extra slice of pie out of the refrigerator. What happened?”

He sighed in a put-upon manner.

“We made a stupid bet”, he said. “Whose side won the vote, they got to fuck the other.”

She just stared at him.

“And you passed up a piece of that ass?” she asked incredulously. “Who are you, and what have you done with Dean Winchester?”

He rolled his eyes at her.

“We just agreed not to go through with it”, he said.

She stared at him again.

“You know you're gonna crack”, she said, “so just save yourself the effort.”

“I hate you”, he said, though he smiled as he said it. “Okay, we got into a debate about the presidential election so I offered him a way out. Double or quits; if Hillary wins then his debt to me is clear.”

“And if Trump wins?”

“I marry the guy.”

“Like that's ever gonna happen!” came a familiar gravelled growl from behind him. Dean jumped, then stood to kiss the new arrival.

“You two are so adorable!” Charlie sighed. “Just to let you know I'm taking a different flight, so if you insist on doing the horizontal tango mid-Atlantic you can do it without traumatizing moi.”

She kissed Dean, gave Castiel the Vulcan salute and bounced off to terrorize someone else. Dean looked hopefully at the new arrival.

“You don't think....”

“No, Dean”, Castiel said firmly. “You can wait five months to be disappointed.”

“Not been disappointed so far”, Dean grinned. “Especially when you proved just how damn flexible you were the other day!”

Castiel blushed but led the way towards the gate.

“I still can't believe your leader resigned so he could avoid honouring the result”, Dean said as he followed him. “Typical bad loser.”

“Not 'my leader'”, Castiel said. “I'm on the Hillary campaign now, stopping the billion-to-one chance of America making an even bigger mistake than the Brits just did.”
“Cause you were so effective at stopping them!” Dean grinned. He dodged the elbow.

“Dean!”

“Trump might still win”, Dean said.

“Yeah, like that's gonna happen!” Castiel laughed, grabbing his hand luggage. “Take my word for it; this Brexit will be the only big shock story of this year; come November things will be back to normal again. Lightning doesn't strike twice, you know.”

Ah.

<>

Ah.

<>

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