Four Letter Word For Intercourse

by bendingsignpost

Summary

As a grease monkey turned college freshman, Dean's constantly three seconds away from being stressed out of his mind. It hardly helps that he's finally figuring out his sexuality in his thirties.

What might help with that stress is a little phone number (and a big credit card bill). If he can't figure out how to be bisexual in person, he can at least give it a go over the phone, right?

(It's probably a bad idea, but he really can't help himself.)
The phone rings a couple too many times, and Dean nearly ends the call before the operator even picks up. He actually jumps a little when he hears her voice, and his headboard smacks against the wall.

“Stimulating Conversations,” the woman announces, like it’s some kind of high class intellectual thing instead of a euphemism. “Who are you looking to speak with tonight?”

“Who you got?” Dean asks, because he can do this. No sweat. He’s tried the porn. This is the next step. He can do this.

“We have a variety of conversationalists,” the operator says, and Dean snorts. Continuing over him, the operator adds, “Would you prefer a certain gender or ethnicity?”

Dean opens his mouth and nothing comes out.
“Sir?” the operator asks after the longest five seconds in the world. “Would you prefer a certain
gender or ethnicity?”

“A, uh,” Dean says. He’s gotten this far. He’s already entered his credit card information. He
swallows. “A guy? I mean, chicks are great too, but if you, uh. If you got one.” He clears his throat
before he can choke on his nerves. “A man.”

There’s a slightly too long pause from the operator, like she’s judging him for his blabbering or his
sexuality or having this bad idea in the first place. Then she says, “From what you’ve said, James
would be our best match for you.” From what Dean’s said? What is that supposed to mean? “He’s
available right now,” the operator adds. “Would you like me to transfer you?”

“Yeah, do it,” Dean says, and his hands aren’t shaking or anything. He is sitting on his bed in his
apartment, in his underwear and a t-shirt, calling a sexline as part of a sexual experiment. The garage
below has closed up for the night, too, so there’s no risk of noisy interruptions blocking out this call.
This call that Dean may have been putting off for a couple weeks. No big deal.

The operator transfers, and Dean listens to some other guy’s phone ring. Once, twice, and, “Hello.”

The voice is light. Pleasant.

And very male.

“This is James,” the man continues. He sounds all warm, like he’s actually glad Dean called. “What
should I call you tonight?”

“My, uh.” No real names. His brain stalls. “Call...”

“Michael?” James asks.

“Michael,” Dean agrees, grabbing the path of least resistance with both hands.

“Michael,” James repeats, again with that pleased voice. “Michael, if you don’t mind me saying, you
sound straight.” He says it like it’s something he’s checking, something he’s almost wistful about.
“Are you?”

“I, um,” Dean says, very eloquently. He’s vibrating with tension, a human tuning fork that must be ringing in James’ ear. “I’m.” Bi. Say it.

Fucking say it.

“I’m straight, yeah,” Dean says.

“I’m going to try to respect that,” James promises him, “but you also sound very attractive.”

It’s a line, stupid and easy, but Dean’s entire head flushes. “You got good ears, buddy,” he says, mumbling a little.

“That and more,” James says. “I’m betting the same is true of you.”

“I ain’t bad,” Dean says, fidgeting with his comforter. It doesn’t do much comforting. “But, uh. When you do this. With other guys.”

“They’re also attractive,” James says. “When in person and I’m off the clock. On the clock, I take it on faith.”

“Risky,” Dean says. “But, uh. Not what I was going to ask.”

“Yes, Michael?”

“What do you… do.” Jesus, he sounds like a tenth grader in sex ed, not a man in his early thirties.

“Whatever feels good,” James answers smoothly, his voice light and steady. And it does kinda sound like he’s doing a voice. Like a customer service phone voice. “What feels good to you?”
“Uh.” If he says fucking, they’re going to talk about anal, and he’s not ready for even the talking. Frottage is way too blatantly gay. “Blowjobs. I like getting blown.”

James hums like Dean’s picked a particularly fine dessert off a menu, one that James was considering ordering himself. “Now I understand,” he says, voice inching deeper, and fuck if that doesn’t make Dean’s dick start to pay attention in his boxer briefs. Dean had started with a bit of a chubby while considering this whole thing, but since he dialed, he’s been scared back to start, un-pass Go, pay up two hundred dollars.

“Most female operators can’t describe what it feels like to receive a blowjob,” James continues, the clinical tone at odds with his dropping timbre. “Some can, some try well, but if you want to talk to someone who knows how it feels, I can see why you asked for a man.”

For all there’s no trace of judgment in his tone—and Dean listens hard for it—this is still clearly an excuse. It’s a lifeline, it’s guardrails. It’s a cop-out.

“Yeah,” Dean says, taking it like the fucking coward he is. “Yeah, that’s exactly it. I wanna, uh. Hear… that. About that.”

James hums, a noise of consideration rather than doubt. “Do you have a favorite part?”

“Favorite part?” Dean echoes.

“Of being blown,” James says. “Do you like your partner kneeling or crouched over you? Does that matter to you?”

“I, uh.” Dean swallows. “I kinda thought you’d be the one doing the talking here, Jimbo.” He’s got exactly enough courage to jack it while this guy talks, and maybe not even that. His hand keeps wandering away from his crotch and he kinda wishes he was sitting under the covers instead of on top of them.

“I’d like to imagine it with you. If that’s all right,” James says, more haltingly than teasingly. His voice keeps dripping further down the scale, like he’s actually getting turned on himself, talking to an awkward fuck like Dean. Maybe that’s his kink or something. Maybe that’s why Dean got transferred to him.
Dean must be silent too long, because James continues, “I can keep talking without your input, if you prefer. But I am curious. I know what I like, but what does a straight man look for in his blowjobs?”

It’s another lifeline, like the guy knows Dean is five seconds away from panicking and hanging up.

“No teeth,” Dean says, and James laughs.

Not a big laugh. Not a snicker or a chuckle or anything all that audible, really. More like a hard exhale, but still somehow a laugh.

“Your favorite part of a blowjob is ‘no teeth’?”

All the blood that should be in his dick floods his face instead. Almost all of it. Something about the hint of the guy’s actual personality makes Dean’s dick perk up. “Hey, man, you asked me what I look for.”

“I’d think a lack of discomfort is the bare minimum you can look for,” James says. “What do you want? When you think of good head you’ve received, what do you think of?” His deep voice softens. “Close your eyes. Picture it.”

Dean closes his eyes. He licks his lips, visualizing a number of women, remembering the touch of their mouths and hands and eyes. “She’d, um.” He licks his lips again. “Just a couple times. But she’d sit me down, and then she’d slide down. Get between my knees and just kinda, uh. Pet my thighs. While she waited for me to whip it out.” It’s not what Dean’s paying a stupid amount to hear this guy talking about, but it’s still a very good memory.

“You like the anticipation,” James says, not entirely wrong. The way he says it, Dean’s almost ready to completely agree anyway. Shit, he is down there in one hell of a sex octave. “You liked how she made you wait for it.”

“Kinda,” Dean says when he really means no. Or maybe. The part of him that comes hard at being teased isn’t a part he looks at too closely.

“Was it how she looked at you?” James asks, taking a quick turn toward mind-reading. “She petted your thighs while she waited. While she wanted you.”
Dean’s mouth goes dry. He clears his throat, his nods going unseen.

“Is that right, Michael?” James asks. The name throws Dean off his stride to the point he stops touching himself through his boxer briefs—and he’s not sure when he started doing that. Just a little touching. A light stroke while he plumps up, the kind of touch that starts as a readjustment.

“Yeah,” Dean forces out.

“Did you take your time? Taking it out. Did you savor it?”

“Mmhmm.”

“Did she breathe on you through your underwear? I love that.”

Dean’s always been more of a cut to the chase kind of guy, even in the situation he was describing. “Nope. What does that feel like?”

“Hot,” James answers. “In every sense of the word. The only pressure on you is the pressure of your underwear, but the fabric gets damp and hot. When your cock twitches, there’s friction. All without a hand on you. And your partner has to be close to do it. They have to crouch over your lap or lean in between your legs. They have to get up so close and breathe in your scent between each exhale. They have to want to be close.”

Licking his lips, Dean keeps his eyes closed, leans back against his pillow and headboard, and slips his hand furtively beneath his waistband. “Sounds like we’re talking about what you want.”

“Do you mind?”

“Nuh-” Dean clears his throat. “Nah. You go ahead. Put your mouth where my money is.”

James makes that almost laugh again, that amused exhale that’s closer to silence than noise. “There’s a lot of things to like about a mouth around your cock. But I like the build up. The teasing. I think I’d
have liked that too, someone kneeling between my legs with their hands on my thighs. Reaching for my fly, too impatient to wait for me to do it. But stopping there. To pull me out of my underwear and just look.” His voice is gravel now, dropped so deep into the gutter that it can only be described as filthy. “Have you ever watched someone want to suck you, Michael?”

“Dude, no one wants to give head,” Dean says, scratching his fingers through his pubic hair, holding off from the goal. He’s not sure he’s enjoying this enough for the rate he’s paying, but he’s enjoying it enough not to race to the finish.

“You don’t enjoy going down on a woman?”

“That’s different,” Dean says quickly. “That’s… A chick can ride your face, you know? Get her thighs around your head…” He starts jerking it slowly, furtively hidden inside his boxer briefs. It’s not like this guy can see, but he can probably hear, and Dean’s not all that ready to be overheard just yet. It’s getting pretty uncomfortable down there, though.

“A man can do that too,” James says. “Have you never been teabagged?”

Dean sneaks his hand down lower to tug at his balls. He plays with them a little, his dick hard against his wrist. Even the incidental friction feels good. “A, uh, couple times.”

“What did you like more?” James asks. “The tongue pressing up or the lips tugging down?”

Dean switches his grip to his dick. He has to. Damn thing practically jumps against his stomach. “I like both,” Dean says, and it’s the closest he’s come all night to admitting he’s bi. He tries to shift on his bed and ends up turning sideways to lie down, trying to pull off his underwear that way. It’s a little bit of a contortion, but he gets them off.

While Dean does this, James keeps talking. About good head he’s gotten. About bad head. He actually bitches a little in a digression that has Dean laughing a bit, even while he’s jerking it. James gets right back on track after that, and there’s a new smile in his voice, like James knows what Dean’s doing, but they’re in this together now.

Dean’s jerking it nice and fast, eyes closed as he pictures all the sex acts James is talking about. And not on himself—on another, faceless man. A man with a voice that arousal drops down a mine shaft. That man groaning as another man frenches his dick, and it’s, fuck, it’s good. It’s really good, and Dean is jerking it in earnest now.
“Do you know,” James asks, his voice digging into Dean like a tongue up his ass, “what my favorite part of a blowjob is?”

Dean tries to think through all the shit James has already said. It’s like a porn montage in his brain. “Getting, mm. Getting your balls played with?”

“Almost,” James says.

Dean’s surprisingly close by now, his pre-call momentum finally returned now that he’s in the thick of it. He slows down his strokes a little, wanting to hear the answer. “Then what?”

“Ask the full question, Michael.”

An annoying sense of foreboding crops up between Dean and his orgasm. “If you’re gonna say some kind of joke or a fucking pun, I’m hanging up.”

“Not a joke. Not a pun. Ask me.”

Rolling his eyes and braced for a punchline, Dean asks, “What’s your favorite part of a blowjob?”

“The way a cock fits in my mouth.”

Dean’s hand locks down on his dick. He stops moving. He stops breathing. The slightest twitch could have him tripping over the finish line, it’s so damn abrupt.

“I like the way it stretches my jaw,” James continues, half dirty, half matter of fact. “I clench my teeth too much, so I like to think the stretch is good for me. It makes me relax my jaw, taking it all in. I know you don’t know what it feels like—maybe you don’t want to know—but I love it. The way a cockhead fits against my soft palate, it feels like an argument for intelligent design. It fits all of my mouth.”

Dean’s own mouth opens, but nothing comes out. He risks moving his hand again, just barely.
“Is it all right?” James asks. “If I talk about this. You don’t mind indulging me?”

“Go...” Dean clears his throat. His hand starts moving again by itself. “Go ahead.”

“I love sucking on the head while my partner is pulling out to thrust back in. I love the way it tugs at my lips. I can feel so much.” So can Dean, working himself faster, the pace picking up despite the deliberate delivery of those words. “Do you have any idea how sensitive your mouth is, Michael? How many nerve endings are in your lips? I can feel the slightest change. Did you know the texture changes right before you come? The way the skin of your cock stretches just a little bit more, it’s like your dick is kissing me back, it’s-”

Dean interrupts with a groan, coming all over his hand and thighs.

“It’s like that,” James continues flawlessly. “Can you feel the difference with your hand? Do you know how good your cock is, just to touch?”

Dean keeps going, works himself all the way through it and keeps pumping until the aftershocks clear.

As with a lot of poorly thought out sexual interactions, this whole scenario is abruptly less okay now that he’s had his orgasm.

He freezes, hand sticky and wet, paying out the nose to hear this stranger talk. This poor fucking guy whose goddamn job is to hear dudes fapping and jizzing down the line. Because Dean clearly isn’t pathetic enough in his day-to-day life. He has to go and do this and still be closeted about it. Can’t just be a pervert, have to be a coward about it, too. He can’t even-

“Are you still here?” James asks.

Dean pulls his phone from his ear, lifts his other hand and stops short of hanging up—but only because there’s jizz all over his hand.

“Did I cross a line?” James asks, and he sounds worried enough that Dean actually puts the phone back to his ear.
“No, you, no, you didn’t-”

“Good,” James says firmly, emphatically. “I’m glad.” He takes an audible breath before letting it out slowly. Then again. Dean finds himself breathing along too, his heart rate gradually slowing down. “Can I ask if you liked it?”

Dean coughs, clearing his throat. He wipes his hand on his discarded boxer briefs and then ends up sitting there with his come-covered underwear over his dick, like that can possibly hide him from the shame. “What, you got a customer satisfaction survey or something?”

“Your feedback is important to us,” James deadpans.

A laugh shoots out of Dean, as quick and sharp as it is unexpected. “Screw you.”

“If that’s a scenario you’d like to roleplay...”

It’s really not that funny, but Dean’s still biting down a smile. “Okay, smartass. I mean, no, not okay. I mean, it’d be okay—I mean, I guess, maybe, I don’t know, but it’s not—not now.”


Dean breathes.

“You’re all right,” James promises. “If this was a bad experience, that’s on me. You’re all right.”

“I’m okay,” Dean says, still trying not to freak out. The breathing helps. “No big deal.”

“We’re just talking,” James agrees.

“Right, yeah.” Dean licks his lips, staring down at his lap. “Talking.”
James keeps taking those pronounced breaths and Dean keeps following along. He’s paying money for this, a complete waste of funds, but he can’t seem to stop. It sounds very nearly restful. Like Dean’s listening to James breathe in his sleep, like Dean should be lying down with James cuddled up behind him.

It’s calm. Soothing.

When James finally speaks again, he doesn’t even break the mood, his voice too soft to burst the flimsiest of bubbles. “If you’d ever like to talk again,” James says, no pressure, no presumption, “ask the operator for Jimmy.”

“Thought you were a James.” It’s a fake name anyway. It shouldn’t matter.

A smile in his lightening voice, James—Jimmy—says, “I think we’re a little past that formality at this point.”

Dean blushes so hard, it’s like all the blood from his erection went on vacation in his face. “Oh, uh. Yeah, okay. Jimmy.”

“Would you like to talk some more tonight?”

“No, I’m, I’m good.” Dean pauses way too long, his mouth wanting to say something else, his brain coming up with nothing. “Bye, I guess.”

“Good night,” Jimmy answers.

Dean hangs up. He cleans up. He flops back on his bed to stare up at the ceiling, his mind buzzing. Out of all this, he has one hell of a bill and a couple of conclusions:

He’s a coward and a pervert, but he’s definitely a bisexual one.
The next day, Dean forces himself to pack his shit, head into the city proper, and march into the campus library. He gets fewer stares there than he does in his undergrad classes, more people willing to simply assume that this guy in his thirties is working on his PhD or something. If it weren’t for his splurge the night before, he wouldn’t go, but the garage under his apartment is loud during the day and he needs to get his studying back on track. He’s itching to be down there, adding to the noise, but Bobby’s smacked him upside the head more than once over his priorities.

See, the thing is, when they put Sam through school, Dean figured that would be it. Get Sam through pre-law and then law, celebrate when he passed the bar, and that would be the extent of Winchester education.

Sam, on the other hand, had waited until he landed a well-paying job before turning around and springing the trap on Dean. Sam’s argument had essentially boiled down to “It’s your turn,” and all of Dean’s counter-arguments had fallen to the wayside when Bobby joined in, too. Because apparently Dean’s not just a mechanic in Bobby’s eyes: he’s heir-apparent to the entire company. And by “company,” he means two garages and a salvage yard, but it’s still enough that a guy might want a degree in business and finance.

When Dean had pointed out that Bobby was doing well enough without a college education, Bobby had gone unexpectedly quiet. Worse, he’d gone wistful. When push came to shove, that had been the biggest deciding factor, not that Dean’s ever going to admit to it.

Dean’s life makes no sense to him sometimes, but here he is: thirty-two and a college freshman.

He gets into the library and heads deep, making a beeline to the serious study area. He passes tables of chatting teens and twenty-somethings and gets annoyed at just the snippets of conversations he overhears. He heads past the second reference desk and the myriad No Talking signs. It’s surprisingly busy for an early Friday afternoon, or at least surprising to Dean’s mind. There’s someone at every single one of the tables, all studious and all studiously ignoring each other. If it’s this crowded only a couple weeks into the semester, how bad will it be come finals?

Hanging back, Dean turns his phone to silent while he makes up his mind. There’s an unassuming twenty-something chick with her crap sprawled over the entire table. There’s a pair of teens sharing earbuds while peering at a computer screen together. There’s a tired looking guy who might be around Dean’s age, maybe even older, and Dean’s feet start heading that way before he can second-guess himself.

The guy’s at one of the smaller tables, a two-person affair tucked to the side. He’s gotta be banking on solitude there, but he doesn’t look too upset when Dean stops across from him and, eyebrows raised, points down to the empty chair. The guy nods, blue eyes flicking up to Dean’s face only momentarily before he returns his attention firmly to his laptop. He’s doing some kind of online
reading but taking notes by hand.

Dean shrugs off his backpack and jacket, sticks one on the floor and the other on the back of his chair, and grabs a seat. He pulls out his books and starts the mind-numbing reading assignment of the week. One of them. Out of many. Out of many, many more to come.

He reads until he can’t take it anymore, and then he pulls his dad’s old camping thermos out of his backpack. This is no soup canister for a child’s lunchbox. No, this is a monster-sized metal cylinder as long as his forearm and even thicker. It may not contain enough caffeine to kill a racehorse, but it definitely has enough coffee to make a man piss like one.

The second Dean unclasps the top, the guy across from him looks up from his laptop. His eyes narrow.

Dean is almost positive drinks are allowed at the tables. He’s new to this whole college library business, but that girl over there has a Starbucks cup with a tea bag string flopping over the cardboard holder. Dean points to her before looking at the guy with the universal expression and posture of *The fuck is your problem?*

Blinking, the man shakes his head. He shifts his hand up his page of notes to write on the top. He turns the notebook sideways for Dean to read and, tilting his head, Dean does.

*Envious*, the note reads in slanting print.

Once he’s turned his notebook, the man reaches down to something on his side of the table and he comes back up with a travel mug of his own. He shakes it lightly, the thing clearly empty. The guy sighs a little with a shrug before putting it away.

Dean nods back to him with a little shrug of his own before carefully lifting this giant mass of metal and ceramic to funnel piping hot coffee into his mouth. The guy watches with yet more envy, eyes again narrowed. Being a complete shit, Dean winks back before swallowing and wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. He takes his time clasping the lid back down, the better to watch the guy roll his eyes—his entire head, really—and return to his own work.

Brain still stupidly numb from stupidly expensive textbooks, Dean takes a minute more to lean back and look around. To get comfortable, as far as that’s possible in these chairs.
He takes an extra look at the guy across from him, because, c’mon man, he’s allowed to look. Nothing wrong with having his eyeballs pointed at a dude who’s sitting right in front of him. Who happens to be attractive in a dark-haired, stubble-jawed kind of way. He’s got the blue eyes, dark hair combo, which Dean is always weak for. Hell, just brunettes in general. And now, apparently, brunets, too.

The longer Dean thinks about it, the more it becomes clear that this is a very attractive man. He’s got the sleeves of his white button-down rolled up to nearly his elbows, showing off gorgeous forearms as the guy takes his notes. Which Dean is allowed to notice. Nothing wrong in noticing that. Just taking the sexuality for a spin, not doing anything, not making trouble and not looking for any.

The guy looks up at Dean.

Caught, Dean makes small talk the only way he can. Closing his eyes, he mimes dropping off, letting his head loll to the side before jerking it back up. Opening his eyes, he sees the guy nodding.

With that piece of social interaction completed, Dean goes back to keeping his eyes on his book. Which is torture. He rubs at his eyes and tries to force himself, but his brain keeps insisting it’s at its limit. He struggles on anyway, mind wandering, not absorbing any of it.

He drinks his coffee. He bounces in his seat. He tries. He really fucking tries, but then he gets to the chapter review questions and can’t remember even the basic terms they’re asking about. When he finds them, he remembers the pictures on the page but none of the contents of that page. Naturally.

Dean Winchester: a fucking idiot.

Fighting down a sigh, he starts all over again, now skimming for the answers. That goes a bit better. Faster, at least. It’s all duller than bricks and weighs him down just as heavily. His answers are terse and lifted almost verbatim from the textbook itself, but he gets it done. Eventually. He rewards himself with another coffee break and another casual glance at the guy sitting opposite him before pulling out his finance homework.

Progress slows down. It grinds to a halt. He reads and rereads without understanding simple, basic words. A kid in middle school could do better. He’s two weeks into the semester and already going under. He’s just some mechanic with a GED, he’s not a businessman or an accountant.

Dean doesn’t realize he’s sitting there with his head in his hands until he hears a hard tap on the
table. Dean looks up from the textbook. The hot guy across the table slides him a sheet of loose leaf with a single sentence printed on it in pen.

*Switch subjects every half hour.*

Dean frowns at him, but the guy just nods like he’s handed Dean the Holy Grail. But that doesn’t even make any sense, it hasn’t been…

Dean checks his watch.

Oh.

He nods at the guy. The guy nods back. The guy also takes an exaggerated breath and Dean finds himself doing the same. They let it out together. Very faintly, the guy smiles. Just the lips, no teeth, but it’s still a pretty nice smile.

Dean rubs at his head.

The guy’s eyebrows rise slightly before he ducks back down behind the table for his bag. He comes up holding his travel mug and a bottle of Advil. Both go on the table in front of the guy’s notebook. With a hopeful look, the guy signals between Dean and his own dinky travel mug before tapping the Advil.

...Come to think of it, his head does hurt.

It’s a very careful exchange, Dean pouring coffee into the guy’s thermos, but Dean did bring enough to give himself an ulcer and the headache isn’t helping his overall health either. Dean pops the Advil, the hot guy drinks his bartered coffee, and they toast with expressions of mutual misery. In any other setting, Dean would stall with a conversation at this point, but he saw his first week here just how fucking scary the librarians can be about enforcing the No Talking zone. Instead, he has to carry on.

Before long, despite the medicine kicking in, Dean’s mind goes back to wandering. Financial homework makes him think of his own finances. And then his own expenses. Because, sure, Sam’s chipping in for Dean’s education—and isn’t that a fucking bizarro world thought—and yeah, Dean’s living in the apartment over Bobby’s second shop rent-free ‘cause Bobby says Dean basically owns the place already, but there’s got to be something Dean’s missing, right? Some hidden expense that’s
going to come up and smack him hard, and not in a kinky way.

He ends up making an Excel sheet from scratch, estimating his income on the low side, estimating his expenses on the high side. He still comes out weirdly comfortable because Sam really is being fucking ridiculous about this whole paying Dean back thing. It’s so ridiculous, Dean pulls out his phone to text Sam over it, but then his eye snaggs on his recent call list and his mind takes a sharp turn down a dark alleyway made entirely of gutters.

What if, whispers a niggling little thought, he really does have some money to burn?

What if he calls Jimmy again?

What if he calls again, actually manages to come out to the guy, and then gets to listen to Jimmy talking about how much he’d love to suck Dean’s cock, specifically?

It’s a genius, expensive kind of idea, but it’s way more genius and way less expensive than the whole college thing.

But no, that’s an unreasonable splurge. Hell, last night alone was an unreasonable splurge.

He can’t do it again.

Even if he wants to.

Which he does.

Maybe he does. It was kind of awkward before it got hot.

But it did get hot.

Really hot.
Dean zones out a little, remembering. The awkwardness fades away in the recollection. What stands out instead is the sheer gravel of Jimmy’s voice when he said how much he loved having a dick in his mouth. Dean hadn’t heard the guy jerking off down the line, but the guy had definitely been aroused thinking about it. Dean’s had a couple flings with girls who seemed to like sucking dick well enough, but always as a favor to him, never something they wanted to do for their own pleasure. Which is fine. When a chick sits on his face, Dean’s definitely more into the amazing thigh action on either side of his head than he’s into having his tongue going where his dick wants to be.

Jimmy was probably making it up anyway. James. Whatever his name really is. Just a guy making shit up on the phone for money.

Dean should pick up an actual guy. A real guy. Maybe see how well he does with a dick near his face. Someone else’s dick, not just his obligatory stupid teenage attempt to fold himself in half upside-down against his bedroom wall. It hadn’t worked then and it certainly won’t work now, but maybe a nice sixty-nine session would be a good start.

Except for the fact that it would involve picking up a dude. And coming out to a dude. And maybe being seen by other people. Plus, where’s he even going to find a guy who’s into guys? Sure, the university probably has one of those gay clubs or support groups or whatever they’re called, but Dean feels like enough of an old fart without walking into a den of children secure in their sexualities. He needs someone his age. He can deal with people his age or older knowing more than him, being better than him, but with the begrudging exception of Sammy, he can’t deal with anyone younger.

Maybe he should give this a bigger run-up. Call Jimmy again, actually come out to the dude, and maybe roleplay a little. Pretend to pick him up at a bar or something. Talk it out, figure it out. Ask Jimmy how to pick up hot dudes. The guy’s gotta have a ridiculously huge spank bank of fantasies, if nothing else, with all the people calling in to jerk off to him. Maybe there’s some psychological insight there or something.

So Dean should call back.

A tap on the table breaks him out of his thoughts. He’s been staring at his Excel sheet on his laptop—Sam’s old laptop—blankly for who knows how long now, and when he looks up, the guy across the table taps his sheet of loose leaf again.

Switch subjects every half hour, it still reads.

Blinking, Dean checks the time on his laptop, and okay, yeah. He’s not even doing any work, either.
The guy pulls back the sheet and writes on it some more. He pushes it back.

*I have a silent alarm on my laptop. Do you want me to keep mentioning it?*

Dean nods. Might as well give it a shot. He swaps out the finance textbook open beside him for a different one, trying to force himself back into the groove, as if he were ever in that groove to start with. His mind keeps straying, though, and he winds up back on his spreadsheet. He plugs in a couple calculations, subtract these, add these, see how that’ll look a couple weeks and months down the line, and while he doesn’t get any progress on his homework, he does sort out how much disposable income he has.

That he even has any is fucking weird, but paying for a college educated Dean is a very different expense than paying for a college educated Sam. This ain’t no Stanford. It’s the next step up from community college, and Dean would have settled for that if Sam hadn’t gotten a research bug and pulled out all these scholarships Dean could apply for.

The point is, even after bills, comfortable living expenses, and trying to put some away for saving, Dean has some fifty, sixty dollars floating around. Each week. Minimum.

He should tell Sam. Make the kid take it back before Dean spends it all on booze.

With a sigh, he saves and closes Excel before turning back to his reading. Closing his laptop helps cut down on further distractions, but Dean can always make his own. He must be fidgeting or something, because when he glances up, the other guy is already staring at him. He looks down real quick, though. Dean takes a second to grope around in his backpack for a pen before pulling over the sheet of paper.

*That can’t have been half an hour.*

The guy shakes his head.

Dean looks back, questioning.

The guy writes, *Where did you get your thermos?*
Dean shrugs. He snags the paper to write *It was a gift. Probably army surplus.*

The guy nods back a thank-you. They both pretend to focus on what they’re meant to be focusing on, but now that the distraction has opened up, it looms, that sheet of lined paper an ample temptation.

Dean keeps eyeing it, but, true to form, chickens out. He does math problems instead, because at least that’s the easy shit for the finance side of his classes. He’s been checking over Bobby’s books for him for years, not to mention pitching in to do the taxes. Here, at least, Dean knows what he’s doing. Time passes a lot faster because of it, and before Dean knows it, the guy taps the table again. Dean nods back and switches over to his business reading with a strange combination of regret and energy. His headache starts coming back, but what else is new?

Dean’s in it tonight for the long haul, trying to slog through on his class-free day before using the weekend to get back to his actual job. It’s not all that surprising when the other guy closes and stows his laptop first, packing up his stuff. It’s dinnertime, according to Dean’s stomach, but Dean’s pushed through while much hungrier. This guy, though, he’s leaving. He rolls down his sleeves before shrugging on the trench coat he had lying across the back of his chair. Dean pretends to ignore him, but he does offer a tiny wave as the guy passes him.

The guy turns and waves back, and then Dean’s back to being alone, the oldest guy there, sticking out like a sore thumb.

He hunkers down anyway.

Chapter End Notes

Updates every Monday, time of day may vary.

To see what else I'm working on, you can follow me on [tumblr here](https://example.tumblr.com).

EDIT 1/11/19: Now with a banner! A big thank you to [dragonpressgraphics](https://example.dragonpressgraphics.com), I love it.
Dean calls again, purely for relaxation reasons. Later, he pretends to be responsible and forms a study group.

Sam refuses to take the extra money back. He fucking laughs over the phone, like two or three hundred bucks a month isn’t a big deal.

“Dean, you made sure I had more spending money than that when I was at Stanford.”

“Yeah, but,” Dean says, and Sam cuts him off.

“My school might have cost more, but my fun didn’t,” Sam says over him. “Keep the money, Dean. Put it to next semester’s books or something if it bothers you that bad.”

Dean rolls his eyes even though Sam can’t see him, but that’s what Dean gets for arguing with a lawyer. “You know Bobby’s buying my books for his own library.”

“Then get a new laptop or something. Or save it, whatever you want.”

“Dude, take the money back or I’m gonna, I don’t know, blow it on a phone sex hotline or something stupid.”

Sam snorts. “Whatever makes you happy, man,” he says, and that’s it, that’s basically permission. “How are classes going, anyway?”

“Mind-numbing.” It’s week three and heating up. Dean might have to make his Friday library thing into a routine, because the assignments are stacking faster than they should. “Y’know, first couple classes, I thought Bobby was doing some kinda bullshit ‘so what’d you learn in school today’ thing, like you’d do for a first grader? Except he actually wants to know for himself,”
“He bought those books for you for a reason,” Sam points out. “Well, a lot of reasons.”

It makes Dean feel like shit when he comes home with nothing to tell Bobby, so he’s started taking notes in class and just giving those to him. Bobby was less than impressed with that, though, so Dean will probably stop showing him.

“Are you doing anything social?” Sam asks after a long pause of Dean being too deep in his own head.

“Talking to you, aren’t I?” Dean answers, maybe channeling Bobby a bit too hard.

“I’m not saying you should join a bunch of clubs or anything, but a study group could definitely help.” He says it like this should be news to Dean, like Dean can’t figure out the basics for himself just because he never graduated high school.

“Already got one,” Dean lies.

“Yeah?”

“Yeah,” Dean says. “I mean, it’s just me and this other guy so far, but he keeps us focused and I keep us caffeinated, so it works.”

“Cool,” Sam says, mercifully not pressing for a name. The conversation moves on, back to the parts of Sam’s job he can actually talk about. Because that’s Sam’s life now: a lawyer with confidentiality clauses and fancy suits. Dean listens to Sam say what he’s allowed to say, and he holds onto the threads of conversation like a rope, like Sam’s a poorly moored boat about to drift off with the next change of the tides.

It’s stupid and over-dramatic, but Dean can’t help it. He needs to relax. To blow off some steam.

He’s not losing Sam, not any more than he already has, and college is fine. He’s gonna be fine.
He only lasts a couple days longer before calling Jimmy again.

It’s another Thursday night, just to increase the odds that Jimmy’s working. Yeah, Dean could go with another guy, but another guy might not do that breathing thing Jimmy did at the end, talking quietly and calmly, so damn soothing while Dean had tried to freak out.

No, it has to be Jimmy.

That’s what Dean makes himself say when the operator apologizes and says Jimmy’s busy. The lady on the other end doesn’t seem at all surprised for Dean asking for a “Jimmy” instead of a “James,” either. When she tells Dean that he can stay on hold for free or call back in roughly ten minutes, Dean has a long wait full of hold music to mull over that detail.

Jimmy must use the name thing as a means of screening clients. He’d told Dean to ask for him that way, after all, so what kind of group has Dean been sorted into? The “get rid of this dude” group? The bicurious group?

Dean mulls it over for nearly eight whole minutes before the hold music cuts out. The operator tells him that Jimmy is now available and once she transfers him, it will be a paid call, is that acceptable? Dean agrees, she asks his name, and Dean remembers just in time to answer with “Michael.”

The call goes through.

Jimmy picks up.

“Hello, Michael.”

“Hey, Jimmy,” Dean says, closing his eyes. Instead of getting geared up or twitchy the way he had last time—the way he had while on hold—his body just… No, not freezes. It just… stops. This sensation of rushing cuts out, which doesn’t even make any sense. He’s sitting on his bed in a t-shirt and nothing else, his flannel over his lap for now in a bizarre sort of modesty. He’s not rushing anywhere. “It’s, uh. Same Michael from last Thursday, figure you might have a couple Michaels.”

“I recognized your voice,” Jimmy promises, like Dean was at all memorable. “The straight man who wanted to hear a blowjob described by someone who knows what he’s talking about.” Okay, maybe a little memorable. Inaccurate, but memorable. “Is there something else you’d like to compare notes
on tonight?”

The urge to correct the guy wells up, but Dean still keeps his mouth shut about it. “Last time, you, uh. Did this breathing thing? After. You did this breathing thing.”

“You do sound tense,” Jimmy says like that’s at all related. Maybe it is. Jimmy’s slow, purposeful breaths have been on repeat in Dean’s brain almost as much as his actual words, like an example of how to be calm against a backdrop of how to be horny. “Can I ask you where you are?”

“My apartment,” Dean says. His bedroom sounds too presumptuous, phone sex hotline or not.

“Would you do something for me?” Jimmy asks.

It’s the exact opposite of how this is supposed to go, but Dean only rolls his eyes a little before answering, “What?”

“Would you lie down on your bed for me?”

It’s the for me that makes something twist and twirl in Dean’s belly. He scoots down the bed a little, saying “Okay.” He lies down on top of the covers, flannel shirt still across his lap, a thin layer of protection against cool air and the glow of the ceiling light. His back feels like it’s trying to get back in alignment and he lets out a groan that is nowhere near sexy. If sexy was the North Pole, that groan would be Antarctica.

“Very tense,” Jimmy comments, using his soft voice. Dean closes his eyes again rather than stare up at the ceiling. “I’m going to help you relax, Michael. Would you like that?”

The corner of Dean’s mouth jerks into a smirk. “Uh-huh.”

Slowly, audibly, Jimmy inhales a deep breath. He lets it out just as audibly. It has nothing to do with the heavy mouth-breathing Dean’s always thought of as stereotypical phone sex noises. “I need you with me while I do this,” Jimmy murmurs, no amusement, no innuendo. “Breathe with me.”

Dean breathes with him. His shoulders relax into the bed unevenly, the arm holding the phone to his
ear staying tense. The rest of his body follows at different paces. His calves hurt for some reason. His back hurts, but that’s nothing new. That’s just life as a mechanic.

“Have you ever had a massage?” Jimmy asks, still quiet.

Dean snorts, but only faintly, loath to break the mood. “God, no. Closest I’ve ever gotten is Magic Fingers.”

“I’m not sure what that is.”

“Vibrating bed thing.” It’d been a highlight of his adolescence, when their dad was still alive and dragging them around the country. Dean had taken to lumping loads of laundry together to save extra quarters, checking vending machines and pay phones, that kind of stuff.

“Have you ever sat in a massage chair?”

“Like, in one of those fancy gadget stores?”

Jimmy hums an affirmative.

“Yeah, a couple times. I usually get chased out for not buying shit, though.”

“But did you enjoy it?” Jimmy asks. His voice is a calm lull mixed in between slow breaths. He sounds like the act of falling asleep.

Dean stretches out a little bit more, too aware of the ache in his back and shoulders to be truly comfortable. “It was okay.”

“It’s better when it’s another person,” Jimmy says. “A machine won’t complain about aching hands, but it’s not the same. The warmth of it. Not just the actual heat, but the sentiment.”

“Hm?”
“To have someone literally push the pain out of your body,” Jimmy explains. He exhales slowly, the breath like a sigh’s wistful younger sibling. “There’s something to be said for being touched with kindness.”

Dean closes his eyes again. His heart pounds hard but slowly, his body a strange hybrid of tension and relaxation.

“When was the last time you were touched with kindness, Michael?”

“I…” Dean swallows. “I dunno.” His muscles noticeably tighten around his bones. “Maybe…”

“You don’t have to talk about it if you don’t want to,” Jimmy says. He cuts Dean off, but only technically. There’s nothing cutting about it. His voice is blunted edges, not blunt like a brick or a lead pipe the way Dean is. Blunt like a pillow. Rounded. Soft. “I’m not sure when the last time was for me, either.” He confides the words into Dean’s ear, this little gift of a secret. “I miss it.”

“Yeah,” Dean says, barely.

“I miss it a lot. I wish…” He trails off and Dean waits. Dean lies there and waits and pays for the privilege of it, and he’s not even mad. He’s the calmest he’s been all week. This was a good decision. A weird decision, but a good one.

“What do you wish, Jimmy?”

“That things were different.” Jimmy sighs for real this time before adding, “It’s not often I meet someone who feels the same way, but it is fairly typical that when I do, he’s straight.”

This isn’t an actual connection. Dean knows that. This is a guy who gets paid by the minute to talk about sex and kinks and whatever else, and they are not making some kind of heartfelt connection just because Dean’s using him more as a relaxation aid than a sex toy.

Dean knows that.
No matter how wistful Jimmy sounds, Dean *knows that*. He’s not an idiot. He’s a paying idiot.

He might as well get his money’s worth.

“What if…” He can say it. He almost ruins this nice calm he’s finally got going for himself, but his dick starts to pick up under his shirt anyway. *If I weren’t straight, what would you do?*

“Friends can give massages, that’s true,” Jimmy says, and that is not where Dean was going with this. It’s not where Dean wants Jimmy going with this either. “Where do you ache the most, Michael?”

*My dick.* That’s not true, not yet, but the more Dean’s mind wanders back to their last conversation, the more factual it becomes. “My back,” he says instead, like any mechanic would.

“Roll onto your front,” Jimmy instructs calmly, firmly, and then Dean is lying on his stomach, dick to mattress, with no real memory of the transition.

“Oh, okay,” Dean says, and his voice totally doesn’t shake.

“That’s good,” Jimmy tells him softly, and Dean breaks out in goosebumps that have nothing to do with his lack of pants. Maybe a little to do with it. The air isn’t the warmest, and lying still hasn’t been heating him up either. “Find a comfortable position where you can still listen to your phone.”

He puts his phone down, folds his arms over it, and rests his head on top of his arms. “Can you hear me?”

“I can. Can you hear me?”

“Mmhm.” This position kind of strains his shoulders, kind of stretches them. He’s not sure he likes it yet, but he doesn’t move.

“That’s very good,” Jimmy says, and Dean’s dick gets a little more interested in this whole firm surface under it deal. “How many layers are you wearing right now?”
Definitely not the sexiest “what are you wearing” Dean’s ever been asked, but his dick does not care. “T-shirt.” His flannel is mostly under him now, his legs and ass bare to the rest of the room. His skin prickles with more than the chill of the air. “Can I get under the covers?” he asks, not sure where Jimmy’s going with this.

“Would that make you more comfortable?”

“Yeah.”

“Under one sheet. More if you’re cold, but start with one.”

“Okay.”

The fucked up part is, Dean actually does it. He gets up, peels the layers of his bed back, and pulls the sheet back over himself when he lies down again.

“Okay, I’m back.”

“Wonderful,” Jimmy says. Somehow, the word doesn’t even sound sarcastic on him. “Now close your eyes.”

“Uh-huh.”

“And let yourself stretch out. Flex and stretch, can you do that for me?”

“Mhm.”

“Breathe out and stretch. Good. Just like that. Can you feel your clothes shift against your skin?”

It’s the sheet against his bare lower body, but Dean hums in the affirmative.
“If I were there, where would you want me to start?”

“Um. My shoulders.”

“It’s all right, my hands are warm,” Jimmy promises. It makes Dean smile against his folded arms, the earnestness behind such a stupid thing to say. A stupid thing to do over the phone, period, but Dean doesn’t ask him to stop or do anything differently as Jimmy starts describing it.

His hands pressing.

Where his thumbs might dig in or his palms could push.

The warmth of contact. A steady touch.

It’s soothing just to listen to, and Dean finds himself melting into his bed. Jimmy’s voice is as steady as his progress downward, and Dean stifles his disappointment when Jimmy’s descriptive journey jumps from the small of Dean’s back down to his calves.

Though keenly felt, the disappointment doesn’t actually take that much stifling. Expressing it would take effort, would involve waking up. He’s floating on the steady kindness of Jimmy’s voice. The places where his body still aches, ache with need instead of pain. Nothing’s changed, not really, not at all, but everything has. The hurt turns good. His sheets become sensual. The simple act of stretching out on his bed becomes sumptuous, hedonistic beneath Jimmy’s instruction.

It’s something Dean would never have thought of doing on his own.

He’s relaxing.

“We can stop there,” Jimmy says, and Dean wakes up at that. Not all the way, just most of it, enough to register a sense of *aw, really?* before Jimmy continues, adding, “Or you could roll onto your back.”
“On m’ back,” Dean mumbles, relaxing back down, unmoving.

“Are you really?” Jimmy asks, clearly not believing him.

Dean lets out a groan. Rolling over is an aching affair and his ceiling light is abruptly too bright. He covers his eyes with one hand and presses his phone to his ear with the other. “Fine. Am now.”

Jimmy hums in approval. Dean’s dick, long neglected save for the pressure of his own body against the bed, takes a moment to point out how much of a tease the sheet is being.

Eyes shut tight against the light, Dean sneaks his hand down. His fingers are colder than he’d realized and he hisses a little, but Jimmy shushes him softly, less like a mean librarian and more like a cowboy to his beloved horse. It makes Dean’s dick perk up a little more, or maybe that’s just the touch of his own hand.

“Would you let me touch your chest?” Jimmy asks. Like Dean might say no to this totally PG fantasy. Like Jimmy has no idea Dean’s slowly, secretly pumping himself to full mast.

Though lethargic, Dean’s hyper-aware of every sound he makes. Like it wouldn’t be that bad for Jimmy to catch him at it—still the dude’s job, after all—but it would still feel kinda rude.

“Michael?” Jimmy asks, and, okay, that’s a little jarring. “Can I touch you?”

“Yeah,” Dean breathes out. He lifts his chin up a little and cracks open one eye, even though he knows he’s alone. He shuts his eyes real quick after the check, better off with the fantasy. “Where, um?”

“I’d like to start with your shoulders again. Could I have your help for that?”

“’m right here, buddy.”

“Which hand is holding the phone?”
“Uh, right.” He stops jacking it with his left.

“With your left hand, do as I say.”

Reluctantly, Dean follows directions and touches himself higher. Much higher. He squeezes at his own shoulder. He presses circles into his chest. He switches his phone to his other ear and repeats on the other side. He’s touching himself without touching himself.

Jimmy’s touching him. He’s just using Dean’s hands to do it.

“Can you rest the phone against a pillow now?” Jimmy asks. “You’ll need both arms.”

And so Dean squeezes his own biceps, his own forearms. He digs his thumb in while Jimmy walks him through what might feel better, and better still. When it’s time to switch arms, Dean cheats a little, rubbing his bicep while rubbing one out. Slowly. Quietly. He does it through the sheet, the way Jimmy would have to.

“Both hands together now,” Jimmy instructs, his voice still smooth and light and gentle. Dean might be too nervous to kiss a man just yet, but he wants that voice inside his mouth. He wants to suck on it.

“Together on what?” Dean asks, his own voice rough, his hands held motionless above his body.

“On each other. Lace your fingers together.”

Dean tilts his head against the phone a little harder. “Hold my own hand?”

“Yes.”

Dean frowns but does it. “Okay.”

“Rub the thumb of one hand into the palm of the other,” Jimmy says, and huh. There’s tension even there.
“I want,” Dean says before his brain catches up.

“Yes?” A gentle word, but still expectant.

Tension seeps back in, the wrung out sponge of his body dropped back into dirty water. “I… I don’t know,” Dean lies.

He waits for Jimmy to press him, but all Jimmy says is “It’s all right not to know.”

“What, um.” Dean hesitates more talking to this guy than with anyone else in the world. It’s fucking ridiculous. Dean’s paying for some sex talk but all he’s done is this mess of weirdness, and he still hasn’t told this guy he’s not straight. Jesus.

“Breathe with me again?” Jimmy asks and, yeah, okay, Dean wants that.

“Okay,” Dean says, and he follows along. He rests his hands on top of his stomach, folded over the sheet. He breathes and Jimmy breathes, and they’re breathing together until Dean’s floating somewhere else, somewhere far better than his bed.

“It’s all right,” Jimmy says. “You’re all right.”

“How do you know how to do all this?” Dean asks, somewhere between calm and detached, between satisfied and aching. “They give you guys a bunch of scripts or what?”

“I’ve had one massage in my life and was forced to take meditation classes for a few years,” Jimmy answers, so serious Dean has to grin. “It’s good material to work with.”

“Huh.”
“Do you feel better now?”

“Yeah.”

He doesn’t have to think about it.

He even means it.

“I can stay on the phone longer,” Jimmy says, “but if you fall asleep, you should know I’m not allowed to hang up.”

“Not tired,” Dean mumbles. “Just relaxed.”

“Good. I’m glad.” He even sounds like he cares.

Dean swallows. “Man, whatever they’re paying you, it ain’t enough.”

Jimmy audibly smiles. “Thank you. If you’d like to leave a comment for my manager, I can forward you.”

Dean laughs. Just a breath of laughter, but it feels like more inside his lungs, his mouth. It feels heavy the same way his limbs feel heavy: weighed down by contentment. “Do you guys take Yelp reviews?”

“I’ve never asked.”

They breathe together a little bit more and Dean starts reaching down for his dick again. His hand stops above the sheet, though. It just feels… off. Like maybe this is a break for Jimmy, a pause in the typical perversion of his nights. As if Dean can be this considerate, likable guy by keeping his hands away from his crotch.
Except.

He called to get off.

No, he called to calm down, but…

It would be nice, that’s all.

Dean swallows. He rolls onto his side, cheek pressing against his phone. The screen lights up against his face. “What do you look like?”

Dean half-expects Jimmy to counter with “what do you want me to look like?” but the actual response is “White male, mid-thirties. You?”

“White male, early thirties,” Dean answers. He could ask more. Fill in some blanks.

But.

He’s calm.

He’s okay.

And if Dean starts asking questions, Jimmy will have to stop doing his breathing thing, and Dean already knows which he’d prefer. Jimmy’s good as a faceless voice, a disembodied force of comfort.

A relaxed, half-dozing minute later, Dean groans, and not from any masturbatory efforts.

“I should hang up,” Dean says, not sure why he’s apologizing. “Getting expensive.”

“Thank you for staying as long as you have. This was a refreshing change of pace.” Either Jimmy can fake sincerity like nobody’s business, or he actually means it. “I hope whatever was bothering
you resolves itself soon.”

“Yeah, not likely,” Dean says with a sigh.

“You’ll get through it,” Jimmy says, still turning on that earnestness. “One way or another. And if you ever need to call again, I’m on most Monday, Thursday, and Saturday nights.”

The hook should wake Dean up. The bait of support, or relaxation, or pleasure, or whatever this is. Dean can fucking see it, but the urge to bite anyway is strong. “I’ll keep that in mind. Bye, Jimmy. Thanks.”

“Good night,” Jimmy tells him, far more intimate words of parting. “Sleep well.”

“You too,” Dean says, and immediately winces. “I mean, when you—bye.” He hangs up and groans again, but embarrassment aside, he still feels good.

He feels a little bit better when he jerks off before bed, too.

Another Friday, another library day. With the garage below his apartment, there’s just no way around it.

Being ultimately a creature of habit, Dean gravitates toward the same spot as last week. Annoyingly, there’s someone in what Dean’s already mentally referring to as his seat. She’s a bit younger than Dean without being a teenager, so maybe a graduate student. She’s completely camped out at the two-person table on the side, and Dean can’t even take the other spot because the hot guy from last week is back.

Instead, Dean’s forced to the next table over, one with two chairs on either side. He gets an entire side to himself, a pair of presumed teenagers across from him, and he forces himself back into the pile of reading. He’s getting better about switching subjects when his mind wants to give up, but it’s still a slog. It’s probably always going to be. None of it fits together in his brain the way cars do.

Dean knows parts and pieces. He knows repairs and treatments. He knows wear and tear and types of accidents. Most of all, he knows how to fix things, to do shit with his hands because he’s always
been the stupid one who can’t do shit with his brain.

Sam seems to think otherwise, but when it comes to their dad’s opinions, Sam always thinks otherwise. It doesn’t actually mean anything.

He reads on. He switches books. He does the math for his accounting homework. He goes back to reading and rolls his eyes at having some overly expensive book try to explain supply and demand to him. Or supply chains, when Dean’s been ordering parts both from and for Bobby for over a decade. Sometimes, they need fresher parts than the salvage yard can provide, but that doesn’t mean Dean doesn’t know the worth of all those parts in those hunks of junk.

His mind wanders. He glances up as the teenagers across from him depart. He glances over some unknown amount of time later when the woman across from the hot guy leaves too. There’s Dean’s seat, ready for the taking… except for the fact that Dean is alone with a huge table to himself. There’s no actual point in crowding the hot guy.

Dean’s already got his laptop plugged in and everything, too.

He considers switching over anyway, only to find the hot guy already looking at him. Dean meets his gaze unrepentantly and the hot guy looks away. Okay then.

Dean catches the hot guy looking two more times before he realizes he’s left his giant thermos out on the table. It’s not actually Dean that this caffeine junkie is staring at.

Disappointment coils low in Dean’s belly, but it’s not like he was going to do anything anyway. The only gay couple Dean’s ever successfully picked up on was Bert and Ernie, so that’s probably a straight dude. Probably just Dean seeing a frankly gorgeous guy and hoping.

And he is gorgeous, no two ways about it. A strong, stubbled jaw. A rumpled professor-in-training kind of look today. Dean cannot believe he’s checking out a man in a sweater vest, but that ship has definitely sailed. The guy has his sleeves rolled up again today, and he has to work out or something to have forearms like those. He’s also loosened his tie, the knot still peeking over the V of his navy sweater vest.

This time, the guy catches Dean looking, but Dean is nothing if not smooth. He simply points to his dad’s old thermos and raises his eyebrows in a question.
With a bit of a shrug, the hot guy reaches down and pulls out the same tiny gray travel mug he was using last week. His face pulls in disappointment, turning him from hot to adorable. He shrugs again.

Dean nods and turns back to his work. That’s it for interaction until the next group of students come in, a gaggle of four. They stop short as a flustered freshman cluster that Dean tries and fails not to relate to. Seeing as all the other four-person tables have at least two people at them, Dean kills two birds with one stone and gives up his new spot—the better to return to his old one.

The hot guy actually smiles faintly at Dean when Dean sits down, like this is some act of charity to be rewarded. Shrugging, Dean plugs his laptop back in.

Time passes. Dean pushes through. They exchange glances over the tops of their computers, a silent conversation of mutual suffering. Hot guy is typing something up today, the muted clicking of his keyboard the only real sound in Dean’s head. Dean switches back to his accounting assignment—how sad is he that his favorite subject is accounting—and for a brief span of time, it all clicks.

The scratch of a pen against paper pulls Dean’s eyes back to the other man. The hot guy must be bored, because he slides over a sheet of paper.

*What are you working on?*

*Math*, Dean writes, trying not to sound pathetic. *You?* He slides the paper back, his black ink a marked contrast against the hot guy’s blue.

*Research project.*

Dean nods. They go back to ignoring each other, or at least they go back to not writing. When Dean switches subjects and realizes his back is growing tense and painful, he stretches, spine popping, and the hot guy looks at him for that. Dean shrugs, refusing to be sheepish, but then the hot guy stretches too like it’s something Dean reminded him to do. And, fuck, it’s something Dean should remind him to do more often if it means a show like this.

One arm stretched over his head, pulled down to the side with a hand on his own wrist. His head tilted, neck on display. A repetition on the other side, and a faint look of pleasure on his face, eyes closed, lips parted.
Oh yeah, Dean is going to stretch more often.

Afterward, the guy opens his mouth real wide and works his jaw from side to side, which is a little weird, but maybe hot guy clenches his teeth. And hot guy can open his mouth really wide and this detail may possibly haunt Dean’s dreams tonight.

They get back to work and Dean tries not to keep glancing over. It’s hard when the work is so boring and the hot guy is so hot. When hot guy catches him looking, Dean’s forced to write another note to avoid awkwardness. The first thing that springs to mind is the lie he told Sam.

*You here every Friday?* The hot guy nods even while Dean writes, somehow able to read Dean’s scrawl upside-down. *Cool*, Dean adds. *Me too. Study group?*

The hot guy’s eyes light up, and Dean is fucked.

Hot guy pulls the paper over to himself. His pen looks small between his fingers, and Dean is really fucked. When the hot guy slides the paper back, it now reads in blue, *We could keep each other focused, but I am entirely unable to help you with math.*

Dean grins. He shrugs and the hot guy faintly smiles back.

Awesome.

Drawing the paper close, Dean scratches out two quick words. *Name’s Dean.*

The hot guy writes back. *Castiel.*

Head tilted to better read, Dean frowns a little at the word. He mouths it, unwilling to risk getting kicked out just when he’s finally settling in.

The hot guy pulls the sheet back to draw a quick line. *Castiel.*

Cas.
Dean nods and gives the guy—Cas—a thumbs up, but Cas reaches across the table in an unmistakable offer.

Dean takes him up on it, shaking hands. Cas’ palm is soft and warm, his grip solid, and a tightness that has nothing to do with dread fills Dean’s stomach. Very much the opposite of dread.

Dean might hold on for a little too long.

But then again, Cas doesn’t look in any hurry to let go either.

When it happens, it’s a mutual release, and Dean tries not to read too far into it. Not every dude is gay, not by a long-shot, and wishful thinking does Dean no good. They go back to their respective tasks, Dean reading, Cas typing with a frown on his face and defeat in his blue eyes. This time, when Dean stares at him too long, he’s got no excuse planned for when Cas catches him.

Fortunately for Dean, he is nothing if not a consummate bullshitter.

He grabs his thermos and points to it, eyebrows raised.

Cas looks at him as if seeing the most perfect human to ever walk the planet. He pulls out his empty travel mug, pops the cap, and holds it out like he’s receiving communion. Excruciatingly careful about it, Dean pours as much of a refill as he’s willing to spare. He spills just a little in the transfer, a few drops down the side of each container. He wipes his thumb up the side of his thermos, licks the warm coffee off his thumb, and wipes his thumb dry on his jeans.

When he looks back up to Cas, Cas is already drinking. Just a sip. Just a closed-eye little sip with a following soundless sigh. Fuck, but he’s gorgeous. Dean stares too long again, but that’s easy enough to cover. He just puts a question on his face and gives Cas another thumbs up, clearly referring to the coffee.

Cas responds with the most emphatic thumbs up Dean has ever seen.

Dean grins in return and, with that major source of distraction, gets back down to work.
To see what else I'm working on, you can follow me on [tumblr here](https://example.com).
Dean inches out of the closet.

He doesn’t need to call on Saturday, and he tells himself he doesn’t need to call on Monday.

Thursday rolls around.

He calls.

“Hello, Michael,” Jimmy says warmly. “To what do I owe the pleasure?”

“I’m bi,” Dean says, and it pops out of his mouth as neatly as it had the first hundred times practicing alone in his car.

“Oh,” Jimmy says in an abruptly careful tone that nearly has Dean putting his pants back on. Nearly, because then Jimmy would hear him and then Jimmy would know and it’s already bad enough and—“I’m sorry I assumed otherwise,” Jimmy says.

Dean’s mind goes blank.

“What,” he says.

“I’m sorry I assumed,” Jimmy says again. When Dean can only sit and stare dumbly at his bedroom wall, Jimmy adds, “Thank you for correcting me.”

Dean desperately tries to reboot. “No, I, uh. You. You asked. Before. And I said… but I’m bi.”
“You don’t need to come out to a stranger on the phone,” Jimmy says, and it rubs Dean entirely the wrong way. “That first call, we were strangers.” And that rubs Dean a little bit better, even though they’re definitely still strangers now.

“I gotta start somewhere, right?”

There is another longer than normal pause from Jimmy. “Am I the first person you’ve told?”

Alone in his bedroom, Dean nods. “Yeah.”

“...Thank you. I’m honored.”

“It’s not a big deal, man.” He’d wussed out on it two weeks in a row, but that was him being a dumbass, not it being some monumental task. “It’s just baby steps.”

Jimmy makes a faint noise of amusement. “Clearly you aren’t friends with any first time parents. First steps are absurdly celebrated. Photos, videos, shoving the videos into co-workers’ faces…”

Dean snorts. “Still not impressive to anyone else.”

“How do you want to celebrate your baby steps?” Jimmy asks. “If you call back next week, I’m sure I can think of a worthwhile scenario by then, but what did you have in mind for tonight?”

“Dunno,” Dean lies. Then he adds “Anything,” and that’s the truth.

“Do you want guidance or fun?” Jimmy asks. “People call for both.”

“Who calls a sexline for advice?”

“Depending on your insurance, it can be cheaper than therapy,” Jimmy says in the voice of a man who is not joking. “I did help you relax last week. Is that what you were so tense about? Coming
“It’s not a big deal,” Dean repeats.

“Michael. It’s allowed to be a big deal.”

“But it’s not,” Dean says, because the second it becomes big again, he’ll wuss out entirely.

“Is it part of you?”

Dean frowns. “I guess?”

“And you’re not a big deal?” Jimmy asks like he’s honestly confused.

_Nope._ It sticks in Dean’s throat too long. They can both hear it. “Biggest deal you’ve ever seen, babe,” Dean says, much too late.

Jimmy makes a thoughtful noise. “Do you want to know what my niche is? Why certain callers are directed to me.”

Dean has the sinking feeling he already knows. He hunches where he sits on the edge of his bed. “What?”

“When a male caller is hesitant to ask for a man, I receive that caller. The closeted, the nervous, the insecure. They’re sent to me.”

Closeted, nervous, and insecure, Dean bristles. “So what, you’re Gay Jesus?”

Without missing a beat, Jimmy answers, “More of a gay angel. I’m just a messenger, not salvation itself. But that’s missing the point.”
“What, that we should be having phone sex by now?”

“No,” Jimmy says, and it’s actually good to hear an edge of annoyance in his tone. He pulls it back in almost immediately, a complete tease at the real person beneath the facade. “Obviously we could be doing that, but my point is, if I’m not the best match for you—if what I do isn’t what you need—we can find you someone else.”

There is a physical sensation in Dean’s chest, and it isn’t good. It’s there and tight and huge, like an extra organ was slammed up inside his rib cage, pressing all the air out of his lungs in order to fit.

“I,” Dean starts to say. He swallows.

I don’t need your help.

God, he needs this guy’s help.

“I mean, I’ve kinda gotten used to you.”

“That’s fair,” Jimmy says, and he sounds pleased. “Should I go ahead and plan something special for next week?”

Dean’s being manipulated. Asked to stay or go, then asked to keep coming back. He’s being edged in deeper. Regardless of what his textbooks and classes tell him, Dean knows how to sell. But he also knows it’s easiest to sell to people who are already looking to buy.

“Let’s see how things go tonight,” Dean says.

Jimmy hums in the affirmative like this is an acceptable answer, like he’s not actually going to pressure Dean to come back. “And how should things go tonight?”

“Dude, I’m calling for phone sex, there should be phone sex.”

With an audible smile, Jimmy says, “There can be phone sex.” He lowers his voice as if his vocal
chords are crouching, his voice itself ready to spring. “But what kind? Should I tell you a story? Should I tell you how to touch yourself?”

Dean’s dick sits up and begs for the second option, but Dean’s not that big of a pervert. “Story. Tell me, um. You and a dude. How did you, your first time, how did you get with a dude?”

“No, I, uh.” Holy shit. “There was… I didn’t hear you, what was his name?”

“I can use a different name,” Jimmy offers.

“Both is fine,” Jimmy replies, a smile clear in his voice.
“Shut up.”

“That would be a waste.”

Leaning back against his pillows and headboard, Dean covers his face with one hand. “Start talking or I hang up.”

“Do you want to hear about my first time in general, or my first time doing anal?”

“You getting fucked,” Dean says without hesitation. “Unless you did him first, I mean...” Though he’s not sure his brain will survive hearing Jimmy using his name for that kind of story. Or, hell, this story.

“I did him first,” Jimmy says. “He edged me in. He… edged me in a lot of ways.”

Licking his lips, Dean lowers his hand from his face to better wrap it around his dick. “He was more experienced?”

“By far. He was three years older than me, but that means a lot when you’re nineteen and a virgin.”

“How’d you get together?”

“He was my upperclassmen counselor at college,” Jimmy said, “and I… may have thought I was more subtle in my crush than I was. But Dean was… magnetic. He was handsome and smart, and I thought I was only intimidated.”

“But you wanted him.”

“I did. He showed us around campus—myself and his other freshman charges—and then he started dropping hints about extra curricular activities. About the LGBT group and his involvement… and he would always be looking at me. I joined right away. I thought we’d see each other there, and then…” Jimmy sighs. “I discovered he’d only been looking out for me. He wasn’t interested, not then.”
“You said this was the short version.”

“This *is* the short version.”

“Fuck.”

“Effectively, yes.”

“Can you just skip to that part? The fucking part?”

“He put his dick in my ass and it was great, the end,” Jimmy deadpans.

A laugh breaks out of Dean without permission. It’s weird, laughing while trying to jerk off. The key word being *trying*. “Dude, c’mon. Give me something to work with here.”

“I would, but someone keeps interrupting.”

“Okay, okay. Paint me a word picture or whatever.”

“That’s better,” Jimmy says, his voice warm but firm in a way that makes Dean’s insides swish about like he’s some sort of smitten washing machine. Except he’s not smitten, not any more than he is a washing machine. He’s just a horny dude talking to a funny guy with an awesome sex voice.

Starting over, Jimmy says, “Dean was never my boyfriend. He was never anyone’s boyfriend, but by sophomore year, he was definitely my friend. And then my friend with benefits. It was only meant to be the once, but he liked the way I reacted. He had a praise kink—he had a lot of kinks, in hindsight—and it shaped me.”

“Praise kink?” Dean asks, his hand a slow touch on his dick. Teasing fingertips while Jimmy works his way up to it, not yet fisting himself.
“He got off on being told how good he was,” Jimmy explains, his words riding on a low chuckle. “He framed it as checking in for consent. It may have been, in his mind, but it was more than that. I was awestruck. I was a nineteen year old virgin who would have come from anything he did.”

“Did you?” Dean asks, when what he means is *tell me.*

“I came from *everything* Dean did,” Jimmy answers with such clear wistfulness and arousal that Dean has to bite his lip, his hand reflexively tightening around his dick.

“When you tell a man exactly how to suck your cock and he does it, it is the most perfect feedback loop I have ever experienced. It was… seamless. What I wanted, what he’d do. All I had to do was keep telling him. He didn’t even want me to reciprocate half the time, not physically. He wanted me lying in a puddle of bliss and semen, admiring him through a daze while he touched himself.”

With no conscious thought behind it, Dean’s hand moves faster. “What did that look like?”

“Sometimes he’d be kneeling on the bed. If I was on a couch, he’d stand up between my knees, brace one hand on my shoulder, and…” Jimmy swallows. He lets out a low breath, like lust itself sighing.

Dean licks his lips. “He’d come on you?”

“Have you ever had the experience where what you’ve seen in porn is anti-climatic in reality?”

“Yeah?”

“This wasn’t,” Jimmy says, speaking as if there’s a dream atop his tongue. He’s hushed and quiet in Dean’s ear, private but not furtive. As soft and filled with awe as a sunrise. “This was… everything it was supposed to be. He’d stand over me and look at what he’d done. He’d only ever come on me after I’d come on myself. Not making a mess, only making it bigger.”

“Did he-” Dean has to start over, has to slow his hand and give himself a warning squeeze at the base. He lowers his voice, though he doesn’t stand a chance at matching Jimmy’s. “Did he come in-” He can’t say it. “Did he?”
“Did he come inside me? Did he fill me up until I was shaking and dripping with it?”

Dean swears, jerking it hard now. “Did he? Tell me, tell me he, *fuck.*” His toes curl and he fights to stave it off, all while his hand keeps flying. He can’t come yet. He has to come. He’s going to come, but not *yet,* *fuck,* *please.*

“Only with lube,” Jimmy says, sounding fucking torn up about it. “I would have let him. I would have let him fill me up, I was so young and stupid. I wanted every bit I could get, I would have taken that too.”

“Every bit of *Dean,*” Jimmy corrects, and Dean dies. He just dies. His entire life force comes rushing out his dick and then he is dead.

Jimmy resurrects him one word at a time. Jimmy murmurs into Dean’s ear until Dean’s head feels as overstimulated as the head of his dick, but Dean still keeps touching himself, his thumb circling while he twitches and shakes, determined to get the absolute most out of tonight’s call.

Finally, Dean can’t take it anymore. Jimmy isn’t even talking about some other guy anymore, he’s not talking about a Dean, he’s talking to *Dean,* saying shit like “That’s it” and “Keep going” and “Come for me harder.”

“Can’t,” Dean gasps, trying anyway.

“You came as hard as you could?”

“Uh-huh…!” He’s still trying, wincing and hissing, his breathing a mix of shudders and gasps.

“That makes me very happy,” Jimmy says, the proverbial cat who got the cream. Or the come. Jesus, Dean has to stop thinking about jizz, but that’s a hard thing to do when his hand and stomach and thighs are a mess. His legs are still tense, toes curled. His left ankle actually cracks when he stretches
back out, and Dean groans.

“Fuck,” he says, dizzy and sated and feeling increasingly weird. “You, uh…”

Jimmy waits for Dean to finish. When Dean can’t find the words, Jimmy speaks for him. “I didn’t finish the story, no. I wasn’t very on topic, either. I’ll do better next time.”

“You said…” Dean does actually know how to talk, he swears he does.

“Yes?” Jimmy’s voice is still deep, his tone attentive. Dean pictures a figure in a dark bedroom leaning in, leaning over him, a silhouette back-lit by a thin line of yellow around the far door. He pictures broad hands stroking over his shoulders.

“You said you’d do something special. If I call next week.”

“Would you like that?”


“Consider it a coming out party.”

For some reason, Dean blushes harder at that than he had while jerking off over the phone. “You don’t have to.”

“I want to,” Jimmy says, somehow sounding just as sincere as he always does. Earnest, like it’s important Dean believe him. Like it matters whether Dean trusts him. “I’ve never been the first person someone’s come out to before.”

The blush gets worse. All the blood relocates from his dick to his face. “Still not a big deal.”

“Can it be a big deal to me?” Jimmy asks, like he needs Dean’s permission.
“Yeah, okay, whatever.” Each word is quieter than the last, quicker than the last.

“Thank you, Michael,” Jimmy says, so warm and pleased that the alias stings. That’s not Dean’s name, and he knows how it sounds now in Jimmy’s voice, warped and deepened by arousal.

“You’re welcome, Jimmy,” Dean answers. It comes out rough and glib, but still very much on the breathless side of things.

“Will you call back, then?” Jimmy asks after a pause. Like it’s important to him. Like he wants Dean to call.

But of course he fucking wants Dean to call. Repeat clients and long calls must be this guy’s bread and butter, and only an idiot would forget it.

“I’ll see what I can swing,” Dean hedges. He pulls his phone away from his ear, touches the screen, and winces at the call length. “Yeah, I should hang up now before I go broke.”

“I’ll have something ready,” Jimmy promises. “For whenever you call again.”

“Cool,” Dean says, making light like he isn’t naked in bed with his own spunk drying on him. He normally cleans himself off faster but tonight… Tonight felt different. “Bye, man.”

“Good night.”

Dean waits for Jimmy to hang up first, but of course Jimmy doesn’t. He’s not allowed to.

Dean hangs up.

He cleans himself off.

He goes back to bed, thinking.
Armed with books, his laptop, and the usual amount of coffee, Dean makes his way into the library and finds Cas sitting alone at his usual table. The guy must get here early.

Cas looks up with a faint and distracted smile as Dean sits down, but that’s it in terms of acknowledgment. Whatever Cas is working on today, he’s definitely in a groove, and Dean keeps from distracting him accordingly. Keeping from distracting himself is a lot less difficult.

Five weeks into the semester, Dean’s gotten into something of a rhythm. The two past weeks in the library definitely helped more than the two weeks prior, holed up in his apartment and resenting the garage below. Friday number five goes a bit better than all the previous Fridays combined, but only because he’s a productive procrastinator.

He runs out of the reading and busywork all too soon. The only things left are a pair of research papers, due in two weeks in lieu of midterms.

After staring at the assignment outline in muted confusion and frustration, Dean pulls out his class notes to see if those can help.

They don’t.

Finally, he flips to a clean page, swallows his pride, and writes a simple question he has no idea how to answer. Turning the book around, he slides it toward Cas, nudging the other guy’s pile of books. Cas looks up at him before frowning down at Dean’s notebook.

*How the hell do you write a research paper?*

Head slightly tilted, Cas frowns at Dean for further measure.

Dean pulls his notebook back and adds, *You’re doing a research paper, right? How do you make it good?*
Cas takes the paper and writes down a very concise, very disappointing reply. *The writing center is on the second floor. Try there.*

Dean flushes, already far out of his comfort zone asking for this much help. If he has to say any of this shit aloud, it’ll never make it out his mouth. *Throw me a bone here,* he writes. *I’ve never done this before and you look like you know what you’re doing.*

*I’m busy doing it,* yes, Cas jots down, not even bothering to pull the notebook toward himself. He immediately puts his seemingly full attention back on his laptop, so much focus that it spills over and dedicates itself to ignoring Dean.

But being pointedly ignored is just another way of being noticed.

Banking on that, Dean reaches down and pulls out his trump card. He sets his thermos down on the table, meets Cas’ eyes, and pushes the thermos forward.

Cas looks at the thermos.

Cas looks at Dean.

Dean smiles.

Cas glowers but puts his travel mug on the table and uncaps it. Dean fills him up accordingly, but keeps a firm grip on Cas’ mug. He tilts his head, indicating the notebook. Cas relinquishes his grip on the coffee with a sigh. Only once Cas has jotted down a list of bullet points does Dean give him the coffee.

Cas takes it with an eye roll that brings the rest of his upper body along for the ride. It’s prissy and over-dramatic, and Dean has to bite his lip to keep from laughing in the library’s silent area.

He pulls over Cas’ instructions and reads. *Narrow down a topic until you find a fight you want to pick. Research the fight. Citations are your ammunition—collect as many as you can before you begin. Preempt your opponent’s counterattacks. Organize the idea into an outline until you beat it into submission. Write.*
Okay. Yeah. Dean can do that. It sounds a lot like arguing with Sam, actually.

Getting started is difficult, abruptly so, but he’s getting no more help today and shouldn’t need it. What he needs is books. Books on, let’s see, what does he want to pick a fight about? Something personal. Automotive shops. Salvage yard regulations. Blatant favoritism in the supply chains for the giant dealerships. The complete bullshit that all these new half-car, half-computers vehicles cause for smaller garages. Now that’s a good one.

How the hell does he get books on that?

Standing up, he taps the table to make Cas look up at him. Then he points two fingers to his own eyes before pointing down to his stuff, his head again tilted in a question.

Cas shrugs, then nods. Dean leaves his stuff where it is and begins the search on a library catalog computer. Then in the stacks. He assembles a pile, checking indexes and skimming for relevance. He hauls the actually pertinent pile back to the table, where Cas looks up at him with a frown.

Dean looks back with a clear demand of What?

Cas reaches out and writes something on the notebook. JSTOR.

Dean frowns.

Cas stares a little. He does something on his laptop, then gestures Dean to come around to his side of the table. Dean hunkers down, looking over Cas’ shoulder as Cas opens a new browser tab and navigates to this JSTOR thing. He logs in as “cjnovak” and basically screws Dean over with options. He leans around his computer screen to see what books Dean’s brought over and types “automotive industry” into the search bar, and, okay, wow. Yeah, that’s a lot of hits.

Going back to the notebook, Cas writes down, Secondary sources. Find people who already agree with you. He pauses. Or people who did a bad job disagreeing and tear them down.

Dean puts a hand on Cas’ shoulder and gives him a warm squeeze. It’s a thick shoulder, solid and muscular, and Dean tries not to flush as Cas twitches an absent smile up at him. His body is warm through his vest and button-down, and his eyes are distractingly blue. His dark stubble emphasizes the strong cut of his jaw, and Dean might have a problem here.
He removes his hand before it can get awkward and circles around to his side of the table. Time passes in companionable silence that has little to do with the enforced quiet of the library. Dean compiles his ammo with no real idea of how he’s going to use it, but he starts to shape a plan to the gentle patter of Cas’ typing.

Eventually, he looks up at the noise of a crack and a pop to find Cas stretching. Dean joins in, needing it. Maybe, just maybe, Cas eyes Dean the same way Dean eyes him, but that’s probably a combination of wishful thinking and paranoia.

Cas writes something else down on Dean’s notebook, proving he’s got something on his mind other than Dean’s attractiveness. *How did you get this far not knowing how to write a paper?*

Dean bristles a little, but for all the judgment in the phrasing, there’s very little in Cas’ face. Just curiosity, really.

Dean responds simply by reaching out and underlining *this far*. He looks at Cas with a question, but Cas only frowns, somehow not getting it.

Making himself clear, Dean shifts his hand lower to write, *Dude, it’s only week five*. Cas’ frown grows deeper to the point that Dean checks his class syllabus. Yeah, definitely week five of fifteen. They’re only a third of the way through Dean’s first semester.

Cas’ expression marches deeper into confusion before popping out on the other side. With slightly widened eyes, Cas writes, *Are you a freshman?*

Dean shrugs. Like he doesn’t give a fuck. Like it’s no big deal.

Cas clearly takes that as the yes it is.

Dean ducks his head down and gets back to work, dragging his notebook back to himself and flipping to a fresh page. He keeps it out of Cas’ range, allowing no replies. His cheeks aren’t burning, it’s just hot in here. Dean Winchester does not blush. He also doesn’t look up at all as Cas starts writing something on a notebook of his own. A lot of something.
It goes on an agonizing length of time, the scratch and slide of Cas’ pen, and it concludes with the quick rip of a paper being torn from a notebook. Dean still refuses to look until Cas starts jabbing the paper against the side of Dean’s hand.

It’s Dean’s turn to fire off a glare, but Cas insists.

Dean takes the paper.

*I had to take a few years off. Getting back into academia was very difficult. How do you need me to help?*

That’s… not what Dean was expecting. Not knowing what else to do, Dean just shrugs, still looking down. It’s not a big deal. Nothing in life is a big deal unless he lets it be.

When he risks looking up, Cas is still looking at him, waiting for a real answer. Meeting his gaze with almost a glare, Dean shrugs again, harder.

Cas responds with a nod and gets back to his own project with no further fuss. He leaves Dean to beat his brains out against a pile of books and online articles and his own incompetence. And Dean does. He puts his head down and drinks his coffee and regrets ever saying yes to these specific classes, let alone this entire plan.

In the end, he’s got a pile of research and a vague idea of what fights he wants to pick with it. He doesn’t have to have the damn things finished for two weeks, still, but that’s the exact same time as his midterms for his other classes.

He glances up at Cas, who is clearly embroiled in whatever that project of his is. It’s barely a second before Cas feels Dean’s stare and looks up at him.

Cas tilts his head in a question.

With a lick to his dry lips, Dean reaches out for that notebook page, for that offer of help… and wusses out. Instead of any real, productive question, Dean asks, *What’s the thing you’re working on?*
Cas reads it and kind of tenses up. The firm line of his mouth goes tight instead of soft, the way it usually looks. Ultimately, Cas just writes, *I don’t discuss my papers before they’re finished.*

Dean immediately writes back, *Not talking.*

Cas’ smile is faint and tiny, but Dean sees it all the same.

*Fine, have it your way,* Dean writes. *What field, though?* Anything that might help Dean to know about?

Small enough to slip through the corners of Cas’ mouth, the smile vanishes. It’s replaced by a weighing look, something almost challenging.

Cas pulls the paper back to himself instead of simply reaching over with his pen. It takes way too long for him to write only two words, but when he passes back the paper, there they are: *Gender studies.*

Okay, unexpected. Smirking a little, Dean writes back, *Pick up the ladies with that?*

Expression fully sour, Cas retrieves the paper and rolls his eyes. This time when he returns the sheet, the blue ink is somehow darker, pressed harder into the ripped out page.

*Not with an LGBT Studies/Queer Theory focus, no.*

And he stares at Dean with a resigned defiance, the way the customer service side of Dean’s job makes him feel when pissed off idiots descend, furious over the costs of parts and labor. When Dean has to hold his ground in his own damn space.

But seeing the words, Dean’s face does this strange, unexpected thing.

It starts grinning. It starts grinning hard.
Cas blinks at him, head tilting.

With a steady hand, Dean reaches over and circles the B in the acronym.

He keeps grinning.

Cas blinks again. He starts to smile. Just a little at first, then more, then beautifully. It’s soft and gorgeous. It fits him perfectly.

Cas circles the G.

Feeling a strange mix of serious and goofy, Dean holds out his hand. They shake. Nervous butterflies churn in Dean’s abdomen, trying to set off a tornado of a chain reaction, but Cas’ hand in his is firm and grounding.

And Cas is smiling in response to Dean’s stupid grin.

They let go, but their eyes linger. Cas only looks down to write something else.

*What are you studying? I know it’s early for you to have picked a major.*

*Business with accounting,* Dean writes back. They won’t let him declare yet, but that’s what he’s got going.

*Very practical. Is that what you want to be doing?*

The question sits poorly in Dean’s head, but he replies, *Taking over the family business.* It’s the shortest answer.

Cas simply nods and underlines his *Very practical* with another faint smile. Dean prefers the other one, the big warm one, but he stomps down on that thought. He needs to come out to more than two people before he asks another guy out, way more.
With that knowledge curling low in his stomach, Dean simply nods in return and gets back to work.

Chapter End Notes

Updates every Monday, time of day may vary.

To see what else I'm working on, you can follow me on tumblr here.
Chapter Summary

Dean meets someone new.

Chapter Notes

WARNING: The phone sex half of this chapter includes graphic description of male/female sexual relations.

If you would care to skip to the library portion, ctrl+f is your friend, combined with the phrase "with a week until midterms".

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Dean needs a break. From work and school, from homework and people. Just a little break.

A little, tiny, stupidly expensive break.

It is Thursday, after all.

Naked and fidgeting on his bed, Dean makes the call. He holds his boxers over his dick while he listens to the ringing, and he keeps them there as he speaks with the operator, asking for Jimmy.

“He’s available,” the operator confirms, audibly typing over the line. “He’s also requesting you hold for five minutes.”

A twinge of annoyance flares up at the interruption. Guy probably needs some water and a bathroom break, that kind of thing, but Dean’s willing to admit he’s impatient. “Yeah, fine, you can stick me on hold while he hits the can.”

With the hint of a smirk in her voice, the operator says, “He wants me to relay that he’s setting something up.”
And then she sticks him on hold.

Dean stares at the phone in his hand like it’ll give him actual answers. Setting what up? Dean’s something special, his ‘coming out party’? Dean’s surprise needs to be set up?

Jimmy’s gonna fuck himself with a dildo.

It’s the first thought in Dean’s head, at once irrational and the only thing that makes sense. Jimmy’s gonna fuck himself with a dildo, and Dean’s gonna listen to the squish of lube over the phone, to gasps and grunts and Jimmy actually coming.

Dean puts his boxers aside, the better to touch himself. Not to get the proceedings underway too far in advance or anything. Just because it’s a fantastic thought, even if Dean’s mind stops short when he tries to picture Jimmy. His brain shuffles through a general sweep of white dudes in their thirties, but nothing really pops out.

He wants to say skinny. Something about the voice. When it gets deep with arousal, Jimmy sounds like he could be a decent-sized guy, if only because it’s gotta take a big instrument to go that low, but that’s just the turned-on voice. The starting point, not so much. So he’s probably smaller than Dean. Maybe not that much smaller, though.

This late at night, he’s probably got a fair bit of stubble. A nice nine o’clock shadow. Beyond that, Dean comes up short on any details, but he tries for the full five minutes, until the suggestive soft jazz of the hold music gives way to a much more welcome sound.

“Hello, Michael,” Jimmy says. He sounds pleased.

A flush flooding his cheeks, Dean answers, “Hey, Jimbo.”

“Thank you for joining us. How are you today?”

It’s a clear distraction, especially when Dean’s stuck on one little word. “Wait, ‘us’? Who’s ‘us’?”

With a smile in his voice, Jimmy says, “I do believe I promised you a party, Michael. Three of us is
“Who, uh.” Dean licks his lips. “Who’s the third?” The rate Dean gets charged goes up if he’s got more than one person on the line.

“Due to company guidelines, I’m not allowed to permit anyone else on the line,” Jimmy continues, a reassuring piece of news for Dean’s wallet. “That doesn’t mean I’m not allowed to have anyone else here, provided they stay quiet.” His tone shifts, no longer the friendly confiding tone he’s used with Dean. This is something deeper, familiar instead of friendly, as dark as it is warm. “And you are going to stay quiet, aren’t you?”

There’s no answering voice.

“Good girl,” Jimmy praises, and somehow, it sounds nothing like the way people use those words on their dogs. “But you have your clicker for a reason. It’s not just your safe word tonight. Answer so Michael can hear you.”

*Click-kuh!*

His mouth dry, Dean stares at the pulled back sheets of his bed.

“Could you hear that, Michael?”

*Are you making this up?*

Dean licks his lips futilely. He swallows and that barely helps.

“Michael?”

“Yeah, I, I could hear that. What’s, uh, what’s her name? What are you doing?”

“This is Mandy,” Jimmy says. “That’s not her real name, but it’s the one we use when I’m on the phone and she’s subbing for me.”
“How can she be subbing for you if you’re still here?” Dean asks before the penny drops.

“Submitting,” Jimmy corrects with clear amusement in his voice. “Not substituting.”

After years of Sam accusing Dean that he confuses reality with porn, Dean went and confused porn with reality. Because this isn’t reality, regardless of whether there’s actually a woman with Jimmy today. It doesn’t matter how much Jimmy sounds like the guy next door, doesn’t matter how normal and comforting Jimmy can be in between the filth. It’s all still porn.

“Right, I knew that.” He squeezes his dick a little, still half-hard despite the embarrassment. “I just… It doesn’t come up in conversation much.”

“I understand,” Jimmy says, no trace of mockery in his voice. “Is this something you’re comfortable with? Having a threesome over the phone?”

“No, yeah, that’s, um. Yeah, that’s good. That’s.” Dean gets himself under control. “What’s the plan, here?”

“The plan is whatever you want it to be,” Jimmy promises. “This is your party, Michael. Let me describe to you what games we have available.”

“Okay.” Because it’s all just a game, right? Jimmy doesn’t actually have some woman there with him. Right? “What’s Mandy look like?”

“Impatient,” Jimmy says, a note of amusement back in his voice. A slight pause, and he adds, “Michael asked what you looked like. Can you hear him at all?”

There’s a pair of clicks.

“Are you all right if I describe you? Physically.”

A single click.
“Mandy is beautiful, naked, and impatient.” A pause, soft and lush like a growing smile. “And now she’s blushing. Squirming a little. What else, hm. She has long black hair. Straight, parted on the left. When she’s standing, it falls just past her breasts. When she’s lying down, like she is now, we make sure to keep it out of the way, so she’s not lying on it. I think the best descriptor for her skin tone is olive, and her nipples are dark. Her breasts are the perfect size for my hands.”

Not to Dean, he adds, “They are, look. Look at that. No, bad girl, no clenching your thighs.”

Again to Dean: “She really is impatient. She knows she’s not allowed to touch herself until I say, but we’ve already had to break out the bondage tonight.”

There’s a roaring in Dean’s ears that has nothing to do with how hard he’s pressing the phone against his head. His hand stutters in his otherwise drawn out path up and down his cock. “You’ve got a chick tied to your bed.”

“Her wrists are bound to my headboard, yes. She has the clicker in her right hand and the end of the rope in her left, don’t worry. If she needs to move, all she has to do is let go of the rope. Mandy, show Michael your safe word for me.”

Three rapid clicks.

“Good girl.” Proud and pleased.

Dean closes his eyes, trying to picture it. An image leaps straight to mind. “So there’s this, uh. Girly mag. Busty Asian Beauties. Is that what’s going on here?”

“That wouldn’t be inaccurate,” Jimmy says slowly, “though I think Mandy might be offended at the existence of that publication.”

The turn towards formality has Dean rolling his eyes, but damn, that’s his spank bank opening right up. There’s just one last thing.

“What do you look like?”
“Dark hair, moderately athletic build,” Jimmy says. “Still clothed, I typically fuck Mandy with my clothes on when we’re doing a scene, but that can change.”

Dean’s dick jerks in his hand. “Yeah?”

“Of course. Do you know what we’re doing tonight, Michael?”

“You’re gonna fuck her,” Dean says, trying to slow down his hand. He takes a deep breath and that helps. “You’re gonna fuck her and tell me about it while you do it.”

“Almost,” Jimmy says. “We’ve been waiting for you to call, did you know that? When we started our scene tonight, I was very clear: if Mandy is going to come, it has to be during your call. I warned her that you might not call, and she accepted that risk. For every caller who allowed her to stay, she had to listen to me work without touching herself. For every caller who didn’t, she had to kneel in the hall with headphones on, waiting. Waiting for you to call. And now, here you are.”

“Yep,” Dean rasps, throat dry. “Yeah, I’m. Here.”

“Excellent.” Jimmy clears his throat. “Mandy, do you still agree to the game?”

*Click-uh.* The press and the release of the clicker. Is it far enough away from the headset that Jimmy’s not just doing it himself, though? It could be.

“Good girl,” Jimmy praises, and his voice is so much lower than the last time, a deep rumble that strokes the second word into a growl. He’s so fucking turned on, Dean can hear it in the slow stretch of those syllables, and that more than anything convinces Dean of the reality of the situation.

“Fuck,” Dean breathes.

“Is that what you want me to do, Michael? I could give in and fuck her right now, I’m sure she’d agree. She’s been ready for at least an hour. I made her take off her panties because the damp spot was too distracting. I don’t know why I like seeing that so much, but I do. Seeing someone that aroused, that wet? It’s beautiful. It makes me want to go down on her, but I can’t, not with the headset on.”
Dean holds onto his dick and his phone like a mismatched pair of lifelines. He controls his breathing, straining to hear. This is insane. This is amazing.

“What should I do, Michael?” Jimmy asks, sounding like he actually wants guidance here. A woman on his bed, tied and willing, and he asks Dean what to do.

“Dude, why are you asking me?”

“She knows all my tricks by now. You could be as much of a treat for her as she is for you.”

Dean’s tongue sticks in his mouth.

“Would you like to hear the supplies at hand?”

“Yeah,” Dean says. He swallows. “Yeah, what you got?”

“We have more rope. We have her blindfold and her favorite gag. We have her vibrator...” A distinct buzzing noise cuts through the air, first as a solid vibration and then as a pulsing rhythm. It stops, but Dean’s brain keeps on shaking, trembling with that promise of pleasure. “...and my butt plug. We know from experience she can take both at once.”

“Your butt plug?”

Jimmy hums in the affirmative. “And more than enough lube to use it. Now tell me, how are we going to fuck this good girl of mine?”

*She should stick the plug up your ass*, Dean thinks but can’t manage to say.

*I wanna hear you get fucked.*

“Can you, uh…” *C’mom, say it. You’re paying him, say it. He wouldn’t have one if he didn’t like it*
“You’re sure Mandy can’t hear me?”

There’s the slightest pause before Jimmy says, “Mandy, can you hear Michael at all?”

Two clicks.

“Whatever you say will be a surprise to her,” Jimmy confirms, like that was Dean’s real concern. “If it’s something I know she doesn’t like, I’ll ask you to pick something else.”

“Like what?” He’s gotta calm down, gotta think of something less sexy.

“Water sports,” Jimmy says without hesitation. “She’s not a fan, and I am not doing that to my bed.”

“Okay,” Dean says, and that helps a little. Then he thinks of Jimmy, cock in hand, spraying out jizz all over this woman instead, and that does not help at all. “Okay. Are you touching her?”

“Not yet. Where should I start?”

“Kiss her,” Dean decides. Get the microphone close to both of their mouths, let Dean hear if she’s real. “Don’t touch her anywhere else, just kiss her.”

There’s a shuffling sound, like someone moving on top of a bed. Then the absence of that noise, then the return of it. Like Jimmy got off the bed and came back at a different angle.

“Close your eyes,” Jimmy says, and Dean does.

“Open your mouth,” Jimmy says, and Dean does.

“Good girl,” Jimmy praises, and Dean blinks in confusion.

Wet, soft, sliding noises follow. A low chuckle, muffled. “Did you think you were getting my
“cock?” Jimmy teases. “I’m sorry, that was mean.”

Something bumps up against the microphone and Jimmy lets out a muted grunt as he adjusts it.

“Play nice.” Then: “All right, I’ll play nice, too.”

There are more wet sounds. Slick and sucking.

Eyes falling shut again, Dean tries to keep his stroking slow. Eventually, he has to pull his hand away and fist his sheets instead. They’re not even doing anything yet. There’s increasingly deep nose breathing as those wet noises grow in intensity.

“Can you…” Fuck, it’s weird asking for this. For any of this.

Jimmy breaks the kiss with a messy noise. “Tell me,” he orders, voice deep and wrecked. Just from kissing. Just from the probably hours of build-up, him talking off strangers while his girlfriend—his submissive? his fuckbuddy?—while Mandy got worked up from it.

“Fuck her.”

“With or without foreplay?”

Dean’s dick says with. Dean’s phone bill says without.

“With.” Screw it. “With, you get her soaking those sheets.”

“Mm,” Jimmy hums appreciatively. “On her back or front, do you think?”

“Back.” He licks his lips, sinking down against his headboard, his dick sitting up straighter than he is. “You gotta tell me what her breasts look like when you fuck her.”
“Like perfection. The way they bounce, you want to hold them still for her,” Jimmy says, which has to be the weirdest way Dean’s heard a guy talk about breasts. Recently, at least. “Mandy, shift up.” There’s another bunch of movement noises. “Lift. Good girl.” His tone changes back to a confiding whisper, like this is just for Dean and Mandy’s the one listening in: “I put a pillow under her hips. I’m kneeling between her legs. Just between her knees for the moment. What do you think? Toy, fingers, or cock?”

“Thought we agreed on foreplay,” Dean says, feeling oddly cheated.

“Oh, this is definitely still foreplay. Staring her in the eyes. Watching her breathe. Knowing she can’t hear your answers, knowing she can’t predict what I’ll do when I don’t know what I’ll do. Come on, Michael. Use me to fuck her.”

Dean holds onto his phone and his fitted sheet very, very tightly. “Do it. Do it, I can’t- fuck, you just gotta do it. Stick, stick your dick in her, you gotta…”

“Oh, this is definitely still foreplay. Staring her in the eyes. Watching her breathe. Knowing she can’t hear your answers, knowing she can’t predict what I’ll do when I don’t know what I’ll do. Come on, Michael. Use me to fuck her.”

“Okay,” Jimmy says, voice rough, tone reassuring. “I have the condom, I’m putting it on. She’s staring at my hands. She’s staring at my cock. Fuck, I should have taken my pants off. I need to do dry cleaning anyway, I don’t care, come here. Come here. I’ve got you, I have you, I have…” A stiff inhalation. “I’m running the tip of my cock over her. God, I could fall into her so easily. I’m not pressing in yet, I’m— no.”

A sharp smack fills the air.

Jutting out with no contact with his thighs or belly, Dean’s dick jerks hard against nothing at all. He moans even before Jimmy starts talking again, saying, “If you want me to rub your clit, you wait until Michael says.”

Dean starts jerking it again. He can’t not.

“Do I need to turn you over and spank you properly?” Jimmy continues, voice dark and reasonable. “Or would that be rewarding you? Do you think you can get me to stuff that vibrator inside you and spank you over my knee? I’m not asking tonight, I am telling. Tonight, you take what Michael decides I give you. Now, are you ready to be my good girl?”

Dean almost says yes. He catches himself just in time.
But.

Almost.

Mandy clicks her button.

Dean lets out a groan, more relief than lust. “Fuck her, man, c’mon, just fuck her already, I need you to, to, y’know, c’mon.” He can’t let himself come before Jimmy even gets to the main course, but it is rapidly becoming impossible. Short bursts of stimulus, and then he has to stop. Orgasm looms like a brick wall across a road, and he really wants to see this destination Jimmy’s driving them toward.

“Do you know how lucky you are?” Jimmy asks, low and aroused and fond, and there’s a second where Dean has no idea which one of them he’s talking to. “Michael’s going easy on you. I wouldn’t, but then, I’m not in charge tonight. Remember, you make a noise, you don’t get to come. You come without permission, and you’re in chastity for a week. Understood? Don’t just nod, let Michael know too.”

Mandy clicks again.

“Good girl,” Jimmy purrs. Actually fucking purrs, his words more rumble than voice. Nobody actually sounds like that—except for this guy, it turns out. “Now spread for me again. Wider. Good, like that. Do you need another pillow? Good.”

With a sharp inhale, Jimmy must push forward. Push into her. Sink into her.

“Jimmy.” Dean needs him to talk. To say something, anything. Like maybe if Jimmy’s talking, he won’t hear the slick noises of Dean’s hand sliding precome down his cock. He shifts down further, lying down, and it’s a position he’s not thinking about. His legs inch wider, thighs parted, and he’s not thinking about that either. Bow-legged, that’s him. His legs are never pressed together, never have been; this is no different.

“She feels so good,” Jimmy tells him. “She has her legs wrapped around me and her arms are shaking. She’s still holding that rope, she’s keeping herself tied to the headboard for me, she’s, oh, god.”

There’s a smacking noise, nothing at all like that split second of spanking.
Another smack.

Another.

Another, another, another, the rapid slap of skin on skin, the impact of quick, shallow thrusts.

“Fuck her,” Dean hears himself whisper. “Fuck her, fuck her, fuck her,” he keeps chanting, his mouth running as quietly as it can, striving to keep beneath his straining ears. The sounds of his own hand and dick fight to overwhelm what’s coming through his phone.

“She’s so tight,” Jimmy croons, sounding overwhelmed. He’s still fucking fast, must have his arms braced on the bed, must be bent over her. His head hanging down, his mouth pulling open as Mandy grabs at him with her thighs. A foot digging in against his ass, dragging him in harder, faster. Jimmy groans, low and long. “Getting tighter. Such a good girl. She’s—can she come, Michael? Should we let her come?”

“Yeah. Yeah, you, yeah.”

Again in that sharp, commanding voice meant for Mandy: “Come for me. Now.”

Dean does.

His mind blanks. His body clenches. His hand is like some foreign, disconnected force, moving flawlessly while the rest of him seizes. The fingers of his other hand, clamped around his phone, ache. His raised arm is trembling. Jizz drips down his thighs, between them, like Jimmy came between his legs, except Jimmy hasn’t, Jimmy hasn’t come yet.

Jimmy’s groaning and panting, and the slapping slows down for more leisurely thrusts as Dean comes down. Slows and softens but doesn’t stop.

“She came,” Jimmy tells him, at once breathless and breathy. “Wish you could have seen her.”
“You?” Dean asks, very articulately.

Stilted, with great difficulty, Jimmy says, “Have to keep going. Can’t… yet.” He exhales hard. It’s the only sound. “Mandy, are you good? Let, let Michael know.”

Mandy clicks.


“What?” Dean asks, the amazing conversationalist that he is.

“I’m edging,” Jimmy tells him. “Have to stop.”

“But,” Dean says, and has to stop there too. I wanted to hear you, won’t leave his lips. He clears his throat. “Thought we were having a party, dude.”

Jimmy laughs, a shaky, breathless sound. “It was a good party. At least, I liked it. I think the lack of toys surprised Mandy.”

Click-uh.

Another laugh from Jimmy, lower and darker, though still a bit tilted, like his voice itself is about to fall over from exertion. “She looks so fucked-out, Michael. You can let go of the rope now, sweetheart, let’s stretch your arms. Good girl. Such a good girl for me.”

Dean presses his eyes closed and ignores the sensation of semen on his lap. Or maybe he doesn’t. Maybe he’s stupidly aware of that jizz and thinking of Jimmy pulling out of Mandy in order to come on Dean, and that is a trembling wave of fantasy he’s never going to admit to.

“You didn’t get to come,” Dean protests instead.

“I’ll be doing that later, after my shift. Have to keep Mandy entertained, after all.”
Jesus. “How much longer you gotta last?”

“Until at least eleven. Maybe midnight if it gets busy.”

Dean checks the clock on his phone only to wince at the length of time on the call. “Good luck, dude.”

“Thank you,” Jimmy answers with no small trace of amusement. “I’m sure Mandy will make it worth my while.”

*Click-uh!*

Jimmy laughs. It’s short and lusty and joyful.

Dean licks his lips. “You should, uh.”

“Yes?”

“Kiss her. For that.”

Jimmy sighs, putting it on. “Michael wants me to reward your sass. But he is in charge right now. Come here.”

There’s more shifting noises on the bed, followed by a light, wet sound. Jimmy lets out an appreciative hum, and there’s another bump against the microphone.

Dean should really be cleaning himself up. He should be ending the call and doing his homework or going to bed to get an early start tomorrow. He should be doing a lot of things other than lying here, curled onto his side with his phone pressed against his ear like the audible equivalent of a teddy bear.

They keep kissing. It’s lazy and light, no moans, only happy hums from Jimmy. Like he’s still turned
on but refusing to let himself go for it.

The kiss breaks. “You can touch me now, you know,” Jimmy murmurs. “Hands above the waist.”


“You still got your shirt on?”

“I told you, I typically fuck her clothed when we scene.”

Right, right. “You got pants on, too?”

“Dress slacks, from work. I took off my shoes and tie, but that’s all.”

“Dude, give that girl some skin.”

This time, it’s Dean who earns the laugh. There’s more fabric noises and a somehow delighted sounding click.

“She likes what she sees, huh?” Dean asks.


After listening just to that for way too long, Dean makes himself ask, “Is the party actually over?”

The kissing goes on a few seconds longer before their mouths pop apart. “What was that?” Jimmy asks, his voice once again dropped through the floor, past the basement, and into the core of the earth itself.
“Are we done playing?”

“We don’t have to be,” Jimmy answers, a smile in his voice. “Mandy needs a little time to recover, but we could have a second round.”

Dean can’t afford that, not without having to skip next week.

“We could use the toys on her,” Jimmy continues, just casually bringing back up that butt plug like its existence won’t taunt Dean in his dreams. “Fill her up while she sucks me, use every hole. She’s very skilled at multitasking.”


She doesn’t mind anal,” Jimmy says, catching the wrong end of the stick. His tone shifts, something more private as he says, “I know I have to make it worth your while, for anal.”

Mandy clicks.

Jimmy chuckles. There’s a soft noise, quick, probably him kissing her, not the other way around. “We’ve had me in the back and the vibrator in the front before. We both really liked that.”

Another click.

“Would you be up for that, if Michael wants to stick around longer?”

There’s a pause before this click, but there’s still a click.

“Would you come in her?” Dean has to ask, somehow manages to ask. They’ve done this four times, and Dean still hasn’t heard that. Jimmy coming. Jimmy aroused, yeah. Jimmy fucking, yes. But not orgasm.
“It’ll be such a struggle not to,” Jimmy says, and Dean is irrationally gutted. “Stopping once was already so hard. You have no idea.” Before Dean can unstick his tongue from the roof of his mouth, Jimmy adds, “Oh, look who’s smug now. Stop it.” Another soft kiss, and more shifting noises.

They’re cuddling. They’re lying on Jimmy’s bed, Mandy naked, Jimmy with his pants on, and they’re cuddling. The visual smacks Dean between the eyes: a toned man, arms buff and torso bare, dress slacks straining at the fly. Him gathering a spent woman against his chest, her long black hair falling over his thick forearms. Kissing, careful of the headset.

Dean’s dick feels weird, his orgasm retroactively unsatisfying.

“What do you think, Michael?” Jimmy asks, voice still stuck in his sex register. And it should be. He still needs to come, and unless Dean is willing to stay on the phone for a couple hours, Dean won’t hear him finally reach his peak. “Should we have an after-party?”

Already knowing his answer, Dean checks his phone for the call time just to drill that decision in. “No. I mean, you can if you want, but I gotta hit the hay.”

“Very responsible of you,” Jimmy says, sounding regretful.

Dean sighs. “Yeah. Right, well. You kids have fun.”

“We always do.” Then, a clarification not to Dean: “Have fun.”

Click-uh!

A smile tugs halfheartedly at the corner of Dean’s mouth. “Good night, you two.”

“Good night, Michael.”

Click-uh.
Dean hangs up.

He puts his phone down and cleans up. After, he lies on his back, staring at the ceiling.

He lies there for what might be a long time, his mind buzzing instead of thinking.

He gets up again. Packs most of his shit for the library tomorrow. Lies back down. Gets back up. Packs the rest of his shit, because there’s no way he’s working on his reports tonight. He’s still awake when midnight rolls around, no surprise there.

Jimmy’s getting off work now.

Jimmy’s getting off now.

Without thinking about it—he can’t think about anything right now—he rolls over, half-hanging off the side of his bed to grab his shoe box of porn. What he wants is two girly mags down. He powers through the pages, turning past one Busty Asian Beauty after another until he finds the page he wants.

It’s an over-the-shoulder shot, but it’s a dude’s shoulder. He’s clearly naked, whereas the woman kneeling down between his parted legs is in deep red panties and the lacy suggestion of a bra. The dude’s dick is tastefully out of the shot, but that’s definitely where the chick is looking.

Mandy, Dean hears himself think. Jimmy.

He keeps his eyes open as long as he can, jerking it to the image, to the echo of Jimmy’s voice, to sarcasm and eagerness conveyed through nothing more than a clicker. Jimmy, so damn affectionate. So full of praise for his good girl.

Good girl, Dean’s mind chants as his hand speeds up, taking him much too quickly for his second session tonight, even with a couple hours in between. Good girl. Good girl, good girl. His brain’s doing this thing where it sounds like Jimmy’s voice and it sounds so good, so hot, so fucking loving. Dean jerks it, staring down at his skin mag through heavy-lidded eyes, his breathing shallow.
Good boy, Dean.

The thought, intrusive and abrupt and still in Jimmy’s voice, punches the orgasm out of him. Once he starts, he can’t seem to stop.

Good boy, he mouths, eyes shut as he rides out the wave.

Good boy.

He comes back to himself from far away, without ever really leaving. His body is loose. His mind is calm and empty. His body feels strange while he cleans himself off, but that fades once he’s under the covers, bundled.

He sleeps.

With a week until midterms, the library is packed. The second Dean walks inside, he knows he’s fucked for a spot. The main areas are crammed full of students, and even the silent area has an annoying undercurrent of noise to it today. Bodies shift. Keyboards clack. Papers rustle and books thud against tables.

And the coughing. From everywhere, the coughing. Some sniffles, some sneezing, but it’s the coughing most of all that rattles through the shelves and study spaces.

Dean makes his way through the maze of illness to his usual area only to let out a disappointed sigh. There’s already someone seated opposite Cas—or at least, somebody has claimed the spot with their crap. There’s an open laptop, asleep, facing the trench coat draped over the chair.

In any other space, Dean’s sigh wouldn’t register, but Cas looks right up from his books. No laptop today, just the books… or at least that’s what Dean thinks right up until Cas reaches across the table and drags the laptop back to himself with the most stupidly exaggerated wink Dean’s ever seen.

A grin splits Dean’s face. He dumps his crap next to the chair, picks up the trench coat, and passes it back to Cas in a loose bundle. Cas accepts it with an answering smile, looking up warmly at Dean as he leans across the table. In the transfer, supporting the coat, Cas’ hand covers Dean’s from below,
and it’s so jarring, touching another person.

He sits down, holding Cas’ gaze a little longer than is strictly casual. He gestures to the space and gives a thankful nod. Cas keeps smiling back, fainter now, and he nods in return before pulling out his travel mug with a hopeful look. Dean rolls his eyes but complies with the refill. Cas’ smile renews itself, and Dean dares a flirty wink.

Cas ducks his head slightly, but he doesn’t stop smiling. He ends up looking at Dean through his lashes a little, and damn, that’s just as good a look on a dude as it is on a chick.

Maybe a little pink in his cheeks, Cas pops the cap back on his mug. Dean goes to cap his thermos as well, but, as always, a little bit of escaping coffee drips down the side. He chases it up the metal with his thumb before kitten-licking up those precious drops of caffeine. Then he drinks straight from his giant-ass canister, because he’s sure as hell not sharing any more than he already has.

Cas is still looking at him, expression trying for blank. Dean brings his dad’s old thermos against his chest and curls a protective arm around it. Cas smiles again at Dean’s silent theatrics before shaking his head and looking down, clearly trying to get back to his own work.

Following suit, Dean forces himself to hunker down and get to work. He’s got other shit to do, no matter how much he wants to keep flirting. He sort of had a threesome last night, of course he’s feeling flirty. Besides, Cas is responsive and, well. The guy’s not just gay, he’s actually studying gayness. Dean’s not going to put him off. Dean’s not going to get punched in the face or kicked in the crotch or any of the dozen things he’s heard people say while bitching about “the gays.” Dean’s gonna get little smiles and blushes from a hot dude instead.

Dean has to wonder, is this how Jimmy feels flirting with a guy who stammers? Dean knows he’s a fucking mess on the phone, but if Dean’s getting a kick out of Cas’ little blush, he can only imagine how Jimmy must feel. Wanted. Powerful. Shit, is that why they call it gay Pride? Because that would really fucking fit.

After an hour has somehow passed, Dean’s tired brain circles back to that line of thinking, needing an excuse for a break. Judging by the bitchface Cas is directly toward his own computer, Cas feels the same way.

Dean flips his notebook to a page that isn’t covered with the sprawling pointing arrows that serve as his research paper outline, and he pauses, pen poised. Before he can formulate a question to prod Cas over The History of Gay Shit, someone comes up to their table, and not to pass by it. Already distracted, Dean looks up first, but the girl—Dean doubts she’s even twenty—has to wave at Cas
multiple times to catch his attention.

Finally looking up, Cas immediately closes his laptop. He tilts his head in a clear question and the girl shows him what looks like a class syllabus. She points to a specific part with a question in her eyes.

Cas looks at the paper. Cas looks at the girl.

The absence of his sigh is audible against the backdrop of coughing and snifflies, but Cas starts to stand up anyway. He moves to unplug his laptop before pausing. He looks to Dean and gestures, pointing two fingers to his own eyes before indicating his belongings.

Dean shrugs and nods.

Cas smiles at him again. He leaves with the girl towards one of the study zones where talking is permitted, and all he takes with him is a single book and his coffee.

As much as he feels like slamming his head against a wall, Dean has a very productive half an hour studying for midterms while Cas is unavailable for being stared at. Then he nearly jumps out of his skin at an unexpected touch on his shoulder.

Cas withdraws his hand quickly, looking alarmed himself.

Dean waves the concern away as best he can. He flips back to that unused notebook page to write *All good?*

Peering over Dean’s left shoulder to read, Cas nods. He takes the pen from Dean’s hand in an unexpected tangle of fingers and Dean leans to the side a little to let him write a response. *A student from one of my classes.*

Dean frowns up at him.

Cas frowns back.
Dean being in classes with a bunch of eighteen-year-olds is one thing, but Cas said he’d only needed to take a couple years off, not over a decade. So what gives?

What class?

*Gender + Sexuality 102*, Cas writes. *Almost as boring to teach as 101.* And then he underlines the *almost* while Dean’s brain is busy exploding.

Cas is a professor.

Cas is a *professor*.

A professor, leaning over Dean’s shoulder and smelling good. It does explain the level of formal Cas is always dressing at, as if ready to attend the business meetings that Dean’s classes are meant to prepare him for. Maybe Cas isn’t just working on a PhD or something, maybe he already has it.

Publish or perish, right? His research project thing could be that, and not the thesis for his doctorate.

Jesus fuck, Dean’s been hitting on a professor.

Something must show on his face—there’s no way something doesn’t show on his face—because Cas looks at him with a growing expression of confusion.

*Bathroom break—watch my stuff?* Dean scrawls. He barely waits for Cas’ nod before he rockets out of there, walking fast. In the bathroom, sitting on the toilet, he googles on his phone, because he’s apparently turning into Sam. Solving the problem with knowledge and all that.

So Cas could be a TA. Or an adjunct professor. Or an assistant or associate professor, whatever those mean. But still someone with professor in their title, and Dean should probably stop flirting with the guy.

Dean does another google, this time for the school and “Gender and sexuality 102.” What turns up is
a class description, complete with a link to the school profile of one Castiel J. Novak, Associate Professor. There’s even a picture.

It’s a good picture. A blue vest and gray tie perfectly compliment his eyes. He’s got a bit of styled bedhead going on, and the angle shows off his jaw. It’s a very good picture.

Dean stares at it for a while before mentally snuffing out a little torch he hadn’t realized he was carrying. That’s a bad idea for a hookup, and even Dean knows it. He closes the results page on his phone. He flushes the toilet on principle and then spends too long washing his hands.

It’s not like he wants to date right now. Not a dude, not even a chick. He’s busy and stressed. Not to mention, as pathetic as it would sound aloud, he already has Jimmy. For all Jimmy is one hell of an expensive date, at least Dean knows he’ll be getting off.

Last night was… It was something else. Either Jimmy actually fucked his sub while Dean listened in, or Jimmy is a master of sound design and an amazing actor. Whichever it is, the guy is awesome. Dean wants it to be the first option, though, because who wouldn’t want that?

The way Jimmy had called her his good girl, the way he’d get distracted from Dean while affectionately talking to her, that felt real.

He dries his hands one slow paper towel at a time. His brain keeps trying to whisper good boy, but he puts the thought away. For now.

He heads back, and every student he passes only reinforces his extra long handwashing session. He gets back to his table, flashes Cas a completely appropriate smile, and takes his seat.

Everything okay? Cas writes, back to using his own pen.

Shoving down disappointment he has no right to be feeling, Dean puts on his confident smirk and nods.

Chapter End Notes
Updates every Monday, time of day may vary.

To see what else I'm working on, you can follow me on tumblr here.
“I’m running away,” Dean says the moment Jimmy picks up. “I’m gonna quit everything and join the circus or something.”

“Hello, Michael,” Jimmy says like Dean’s greeting was perfectly normal. “Why the circus?”

“My brother’s terrified of clowns, he’ll never find me there.”

“I see,” Jimmy deadpans. “Why are you running away from your brother?”

“To see how he likes it for a change?” With a groan, Dean flops down onto his bed. “Everything sucks, man.”

“I’m sorry to hear that,” Jimmy says. “I’d promise not to suck as well, but that does happen to be one of my talents.”

Dean snorts. “Yeah, I could go for a BJ right now.”

“Do you want to tell me about it first?”

“What kind of blowjob I want?”

“It sucks because it sucks, man,” Dean lies. Honestly, it sucks because Dean’s stupid. He’s a goddamn fucking idiot who’s crashed and burned on all of his midterms. He still has one left on Monday, but the rest? He’s boned. No matter how hard he tries, how thoroughly he prepares, he’s just gonna freeze again.

“Tell me about it,” Jimmy says, and the words somehow aren’t rhetorical or flippant.

It’s so unexpectedly sincere, the reply actually gets halfway up Dean’s throat before he chokes on it. He lets out a huff of a sigh before saying, “Nah, I’m just complaining. It’s not a big deal.”

There’s a pause from Jimmy, definitely on the longer side of pauses, as these things go. “I have this problem,” Jimmy says at last. “Where if someone brings up a topic and then tells me ‘never mind, ignore what I was going to say,’ I am physically incapable of thinking about anything else.”

Dean laughs for what feels like the first time in days.

“I’m serious,” Jimmy says. “It’s already bothering me.”

Maybe it’s just another way for Jimmy to milk the call longer, but Dean is beyond caring at this point. “Okay, fine. Simple version: I’m in line for a promotion at work, but I need a pretty intense training to do it, and I just crashed and burned.”

“I’m so sorry, Michael.”

“Yeah, well.” Dean closes his eyes against the unrelenting blankness of the ceiling. “My own damn fault.”

“What happened?”

“I don’t even know,” Dean says, lifting his free hand to scratch at his head. His brain itches whenever he tries to think about it too hard. “Y’know, I thought I was ready, right? I have been digging in there, I’ve been fucking putting the effort in, and then… I don’t know. I just choked. It’s like everything that stuck in my brain wasn’t even words.”
“I’m not sure I understand.”

“Join the club, buddy.”

“No, I mean,” Jimmy says, still patient and calm and concerned, “if it’s not words, what is it that you have in your brain? Numbers? Pictures?”

Dean blinks up at the ceiling. He thinks of his outlines for his research papers, more like interlocking systems of clusterfucks than sensible lists. Fuck, did he screw up those papers too? It’s not his fault he thinks in schematics and diagrams.

“Michael? Your breathing’s gone ragged. Can you listen to me?”

Dean doesn’t answer, not out loud, but he can follow along with Jimmy’s slow, exaggerated breaths. After a little while, maybe as quick as ten or fifteen seconds, it doesn’t feel exaggerated anymore. Already flopped down on his bed, Dean starts to sink down into it instead.

“That was very good,” Jimmy murmurs. It’s not that low, dark murmur he’d used to call Mandy a good girl, but it’s still something. It’s light and approving, and it makes Dean imagine Jimmy standing beside his bed, looking down at him with undeserved praise in his eyes.

He adjusts his dick through his boxer briefs before taking his hand away.

“Your turn to talk now,” Dean announces. “You alone today?”

There’s another one of those pauses, like maybe Jimmy’s deciding whether to actually drop it. “It’s just me, yes. Would you be interested in a repeat of last week?”

“It was pretty hot,” Dean understates before grabbing on to the topic with both hands. “You do that a lot?”

“Fuck with an audience?” Jimmy asks, so casual about that question that Dean has to adjust his dick
again. Slowly. “I think I have a very skewed sense of what counts as ‘a lot,’ but I’d say it’s more of a special occasion thing.”

“You ever fuck in front of an actual audience? Someone there and watching you?”

“Is that what you want to do? Watch me fuck someone? Or be fucked. I’ve been told I take it up the ass beautifully.”

“I bet you do,” Dean says, believing him entirely. “But I, uh. Sorry, got distracted. I meant, the stuff you did with Mandy. The ‘good girl’ stuff.” He licks his lips, shifting on his bed. “You do that a lot?”

“Domming? With the right person.”

“What makes Mandy that right person?”

“That,” Jimmy says slowly, “is a very good question.”

“So… you don’t know?”

“I’m putting the words together. She… responds well to challenges. She wants me to push her abilities, not her boundaries.”

“Not sure I get it.” He wants to hear more, though, especially with the way Jimmy’s voice deepens as he speaks.

“We’ve been working on how much of my cock she can take at once,” Jimmy explains, sounding so strangely, casually aroused. “In her mouth, I mean. We worked her up to deep throating, and now we’re working on how long she can hold her breath. We’re pushing her abilities. Pushing her boundaries would be asking her to do watersports.”

“And you like that? Helping her fuck better?”
“It doesn’t have to be fucking,” Jimmy says. “It could be anything. It’s the trust, really. We can find a sense of accomplishment together. She trusts me not to set unreasonable or unsafe goals, and I trust her to share her limits.”

“And then you fuck.”

“And then we fuck,” Jimmy agrees. “I’m proud of her. She stayed so quiet for me last week. We don’t even have to gag her anymore.”

“This is a seriously weird conversation, I hope you know that.”

“I do,” Jimmy confirms, a faint smile in his voice. “In my defense, you did ask.”

Not about the gagging, but it’s a fair point. Speaking of questions… “Is she the only person you, uh, Dom?”

“I don’t have a large retinue of subs, if that’s what you’re asking.”

“But it’s more than just her.”

“Do you want someone else with me next time?” Jimmy asks, at once mercifully and torturously oblivious as to where Dean’s line of questioning is going.

“No, no, I, um.” Dean swallows. “I dunno.”

“Would you have preferred me to narrate instead?” Jimmy asks, keeps asking, and Dean gets a weird mental image of a survey and the words your feedback is important to us . “Was it too intrusive, telling me how to touch another person?”

“I dunno,” Dean says again. “I mean, I’m calling you to relax, right? So I guess I just wanna, I don’t know.” Be distracted. Not think about the mistake Sammy is making with him, funding Dean and these damn calls. Ignore all the ways he’s letting Bobby down.
“Let someone else do the heavy lifting?” Jimmy suggests after a lengthy pause.

“Yeah, I guess.”

“I can do that,” Jimmy promises, his voice dripping lower. “Would you care for another story, Michael? Or something more direct?”

Jimmy’s dulcet tones aside, Dean’s boner has died so hard, it’s a wonder his dick doesn’t spontaneously get gangrene.

“Okay, what part of ‘someone else does the heavy lifting’ are you not getting?” Dean asks right back.

“I want to know your preferences,” Jimmy says like it’s important. “I want to know the things you’ve begged for.” He’s so matter-of-fact about it when it should be pervy. It’s more like he’s encouraging Dean to confide in him than trying to turn him on.

“I’ve never begged for anything in my life,” Dean boasts, possibly lying. He doesn’t think he’s lying, but he is a master of repression.

“You’ve never been with a man before, either.” A pause. “Or have you? Is there someone who’s managed to tempt you?”

Dean immediately pictures deep blue eyes and dark bedhead across a book-strewn table. “I mean.”

“I see. Tell me about him.”

Dean’s throat closes up.

“Or I could guess,” Jimmy adds after Dean’s quiet for too long. “Or I could tell you about a man I met recently.”

“Tell me about him,” Dean says in a quick rush. Seriously, Jimmy’s the one who’s supposed to be
doing the work here. Dean’s the one who’s supposed to lie back, let himself be worked up, and come all over himself. So far, all he’s gotten is the lying down part.

Jimmy takes a second before saying, “Have you ever met someone who made you think reality itself had been photoshopped?”

Again, just as unbidden as the first time: a flash of a stubbled jaw and strong fingers curled around a blue pen.

“Yeah, actually.”

“It’s very jarring,” Jimmy tells him, preaching to the choir. “Very distracting. His eyes in particular are unreal, but it’s very difficult to admire someone’s eyes without being caught staring.”

“Right?” It comes out more enthusiastically than he intends, but it’s true. “What color? Blue?”

“Green,” Jimmy says. “I initially thought they were hazel, but they’re definitely green. Startlingly so. Does your man have blue?”

“My guy is, um. I mean, he’s not my guy, he’s...”

“You want him to be.”

“Shit, I don’t even know,” Dean confesses without meaning to. He shifts on his bed, curling onto his side. “No point in wanting him when it’s not gonna happen.”

“There doesn’t have to be a ‘point,’ Michael. You can enjoy wanting someone.”

No. It feels too hopeless, just like everything else. Aloud, Dean says, “Maybe. Tell me about your guy.”

“He’s a flirt,” Jimmy answers without hesitation. “And he’s good at it. He’s gorgeous and knows it, and that should be obnoxious, but he’s so obviously having fun that it’s infectious instead.”
Regardless of how Jimmy describes him, Dean finds himself disliking this dude. “So he’s flamboyant.”

“Not in the sense you’re thinking of. When we met, I assumed he was straight. Very traditionally handsome, no queer flagging. But it turns out he’s very much bisexual.”

“What’s that supposed to mean? ‘Very much bisexual’?”

“I meant openly. I didn’t mean some greedy bisexual stereotype.” With a smile in his voice, Jimmy adds, “He’s very flirtatious. I know things are changing, but it’s still a thrill whenever a man flirts with me in public.”

Something twists behind Dean’s stomach. It corkscrews from his spine to his navel, like his body is a wine bottle about to be tugged open with a sloshing pop.

“I think he’s an unintentional tease, but I’m not sure yet,” Jimmy continues. “He might know what he’s doing. He’s very charismatic, I wouldn’t be surprised.”

Yeah, Dean officially hates this guy. He doesn’t need a reason: just hearing about the guy is rubbing Dean the wrong way. Some stupid asshole who’s out and unafraid to do what Dean’s too chickenshit to even consider? Fuck that guy.

“I want to talk about something else,” Dean interrupts over Jimmy.

“Of course,” Jimmy says smoothly, like maybe he was waiting to be interrupted. “What is it?”

There’s a split second where Dean doesn’t have a clue, but their unfinished storytime from two weeks ago mercifully springs to mind. “Your first guy,” Dean says, and he pretends like he can’t remember the name Jimmy had used. “Dan or whatever it was. Dean? Dave?”

“I think I called him ‘Dean,’” Jimmy confirms, sounding more amused by Dean’s guesses than he really should. “You want to hear more of the story now? How far did I get last time?”
“He liked to come on you,” Dean says, his voice reflexively lowering in both volume and timbre, even in the solitude of his apartment. Everyone’s gone home from the garage beneath hours ago, but he still speaks quietly. “You said he fucked you but he let you fuck him first.” That little thought hasn’t been rolling around inside Dean’s head for two weeks or anything.

Jimmy hums, very audibly appreciating the reminder. “He demanded I fuck him first.”

Hell yeah. This is a way better story than that flirty asshole. “He liked it that much?”

“He knew I was nervous,” Jimmy says, a fondness in his voice. It’s the same tone he’d used to talk to Mandy. It’s the kind of tone that only gets directed at a lucky bastard, and Dean eats it up, even only listening in. “I wanted him to take me—I was almost certain I wanted him to—but I was intimidated. I could barely fit him in my mouth at that point. Not all of him. He was too big and I was too inexperienced, but the sounds he made… He made me want to try harder.”

“'Cause you like sucking dick,” Dean says, just to hear Jimmy agree.

“I love sucking dick.” So matter-of-fact. So sincere. “You hear the insults, Michael, but it’s nothing like that. Cocksucker. Blow me. It’s not like that at all.”

Fisting himself through his boxer briefs, Dean tries to keep his breathing steady. Deeper, yes, but steady. “Yeah?” It comes out breathy anyway.

“It was trust. Him not to choke me, me not to bite him. I would have the most vulnerable part of him in my mouth. I would shoulder between his thighs and he would squeeze my sides with his legs. I could smell his arousal so strongly, sometimes I’d think I could taste it through the latex. Do you know how it feels to have proof of that wanting?”

Dean makes a noise in the back of his throat, somewhere between vain agreement and encouragement for Jimmy to keep going.

“I’m sure you have,” Jimmy continues. “I’m sure you’ve slipped your fingers beneath the waist of a woman’s panties and found her soaking wet for you, but, God, with, with Dean, it was something else.”

It is definitely something else with Dean. Slipped beneath the waistband of his boxers, it’s very much
something else. “Tell me.”

“Do you have any idea how hot a dick is?” Jimmy asks. “I don’t mean aesthetically, I mean literally. You’d think you’d know, wouldn’t you, how hot it is. We touch our penises all the time, going to the bathroom, putting on our underwear. It’s not strange. But when you touch your erection, do you pay attention to how hot it is? You’re too used to it, feeling it from the inside out. Pay attention for me.”

Dean’s hand freezes. His lungs seal shut. Jimmy heard him. Jimmy heard him touching himself, Jimmy must have heard him every single time.

“How hot is it? Your dick in your hand?”

“I…”

“Are you hard for me?” His voice is low, solidly in his sex register, and Dean’s dick twitches against his fingers, plumping up the rest of the way. “Tell me you’re hard.”

Dean chokes out a noise of confirmation.

“Can you feel your own heat? Can you feel how hot your arousal is?”

Throat working, Dean nods uselessly against the phone. Fuck, he really needs to get a headset. He’s got one hand in a death grip on his phone and the other down his boxers. He’s jerking with the arm he’s lying on, which isn’t the best of ideas.

“Look down,” Jimmy urges, clearly unaware that Dean’s lying on his side. “Look at yourself. What do you see?”


“Are you tenting them? Is it a long bulge or a peak?”

A laugh bubbles up Dean’s throat and comes out as this weird sex chuckle. “You like how dicks
There’s a slight pause, like he’s thrown Jimmy off. Or maybe that’s just Dean’s brain exaggerating the second of silence into something long and fraught. Or maybe Jimmy’s gotten distracted by something, or-

“I like that very much,” Jimmy says, his voice impossibly deeper. Deeper, maybe, than he’d gotten even while fucking Mandy.

“I’m, I’m rubbing it,” Dean tells him, remembering or misremembering or hoping he remembers something Jimmy once mentioned liking.

“That’s good,” Jimmy says, not getting it. “Rub one out, that’s good.”

“No, I’m, fuck.” Breathe. “Just the head. I’m. I’m rubbing the tip against my boxers. It’s all wet. It’s, ah. It’s pulling. On my dick. Catching on it. S’all wet. Making a big wet spot.”

Jimmy inhales sharply.

Involuntary, Dean works his dick faster.

“What color are they?” Jimmy rasps.

Dean has to look down to check, has to stare down at his hand disappearing under the black waistband. At the bulge of fist and dick. “Gray.” He swallows. “With a dark patch.”

“Make it darker.”

“Gotta, fuck.” He rolls over onto his other side. He abandons his phone on the bed, lying with his ear pressed against it and hoping like hell his cheek doesn’t press the screen wrong. “There. There.”

“Do you like it?”
Dean doesn’t even know. The damp cotton blend pulls at his skin at its most sensitive. It almost hurts when he goes fast and it almost itches when he goes slow, but there’s this sweet spot in the middle where it’s damp and clinging without the impending threat of chafing.

“Do you like it?” Jimmy repeats.

Do you want me to? Dean nearly asks, but that’s too fucked up, even for him.

“Feels weird,” he says instead. “Good weird, maybe. Feels, shit.”

“Oversensitive? Twitching?”

“Shit, yeah.” The slit of his dick takes a particularly hard drag against the damp cotton, and he gives a full-body twitch. “Fuck.”

“Are you going to take it out? Or are you going to come inside them?” Jimmy’s voice pitches from light to dark between the questions, making the answer clear.

“Gonna come inside.” Ear pressed to the phone on the bed, his neck at an awkward angle, he strains to hear Jimmy down the line. Is his breathing affected? He’s too quiet to be jerking it, but maybe he’s adjusted himself through his pants. “Gonna come in my boxer briefs, what do you think about that?”

“I think it will be beautiful,” Jimmy answers, sounding rapt, and Dean’s face tries to flush as hot as his dick. Maybe it would, if his blood weren’t already occupied in better pursuits. “Would you do that for me?” Like it’s a favor he’s asking.

“Uh-huh.” His agreement comes out garbled, but it does make it out of his mouth.

“Thank you,” Jimmy says. Sounding turned on, and sincere, and real.

“Need,” Dean starts to say, and he cuts it off before something stupid can come out.
“Do you need my help?”

Dean grunts in the affirmative.

Jimmy talks to him. Low and dirty, this unrelenting litany of praise and encouragement focuses on Dean, on his body, on his reactions. Not just his dick, not just his hand, but the growing tension in his legs, the shallowness of his breathing, the tightness of his shoulders as his hand and wrist grow tired. Jimmy talks him through his entire body, arms and legs, hands and feet, chest and dick, and all Dean can hear is his voice. All he can think of are the places Jimmy leaves untouched, unmentioned.

Dean’s mouth. His neck and ears.

His ass.

“Tell me you’re close,” Jimmy orders.

Dean tells him.

“Tell me you want to come.”

Dean tells him.

“Tell me you’re going to come.”

Dean tells him. He says it and tries, so damn close—but he can’t. If he comes, the call is over. If he comes, this will stop. He can’t prevent his own hands from moving, can’t keep his eyes open, can’t keep the sounds inside his mouth no matter how he tries.

“Let me hear you,” Jimmy urges. “I don’t get to see you, I want to hear you. You sound so relieved when you come, did you know that? You sound so satisfied. Content. It’s lovely.”

Dean squeezes his eyes shut tighter and bites his tongue.
“How dark are your boxers now? How wet are they? Could I stand in the doorway of your bedroom and see it? Or would I have to come closer? Would I have to come over to your bed and pull a sheet off you? Would you let me look? Can I? Can I see you come?"

It’s not what Dean needs him to say. It’s close, but it’s not it, the same way his orgasm is close. It’s hovering out of sight, close enough to scrape his fingers against, but he can’t take hold of it.

“I want to see you,” Jimmy begins, and that’s it, that’s Dean, that’s fireworks bubbling up through his veins, tension fizzling up into sparks through his legs, down his spine, that’s him jizzing inside his boxer briefs before Jimmy can even finish that sentence, can finish saying, “I want to see you come.”

Jimmy, thank fuck, keeps talking to him through it. “That’s it,” he says, and it turns out that aroused and proud are two great tastes that taste great together. “That sounded so lovely, could you hear yourself? Did it feel as good as it sounded?” His words slow as Dean’s breathing slows, or maybe that’s the other way around.

“Do you want to take your boxer briefs off now?” Jimmy asks, and Dean does it without thinking, squirming and all. “Did you do it?”

Dean hums in the affirmative, his limbs rapidly growing heavier. The relaxation is short-lived, his tension returning to his limbs even before his mind can pop back into his brain, but, fuck. That was worth it.

It was worth it.

“’anks,” Dean mumbles, purposefully quiet about it.

Jimmy must have some amazing ears or really good headphones or something, because Jimmy’s response is a warm “You’re welcome.”

He even sounds fond.

Dean closes his eyes again. “That, uh.”
“Do you feel better?” Jimmy asks, still sounding like he actually cares.

Dean turns his face against the warm surface of his phone screen. “Yeah,” he says, because he can at least give Jimmy that much.

“It’s none of my business, but there is something I would like to ask.”

Those words shake Dean up out of post-coital lethargy despite the ease in Jimmy’s tone. “Uh, yeah. Okay.” Dean swallows. “Shoot.”

“This job training you’re doing. Is there anyone you can ask for help?”

It takes a few seconds for Dean’s liquefied noggin to remember how he’d described his midterms to Jimmy. “Kinda already too late, man.” The papers aren’t due yet, so maybe he can salvage those, but he knows he screwed himself over on the actual tests. He’s got one more on Monday, but even if he doesn’t tank that one, it won’t save his other classes.

“Are you sure?” Before Dean can muster the energy to take offense at being questioned, Jimmy adds, “You’d know better than I would, but sometimes a little dogged pursuit can go a long way.”

“Dude, I finally just relaxed.”

“Right.” A pause. “I’m sorry. I’ve been told I have a strange sense of aftercare.”

The word sticks oddly in Dean’s head. “Meaning?”

“My timing isn’t always the most appropriate. I imagine it’s the need to physically reassure my partner coming out verbally.”

“You saying you want to take care of me, Jimbo?” He tries for a taunt, but it comes out stupidly breathless.
“If you’d indulge me,” Jimmy says, sounding faintly hopeful.

Inwardly, but only inwardly, Dean sighs and resigns himself to five more minutes on his phone bill. “Yeah. Yeah, okay.” And he settles in, warm and loose for just a little while longer.

On Friday, he’s still a worthless failure of a brother and a disappointment of a son, but he hates himself for it less than expected. It’s a jarring feeling, conspicuous by its absence, and Dean makes his way to the campus library feeling more resigned than angry. It’s a warm way of being numb, like Jimmy’s reassurances have set themselves up as a slim barrier against reality. They loop through his head as he drives and parks in the nearest lot to the library, and he tries to brush the whole mess aside as he enters the building.

It’s not as packed as it was last week. Most of the midterms are over, but then again, there’s a lot of illness going around for it only being October. It’s probably a combination of the two clearing the library, but Cas is still there at the usual spot.

It’s kinda impressive, how a guy can look that hot and that grumpy at the same time. He’s in a full suit today, the navy jacket unbuttoned over a white shirt and blue striped tie. Whoever told this guy that blue was his color did both a service to humanity and a disservice to Dean’s ability to focus.

Dean, as always, has a flannel layered over t-shirt and jeans. They’re wearing thin at the knees and wearing poorly at the ankles. He should probably invest in new jeans instead of blowing his excess funds on chatting with Jimmy, but screw it, he likes these pants just fine. It’s a style, anyway, and not Dean being the poor kid at school.

Plastering a confident smile on his face, Dean grabs his regular seat. Cas glances up at him as Dean shucks his jacket and sets down his bag. Cas doesn’t have his laptop out today, only a pile of papers, a red pen, and a foreboding frown. The frown twitches in a better direction as Cas meets his gaze, but that change is quick and doesn’t last.

Dean opens his laptop and pulls up the first of the papers he has to submit by midnight tonight. He reads through it and thinks it’s okay. He wants to think it’s okay. The other paper is less okay. He tries to shove it into place, but words are stupid. He’s not Vonnegut, he’s Dean Winchester, and this isn’t an old clunker of a car for him to fix.

When he gets too frustrated, he finds himself watching Cas instead. The red pen makes Xs, checks,
and circles down rows of multiple choice questions. Cas’ frown deepens over the open response questions even when he checks them off. He does them one after another with furrowed brows and focused eyes. For one, he flips his pen around and traces the line repeatedly with the pen cap, his eyes narrowed, his lips pursed.

Dean maybe stares too long.

Cas looks up.

Dean tilts his head and shifts his expression into the universally understood message of *Whatcha doing?*

Cas silently sighs before indicating the papers and holding both hands beside his head, palms facing inward, the lines of his shaking arms like a cartoon rendition of stress.

Dean tries for a sympathetic grimace. He must manage it, because Cas nods almost gratefully before going back to work. The way Dean should.

Gritting his teeth, Dean forces his eyeballs—if not his actual attention—back to his paper. He keeps poking at it futilely before he thinks to check his outline or see if he left something out when he copied over his handwritten rough draft. He rifles through his bag for the appropriate notebook, and flips through.

And there, on the page beside his sprawling mess of an outline, is one of his first conversations with Cas.

In black ink: *How the hell do you write a research paper? You’re doing a research paper, right? How do you make it good?*

In blue: *The writing center is on the second floor. Try there.*

There’s a faint buzzing in Dean’s head as he looks at the notebook page. It stays even as he looks back at his laptop. It expands, moving from his ears to meet in the middle before sinking down into his chest and stomach.
He can’t let someone see this pile of shit, but he can’t fix it unless he does.

He freezes way too long, but finally, he taps the table, getting Cas’ attention. When Cas looks up, Dean points to his own eyes before indicating his crap. Cas nods, a perfunctory promise to watch it for him, and Dean didn’t even have to bribe the guy with coffee. They’re practically friends.

Dean takes his laptop and notebook but leaves the rest. He heads to the second floor and follows the jarring noise of human speech instead of checking a map. As feared, the writing center is packed today. It’s grimly reassuring that Dean isn’t the only idiot waiting until the last minute, but mostly it’s just one more barrier between him and being finished with this bullshit.

There’s an actual waiting list he has to sign, and he’s behind a full dozen people. Which isn’t the worst thing, because it turns out that he needs to print the papers for one of these assholes to write on them. That takes up some time, but not enough. He stands there and suffers, at least until the line moves a little, and then he gets to sit there and suffer. Finally, one of the writing center staff—a kid a decade younger than Dean—gestures over the next person and Dean heads on over to face judgment.

Tucking her blond hair behind her ears, the girl reads through the paper once in complete and unnerving silence. A few words and lines get circled in red pen. Sometimes, she nods a little. Mostly, she doesn’t. Dean braces himself for the feedback, a litany of What is this garbage? and Can’t you do anything right? preemptively looping through his head.

The kid finishes reading, flips back to the first page, and says, “It’s coherent, but a little rambling. Right now, I’d say you’re in B territory.”

Dean blinks.

The kid—whose name is apparently Jo—walks him through his own paper with quick and efficient strides. She points out where he’s said the same thing twice before cutting through lines of text with her red pen. “You already made your point,” Jo tells him. “The good news is, you did it better the second time, so definitely keep that one. You’re pretty heavy on quotations, too, you really don’t need that many.”

Slow to wrap his brain around a simple concept, Dean asks, “I did too much?”

“You’re using other people’s words too much,” Jo explains. “It needs more of you in there.” She
loops back through the paper one more time, circling this, putting that in brackets. At two points, she draws a quick star next to a bracketed section. “These parts are strongest, do that.”

They go through the second paper even faster, and it sucks less. Now all he’s got to do is fix it all before midnight. The thought is strangely reasonable, reinforced by Jo’s apparent lack of concern.

When they’re done, he grabs up his shit and she shoots him an absentminded thumbs-up while gesturing the next person over. It’s no big deal to her, no matter how part of Dean is still quietly waiting to be eviscerated.

He heads back to Cas. In the time Dean’s been gone, Cas has gotten through most of his pile and is now frowning his way through short essays. He looks up at Dean’s return, but the question in his eyes fades when he sees the red-marked pages Dean sets down alongside his laptop.

Now armed with actual instructions telling him what to do, Dean tears through the corrections. He’s fucked up with a lot of his commas, so he tackles those first, working his way up to the hard stuff. He types with his tongue between his lips, lightly bitten between his teeth, because otherwise he’s going to start trying to read this shit aloud.

His typing is loud against the backdrop of breathing and the scratch of Cas’ pen. He keeps going. He gets the first paper as good as it’s going to get. He starts the second. He hates it. He keeps going. There’s an actual, physical strain pushing up inside his brain, and he still keeps going.

In the end, they have to be done, because he is. He’s finished. He takes one final read-through of each before biting the bullet and submitting them online. And then he promises himself to never open the files ever again, because otherwise he’s going to drive himself insane.

He closes his laptop harder than he should before sagging back into his seat. He’s exhausted. He’s been sitting in a chair, prodding words around a document, and he’s fucking drained.

Head tilted back, he stares blankly up at the ceiling, at the lines of lights and rows of bookshelves stretching away from them. He’s still got that test to study for on Monday, but he’s so fucking done. Closing his eyes, he breathes. Deep breaths, the way Jimmy does it. Slow and steady, though Dean will never match the sultry vibe Jimmy gives off. How is sultry breathing even a thing? But it is, and Jimmy does it. Jimmy does it, and it’s gorgeous.

With a sigh, he lifts his head and opens his eyes. He catches Cas looking at him, and Cas
immediately makes this concerned face. Dean waves him off before pointing to Cas’ pile of papers. When Cas’ expression turns sour, Dean grins. Cas rolls his eyes in response, that hilarious full-body motion of sarcasm.

Only grinning wider, Dean finally remembers his thermos. He’s obviously been conditioning Cas, though, because the second the canister is in sight, Cas’ eyebrows go up in a quiet plea. Dean rolls his eyes like he wasn’t already planning on sharing, but when he pulls Cas’ empty thermos over, Cas actually looks surprised.

For all that it’s small, Cas’ smile still lights up his face. It’s a good look.

It’s a good face.

Dean passes back the thermos, and Cas keeps smiling. That joy is directed explicitly at the coffee now, Cas’ eyes lowered to the lip of the thermos as he drinks, pulling in small, savoring sips. It’s not even the good stuff, only what Dean can load up on in massive quantities before heading out for the day, but that doesn’t seem to matter. Dean tears his eyes away before he can perv too obviously.

Putting off studying, he reads from Cas’ pile instead. It’s slow going, reading upside down, and he’s pretty sure he’s reading it wrong. Either that, or “heteronormative” is a real word now. In an example sentence: What are three heteronormative assumptions and how does each negatively impact both heterosexual and queer individuals? (9 pts)

And that’s the shit Cas is correcting. Yeah, this guy is way smarter than Dean.

Cas notices him looking, because of course Cas notices him looking. There’s something in Cas’ expression that encourages Dean to comment, to flip open his notebook and scribble something down, but if Dean were a real bisexual, he’d already know shit about being gay and crap, right?

So Dean just twitches back a smile and opens his laptop up, pretending to have something to do. He has a lot of things to do, actually, just not right now. He’s got readings and should be trying to study for Monday, but instead he pulls up Google and tries to think of a worthy distraction.

He looks up cheap headsets. He’s got those earbuds with the speaker input thingy that came with his phone, but there’s no way in hell he’s risking having an earbud fall out while his hands are coated with jizz. Or, maybe, theoretically, lube. Or whatever. The point is, he finds a couple headsets that might not suck. Besides, if the headset makes it that much easier to jerk off, that’ll cut down on the
call time. Which means he could technically be saving money in the long term.

Not that calling Jimmy every week is a long term thing. Just maybe longer than a short term thing. A semester thing. He’s budgeted it out and he should be able to make it work. Sam keeps telling him to make sure he’s fitting fun into his schedule, and hell if that isn’t weird for everyone involved. Since when is Sammy the brother rooting for college parties?

But that’s the thing. Dean isn’t going to parties, college or otherwise. He’s way too old for those parties, or maybe it would be better said that those parties are way too young. He’s overheard a couple, wandering off campus on Friday nights after an afternoon at the library, and the music is always shit. It’s children jumping around and getting drunk like they’re still fifteen.

Jimmy, though. Jimmy’s the definition of adult content, and Dean likes his idea of a party way better. Maybe he’ll have Mandy over for work again. One of his other regulars might have a birthday or something, and then everyone will get to celebrate.

Maybe Jimmy will bring a man. He hadn’t really answered about whether he had a man. A male submissive. A good boy.

Dean stares at the screen without seeing it. His mind races without going anywhere, wheels spinning while the car’s still suspended on the lift, dangerous and unproductive.

He opens up a new tab and runs another search, a word from last night still pinging inside his brain.

A search for aftercare comes up with a variety of things. The first three results are for local medical services and daycare centers, but Urban Dictionary strongly disagrees with those suggestions. The link for What Is BDSM Aftercare? also looks pretty promising.

Dean clicks.

He reads.

He keeps reading.
It’s Jimmy.

So much of it is Jimmy. The checking in. The reassurances.

It’s Jimmy.

An ache starts to bloom through Dean’s cheeks. He’s grinning. Been grinning for a while, by the feel of it, and he can’t seem to stop. He puts his hand over his mouth and he’s still grinning at his laptop like a complete moron.

Jimmy wants to Dom him. At least, Jimmy’s instinct is to Dom him. Dean’s not delusional, he doesn’t think Jimmy actually wants him. But if aftercare is a BDSM thing and Jimmy’s doing the aftercare part, he’s got to want to do the rest, right? Work Dean over like he did Mandy.

Plus, it’s not like it could actually go that far, not over the phone. No whips or chains. Nothing freaky, nothing painful. Just Jimmy’s voice.

Because, well, if Jimmy wants to play that way, Dean might as well let him. The guy’s got a pretty crappy job with loads of perverts calling him, Dean included, so Dean can at least do him that favor and let Jimmy play the way he wants to. Right? That’s just Dean being a good person, or at least a slightly less awful one. Dean could get off just on the stories—story, singular, they still haven’t gotten to finish the actual Tale Of the First Fucking—but if Jimmy wants to tell him how to jerk off, they can do that too.

When it comes down to it, it would still just be jerking off. There’s no one there to fuck him, and it’s not like Jimmy can shove his dick through the phone and down Dean’s throat. The most that’s going to happen is maybe Jimmy telling him to finger himself, and Dean can always say no. Hell, Dean can hang up, as much as the thought makes him wince. Dean’s the one paying. He’s in charge.

Somewhere in all this thinking, Dean’s gone from covering his grin with his hand to biting the side of his index finger. The air around him is still and quiet, unnaturally quiet even in the silent study area.

Cas has stopped writing.

Dean looks up.
Cas looks back at him, concern on his face.

Dean jerkily waves him off.

Cas tilts his head further, looking more concerned.

Dean pulls over his notebook, still turned back to that page from weeks ago with Cas’ suggestion to go to the writing center. He looks around for a pen before realizing it’s in his bag, but Cas holds out one of his own, the red one. Dean uncaps it but pauses, the nib pressing hard against the page.

*I’m fine,* he writes.

He passes the pen back and Cas nods before Dean can even turn the notebook for him to read. Cas reaches out, a long line of arm and shoulder, and he writes upside-down on the line below Dean’s. *You went from very happy to very nervous, very quickly. Do you need help?*

Dean needs like five kinds of help, but probably not the kind Cas is thinking. Though Cas still holds out the pen for him, reaching far across the table to do it, Dean doesn’t take it back. He shakes his head and puts on the same smirk he’s used for years. *Me, need help?* that smirk says. *You’re cute for asking.*

Cas’ answering expression is two parts unimpressed, one part curiosity, and about ten parts not about to waste his time on Dean. It’s a hell of a look, especially on a guy with that strong a jaw, but it’s nothing Dean hasn’t seen before.

Dean just shrugs.

Cas seems to realize it was none of his business and goes back to ignoring him. He straightens up and resumes grading like he’s on some kind of crusade and, that quickly, Dean might as well cease to exist.

Which makes sense. Not everybody is Sam. Most people don’t chase after Dean once he tells them to fuck off.
(Most people don’t chase after Dean *before* he tells them to fuck off.)

Dean wastes some time rereading his class notes for Monday’s midterm and staring blankly at the study guide. In the end, there’s not much more he can do than finish his coffee and head home. When he gathers up his stuff and packs his bag, it makes noise, as always, but Cas doesn’t look up.

Standing with his jacket on and his bag over his shoulder, Dean pushes in his chair and Cas still doesn’t look up, frowning over a short essay question with his pen resting against his lip. Dean waits too long, a few seconds watching for something he’s not going to see, and he leaves without waving goodbye.

Chapter End Notes

Updates every Monday, time of day may vary.

To see what else I’m working on, you can follow me on [tumblr here](http://tumblr.com).
Bad Timing

Chapter Summary

Maybe he's getting better at this; maybe he's getting worse.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

He buys a headset after his Monday midterm. He tells the guy at the store that he needs to be able to sort through a filing cabinet while on the phone. He says he needs it to work with a cell phone and that he wants the cheapest option.

This piece of shit is definitely the cheapest option. It’s still more than he deserves to treat himself to after the disaster that was his midterms, but screw it. These calls are the highlight of his week. He goes to class and hits the books. He toils away in the garage office when he should be elbow deep under the hood.

He’s doing everything right, even if he’s not doing it well. Everything Sam expects and Bobby wants, Dean’s doing it. So what if he’s being more of an asshole about it than usual? This shit is stressful. Keeping them from finding out how much he’s fucking things up? Also stressful.

It’s a crappy justification to buy the headset, let alone continue the calls, but it’s the crappy justification Dean’s going with.

He tests the headset out on Tuesday with Sam. It’s a tense exchange of less than pleasant pleasantries. Sam can’t share confidential law stories. Dean doesn’t have anything fun to share from the garage, now that he’s been pulled out from where he belongs and into management and classes.

From a technical standpoint, the call goes fine. Dean gets used to the headset and Sam doesn’t comment on Dean sounding weird. At least, not in terms of the phone call itself. It’s a little weird hearing Sam’s voice in both ears, but he’ll get used to it.

Wednesday sucks only moderately, but Thursday drags on like Dean pissed off the Mythical Hourglass Of the Universe or something. Finally, after classes and errands and chores and cooking and doing the dishes, finally, Dean is alone in his room, wearing nothing more than boxer briefs and a headset.
He pulls back his covers, lumps his pillow up against the headboard, and settles in, mindful of the twisting cord tethering him to his phone. He dials. He rocks out to the hold music for a couple minutes before grabbing his phone and getting up for a book. His focus shot, he tries to read anyway.

He ends up plugging his phone in before he gets off hold, just in case. It’s a good thing, too, because nearly half an hour passes before the hold music stops looping and the operator picks back up. Dean finally gets transferred over, and it’s like all the tension drains out of his body the second he hears, “Hello, Michael.”

“Hey there, Jimbo. Busy night?”

“Not too busy for you,” Jimmy promises, his voice already rough and deep. He might be aroused, but he might also need a break for his vocal chords. Either way, having his voice in both ears at once is already worth the price of admission. “I’m glad you weren’t too busy for me, either. You were on hold for over twenty minutes?”

“Eh,” Dean says, closing his textbook on his capped highlighter and setting it aside. “Got some reading done, no big deal.” He’ll have to reread all of it tomorrow at the library, having absorbed exactly none of it, but Jimmy doesn’t need to know that. “What about you? You need a break or something? You’re sounding kinda hoarse there, buddy.”

Jimmy clears his throat and goes up half an octave. “I’m fine. Just need a little water.”

“You wanna go get that?” Dean’s suddenly a lot more patient, even though these are the minutes he’s paying for. “I can finish my paragraph, it’s fine.”

There’s the slightest pause before Jimmy says, “I already have it here.” Another pause, and: “Thank you.”

Dean shrugs, awkward and alone. “I’ve been on hold for longer than that.” He tries for a flirtatious grin, leaning back against his headboard and looking up at the ceiling. “For way worse calls, too.”

“Are you comparing me to calling your cable company?”
“In a good way,” Dean promises.

“Such a charmer,” Jimmy deadpans.

“That’s me. Suave as fuck.”

Jimmy hums, clearly considering that. “And how do you propose to sweep me off my feet?”

“A kick to the back of the knees, typically,” Dean says, gratified when Jimmy laughs. Even with both ears covered by his headphones, it’s a soft noise, barely there. Dean closes his eyes for the brief moment it lasts, hearing it better in the dark.

“How are you this week?” Jimmy asks, turning serious too soon. When Dean hesitates, Jimmy smoothly adds, “Unless you’d prefer the distraction.”

“I’d love the distraction. But, y’know, I’m, uh. I’m okay.”

“I’m glad,” Jimmy says, so simple and sincere, the consummate actor. “Has the situation improved?”

Dean makes a groan in the back of his throat, but it doesn’t quite manage to come out as dismissive as it had while reassuring Sammy. “It sucks maybe a little less,” he admits. He’s already trusted this guy with his bisexuality and his orgasm grunts; after that, complaining should barely register.

It still does, though, like Dean is doing something wrong. Besides the paying for phonesex part.

“Did you find any help?” Jimmy asks.

“ Took a buddy of mine up on some advice,” Dean settles for saying. Down the line, there’s the sounds of drinking, so Dean keeps talking, giving the guy a respite. “I think it panned out. I won’t know for sure for a couple weeks, but it is what it is. Might not have been as clueless as I thought, either.”

Jimmy swallows. “If you were clueless, you wouldn’t know it. By definition.”
“Thanks for the semantics pep talk.”

“You’re welcome.”

“What about you?”

“I think I have several clues.”

Dean rolls his eyes. “Jinkies.”

“What?”

“I was asking about your week, genius. You good?”

“Oh,” Jimmy says, sounding surprised. “I’m—I’ve been busy. It was a busy week.”

“Good busy or bad busy.”

“Busy,” Jimmy answers concisely.

“Yeah, I’ve had those weeks.” Dean settles back against his headboard, rolling his shoulders. He brushes the cord of his headset off his thigh. “You, uh. You Dom anybody?”

“Yes,” Jimmy says with a smile clear in his voice. “Have you had that kind of a week, too?”

Dean wavers before admitting, “Can’t say I have.” That’s a normal response, right? Normal people haven’t done that. “You do any of that in-person?”

The smile audibly vanishes. “I’m not that kind of sex worker. This is strictly over the phone.”

You call her your good girl lately?

“I might be able to arrange another threesome night soon,” Jimmy says, more considering than calm.

“You mean, like, for the phone, or is that just a thing you do?”

“I did mean for the phone, yes.”

**But is that something you do?**

Dean clears his throat. “That’s, uh. One hell of a flexible girlfriend you got there.”

“She is very flexible, but she isn’t my girlfriend,” Jimmy corrects. “We aren’t exclusive.”

Dean frowns, the headphones shifting faintly against his ears. “But you sounded…”

Gentle and quiet, Jimmy asks, “How did we sound?”

“You were all, you know.” He ducks his head and mutters. “Affectionate and shit.” Intimate, even with Dean listening in.

“I’m affectionate with my friends,” Jimmy says, so matter-of-fact that Dean has to laugh through his embarrassment.

“Buddy, if that’s what you’re calling it, then I need a couple more friends like you.”

“You’re off to a decent start.” As Dean frowns in hope and confusion, Jimmy adds, “Not many people ask me about my week.”
There’s a thump in Dean’s chest and a reflexive grin on his face before he reins it in. “Assholes. Guess that’s the job, though. Talking to assholes and dicks about assholes and dicks.”

“No comment,” Jimmy says, the faint tinge of a smile back in his voice. “Unless you do want to talk about assholes and dicks now.”

“Hey.”

Jimmy chuckles, low and deep. Without a phone to press his ear against, Dean tilts his head back against the wall, eyes slipping shut at the sound. Jimmy asks, “So you don’t want to talk about assholes and dicks?”

“I don’t know, man. Every time I try, you go off on some tangent like the Scheherazade of porn.”

That earns Dean another laugh, just a little one. “That’s the best compliment I’ve received in a long time, thank you. Are you saying you do or don’t want another story?”

“Well, what are my other options? Press one for dick, press two for ass?”

“Whose ass? Mine or yours?”

Though Dean remains still, something inside him starts to squirm. His hands on his thighs grow in weight and heat. “Uh.”

“Is that something you’re curious about?” Jimmy’s voice begins its meander down toward arousal. “It’s not for everyone, but when you like it, it’s an entirely different kind of orgasm.”

“And you like it.”

“I had a wonderful introduction to it.”

Oh, fuck yes. “With Dean,” Dean says, sitting up straighter both on his bed and inside his boxer briefs.
“With Dean,” Jimmy says like he loves the taste of the name. “He started so slowly with me, I’m not sure even he knew when he started.”

“So he didn’t go straight for your ass?” That’s definitely where they differ. Dean would be balls deep in Jimmy long before now.

“No, Michael, he went gay for my ass.”

Dean chokes. “Okay, fuck you.”

“Soon,” Jimmy promises.

“Really?” Dean can’t help but ask. “I mean.” He’s not sure what he means. “I know we can’t actually, but.”

“We can fuck,” Jimmy says, his tone incongruously reassuring. Dean’s heart rate tries to slow down and pick up at the same time. “I have my dildo, you have your cock. We can fuck.”

Dean closes his eyes tight, inhaling sharply through his nose.

“Or should I complete my story first, for once?” Jimmy adds like the fucking tease he is.

“Would you come this time? You, uh. With Mandy, you didn’t.”

“I might.”

Yeah, definitely a tease.

“I only fuck people who are going to come,” Dean says, hiding his want under a boast. “Personal policy.”
“That wasn’t an insult. I came less than an hour ago, that’s all,” Jimmy assures him, and Dean sees red.

He’d figured Jimmy didn’t come. That Jimmy did his edging thing all night and maybe, maybe blew his load on his last caller, but probably not. He’d figured Jimmy didn’t come with any of them, kept all of them wanting equally.

“If you think you can make me come again, I’ll get out my dildo.”

“You want to get reamed in the ass, dude? Because this is how you get reamed in the ass.”

“Maybe I do,” Jimmy goads him, voice all the way down in the gutter. “You’ve never been fucked after an orgasm, have you?”

“You know I haven’t.” He doesn’t turn red at all as he says it. His face is hot because his body is hot, bare skin prickling against the air of his bedroom. His hand is on his dick over his boxer briefs, has been for a while, but he’s just holding now. Covering it.

“The things I could introduce you to,” Jimmy muses, low and wistful, like Dean’s gay inexperience is something to be savored.

“How about we introduce my dick to your ass?”

“I’d like that. Hold on, let me put down a towel.”

Dean’s stomach lurches. His dick jumps against his hand. “Are you actually doing it?”

“Do you not want to?” Jimmy asks. “I don’t play gay chicken, Michael. If you tell me what you want and I agree, then I’m agreeing.”

“And you’re… putting down a towel.”
“The lube can make a mess, especially if I’m on my back, but it’s worth the cleanup. Now, do I need that towel or not?”

The horny impatience goes straight to Dean’s dick. “Yeah, get it.”

“All right, one second.”

There’s a shifting noise followed by a cloth scrape as Jimmy’s headset winds up on what might be a bed. There are receding footsteps, a door opening, a distant door opening and the same door quickly closing. The returning footsteps are even quicker. There’s the soft *whump* of heavy cloth followed by the sounds of a drawer opened, rummaged through, and shut. Something gets put down on the bed, and then there’s the familiar sounds of Jimmy drinking his water, quick and hasty.

Throughout it all, Dean keeps palming his dick in horny disbelief. This is happening. This is actually happening.

There’s another scrape of microphone on fabric and then Jimmy says in a low and rough deadpan, “Thank you for holding.”

Dean surprises himself with a laugh. “You’re worth the wait, man.”

“Good, because if you come before I put my dildo inside me, I’m going to be very annoyed.”

Cheeks flushed, Dean tells him, “You just worry about getting that dick inside you.”

Jimmy lets out a pleased hum. “Do you want to walk me through it? Or do you want to watch?”

“What, you’re a camgirl now?” But the idea still has Dean finally giving in and slipping his hand under his waistband. He’s been teasing himself almost as much as Jimmy has, but he’ll be good. He can hold off.

“Mm, no, but I can tell you how I’m doing it to myself or you can instruct me.”
“You’re the expert, buddy,” Dean rasps with a dry mouth.

There are settling noises, like Jimmy’s lying down. “Do you want me to teach you? You can follow along.”

“Uh.” Dean’s throat tries to click shut. His ass clenches, tense butt cheeks lifting his entire lap higher in an unintentional flexing sort of thrust. He grinds his dick into his hand instead of the other way around.

“When I tell you what I’m doing, picture it. We can finger me open together.”

Oh.


“Slow,” Jimmy says, and Dean’s wallet weeps. “Light and slow, until I’m pressing back down into it. What hand are we using?”

“What?”

“What hand are we fingering me with? Right or left?”

Jesus. Dean’s right hand is locked around his dick, so… “Left.”

“Then the right hand is for dispensing lube.” There’s a click like a lid uncapping from a plastic bottle. There’s a squirting noise, and while it might not be sexy, it is undeniably real. Jimmy inhales sharply before audibly relaxing. “I didn’t warm it up,” he explains, his words slow, his voice deep. “I went right to it, but I like the chill. It makes the dildo feel hotter in comparison. More like a real cock.”

Eyes closed, Dean tries to hold the image. A dark-haired man on his back on top of a towel, bottle of lube in one hand, asshole beneath the other. “You lying there with your legs spread?”
“Mmhm. My forearm keeps brushing against my cock. It’s distracting. It’s still overstimulating.” And while Dean’s busy picturing that too, Jimmy asks, “Should I start now?”

“Dude, yeah. Go for it. Are you gonna get hard again?”

“I’m plumping up a little,” Jimmy confesses. “But right now, it’s mostly about feeling it. Circling a little. Pressing.” He swallows. “My body feels so relaxed, and yet.” His breathing is deep and steady, like he’s controlling it.

Dean forces his mouth to move, to make noises. “You dipping your fingertip in?”

“I’m using the pad of my finger,” Jimmy tells him, a throaty correction. “It feels wider. Thicker.”

“You got big fingers?” Dean asks. “You got big strong hands?”

“Hard to say. They’re proportional to my cock.”

Dean laughs, breathy and high with arousal. “What, they swell up when you get a boner?”

Jimmy laughs too. Less breathless, but still pleasant.

Dean works himself a little faster before squeezing himself still. “You telling me you ain’t a Slim Jim?”

Jimmy groans, and not in a moaning way. “Michael, I am trying to become aroused. Why are you preventing this?”

Dean snickers to himself, irrationally thrilled. “You can’t jerk off through that? Just one fucking bad joke, that’s enough to do you in?”

Jimmy’s breathing grows at once more controlled and more labored. There’s another squirting noise, but Dean doesn’t snicker at that, as comical as it sounds.
“You inside yet?” he asks instead, pumping himself. He’s still inside his boxer briefs, just the way Jimmy would want him.

“Still circling,” Jimmy says with a gasp. “Pressing more.”

Dean licks his lips. “Can you take it yet? You can, right? Just a little?”


Dean swears, picturing it. “How hairy are you? Down there.”

“I’m, what?”

“Me looking at you, what am I seeing?”

“Dark gray towel. My legs spread. Left hand between. My cock’s trying to get hard against my arm, but I need, please, I need- Can I fingerfuck myself now?”

It feels so wrong to have Jimmy ask him permission, but the response bursts out of him all the same. “Oh, baby, you fingerfuck yourself all you want.”

There’s a squelching noise, which isn’t sexy, and then there’s Jimmy sighing in relief, which more than makes up for that. That goes on for a while, testing Dean’s self-control, making him breathe as quietly as he can.

Hands almost shaking, Dean adjusts his underwear over his dick, the cloth getting damp, his dick getting cramped, but he still doesn’t whip it out. He’s making that dark patch, just the way Jimmy likes it. “How is it? Is it good?”

“Dude, don’t hurt yourself.”

There’s the slightest pause in the rhythm of the wet squishing noise, Jimmy paused with a finger inside himself, hand between his legs, arm stretched down his chest and stomach, dick against his wrist. Dean can see the outline of it, this drawing he keeps trying to color in.

“You’re sweet,” Jimmy says, his voice a low, gravelly mess, as surprised as he is aroused.

Dean flushes. He actually squirms, the waistband of his boxer briefs digging into his wrist and hips, the legs tight around his thighs. “Shut up.”

“You’re very sweet,” Jimmy says, the bastard, and the rhythmic squelching resumes. His big thick fingers dipping in and out of his hole. Dean’s ass clenches in sympathy, the weight of his own body forcing friction between skin and cloth as his muscles flex.

“I want you begging for it, not begging for it to stop,” Dean blusters.

“Do you want me to go slower?” Jimmy teases. “Can you last if I go slower?”

Dean’s ego says yes. His wallet says no. For once, his dick agrees with the wallet, and that alliance wins. “You don’t want to be fucked full? You saying you don’t want my dick up your ass?”

The second the words are out of his mouth, they boomerang around and smack him in the head with his own stupidity. Of course Jimmy doesn’t want Dean’s dick, not in his ass or anywhere near him.

“If you want me to beg, you’ll have to make me,” Jimmy challenges, goading Dean back on track. There’s more of the wet noise, but slower, more drawn out, like maybe he’s stretching himself open instead of thrusting. “Or you could always teach me by example.”

“I don’t beg.”

“Not even if I made you wait?” Jimmy asks through hitching breaths and little sighs. “I’m sure you
have your cock out, ready and hard for me.”

“Nope,” Dean says, stupidly proud. “Still in my boxers, dude. Getting all wet and clingy on my dick.”

Jimmy sucks in a breath, but his words themselves are breathless. “Are you really?”

“Mmhm. ’Cause you like that shit.”

Jimmy groans and the noises grow faster, like Jimmy can’t hold himself back any longer. “You’re so good for me. You’re so good, thank you for that.”

Dean’s entire body tenses with the effort to keep from coming. “Fuck.” His hands lock down on his dick, his legs seize up against his bed, his nipples fucking itch with how hard they are.

“I’m ready,” Jimmy says, urging him on. There’s a snick of a plastic cap. “I’ve got my dildo nice and wet, it’s ready to fuck me if you are.”

“Put it in,” Dean tells him. Orders, not begs. Doesn’t beg at all. “Stick it in. I want…” He bites his own tongue, listening to Jimmy control his ragged breathing. The moment goes long and thick and slow, just like the fucking Jimmy’s bound to give himself.

“Is it in?” Dean hears himself ask. He swallows. “Tell me it’s in.”

“The first few inches,” Jimmy says, his voice keening high. “I went a little too fast, but it, god.”

“What are you doing with it? Are you just pushing it in, what are you doing?”

“You, ah, you tell me. You’re fucking me, aren’t you?”

Oh, right. “Gonna have to take off my boxers for that,” Dean answers, shifting to shimmy them down.
“Can you pull them down?” Jimmy asks. “Not all the way, just the waistband under your balls?”

Dean pauses with his thumbs hooked into the waistband at his hips, dick thrusting up against the straining cloth. “Uh, why?”

“I love the way it makes your cock stand up. It looks so good.”

It’s kinda weird, but Dean’s rolled with weirder. He moves the band. It digs in a little—kind of a lot—but it’s not a bad sensation, at least not while he’s this turned on. “Done.”

“So good for me,” Jimmy says again, and it’s Dean’s new favorite sentence. “You’re so good for me. Now put your cock inside me.”

Maybe Dean should have bought a fleshlight instead of a headset, but sitting on the bed with Jimmy’s voice securely in both ears, he’s still pretty sure he made the right choice. He holds his dick with one hand and makes a fist with the other, pressing his cockhead against the curl of his fingers like it’s a tight asshole. “How much?”

“Just the tip, start with that.”

Dean pushes up into his hand, wet with only his own precome. “I’m in. Jimmy, I’m—tell me, you gotta tell me, man.”

“You’re pushing inside. You’re stretching my rim with the head of your cock and it feels so good. My cock’s trying to get hard again, god. If I were younger, I’d be ready to come.”

“If you were younger, it’d be creepy. I wanna fuck a man.” It pops out of his mouth, a revelation he already knew. He’s never said that before, not even to himself.

“You want to fuck me,” Jimmy corrects, voice strong and deep and only a little unsteady. “Say it.”

“I...”
“Say it and you can fuck me. You can push your whole cock inside me, but you have to say it.”

His hands frozen on his dick, Dean chokes out the words. “Let me fuck you.”

“That’s not what I told you to say. Now are you going to tease me, or are you going to give us what we both want?”

“I wanna fuck you,” Dean lets out in one furtive rush. “I want you so bad.”

“I want you kneeling between my legs,” Jimmy answers. “I want you pushing your cock against my hole until the head pops inside and stretches me open. I want you staring at my hole as it swallows you up, I want you panting and shaking and holding still until I’m ready for you to move. Can you do that? Can you do that for me?”

Dean makes a strained noise of assent.

“How are you going to fuck me?”

“However you want,” Dean promises. “Whatever, anything.”

“I want you over me. Knees against the bed, cock in my ass, your hips between my thighs. I want you pressing me open, my legs, my ass. I want it slow, so slow you’re shaking. I want you buried inside me. Are you inside me? Are you stretching me open?”

“Yeah,” Dean pants. “Yeah, I’m, I’m in, can I, please, can I move?”

“I said I want you over me. Are you? You can’t be inside me unless you’re in position.”

Dean scrambles unthinkingly onto his hands and knees. He grabs the headboard, dropping his head down onto his forearm, dropping his other hand back down to his dick. “I’m here, I’m here. I’m, I’m inside you.”
Jimmy chuckles, dark and deep. “I should hold you like this. I should drag you in tight with my legs and hold you in place until you’re trembling. Keep you right there until I’m as hard as you are. Keep you aching inside me until I come.”

Eyes screwed shut, Dean pictures it. He keeps his hand as still as he can on his dick, but his orgasm looms, dark and tight and ready to escape the moment he drops his guard.

“Should I let you move?” Jimmy asks. “I’ll let you move if you can find my prostate.”

“I can,” Dean promises with no idea where it is. “Let me.”

There’s that lubed up squish and Jimmy gasps. “Yes you can,” he praises. “Right there. Right there. Tiny thrusts, right there, I need you brushing up against it.”

“Are you hard?” Dean asks, already picturing it.

“I’m getting there. You’re helping me. Just a little more. Can’t you feel me getting hard against your stomach? I’m going to come with you inside me. I’m going to drag you in tight with my legs and rub up against your stomach. Can I come on you? Please?”

Oh god. He nearly loses it. He’s holding on by a thread, folded over his bed with his head down and his ass working as he thrusts into his own hand. He can’t stop moving, can’t hold on any longer, but he has to, he has to last. “Do it.”

“Soon. I’m going to come on you and then you can come inside me.” The noises are getting faster now, Jimmy breathier, moaning. “Can I grind against you?”

“Let me jerk you off?” He can make it. He can last.

“Oh, sweetheart,” Jimmy pants. “You’re so good for me.”

Dean comes.
He comes hard and groaning, forehead pressed against his arm on the headboard. His toes splay against the bed for purchase. His come splatters and pitter-patters down onto the bedspread.

“Fuck!” he yells. Pleasure spirals down his spine, but something darker and hotter comes racing back up. “Son of a bitch.”

“Michael? Are you all right?” Jimmy asks, voice still deep but his arousal otherwise vanished.

“Fuck,” Dean swears again, throat thick with shame. He stays hunched over, huddled by the headboard, his back to the room. “Fuck. You, you keep going, it’s okay.”

“What’s wrong? Did the waistband pinch you?”

“No.” Sitting back into a kneeling position, Dean hurriedly tucks himself back inside his boxer briefs, but they’re all damp and clinging and disgusting. Like the bedspread, striped with come. His stomach turns. “Seriously, keep going.”

“I need you to tell me what’s wrong. I need that more than I need an orgasm, Michael.”

Dean can’t say it.

“Are you hurt?”

“No.” It comes out sullen, like Dean’s some sulky teenager instead of a grown man with the stamina of one. He closes his eyes tight, so fucking frustrated.

“Can you tell me what’s wrong?”

Don’t be mad. The words crowd up behind his teeth and he bites them back. “I…” He lets out a groan. “I came, all right?”

There’s a silence from Jimmy, the short kind that might as well last forever.
Jimmy takes a deep breath.

Jimmy tells him, “I wanted you to.”

Dean’s face somehow manages to flush even more. “But I wasn’t supposed to.”

“What?” And he sounds so fucking concerned, so confused. Great. Dean cost the guy an orgasm and messed with his head, all in one go.

“You were supposed to come first and I-”

“That was my fantasy,” Jimmy interrupts. “I—hold on, I can’t have this conversation with a dildo in my ass.” He’s so matter-of-fact about it that an unintentional snicker pops out of Dean’s mouth. There’s a slopping sort of noise and Jimmy sighs. “Okay. That was my fantasy. I was saying things, trying to get you off because I can’t do it in person.”

“I know how phone sex works.”

“Yes you do,” Jimmy confirms, neither sultry nor patronizing. “But I’m not sure you know how scenes work. Did I say you weren’t allowed to come? I didn’t forbid you.”

“But you wanted...” Dean can’t finish that sentence. It’s a miracle he even began it.

When Dean goes silent for too long, Jimmy finishes for him. “I wanted you to come and you did. You did nothing wrong.”

Dean turns his face away, the motion stupid and ineffectual with the headset firmly in place.

“Can you do something for me now?” Jimmy asks.

Dean makes a noncommittal noise in the back of his throat.
“Lie down. Not in the wet spot.”

He hesitates but ultimately obeys. “Okay.”

“Are you the big spoon or the little spoon?”

_Little._ “Big.”

“I want you to take a pillow and hold me. I’m going to put my plug inside instead of the dildo, and then you’re going to hold me until you’re feeling steadier.”

Dean shifts onto his side and, feeling stupid about it, pulls his pillow against his chest. He shifts his arm, trying not to rest his ear directly on the headset. If Jimmy’s doing whatever with his butt plug, Dean misses the sounds and hates that he missed them. “This is fucked up,” he mutters.

“Why?” Jimmy asks, and he asks it like he means it. Like there’s no obvious answer.

Dean just lies there, unable to answer.

“I wanted you to come and you did,” Jimmy reminds him. “I’m very pleased with you. I’d be more pleased if you’d tell me what’s bothering you, but you don’t have to.”

_I wanted to last._

“Can I tell you what I would do if I were there?”

Dean hums, just a noise.

“I’d roll over in your arms and kiss you. You sound like you need kissing. Would you mind that? Kissing a man with stubble?”
“No,” Dean manages to say.

“Then I’d roll over and kiss you. And I’d let you toy with me if you wanted to. You could reach down and play with the plug as long and slow as you wanted, until I’m clutching at you. Or we could just lie there. Just kissing. Feeling your lips with mine. Will you imagine it with me?”

“Yeah.”

“Do you like kissing?”

“Yeah.”

“Would you like kissing me?”

Dean swallows. “Yeah.”

“I’d like to kiss you too,” Jimmy confesses. “You’re very sweet.”

“Stop calling me that.” Embarrassment cuts through the shame in a barely perceptible change, like a streak of aqua painted over blue. “I’m not.”

“What should I call you?”

“I’m, uh. I’m pretty hot.”

“You’re more than that,” Jimmy says with absolute certainty, and something brittle inside Dean’s rib cage cracks.

“Really not,” he mutters into the mic, almost trying not to be heard. “Couldn’t even last until the end.”
There’s another one of those pauses, short and awful and eternal. “...You really think you came early.”

The surprise in Jimmy’s voice has Dean blinking his eyes open. There’s nothing there—there’s never anything there—so he closes them again, but he still actually looks. “Came before you did. So… Yeah.”

“Michael,” Jimmy says, exasperated and amused. “I told you, I already came tonight. It’s impressive I even became hard again this soon after the fact.”

“Yeah, yeah, you got stamina for days, I get it.”

“Michael.” It’s not even Dean’s name, but it’s still chiding, and Dean hates it.

“I’m hanging up,” Dean announces, not yet reaching for his phone.

“I had a twelve second call today,” Jimmy says in a rush, like Dean has his finger on the button.

“What?”

“Twelve seconds. That was the entire call. I picked up, said hello, and listened to a man jerk off for twelve seconds without saying a word. Then he hung up right as he came.”

“Twelve seconds,” Dean repeats.

“Twelve. Most of my calls are five minutes. Most of my calls, they hang up right after they come or even right before. They don’t have the fortitude to stay on the line.”

“You’re trying to make me feel better.”

“Yes. Is it working?”
Dean shrugs against his bed, then shifts around a bit more until he’s lying almost on his stomach, arm around the pillow. He should really take his boxer briefs off. He doesn’t, unwilling to move any further. “Is all that shit true?”

“It is.”

Dean thinks about that, feeling the time pass and his credit card strain. “Your job sucks,” he eventually says.

“Only some parts. Some parts don’t suck at all.”

“Not gonna make a blowjob joke?”

“It didn’t seem the time,” Jimmy says, a small smile in his voice. “Can you tell me if you need anything?”

“How d’you mean?”

“When Mandy gets subdrop—when we do a scene and she gets upset after—I give her a foot massage while she drinks some water. We talk about what didn’t go the way we wanted.”

Dean snorts. “Don’t think Mandy has a problem coming early.”

“The problem isn’t coming early. The problem is feeling like that’s a problem,” Jimmy explains. “I want to know how I gave you that impression.”

“I dunno. I just.” Dean shakes his head. “I dunno.”

“You were so good for me,” Jimmy says, sending a hot flash prickling beneath Dean’s skin. “I don’t want you thinking otherwise. But if I can’t take care of you properly after, then I don’t deserve that goodness. Do you understand?”
“You’re too fucking nice, you know that?”

“I’m only giving you what you deserve.”

It’s such a blatant falsehood that Dean wants to laugh, but it’s clear Jimmy believes it. And Dean, selfish bastard that he is, wants Jimmy to keep believing it.

Dean’s silence must be all the answer Jimmy needs, because Jimmy adds, “And I want to treat you well. If you want to please me, you have to let me do that.”

Dean breathes out slowly. “Okay.”

“Okay?”

“Yeah.”

“Thank you,” Jimmy says, like Dean’s giving him some amazing gift. Something precious that he actually wants.

“I need to hang up now,” Dean tells him, still not moving. “Money and shit. I don’t even want to look at the time on my phone, I know it’s gonna be bad.”

“Whatever you need. And if you need more help steadying out, I’ll be working until two in the morning. You can call as late as two and I’ll still pick up. Or Saturday or Monday nights, if you need to call sooner. I’ll be here.”

“I’m fine.”

“I’ll be here anyway. And I’d rather talk to you than someone who mouth-breathes at me for twelve seconds.”

Dean snorts. “Right back at you. ‘Night, Jimmy.”
“Good night.”

Dean rolls over, grabs his phone, and hangs up.

He takes the headset off.

His room is very quiet. The garage below, silent. The street beyond, the barest murmur of passing cars, the traffic thinned by time and darkness.

He looks down at his comforter, groans, and shucks his boxer briefs. He wipes up the mess. He’ll need to do laundry in the morning, but tonight, the only option is to sleep under the jizz blanket. It’s cold this late in October.

He rattles around for a long while before he falls asleep on the other side of the bed, but at least he doesn’t call Jimmy again that night.

Laundry sucks but Dean does it anyway, because apparently that’s just his life now. Things that suck, that he does anyway. He drags his bag home from the laundromat and hangs shit up to dry like a damp blanket fort. It’d been a while since he’d changed his sheets anyway. Probably long overdue.

With chores in the way, he gets to the library later than usual, but with all the midterms over, the library has gone back down to pretty normal levels of business. Cas hasn’t even had to claim Dean’s seat for him. He looks up when Dean sits down, long enough to give him a distracted little wave, and then routine takes over. Dean does his accounting stuff first, getting the easy work out of the way, and then it’s time for way too much reading. There’s a lot of big picture economy stuff that’s only vaguely pertinent to his job-to-be, but it’s not like Dean gets to pick and choose.

He keeps focused, forcing his mind forward when it wants to wander. There’s a nagging feeling in the back of his head, but there’s nothing he’s forgotten. He runs through his syllabus and his backpack just to be sure, and then he checks his emails on his laptop, the top of his screen rising an inch or so higher than Cas’, but the computers otherwise sitting back-to-back. No, Dean’s not forgetting anything.

Remembering too much, on the other hand, might be more accurate.
In need of a better distraction than schoolwork, he focuses on the one in front of him. He flips his notebook back to a page of their previous scribbles and writes, *What do you actually teach?*

Turning the notebook sideways, he reaches across the small table to set it on top of a few of Cas’ closed books, the lines of the paper pointing between them. Cas glances up from his laptop. He reads before shooting Dean a look.

*Check the course catalog.*

*Already did,* Dean writes, which isn’t a complete lie. He’d checked a little. *Is it like a history thing?*

*History leading to current events and gender theory with a side of sociology, psychology, and cultural anthropology.*

Dean reads that and nods like he’s got any clue what Cas is talking about. *Cool,* he writes back, just that. When Cas keeps looking at him, expectant and silent, Dean’s boredom slinks away to hide behind his better sense. *I’ll stop bothering you.*

Head tilted, Cas reads the words and shrugs. He takes back up his pen and writes, *These are technically my office hours. You’re allowed to bother me.*

Dean’s eyebrows shoot up. *You’re in the silent section. There are No Talking signs everywhere.*

*My students know where I am.*

That one girl had definitely come to fetch Cas last week, that’s true, but it’s still ridiculous. *Don’t you have an office for office hours?*

Cas levels him a look like Dean’s the one being an idiot. *I have a shared office space.*

Dean nods, able to relate to that much, at least. *Running short on office, space and sharing?*
Cas nods back before leaning forward to draw in a fucking Oxford comma on Dean’s question.

Dean shoots him a bitchface.

Cas answers with the expression of a man trying to be subtle in his amusement. Despite his face being effectively blank, it’s still absurdly obvious.

Dean increases the bitchface.

Cas’ expression doesn’t shift at all.

And yet.

And yet.

Dean rolls his eyes and Cas actually grins. It’s there, quick and gone and fucking stunning, but Dean still doesn’t give in. Instead he reaches out and writes, *I can see how you’re the one who got kicked out.*

Again, Cas’ expression changes without moving. It’s as if the fractional tilt of his head is enough to drastically change every feature of his face. He pulls the notebook back and writes a somewhat lengthy response. Dean waits, idly watching the way his hair curls ever so slightly over his forehead. It’s still weird, admiring a guy’s looks while knowing he’s doing it, but at least the view’s nice.

*My officemate likes to read over my shoulder. It makes my work impossible. Working in the library is much easier, distractions aside.*

Dean eyes him before writing back, *You calling me a distraction?*

Cas just levels a look at him.

Dean reaches forward, keeping his hand low beside the barrier of books he’d propped his notebook on, and he pops his middle finger up over that short wall.
Cas cracks another grin, slightly longer this time, and the shit it does to Dean’s insides just isn’t fair.

He rolls his eyes and looks away. He reaches for his notebook, but stops and looks at the scratching of a pen.

*Speaking of distractions*, Cas writes, *there is a Halloween party tomorrow night hosted by QUILTBAG House.*

Dean frowns, not sure he’s parsing Cas’ handwriting correctly. He reaches out to tap the acronym with a frown.

Cas makes this little *oh* of understanding and adds, *The student LGBTQ group.*

Dean makes an answering *oh* face. But not an O face. Realization, not orgasm. A flush tries to creep up his neck, a remnant from last night that he shoves down as hard as he can. He reaches over with his pen and writes a quick, *Why, you going?*

Cas underlines the word *student.*

Dean considers that for all of half a second before shaking his head.

Cas tilts his head in a clear question.

Dean writes, *Not going to be the old man partying with a bunch of toddlers.* A gay man his own age, that might be something. Make that, a gay man his age who isn’t a damn professor. Dean could try for a party of his own. He could be the one telling Jimmy a story for a change.

Lips quirking as he reads, Cas nods. He looks at Dean like he understands completely, which Dean sincerely hopes he doesn’t.

*There anything for the older crowd?* Dean asks.
I’m really not the right person to ask. An apologetic smile gives a single tug at the corner of Cas’ mouth. No, not apologetic. Wry. It’s so quick and faint that it’s hard to tell, but it just makes Dean need to stare at him harder. Except not, because that would be creepy.

You’re not out there hitting the clubs every night? I’m amazed. He pushes down a grin as he writes before angling the notebook back to Cas.

Cas, in return, shoots him a dirty look, but not a displeased one. I haven’t had time for a night out in a very long time.

Meaning, he did once. But if you did, where would you go? To pick up a guy our age.

Cas looks at the question, head tilted, and his eyes flick up to Dean’s face in a way that sends Dean’s stomach tumbling before Cas finishes writing and turns the notebook back around.

I’d go to Paradise on Main St or Jacob’s Closet on 5th. If I was into bears, I might go to The Cave. But I imagine you could go anywhere.

He can feel Cas’ eyes on his face as he reads. He can feel it in the air, the exact moment Cas sees him reading that last sentence. Not blushing or anything, Dean looks up at Cas who is looking back plainly, simply, as if somehow unaware of the flirtation. Or is that a knock about him being bi?

One way to find out.

My gaydar is shit, but as a hot gay guy, you’d know where more of you gather, right?

He tilts the notebook back and watches with satisfaction as Cas reads. When Cas’ eyes lift from the paper, Dean already has a small smile in place. Kind of joking, kind of serious. Maybe flirting, maybe teasing, but definitely having fun. A plausible deniability smile of charm.

Still looking at Dean, Cas writes something, barely glancing down at the motions of his pen. He turns the notebook toward Dean.

If I did, I wouldn’t be single.
Holy shit, they’re flirting. Is Cas even allowed to flirt with him? College rules have to be different than high school.

Before Dean can wrap his mind around that, Cas frowns and writes a bit more. *You look confused.*

*You have that relationship vibe,* Dean bullshits, covering his ass. *Like you got people at home to get back to.* Because that’s the thing, they’re old enough to be fathers. They’ve been old enough to have been fathers for over a decade, and yet that’s still something Dean forgets to check sometimes. Not that he hasn’t seriously dated a woman with a kid before, but the kid definitely complicates the break-up.

*Not yet,* Cas writes back, and that’s sweetly hopeful. Dean has to smile a little at that.

He crams his next message at the bottom of the page. *Gotta get out to those clubs first, right?*

Cas tilts his head side to side, not quite shaking it but definitely not nodding. He takes the notebook, turns it, and writes up the side. *No time. I can only hope to meet someone in my daily life.*

And he looks at Dean in a way that might be neutral or might only be trying to be neutral.

Dean goes for it.

He grabs the notebook. He puts his pen down, ready to write perpendicular to the lines of the paper. He looks back up at Cas’ blue, blue eyes and jetlagged five o’clock shadow, and he could do this. All he has to do is write something like *Tomorrow night, take me to Paradise.* The pick-up line is in the fucking name.

But he looks at Cas, gorgeous and gay and undeniably a man. Thinks about taking him home to his apartment before the guys finish up at the garage below. Thinks about them telling Bobby before Dean can.

He freezes. Not simply his hand paused, not simply his body motionless. He physically freezes, the heat fleeing from his body.
His pen is still against the paper.

Cas is still watching him, now with eyes narrowed, forehead furrowed.

*Yeah, I don’t have time to date either,* he writes like the coward he is. *Boss doesn’t want me working full-time while I’ve got classes, but that doesn’t mean I don’t have hours.*

Dean passes the notebook back, and though Cas stops frowning, his face still perceptibly falls. Just barely, but it does.

*What do you do?* Cas writes, his expression remaining a few steps above polite interest.

*Mechanic. Swapping the blue collar for a white one.* He barely fits the words in, but he doesn’t flip to a new page.

Cas pulls the notebook closer and writes up the other side of the page. *What are you studying to do?*

*Taking over the business once my boss retires,* Dean answers.

It’s quick and concise, nothing he needs to talk about further, but Cas picks now of all times to get interested. *An auto shop?* He manages to fit the three words into the tiny remaining gap, forcing Dean to take his notebook and flip through until he finds a fresh page.

*Two garages and a salvage yard.*

It’s not much, especially compared to their competition, but Cas actually looks impressed. *Hence the business and accounting classes.*

Dean nods. *Been easing into the management side of things for a couple years now. Mostly running one of the garages already.* It really has been a couple years since he was just a grease monkey. He’s moving on up, the way Sam did in leaps and bounds, the way it took Bobby a lifetime to do.
It’s progress. It’s what he’s supposed to do. If he doesn’t recognize his own hands without oil and grease beneath his fingernails, then that’s his own problem.

*I can see why you don’t have time to date*, Cas writes back.

Dean looks at that for a long second. Then he sighs like it’s just his schedule that’s getting to him. Time to change the subject.

*What’s got you too busy?*

When Dean pushes the notebook back, Cas frowns down at the words. His pen taps against the page once, twice, before he writes. *Lesson plans, teaching, grading, office hours, research, life.*

It’s Dean’s turn to frown a little. He reaches over to underline *research* and looks at Cas with a question.

Cas frowns back and gestures at his books and the library around them.

Dean writes, *How did all the info get into the books in the first place? How are they going around finding out all the sex stuff, besides the obvious?*

It’s Cas’ turn to underline, reaching over to draw a blue line under Dean’s black *the obvious.*

Dean breaks out his most flirtatious grin and winks.

Cas, the nerdy fucker, actually blushes. Dude tugs at the side of his collar, like his neck needs to be shown off any better than it already is.

Dean leans an elbow on the table, plants his chin against his palm, and grins harder.

Cas actually fucking *squirms* and it’s the proudest Dean’s been of himself in weeks, maybe months. Cas shifts in his seat and looks away, rubbing at the back of his neck, and Dean’s ego swells. He’s not some sexual fuck-up, he’s goddamn Casanova over here.
Without meeting Dean’s eyes, Cas pulls the notebook all the way to himself instead of writing on it in the center of the table the way they’ve been doing. He writes a lot, too, but Dean enjoys watching him. Cas steadies out as he writes, expression smoothing out from flustered to in control, returning from cute back to hot. He slides the notebook back like he’s throwing down a royal flush in poker.

Research for queer studies is similar for what you might see in sociology, psychology, anthropology, and so on in terms of surveys, interviews, and other research. There are theorists, autobiographers, and first-hand accounts of historical events in terms of primary sources. Historically, the field was more closely tied to medicine and psychology due to the pathologization of homosexuality and transgender individuals, then typically viewed as sex acts and cross-dressing rather than identities, at least from a Western viewpoint. Though views on and approaches to sexual interaction are a worthy area of study, to say that is all there is would be extremely reductionist.

It takes Dean a minute to read all that.

His response is a very concise Dude, I was teasing.

Cas just shrugs at him like that paragraph is his knee-jerk response or something. Jesus, this guy is smarter than him.

Having no idea what else to say, Dean falls back on routine and pulls out his giant camping thermos from his bag and tilts it in Cas’ direction. Judging by the way Cas’ eyes immediately light up, the peace offering is readily accepted. Dean does the regular coffee transfer, this time without spilling at all, and they drink together.

Twisting the lid shut on his travel mug, Cas looks back at his laptop and silently sighs. He reaches out and writes I should get back to work before capping his pen with clear resignation.

Dean nods back with just about as happy of an expression, which is to say, not at all.

They look at each other, sigh in unison, and Cas cracks the tiniest smile. He wakes up his laptop and resumes whatever it was he was doing in the first place, but it’s clear he has to try to ignore Dean. Like Dean’s presence is so strong a thing that it’s a distraction even to a guy like Cas.

It’s nice to be noticed. Really nice. Good in a way he doesn’t want to look at too closely, because he already knows he’s a desperate lonely asshole, calling Jimmy every week. But here’s a guy, a hot
one, a smart one, who doesn’t even need to be bribed with coffee to put up with Dean. Not anymore, at least.

Maybe he really can do this bi thing after all.

Chapter End Notes

Updates every Monday, time of day may vary.

To see what else I'm working on, you can follow me on tumblr here.
Chapter Summary

Jimmy's determined to give "Michael" something to laugh about.

Dean continues to Dean.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

He nearly calls on Saturday. He nearly calls on Monday. Instead, he does his schoolwork and his office work and does maintenance on Baby just to get his hands back under the hood, any hood. By the time Dean finishes his degree, Baby’s going to be in the best condition of her life, and he’s never slacked with her before.

Bobby’s too busy at the other locations to notice, but Garth and Benny notice for him. Garth asks if he wants to talk. Benny asks Dean to give him a hand instead, so that’s where Dean goes. He works better with a physical problem to tackle, especially something he already knows the shape of. Cars are easy. Cars make sense. Plus, some of them are fucking gorgeous, which is always a bonus. If Dean could focus on restoring classic muscle cars and ignore these modern plastic hunks of junk, he would die a happy man.

Unfortunately for him, he has to focus on shit like group projects and not strangling his classmates. Some of the tiny fuckers joke around about going Trick o’ Treating through the campus dorms. Is that even a thing? Jesus, Dean’s an old fart. He doesn’t even put out a bowl of candy on the night, because no one in their right mind is going to let their kid ring the doorbell on the side door of the garage.

The next day, though, he splurges even before his call with Jimmy. Everyone knows the real holiday is discount candy day. It’s like the day after Valentine’s, except Dean is chomping on peanut M&Ms before he gets off.

Not immediately before. Just beforehand. He stops munching when he starts drinking. One isn’t enough to get him buzzed, two gets him a little loosened up, and between the snacking and dinner, he doesn’t have enough room in his belly for three. Not if he’s going to be jerking off without feeling gross.

He’s working the second bottle while he’s setting up the headset and dialing. It’s the cheap shit because he always gets the cheap shit, more about booze than taste, and that’s probably the only way
he’ll ever be a stereotypical college freshman.

Tonight, the call goes through with barely a stop at the operator. She must know his number by now, because the woman just asks if he wants Jimmy before transferring him on through.

Before Dean can digest that, though, there’s a warm voice on the other end saying, “Hello, Michael.”

“Hey there, Jimbo. How’s tricks?”

“Still turning,” Jimmy answers, so naturally and matter-of-fact that it takes a second for the joke to catch up with Dean. By the time Dean snorts, Jimmy’s already in the middle of asking “And how are you this week?”

“Oh, you know me. I’m always fine.”

“I’m sure that’s visually true,” Jimmy says like a smooth motherfucker.

“True any way you slice it.”

“I’m glad to hear it,” Jimmy says. “I was thinking about you over the weekend, and I want to make sure-”

“Yeah, how about we just move on,” Dean interrupts. “Last week was- Last week was weird, okay? Sex is weird, weird shit happens, we don’t gotta talk about it.”

There’s a horrifying pause where Jimmy might still try to talk about it anyway.

Then Jimmy says, “I was saying, I wanted to make sure we did something relaxing today.”

Great. Now Dean’s getting handled with kid gloves. But then his brain detours to thinking about getting handled with any kind of gloves, and down to just getting handled. He thinks of Cas’ thick, strong fingers around that blue pen, and it’s a nice image to accompany the thought. What can he say, he’s calling a sex line.
Finally, Jimmy’s actual words register. “You mean, like the massage thing?” He’d liked it, Dean had definitely liked it, but he was kind of hoping for something a little—a lot—more. If they’re going to have a repeat, why not one of Jimmy saying how much he wants to suck Dean’s dick? Now that’s a show worth airing the reruns.

“If you wanted to do that again, we certainly could,” Jimmy says, “but I had something else in mind for you.”

Dean’s stomach doesn’t flip at you. At all. In any way. “Uh, yeah, shoot.”

“It occurred to me that between your job training and certain personal realizations, you might not have enough to laugh about. So I thought I’d share something truly ridiculous.”

“Okay.” He shifts back against the headboard, then absently adjusts his dick through his boxer briefs. He hasn’t bothered taking his t-shirt off yet, only his other layers. That might be an issue with the headset later, if he wants to strip down all the way, but that’s a distant concern.

“How familiar are you with FCC censorship?”

...Well, that came out of left field.

“Uh,” Dean says, very articulately.

“Words you can’t say on television,” Jimmy explains. “Obscenity, that kind of thing.”

“Like you can only say a chick’s got a pussy if you mean her cat?”

Jimmy hums in the affirmative. “It’s not just for TV and radio. If you weren’t paying by credit card, I wouldn’t be able to say ‘fuck.’”

“That’s fucking ridiculous,” Dean says, and Jimmy laughs, soft and quick and lovely. “Wait, would I be able to say it?”
“There’s no regulation for what you say, but I have to use some very strange alternatives.”

Dean snorts. “Yeah, pretty sure most people don’t call to hear about ‘making love’ or some shit.”

“That’s not strange,” Jimmy disagrees. “Calls for fucking are fast and rough. Calls for making love? They’re slow. Breathy. They linger over foreplay.” His voice gradually lowers, both in volume and timbre. “There’s anticipation involved, like leaning in for a kiss and stopping short to look at your partner instead.”

Dean shifts where he sits. He takes a second to finish off his beer. “You like that mushy crap?”

“I love that mushy crap,” Jimmy says. “Scenes and fucking are always good, but the calls for making love are good for variety. But that’s not what we were talking about. I promised you a good laugh.”

“I dunno, that’s still pretty funny.”

“It’s amusing. What’s funny are the alternatives the company suggests in place of ‘blowjob’ or ‘asshole.’”

“Okay…” He’s not sure where this is going, but he’s got a preemptive smile on his face and that’s more than he’s had in a while, since probably Friday with Cas.

“Are you drinking anything? Because you should swallow now.”

“I was, but I’m good now. Shoot.”

“The suggested alternative to ‘blowjob’ is, in all sincerity, a ‘tongue bath.’”

Dean chokes on his own spit and starts to snicker. “What the fuck, dude?”

“Some people don’t even notice.”
“How do you not notice that?”

“I’d assume by being very horny.”

That gets a small laugh, but still: “I dunno, man, that would definitely kill the mood for me.”

Jimmy hums. “Would you like to test that?”

“Dude, if you say ‘tongue bath’ right as I’m about to come, you’ll completely fuck up my orgasm.”

With a smile in his voice, Jimmy replies, “I’ll keep that in mind.”

“I fucking knew you were an asshole.”

“Only on credit card calls. Otherwise, I’m a furled rosebud.”

Dean loses it. It’s so stupid, said so seriously. He cracks the fuck up.

“The implication there being that my feces would smell like roses,” Jimmy continues over Dean’s laughter, still in that completely serious tone, like this is an important subject he thinks about a lot. “It’s technically less obscene, saying ‘feces’ instead of ‘shit,’ but I can’t but feel that ‘feces’ is somehow worse. Defecation. Hm.”

Dean can’t stop laughing. “Shut up,” he chokes out, grinning fit to split his face.

“About defecation? Of course, that’s not sexy. I should be talking about that tight pink pucker. Someone else might be able to talk about their lower lips, but for me, that would involve talking out of my ass. I’m sorry, my shapely rear.”

Dean’s gasping for breath, but Jimmy just keeps going, musing a thoughtful trail through the completely ridiculous. Dean laughs until it hurts, until well past it hurting, and there isn’t even a hint
of a smile in Jimmy’s voice, not one single trace of breaking.

“You gotta stop,” Dean manages to say between bursts of laughter. “Gonna take off the headset.”

Jimmy changes tracks immediately, transitioning from ludicrous to conversational in an instant. “You have a headset? That’s good to know.”

Dean wants to answer, but he has to take a minute to flop onto his back and breathe. Every time he thinks he’s okay, he sets himself off again with yet more snickering. Finally, it dies down into shaky breaths. “Oh, man. I haven’t laughed like that in… I don’t know. Years.”

“I like your laugh,” Jimmy says, the smile finally back in his voice. “I’d like to hear more of it.”

Dean knows he’s blushing but can’t bring himself to care. It almost feels good, in a weird and shameful way. It doesn’t matter if Jimmy’s lying, because the point isn’t telling the truth. The point is Jimmy making Dean feel whatever Jimmy decides Dean should feel, and that’s all been pretty great so far. “Keep talking like that, and you’ll get it. I can’t believe people actually get off to that shit.”

“I happen to be good at my job, Michael.”

“Nobody’s good enough to make ‘tongue bath’ sexy. Not even you, man.”

“It requires build up. Otherwise, it’s the verbal equivalent of skipping foreplay and heading straight to fisting.”

Dean laughs again. His stomach hurts when he sits back up, almost as much as his face aches. “Tell me that’s not a personal example.”

“Fortunately, no. But as I was saying: I am good at my job. I’m willing to bet I can talk you off with only PG-13 rated language.”

“Unless you know a way to laugh out a load, that’s not going to happen.”
“It will,” Jimmy tells him with such absolute confidence that Dean’s dick notices. “I bet I can make it happen without any explicit or obscene language.”

“What are you betting me? ‘Cause that’s an expensive risk there, Jimbo.”

“If I can’t do it, you can name any scenario, as explicit as you like, and we’ll do that instead.”

Dean’s stomach clenches with more than the ache of laughing. “Anything?”

“Anything.”

*Good boy.* Dean licks his lips, eyes glazing over as he stares blankly at the opposite wall. “And you’d be cool with, with whatever? Even weird shit?”

“If you can think of weirder things than I have already done, I will be impressed.”

“I’m gonna need a weirdness benchmark here.”

“On Monday, a caller wanted to fuck me as a centaur.”

“As...”

“A centaur, yes,” Jimmy says. “He initially wanted to pretend to be a horse, but I argued him down to centaur.”

Rather than try to unpack that, Dean shoos his brain right along in the attempt to ignore it. Because, bluster aside, he should really be looking at the other side of this bet. “And what do you get if you win?”

Jimmy hums, but Dean can tell he’s only pretending to consider the question. “The same kind of input. If I’d rather have a mystical sentient creature than full bestiality, that kind of adjustment.”
Something awful sits up inside Dean.

“Dude,” he hears himself say. He hears a strange rush, too, a blood-roar in his ears.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t mean you imply you were into bestiality—”

“That’s- no, I- Dude, ” Dean says again. “You get the input or whatever. You’ve got that already. I like letting you take the wheel, okay? Less work for me. So that’s- It’d be a stupid bet.”

There’s a jarringly long silence from Jimmy. “Thank you,” he says, and the poor fucker sounds so surprised. Like he’s trying not to sound surprised, but it’s too big for even him to hold back.

“Your job seriously sucks,” Dean tells him, not for the first time.

“There are parts I enjoy,” Jimmy replies. “Certain callers make it worthwhile.”

The blush starts up again, hot pressure in his cheeks and ears, but Dean rides it out. He knows he’s making it worthwhile: it’s a long call and he’s paying through the nose. “Just say what you want if you win.”

“When I win,” Jimmy corrects, “I would like… hm. I’ll have to think about that.”

“Winner picks next scene?” Dean offers. Everything Jimmy’s picked so far has been good. Great, even. Better than the shit Dean can’t even make himself ask for.

“Scene, or scenario?” Jimmy asks. “When I say ‘scene,’ I do mean a BDSM scenario.”

“Whatever,” Dean says, the pinnacle of nonchalance even as he covers his clothed dick with his hand. He’s sporting half a chubby just talking to Jimmy, but that’s basically Pavlovian by this point. The second Jimmy’s voice scrapes down into a lower register, that’s Dean pressing up in response. “So how do you normally do the PG-13 bullshit anyway?”

There’s a slight pause from Jimmy before he answers. “The language is either much more flowery
“Like a furled rosebud?”

“-or relies more on euphemisms,” Jimmy continues over him. “Obviously, flowery language won’t work with you, so it would have to be euphemisms. For example, I can’t ask how long your cock is, but I can ask how tall you are lying down.”

It’s stupid, but Dean licks his lips anyway. “How tall are you?”

“Standing, or lying down?”

“Either. Both.”

“Standing, I’m six feet.”

Dean waits. “And?”

“And?” Jimmy echoes, faux-innocent.

Dean cups a hand around the microphone of his headset, not quite covering his mouth as he mutters, “How big is your dick?”

“How big is your dick?” Jimmy says, his voice edging downward.

“To, uh, to suck, or…?”


Swallowing, Dean closes his eyes.
“We could work on that together. It’s not that hard. Actually, it is that hard, but it’s not that difficult.”

Dean lets out a choked little laugh before clearing his throat. “Uh. Now? Or…?”

“That’s up to you.”

Dean can’t fucking ask for that. “What if someone wants to talk about dicks? Explicitly about dicks.”

“Then either I get him talking, or I pick an acceptable innuendo.”

“Like what?”

“I recently had a conversation about big, black… cars.”

“I’ve got a big, black car,” Dean says without thinking.

“So definitely a phallic stand-in.”

“Okay, first off, Baby is a lady. Second, she’s not my dick, she’s my soul, okay?”

“I’ll be more respectful,” Jimmy promises, his voice a low, amused murmur. “Would you let me see her?”

“Like, text you a picture?”
“That would be difficult, seeing as I’m on a landline. No, I meant… Let’s say I called you. If I asked you to come over, is that the car you would take?” His voice drops low, a full growl as he adds, “To come rumbling down my driveway?”

“Yeah,” Dean says, his own voice going rough. “I see where you’re going with this.”

“I’m not going anywhere. I’m staying right here, waiting for you to come. Over.”

A distant, increasingly removed part of Dean wants to laugh. The rest of him already has his hand on his dick. “Should I drive fast?”

“Only if you want to. What does Baby prefer? Long, hard drives? Or slow, meandering journeys?”

“Oh, we can do it all, man. Just no off-roading.”

“So not too rough. Fast, but smooth. How does she handle, Michael?”

“She’s perfect,” Dean says. You’re perfect.

“You’re in the driver’s seat,” Jimmy tells him. “Your foot is pressing down a little too hard, going a little too fast. Because I called you, and now you’re going to come to me. Aren’t you?”

He keeps his eyes shut, head dropping forward as his hand works, wrist rubbing against the waistband of his boxers. “Yeah.”

“When you get to my street, you should slow down. Let the whole neighborhood see you pulling up to my house. I don’t want anyone coming around to bother us, do you?”

Dean shakes his head, the headphones shifting faintly against his ears.

“Just you and me, uninterrupted,” Jimmy continues. “You’re such a good friend, coming over so
quickly. Because I called you and said I was lonely, and now here you are, racing across town just for me. Would you do that, if I called you?”

“Yeah,” Dean says roughly, stroking faster.

“Would you bring me what I want? If I had a craving for more than just company?”

“Bring over a six-pack, do whatever. Hell, I’d bring take-out.”

“I’d like that,” Jimmy says, voice lower and sincere. “But I think I’d like eating out with you more.”

Dean’s head catches on fire but his hand doesn’t slow. “Fuck. Yeah. We could, yeah, we could do that.” Dean’s not even sure which way Jimmy means, whose tongue and whose ass, but he can’t help but picture it: his face pressed down into his pillow, his ass in the air. A pair of strong hands with gentle fingers pulling his cheeks open while Jimmy rumbles *Good boy, Dean.*

“We could,” Jimmy says. “Another time. Because right now, do you know what I need more? Do you know what I need most?”

“You need me to come inside,” Dean mumbles, quick and stupidly shy for all Jimmy has to hear him jerking off. Dean’s not even trying to keep quiet. He’d rather risk Jimmy hearing him jerk it than Jimmy hearing him say the wrong thing.

“I need you to come inside,” Jimmy agrees, the words thick with pleasure, like he’s been waiting to say them. Like Dean picked the right sentence; like out of thousands of possibilities, Dean got just the right one.

“Just lemme park out front, babe, and I-”

Jimmy hums in negation, and Dean’s hand freezes on his dick, fingers halfway through a twist around the head, precome smearing. “That’s not where you should park,” Jimmy tells him with no further disapproval.

“No?” Tell him where.

Dean doesn’t even snicker that time.

“Okay,” he says instead.

“I hope you don’t mind using the rear entrance,” Jimmy says, “but it’s the only garage I have.”


“It’s manual.” Jimmy’s voice is a warm purr in Dean’s ear, between his ears, inside his head. “You’ll have to open it yourself.”

Dean inhales sharply. “Okay. Okay, yeah, I’ll…”

“You’ll have to stop and take your hands off the wheel for a second,” Jimmy tells him, almost apologetically. “I should have left the door open for you.”

“I got it. I, uh. I want to. I wanna lift it open.”

“I know you do. I want you to use your big, strong hands and open up my back door. Would you do that for me?”

“Yeah.”

“Are you doing it?”

“Yeah.”
“I want to hear you say it.”

Dean licks his lips. “I…”

“Are you opening up that entrance for me?”

He swallows hard. “I’m opening it up.”

“For me?”

“For you.”

“I knew you would,” Jimmy tells him, proud and pleased and pushing Dean toward his limit. “It’s ready to open, can you feel how it gives way so easily? I made sure. I want you to come inside the second you get here, so I made sure. Everything’s lubricated downstairs. Just lift up that door a little and it’ll take itself the rest of the way.”

He’s jerking off too fast now, stupidly fast, but he can’t fucking slow down. “Can I come in now?”

“Oh, I don’t know,” Jimmy says like the fucking tease he is. “It’s a very big car. It’s going to be a tight fit.”

“I’ll fit,” Dean promises. “Park like a damn pro.”

“Please.”

“Yeah.” He’s going for it now, working himself with one hand while the other tugs at his balls, trying to delay the inevitable. He squirms, clumsily pushing his boxers lower down his thighs, his ass flexing against the bedspread. “Yeah, I’m…”

“There’s a little bump to get past, but then you can idle the rest of the way. Like the car is being
pulled in. Like it belongs inside, like you belong inside. Are you coming inside?"

“Yeah.”

“Say it.”

He screws his eyes shut tight but doesn’t—can’t—stop. “Coming inside.”

“It’s such a tight fit,” Jimmy whispers, rough and low. “So tight. I hope you know what you’re doing. Those inner walls are easily damaged, but I know you’ll pull in just right.”

Chin dropped against his chest, muscles jumping in his thighs and twitching in his feet, Dean pulls himself the rest of the way there, almost the rest of the way there.


“Gonna-” He chokes on a moan.

“Are you coming? Tell me you’re coming.”

Dean shakes his way through it, gasping out that truth: “I’m, fuck, I’m coming. Jimmy, I’m…”

“Come here. Come closer. All the way inside. You need to come all the way inside.”

“Fuck.” He’s trembling. There are colors behind his eyes. A long, slow pulse of satisfaction pulls together out of the vibrations of his body. “Fuck,” he says again, and collapses back against his headboard. He swallows and tilts his head back, just trying to breathe.

“Look at that,” Jimmy says in this warm, marveling tone. “You came.”
Chest heaving, body flushed, Dean tries to hold on to the moment. He breathes, ears straining harder than his dick had been.

“Beautiful,” Jimmy says, and he says it like he means it. “That was beautiful. Thank you.”

The flushed feeling gets worse. Gets prickly. “Dude, I just jizzed on my boxers. That’s not…”

“Did you?” The shift in Jimmy’s tone is obvious, even to Dean. Maybe especially to Dean. “What color are they?”


“Do you normally get off with your boxers on?”

Dean’s face burns. “No.”

There’s a pause like the silent intake of a breath. “Are you keeping them on for me?” Jimmy asks, and he sounds…

“Yeah,” Dean admits quietly. “So?”

“Beautiful,” Jimmy calls him again. “You must look gorgeous right now.”

Dean rolls his eyes. “Yeah, with come-splattered boxers halfway down my thighs.” He wipes his hands on them, making it worse.

“I will respect your kinks if you respect mine.” Something in Jimmy’s tone almost makes it a threat. “Are you still half-hard?”

“Yeah?”
“I’d want to keep touching you,” Jimmy tells him. “As long as you can stand it. Even just keeping my hand still on you, to feel you relax all the way back down.”

Dean shudders a little—not unpleasantly, only a reflective tremble—as he holds himself again. “That all you’d do?”

“No.” The word is full of amusement, but not at Dean’s expense. At the concept itself, at the idea of being finished and done. The fading rush of Dean’s orgasm pricks back across his exposed skin. “I’d lie down next to you. I’d be on my side, propped up on one arm, so I could keep looking at you. Touching you.”

He rubs his thumb up and down the side of his shaft. His foot twitches out a tiny involuntary kick even as his eyes keep drooping closed. “Touching me? Not touching you?”

“Would you do that for me? Or would you want to watch?”

“I got you,” Dean says immediately. “I got you, I’d…”

“Would you let me kiss you?”

“Yeah.”

“On the mouth?”

“Yeah.”

“Lower?”

“Yeah.”

“A lot lower?”
“Nothing below the knees,” Dean jokes breathlessly.

Jimmy chuckles. “I think I’d get distracted before I reached that far, don’t you? Someone has to clean up the mess we’ve made of you.”

Dean swallows. “With your mouth?”

“Would you let me?”

“Yeah.” Eyes closed, he keeps up the light stroking even as his dick softens, barely moving his fingers.

“Take off your boxers.”

Dean does, lifting up and squirming them down and off.

“Clean off your thighs and stomach for me.”

Dean does, wadding up his boxers and giving himself a cursory wipe.

“The rest is for me, do you understand?”

Dean hums agreement. Where his horniness ought to grow, something else builds instead. This strange sense of contentment, building as his body relaxes. It makes him want to listen. It makes him want to be still and quiet.

“Do you understand?” Jimmy repeats, kind, not stern.

He nods, head against the wall over the headboard. “Go ahead, man.”

“Thank you,” Jimmy says, like Dean’s the one indulging him, and it pumps all the excess heat back
into Dean’s face. “I’m going to clean you up. Get you dirty again. And lick myself off you.”

“You’re gonna jerk off? Really?” It comes out far too hopeful, but it comes out anyway.

“Should I? Can I? All over your lap? Can I straddle your thighs?”

“Yeah.” He swallows, sinking down lower onto his bed. “But only if you lick it all off.”

“Do you really want that?” Jimmy asks, not taunting, not truly questioning. Marveling. Like Dean’s something special, like Dean hasn’t been waiting weeks to hear Jimmy come.

“Yeah.”

“Are you telling me,” Jimmy says, his voice low, velvet lovely and ocean deep, “that you want a tongue bath?”

Dean chokes.

Collapses onto his side.

And dies laughing.

He can’t fucking breathe, he’s so busy laughing. Curled up in a shaky fucking ball around his soiled boxers, buck naked on his bed. Gasping for air, the headset askew. Through one ear better than the other, he can hear Jimmy.

Jimmy’s laughing too.

They gasp and they giggle. They breathe and they hiccup and they set each other off again with the slightest snickering. They sigh to a stop, Jimmy first, Dean following.
“Never use those words ever again,” Dean tells him.

“They had their intended effect,” Jimmy answers, practical and matter-of-fact as always. “It’s a very useful phrase.”

“I am mentally scarred. You have mentally scarred me.”

“I’ll make it up to you.”

“You’re such a furled rosebud,” Dean says.

Jimmy laughs again, and this time, it’s all Dean’s doing. Dean grins along, eyes closed, head tilted to better pin his headset between ear and bed. He reaches up to adjust it but stays lying down, too relaxed to sit upright.

“You should watch your language,” Jimmy replies once he’s got himself back under control. They could spend the entire night like this, telling stupid jokes and pretending to be clever, and fuck if that doesn’t sound good.

It also sounds expensive as hell.

“I should, uh…”

“About next week,” Jimmy interrupts, and Dean immediately forgets about hanging up.

“You taking the night off?”

“No. I just want to know if I need to prepare anything.”

“It’s your call, dude. No pun intended. You definitely won that bet. You get a week to pick.”
“I know what I’m picking,” Jimmy says without hesitation. “I want to try it, and if we don’t like it, we can do something else.”

“Yeah, okay,” Dean agrees immediately, heart rate picking back up. “What is it?” He crosses his fingers, not even sure what he’s hoping for.

“What I want to try, what I really want to try,” Jimmy says, “is the fantasy you’re not telling me.”

Everything inside Dean freezes. His brain. His heart. The pounding in his ears has to be an echo, because even his blood is frozen still and solid.

“That one,” Jimmy confirms. “Whatever you just thought of, that one.”

Dean can’t breathe.

“It’s all right,” Jimmy continues, practical and quiet and unrelenting. “You don’t have to tell me today. You don’t have to tell me all of it. We can do just a piece of it.”

“What, uh, what if I wanted to fuck a horse too?”

“Then I would be very surprised,” Jimmy says without even pausing to consider it. “That is not the form of transportation I can picture you having sex with.”

Dean cracks an involuntary smile. He shuts it down, pulling in on himself.

“You can always tell me later, but you should know that the more time I have to prepare, the better these scenarios go.”

“No, I get that,” Dean makes himself say. He doesn’t say anything else.

“I think you want to tell me,” Jimmy says after a long pause. “If you wanted to hang up, you could. You’ve already climaxed, so the only reason for staying is that you want to talk to me about something.”
“I dunno, man, it’s not like I got to hear you come,” Dean points out.

“Would that be part of the fantasy?”

Dean shuts his idiot mouth. He takes a second. He grabs his ego with both hands and says, “It’s weird having sex where the other person doesn’t get off too. I get why you don’t—you’re fucking marathoning, I get that—but it’s weird.”

“Oh,” Jimmy says, and he sounds insultingly surprised.

“Hey, I’m not usually paying for it, okay? It’s just the, the guy thing and my gaydar being crap, that’s all.”

“I wasn’t questioning that,” Jimmy assures him. “I had assumed you were still testing the waters. That you might not actually want to hear another man do that.”

“Oh.” Dean blinks at the wall. “Well. I do.”

“That bodes well for both of us, then,” Jimmy says with more than a hint of heat. His voice, still lower than usual, drops a bit further. Something tight and burning loosens in Dean’s chest. It doesn’t unbind and it doesn’t cool, but breathing is easier. “Is there anything else I should be doing?”

“Dude, you’re doing awesome. No problems there.”

Jimmy hums, a noise of satisfaction and consideration. “If you don’t want to tell me one of your fantasies, I could finger myself again next week. I know you like to hear about me getting fucked.”

Dean closes his eyes, inhaling deeply. He opens his mouth. “What, uh.” The clock is still running. Now or never. “Could we do it together?”

“Open me up?”
Dean can’t answer.

Somehow, Jimmy understands. “Open ourselves up? We could do that together. Yes, I’d like that. Let’s do that.”

“I mean, I gotta learn how to be gay somehow,” Dean mutters. “So, uh.”

“Michael,” Jimmy says, not quite chastising but definitely on the serious side. “Have you experienced attraction to a man?”

Dean’s experiencing it right now. He rolls his eyes hard instead of admitting it. “No, your voice is like a cold shower.”

“You already know how to be gay. Or bi. If you want to have sex differently than you have in the past, I can work with you on that.”

“C’mon, you know what I meant.” He pushes himself up, feeling awkward over lying there with his ass out.

“I do. But I also want to be sure you know you don’t have to do any of it. There’s no sex act you’re obligated to try. You don’t have to like it.”

“I don’t even know if I like it,” Dean finds himself saying. “That’s kind of the point, dude. Finding out?”

“As long as that’s what you want to do.”

“It is,” Dean says, surprised to say it. “Look, if I try by myself and I don’t know what I’m doing, maybe I fuck it up when it should be awesome. Someone who knows what the fuck he’s doing walks me through it, I figure I’ll know for sure if it actually sucks.”

Jimmy makes a noise of agreement. “Reasonable. In that case, next week you’ll want a towel you’re not attached to, thick lube, and possibly latex gloves. Or at least trim your fingernails.”
“I think I can handle that.”

“If you wanted to shower beforehand, that wouldn’t hurt either. Whatever helps you relax.”

Dean snorts. “You relax me just fine, Jimbo.”

“Good,” Jimmy says. “I’m glad.”

Wiping his hand on his wadded up boxers, Dean reaches for his phone, locating it by the cord connecting it to his headset. “So I’ll talk to you next week.”

“You still have thirty seconds.”

“What?”

“You’re charged for a full minute when the next minute starts. Twenty seconds… now.”

Dean checks the time on his phone and winces. “Good to know. Not much else to say, though.”

“All right. If you’re sure.”

“Night, Jimmy.”

“Good night, Michael.”

Dean stays on the line a few seconds longer anyway before hanging up. He pulls off the headset and sits there a little while.

“Tongue bath,” he says aloud, just to himself, and snorts.
He gets a little hands-on work in the garage before he heads out to the library in the early afternoon. The obvious upside is that he actually feels like himself when he gets there. The downside is the smears of grease that stain his fingers. He leaves a smudge on a notebook page, checks the blade of his hand, and discovers that he hadn’t cleaned as thoroughly as he’d thought.

He signals to Cas to watch his stuff, Cas nods, and Dean gets to scrubbing in the closest bathroom. When he gets back, Cas is combing through books instead of typing on his laptop. Which is pretty typical behavior—but not a typical book.

At least, Dean hasn’t seen many with BDSM written right there in the title.

He only sees the front cover for a second, Cas closing the book on his finger while typing something into his laptop, but the capitalization jumps out at Dean even upside-down.

Okay then.

Dean tries to do his work. Really, he does. But that is one hell of a distraction. And then there’s Cas sticking post-its into the book. Cas tapping the end of his pencil against his bottom lip, two contrasting shades of pink.

It’s academic. It’s a field of study. Like, like gynecology. It’s not like Cas is sitting there taking notes on porn. He just… apparently happens to know shit about BDSM. He’s going at it with this intense focus, too, eyes narrowed as they cross the page, fingers shifting around the pencil as he rotates it back and forth, rolling the eraser across his lower lip.

Dean scoots his chair a little further under the table. Cas glances up at Dean, but only for a second. His eyes go higher, fixing on something behind Dean, and when Dean twists around to look, there’s a pair of co-eds with books and messenger bags. The closer of the two gives Cas a little wave. The other looks at Dean and smiles. Dean winks back and gets an honest-to-god giggle that absolutely everyone hears in the silent section. The girl ducks her head down, sheepish, and Cas kicks at Dean’s foot under the table.

When Dean looks back to him, Cas gestures to Dean to watch his things. Dean nods. Cas grabs yet
another book out of his bag before gesturing for the pair of students to lead the way. It’s a little surreal, people actually showing up for Cas’ so-called office hours. Dean watches them go, Cas’ ass only partially concealed by his suit jacket.

Dean tries to get back to work. He aims his eyes down and reads and rereads and absorbs nothing.

He glances back over his shoulder.

He tries a bit more.

He stretches, and if his stretching happens to twist him around in his seat to look off in the direction Cas went, that’s incidental.

Dean grabs the book.

He skims the table of contents—it’s an essay anthology—and looks over his shoulder again.

He flips open to one of the post-its. The note is a simple reference this? in a messier version of Cas’ handwriting than Dean is used to.

Dean skims the actual page.

Dean intently reads the actual page.

Dean backtracks to the start of the essay—personal story, anecdote, thing—and reads the words of a professional lesbian Dominatrix.

It’s not salacious. That’s the weird thing. It focuses a lot on her knowledge of herself and of her clientele, the actual thought processes behind crafting scenes. It definitely mentions what some of those scenes are, but the brief descriptions are far from porn. The writer is funny while making a lot of sense, and Dean distantly starts to understand how Cas looked so sucked into the book. He moves the post-it to read around it and puts it back carefully, but the essay is over three pages later.
He flips back to the table of contents and goes for another. A straight male Dom. Another male Dom who doesn’t mix sex with kink. A straight Dominatrix who works with men and women.

Their views on kinks, bondage and pain and submission. On trust and training. On the personal and the professional, and how the two can bleed together when playing for pay. On sometimes needing aftercare as a Dom, and what that even looks like when the sub is a client.

After a certain point, he stops skipping around. He just reads right on through.

Then someone touches Dean on his shoulder and he nearly jumps out of his chair.

How the fuck he doesn’t shout, he’ll never know, but it has to be some long-forgotten terror drilled into him by his elementary school librarian or some shit. The sound wells up his throat but catches behind his teeth before it can escape.

Hand reflexively raised against the surprise, Dean blinks up at Cas. Removing the touch from Dean’s shoulder, Cas rocks back slightly on his feet. The open position of Cas’ palms is more to block than it is to soothe, but it’s still a bit of both.

Dean lets out a breath instead of a swear or a yell.

Cas holds out his hand.

Dean stares at it.

Cas nods pointedly.

Dean gives him his book back.

Cas gives him a faint smile and sits back down. He reaches over to tap Dean’s notebook, and, not looking forward to it, Dean obliges him by flipping open to their latest page of communication. It’s weird, seeing gray pencil instead of blue ink when Cas slides the notebook back.
One of my students asked me for your phone number.

When Dean looks up, Cas’ expression is more than faintly accusatory.

Dean just grins and writes, *For her older sister?*

Cas shakes his head.

Dean shrugs and spreads his hands in the universal gesture for *What can I say, I’m hot.*

Cas rolls his eyes, the motion moving his entire torso and showing off his neck to his advantage.

Dean keeps grinning at him until Cas’ glare softens in exasperation, Cas clearly deciding to pick his battles.

Cas writes, *If I finish this up before you leave, you can check out the book. If not, I have other recommendations.*

Dean shrugs like he doesn’t care, but Cas keeps looking at him intently. It’s a hell of a thing, Cas’ attention. The guy focuses on Dean the same way he focuses on books or his laptop or, presumably, teaching his students.

...Right. This is an educator talk, not a sexytimes conversation.

Keeping himself in check, Dean writes back, *You got a spare syllabus or something?*

Cas smiles faintly, the corner of his mouth pulling to the side as he reads. His pencil scratches paper, louder than the typical smooth glide of his pen. *What are you interested in? I can point you to a broad overview or something more specific.*

Dean goes for the innocuous option, if asking BDSM reading recommendations has an innocuous option. *What’s your favorite book?*
Cas takes a couple seconds to think about that one. He writes something down, then looks something up on his laptop. He writes a short list: titles, authors, descriptions. He slides the notebook back, and just looking the list over, Dean can see the variety there. It’s definitely not as specific as the book Cas is working out of now.

You got anything like the opposite of that one?

Cas looks at him curiously, writing back, *Amateur Doms*?

*Sub perspective stuff.* Justifying it, Dean adds, *That book was pretty one-sided.*

Nodding, Cas adds a few more titles, slower about it this time. *The library doesn’t have all of them, but you could borrow one or two from me if you’ll return them by the end of the semester.*

Dean can’t help the way his face lights up.

His smile faint but warm, Cas reaches over and draws quick little stars next to certain titles. He raises his eyebrows at Dean. Dean reviews the shortened list and, after a pause for consideration, circles the stars next to a Dom book and a sub book, the better to hide his tracks. He’s just looking for a well-rounded overview, that’s all.

Cas nods like those are good picks, like he approves, and he writes, *I’ll bring them with me next week.*

Awesome. Thanks. Dean thinks for a second and before he passes the notebook back, he adds, *If you need to know about car repair, I got you covered.*

Cas answers with the most incomprehensible sentence in the English language.

Dean stares at it way too long, but the words still don’t make sense.

There, in dull pencil lines, reads, *I don’t drive.*
Dean stares at Cas for further measure.

Cas tilts his head.

Dean writes, *I don't think we can be friends anymore.*

*I'll leave the books at home, then.*

*Dude, how were you going to bring them? On the fucking bus?*

Cas nods like that should have been obvious.

Dean is appalled.

Cas is unamused.

Dean is even more appalled.

Cas rolls his eyes in that full-body move he has and goes back to work, pointedly ignoring Dean.

After another stretch of fruitless staring, Dean tries to follow suit. He does his accounting homework slowly, his mind meandering over the simple crap he can normally knock out with ease. It’s just that his mind goes from driving to cars, to Baby, to last night.

Does Jimmy Dom professionally, too? Does he feel the same way as any of the Doms in that book? He definitely Doms with Mandy, but that sounds more like a playmate kind of thing. It’s not a monetary transaction, but it’s not a relationship either. At least, not the way Dean thinks of relationships. It’s got to be some kind of relationship, right?

Yeah, he should probably read those books.
Just in case Cas wasn’t kidding about leaving the books behind, Dean pulls out his thermos along with a pair of so-called fun-sized peanut M&M packets. He tosses one in front of Cas with a click and clatter of little candies, the paper-muffled sound still loud in the sustained silence of the library.

Cas looks up, sees the thermos, and immediately has a change of expression, putting his empty travel mug forward. He tugs Dean’s notebook back toward himself and writes, *Are we friends again?*

The thing is, they’re really not. They’ve been sharing each other’s space for a few hours once a week for nearly two months. They’ve never actually spoken, not aloud. Most of the time, Dean is outright bribing Cas to put up with him. It’s all more of the same, really: Benny and Garth have to make nice with Dean as their boss’ not-quite-son, and, hell, Dean is literally paying Jimmy to talk to him.

Dean doesn’t actually have friends, but screw it. It’s nice to pretend.

He smiles and pours the coffee.

Chapter End Notes

Updates every Monday, time of day may vary.

To see what else I’m working on, you can follow me on [tumblr here](https://example.com).
What Makes A Good Boy Good

Chapter Summary

Dean's been waiting all week for this. Maybe longer.
(Definitely longer.)

Chapter Notes

This chapter contains discussion of homophobic threats and biphobia.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Thursday can’t come soon enough. He knows it can’t, because it’s taking forever. He’d call Jimmy on Monday if it wouldn’t make it clear just how eager Dean is to take it up the ass.

Not that he’s eager for, like, a dick or something. But there’s only so many times a guy can watch a chick ride his dick before wondering what the pleasure on her face feels like from the inside. It’s not the same thing, he knows that, but, hell, he’s always enjoyed it when a woman held onto his ass for the ride he gave her. So he’ll probably like it, right?

Worst case scenario, it’ll feel weird and Dean will go back to jerking off normally while Jimmy gets himself off. Not that he explicitly reserved an orgasm from Jimmy or anything, but it was implied.

Dean’s pretty sure it was implied.

He zones out in class more than he should, wondering if that was actually implied. But Dean’s got it all well in hand. Not his dick. The classes. He’s got the classes in hand. Because this is a reward system. That’s the entire point. He finishes his last class of the week on Thursday and only then can it be Jimmy time.

He looks forward to it all week, like some kind of fucking idiot. And not just zoning out in class or jerking off in the shower. Benny calls him an asshole and Dean chokes on a laugh. Dean hears something get bleeped out on the TV and starts snickering. He thinks about what he’d read in Cas’ book on Friday and his brain starts to shut down.
Days before Dean gets the books from Cas at the end of the week, Dean starts researching on his own. He can google. Hell, he takes a hint from Cas and looks through that JSTOR thing again. Most of that shit is way too weighty, but it’s easier to run searches when he tells himself it’s just to have better, well-informed conversations with Cas.

There are a lot of terms, a lot of labels. None of them are really him, though, even if some of them sound fucking amazing, or like amazing fucking. Dean isn’t a masochist; sometimes, a dude just wants to be slapped across the face while a chick in a Zorro mask rides him. That’s not being weird. That’s having taste.

He’s definitely an old hand at topping, but bottoming is going to be a new one. Come Thursday night, he’s more than ready to find out. He remembers Jimmy’s instructions from last week and carries them out with his nerves singing in anticipation. He takes a shower and lays down a second towel on the bed after drying off with the first. He grabs a box of tissues, his phone and headset, and the lube he’d bought for the occasion.

He puts the headset on. He places the call. He gets put on hold for a minute, because that’s how long Jimmy needs to get ready.

Sitting there wearing nothing but a headset and a big, stupid grin, Dean waits. He fidgets and pops the cap on the lube. He doesn’t squeeze out any yet, not even for his dick. By the time the call actually goes through, he’s so ready that he has to resist that urge, ears pricked for a warm “Hello, Michael.” A few of his better dreams have started off with those words, lately.

Jimmy picks up, Dean grins wider, and Jimmy says, “Michael, how are you?”

His voice is warm, but not in the way of a working engine rumbling beneath the hood. It’s the summer heat inside the car instead, trapped with the windows up. It’s forced and flirty.

“What’s wrong?” Dean asks, leaning forward. He crosses his bare legs, elbows on his knees.

After too long a pause, Jimmy asks, “What?”

“What’s wrong?” Dean repeats. “You okay?”

For a second, Dean hears nothing. No voice, no breathing, nothing. He grabs his phone to check that
the call hasn’t dropped, but Jimmy’s still there.

“I’m sorry,” Jimmy says at last, his words clenching Dean’s stomach even more than his silence had. “I shouldn’t have taken the call. I’ll take the reprimand and hang up, you should be able to get your money back.”

“What, no, hey,” Dean interrupts. “Hold on.” There’s silence, but he checks and the call is still going. “At least tell me if you’re gonna be okay, what happened?”

Jimmy takes an audibly deep breath.

“You’re gonna be okay,” Dean decides for him, the way he sometimes wishes someone else would decide for him.

“I’m fine. It’s… I’m fine.”

A tilt in the emphasis brings Dean to say, “But someone else isn’t.”

Jimmy’s quiet again before saying, “You’re very perceptive.”

He’d had to learn how to read his dad, whether sober, drunk, or in between. He still has to read Sam over the phone, out in California and calling back to check up on Dean the way Dean should be calling to check on him. He has to deal with customers, stupid and angry and unable to understand that he’s not ripping them off.

Dean doesn’t say any of that. Nobody needs to be burdened with Dean’s crap.

“What happened? I mean, can you tell me? Is that allowed?”

“It’s… been a bad night.”

“Yeah, I get that.”
“This isn’t why you called,” Jimmy says, as if Dean needs reminding. As if Dean has somehow forgotten that his naked butt is on a towel on his bed, his lube bottle rolled against his thigh.

“Yeah, well, if you hang up, I’ll just spend the night worried, so you might as well spill.”

Another deep, steady inhale. A slow sigh. “It’s been a bad night.”

“I noticed.”

There’s a shifting noise down the line, Jimmy hopefully making himself more comfortable. “Do you remember what I told you last week? About FCC regulations.”

“Dude, as much as I want to forget, I’m gonna remember ‘tongue bath’ until the day I die, you furled rosebud.”

A faint sound of amusement. Just a little, but there. And then it fades. “Requiring a credit card to hear obscenity is meant to prevent children from accessing it.”

“Okay…?”

“I think he was twelve. Sixth grade is twelve, isn’t it?”

“Wait, you got called by a kid?”

Jimmy hums confirmation. “The operator let him through because he sounded like a woman and used a woman’s credit card. Female callers are unusual but not unheard of. ‘She’ asked to talk to a gay man—a real gay man, not someone pretending—but he told me once the call was transferred.”

“A kid wanted you to talk him off,” Dean summarizes.

“No,” Jimmy says flatly. “A child called a sex hotline because he’s the only gay person he knows
and hates it.”

“Oh.”

“Yes.”

“That’s, uh. That’s pretty craptastic.”

“Yes,” Jimmy agrees. “I gave him other resources. It was all I could do.”

“You listened to him. That’s not nothing.”

“I normally handle these calls better, but that was the youngest I’ve ever gotten.”

“Wait, that wasn’t the first one?”

“No. Normally, they do sound like men, though. You know there’s something wrong because of the questions and the anxiety.”

“And the lack of jerking off noises,” Dean guesses.

“That’s also a clue, yes.”

“I’m sorry, dude.”

Jimmy sighs. “So am I.”

Making up his mind, Dean sets the lube and tissues back on his bedside table. “Do me a favor, buddy?”
“All right…?”

“I’m gonna lie down. You should lie down too.”

Dean makes good on his word, settling down on his back before twisting over onto his side, pulling the towel over himself. The headset digs into his ear and his pillow, but he’s had worse. He listens to Jimmy settling in, too.

“You want to do your calm breathing thing?” Dean offers. He’s never seen the point of that meditation and yoga crap, but when it’s Jimmy taking the lead, Dean doesn’t mind following so much.

“I did that before I took the next call.”

“You mean, this call.”

“No,” Jimmy says. “I mean the call before this one.”

“Oh Jesus.” Wherever this is going, it can’t be anywhere good. “What happened?”

“It’s… One of my co-workers calls it ‘wanker’s regret.’”

“What, you got a British guy?”

“Some people prefer the accent.” Hesitating slightly, Jimmy adds, “If you’d rather-”

“Nope,” Dean interrupts. “Just curious about the ‘wanker’ thing. So is that like buyer’s regret? Dude gets off and then demands a refund?”

“Not exactly. Sometimes, it’s a demand for money back, but most often, it’s misdirected anger.”
Arm folded under his head, Dean frowns. “Meaning?”

“Verbal abuse,” Jimmy states flatly. Not hurt, but tired. “I’ve gotten a good handle on it. I typically enjoy the opportunity to give better than I get, but tonight, it was too close to what the boy had been talking about.”

Dean closes his eyes, tugging the towel tighter around himself. He reaches out, grabs the second pillow, and tucks it against his chest, just getting more comfortable. “That fucking sucks, man.”

“Yes.”

“And you’re not allowed to hang up when they, I don’t know. Go off on you?”

“They’re paying to yell.”

“And I thought my job sucked.”

“How’s the training going?” Jimmy asks, apparently having remembered. Having cared at least that slim sliver of an amount.

“Kinda rough, still on track. Not really what I called to talk about, though.”

“I’m sorry.”

“No, dude, no,” Dean says. “If it was me, I would have packed it in for the night after that.”

“I was considering it. I only picked up because it was you.”

Lying motionless on the bed, Dean’s body lurches without movement. His stomach. His entire chest. “...Seriously?”
“We had an appointment,” Jimmy says with unmistakable warmth. It might be faint, but Dean hears it. It’s there, right in Dean’s ears. In Jimmy’s voice.


“We still could.”

Dean rolls his eyes. “Don’t even try to bullshit me on that one. You’re not feeling it.”

Jimmy’s quiet again, but maybe not in a bad way.

“What would you want to do?” Dean asks. “If we were just two guys hanging out, comparing crappy days. You a grab a beer kind of guy?”

“You do realize we are two guys hanging out, comparing crappy days?”

“Smartass.”

“I prefer ‘rosebud of intelligence,’” Jimmy deadpans, and Dean chokes.

“Okay, first off, no,” Dean manages once he can breathe again. “The rosebud is the asshole, not the ass. The whole ass can’t be a flower. The ass is like…the rosebush.” He snickers. “Although I guess it’s already close to a bush.”

“Thank you for giving this matter the serious consideration it deserves.”

Dean doesn’t grin against his arm, not at all. “Fuck you.”

“Not tonight. You were saying?”

“Huh?”
“You said first off. What’s second?”

“Uh.” It takes a moment. “I just meant, y’know. If we were hanging out in person. What would you want to do?”

“That depends on what TV shows you watch. There’s a lot I need to get caught up on.”

That’s not where Dean thought this would go, but he can roll with it. “Working when the new episodes are coming out, huh?”

“Mostly, I watch on Netflix, so I can pause for calls.”

“...Jimmy, are you saying we’re Netflix and chilling right now?”

“...I hadn’t thought of it that way.”

“Dude, we are. You professionally Netflix and chill.”

Jimmy laughs, just a little. “Thank you.”

“Wasn’t exactly a compliment, but you’re welcome, I guess.”

“Thank you for tonight,” Jimmy clarifies. “I haven’t had a call like this before.”

“Well, uh, guess it’s about time I had one of your firsts, too, huh?”

Jimmy makes that noise again, that tiny laugh. It sinks through Dean’s ears. It fills his empty mouth.

Before Dean can do something stupid over it, he redirects. Because as much as Jimmy might be
enjoying the respite, Dean is, after all, a selfish asshole with his credit card burning hotter by the minute. “You feeling any better, Jimbo?”

“I am. It will take a little longer for the guilt to go down, but I appreciate the distraction.”

“Guilt? Dude, you didn’t do anything wrong. I mean, unless you talked dirty to that twelve-year-old, that would be kinda fucked up.”

“No. I told him it would be all right.”

“See, there you go.”

Jimmy stays silent.

“There you don’t go?” Dean asks.

“I told him signs to look for safety. I promised he didn’t have to be afraid of everyone.”

“And then your next guy was a dick.”

“My next guy threatened to sodomize me with a knife, yes.”

“What the fuck.” His entire body goes tense with rage. The tone Jimmy uses makes it even worse: bored and tired, like he can’t even be bothered to be angry. “Jesus fucking Christ, Jimmy.”

Sounding like he’d rather be done with the whole thing, Jimmy says, “We put his number on the warn list. He won’t be allowed to make calls again, but I don’t enjoy the thought of him in the area.”

“Fuck no. So, wait, you’ve got his number? You’ve got the area code?” Because Dean has fists. And many heavy, metal tools. It’ll be awkward explaining to Bobby why he needs to hide a body, but he’ll cope.
“What? No. All calls are local.”

The bottom of Dean’s stomach drops out. It’s a weird, anti-gravity sensation while lying on his side, surreal and disconnected from his brain. “He lives near you and he knows your voice?”

“That doesn’t bother me. There are protocols in place in case a caller finds one of us, or starts displaying signs of stalking. It’s the boy I’m worried about.”

Dean rubs at his face. “What kind of protocol? ‘Cause if there’s a team of muscle or something that beats up these assholes, I’ve got a mean right hook.”

“It’s just an emergency number. Maybe a fast track to a restraining order.”

Dean makes himself breathe. “Are you okay?”

“Michael, I’m fine,” Jimmy says like the concern annoys him. “It sounds worse than it is.”

“Dude, if I can notice it, you’re upset.”

Jimmy sighs. “I feel worse about the boy than I do about the man. A closeted bigot needs a therapist, but I wanted to at least help the boy.”

“You did. You do,” Dean promises. “Look, I get it’s not the same, but you’re keeping my head screwed on, all right? I don’t think anyone gets into phone sex to go around making a difference or some shit, but for what it’s worth, you actually do, okay?”

“…Thank you.”

“I’m not bullshitting,” Dean swears. “I haven’t come out to anyone else, just you and this gay guy I know, but I wouldn’t have even had the guts to come out to him if it weren’t for you. I get it, that doesn’t look like much. Too big of a wuss to come out to a fucking gay guy on my own, but. Y’know. You help.” Even if it’s only for baby steps Dean should be able to do on his own.
“That’s still brave,” Jimmy tells him, saying, as he always does, exactly what Dean wants to hear.

Dean rolls his eyes, pushing back the warmth where it sneaks through protective anger. “Yeah, ‘cause a gay guy’s gonna yell at me to get back in the closet.”

“Considering the amount of biphobia these days, that’s always a possibility.”

A record scratches inside Dean’s brain. “What?”

“What?”

“Gay dudes hate bi dudes?”

There is a long pause where Jimmy doesn’t lie to him.

“There are idiots on every side,” Jimmy says, sounding sorry. “I’m glad your friend isn’t one of them.”

“Yeah, being smart is kinda his entire thing.”

Jimmy hums. “Should I be jealous?”

The distraction is obvious, but Dean takes it anyway. “He’s pretty hot, so maybe.”

They go quiet for a few long, expensive seconds.

“Are you still lying down?” Jimmy asks.

“Yeah.”
“Are you willing to cuddle?”

“Like, hug a pillow?”

“Any surrogate is fine.”

“Yeah, fine, I’m hugging you,” Dean says, an arm slung around his pillow. “I’m gonna spoon the shit out of you.”

“...That sounds very uncomfortable. And unsanitary.”

Dean snorts. “You know what I meant.”

“I know. But I like making you laugh.”

“You make me laugh plenty.” More than anyone else has in ages. “You’re a funny son of a bitch, you know that, right?”

“Most people don’t think so.”

“Idiots on every side, man.”

Jimmy hums. “What do you want to do next week? We could still finger you tonight.”

All the extra blood that should be in Dean’s dick floods into his face instead. “If it’s just me by myself, that’s way too awkward. I can wait a week. I mean. Whenever. Whenever’s good.” If something fucks up next week too, he’s gonna be pissed. He should probably ask Cas about Punch A Homophobe community projects or something, because he’ll need to let off some steam.

“I want to make sure I have this right,” Jimmy says, his voice creeping back down from its typical bright, clear cadence. “Do you want to follow along?”
Dean’s arm tightens around the pillow. “I mean, you’re the guy who knows what he’s doing, right?”

“Do you want me to teach you what to do… or do you want me to tell you what to do?”

“Uh.” Dean laughs, rough and throaty. “Kinda the same thing there, Jimbo.”

Another hum, lower than the last one. “It really isn’t. I think you know it isn’t. And if that isn’t something you want to explore, that’s fine.”

Dean swallows. “Is that maybe… something you want to explore?”

“I don’t have any objections, but it would have to be something you want. I only do this kind of thing when it’s safe, sane, and…” Jimmy trails off.

“Consensual, yeah,” Dean finishes for him.

An audible smile presses against Dean’s ears. “So you’ve looked into it.”

“Uh. Yeah. So?”

“If you want to play, I do have one cardinal rule,” Jimmy warns him.

“Yeah?”

“I will only give you what you ask for. If you can’t ask for it, you can’t have it.”

“And if I can ask?”

“Then you can have it,” Jimmy promises.
“Simple as that?” Dean asks, mouth dry.

“Yes.”

Dean’s stomach keeps twisting in tighter on itself. He clears his throat. “What if there’s something you don’t like?”

There’s a pause from Jimmy, one where the smugness fades in what Dean thinks could be surprise. “If I object, I’ll tell you,” Jimmy says slowly, thoughtfully.

“What don’t you like?” Dean asks.

Again, that pause.

Dean rephrases: “I want to hear what you don’t like. Besides roleplaying as a centaur. C’mon, man, I’m literally asking for it.”

Jimmy’s laugh is low and dark, a shadow cast by his voice. “No bestiality, no rape play. Anything else, I’ll tell you as it comes up.”

“No, that’s, that’s good. I’m not into that either.”

“What are you into?” Jimmy asks.

“Boobs,” Dean says out of force of habit.

“I’m afraid I can’t help you there. I’ve noticed you’re very interested in anal, though.”

“It’s… Y’know.”

“I do know. But you don’t.”
“Guess that’s why I’m interested,” Dean admits. It’s a good reason. Normal. Curiosity at the unknown, nothing weird about that. Besides, chicks make getting fucked look hot.

“Did you get ready tonight?”

Naked under his towel, his hair now dry from his shower and the lube still lying on the bed with him, Dean doesn’t immediately answer.

“You did,” Jimmy realizes anyway. “I’m sorry.”

“A little anticipation never killed anyone, right? We’re good.”

“You’re good,” Jimmy corrects. “You’ve been very good for me, and I didn’t even realize. Thank you.”

“It’s not a big deal,” Dean mutters, totally able to breathe normally.

“Did you shower first?”

“Yeah. But I always shower at night,” he lies.

“Do you have the lube?”

“Already had it,” Dean continues to lie.

“Do you have it out?”

“Yeah.”
“Did you put a towel down?”

“Kinda under it now. Got cold.”

“Are you naked?” Jimmy asks like he’s actually interested in the answer.

“Dude, it’s not like I had my dick hanging out this whole time.”

With a hint of impatience but no edge of anger, Jimmy asks, “Under the towel, are you naked? You usually keep your underwear on for me. Did you?”

His shoulders ache, his arm too tight around the pillow. “Should I have?”

“...Such a good boy for me.”

Dean can’t breathe.

Dean doesn’t want to breathe.

“You’ve been such a good boy for me, and I hadn’t even noticed,” Jimmy continues, voice low and awed. “In the future, I want you to say when you’re being good. If I can’t see you, I need you to report it.”

“I’m just doing shit, it’s not…”

“Are you doing any of it to please me?”

Dean can’t answer that.

“Do you normally leave your boxers on, or have you been doing that since I told you how much I enjoy how it looks?”
“It’s weird having your dick out on the phone, okay? I mean, not, not _on_ the phone, you know what I meant.”

“I do, but I’m sure someone’s done that,” Jimmy says dryly. “There’s a fetish for everything. And if someone did want to put a vibrating device against his cock while speaking with me, that wouldn’t be so unusual.”

Dean has never thought of that. How has Dean never thought of that? Because vibrators are for girls, obviously, but besides that?

“But I’m getting sidetracked,” Jimmy continues. “Whatever you’re doing for me, I need you to say. Do you understand? If you don’t tell me, I don’t know when to reward you. And I do want to reward good behavior. Do you want to know what good behavior entails?”

He swallows with a dry throat. “Yeah. What?”

“I need you listening. I need you paying attention. I need you to tell me what you want.”

“Kinda thought the whole point was me doing what you want.”

“There are a lot of different points,” Jimmy says, “but I do need to know how to reward you.”

“Orgasms are always a good start.”

“Then we should start there. Do you want to play tonight?”

,Yes . “You’re not feeling it.”

“That’s not what I asked you,” Jimmy says, his voice lower, darker. “Do you want to play tonight?”

“Yeah, but if you don’t-”
“Michael, you’re not listening,” Jimmy interrupts, sharp and rough. “I told you to pay attention, and I told you to tell me what you want. Now, for the last time, yes or no, do you want to play tonight?”

Dean swallows. “Yes.”

“Good boy.”

Dean closes his eyes. He lets go of the pillow to sneak a hand down low.


“No, that’s, that’s good.”

“If you think of something you’d prefer, you’ll tell me.”

It’s not a suggestion.

It’s a command.

Dean’s heart is pounding so fast, and all he’s doing is lying here under a towel, dick in hand. He holds still, trying not to make any noise, but this, like other things, is hard at the moment.

“Do you understand, Michael?”

“Yes.”

“Do you like it when I call you that? A good boy?”

Dean squeezes his eyes shut tight and grits out an embarrassed, “Yes.”
“Good boy,” Jimmy says again, says it like he means it, like it’s a reward for both of them. “Do you know what’s the most important quality I look for in a good boy?”

“Listening,” Dean says, because he really is paying attention.

“That’s very important, but it’s not most important. You’re allowed to falter. You’ll have lapses of concentration, but that isn’t the deal breaker. In order to be my good boy, you have to want to be my good boy. I don’t take bratty subs I have to punish. Do you understand?”

“Yeah, I got it.”

“Does any of that sound unreasonable?”

He shakes his head, the headset shifting over his ears, against his folded arm beneath his head. “No.”

“Then tell me you want to be a good boy for me.”

Dean holds his own dick like a lifeline.

“If you don’t ask, you can’t have it,” Jimmy reminds him.

“It’ll sound stupid.”

“It might, to you,” Jimmy allows. “But that’s not important right now. It won’t sound stupid to me, and I want to hear you say it.”

“Look, I thought it was supposed to be all, I don’t know. Not whips and chains or shit, but you bossing me around over how I jerk off or something.”

“But that would be a reward, wouldn’t it?” Jimmy asks, voice low and mouthwatering. It’s a sound worth sucking on straight from the source. “That wasn’t a rhetorical question. Would that be a
reward for you?"

Jesus fuck, don’t make him say it. If he could play it off as a joke, that would be one thing, but the second it passes his lips, it’ll be serious. It’ll be real.

“I think it would be,” Jimmy says for him. “I think it would be an excellent way to reward you, but you have to earn it first. You know what you have to do.”

Dean knows.

He knows he can’t say that either.

“If it’s too difficult, we can try something else,” Jimmy continues. “You don’t need to prove yourself if you don’t want to. You’ve already been very good for me tonight.”

Dean actually snorts at the unexpected praise, surprised into the laugh.

“Are you disagreeing with me, Michael?”

“I haven’t done shit, man.” He knows that for a fact.

“You haven’t?”

Dread fills up his stomach, but Dean lets go of his dick, abruptly less nervous at the return to the familiar territory of disappointment. “No.”

“Don’t hang up, but I want you check the call time.”

Blinking his eyes open, Dean does as bid and winces. “Yeah, so?”

“I was going to hang up in the first minute, but I stayed because you asked. You put my comfort
above your pleasure. You literally paid money to reassure me.”

His face is burning. His head is on fire. “You were having a shit night,” Dean mutters into the mic. “It’s not a big deal.”

“It is to me. Let me treat you as well as you’ve treated me.”

“Dude, that’s not even close to the same.”

“Why are you trying to argue me out of treating you well?”

“I’m not. I’m…”

“Do you want something else?” Jimmy asks, sounding so damn reasonable. “I can only guess so far. Should I give you other suggestions?”

“No, that was, we can do the first thing.”

“Which thing?”

“Okay, now you’re just trying to make me say it.” Dean might be stupid, but he’s not that stupid.

“I am,” Jimmy admits. “If it’s difficult, then you deserve a reward for doing it. If it’s too difficult, we’ll do something else.”

“Saying one stupid thing isn’t ‘too difficult,’ Jimbo.”

“Then you’ll have no problem doing it.”

Yeah, Dean had been afraid he’d say that.
He clears his scratchy throat. “And after that?”

“After that, I’ll talk you off.”

“After just the one thing?”

“Just the one thing,” Jimmy promises.

“Y’know, I’m not really seeing how this is BDSM shit. You sure you know what you’re doing there, buddy?”

“Do you understand what the word ‘submission’ means, Michael?”

“Yeah, it’s a wrestling term,” Dean says glibly, pulse pounding.

Jimmy sighs, agitation lowering him down into a growl of a groan. “I’m not going to train you to behave. I was having a good night with you, and I’d like to resume that, so either you teach yourself to behave or we go back to our usual play style. I told you, I don’t bother with bratty subs.”

“And if I’m a bratty piece of shit?”

“I can’t physically restrain you over the phone. It has to be mental. If you aren’t willing to restrain yourself in that way for me, I can’t see how we’d manage the rest.”

“So, uh. If we’re gonna do this…”

“The submissive has to actually submit, yes.”

“Did you just roll your eyes at me?”
“Did you deserve it?”

Dean blows out a hard breath. “Yeah.”

“If we were having sex and I withdrew from you physically the way you’re withdrawing from me verbally, would you want to continue?”

Well, if he puts it that way: “No.” It comes out sullen.

“If we were having sex and I told you how much I wanted to feel you come, how good it feels to have your cock pulse inside me, how much I love it when your balls slap against my ass, would you continue then?”

The abrupt turn dries out Dean’s mouth. “Yeah. Yeah, fine, I get it.”

“Do you?”

“Yeah.”

“Prove it. Make me want to keep going. Tell me what you want to be.”

Cheeks flaming, cock hard, Dean chokes out, “I want to be your good boy.”

The shame doesn’t simply well up. It rises. It crashes over him. It buries and consumes him, every idiotic syllable echoing in Dean’s head.

“You are,” Jimmy says over that resounding mess. “It really is that simple with me. I’m not going to mock you. I’m not going to trick you. I’m going to give you simple commands for things you might find difficult to do. The more difficult it is, the better a reward you get. Does that sound reasonable?”

Dean manages to keep breathing. “Yeah, I guess.”
“Good,” Jimmy says, and he seems to mean it. “Are you still under the towel?”

“Yeah?”

“Take it off. Let me see you.”

That, Dean can do. That part is easy. He draws back the towel and shivers with more than the chill of his room.

“You have to tell me when you’ve done it,” Jimmy reminds him.

“Lying here naked, dude.”

“Not ‘dude.’ If we’re doing this, you address me properly. Do you understand?”

Dean’s dick gets right on board with this development. With the stern command in Jimmy’s voice. Dean fists himself as loosely as he can stand, saying, “Yes, Jimmy.”

“No,” Jimmy says, and Dean immediately releases his dick. “The proper form of address is ‘Sir.’ Do you understand?”

Dean freezes. “No.”

“You don’t understand?”

“I’m not calling you that.”

There’s a pause—a long pause—an eternal pause that can’t possibly be as long as Dean’s brain makes it out to be. Jimmy asks, “Are you being a brat, or is this a legitimate issue?”

Dean wants to say brat. He wants to lie, but then Jimmy would stop playing. “Issue.”
“I’d like to know what it is, if you’re willing to tell me,” Jimmy says, just as firm, if far less stern.

“My, uh.” Dean pulls the towel back over his junk, holding the cloth up like a tent over his dick. “My dad. He was a Marine.”

“He was ‘Sir’?”

“Yeah.”

“You won’t call me ‘Sir’ for the same reason you wouldn’t call me ‘Daddy’?”

Dean recoils at just the thought. “Yeah, never say that again.”

“That’s good to know. I won’t. But if you’re going to be following my commands, what will you call me instead?"

“Uh.” Something formal, right? “James?”

“Good. If you want more convincing, you’ll call me Jimmy, and if you want something different, you can call me Jimbo. Do you understand?”

“Yeah. James. Yes, James.” He’s read enough to know about systems of safewords and all that crap.

“Good. Do you know what you just did?”

He can’t help the way his stomach clenches, not any more than he can prevent his eyes from squeezing shut. “What?”

“You did perfectly,” Jimmy praises. “You did exactly what I wanted you to do.”
“You wanted me to call you ‘Sir.’”

“I want you to let me take care of you,” Jimmy corrects.

Dean refrains from audibly scoffing, only to ruin it by saying, “That’s some pretty boring shit, man.”

Jimmy’s voice snaps low. “Address me properly.”

“James. Sorry.”

“Do you understand the night I’ve had? I couldn’t promise a boy he’d be safe. I’ve been threatened with physical violence. Do you understand that I need to make sure someone else feels safe before I can?”

The tension evaporates. Dean sinks back down against the mattress, letting the towel fall directly back onto his lap. “You need this?” It’s too good to be true, but Dean asks it anyway.

“Yes. Will you let me take care of you?”

Jimmy needs this. It’s not even a decision. “Yes, James.”

“Good boy.” Voice rough and low, it’s gotta be the closest a human has ever come to purring. “Are you still bare for me?”

Dean whips the towel off. “Yeah.” He swallows. “James.”

“I have two conditions, and then I want to hear you touching yourself.”

Hell. Yes.

“I want you to spread your legs,” Jimmy instructs. “I want your knees wide apart throughout. But,
here’s the second condition, no matter what I say, you’re not allowed to touch your hole.”

“Is this gonna be like jerk off Simon Says?”

“No, but we can play that another week. For tonight, I’m going to describe what I’d do if I had you under me, and you’re allowed to touch yourself anywhere except your hole. Do you think you can handle that?”

“Easy.”

“It’s supposed to be easy,” James says. “That’s what makes it a reward.”

“But I…” Dean shuts himself up before he can ruin it, but it’s already too late.

“You what?”

Shit. He pushes down a groan but comes clean. “I didn’t do anything. To get a reward. I haven’t…”

“Michael,” James sighs, indulgent and fond and exasperated. Naked and exposed, Dean shivers on his bed. “Do you want to be my good boy?”

He doesn’t squirm. He doesn’t hide. It’s stupid and it doesn’t matter and he’s got no reason to want to curl up where Jimmy can’t see him. “Yeah,” he mutters.

“That’s difficult for you to say, isn’t it?”

Dean can’t answer.

“It is,” Jimmy concludes. “It’s very difficult, but you did it for me anyway. Do you know what that means, Michael? It means you’re my very good boy. It means you get a reward. It means you’ve earned a reward.”
It shouldn’t.

It’s stupid.

James is, Jimmy’s just indulging him. Taking pity on Dean’s fucked up mess and spoon feeding him the most vanilla BDSM the world has ever seen. Dean might be too greedy to say no, but he’s too chickenshit to ask for more.

“I don’t like that silence, Michael,” James warns. “The only feedback I have is the sounds you make. I need you to keep making noise. Tell me you’ve earned a reward.”

Dean doesn’t.

“I’ll wait,” James tells him. “We’ll both wait to touch you until you’re willing to talk.”

“I’ve…” Jesus, this is stupid.

“Good,” James says, coaxing him further. “What have you done?”

His entire head is on fire. It has to be. “I’ve earned a reward.” He rushes the words out in a quiet, furtive voice.

“That’s two difficult things you’ve said for me,” James says. “And I was going to reward you for just saying one. You’re being so good, Michael, I adore how hard you’re trying. That’s very good. That’s exactly what I want. You are exactly what I want.”

It’s bullshit, but it sounds so good. Not even Dean’s enough of an idiot to make him stop.

“I want you naked and on your back. Tell me when you are.”

Dean shifts. “’m there.”
“Spread your legs for me.”

He tries, but he has no idea what he’s doing. That’s not something his legs know how to do, bow-legged or not. “How, uh.”

“Plant your feet and part your knees. At least shoulder width apart, give me some space.”

Dean closes his eyes and does as told, hands riding his thighs. “I’m, yeah.”

“Are you touching yourself?”

“No.” Is he supposed to be?

“Are you hard?”

Dean huffs out a little laugh. “Talking to you, aren’t I?”

“Such a good boy for me,” James murmurs. “I want you to start. You can come whenever you like, but you have to tell me when you’re close. I don’t mean a second before, I mean while you still have the ability to stop.”

Fuck. “Okay.”

“Answer me properly, Michael.”

Dean shudders, dick in hand. “Yes, James.” His toes curl against the bed.

“Are your legs spread for me?”

“Yes, James.”
“Good. Because I want to see you. I want to see your hand working your cock. I want to touch you, will you let me touch you?”

Despite himself, Dean relaxes into it. Jerking himself, he spreads his legs a little wider. “Yeah. Yes. Yes, James.”

“I want to kneel between your knees. I want to stroke the insides of your thighs. Will you do that for me? Do that for me. From the side of your knee all the way down to your cock. I’d touch your hole but you have to touch your cock. My mouth is for your cock, but my hands are for your hole, do you understand?”

Each yes is easier than the one before. Dean strokes his inner thighs, switching from one hand to the other, one happy on his dick, one teasing on his legs. It’s ticklish and good and not enough. His legs twitch apart wider.

“I’d squeeze your ass while I worked my mouth down you. And you’re going to be a good boy for me, you’re going to stay relaxed and not thrust up. If you choke me, you don’t get my hands. If you choke me, you don’t get my fingers circling your hole. You won’t choke me, will you?”

“No, hell no,” Dean promises, keeping his hips still. His legs move instead, knees trying for more distance. His ass clenches against the bed, muscles playing against nothing.

“You’ll be good for me, I know you will,” James croons. “You can squeeze me with your legs, I like that. Clench around me like your ass around my fingers. Hold me so tight. You won’t let me go, will you?”

“No, I got you. I got, fuck.” He can barely talk, working himself faster. “I got you.”

“Take me.”

Dean’s hands falter, his thoughts slipping off the side of his brain. “But I…?”

“Take me inside you.”
His hands pick back up where they left off, one on his cock, one dropping lower. He touches the outside of his hole and everything, every part of him, twitches. It’s dry and sensitive and tingling, an awkward reach on his back, but so immensely worth it.

“Will you do that for me?” James asks, low and needful.

Dean nods and makes himself stop, the headset shifting against his ears and hair. “Yeah, yeah, I got you.”

“Say it.”

“I’ll do it for you.”

“You’ll take me inside you?”

A lifetime of porn flares up behind his eyes. Thick cocks dragging against skin, pushing into holes. Thighs pushing between thighs, men and women fucked open by dicks and strap-ons. “Y-yeah.”

“Say it.”

“I’ll, fuck.” He presses his finger harder against his hole, firmer, and it’s too dry. He sacrifices the touch on his dick to grab at the lube and pops the cap.

“What was that?” James demands, tone abruptly stern and suspicious.

Blood rushing everywhere inside him, heat flushing through him, Dean forces the words out. “I’ll take you inside me.”

“No, what was that noise? That snapping sound, what was that?”

“Uh.”
“Was that lube? Are you touching your hole when I explicitly told you not to?”

Guilt bubbles through the lust fog enough for Dean to grit out, “Shit.”

“Cap the lube and toss it on the floor,” James commands. “Do it. Now.”

Dean does it.

“Good boy,” Jimmy praises when he hears the thump. “If you threw something else, I’m going to be very disappointed.”

“I threw it,” Dean swears. “Promise.”

“Did you deliberately disobey me?”

“No, no, I just…” It’s so fucked up, the way he can’t stop touching himself.

“You just wanted my fingers so badly?” James asks, offering him that out, showing him the path to forgiveness.

“Yeah, yeah, I did, I wanted, I forgot.” He’s waited a whole week. Longer. So much longer.

“You want me stretching you open? Pressing tight and hot inside you? You want me working deeper and deeper until your cock is pulsing with it? I could milk you dry from the inside out, boy, stroke you into my mouth until there’s nothing left, I could suck you until you don’t even know what you’re begging for—”

“I’m coming,” Dean interrupts, remembers to interrupt. “I’m gonna, I can’t…”

“You are, you’re coming around me, you’re clenching down and shaking, your ass is tugging me deeper. Your ass wants it, your body wants it, can you feel that? You’re going to come like that,
aren’t you, just for me, you’re going to make those pretty little noises I love so much, that sound, just like that.”

An endless stream of filthy praise flows from James’ lips to Dean’s ears. It fills his head, fills him up entirely even as he empties out into his hand, groaning, toes curling against his bed, feet still planted, knees still spread, back attempting to arch. It’s good and warm and fond and so entirely approving, and Dean is good, he is good, he can want this and still be good, it’s okay. It’s more than okay.

Dean comes down slow, breaths as heavy as his limbs. Nerves twitch beneath his skin, electric illumination sparking inside his muscles. His legs slip down to lie on the bed in their typical fashion.

All the while, Jimmy keeps talking. He talks about massaging Dean’s thighs. He talks about a damp washcloth and warm water, cleaning lube and their mingled semen from Dean’s pliant body. He talks Dean down from a pounding heart to quiet, steady breathing.

Dean’s tired and spent in a way that doesn’t make sense, not for jerking off, but he can’t bring himself to care. He wants more. He needs to hang up, but, fuck, he wants more. Wants a body on top of him, heavy and warm.

Quieted down into a gentle murmur, Jimmy asks, “Did you like that?”

Dean hums.

“I’m pleased with you,” Jimmy adds.

“Messed up,” Dean mumbles, for some reason not bothered by this.

“And you corrected,” Jimmy says, almost proud, and Dean’s chest swells. Air fills his lungs and bubbles up his throat and it catches behind his teeth in this dumbass smile. “You’re allowed mistakes. Humans make mistakes.”

“And you’re not into bestiality.”

Jimmy audibly rolls his eyes. “There is one more thing I want from you, Michael. Will you do one
more thing for me?”

Anything. “What?”

“Until you call next week, I want you to keep playing by the rules. You can come as much as you want, but no touching your hole.”

“I can do that,” Dean promises with no hesitation. It’s not something he wants to do without Jimmy anyway. Easiest deal of his life.

“You’re allowed to change your mind. All I ask is that you report honestly.”

“Yeah, no, I can do that.” He pushes through lethargy to sit up and wipe at a few spots with the towel. “I don’t finger me until you tell me to, got it.”

“Nobody fingers you until I say,” Jimmy corrects and, Jesus Christ, if Dean hadn’t just come, his dick would be pointing to the ceiling. “For the next week, I own your ass. If I don’t get to finger you, no one does, do you understand?”

Dean’s gonna die.

Simple as that.

He’s just going to be dead now.

“I need a response, Michael,” James instructs.


“Yeah.”

“Are you stressed or worried over anything we’ve done?”

Dean tries to think about that for a moment, but his mind glances right off it. “Only financially.”

“That’s fair. This has been a long call. We did just start another minute, though, so we have at least another forty-odd seconds.”

In that case, Dean cuts right to the important shit. “What about you? How are you holding up?”

There’s a pause from Jimmy, a blank moment of surprise. “I’m doing much better, thank you.”

“Yeah?”

“Yes. Thank you for letting me take care of you, I think I needed that.”

Dean flushes, weirdly shy at words with no trace of filth.

As Dean silently squirms, Jimmy adds, “Kink is no adequate substitute for therapy, but it still helps.”

That jars Dean out of the warm fuzzies. “Wait. You’re in therapy?”

Another pause, like maybe Jimmy is going to deny it, or maybe he’s kicking himself for letting it slip. In the end, he simply says, “Is that so surprising?”

“Uh. Yeah?”

“Everyone needs help sometimes.”
Dean can’t see how lying on a couch groaning about his childhood could help anything, but a dude living in a sexually weird house shouldn’t throw stones at the guy who currently owns his ass. So he just says “Yeah, I guess” before double-checking with “But you’re definitely feeling better now?”

“I am. Ten seconds.”

Dean grabs at his phone, sees the time, and sighs. “Yeah.”

“I only brought it up because of the financial stress. You don’t have to hang up if you don’t want to.”

They tick over into the next minute together.

“Yeah, okay,” Dean says once he’s already been charged for the next sixty seconds.

Jimmy sighs, but there’s something like relief in it. “Honestly, I’d feel neglectful leaving you alone so soon after even a minor scene, but that is your decision.”

“Is that aftercare stuff?”

“It would be.”

“Like…”

“Holding you. I’d bring you water, then sit up at the head of the bed with your back against my chest. One hand over your stomach, the other running up and down your arm as you drink. But that’s what I like. I don’t know what you like yet.”

“We could start with that.” Come to think of it, Dean is kind of thirsty.

“I’d like that,” Jimmy says, and fuck but those words sound good strung together. So soft and fond and wistful. Like Jimmy wants it too. Like Dean isn’t alone in this.
Except, of course he is.

This is Jimmy’s fucking job, of course Dean is alone.

“Michael?” Jimmy asks.

“I’m fine,” Dean says, quick about it.

“Yes you are,” Jimmy says, firm and confident for him, because naturally he can tell Dean needs him to be. “You’re all right.”

“I should hang up.” He’s still got more time on the clock, but.

He should hang up.

“Thank you for letting me take care of you. I’m not sure you believe me, but it is what I needed tonight. You were what I needed tonight.”

“Talk to you next week,” Dean says before he can say something else stupid.

“If you need to call back sooner, I’ll be here.”

That’s too tempting a thought to dwell on. “Night, Jimbo.”

“Good night, Michael.”

Dean hangs up, only to miss him immediately.

And then he gets over himself.
Come morning, it’s only ridiculously obvious that Dean needs those BDSM books Cas promised to bring him this week. He needs to know what’s normal. He needs to know if other people feel like this.

Some of the stuff he’d read last week, that sounds vaguely like what Jimmy was talking about, but only vaguely. And sure, maybe he did feel more in control of himself after feeling in control of Dean. That’s great and all. Good for Jimmy. But Dean still went to a guy who’d just been threatened with a fucking knife up the ass and asked that guy for praise and orgasms.

Dean is a grade-A dick.

He’s a guilty dick, which maybe helps a little, but definitely still a dick. Whenever he sits down, the pressure reminds him that Jimmy owns his ass for the week. It’s thrilling for no damn reason. A grand total of nothing happens. Absolutely squat continues to happen, but it’s still enough to distract him all morning and have him driving to the library on autopilot that afternoon. He walks the final stretch through an early November snow flurry only to turn back around, convinced he’d forgotten to lock the car door.

He hadn’t. He double-checks anyway.

Taking his little slip-sliding walk again, he tries to focus on the facts. First off, Jimmy brought up the ass-owning thing by himself. Dean might be a freak for getting this distracted by the idea, but Jimmy’s the one who brought it up. It even makes a weirdly efficient kind of sense. Jimmy’s putting in a full week of work with just a concept. Looking at it that way, Dean’s getting a hell of a lot of bangs for his buck.

That’s gotta be good, at least. Because Dean can’t afford to scale up. Calling once a week is bad enough, but if he started calling multiple times? Hell no. He’s not breaking the bank here, but he’s hardly comfortable about it, either. He’s only allowed one call a week. That’s a hard limit, the line in the sand. It has to be.

Dean makes it all the way to his usual spot in an introspective haze. He only blinks back to awareness halfway through a silent moment of interaction, because it’s pretty weird for Cas to respond to a distracted wave by hanging his head.
Hanging his jacket on the back of his chair, Dean cocks his head and frowns.

Cas reaches around for paper before scribbling on a post-it and slapping that over. There, in blue ink against neon orange, reads, *I forgot the books*. 

Dean droops in the universal gesture of *c’mon, man, seriously?*

Cas sighs at him but offers no further explanation.

Great. He’ll just have to keep googling this on his own. Dean sighs back and sits down. Melting snow trickles through his hair and down the side of his face, the universe taunting him to go ahead and cry about it. He swipes at his cheek with the sleeve of his Henley and brushes off his bag too before opening it.

He grabs his stuff and, straightening back up to dump it on the table, becomes once again aware of the fact that he has an ass and is sitting on it.

Which should not be news.

Much less distracting news.

Except.

Except, Jimmy.

Jesus Christ, Dean is screwed.

From across the table, Cas looks at Dean with the confusion of a sane person. Probably because Dean’s face just spasmed from pleasantly aroused to humiliatingly damned. Cas’ frown only deepens while Dean stares back at him, frozen in bright blue headlights, and Dean needs a distraction.

He holds up a finger and goes for his notebook. By the time he flips it open and grabs a pen of his own, he even has a tactic. And it’s even for something he should probably know about.
Can I pick your brain about something?

Cas glances over at whatever’s on his laptop screen before typing rapidly, clicking something, and closing the computer. Somebody’s ready and raring to take a break. He nods at Dean and gestures for him to write the question.

God, Dean hopes he spells this right. It’s gotta be spelled the way it sounds, he’s almost sure of it.

What’s the deal with biphobia?

Cas looks at him, rereads the question, looks at him again, and sighs. He pulls the notebook over and writes, That’s an excruciatingly broad question. What do you mean, specifically?

Without an actual example, Dean naturally spouts some bullshit. Thanksgiving in two weeks, how do I explain to my cousin’s kid why people are mean without making it sound like my fault? Because Dean should probably have this crap explained to him like he’s a child.

As Cas reads, his eyes widen slightly and he nods. Are the mean people your cousins?

Dean hasn’t seen his cousins—technically second-cousins—in years because they’re all assholes, so… Yes, he writes. Let’s just say, the dad’s name is Christian.

That, Cas doesn’t look too impressed about. That doesn’t mean much. I’m named after an apocryphal angel.

Huh. Dean had wondered about that.

In any case, Cas continues writing, not stopping to admire how Dean can read upside-down, a child should be able to understand that when people are frustrated by too big an idea, they get angry.

Dean frowns at that even before Cas slides him the notebook back. It’s not really a big concept.
Cas reads that and almost looks approving. *When people are only used to ‘yes’ and ‘no,’ hearing ‘maybe’ can terrify them. It’s not fair or rational, but it is very human.*

That gets one hell of a frown from Dean. *Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate? Thanks a lot, Yoda.*

Cas rolls his eyes and pulls back the notebook in order to set off into a flurry of an impromptu essay. It’s kind of impressive just to watch as Cas bullet points his way down an argument with absolutely no hesitation, clearly thinking twice as fast as he writes.

*Denial: disbelieving in the existence of bisexuality. The women are doing it for male attention. The men are trying not to look gay. It’s just a phase.*

*Anger: the greedy or cheating bisexual myth. The ability to want multiple kinds of people means you must want multiple people and are therefore prone to cheating.*

*Lust: the idea that bisexuals only exist for threesomes.*

*Envy: the myth of bi people having straight privilege. A gay person sees a bi person talk about some exes and be open with their current partner, experiences jealousy, and reacts without seeing how that bi person is forced into the closet by being read as straight.*

*Gatekeeping: being between two groups means being barred from both.*

*In short, many things lead to hate, and I am Obi-Wan.*

Dean reads down the list with mounting dread, only to have to smack a hand over his own mouth to keep down a laugh. It’s not even funny, it’s just the relief of humor after reading all the problems. That’s probably not even all the problems.

Pen in hand, he sets the tip to paper and has to stop there, no glib response forthcoming. He settles on something trite instead, like *Thanks.*

Immediately moving on to avoid the subject, Dean digs into his bag and pulls out his computer, too.
Getting the cord out and plugging everything in eats up a good amount of time, but when he’s done, Cas has written a response. Hell, even an amendment to his response.

What happened? And, in slightly fresher ink: If it happened on campus, I might be able to help somewhat.

Dean glances back up to Cas’ face. He’s waiting, patient and earnest and more than a little irate on Dean’s behalf. It’s unflinching, unthinking solidarity, a mirror of Dean’s own heart, an echo of what Dean’s spent years reaching out to get a glimpse of in Sam.

He picks back up his pen and answers as best he can. My buddy got hassled off campus.

Cas’ stern expression turns sterner yet, but not at Dean. He pulls over the notebook and writes, I’m sorry. Is he all right?

Yeah, he’s tough. He just doesn’t deserve that crap, you know?

Cas nods back without a trace of false platitudes. He is serious and determined and entirely on Dean and Jimmy’s side. Dean kind of wants to bask in it, this unwavering, unthinking alliance.

He shrugs the one shoulder instead, signaling that it’s time to move on, and they move on. Cas does whatever it is Cas does. Dean does his homework from math to reading and probably should have started with the shit he hates. Too late now.

They take little breaks. Cas attempts this disastrous take on the puppy dog eyes over his empty travel mug and mostly comes off looking like he’s mourning the need to kill Dean for his camping thermos. Dean pours, they drink, the afternoon goes on.

Eventually, they start chatting again. First with Cas asking how badly it was snowing when Dean came in, then Dean asking if Cas is going to need a ride home, that kind of thing. Cas declines the ride in light of Dean writing that it wasn’t snowing so hard.

Later, the question bothering him probably more than it should, Dean writes, Theoretically, would you ever date a bi guy?
Cas rolls his eyes at the question and Dean’s stomach drops through the bottom of his chair until he reads the concise answer. *I already have.*

Dean being Dean, he can’t leave well enough alone. *It didn’t work out for other reasons?*

*He was closeted. I’ll hide anyone who needs to be hidden, but I can’t live that way. I don’t need to hold hands in public, but I need the option.*

Dean’s stomach finishes the trip all the way down to the floor. *Guess that wasn’t fair to you, huh.*

*He was paranoid. I was irritable. Closeted and out is a bad combination.* Cas doesn’t look too irritable now. Maybe a little wistful. Maybe a little regretful. Some quiet kind of look.

Right. Cool. Just another reason Dean should keep his mouth shut and stick with this fucked up batch of pathetic he’s got going on with Jimmy. That’s just one more thing he hadn’t thought through. Cas seems to expect some kind of response, though, so Dean writes back, *Never dated anyone closeted. Unless one of the girls was, I guess.* That’s a new thought, too.

Cas nods, reading that, but he still looks at Dean like he’s expecting something more. Like Dean had actually explicitly written out *Would you date me?*

Like Cas had explicitly written back a *Yes.*

Except they hadn’t, and Dean is definitely reading too far into this.

Lacking anything else to say, Dean just shrugs and gets back to work. They do their stuff in relative silence, the only sounds those of pens writing and pages turning. Chairs pull out and scoot in. Students pack up their belongings, books knocking, fabric brushing. It’s quiet, contemplative, and when Dean glances up at Cas’ face, the other man’s attention focused elsewhere, it’s even comfortable. Maybe if Dean had had a study buddy like this as a kid, high school might have gone differently.

It’s a thought, anyway. It’s a day for thoughts.
Before he packs up his stuff, Dean checks the weather. It’s still snowing, but not that bad. Even so, he still double-checks with Cas about giving him a ride instead of the guy taking the bus. Because Dean can be considerate like that, not just because dropping Cas off at his place would mean Cas could just run inside and loan Dean those books after all.

Cas responds with a written *I’ll be fine, thank you* and a shiver-inducing smile that Dean’s face can’t help trying to replicate. Whatever kind of expression Dean manages, it has Cas looking down and then back up, and Dean’s still not sure what to make of that receptiveness.

Then he realizes: Cas must think Dean’s out. If some random guy Dean wasn’t close with came out to him, he’d assume the guy was out to everyone.

Shit.

Dean can’t tell him. He can’t lose that respect.

And great, now he’s closeted about being closeted. The bullshit he brings down on himself, it’s ridiculous.

Something in Dean’s chest must show on his face, because Cas adds, *I promised my students I’d be here for all of my office hours, whether they come or not.*

Dean shoots him a thumbs up, playing like it was that tiny moment of rejection that was getting him down, and not a mess of his own making. He packs up his notebook with the rest of his shit, and he and Cas wave each other a quick goodbye. His bag heavy, he leaves in silence, but when he glances back, just the once, Cas waves again.

Chapter End Notes

Updates every Monday, time of day may vary.

To see what else I’m working on, you can follow me on [tumblr here](http://example.tumblr.com).
The week drags. Bobby even asks if Dean’s all right. Sam calls to shoot the shit and keeps making these inquisitive little jabs about Dean’s classes no matter how many times Dean tries to change the subject to Sam’s Thanksgiving visit next week. It’s understood that Sam will be staying at Bobby’s house, not Dean’s shoe box of an apartment over the garage, and that’s the single piece of mercy to be found in the situation. There’s no way Dean can explain that he needs Sam gone so Dean can have some private time for a phone call.

Not that the calling is going so well even with Sam far, far away at the moment. Dean takes a shower. He takes a second towel to lay out on the bed. He sets the lube on his bedside table next to the waiting headset, and he unplugs his phone from its charger. He sits on his bed, damp towel still wrapped around his waist.

He gets back up and stalls.

Twenty minutes later, he’s on his laptop, trying to make an email sound less stupid.

**Subject: This is Dean from the library**

*Hey Cas,*

*This is Dean from the library. Just wanted to check in about those books we talked about. I’m a quick reader, so I’ll get them back to you the Friday after Thanksgiving break.*

*See you tomorrow,*

*Dean Winchester*

Is it weird Dean’s emailing him? Cas’ email is on his university profile page, it’s not like Dean’s stalking him or something. But Dean definitely needs those books, and he needs Cas to bring them tomorrow. It’s that or wait two weeks. Or wade through the library shelves on his own, but that
would involve actually checking the books out while a librarian looked him in the face, and he can’t do that.

Maybe there’s a self-checkout.

Dean sends the email before he can move past from second-guessing to third-guessing himself, and then he’s run out of ways to stall.

He sits back down on his bed, hair and towel close to dry. His body aches with tension, but just putting the headset on calms him down in a flash. Dialing the number—memorized, not entered into his contacts—is like taking a hit. He relaxes. He goes jittery. His mind turns clear and cloudy while his mouth dries out and his dick plumps up.

Naturally, he gets put on hold. But he waits. He toys with the cap of the lube. He shifts around so he’s sitting on the dry towel with the damp one across his lap. His nipples pebble in the cool air. His stomach twists back and forth like a bored teenager is using it as a swingset.

Finally, finally, Dean gets put through.

“Hello, Michael,” Jimmy greets, wonderful and warm. His voice is already on the lower side of the scale, like Dean waiting for Jimmy is affecting him too. “Were you a good boy for me this week?”

It takes Dean a second to respond to this waking wet dream. “I, yeah. Yeah.” He licks his lips. “I didn’t touch myself there.”

“You didn’t touch yourself where, Michael?” Jimmy prompts.

“I didn’t touch my hole. James.”

“Good boy.”

The praise sinks into him through both ears. Praise in surround sound. Dean has to consciously make himself keep breathing.
“Did you want to?” Jimmy continues. “Were you tempted to touch your hole without me?”

Dean sits up straighter. “Yes, James.”

“Why didn’t you?”

*I wanted to do it with you* is too humiliating to say. “Because you told me not to,” Dean says instead, safe and simple.

“Such a good boy for me. Tell me how you got ready tonight.”

“I showered. Got another towel on the bed. Got the lube here, too.”

“Are you naked?”

He doesn’t blush. There’s a fire in his head, but it’s nothing like blushing. “Yeah.”

“Are you ready for us to finger you until you come?”

His entire body is on fire. He swallows. “Yeah.”

“If I like the sounds you make enough, we’ll be fingering you even after you come. After you come clenching around your fingers, you’ll be nice and loose for me. I know I don’t get to fuck you, but if this goes well, we might want to pretend.”

“What, um.” *What kind of noises?* “How do we start? You’re doing it with me, right?”

“You mean, am I fingering my ass open while you’re fingering yours?” It should be too matter-of-fact to be sexy, but Dean’s dick doesn’t care in the slightest.
“Yeah,” Dean manages to say, breathless. “Are you?”

“You’ve been a very good boy. You’ve waited. You’ve behaved. Is that the reward you want? Me stuffing my fingers inside my hole for you?”

“You can come from that, right?”

“I can come hard from that. Is that what you want, boy? You know you only get what you ask for.”

Shivering despite himself—he blames his nudity, blames the air—he nods. “I want that.”

“You want me to come all over myself with my big, thick fingers rubbing up against my prostate until I’m shaking with it?”

Dean’s dick could not be more on board with this if they were on a fucking boat. “Yeah,” he croaks. “I mean, yes, James.”

“Then that’s what my good boy gets. Lie down and get comfortable.”

Dean does, but over the sounds of his own shifting, he can hear James moving. The jingling chime of a belt buckle. The soft flwumph of pants hitting the ground. More rustling fabric, a body settling on a bed. A drawer, opening smoothly but shut hard.

“If I were there with you, there are so many things I’d be able to do,” James says musingly, wistfully. “I’d know how ready you are by looking at you, by touching you. I’d be able to feel it under my hands as you relaxed. I could lie down on top of you. Get your legs spread for me before my hands are any lower than your chest. Could I kiss you quiet and calm? Would you let me do that?”

Eyes closed, ears basking, Dean hums in the affirmative and sprawls a little wider.

“I’d open up your mouth first,” James decides. “I’d circle the tip of my tongue across your lips until you let me in. Until you take me in and suck me hard. My tongue across your lips, my finger tracing around your hole. I could enter you from both sides at once. Just barely, just the tip at first. More when I hear you ask, but you know I need to hear you ask. I need to hear you, because I can’t see
you or touch you, do you understand?”

“Mhm.”

“My good boy makes noises for me. Whatever you feel, that’s the sound you make. Can you do that for me?”

He’s not going to be doing any fake moaning or shit, but: “Yeah.”

“Good. I know you can. Tell me when you want to start.”

“Last week,” Dean jokes without thinking.

There’s a pause from Jimmy, too long of one.

“Sorry,” Dean says over him, over whatever Jimmy’s about to say. “I didn’t mean it like that.” It’s weirdly easy, weirdly urgent to apologize.

“I should make you wait longer,” Jimmy says, almost absently, as if to himself. “If you hadn’t been good for me, I would. Pick a hand.”

The sharp switch back into command jars Dean into confusion. “What?”

“One hand to dispense lube, one hand for your hole. You don’t want to switch once you start, unless you enjoy slippery mishaps.”

“Uh. Left hand lube, right hand rosebud, let’s play some Twister.”

Jimmy laughs faintly. “We’re going to start slow. Dry. Just touching the outside, do you understand? You can rub your cock against your forearm if you need to. I want you staying hard. Will you do that for me?”
“Are we edging?”

“I asked you a yes-or-no question, Michael.”

Dean swallows. “Yes.”

James’ voice drops deeper, lower, a growling panther crouched and ready to spring. “What was that?”

“Yes, James.”

“Good boy. And we’re not edging you tonight. Once you know your body better, we can play that way, but tonight, you’re allowed to surprise yourself into an orgasm. As long as you tell me before you come, you may.” It should be presumptuous as hell, James telling him whether he’s allowed to come. It should sound wrong. It should be immediate grounds for an offended fuck you.

Instead, it’s hot as hell, weirdly comforting, and something Dean has to force himself to stop thinking about.

“Confirm that you understand,” James orders.

“Yes, James.” It comes out nearly as a sigh. A relieved one.

“I’m going to touch myself now, and I want you to follow along.”

Hell yes. “Yes, James.”

“I’m stroking the backs of my thighs. I’m heading lower, finding a comfortable position. Are you comfortable, Michael?”

“It’s, uh, a little awkward.”
“Mm, it would be better if I could do that for you,” James agrees. “Let’s start with the lube now. Warm it up in your right palm if you don’t like the chill, and don’t worry about using too much. That’s why you have the towel.”

“What about you?”

James sighs. “I should change my sheets anyway. How often should you- I’m getting distracted.” There’s a faint noise down the line, vaguely wet. “We’re going to start with the pad of your finger, not the tip.”

Dean doesn’t bother waiting for the lube to warm and goes straight for his hole. It makes his thighs jump, but not unpleasantly. “What should I…?”

“Circle it. Don’t rub yet. Don’t press in, not until I tell you.” James’ breathing hitches with whatever he’s doing to himself. “You’ll feel when you’re ready.”

His legs feel strange, spread the way they are, legs again planted the way they were last week. It’s a lower reach than it is for his dick, and maybe he should be doing this on his side, reaching around and going the back way. But this feels better, a piece of instinctual knowledge. He’s more exposed. More open. More the way James wants him, the way he hopes James wants him.

Though the position is maybe right, the wetness is strange. If his stomach didn’t feel fine, he’d think something had gone wrong. And that’s just circling, not pressing inside just yet. The small hairs of his ass get slicked with lube, everything turning slippery and gliding and soft. He presses a little harder as he circles, just the way James tells him to.

“Do you like it?” James asks. James keeps asking that, sounding each time like it matters.

“Yeah,” Dean mutters each time in response.

“I’m glad. I know how much you’ve been looking forward to this. I want to make it special for you.”

Dean’s face burns. He turns his head to the side, the headset shifting as his ear hits the pillow. Correcting that is on the difficult side of things, using his head alone, but he manages.
“Are you ready to press in?” James asks. “Are you still hard?”

It’s more of a semi than a true hard-on, but it’s enough for Dean to hum in the affirmative. “What do I do? Do I bear down?”

“You relax,” James instructs. “Why do you think we’ve been playing with you? Besides me wanting to finger you, I mean.”

“You…”

“Is that all right?”

Dean swallows thickly. “Yeah.”

“Good. Because I do want to finger you. I want to kiss between your thighs and touch your hole until you’re pressing down against my hand. I want to see the look on your face the first time you feel me press inside. Do your breaths turn shallow, or are you a heaving breaths kind of bottom? I want to watch your mouth fall open the way your hole wants to.”

Forget about the semi, Dean is hard against the side of his arm. His left hand abandons the lube bottle, the better to jerk it. Just a little, just slowly, just enough that he doesn’t go out of his mind as he presses his fingertip in.

It’s weird and wet and kind of wonderful, and Dean forgot to ask first.

“Can I…?”

“Can you what, sweet boy? Can you enter yourself now?”

“Y-yeah.” It comes out low and shaky, horny as hell.

“Start slow. Make it last. Don’t rush. The pleasure will still be there when you get to it.”
It’s strange, like a bad shit crawling back up his ass, except not painful. It’s there and tingly, the sensations themselves a mere background to James’ voice. It’s too big and not enough. Not enough stimulation, not enough length, not enough James.

“Are you?” Dean asks.

Somehow, James understands. “I’m working my finger in,” James says, as low and rough as a fingerfuck. “I’m not moving it yet, just stretching. And I have enough lube, do you?”

“Oh.” Dean lets go of his dick to add more, just in case. Despite the chill, it does feel better. Gross, but in a good way, like watching all the dirt and grime of the garage drain down the sink with so many gray soap bubbles. Satisfying. “Yeah. How do I stretch it, do I stick a second finger in?”

“Do you want to rush through? Or are you going to let me have my way with you?”

Finger in his ass, hand around his dick, Dean’s eyes try to roll up inside his head. “Just tell me the way, man.”

“Crook your finger. Slowly.”

“Oh fuck.”

“Slowly,” James repeats. “We’re going to experiment now. We’re going to discover what you like. We’re going to find out what makes you twitch and what makes you cry and after you’re very, very good, we’ll find out what makes you come.”

It sounds amazing, except Dean gets stuck on one point. “I don’t cry during sex, dude.”

“Do you know why we cry, Michael? Besides to protect our eyes.”

“Kinda getting unsexy there, Jimb- Jimmy,” Dean says, catching himself in time. He’s not safewording out. He just wants to get back on track before he gets awkward over the finger in his
“When the chemicals in your brain build up, when you feel something so incredibly strongly there’s no other escape from the sensation, it comes out through tears. Sadness. Anger. Joy.” There’s a hitch in Jimmy’s voice, a strain. “Relief. Bliss. Anything. Anything that overwhelsms and takes you out of yourself. I could do that to you. I’d like to do that to you. Would you let me try?”

“Not sure even you could make that sexy,” Dean lies.

“I’m sure you could.”

Any smartass response Dean could come up with fizzles out, every spark of sarcasm washed away in the flood of heat that prickles up through his skin. It’s more than just his dick and his ass; it’s his face and shoulders and chest.

“Let’s open you up,” James continues at a murmur, carrying Dean past that hot, frozen moment. He walks Dean through it, a slow pull here, a gentle circling motion there. He doesn’t say a thing about thrusting for much too long, until after Dean is fighting not to squirm, until after Dean’s already sneaking his finger in deeper.

The pressure is still strange, the fit hot and tight no matter how much lube Dean adds. But it’s a good strange. An increasingly better strange. By itself, it’s nothing to write home about, but paired with James’ low instructions, with James’ sighs of pleasure setting the example, with that, it’s something else.

Maybe Dean can’t get off from shit up his ass after all, but he’s definitely going to jerk off about this moment in the future. James telling him how to fuck himself. James doing the same things to himself at the same time.

It’s almost like they’re together.

In the same place, together. Not together-together. Just two dudes lusting after each other, instead of one guy desperate enough to pay for it and another guy kinky enough to indulge him. Two dudes wrapped up in each other, knuckle-deep in each other.
Fuck, but that would be good. Chests pressed together, James pressing him down against the towel, into the mattress. Their dicks nearly touching, lower bodies kept apart enough for James to get a finger up inside Dean. Hell, two or three. If one feels okay, two’s gotta feel good, right? Better odds at finding his prostate too, wherever that thing is supposed to be. Staying fully hard while he looks for it is increasingly a challenge.

“Your attention is drifting,” James chides, somehow able to tell. “I need you to focus for me. Tell me you’re focused.”

“’m focused, James.” The words are out before he even thinks them.

“Where was my good boy’s mind going?”

Dean actually shudders. The words line up with a particularly good stroke of his dick, a twist around the head just as James calls Dean *his*. “Uh. Where’s, um.”

“Do you want to play with your prostate? Do you think you’ve earned it?”

Dean’s eyes are already closed, but he squeezes them shut tighter. “No,” he says, voice as small as it is resigned. He sounds petulant and childish to his own ears, even through the lightly muffling barrier of the headset.

James hums thoughtfully, not yet disapproving. “Did you ignore any of my instructions?”

“No.”

“Did you come without telling me? Even a dry orgasm counts.”

“No, I… No.” There’s this sense of pressure behind his dick, tucked up behind his balls, but it’s not been anything like an orgasm.

“Do you want to stop?”
“No,” Dean says, much too sharply.

“Then you’re still my good boy,” James concludes, “and that means you’ve earned it.”

Fuck if Dean doesn’t want it, but…

“Haven’t done anything.”

“Did you relax for me? Did you make yourself feel good?”

“I didn’t come,” Dean repeats quickly.

“I know.” James’ response is slow, measured. “I believe you. But do you feel good? Touching yourself the way I’m touching myself, does it feel good for you too?”

Dean swallows. “Yeah.”

“What was that?”

Shit. Dean’s so bad at this. “Yes, James.”

James hums approvingly. “That’s what I want from you. That’s exactly what I want. I want you to feel like the good boy you are.”

It’s the wave of heat all over again, except worse, except hollow and sour and false. It’s as awful and urgent as if Dean’s led Jimmy by foot onto the highway and told him it was a sidewalk.

“I’m…”
That’s as far as he gets.

He can’t go any further.

“I want to play with your prostate,” James decides. “I’m going to touch mine, so you have to touch yours. Do you understand?”

The lump choking Dean goes down enough for him to answer, “Yes, James.”

“How deep in is your finger? What knuckle are you at?”

“Oh. Second.” It feels like it goes on forever.

Jimmy pulls in a sharper breath before sighing out. “All right. I’m matching you. We’re going to push in together. It’ll be under the pad of your finger as you go in.”

“Is it like a nub or something or…?” Dean’s looked some stuff up, and it’s supposed to be a walnut-sized gland, whatever that means. Probably a different texture, though.

“If you feel a ‘nub,’ you should go to the doctor tomorrow,” James replies. “If you like it, you’ll know it when you feel it. I’m, mm.”

Dean presses in faster, wrist aching, arm straining. Maybe on his back with his legs spread wasn’t the best position for the first attempt, but on hands and knees just felt too… something. Before he can sort that out, though, he finds something new to contend with. “I, oh.”

“Push in past it,” James orders.

Dean does. The pressure abates—the pressure behind his balls, not the thickness inside his ass, how is that just his finger—but his erection doesn’t, at all. If anything, he’s leaking harder than before. “Shit, man.” It comes out high-pitched and breathy.

“There’s my good boy,” James croons. “Pull halfway out, slowly. Try to press over it again.”
“Fuck.”

“Do you like it?” James asks, as if he’s presented Dean with a handmade sweater and not a brand new orgasm button.

“Yes. Yes, James.”

“Back in, still slow. Press harder.”

Dean lets out a noise that might be a whimper.

“Is it good?” James asks.

“Hand twitched. Lost it.”

“Pull back out and sweep side to side. Keep it slow. You’ll find it.”

The sound that leaks out of Dean’s mouth has nothing on the precome dripping out of him.

James murmurs yet more praise. This time, Dean basks in it, head lolling against his pillow.

“He has to let go of his dick to obey, but right now, it’s easier to relinquish the grip on his dick than it is pull his hand from his ass. He keeps rubbing hard on his prostate until his right leg spasms and fucks up his angle, and then he gets himself back into gear, incentive filling up all the gaps the pleasure left.

Getting the second finger in there is a little difficult, a little bit of a burning stretch, but it’s so good, his rim getting more attention. It feels like a flashback to something from years ago, the reminder that
his rim is good and hot and sensitive.

“Do you like it slow?”

Dean’s answering hum comes out more like a mumble, but he’s pretty damn sure James still understands.

“Do you want to try it faster? Just a little faster.”

Dean makes the same sort of sound, speeding up, and down the line, he hears a distant squelch of lube. That speeds up too. Oh fuck. Oh fuck.

They’re fucking themselves together.

“Something’s,” Dean manages to say in time. Just that. No more than that. He grabs his dick by the base and tries to stave it off, but it creeps up his spine and spills out his skin. His dick is still hard, not a single pulse of orgasm there despite the way it rattles around the rest of his body. His fingers are abruptly huge, his ass clenching around them, pulling them in tighter, deeper, needier. “Oh god.”

“Such a good boy,” James mutters, the gravel of his voice almost distracted in its arousal. “Did you come all over yourself for me?”

“No,” Dean says in a sigh, then hurriedly corrects himself. “I mean. Yes. But dry.” Except not. There’s precome everywhere. “I, I dunno.” He can barely breathe, can’t at all stop the way his hand gets back to business on his dick.

“Do it again,” James orders. “I want to hear you. Say my name when you come for me.”

“Sorry, sorry,” he gasps, still jerking it, unable to prevent himself.

“I didn’t tell you to before. You came and I wanted you to, and now I want you to come again. As quickly as you can, can you do it again?”
It shouldn’t be possible. He’s on the wrong side of thirty, but the more his fingers work inside of him, the more his body forgets that particular little detail. The first orgasm never fully dissipates, never fully satisfies, and when it comes, welling up beneath Dean babbling James’ name, the second orgasm feels less like a sequel and more like version 1.5. Like the last sneeze of a set, except so, so much better.

His ass clenches again, not as hard as the first time, and the hard press of his fingers turns painful. He pulls them out before he’s even done coming over his own stomach, and there’s a blissful, horrified second where he’s convinced he just crapped onto the towel.

But he checks his wet and aching hand, and he clenches his wet and aching ass, and the only shit he has to deal with is what he wipes onto the towel himself. With heaving breaths, he lets his legs sprawl out in front of him. He lies flat on his back, empty and strange and thrumming. The muscles of his thighs bubble. So do the soles of his feet, as if his body itself is trying to giggle. It’s good and toe-twitchingly weird, but fuck it all, Dean’s lying here. He’s earned that, just for a second.

James talks to him throughout, cooling from lusty to soothing, and it takes Dean much too long to catch up.

“Wait,” Dean says, tongue as slow as his mind. “Did you come?” ‘Cause James doesn’t sound like he’s going to, not anymore.

James hums in confirmation.

“Oh.” Too much of the satisfaction fizzes out at that. “I didn’t hear you.”

“I stayed quiet to hear you,” James says, and that brings some of the satisfaction back. Not all of it, but some. “How are you feeling?” The question comes out warm and fond, somehow more Jimmy than James, and Dean starts breathing more deeply, more easily, as if he’s come up from the depths or down from a height.

“I’m, uh. You, how are you feeling?”

“I’m a little sad I couldn’t hold you through it,” Jimmy says, sounding impossibly sincere. “You did obey wonderfully. I’m very pleased with that part.”
Forget about the breathing after all, because Dean can’t. Jimmy might as well be expertly reading off a script, he’s so perfectly saying everything Dean wants. Hell, there probably is a script. How long has Jimmy been doing this? He’s gotta have enough practice under his belt.

“What about you?” Jimmy asks. “Should I have done anything differently?”

“Trust me, man, you’re already doing more than enough.”

“You’re not answering the question.” There’s a pause where Dean’s loose limbs try to tighten up before Jimmy adds, “Never mind, I shouldn’t press. Aftercare isn’t about my demands, no matter how curious I am.”

“Speaking of aftercare,” Dean says, mouth slow, heart pounding weirdly. His legs are still watery, his hand and arms still aching. “How should I be cleaning up here?”

Jimmy walks him through wiping himself down and gives him some basic advice about getting the rest out in the bathroom. “You might also be gassy,” Jimmy warns. “If you forced too much air up inside, it’ll have to come out.”

Dean snorts. “Awesome.” But beyond the basic wiping up, ass and hands both, he can’t bring himself to move. He definitely can’t bring himself to hang up. “Do, um. Do you do this a lot?”

“Anal?”

“No, the, the other part. Besides with Mandy, I mean.” If Dean circles around it enough, maybe he can go without ever actually saying the words.

“I Dom more than I do anal these days, if that’s what you’re asking. What about you? Have you ever subbed before?”

“No,” Dean says, but it comes out sounding like a lie. A memory bursts to the forefront, that well-trod masturbatory path abruptly vivid with fresh colors and terminology. “I mean.”

“Not officially?” Jimmy asks.
Dean licks his lips. “You’re, uh, not gonna tell anybody this, right?”

“Never. Whatever parts of yourself you give to me aren’t for sharing.” It’s more matter-of-fact than possessive, but damn, it still sounds good.

“There was this, um. We were… nineteen? Yeah. Nineteen. And she…” He licks his lips again, both dreading and eager to say it. He’s never fucking said this, not to anyone. He lowers his voice past a whisper and rushes it out. “She made me do stuff.”

“Would you like do any of that ‘stuff’ again?” The question comes out honest and intrigued, no trace of mockery no matter how Dean’s ears strain for it.

“Not something we can really do over the phone,” Dean settles on saying.

“I can be very creative.”

Dean closes his eyes against that promise. He pulls the other towel over himself only to push it off, the damp cloth much too cold against his skin. “She made me put her panties on,” he confesses, face flushing hot in stark contrast to the goosebumps prickling up across the rest of his body.

“What color were they?” Jimmy asks, his voice jumping lower.

Something curls low in Dean’s belly. Something nervous and hot and dangerous. “Um. Pink. Satiny.”

“Did your cock fit in them?”

He’d been so hard, he was shaking. Even so soon after an orgasm—two orgasms?—he’s close to shaking again. “Kinda spilled out a little.”

Jimmy hums appreciatively. “Your balls out the leg holes? Or the head of your cock over the waistband?”
Realization dawns, as slow as a true sunrise. “Are you actually into this?”

“You know I enjoy how a bulge looks,” Jimmy reminds him.

“Yeah, but.” He gropes around for an actual argument only to settle on: “Panties.”

“Male lingerie exists.”

“What, seriously?”

Jimmy hums in the affirmative, a savoring sound.

Dean lies there, thinking. About that response. About Jimmy in general. About what he might look like beyond the sketchy outline in Dean’s head. About maybe lying next to him after doing shit like this. The thoughts wander past without Dean’s brain having to do anything about them. He watches them go, as easy and impossible as falling asleep in the passenger’s seat.

“Tell me what you’re thinking?” Jimmy asks after a warm, slow minute.

_I wanna kiss you._

Dean swallows. “Kinda not thinking.”

“Relaxed?”

It’s Dean’s turn to hum. It’s even mostly true.

“I’m glad,” Jimmy says.
“You don’t-” Dean starts to say before thinking better of it.

“I don’t what?”

Shit. “Never mind. It’s not important.”

“Maybe so,” Jimmy allows, “but if you don’t tell me, it will bother me for the rest of the night.”

“It’s seriously not important. It’s just, y’know. You don’t have to say that shit.”

“What ‘shit’? That I’m glad you’re relaxed?”

“I’m not paying you to care about me, man. It feels weird when you pretend.”

Because Dean knows better. Or, he should know better, but wants to believe anyway. God, does he want it. Jimmy kissing him down against the mattress, his fingers stuffed up Dean’s ass, his dick rubbing against Dean’s thigh. Fuck if that wouldn’t be perfect.

“I’m not pretending,” Jimmy lies, and he lies so fucking well. “Michael, you literally paid to care about me last week.”

Dean rolls his eyes, matching the heaving roll of his stomach. “Dude, I paid you to talk me off after some douchebag threatened to stab you in the ass.”

Jimmy’s too silent for a second. It’s a very long second.

“That’s not how I remember it,” Jimmy says.

“Then you’re remembering shit wrong.”

“I remember feeling guilty and vulnerable,” Jimmy tells him flatly. “I remember needing a distraction
and to feel in control, and I remember you giving me the opportunity for both. And I remember feeling much better afterwards. Don’t tell me what I remember. I know my own mind. I know my own limits. If I crossed yours, that is definitely a discussion we should have. Did I?”

“I’m fine. I’m just saying, you do all the horny crap well, but the pretending to give a shit is really wrecking my suspension of disbelief here.”

There’s another pause, and then Jimmy asks, “Are you familiar with the symptoms of subdrop?”

“I’m not dropping,” Dean snaps.

“Then why are you angry at the idea that I might ‘give a shit’?”

“Because you don’t.”

The words don’t come out like a blade from a sheath, not unless his body counts as a sheath. They slice up his throat and out his mouth, cleaving him open from stomach to tongue.

Shit. Shit. He’s fucked up. Dean’s fucked up. He’s fucked up big.

“I need you to breathe with me,” James orders, hard and harsh the way Dean should be breathing but isn’t. “Listen to me. Breathe.”

“Fuck off,” Dean gasps, but he doesn’t hang up. He should, god, he should, but he doesn’t.

“Breathe with me,” James commands, and Dean does. It’s slow and shuddering and it hurts, just another moment of being smacked in the face with the simulacrum of affection, but Dean follows.

“If I can make you relax, I’m doing my job right,” James tells him. “If I get you off. If I help you feel safe. If I can give you what you need, that’s an accomplishment. It’s professional pride. I’m sure you can understand that.”

Dizzy and drained, Dean keeps breathing.
“If I said I was in love with you, that would definitely be a lie,” James continues, “but if I said I didn’t care about you at all, that would also be a lie.”

“Just shut up, okay,” Dean somehow says.

For a second, Dean thinks James is about to refuse, but then the guy sighs. “If I count breaths, will you breathe with me?”

“Yeah, fine, whatever,” Dean mutters. He’s curled onto his side and can’t remember actually making the motion. The headset digs into his ear. His ass feels exposed, sticking out, wet and open even after the perfunctory clean-up.

James counts.

Dean breathes.

It’s calm. Lulling. James is back in control, and that’s probably a better idea than letting Dean fuck things up on his own.

Slowly, the endless counting of inhales and exhales comes to a soft conclusion. Gently, Jimmy asks, “Can I ask you a question about your job?”

Loose and limp on his bed, Dean blinks his eyes open before grunting a vague affirmative.

“Is there any aspect of interacting with the public?”

Now that he’s doing more office stuff, yeah. If Dean had his way, he’d be in the garage the entire time, always a tool in hand and never a pen, but Dean’s not having his way, is he? He’s having the Bobby way.

“Yeah, I guess,” Dean says, the simple answer.
“Are there clients you despise?”

An involuntary chuckle pops out his mouth. “Man, you’ve no idea.”

“I should probably be saying that to you,” Jimmy deadpans. “Are there clients you mind less?”

Again, Dean grunts yes.

“Are there any that you actually enjoy?”

A couple people do spring to mind. Not many. Just a couple. He pictures the cars before he pictures the people. There’s a lot a guy can learn about a person by the way they treat their car. “Yeah, I guess.”

“You are one of the people I actually enjoy,” Jimmy tells him flatly. “We have actual conversations, you laugh at my jokes, and I’ve always been partial to routine.” There’s absolutely no sentimentality in the words, only sheer, unrelenting practicality. “But you are right: you’re not paying me to care about you. So don’t worry about that part.”

Dean’s gonna worry about that anyway.

Regardless, it’s past time for a change of subject. “Speaking of routine,” Dean says, clearing his throat. “You gonna be on next week? Thanksgiving and all.”

Dean gets the feeling Jimmy’s fighting down another sigh, but Jimmy answers him anyway. “I’m planning on it. All my plans are earlier in the day. What about you?”

“My brother’s staying over at my, uh, our uncle’s place, so I’ve got the night open.” Calling Bobby his boss would have been a way longer, much more confusing conversation than Dean’s willing to explain at the moment. He sticks with a much lighter, way more amusing subject. “Booze plus turkey means the kid passes out. You’d think the Sasquatch would have the body mass to handle it, but I’m not kidding, he falls asleep at the table half the time.” Sam claims it’s the jetlag, but Dean’s always called bullshit.
“Is he tired from cooking?”

Dean scoffs. “From watching me and our uncle, maybe.”

“I can’t cook either.”

“That’s how you end up buying all the booze in this family.”

“There are worse fates,” Jimmy says.

They go a little quiet after that, out of words. Out of the easy ones, at least.

“I’d like to ask you a few questions,” Jimmy says eventually. “You don’t have to answer.”

“Uh, yeah. Shoot.” It’s all Dean really has to offer him.

“Did you enjoy what we did? The fingering part.”

“Yeah,” Dean admits, voice as quiet as his face is hot. His arms and chest prickle in the cool air. Steam should be rising off him with the contrast.

“I’m glad. Were you all right following my commands?”

“Wasn’t really difficult.”

Jimmy hums but doesn’t call Dean out for sidestepping the question. “Should I be more or less commanding in the future?”

“You don’t have to hold back on my account, buddy.”
Again, Jimmy doesn’t call him on his bullshit. “Then if I thought up some scenarios—challenges for you to accomplish—would you be willing to play along?”

Dean’s exhausted dick and empty hole both twinge at the thought of Jimmy doing that kind of homework.Thinking about Dean even while off the phone. “Like, a scenario just for me?” he asks before he can realize how stupid those words sound.

“Tailored to you, yes,” Jimmy confirms. “Maybe involving panties. Maybe involving your… big black car.”

Despite himself, Dean snickers.

“Would you agree to that?” Jimmy adds. “If I’m going to spend the effort, I need to know you’ll be a good boy for me.”

All traces of laughter flee from Dean’s throat, and they take all moisture with them. He swallows and fights down the urge to cough. “I… Yeah.”

“I like playing,” Jimmy says. “If my idea of fun doesn’t match yours, I want you to say so.”

Dean rolls his eyes, putting it on for an absent audience. “I’m a big boy. I know how to say no.”

“Then you do want to keep playing?”

It sounds weird, phrased like that. Playing is a word for kid stuff, not for unquestionably adult activities. But if it’s what Jimmy likes to do, it makes a weird sort of sense. Like, hell, Dean will play pool with anyone. It’s not about the partner half the time, it’s about the game, and just like that, things finally make sense again.

“Yeah,” Dean says, voice firm at last. “Yeah, let’s keep playing. Same time next week?”

“Of course. Do you want to stay on the line longer?”
“Did we just start a new minute?”

“Twenty seconds left.”

“Oh.” The disappointment twinges through him, but he knows without checking the time that he’s already overindulged today. He’s always overindulging, when it comes to Jimmy, but that’s not the point. “Talk to you next week, then.”

“Good night, Michael,” Jimmy says like he can hear how much Dean doesn’t want to say goodbye.

“’Night, Jimmy,” Dean says anyway.

He hangs up but doesn’t remove the headset.

He listens to nothing at all, but he lies there longer, and longer still. He should wash his hands and clean his ass. He should ball up the towel and dump it in the laundry for tomorrow. Or maybe just leave it balled up on the bathroom floor. Probably more sanitary for the rest of his stuff.

He lies there, thinking about all that.

Eventually, he gets up.

Laundry before schoolwork always makes for a dull day, but last night’s activities make for a paranoid day. There’d been a bit of farting after all, and though Dean’s ass isn’t sore, he’s still half-convinced he’ll be letting one rip in the silence of the library before the afternoon is through.

He goes anyway, books and laptop packed, coffee brewed and stored in his dad’s old thermos as usual. He’s got a stupid amount of projects to get done over next week, enough that calling it a vacation week is a humorless joke.

He does have one good piece of news going into the day, at least. He’d gotten an email back from
Cas late last night, almost around midnight, and though Cas hadn’t actually written back, the attached picture was good news: a clear shot of two books on top of Cas’ familiar bag.

(Also in the pic was Cas’ travel mug, empty and lying on its side in an obviously staged position. Dean will never admit to finding this funny, ever.)

When Dean comes in, the books are waiting for him at his spot—both of them lying mercifully with their covers down and their spines facing Cas. As Dean sits, trying not to be ginger about it, Cas nods at the books and Dean flashes him a quick thumbs-up. Talk about having a reward for getting his work done.

Then Cas holds out his travel mug, the lid already off, and Dean somehow manages to keep down a laugh. He fights back a grin and rolls his eyes instead, dutifully filling Cas up before he even gets his own first sip.

Cas nods in gratitude.

Dean rolls his eyes again.

Cas dips his head to drink before he even pops the lid back on. Wisps of steam curl in front of his face, flushing his cheeks, and he closes his eyes in a look that can’t be described as anything other than rapture.

Dean shifts uncomfortably, clenches at a phantom sensation, and silently and hurriedly talks down a boner as every single one of his wires get crossed. Before Cas can move past whatever coffee orgasm he’s apparently having, Dean bends down in his seat to pull the rest of his crap out of his bag. He drops the borrowed books in, hoping to do better with at least one source of distraction hidden.

That’s the problem with seeing a hot dude after phone sex night, Dean figures. Though he can’t fully remember his dreams from the night previous, he’s damn sure none of them served as a palate cleanser. Jumping from hot dude to hot dude isn’t exactly helpful in keeping him on track.

Then again, actually wanting to do any of his school crap would help keep him on track too.

Pushing down a sigh, Dean gets to it. Sam’s flying in early in the week, so the sooner he gets this
shit out of the way, the better. Even with that incentive tugging at him, everything drags. He shoves through anyway, feeling his brain burn and his eyes blur.

It shouldn’t make any difference when one of Cas’ students comes to pull him away. It shouldn’t, but it does. There’s no reason to pretend to be a good student if Cas isn’t there to believe it. It’s not bad enough to lay his head down and take a nap, but he’s getting there.

Checking his email about group presentation bullshit somehow ends up with him defaulting to work emails—actual work, the paying kind—and he’s halfway through a pile of appointments and estimates and complaints before he realizes Cas is back. Crap. So much for getting the school stuff done. He closes his laptop and tries to get back to it, but it’s just one of those days.

He gives up.

Flipping his notebook open to their latest shared page, he scribbles down the holy grail of questions and shoves the thing over a little harder than strictly necessary.

*How the hell do you stay focused?*

Before reading, Cas shoots him a dirty look at being jostled, and not the kind of dirty look Dean might theoretically prefer. (Jesus, nights with Jimmy leave him like a horndog afterwards, his body so damn confused that it’s not actually being touched.) Then Cas reads, makes a face of consideration, and writes back in his familiar blue ink.

*Practice. Are you switching subjects enough?*

Right. That tactic.

Dean sighs.

Cas just looks back at him steadily, entirely unimpressed.

Part of Dean tries to crawl under the table and die, but only part of him.
Cas pulls the notebook back to himself to add, *Switch now. I'll set a timer.* He doesn’t specify for how long, and Dean doesn’t even think to ask until he’s ten pages into one of his readings. By then, it’s easier just to keep going.

Dean looks up with a start when Cas reaches across the table to touch his hand. He freezes, blinking into the sunlight of Cas’ face, but he gets it when Cas just looks at him pointedly. That book goes off to the side and his accounting homework comes out instead. That flies by in record time, the routine of numbers abruptly easy with his mind fresh and clear.

Once he finishes, he reaches for the book he was working on before, but, again, Cas reaches out. He touches two fingers to the back of Dean’s hand, and there’s no doubt in Dean’s mind now that he’s not getting enough physical contact in his life right now. His body is so parched for Jimmy that it’s more than willing to drink down Cas instead. Distantly, that registers as fucking pathetic, but much more pressing is the way Cas shakes his head and begins to write on Dean’s notebook.

*You still have ten minutes left in this session.*

*Finished already. Moving on.*

Cas shakes his head and writes, *Then you have a ten minute break.*

Dean stares at him.

Cas doesn’t budge.

Dean takes a break.

Cas is the expert here, after all. Besides, Dean would be lying if he said the borrowed books hadn’t been calling to him. He goes to the sub one, tells himself that, no, Cas isn’t staring at him, and quickly gets too drawn into the book to worry about that.

He comes back to himself after what has to be the shortest ten minutes in the recorded history of the universe. Again, there are two fingertips resting against the back of his hand. Dean takes in that information slowly. Thick, sturdy fingers, strong but clean, soft in ways Dean’s will never be again.
He looks up to Cas’ face. Bizarrely, the simple act of lifting his eyes reminds him of sitting up in the bathtub, the transition from weightless to heavy. It takes him a second to get back on track with reality, always the sign of a good book.

He works the rest of the afternoon away like that and never bothers to check the time for himself. It’s easier, like working on a car until it’s road ready. Set a timer, do the work, check the hours later. Do the task until it’s done, or until it’s time for something else.

With the load he has to pull off over the so-called Thanksgiving break, he doesn’t manage to get it all done in one sitting, but he gets a lot farther than expected. A small part of him wants to make a checklist just so he can shove it in Sam’s face when he shows up.

Finally, though, Dean is out of coffee and Cas is giving him breaks even when Dean doesn’t finish his work before the end of a session. It still feels idiotic, sitting here and being exhausted from thinking, but, again, Cas is the expert here. The guy has to have a Masters degree at least, right? And he’s still studying and writing things and doing research projects without giving up. So yeah, wherever Cas wants to point him, it’s probably a good place to go.

When the last break comes, Dean knows it. He’s fried. He can’t even read the sub book anymore, he’s that tired in the brain. Instead, he grabs his notebook and bothers Cas.

You get next week off too?

It takes Cas a few moments to look away from his laptop, evidently absorbed in whatever it is he’s typing. The rhythm of it is soothing, at least, the typing soft enough not to be obnoxiously loud in the otherwise silent section. It’s emptied out a lot since Dean arrived, too many students ready to book it out of there and let their vacations begin. The few that remain periodically announce their presence via coughs and sneezes, playing Marco Polo through the stacks via illness.

Finally, Cas wraps up whatever he’s doing enough to spare Dean some attention. Knowing he’s about to head home, Dean doesn’t mind the wait. Talking to Cas: that’s the only thing he’s got left to do here today, just because he wants to.

I still have work even when I’m not teaching, Cas writes. He looks tired. Do you have any good plans?
Pie. Dean underlines it three times for the proper level of emphasis.

Cas smiles. Even with the growing bags under his eyes and the matching shadow of stubble, he’s still unfairly gorgeous. God, Dean used to go years without noticing if a guy was attractive or not, but now that’s sure come back to finger him in the ass.

Do you bake? Cas writes.

Normally, Dean would hesitate before admitting it, but screw it. By definition, Cas is already gayer than Dean will ever be. This year is whiskey pecan, cheddar apple and caramel pumpkin. He’s not entirely sure about the sacrilege of tainting a pumpkin pie with other flavors, but he’s heard enough good things to try.

Cas’ eyebrows go up. His eyes flick to his empty travel mug, the unwitting implication very clear.

Dean grins back.

Then Cas, consummate asshole that he is, reaches over and sticks an Oxford comma in Dean’s sentence.

Okay, just for that, no pie for you.

You weren’t actually going to bring me pie.

I was going to maybe consider thinking about it.

Oh no. What have I done.

It’s the fucking period that gets Dean. When Dean glances up, Cas is absolutely deadpan, completely emotionless, and Dean has no choice but to roll his eyes and kick the guy under the table.

Cas kicks back.
There ensues a small scuffle in which Dean accidentally pops off one of Cas’ loafers and the thing goes bouncing out from under the table, but it’s not like there’s anyone else around.

Dean retrieves the shoe for him, but only because Cas glares up a storm. There’s a ridiculous part of Dean that wants to drop to one knee and return it Cinderella-style, but not even Dean is sarcastic enough to pull that off silently. Instead, he hands it back like a normal person before reclaiming his seat and writing, *What are you, five?*

*You kicked me first,* Cas writes.

Dean underlines his question, because come on.

Cas pretends to be irritated.

At least, Dean thinks he’s pretending.

He’s almost sure.

Sure enough.

But just to be on the safe side, he writes, *If the books are awesome enough, I might bring leftovers.*

There won’t be any, not a week out from Thanksgiving and especially not any of the pie, but, what the hell. If one of the recipes goes awesome—and the whiskey pecan *always* goes awesome—he might just have to make an encore pie. He hasn’t picked up his full freshman fifteen after all.

*I was joking, but I wouldn’t say no,* Cas responds.

Dean shrugs like it doesn’t matter.

Because it doesn’t. It’s just pie, and if there’s one thing in his life he’s not going to overthink, it’s pie.
Dean starts to pack up his stuff, standing to do it and saving the notebook for last. It’s a good thing he does, because Cas writes more.

*If you want to discuss anything you read, feel free to email me again.*

Dean tries not to stare. He grabs a moment to think by coiling up his laptop charger and comes to the conclusion that, while Cas is definitely inviting conversation about kinky sex, he’s inviting an *academic* conversation about kinky sex.

Mostly because Cas rereads what he’s written and looks moderately horrified.

Naturally, Dean has to go on the offensive. With a salacious grin and a flirty wink, he leans down and writes, *You inviting me for some private tutoring, professor?*

Cas looks up at him like he’s going to kick Dean in the shins again—and mean it this time.

*I was considering a small book club, but I’ve changed my mind.*

*No pie for you, got it.* Dean packs up the notebook after Cas reads just to make sure he has the last word, and he keeps grinning no matter how Cas glares. After putting on his jacket and shouldering his bag, Dean gives him a cocky little parting wave. Cas acknowledges it with a combined eye roll and nod, the full-body motion of the first exaggerating the second.

On his way out, still grinning to himself, Dean stops at the first shelf he reaches and looks back through the silence between them. Eyes directed downward, Cas sits with a hand over his mouth, but the rest of his face gives his smile away.

Dean stops a little longer than he means to.

Cas looks up.

Dean grins like the little shit he is.
Cas can’t quite manage another glare.

Dean waves again, and this time, a smile fighting its way onto his face, Cas waves back.

Chapter End Notes

Updates every Monday, time of day may vary.
To see what else I’m working on, you can follow me on [tumblr here](#).
Thanksgiving

Chapter Summary

Plans fall through.

Chapter Notes

Here it is, folks, the first Absurd Ben-Length Chapter! If you don't already know the drill:

Grab a snack, and don't forget to drink your tea while it's still hot.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It’s great to see Sam. Of course it’s great to see Sam. Hearing from him has been okay the past couple of years, but actually seeing him never stops being a big deal. Dean picks him up from the airport on Saturday, Sam loads his bags respectfully into Baby’s trunk, and they spend the rest of the day shooting the shit at Bobby’s place.

It’s great to see him. Hands down. No debate.

It’s the talking with him part that completely sucks.

Dean can handle the phone. Phones are easy. There’s no end to the bullshit Dean can bluff his way through on the phone. In person, Sam can see when Dean’s getting tense. In person, Sam still knows all of Dean’s tells, even the ones usually hidden by grainy Skype video.

Sam wants to know what’s wrong. After dinner, washing the dishes for Bobby in exchange for the food, Sam asks while Dean’s wrist-deep in suds, right where he can’t get away.

Dean says all the normal shit. One of his professors is an asshole. He’s got a group project, they’re supposed to do it over break, and everyone else is an idiot teenager.

He doesn’t bring up his midterm grades, not when his highest grade is a B+ of an essay and his lowest is a C- of an exam. He doesn’t mention the pile of work that keeps building up every week
until it comes bursting out on Fridays with Cas. He definitely doesn’t breathe a word about his new Thursday tradition, once a reward, now a bribe to keep himself going. If he can’t get through his own crap, he really doesn’t deserve Jimmy.

Once Dean starts complaining about the group project, though, Sam starts in on some of the crap he endured during law school. All of it, by an order of magnitude, is absurdly worse than what Dean’s been failing to cope with, but Sam just laughs about it while drying plates. The kid’s a genius, pure and simple. Always has been.

He’s everything Dean’s not, and that’s why Dean can’t hate him for it.

Though otherwise too smart for his own good, Sam hasn’t figured that part out yet. Sam seems to think Dean actually wants to swap school stories. Dean manages to hold up his end of the conversation with questions, asking Sam how the second semester goes, the second year.

He doesn’t ask how anyone holds out for multiple years, doing this. He doesn’t ask when the classes start actually mattering. He doesn’t ask any of the shit he should already know. Sam has to already know Dean’s not smart, but he can’t have Sam knowing he’s an idiot.

When they wrap up the dishes, Dean grabs two beers and heads for Bobby’s office of a living room. One beer is for Bobby, one stays in Dean’s hand, and Sam has to detour back to the fridge to get his own.

“How’s things at the garage?” Dean asks Bobby, taking advantage of the pause he’s made.

Previously angled down at the ancient laptop on his paper-laden desk in the sitting room, the bill of Bobby’s hat lifts to reveal a pair of very skeptical eyes. “That supposed to be an honest question?”

“What?” Frowning, Dean pauses halfway through handing Bobby a beer.

Bobby rocks forward in his chair to grab it anyway. The chair squeaks as Bobby grunts. “If I didn’t know better, I’d swear you were spending more time there since starting school.”

“I thought you were going down to part-time,” Sam chimes in, following way too quickly. Then again, it’s not like it takes five minutes for a guy to grab a beer from the fridge, even with ridiculous hair in his eyes.
Dean just shrugs. “I am.” It’s the truth. Part-time is thirty-four hours a week or less. Dean hasn’t gone over forty hours since the summer. “Helps me clear my head, it works. Plus, this gorgeous ’78 Mustang King Cobra just came in, you can’t expect me not to get my hands all over that. If I could spend the rest of my life restoring beauties like that, I’d die a happy man.”

Bobby rolls his eyes but still lifts his beer in a silent toast. They clink the necks of their bottles. Sam just looks at him like this is some strange mystery he’ll never understand.

“No, no, look,” Dean says, setting his beer down on Bobby’s desk to better pull out his phone and thumb through his pictures. With a grumble, Bobby moves Dean’s beer to some other equally cluttered but apparently more desirable spot on his desk. His expression softens when Dean shows him the picture, though. “That’s the before. Getting the rest of the parts in is going to take some time,” he continues, saying this part for Sam’s sake, “but, hell, look at her.”

He moves to pass his phone over to Sam on the couch. Then he swipes a bit through the next few photos, all different jobs at the garage in various states of progress, and he gets to the good they’ve been able to do already. He points out what he’s done, but before he can go into any sort of detail about it, Sam’s eyes visibly glaze over.

Sure, Sam’s still looking at the phone. He’s still nodding along. But he’s not asking the interrogation of questions that the slightest mention of Dean’s classes will haul out of him at a moment’s notice. From experience, Dean knows that if he keeps going, Sam will check out entirely.

Dean tucks his phone away, moving back to the desk to grab his beer.

Bobby, the grumpy lifesaver that he is, takes over the conversation seamlessly. Apparently, as little info as Dean gets from Sam about the guy’s life, Bobby gets even less. Finally, the questioning goes in a direction Dean’s okay with, and all Dean has to do is kick back and listen—and wisecrack—for the rest of the night.

Dean leaves on the early side so they can make up Bobby’s couch as a guest bed and shoehorn Sam into it. Dean’s back in the morning, though, making pancakes and coffee for all. Sam’s groggy from jetlag, but both he and Bobby perk up in equal measure over breakfast. They all chew instead of talking, and it’s a good start to a good day.

Monday isn’t so great. Sam does some solo wandering around the town while Dean beats his head against his homework. There’s work going on downstairs, audible as hell up in Dean’s apartment,
but Dean’s still trying his best to be responsible. He doesn’t murder anyone over email, but it’s a close thing, especially when two of the students in the group take a conversational detour over what classes they’re planning to take next semester.

Because Dean needs something else to worry about.

He makes the mistake of mentioning it when Sam drops by his place for dinner. He’s in the middle of complaining about his so-called partners in this project, Sam actually empathizing along with him, but the second Dean says a word about everyone else getting distracted, Sam goes and gets distracted too. Unlike the teenagers, though, Sam doesn’t get distracted with anxiety. Fuck no. Because Dean’s life is a living hell, Sam gets excited.

Dean manages to stave most of it off until after dinner, but Sam’s so eager for Dean to pull the course catalog up on his laptop that Sam volunteers to get started on the dishes while Dean does it. The next round of distraction comes in asking Sam how he’d picked his classes in undergrad and law school. It’s not something Dean’s ever asked him about before, and though Sam’s never previously volunteered the information, he’s stupidly thrilled to share it now.

He tells Dean about meeting with advisers and poring over the catalog and comparing schedules. He tells Dean about the horrors of having two necessary classes back-to-back—on opposite sides of the campus. That last story is actually pretty funny, the kind a person might expect a guy to share with his big brother unprompted. But apparently not.

Over the course of doing the dishes, it’s wholly possible that Dean hears more about Sam’s college experience than he did while Sam was living through it. It’s definitely the happiest Sam’s ever been talking about it, but Dean would bet money that it’s at least in part due to the experience being long in the past now.

Eventually, the stalling runs out. Dean says he just hasn’t gotten to talk with his academic adviser yet, because that sounds less stupid than having ignored everything. As if maybe the next semester just won’t come if Dean doesn’t look at the calendar.

Grabbing a beer from Dean’s fridge, Sam starts in on the advice. Half of it, Dean’s heard before from other sources. More than half. Getting a beer of his own, Dean listens as attentively as he has it in him.

Some of it—not much, but some—is actually new.
“I get checking out the professors in advance, but it’s still early days,” Dean explains right back at Sam. “Nobody I know has really gotten to know a professor yet.”

“So get this,” Sam says, crammed in next to him at the tiny kitchen table, holding a beer between pruny fingers. He tells Dean the web address, Dean laughs at the idea, and then they start combing through the Yelp of professors. “You have to take some of the reviews with a grain of salt, but if everyone’s saying the same thing, definitely pay attention. Plus, you want to keep an eye on what class they took.”

Dean’s got his eye on something else entirely. “Does that chili pepper mean what I think it means?”

“Dean.”

“What? Honest question.”

Sam shoots him the bitchiest of looks.

Dean raises his eyebrows. “Well? Does it?”

Sam’s face somehow turns even bitchier. It’s a miracle of facial muscles.

“I need to check something,” Dean announces, already searching for a few professors of his own. “Okay, no pepper there. Thank god.” Professor Adler: officially devoid of veggie icons.

He nearly types in a search for Cas then and there, but he doesn’t want Sam getting the wrong idea. Dean’s got no reason at all to be looking up a professor of queer studies, and that’s the way it’s gotta stay until Dean figures out what the hell he’s doing. Or at least until he meets a gay guy he likes enough to date. Besides on the phone. Or who isn’t way too smart for him.

That should be a while.

He cheers himself up by looking at the sheer number of bad reviews Adler’s gotten. His difficulty rating is higher than his quality.
They tab back over to the course catalog and then start scoping out the corresponding professors. Reading some of the angrier comments nearly makes Dean want to break out the popcorn, and if the way Sam starts reading them aloud is any indication, Dean’s not alone there.

They have a good laugh. Sam regales him with crap he’s never mentioned before about his law school professors and advisers, all this ridiculous bullshit that Sam keeps remembering more of the longer he talks. It’s endless and hilarious in a schadenfreude kind of way, and Sam lights up so bright, Dean could swear it was Christmas around the corner instead of Thanksgiving. Except not, because Sam hates Christmas, but that’s not the point.

Sam’s talking to him, happy. Sam’s running at the mouth and watching Dean for laughs, for approval in a way Dean hasn’t seen since Sammy stopped looking up to him in the literal sense. When they call it quits for the night, Sam stops twice in the hall to tell Dean something he’s just remembered, and Sam’s grinning fit to break his stupid, genius face when Dean promises to meet him for lunch the next day.

Sam hugs him tight.

The classes are worth it.

Anything would be worth this.

Tuesday is a groggy mess of working on the presentation in the morning, but that’s Dean’s own fault for staying up late reading the night before. He’s reading Cas’ Dom book first, and over halfway through, he still hasn’t found anything close to Jimmy beyond the term ‘service top.’

Part of Dean kind of likes that. Likes the idea of being a sleek machine to be serviced and maintained. And then the small part of his brain that isn’t wrapped up in cars kicks in, and maybe the term is more like some weird, sexual, human version of a service dog.

Basically, he needs to read more.
Lunch goes well with Sam, and then Dean manages to wrangle Sam into Thanksgiving grocery shopping instead when Sam wants to go take a look at the campus. And then even cooking prep, the parts of it Sam can be trusted with. Sam complains less and follows directions better.

Wednesday is baking day, and by now, it’s established tradition that Dean will be bringing pies that are all missing a single slice. The caramel pumpkin proves a mistake, but the other two more than meet with his approval.

Thanksgiving is perfect in ways that Winchester holidays never are. Dean doesn’t dry out the turkey, Bobby provides all the drinks, and Sam only looks completely horrified when Dean reveals how much butter he put in the mashed potatoes. Doesn’t stop the kid from finishing off the rest of his plate, though.

Buzzed and stuffed, belts unbuckled and pants straining, they collapse onto the couch that’s been serving as Sam’s bed all week. The radio’s on, detailing one of the many football games of the day, and Sam’s not the only one close to conking out from booze and turkey. How Bobby’s actually up and doing dishes is a mystery that will never be solved.

“Hey.” Slouching, Sam knocks his shoulder against Dean’s. He stays that way, this giant wobble of a man threatening to spill over. “Hey.”

“Mm?” Dean takes another swig of his beer only to remember that the bottle is empty. He tilts it back and waits anyway. Gets a couple more drops. Staves off the walk back to the fridge for a minute longer.


Dean returns the bottle to the cup holder of his thighs. “Yeah, it’s definitely Friday.” Dean’s sure of it, and not just because of the holiday. Sam’s flight back to California is Sunday.

“Do you still go out?”

“On Fridays?”
“Like. Ever.” Sam tilts his head at him. Or maybe he’s just trying to turn his head and his entire body joined in. “With school.”

Dean snorts. “With work.”

Sam blinks at him very slowly.

“Didn’t have time even before school.”

This time when Sam blinks, his eyelids pull down the rest of his face with them, a tired collapse of confusion. “Oh.”

“What, surprised?”

“Uh. Yeah.” Sam stares at him a bit. “You’re, you’re you. You go out and have fun and people like you.”

“Sammy, you are drunk,” Dean articulates very clearly and soberly.

“We should go out.”

Dean laughs.

Sam smacks him on the shoulder. “We should go out! Tomorrow. You and me. I bet, I bet I can kick your ass at pool now.”

Dean laughs even harder. “Right now?”

Sam rolls his eyes, almost as dramatic about it as Cas always is. “Not now-now. The general, big now. That now. Present day Sam.” And then he slumps against Dean more fully, unnecessarily pressed side-to-side like he’s still four and Dean’s about to read him a book. Sam had always wedged himself in back then, insistent on seeing the full page the entire time, and not just the pictures when Dean was done. “We should play.”
“Yeah,” Dean decides.

They slump there, listening to the radio and the sink and Bobby. Sam’s solid and present even as he drifts.

“Hey, Dean?”

“Yeah?”

“Is something up?”

The sheer amount of turkey and pie and booze inside Dean cushions the majority of his tensing. He’s too tired to tense. “Hm?”

“Is something up?” Sam repeats. “With, I dunno. Things.”

“Things are good,” Dean says, and in that moment, it’s not even a lie. Not really. “What about you?”

Sam nods heavily. “Can’t believe I got the whole week off. This stupid latest case, man. Can’t say anything, but. So stupid. Just… people.”

“People,” Dean agrees in disgust. He pitches up his voice into a terrible impression of no one and everyone. “‘Do it faster, charge me less, I don’t know shit but I’m always right.’”

Sam laughs like that’s comedy gold. He slings an arm around Dean just to stay upright, and then they’re both laughing while Dean makes mockingly annoyed sounds. It turns into a gasping, hiccuping kind of laughter, the sort that shouldn’t be attempted on an empty stomach, much less a full one. They’re laughing and groaning and aching, and it’s only made worse when Bobby calls over, “You two dyin’ in there?”

Comedy gold.
By the time Dean can breathe again, Bobby’s come in and snapped a few pictures, presumably for blackmail. There’s a smile crinkling up his facial hair.

“You spending the night too?” Bobby asks. “Got a sleeping bag somewhere around here.”

Dean shakes his head. “Put some coffee on?”

Sam pouts at him like that didn’t stop working on Dean when the kid was six. It’s a perfect moment, and Dean needs to leave before he can do something to ruin it.

Besides. It’s Thursday.

“What, you got a hot date to get to?” Bobby asks, his sarcasm hitting unnervingly close.

“Bobby, if I sleep on your floor, it’s not the hangover I’m worried about in the morning.” The pre-prepared excuse rolls off his tongue easily, because it’s not like he’s been thinking about how to bow out in time for his call all week. Sure, he could always call on Saturday instead, but waiting a full week for Jimmy is already hard enough.

Fortunately, Bobby accepts the excuse without any sign of doubt. Everybody’s got a bit of mechanic’s hunch fucking up their back, after all. “Already have a pot brewing,” he says, holding out a hand for Dean’s empty beer bottle.

“I got it,” Dean says, heaving himself to his feet by means of pushing on Sam’s shoulder. “Gotta get more pie anyway.”

Bobby shifts around him to take a creaking seat behind his desk. “Don’t go finishing off that pumpkin just yet. I need another slice of that.”

“You can keep the rest,” Dean says.

Sam stares at him. “Dude. Are you dying?”
Heading into the kitchen and to the fridge, Dean calls over his shoulder, “The caramel was a mistake.” He’ll have to make a normal pumpkin pie once the leftovers are gone, just to get a fix of the real thing. By the time he comes back with a slice of the apple and a mug of coffee, Sam and Bobby are nattering away about some bit of national news that Dean’s been ignoring between work and school, some political stuff he probably wouldn’t have bothered following anyway.

He sits next to Sam, watching them both and eating his pie. By the time his coffee cools enough for the mug to stop burning his leg, he’s joined in, taking potshots at Sam’s arguments just to see what he does. Even sleepy and buzzed, Sam slaps him back down like a debate ninja until Bobby lets out this cough of a guffaw.

The hour creeps later. Dean grows more sober. Sam gets more tired, the big baby. Finally, Sam slumps over and Dean tucks him in with drama and sarcasm while Bobby takes more blackmail photos.

“You and Sleeping Beauty over there have a good night,” Dean bids him soon after, his jacket zipped, the remains of a pie in each hand, the cling wrap around them just barely living up to its name.

“You good to drive?” Bobby asks needlessly.

“Yeah, yeah, I’m fine. See you, what, Saturday?”

“Unless I’m invited to your night out on the town tomorrow,” Bobby answers dryly.

“Yeah, no offense, but no.”

Bobby swats him out of the doorway and into the night. By the time Dean’s gotten home, Bobby’s texted over the pictures from his old hunk of junk of a phone. They’re grainy and almost all of them are on the blurry side.

Dean stares at them a long time before he plugs his phone into the charger. Then he takes a shower.

The shower’s good. It helps the transition. His brain keeps trying to stick on Sam and Bobby before jerking away. Not really what he needs to be thinking about right now. Definitely not who.
He dries off thoroughly before putting his boxers back on and grabbing an extra towel for the bed. The usual routine. Standing back far enough, he can see most of himself in the medicine cabinet mirror. He’s a steamy blur in fogged up glass, the hazy impression of a man.

That’s probably what Jimmy looks like in a post-shower mirror, too. Fuzzy and vague, just like Dean’s mental image of him. His dreams have gone sideways lately, full of cycling bodies that are all the same man. Scrawny and muscled, unadorned and tattooed; it’s a rotation of porn stars, anyone Dean’s jerked off to before bed.

God, if he could have a picture.

He knows he can’t. He knows why he can’t. Dean will never forget that guy who threatened Jimmy, even if only over the phone and without knowing what Jimmy looks like. That’s not information the company can put out, for obvious reasons. It’s a good thing. A safety precaution, just like the number Jimmy said he could call if that douchebag actually found him. Kind of fucked up Jimmy couldn’t just call 911, but, hell, Dean has no idea if that could end up with Jimmy getting arrested for prostitution.

That’s probably the kind of thing Dean should look into. Paid phone sex isn’t illegal, right? Because it’s not actually sex.

Standing there in boxers, Dean gets way too far into a fantasy involving legal trouble, blackmailing Sam into helping out without ever, ever bringing this up ever again, and Jimmy being very grateful to Dean in person, before he remembers that whole FCC regulation thing. Furled rosebud and all that crap. Meaning, government regulated. Not illegal.

It’s still a really hot fantasy, though. At least the post-court celebration part.

Dean shakes himself out of it. The steam on the mirror has cleared, revealing his own blank stare and bare chest. Toweling off his hair one last time—nothing worse than a headset on wet ears—he leaves the bathroom and heads to his bed and phone. It’s getting late, already pushing midnight, but Jimmy’s gotta work later than that. Dean’s almost sure.

He lays out the towel. He puts the lube on the bedside table. He adjusts his boxers and his dick inside his boxers. He gets the headset, unplugs his phone, and links the two together.
Sitting on his bed, thumbing down through his contacts, his lap starts to make the kind of picture Jimmy likes best. He gets down to the J’s where he’s carefully filed Jimmy away, making absolutely certain he won’t accidentally booty call one of his group project partners. He double-checks the number all the same before he hits send, and closes his eyes to the sound of the ring. Once the operator transfers him, Dean will tell Jimmy about all the preparation. Casually mention it. Go down the checklist and maybe ask if there are any other supplies Jimmy wants to use to play with him.

And Jimmy won’t just notice that Dean’s putting the effort into this, Jimmy will say it. No mocking tone, no: Jimmy will remark on it with a proud thank-you. Jimmy will tell him again how Dean’s different from the guys calling to jerk off in under five minutes. He’ll call Dean his good boy and make Dean follow his instructions until everything’s calm and slow even as his heart races out of control.

The operator picks up. She rattles off the standard greeting, but Dean barely hears her. He barely lets her finish before asking, “Hey, can you put me through to Jimmy?”

“I’m sorry,” she starts to say, and fuck Dean’s luck. He shouldn’t have wasted so much time in the bathroom.

“It’s okay,” Dean interrupts. “I’ll hold.”

“I’m sorry,” she repeats, no longer sounding remotely sorry, “but Jimmy isn’t working tonight.”

Both Dean’s dick and brain go offline simultaneously. The only thing still functioning is his heart, and that’s making this stupid pathetic noise he refuses to listen to.

The first words that come out of his mouth are “Is he okay?”

“Sir, it’s a holiday,” the operator informs him. She has the exact tone he’d expect in someone who runs interference with horny dudes for a living. “Many of our conversationalists aren’t working tonight.”

“Yeah, but he said he’d be on. I checked last week, he knew it was Thanksgiving, and he said he’d be on.”

She lets out the sigh of the chronically underpaid. “I’ve already told you everything I can, sir.”
“Do you know if he’s okay or not?” Dean demands, voice terse but level. “I’m not asking for the guy’s fucking address, I just need to know if he called out sick or something.” Because suddenly the legal trouble fantasy is a goddamn nightmare. The shadow of the wanker’s regret guy looms, imposing and potentially armed.

Slower than the first time, she repeats, “I have already told you everything I can. Do you want to talk to someone else or hang up? And before you ask, if you want to speak to my manager, the answer will be the same, but louder.”

Okay, breathe.

Think.

First off, Jimmy’s probably okay.

Second off, anything could happen to the guy and Dean would never know, but again, Jimmy’s probably okay.

Third off, the wanker’s regret guy might be local, but he has no access to Jimmy either. They all have to be transferred, they have no idea what Jimmy’s actual number is, so--

That’s it.

Dean clears his throat. “Right, yeah. Uh. So. You got anyone British? With it being Thanksgiving and all. British enough not to celebrate. A guy.”

“We have a British conversationalist working tonight,” the operator answers, moving back down from agitated to bored. “Is that a request for specifically a British man, or just someone available tonight?”

“Gimme the Brit. I like the accent,” Dean lies. He can’t tell a fake one from a real one, but anyone who goes around coining terms like “wanker’s regret” is probably the real deal.
There’s the familiar pause as the operator checks availability, and then she says, “I’m putting you through to Crowley now.”

The man who picks up is definitely British, though not the kind of British Dean thinks of when he hears the word. Scottish, maybe?

“Good evening, stranger,” the man, Crowley, purrs, and Dean immediately shifts on the towel to cover his already clad crotch. “You’re one of Jimmy’s regulars, I hear.”

Dean actually reaches for his phone with the sheer wrongness of a different man’s voice pressed into his ears. He stops himself before he hangs up. “Yeah,” he makes himself say. “Got a standing appointment for Thursdays and he said he’d be on. You got a way to see if he’s okay? I know you two talk, figured you might know how to call him.”

Crowley tuts at him, the lewd veneer dropping—mostly—away. “You’re treading on thin ice here. There’s being naughty, and then there’s being blacklisted.”

“I’m not asking for his phone number. Just, if you have it, can you check on him? I know I sound like some crazy stalker, but this guy threatened to fuck him with a knife the other week and that’s kind of conducive to paranoia.”

Once again, Crowley’s tone changes. This time, he sounds like a real person, if a smarmy one. “He told you about that?”

“And the kid who called him before that,” Dean adds, hauling out yet more proof that Jimmy trusts him, that Dean can be trusted. “Think hearing from the kid fucked him up the most, but he also said the knife guy was local. So can you call him or not?”

“I can,” Crowley answers slowly, stretching out words in the way only someone being paid by the minute can.

“Are you going to?”

Crowley makes a considering noise.
Dean swallows his remaining pride. It’s small enough not to choke on. “Please.”

Another considering noise, and then a sigh. “Oh, fine. But when he yells at me for waking him, I’m telling him whose fault it is. What does he call you?”

“How original. Care to be slightly more distinctive?”

“Michael with the black car.”

A pause, and: “Are you trying to be as generic as possible?”

“He’ll know who I am,” Dean snaps. “Just call.”

“How original. Care to be slightly more distinctive?”

“Michael with the black car.”

A pause, and: “Are you trying to be as generic as possible?”

“He’ll know who I am,” Dean snaps. “Just call.”

“Is that how you talk to someone doing you a favor?”

Dean grits his teeth and takes a breath, but every second that passes is another second Dean’s paying for. “Please call him.”

Crowley chuckles. “Good boy.”

Dean has never bristled faster in his life. “Don’t call me that. I’m not a dog.”

“All right, we’ll scratch puppy play off the list. Hold on, I need to grab my mobile.”

There’s a shifting noise followed by silence.

Dean waits.
“Still ringing,” Crowley says.

Dean waits some more.

“Evening, choir boy.” Crowley greets, and Dean’s lungs finally start taking in air again. At least they do until Crowley continues in the distinctive tone of someone leaving a voicemail. “It’s me. There’s a regular of yours on the line, ‘Michael with the black car,’ who’s worried about you. No idea when you’ll get this, but call me back when you do. Ta.”

There’s a beep and Crowley gives a faint sigh. “So. How long are we willing to wait?”

Well, fuck.

In for a penny. And a pretty penny at that. Dean checks his phone for both the call length and the time. “Couple minutes, I guess.”

“I don’t suppose you want to do anything while we wait,” Crowley says, sounding as if he honestly couldn’t care either way. Really not the most alluring thing Dean’s ever heard, but definitely a step up from before. “You are allowed to shop around, you know.”

“I’m gonna stick with Jimmy,” Dean says without needing to think. Anyone else just isn’t good enough.

“That so? And what will you be doing in January?”

Dean frowns into the middle distance. “What, is he taking a vacation or something?” Phone sex work isn’t seasonal, is it?

Crowley goes silent just a second too long. “Well, this is awkward.”

“What?”

“Just a bit odd. Our mutual friend tells you about the boy and the wanker, but he doesn’t mention
he’s quitting next month.”

This time, it’s Dean’s heart that goes offline.

“Next month,” Dean repeats.

“The Saturday before Christmas is his last night, if I recall correctly,” Crowley answers.

Dean swings his legs over the side of the bed. Gets his feet on the floor. The room still wants to rock, something hot and raw roaring in his ears. “Did, uh. He say why?”

“As far as I know, he only ever planned on doing this the one year. Personally, I think he just wants his nights back.”

Dean should reply.

Dean should say something.

Anything.

“I’d never have guessed it,” Crowley continues, “but I think I’m going to miss him. Surprisingly good at coming up with fantasies, very good about sharing them.”

Dean swallows and musters up a single “Yeah?”

“Has he told you the library one? That’s a new one.”

“No.”

“Well-“
“I don’t want to hear it,” Dean interrupts.

“Not from someone besides him, you mean.”

“No offense, but the accent really doesn’t do it for me.”

“Fair enough,” Crowley says, the words a verbal shrug. “Ask him for some recommendations before he leaves. I’m sure he’d oblige.”

Careful not to disconnect the call, Dean swipes through his phone to the calendar app. He counts out the weeks.

All four of them.

If Jimmy doesn’t call back tonight, that’s only four nights left.

“Is he ever coming back?” Dean hears himself ask.

“That’s a question for him. Speaking of which: how did I come up in conversation?”

“He called something ‘wanker’s regret’ and then had to explain why the hell he was using the word ‘wanker,’” Dean explains.

“Ah,” Crowley says. “So this wasn’t about the threesome. Or the foursome.”

Dean’s heart comes back online, and the only thing inside it is rage. Burning, blinding, choking rage. It surges up his throat. It stoppers his mouth.

“He plays a convincing pair of twins, I’ll give him that,” Crowley continues.
The rage slams into a brick wall of confusion mortared together by questions. “Wait, what?”

“The one time we worked together ‘in the field,’ as it were,” Crowley explains. “Set up a conference call, called the twins’ pay rate a two-for-one deal, and went to town.”

“But you weren’t in the same room.”

“Not for that.”

The tension in his chest eases, but the strain in his arms increases. Nothing makes sense. “But you’ve actually met him.”

“I have.”

Crowley doesn’t elaborate any more than that.

He doesn’t need to.

Every question in the world swells inside Dean’s mouth, a choking, suffocating force. He pulls in air through his nose. He’s not going to be this big of a creep. He isn’t.

“How different is his work persona and, y’know. Him?”

That’s not quite as creepy. Nowhere near the level of asking what Jimmy looks like, or how old he actually is, or, or any of it.

“Depends on the persona,” Crowley tells him, faux-conversational. He’s stretching out the wait time, baiting Dean with tidbits of revelation, and they both know it. Because of course Jimmy can play more than just twins.

Dean closes his eyes. “Jimmy and, um.” Fuck. Goddamn fucking son of a bitch, making Dean think this thought. “And whatever his real name is,” Dean finishes lamely, admitting to a reality he’s ignored for months. Two months, maybe a little more, but it’s long enough to already feel like
“One’s a boring asshole with a dry sense of humor, for a start,” Crowley says. It’s not an insult, the way he says it, but Dean still immediately mistrusts his taste. Jimmy’s anything but boring.

“Okay, so what’s he really like?”

Crowley laughs.

Dean sits up straight, his eyes snapping open to stare uselessly at his wall. “That’s what he’s like?”

“Are you surprised?”

Only in that Crowley is describing the guy Dean’s actually been talking to. His insides tighten and tense even as other parts relax and unwind. When Jimmy told him about the kid and the threatening caller, that had to have been real Jimmy. Not-Jimmy. The actual weirdo of an idiot who picked Jimmy as a stripper name.

“How many personas does he have? Was the twin one?”

“Mm, Emmanuel.”

“What, just a name?”

“If I’m remembering correctly,” Crowley answers, his words just slow enough to consciously remind Dean that he’s paying by the minute, “Emmanuel is the gay-for-pay persona. Straight, vaguely religious. Maybe bicurious around the edges. That’s good fun to play with. Like he’d rather not be tempted, but he’s too horny to stop.”

That last bit is way too pointed.

“Hey, I’m just wasting time to see if he calls back.”
“Of course you are,” Crowley says. “How about that weather we’ve been having? Enjoy watching American football today? Are you as annoyed with all the Christmas carols already as I am?”

Dean should hang up.

Dean should have hung up immediately.

If this guy isn’t concerned, maybe Dean shouldn’t be either.

But then, what would this guy be concerned about, anyway?

Dean swallows his pride and eats a few more dollars. “Fine. If Emmanuel is gay-for-pay, what’s Jimmy?”

“You’ve been calling him for how long, and you still don’t know?”

Dean shrugs to an audience of no one. “The guy’s got a range.”

For some reason, Crowley laughs at that. A short, little chuckle that has Dean frowning. “That he does. Here’s a hint: I know you were nervous asking for a man when you first called.”

Fuck this guy. Fuck this guy with the business end of a rake.

“You’re saying Jimmy gets the new guys.”

“Bingo. He’s Sexuality 101,” Crowley says with the smirk of a private joke in his voice.

“How many…”
No. He can’t go down the rabbit hole of that list. He doesn’t need to hear all the personas that Jimmy… that Jimmy’s actor plays.

He doesn’t.

“I’m not sure how many,” Crowley answers anyway, reeling Dean in just as surely as if there was a more-than-metaphorical hook stuck into his flesh. “There’s Steve and Lucien, there might be more by now.”

Don’t fucking ask it.

“What’re they like?”

“Steve’s the bottom, Lucien’s the top. Trust me, if you’d been talking with Lucien, you wouldn’t bother being worried about him.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Let’s say I have a caller who wants to see me taken down a peg,” Crowley says instead. “It’s been known to happen. Let’s say I have a caller who’s willing to pay for it. That’s when Lucien gets pulled out.”

“He Doms you?” And not in the soft way that Jimmy does, either.

“Tit for tat, Mikey. I Dom the ‘twins’ and Lucien Doms me. It all works out in the end.”

Fuck, the details Dean could ask for. Does Jimmy even like subbing? Do he and Crowley ever work in the same room, or is it a conference call? Dean’s fingers dig into his thighs, just wondering it.

“How does he even pretend to be twins, anyway?” Dean asks instead.

“Slightly different voices. Jimmy’s always a bit higher. Never as high as Lucien. Lucien’s a little more nasal. Snide, you might say.”
“No, I meant—” Don’t fucking ask it. “—how does he do the rest of the sounds? You’re not in the same room together, right? And fucking ain’t exactly quiet, so how…?”

“Sound effects aren’t hard to do once you know what you’re doing.”

“So he could fake a threesome on his own,” Dean says as neutrally as he can.

“If you asked him to, I’m sure he could,” Crowley says, sounding for all the world like some douchebag deigning to praise a coworker, and not some guy who’s shredding Dean’s brain apart for a paycheck.

“Okay. Okay, cool.” He checks his phone again, and he has officially paid too much for this nightmare of a chat. They’re closing in on a new minute, fast. “It’s after midnight already, he’s probably not gonna call back, I’m gonna go.”

“For what it’s worth,” Crowley interrupts, speaking over him, “he looked under the weather when I saw him Tuesday.”

They tick over into the next minute. Son of a bitch.

“You could have mentioned that sooner.”

“You had other questions,” Crowley reminds him, feigning ignorance—or at least plausible deniability.

For the sake of getting his money’s worth, Dean holds on to his temper. “Under the weather how? Are you just making shit up now?”

Now and before. All of it. Bullshit to keep Dean on the phone, a load of crap to keep him paying.

Crowley tsks at him. “That’s very rude.”
Dean doesn’t rip the headset off and hurl it across the room. He needs it for later.

He needs it for Jimmy.

“I’m sorry, I meant to say, are you just making feces up now?”

Crowley makes another chiding noise, but Jimmy would have laughed. “It happens to be true, but if you don’t care enough to listen…”

“How the hell do you have any repeat callers? Seriously.”

“I cater to tastes you obviously don’t have. Still interested?”

For the thousandth time tonight, Dean fails to hang up. “Fine. How was he?”

“Tired. Bags under the eyes, all that. Not so unusual with the hours we keep, but deeper than normal.”

“That’s it? Seriously?”

“No, that’s the first thing I noticed.”

“Do you have to draw everything out?”

“What else do you think this job is? Now, the big clue he wasn’t feeling his best was him ordering tea with honey and lemon. Wouldn’t have been memorable, except I don’t think I’ve seen him without a coffee in his hand, before. Happy? Or should I say more? How much stubble he had? If his hair was neat? What he smells like, perhaps?”

Dean is a creep. He knows he’s a creep.
But at least he’s not the kind of creep that says yes to questions like that.

He’s just the kind of creep that wants to.

“Does he know you’re offering up his personal info on these calls?” Dean shoots back. “Because that is all kinds of fucked up, buddy.”

Crowley laughs like Dean’s the one without a leg to stand on. “His personal information? You mean, like his full name? Which I know. Or his phone number? Which I know. Or maybe his day job. Which, again, I know. I know how long he’s been working the phones, why he started and when he’s quitting. We talk about it often, and he pays for my coffee. He’s a gentleman like that, our ‘Jimmy.’”

“Now, if you want to hear something more minor—his real hair or eye color, for example—that would be within reason. His approximate age. Whether he’s married. If he’s actually gay.”

Bi, Dean nearly corrects, but doesn’t. “And what?” he snaps back instead. “You’ll tell me if I stay on the line for ten more minutes? No thanks.”

“How does three minutes a fact sound?”

Dean’s not coughing up that money just to risk being lied to.

Instead, he finally, finally does the right thing.

He hangs up.

In the morning, he wakes up exhausted and blearily surprised he even slept at all. He unclenches his aching jaw to open his dry mouth and rolls over to grab at his ringing phone. “Yeah?” he rasps, plucking the phone from its charger. “You okay?”
“Yeah, just a little headache,” Sam answers, and Dean cracks his eyes open.

Not Jimmy.

Jimmy doesn’t have his number.

Right.

“Then…?” He’s not firing on all cylinders. Or any.

Sam sighs. “So get this. The office called me at the crack of dawn, and, well. Good news, bad news.”

Dean closes his eyes against the faint light struggling in through the curtains. How late did he sleep? “When’s your flight back?” Still on Sunday. Say still on Sunday.

“Would, uh. Would you mind giving me a ride?”

“...I am not driving your ass to California.”

Sam laughs, small and strained. “Guess I caught you before your coffee. No, I meant, I’m flying back this afternoon. Like around two. I know we were going to go out tonight, but maybe we could grab brunch on the way to the airport?”

“Uh, no,” Dean answers on instinct. “We are having a late breakfast or breakfast food for lunch. I do not brunch.”

“So you don’t want a mimosa.”

“The day I want a mimosa, you can shoot me.”
“Okay, but before then, bacon?”

“Bacon. And coffee.” Rubbing at his eyes, he forces himself to sit up fully. Swinging his legs out of bed, his feet land on a pair of towels, both rumpled but dry. “If I head over in twenty, will you be ready to go?”

“Yeah, I’m about finished packing. I’m guessing you didn’t see any of my texts?”

“Just woke up.”

“I can tell.”

“If you want that ride, you’re gonna shut up.”

“Shutting up. But thanks. I’m going to hold this over them, see if I can get more time off to visit for Christmas over this.”

“Tell me about that when I get there.”

“Right, see you soon.”

“Yeah,” Dean says, and Sam hangs up first.

Bobby doesn’t help Sam load his bags into Baby’s trunk, but he does come out to watch. He gives Sam a big hug but declines lunch and being stuck on the ride to the airport. From inside the Impala, Dean can’t make out what Bobby’s saying, but he’s got one hand on Sam’s shoulder and Sam’s nodding. One final squeeze and Sam climbs into the car.

“Thanks, man,” Sam says easily, pulling hard to shut the door behind him.
Dean just grunts. “You’re paying for food.”

Sam shrugs back. “Even your stomach isn’t as expensive as a taxi.”

Dean turns on the radio. He drives. Sam looks for restaurants en route on his phone. They stop at this tiny pancake place called the Stack Shack that the internet swears is good. The internet turns out to be right, although there’s an awkward moment when Dean catches sight of the waiter.

*More like the Stacked Shack,* he almost says aloud to Sam.

It’s still a good joke. And the pancakes are almost as delicious as that guy’s forearms, holy shit. Buff and just the right amount of hairy, plus a tattoo in dark, flowing script. Dean’s interest sharply declines the second the guy opens his mouth, though.

“What’s up?” Sam asks after they’ve ordered.

“What what?” Dean asks right back.

Sam points his fork back to the waiter, who has currently taken up position by the counter, loading way too many plates on his massive arms. “You need him for something?”

Dean shrugs as casually as anyone has ever shrugged. “Trying to read his tattoo but he keeps moving. Not important. So what are they flying you back for anyway?”

Sam sighs but rallies. He tiptoes around the edges of the case, outlining the vague area without spilling any of the specifics, and Dean nods along like he understands. Once they’re done talking about that, though, they run out of things to say.

Their food arrives. Sam thanks the waiter. Dean keeps his eyes on his plate.

“I think it was in Spanish,” Sam says. “Maybe Italian.”
Dean frowns with a mouth full of bacon. “The case?”

“The tattoo.”

He swallows. “Oh. Thought I’d gone dyslexic there for a second.”

The conversation dies again.

Later, when Dean’s chasing down syrup with the last buttery piece of pancake speared on the end of his fork, Sam starts talking again.

“So, something I’ve been meaning to say,” Sam says to the remains of his fruit cup, fruitlessly trying to spear the last grape with his fork. “Bobby was telling me about how you’re, y’know. Hitting the library every week, talking to him about your classes, all that. And I think it’s really great. That you’re really applying yourself.”

Dean sticks him with a glare and talks with his mouth full on purpose. His fork clatters down onto his plate. “So, what, working in a garage for half my life wasn’t ‘applying myself’?”

Sam frowns like Dean’s reaction is somehow unexpected. “No, just, it’s good to see you wanting something more. Not settling. I know how much it cost you, putting me through school. You missed out on so much for me. I just want to pay you back.”

“Dude, it was fine, okay? I was doing what I wanted, I was happy, it was fine.”

“Yeah, but-”

Dean cuts him off, raising his hand sharply to catch the attention of Waiter McMuscles. “Can I get the check?”

The waiter brings the check, Sam pays, and Dean nearly fights him over it.

The remainder of the ride to the airport is completed in silence barely masked by the blaring radio.
Every time Sam opens his mouth, Dean turns the music just a hair louder.

They suffer their way through a line of cars way longer than it should be. Bunch of assholes, flying back home the day after Thanksgiving. Dropping in for one fucking meal. Finally, a spot big enough for Baby opens up in the departure line, and Dean idles with his foot on the brake, not bothering to put her into park.

Sam opens the door.

Dean says nothing.

Sam slams the door shut again and turns off the radio. “C’mon, man. You think I didn’t want this weekend too?”

Dean looks at him.

Sam sighs. “Look. This is a big deal for me. There’s other people they could have called in, but they wanted me and the junior partner. That’s the level I’m being put at right now. That’s huge, Dean.”

Dean shifts into park. “Yeah, I get it,” he mutters to the breast pocket of Sam’s jacket.

“I’ll see you at Christmas,” Sam promises. “I’ll even look the other way if you want to hustle pool.”

“Nope, you’re hustling with me.”

“Dean.”

“Sammy.”

Sam glares his way into a bitchface, and Dean presses the sight into his memory as hard as he can.
“Don’t miss your flight, bitch.”

With a sigh, Sam gives in, slides over, and hugs him. Just one arm around the shoulders, but it counts. It more than counts. Dean slaps him on the back in return.

“Seeya, jerk.”

Sam climbs out and heads around to the back for the trunk. Eyeing Sam through the mirrors, Dean shifts into drive and lets Baby roll forward a foot with perfect timing.

Now *that* is a bitchface.

Sam flips him off.

Dean grins back into the rear-view mirror.

Sam hauls out his crap and slams the trunk way harder than necessary.

Dean flips him off.

They both wave, Sam hauls his shit up the curb, and then Sam disappears through the doors into the airport.

Dean drives away.

Back home, he grabs the first distraction at hand, the only one he’s sure will make the time pass. He plows the rest of the way through the first book he borrowed from Cas and gets a start on the second. He’s restless and absorbed and horny, and these people are just like him. Down in black and white, solid in print, a collection of highly articulate freaks who make this madness sound reasonable.
But all the subs described in these books actually know their Dom. There’s a few mentions of couples doing scenes long-distance, but that’s couples. Or not couples, or more than couples. That’s people who know and trust each other, is the point.

It’s better to think about that, though, than to think about Sam. And as long as Dean has sex on the brain, there’s no room for Sam. All that shit gets magnetically repelled. Or just repulsed by sheer grossness factor, either one.

Dean reads the whole afternoon away in his apartment, moving from room to room as each one grows too cramped. He cranks his music high over the noises of the garage below. He should go down, do some work, get his hands dirty, but Sam’s so stupidly proud of Dean wanting to do more, to be more, to be better than some grease monkey doing the shit he actually loves.

When he finishes both books, he writes Cas an email. He points out a bunch of seemingly contradictory stuff, most of it from the second book, the sub book. He erases half his questions and edits down the rest into the most academic tone possible. Then he makes the mistake of actually sending the email.

Without any other distractions, he tries to watch some Netflix, but that just reminds him of Jimmy, too. Besides, he’s too restless anyway.

He pulls out his notebooks and pretends to study, walking around in little circles in his little kitchen.

Distantly, though increasingly more pressingly, he’s aware that he needs to talk to someone. This is the Talk To Jimmy feeling, the one that pushes up inside his throat and burns his mouth with sour stomach acid.

But Jimmy doesn’t work Fridays. He works Saturdays, one whole night away, the soonest Dean can try again. Tonight, Dean’s got no one. Yeah, he could keep bothering Cas, but Dean can’t let the guy know how fucked up he actually is. Same for Garth and Benny: they’re his employees, too, and he can’t go dumping his own bullshit on them. As for Bobby, Dean can’t break his trust that way, can’t show just how poor a choice Bobby made setting Dean up to take over for him. And telling Rufus is basically the same as telling Bobby.

Dean needs somebody else. Somebody gay, so he can at least mention Jimmy.
But where the hell is he going to find another gay guy?

Dean smacks himself in the face with his open notebook. He slaps the notebook down on his kitchen table and flips around until the flash of blue ink catches his eye. No, wrong conversation. Still no. There, that one.

He doesn’t need to talk this out. That’s the Sam influence showing itself. That’s Dean getting conditioned by phone sex. No heart-to-hearts necessary, and absolutely no chick flick moments.

Dean’s going to a gay bar, and then he’s going to fuck this out of his system. He’s been getting hung up on some dude’s customer service persona when he could be out there banging someone real. This will be better. This will work. Hell, if it goes well enough, he’ll never call again and end up saving himself a shitload of money.

Googling the places on his phone, he stuffs a belated dinner into his face and figures out where he’s going. Jacob’s Closet is more of a dance club, and Dean’s gonna need to figure out if he’s into bears before he goes to somewhere like The Cave. That leaves Paradise, or looking up places on his own.

As it turns out, Cas listed Paradise first for a reason. The pictures of the place actually look classy, polished wood instead of Jacob’s Closet’s metal and glass. A lot of the reviews say a guy can even hear himself think there.

Decided, Dean cleans up and overthinks his outfit. Black t-shirt. The good jeans. Which plaid shirt? That belt. Wrong plaid shirt. Better plaid shirt. He almost goes for his old leather jacket, but something—make that everything—about wearing his inherited jacket into a gay bar comes too close to spitting on his father’s grave. This jacket instead. Which means he switches into a different plaid.

Checking himself and his hair in the mirror, there’s some relief in knowing he’s at least got the fashion part of this gay thing down.

He heads out.

He drives, following his GPS.

He overshoots and parks.
He sits in his car.

Finally, he gets out, feeds the meter, and heads in.

Two drinks in, Dean’s almost calm. Just a local beer, nothing fancy, but the bottle fits well in his hand each time, and the label gives him something to pick at as he loiters at the bar. He keeps glancing toward the door in a fit of paranoia, but then, if anyone he did know came in, they’d be here for the same reason he is.

Whenever he looks around, as subtly as he can, there always seems to be at least one guy looking back. And it is mostly guys. A very different crowd of mostly guys than he sees at his usual watering holes. He’d swear there’s a couple guys wearing makeup, and there’s more than a few who seem to have forgotten it’s the end of November, judging by the amount of skin they’re showing. Some are plain, some ugly, a couple unnervingly handsome, and a few lend inspiration.

Dean pulls off his jacket, sticks it on his bar stool to sit on, and rolls up his sleeves just so. Do his forearms look hotter like this? That guy’s do. He glances around a couple times but no one seems to have noticed. There are a couple other loners like himself, more than a few groups, and if Dean’s going to do this right, he’s going to wait to be approached. See someone demonstrate. Let him learn what to do or what decidedly not to do.

He finishes his second beer and asks for a third.

“Just put it on my tab,” Dean tells the bartender, a fit older guy who is admittedly hot in an Anderson Cooper kind of way.

Anderson Barkeeper shakes his head. “It’s already on his.” And he points his thumb down the bar.

Past an unlikely couple of a nerd and a weightlifter, a small bearded guy lifts one hand in a quick wave. His lips twitch into a smile before he looks away shyly.
Dean’s eyebrows try to fly off his head.

He takes the beer anyway. It’s definitely not what the other guy is drinking. He’s got some fruity thing with an umbrella. And that’s not a slur: there’s actual fruit involved, and at least a fair amount of orange juice.

Dean stares long enough for the other guy to look back. The bartender chuckles and walks away, but the little guy down the bar actually gets up and brings his drink with him, a dark blue coat slung over one arm. He’s dressed pretty nice, in a nerd kind of way, with a maroon sweater over a checkered button-down. Up close, he’s not actually short, just shorter than Dean.

“Hey,” the guy says, his voice polite and masculine. His eyes are brown and puppy-ish, a strangely fitting match for his beard. “Mind some company? Or are you waiting for someone?”

“Guess I’m done waiting,” Dean says, and the guy smiles. He looks down and back up at Dean, and then he sits, jacket across his lap.

“I’m Aaron,” the guy says.

“Dean.” Like an idiot, Dean holds out his hand to shake.

Aaron stares at it for a split second before reciprocating. Not actually shaking, he holds Dean’s hand and Dean’s attention with a small smile, letting Dean feel the warmth of his palm. His own hand damp with condensation from the beer, Dean pulls away first.

“You buy a lot of guys drinks?” he asks.

“You looked like you could use it,” Aaron says with a tiny, bashful shrug. “Bad day?”

Dean shrugs back. “Getting better.” He puts on the smile that’s always worked well with girls, and it turns out guys aren’t so different after all.

The conversation limps, but the looks more than make up for it. When he runs out of things to say, Dean drinks, the bottle cold against his lips, and he catches Aaron staring at his hands and mouth and
throat more than once. Aaron’s knee nudges against his own once, twice, gentle taps of contact that are held longer and longer.

Dean looks him over in return, peckish rather than hungry and entertained more by the flirting than the company. He’s slept with women for less. He’s just gotta lay down the guidelines.

“Can I be straight with you for a second?” Dean asks.

“God, I hope not,” Aaron says with a nervous smile, and it takes Dean a second to laugh.

“Uh, no. Not, not that way.”

“Okay,” Aaron says, somehow still looking hopeful through the growing resignation on his face. “Well, you’re welcome for the drink. It’s okay, I can just…” He points back the way he’d come.

Dean stops him, a hand around his elbow. “You can take me home and have some fun.”

Aaron stares, eyes wide, nostrils flared. “You… Really?”

“Just fun,” Dean repeats. When Aaron’s face pointedly doesn’t fall or change in anyway, Dean finds himself adding, “There’s this guy. Getting over him, but I need, uh.”

“Help?” Aaron offers. His arm relaxes in Dean’s grip.


“Yeah,” Aaron answers, a word full of a grin and entirely void of hesitation. His eyes flit down to Dean’s arms again before darting up to his neck and lips. “Finish our drinks and bow out?”

“I like that plan.” Dean tips his bottle toward Aaron, and Aaron taps his glass against the bottle’s neck.
They keep looking at each other out of the corner of their eyes. A warm weight curls up in Dean’s belly, the satisfied certainty of getting laid. They settle their tabs sooner rather than later. Having taken the bus, Aaron asks if Dean is good to drive, but it would take more than three beers over a couple of hours to put a dent in him.

To his credit, Aaron makes the correct appreciative noises when he sees Baby, even if they do have to have the usual conversation about older cars, seat belts, and the fact that actually Dean wasn’t legally required to install them in this state. The lap belts without shoulder straps are already a modification Dean had to rip his heart out to make. Baby was already perfect the way she was, whatever Sam says about the radio and Dean’s cassettes.

Back at Aaron’s, things get shy. Dean parks on the street, and the chitchat dies away entirely as Aaron leads him up to a row of apartments set over a dollar store. Aaron coaxes his sticky front door open and hauls it closed after them.

It’s a small place, furnished in IKEA shades of blue and light brown. The TV’s nice, but the couch doesn’t have arms. There’s a kitchenette on one side and a bedroom door on the other, the bathroom presumably behind the door in the middle.

“Take your coat?” Aaron offers, somewhere between playful and sincere.

Dean shucks it and hands it over.

Aaron’s eyes darken. He turns to stick Dean’s jacket on one of the free pegs set into the wall and puts his own coat on top of a hoodie already hanging there. He turns back to Dean, opens his mouth to say something, and Dean acts before he can lose his nerve.

He steps forward, head tilted down. He lifts a hand to Aaron’s elbow, then up to his shoulder as Aaron leans closer. Dean closes the last remaining gap.

The beard is weird, but the mustache is weirder. Dean breaks the kiss with this ridiculous giggle popping out his mouth. Aaron stares up at him, more confused than offended, his hands still on Dean’s hips. “What?” Aaron asks, a hint of a smile there.

“Sorry, tickled,” Dean says, scratching the skin between nose and lip. “Let’s try that again.”
They try it again.

The beard issue aside, Dean’s already pretty good at it. There’s kissing, there’s kissing with tongue, and then there’s full-on making out. They ramp up through all three stages. Aaron pets his back and shoulders. Dean scratches the thick texture of Aaron’s beard and gets an appreciative hum and a hand on his ass.

Aaron pulls him to the couch, then pulls Dean down on top of himself. A couple things dig into Dean, and only two of the three could possibly be hipbones. Kissing where beard gives way to neck, Dean gives an experimental roll of the hips and is rewarded with a groan and another ass grab, dragging them together even tighter.

They grind and suck face. Hands go under shirts. Aaron spreads his legs, gives Dean room between them, and hooks one foot behind Dean’s calf. When Dean’s arms start to shake from holding himself up, that ever-annoying side effect of being on top, he manages to shift them on their sides.

Face flushed beneath his beard, Aaron gazes back at him with heavy-lidded eyes, the border between black pupil and brown iris nearly impossible to make out. His mouth is bright and pink, and Dean would be lying if he said he wasn’t turned on.

“How do you want to do this?” Aaron asks, a whisper between their mouths that reminds Dean more of porn than of reality.

“On a bed would be better.”

Aaron grins at that. They pull each other up but separate as Aaron leads the way. Shirts come off. Shoes. Socks. Aaron stares at Dean like he’s some Adonis, like he thinks he walked out of that bar with a prize. Without their upper layers to obfuscate them, the bulges in both their pants are more obvious, and Dean can’t help staring there.

He could have that inside him. Some fingers first, then a real dick up his ass.

Presumably prompted by Dean’s stare, Aaron’s hands move to his belt. Dean mirrors him. They take off their pants. Aaron sheds his underwear in the same motion, but Dean’s brain must still be stuck in Jimmy mode, because he doesn’t even think of taking his boxer briefs off.
Judging by the rapt attention Aaron is giving the whole of him, though, Aaron doesn’t seem to mind. His cock is cut and jarringly normal, a length that porn has taught Dean to think of as small. Dean can probably take a cock that size.

They come back together, Aaron’s dick flopping with each step. How dicks can look that silly and that arousing at the same time, Dean will never know. But it is a dick, and it’s right there.

“Can I…?” Dean’s hand moves in a motion half-gesture, half-reach.

Aaron nods and leans up to kiss him. Fitting a hand between them, Dean touches, and it’s just a dick. It’s hot, physically hot, the same texture and heft as his own even without the foreskin. All told, way less imposing than the first time he had to navigate his way around a tiny clit. The angle is weird, but at least the cramped space is a good excuse for any lack of skill.

Aaron’s hands return to Dean’s hips, thumbs hooking into his waistband. It forces them apart. Aaron asks with his eyes, Dean nods, and they work Dean’s boxer briefs down. Eyes immediately on the prize, Aaron lets out an oddly delighted “Oh hey” and takes Dean by the dick. Dean rocks forward, forehead against Aaron’s shoulder as Aaron lets Dean play with his foreskin.

They end up on the bed, Aaron continuing his investigation with touches no less pleasurable for their inquisitive nature. He’s not jerking Dean off. He’s not trying to make Dean harder or get him to the brink. He’s just having fun. Aaron’s playing with Dean’s dick like his own personal toy, like it’s only there for his own amusement, and something about that has Dean’s breaths going ragged.

“Let’s switch for a little,” he makes himself say. When Aaron moves to let him, Dean says, “No, uh. Here.” He leans against the headboard, sticks a pillow between his back and the wood, and he gestures in between his legs.

Aaron crawls in for a kiss before turning around, before settling back against Dean’s chest and crotch. This time, when Dean gets his hand around Aaron’s dick, it’s basically the angle he knows best—and it immediately shows. Aaron drops his head back onto Dean’s shoulder, baring his neck and ear, and Dean goes to town. It’s fucking heady, how easy it is after that.

That’s someone else’s precome on his hand. That’s a dude’s ass he has his dick rubbing against. A man’s hand in his hair and a man’s fingers digging into his thigh. The weirdest part is how not weird it is.
Relaxed against his chest, Aaron murmurs something.

“What was that?” Dean asks, deliberately slowing his hand. He thumbs the slit, hard.

Aaron’s hips buck up, his ass fantastic against Dean’s dick when he comes back down. “This how you want to do it?” Aaron says a little more clearly.

“What, uh.” He covers the hesitation by sucking on Aaron’s earlobe. He keeps his lips close as he forces himself to finish the thought. “How do you feel about anal?”

“Yeah, I could go for that.”

There’s no hiding the way Dean’s dick twitches against Aaron’s ass. “Awesome.”

Aaron laughs at his transparent eagerness but turns over to grin at him in a way that isn’t mocking in the least. “I’m gonna hit the bathroom first. Pull down the bedspread for me?”

Dean pecks him on the lips. “You got it, babe.”

Rearranging the bed is the simple part. Waiting is the awful part. He sits there, dick softening, listening to bathroom noises and feeling the phantom sensation of a beard against the skin of his face. If there’s anything more awkward than being left alone in a near-stranger’s home, it’s being left alone entirely naked.

Finally, after way too long, Aaron returns with a nervous grin and no towel. Dean doesn’t ask about a towel. Maybe that’s just a Jimmy thing. Plus, it’s probably for the best that Dean stops getting horny whenever he sees a towel.

“You got supplies?” Dean checks.

“Yeah.” Aaron crosses by him to get to a bedside table. He rummages through the drawer a little, but that just gives Dean more time to look at him. This naked guy in front of him, like some strange cross between porn and a locker room. Like they’re getting changed for gym, but Dean’s still allowed to look. Hell, expected.
Encouraged.

Aaron flushes red beneath his beard and smattering of chest hair. “Stop it,” he says, like Dean’s teasing him.

Dean pushes down the roiling terror in his gut and leans back, putting himself on display, dick heavy against his thigh. “Stop what?”

Aaron drinks him in. Like Dean’s something amazing, the hottest guy he’s ever had in his bed. Dean’s seen enough mirrors to know it’s possible, Thanksgiving stomach chub or not. He knows he’s a pretty face, and judging by the look on Aaron’s, that’s something they agree on.

“Want me to suck you first?” Aaron asks. As if Dean would be doing him a favor. “Didn’t mean to let you cool off for so long.”

“We gonna have enough condoms?”

Tossing the lube bottle onto the bed, Aaron checks inside the box. “Yeah.”

“Awesome.”

They wind up with Dean sitting at the edge of the bed, Aaron kneeling between his legs. It’s different having a guy down there between his thighs. Dean’s brain detaches to somewhere outside his body, cataloging.

It’s a good blowjob. Not the best Dean’s ever had, but definitely no room for complaint. It’s just… not distracting enough. Dean keeps opening his legs wider, but Aaron never does take the hint and touch his hole.

*He can’t, that’s Jimmy’s,* insists one of the most imbecilic voices inside Dean’s head. His thighs reflexively tighten around Aaron’s middle, which seems to prompt Aaron to keep doing that thing with his tongue.
It was his for one fucking week, not for forever, Dean reminds himself. He doesn't own me.

But I'm his good boy.

C'mon, man, you know you're not even close.

Dean squeezes Aaron’s shoulder, abruptly ready to tap out despite the suction around his latex-wrapped dick.

Then Aaron looks up, eyes dark, lips stretched red and wide around Dean’s cock, and the whole situation veers mercifully back into A Good Idea.

“Not that this isn’t great, but I’d planned on coming during part two,” Dean explains.

Aaron pulls off and grins. “Yeah, I’d like that too.” He starts to stand and Dean pulls him up. There’s more kissing, now spoiled with the taste of latex, but they push through it.

Climbing onto the bed, Aaron passes Dean another condom and points him to the trash bin for the one still on him. Dean chucks it but turns back to find Aaron already has the lube out—and is using it on himself.

Dean’s dick, already perked up, keeps right on perking. The rest of him sinks right on down.

“You all right?” Aaron asks, kneeling there on the bed with his fingers up his own ass.

Quick about it, Dean says, “Yeah. Just gotta calm down enough to...” He gestures downward, looking away. Tormented by lube noises, Dean eventually manages it.

“If we do doggy style, will you give me a reach around?” Aaron asks as Dean joins him on the bed.

“Yeah, definitely,” Dean promises. How hard can it be?
As it turns out: hard.

First there’s the getting inside part. Which is awesome. Tight and hot and clinging, enough that the condom helps him from literally blowing it then and there.

Then there’s working out a rhythm with a new partner, which always sucks. They get the hang of it before too long, knees digging into the mattress, toes splayed and pushing, but the second one of Dean’s hands leaves Aaron’s waist, it’s all fucked.

Leaning over puts Dean off-balance. Which means planting a hand on the mattress next to Aaron’s, which means forcing the guy lower, which throws off the rhythm again. On the plus side, Aaron lets out the good kind of shout. On the minus side, Aaron’s arms tremble and they both collapse forward under the force of Dean’s thrusting.

They rearrange themselves but keep sinking down. Eventually, panting, Aaron insists, “I’ll do it, I’ll do it, you just, yeah, there.”

Dean keeps fucking into him, a growing sense of failure steadfastly keeping him away from orgasm. Aaron gets more vocal in directing him, which helps, but with only one hand to hold himself up, Aaron starts slumping down again.

“Shit,” Dean swears as Aaron lets out a muffled groan into the pillow. “This is why I’m normally more of a face-to-face kind of guy.”

Aaron turns his head and pushes himself back up on shaking arms. “I’m not flexible enough for that.”

“Reverse cowgirl?” Dean offers.

Aaron shoots him an amused look over his flushed shoulder. “You mean cowboy.”

Fuck yes, Dean means cowboy. Aloud, Dean just winks and says, “That’s the reverse part.”

A dick still up his ass, Aaron laughs.
Gripping the condom at the base, Dean pulls out and rolls over. Aaron adds more lube and slings a leg across Dean’s lap. They line up, then scoot, then line up again once Dean’s propped up enough to appreciate the situation.

In the new position, finally back in his wheelhouse, Dean pulls out all the stops. He follows the rhythm of Aaron’s ride, he strokes those thighs, he thrusts up with a better and better sense of timing until Aaron’s mouth goes slack and his dick is dripping all over both of them.

“That good?” Dean asks, jerking Aaron’s cock while Aaron rolls his hips in tight, fast circles. “You like that?”

Hands fallen to Dean’s chest, Aaron nods above him, lip bitten, eyes closed.

“You gonna come on me?” Dean asks, but Aaron only keeps on nodding, doesn’t say anything no matter how Dean repeats it. Aaron’s just not a talker.

Finally, Aaron answers by coming all over Dean’s stomach, Aaron’s hand joining Dean’s. A wave of relief shoots through Dean so hard, it’s a surprise to discover he hasn’t come himself, somehow resisting the pull of Aaron’s clenching ass.

Aaron lets out a sound half-laugh, half-groan. “Oh, god, you’re still good to go. Oh my god.” A pleased giggle bubbles out of him and he clearly tries to keep fucking Dean, but all the fuck’s gone out of him.

“Back to doggy?” Dean asks.

With a bob of a nod, Aaron pulls off with lethargic, overly-careful motions. They add yet more lube, and, flopped with a pillow under his chest, Aaron actually sighs as Dean breaches him. Aaron reaches back with one hand to pull at Dean’s ass, and hell if that doesn’t get Dean’s hips bucking forward.

It feels good. He’s got his dick in a hole, of course it feels good. He’s got his dick in a hole, he made his partner come, and maybe—son of a bitch, don’t think it now—maybe he’s not bi after all. Because there’s porn, and then there’s reality. Dean’s gotten all fucked up thinking of Jimmy as reality, but he’s not. He’s porn.
Staring down at the curve of Aaron’s spine, the line of his back, the sweat of his nape and the mole on his shoulder blade, staring down at the first fuck Dean could land tonight, he pounds harder. Harder than that. The hand on his ass keeps pulling, so Dean keeps going.

He’s not going to come.

He has to, but he’s not going to.

Desperate, Dean closes his eyes and gives in.

He’s got a dark-haired man under him. A dark-haired, local man who sounds nothing like Jimmy, but Crowley did say Jimmy was doing a voice. Doing a lot of voices.

What if.

It’s impossible, but what if.

Biting his lip hard, Dean comes within a minute, and he is not a good boy.

He pulls out of Aaron and collapses onto the bed next to him, face buried in a pillow. There’s come on his chest. There’s a lube-coated condom on his dick. And still he lies face-down on the bed, a puppet with strings not cut, but instead too tangled to move.

“Oh my god,” Aaron laughs, running a hand down Dean’s back, his fingers slick with the sweat he finds there. “Wow. Looks like I’ll be feeling that tomorrow.”

Dean is an ass. A complete and total ass. An absolute rosebud.

“Sorry,” he mutters into the pillow. His body collapses into lethargy. His mind races ever faster.

Aaron laughs again, low and breathy. “That wasn’t a complaint.” He pushes at Dean’s shoulder.
“C’mon, let’s get you cleaned up. I need the bathroom again, do you want a wash cloth before or after?”

“After,” Dean makes the mistake of saying. It’s only once Aaron has kissed his shoulder and climbed out of bed that Dean realizes he could have escaped while Aaron was in the bathroom. He sits up once Aaron is out of the bedroom and considers it anyway, but even with his flop onto the bed, there’s still too much of another man’s come on his chest for him to cut and run now.

At the very least, he tosses the condom again and locates some tissues to try to mop up what he’s done to the bed. That’s how Aaron finds him, the other man walking stiffly but still smiling. The washcloth in his hand is a light blue made darker with water, and Dean inexplicably thinks of Cas.

Or maybe not so inexplicably. If he’s ever needed some gay advice, he needs it now.

“That for me?” Dean asks, putting on a grin. It’s his flirty one, and despite the mess inside him and on the bed, it clearly still works.

“You can leave that,” Aaron offers, coming up to him. He’s put his boxers back on at some point, and he reaches for Dean’s chest with the washcloth himself.

Dean fits his hand over Aaron’s in the attempt to make the transfer less awkward. “Thanks, man.”

“I mean, if you wanted to be a gentleman and sleep in the wet spot, that would be okay with me too,” Aaron continues, eyes nervous over his smile.

Dean keeps on cleaning himself off.

“Or I could change sheets,” Aaron adds, scratching his shoulder, his arm protectively rising across the curly hairs of his chest.

“Y’know, I appreciate it, but, uh.” Dean keeps his eyes down, inspecting himself as the washcloth rapidly cools. “Not really sure about having my car out on the street overnight.”

“It’s a good neighborhood.”
Dean risks a glance at Aaron’s face. “Yeah, I’m sure it is. I’m just, uh.”

“Protective?” Aaron offers to him.

“I mean, it’s the car my dad died in, so, yeah,” Dean says and immediately regrets it.

Aaron’s eyes go wide. All traces of that polite, half-hopeful smile vanish. “Oh my god, I’m so sorry.”

“No, it’s—I’m oversharing.” There’s no point saying it’s been years, not when that only looks weirder. “I’m, look, I’m not gonna lie, I’m a hot mess right now.” He runs a hand over his face when he should really be holding one over his junk. “I’m an asshole, I should go.”

Aaron holds up both hands. “I’ve had rebound sex before. I know how this goes, and you should sit down for at least ten minutes before driving anywhere.”

It’s on Dean’s lips to refuse, but then Aaron takes the washcloth back and looks up at him with something more akin to friendship than flirtation. Still a bit of both, though.

Dean sits down.

Aaron sits down with him, hisses, and then shifts into more of a reclining position. “You don’t have to spend the night, but can I at least get some afterglow?” He phrases it like a joke, but the hope’s back in his eyes.

Dean shifts with him and winds up, as always, as the big spoon. He tucks his face into the back of Aaron’s neck and breathes in his masculine scent. The tang of sweat. Something either aftershave or body wash. Probably body wash, with the beard and all. Having his limp dick against a boxer-clad ass is kind of weird, but no weirder than having an arm wrapped around a chest devoid of boobs. He absently plays with the chest hair instead, careful enough not to pull, and Aaron relaxes into him.

A jarring period of time later, Dean wakes up into darkness, his arms empty but the sheets warm. Coming back to bed, Aaron shushes him. “Just turned the lights off,” Aaron whispers. He slots
himself back in and Dean holds on.

In the morning, Dean should flee, but he ends up making French toast instead. Aaron putters around him, zap-frying turkey bacon in the microwave and asking Dean what kind of tea he prefers.

“Coffee,” Dean answers, and Aaron makes him English Breakfast instead.

Much like the turkey in the bacon, this is not an adequate substitution.

Kind of a theme this week, really.

They circle their way around small talk. Aaron compliments the cooking. Dean attempts to drink tea. Aaron asks how long Dean’s been going to Paradise, and Dean attempts to avoid mentioning that whole closeted thing.

“Not normally my scene, but a buddy recommended it.”

“Anyone I might know?” Aaron asks.

“Dunno, maybe,” Dean says, and he pulls his phone out. There are texts from Sam, but Dean ignores them. A quick google and he shows Aaron the university profile page of one Professor Castiel J. Novak, picture included.

Aaron’s eyebrows shoot up as he looks. “Vaguely familiar? I’m not sure.”

“Yeah, he’s probably too busy lately,” Dean says, scrolling down to the list of class offerings. “Teaching, grading, answering my dumbass questions.” Which reminds him to check his email once he gets home. Cas probably hasn’t even read his email about the books, much less responded, but a guy can hope. Dean scrolls back up to the picture where Cas’ typically mussed hair and loose tie have both been tamed into the semblance of respectability. It makes Dean grin a little, the idea that this is what people see when they scope Cas out.
“Oh,” Aaron says.

Dean looks up, turning his screen dark with a press of his thumb. “What?”

“That’s the guy you’re getting over, right?” Aaron says, the words angled at Dean like some kind of reminder.

“Uh. No?” Frowning, Dean puts his phone away and prepares to shovel down the remains of his breakfast. “He’s my study buddy. He’s not—that’s a different guy.”

“Okay,” Aaron says, not looking convinced.

The conversation is a lot more stilted after that.

Because Dean is the kind of idiot who could take the gold in the Dumbass Olympics, he offers to do the dishes in the vain hope not to feel like shit. To be a useful disappointment, at least.

Aaron mercifully waves him off but does insist Dean take his phone number. Dean dutifully punches it in despite the unspoken understanding that this is, at best, going to be a booty call number. He texts Aaron a quick this is Dean message that doesn’t include his surname regardless of how Aaron offered his.

After a brief moment of shuffling in front of the door, there’s an awkward hug goodbye. Because Dean hasn’t stopped being an idiot in the past five minutes, he gives in to the impulse to press his lips against Aaron’s bearded cheek, just to feel it one last time before he pulls back, twitches a wave, and hauls ass out of there.

He drives Baby home, inspects her for any damage during her cold night on the street, and falls back into bed, pausing only to strip down and change into fresh boxer briefs.
Everything aside, he’d slept better with company.

Dean wakes up with the knowledge that it is early afternoon, that there are hours to go until he can try calling Jimmy again, and that he has fucked another man in the ass.

He cleans up his apartment. When he runs out of things to clean, he makes up for missing lunch by eating pie. Then he has a pie plate and fork to clean. And then he has nothing.

He finally checks the texts from Sam. It’s nothing major, just the usual confirmation of safety after a death-defying flight through the sky in a tin can.

He checks his email. Nothing back from Cas yet. More bullshit on the group project.

Dean attacks the bullshit.

He goes after everything coming up on the class syllabus, because he might as well get ahead. Absurdly quickly, he tires himself out.

He gets up and showers. He decides to delete Aaron’s number, but halfway through toweling himself off, he realizes Aaron still has his and the advantage of caller ID can’t hurt.

He chokes down a very late lunch of yet more leftover turkey.

He leaves with a minor grocery list and returns with more beer than foodstuffs.

He checks his email again.

There’s a response from Cas.
A long response. Paragraphs. Answers to Dean’s questions. Questions levied in return like a battlefield general transformed into a series of essay prompts. Short agreements and twisting debate for even Dean’s throwaway comments. At the end, there’s an actual smiley face and an offer to let Dean borrow more books relevant to his interests. In the first show of hesitance in the entire email, Cas adds that if Dean is otherwise engaged, he needn’t borrow any.

Dean cracks open a beer and loses a lot of time responding. A whole lot of time, but only one beer.

In a token attempt at dinner, he eats a couple slices of turkey straight from the tupperware, not even heating it up, and then he grabs another beer. He sits in his bedroom and he looks at his charging phone and he can’t for the life of him think of what he wants to say.

Taking a page out of Cas’ book, Dean writes down his arguments.

Every last one of them is stupid, save for one.

*You lied to me* means nothing when the guy’s entire job is creating a fantasy.

*Is that even your real voice* means nothing when the guy is literally doing voice work.

*You said you’d be on* is just needy as hell.

There’s really only one thing that matters.

When it has to be late enough, Dean calls. He asks an unfamiliar operator for Jimmy and gets put through without her questioning whether he’s a stalker or saying he’s been blacklisted. As the phone rings, Dean sits with both hands clasped around his fourth beer of the night, forearms on thighs, the band of the headset digging in through the cushion of his hair. Down to his shoes, up to his additional layers, he’s still fully dressed.

“Hello, Michael,” Jimmy greets in a voice as quiet and rough as it is deep. “I don’t have much of a voice tonight, but I hope you’ll bear with me.”

All sense and sanity immediately flees.
“Are you all right?” Dean asks, clasping a hand wet with condensation around one of the earpieces, pressing it harder, closer.

“I sound worse than I am,” Jimmy assures him, sounding like out-of-breath gravel. Shivers tingle down Dean’s back and up his arms at the low rumble. “I’ve been sick.”

“How are you even working tonight? You’re making me want to tuck you into bed, and not in the sexy way.” It’s only a partial lie.

“Is there a sexy way? I’m not a fan of infantilization.”

“There’s always a sexy way.” Dean just hasn’t thought of it yet. Any other night, he’d come up with it. Pushing better priorities to the forefront, he swallows. “Look, there’s something you should really know. Thursday, I called, and one of your, uh, coworkers got really creepy over your personal info. He-”

Jimmy starts coughing.

Dean shuts up, body straining toward someone who isn’t there.

Finally, Jimmy starts breathing again. There’s the faint sound of swallowing and then the tap of a glass against wood. “Sorry,” Jimmy rasps. “I didn’t mean to laugh. Thank you.”

“Wait, what?” How fucked up is Jimmy’s voice that Dean heard that? “You didn’t mean to what?”

“Laugh,” Jimmy repeats, strained but still clear. “He texted about you.”

“He said he’d called.”

“He’s a very good liar,” Jimmy says with a noticeable lack of moral judgment. “No, he texted after you hung up to let me know the company was probably going to give me a potential stalker alert, but that you didn’t seem overtly dangerous.”
Dean’s still breathing, but the air has stopped working. “What?”

“If you’d taken the deal, he would have fed you falsehoods before blacklisting you.”

“So this guy is…”

“Oh, an unconventional friend, but protective in his own way. So while I appreciate the concern, you are warning me about my own guard dog.”

The air still hasn’t turned back on. Seems like a general oversight of the universe.

“Michael?” Jimmy asks, soft and rough at once, like the caress of a calloused hand.

Dean closes his eyes. “Did he… tell me any true shit?”

“I don’t know what he told you.”

And there it is. The one important argument Dean has. “Are you really quitting next month?”

Jimmy goes quiet. Silent. Dean listens for it, but the guy’s not even drinking his water for an excuse to think. Just silent.

“I’m sorry,” Jimmy says.

Dean presses his lips together hard, his eyes screwed shut.

“I wanted to be the one to tell you, but it never seemed like the right time. Aftercare isn’t the best time for bad news, and beforehand…. That was my mistake. I’m sorry.”
Dean chugs the rest of his beer. There isn’t much.

“Michael, please talk to me,” Jimmy rasps.

“I slept with someone else,” Dean confesses. “I shouldn’t have, and it sucked, and I just, I don’t know. I don’t know, man. Everything’s fucked. My brother’s gone, the job training shit keeps getting shittier, I don’t know what I’m doing. I don’t even know what I am anymore. I fucked that guy, and I didn’t even… It was like I was jerking off on someone. I mean, not, not like a come shot, like he might as well have been a sex doll. I’m a fuck up and an asshole and I-”

“Stop,” Jimmy orders.

Dean stops. His teeth click as his mouth snaps shut.

“Breathe with me.”

Dean breathes with him. After a few slow exhales, he discovers he’s crying. Fucking pathetic. It’s a quiet leak out the eyes, at least, nothing Jimmy should be able to hear.

“Michael, I don’t have enough of a voice to go through all of that tonight. We’re going to discuss it next week.”

Dean wipes at his face as quietly as he can.

“Tell me you understand, Michael.”

“Y-yeah,” Dean says.

“Good boy,” Jimmy says, like it’s the next natural thing to say.

The tears leak out faster. Harder.
“You said your brother is gone,” Jimmy continues, much too careful. “Did something happen?”

“He’s not dead.” Fuck, but now Dean sounds stuffed up and weepy. “He’s fine. He’s great. He went home, that’s all. Across the country.”

“Good. Now, about the, what did you say, the job training. The job you’re training for, tell me why you want it.”

Dean shakes his head to nothing, then has to straighten the headset. He grabs his phone and the empty beer bottle and heads back to the kitchen for a fresh one. “It’s, y’know. The family business.”

“What part of the job are you looking forward to?”

Dean gets all the way to the fridge without thinking of anything. “It’s the family business,” he repeats, opening the door.

“What was that noise?”

“Fridge.”

“Are you drinking?”

“I’m fine.”

“That’s not what I asked.”

Dean pulls out beer number five. “I’m fine.”

“How many have you had?”

“Two,” Dean lies.
“Tell me honestly.”

Dean scoffs. At least, he thinks he scoffs. It’s a word he’s only ever seen written down, not demonstrated, and it might not look the way he imagines. “Yeah, ‘cause we’re so big on honest discussion, you and me. I don’t even know what you actually sound like, ‘Jimbo,’ so maybe you shouldn’t be lecturing.”

“Michael,” Jimmy says quietly, stolidly, “tell me honestly.”

Dean looks for the bottle opener, can’t find it, and sets the edge of the cap against the side of his counter. He pulls the bottle back, and the cap’s already left a small scratch. Dean sighs. “Four.”

“If you drank some water, I would sleep easier tonight.”

Rolling his eyes, Dean sticks the bottle back in the fridge. “I got orange juice.”

“Much better.”

Dean pours a glass of juice like a fucking child and sulks back into his bedroom. He’d slam the door, but Jimmy doesn’t like brats. He sits down on his bed, and Jimmy must hear the creak of the bedframe.

“Can I ask you about the man you slept with?”

“It’s not important. You sound like shit, dude, you should go to bed.”

“When you’re calmer. You said you didn’t know what you are anymore.”

“You said you didn’t have enough voice to get into all of this tonight.”

Jimmy takes in a slow, audible breath. He drinks something, and Dean tries not to shiver at the
sounds of him swallowing.

“Are you being my good boy right now, Michael?” Jimmy asks.

It’s clearly rhetorical.

“Answer me,” Jimmy orders.

“No.”

“I’m going to punish you.” Despite the meaning of the words, there’s no threat in the shape of them. There’s nothing Jimmy can actually do to Dean beyond berate him, and Dean’s already got him beat there. “When we speak again on Thursday, I expect you to report accurately. I forgive lapses better than lying. Do you understand?”

“Yes.”

Jimmy waits.

“Yes, James,” Dean whispers. He wipes at his eyes.

“Until we speak again, you are not to come. Five days without orgasm. Can you handle that?”

As punishments go, that’s nothing compared to the inside of Dean’s head. Besides: “I’m not a teenager.”

“You are either my good boy or you are someone else’s brat. Do. You. Understand.”

Dean ducks his head. “Yes, James.”

“I’m going to tell you the second part, and then I need to stop talking. So don’t argue.” There’s
another pause for Jimmy to drink something. “That is the full extent of the punishment. Five days. No orgasms. And no further punishing yourself for the situation you’re in, because I am doing that for you. Who is in charge of your punishment?”

Dean doesn’t want to say it.

James waits.

“You, James.”

“And if you usurp me, are you being a brat?”

“Yes, James.”

“So whenever you catch yourself adding new punishments, you’re going to stop,” James rasps. “If you want me to be stricter, you will masturbate and stop short. You will finger yourself until you’re leaking as long as you don’t come. If you do come, you’ll tell me and apologize in whatever manner I deem fit. These are the only additional punishments you are allowed. Do you understand?”

For no discernible reason, the air starts working again. There’s oxygen back in Dean’s bloodstream.

“Yes, James,” he says.

James coughs. “Good.”

Just that. Good, and not good boy.

Eyes closed again, Dean tries to breathe as steadily as he can. He’s the one who’s supposed to be mad. He’s the one who’s supposed to be disappointed—but the second he thinks it, he knows it’s all bullshit. Nobody can hire a friend, much less a, a fuckbuddy.

Dean’s already getting so much more than he’s paying for, and even that is more than he deserves.
“Talk to me,” James orders through the ruins of his voice. “I can’t say much more, but I can listen.”

Dean sucks it the fuck up, wiping the tears out of his eyes before they can escape on their own. “How the hell are you even working tonight?”

Jimmy lets out the most ridiculous, gravelly moan Dean has ever heard. Then he does a series of grunts, somewhere between a cartoon character getting the Heimlich and an old couch getting fucked.

A laugh pops out of Dean’s mouth, tiny and unasked for.

“Like that,” Jimmy whispers, sending shivers through the headset. “Now talk to me.”

“Got nothing to talk about.”

Jimmy waits.

Dean can wait too.

Jimmy, apparently, can wait longer. Especially when Dean’s wallet has more say than his stubbornness.

“My brother doesn’t need me anymore,” he says. “My, my uncle still does, but. He doesn’t need me. He could get somebody else to carry the weight. Don’t know why he doesn’t, half the time. Trying to show up my dad’s ghost, I guess.”

Jimmy starts to whisper something, but Dean talks right over him, too chickenshit to hear it. “There isn’t a point to me anymore. My family doesn’t need me, my job doesn’t need me, I’m barely getting through this, this training shit and I fucking hate it. The one fucking thing they’re still counting on me to do, and I’m not gonna make it. I’m trying, man. I am. So hard. I’m doing everything right, and I’m still fucking up. I’m doing all the work, I’m showing up every goddamn day, I’m doing everything and it’s still not good enough.”
“And it’s not like I don’t know why,” Dean continues, one hand cupped around the mic like he can hide his words from the walls, from the world beyond. “I’m not the smart one. There’s no point to me trying. Everyone thinks there is, but I’m just bullshitting my way through it all and they’re gonna find out. Wish I’d never even started this stupid shit, but Sammy gets so proud that I’m ‘improving’ myself and all that crap, and I just can’t let that kid down. It’s not gonna stop me, but I wanted to be better, y’know? It’s not like I want to be the piece of shit moron of the family, but since when does it matter what I want. God, I’m wasting so much money-”

A high-pitched sound pierces through both of Dean’s ears at once.

He swears, rips off the headset, then tentatively puts it back on, one ear at a time. “Dude, did your phone explode?”

“You weren’t listening,” Jimmy whispers, “so I whistled.”

“Yeah, well,” Dean says, and then he closes his stupid fucking mouth. Beer-tinged vomit climbs his throat, and he swallows it back down despite the pain and burn. Why’d he have to go and say all that? Jimmy opens the call with So I hear you’re not a complete and total stalker and Dean has to respond with No, I’m a goddamn fuck-up, haven’t you heard? “Hell of a whistle you got there.”

“Will you do me a favor?”

“Yeah,” Dean says immediately, no thinking required. He knuckles his eyes, wrist hitting the headset mic.

“Spend time with someone this week,” Jimmy tells him in that tremor-inducing murmur. “You don’t have to talk to them about what you’ve told me, but I want you to socialize with someone at least once each day.”

That’s… really out of left field. “Uh. Why?”

“Because otherwise I’ll worry about you being alone,” Jimmy whispers.

Dean snorts. “Uh-huh.”
“Are you calling me a liar?”

“I dunno, you still saying Mandy was real?” Dean counters. “Or that you’re bi, or named Jimmy or James or, what, Emmanuel or Lucien? Or Steve?”

Jimmy goes quiet so long, it’s possible he’s lost the rest of his voice.

“People call for fantasies,” Jimmy says at last. “I assumed you were the same. But if you don’t trust me enough to believe me outside of a scene, we should stop playing that way.”

“No, no, I—it’s stupid, I’m, look. I know that’s your job. I get it, I know that. Makes no sense to get butthurt over it. Stupid. But, uh. I mean. If you’re quitting in a month, I might as well ride it out to the end.”

“Who are you going-” A cough, a bad one. “Who are you going to socialize with?”

Dean sighs, but he already knows he’s going to do it. Maybe he’ll wuss out tomorrow. Spend Sunday alone, masturbating and breaking every rule. His pride wants to. “I guess I can bother my uncle. Maybe hang around the guys at the, at work.”

“What about the friend you came out to?” Jimmy asks in a hoarse whisper. Dude should have been off the phone five minutes ago, and it’s only now Dean remembers that Jimmy can’t hang up on him. “Or was that the person you slept with?”

Dean’s concern takes a temporary backseat to the sudden image of Cas bent over in front of him instead of Aaron, his hair wild, his dress shirt rucked up high along the rolling slopes of his back. It’s Dean’s turn to cough. “Uh, no. Nope. Not, nope.”

“No?” Jimmy asks in a low, amused rumble, and Dean’s dick immediately abandons Cas.

“Out of my league,” Dean explains as simply as he can. “Anyway, we hang out Fridays, so. Can’t exactly hang out with him before our call.”

Jimmy makes a soft, approving hum. Like the pathetic soul he is, Dean bask in the sound like a cat
in a sunbeam, like a dog with its head in its master’s lap.

“I guess I could call my brother,” Dean adds, just to get Jimmy to do it again. “Maybe grab a couple beers with the guys after work.” He draws the line at socializing with his classmates, though.

“That’s very good.”

Dean rolls his eyes at himself, at the physical sensation uncurling inside his chest. “Any other assignments, professor?”

Jimmy starts coughing again. It goes on for far too long and ends with wet, swallowing noises that not even Dean’s dick is awful enough to perv over.

“You okay there, Jimmy?”

Jimmy makes a sound that could mean anything but is probably a bad sign.

“Okay,” Dean decides. “I’ll do my shit if you’ll go to bed, all right? You gotta rest your moneymaker.”

“I will,” Jimmy promises in a rasp.

When Dean checks the call time, he’s ten seconds into a new minute, but that’s not important tonight. “‘Night, man.”

Jimmy hums agreement, and Dean hangs up.

He takes off the headset and, fully clothed, flops backwards on his bed to wonder what the ever-loving fuck just happened.

Chapter End Notes
Updates every Monday, time of day may vary.

To see what else I'm working on, you can follow me on tumblr here.
Ten True Things

Chapter Summary

Dean takes his punishment, and he takes it very well.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

On Sunday, Dean spends the entire day alone, only to wuss out in the final hour. It’s too late to call anyone, but he manages anyway.

“Evening, Sammy,” Dean greets with false cheer as Sam picks up with an alarmed “Dean?”

“Dean, isn’t it after eleven there?”

“Yeah, and?” Dean asks right back. “My Monday morning class isn’t that early.”

“Why are you calling at eleven twenty-three at night?”

“Cause I’m bored and you’re in a different timezone?”

Sam somehow conveys a bitchface so well over the phone, he might as well have texted a picture. “Seriously, what’s going on?”

Fuck Jimmy, this was a bad idea. “What, a guy can’t call his up-and-coming lawyer of a little brother? You never said how the whole case emergency worked out.”

“What?”

This far in, the only thing left is to double down. “The thing you got called back early for, dumbass.”
“It, yeah, it’s pretty intense,” Sam says, verbally tiptoeing out on the ice to join him. “Long story short and keeping things confidential, let’s just say we have literally decades of microfilm to look through and I have somehow become the office research guru.”

Dean snorts. “Yeah, ‘somehow.’ Wonder how that happened.”

“Shut up.”

“C’mon, you had Google-fu before Google did. So they don’t want you in court or anything, just in the stacks?”

“Yeah… It’s not where I want to be, but the job security isn’t bad.”

They end up talking until it’s after midnight, Dean’s time, and Sam reminds him about that stupid class tomorrow morning.

Dean goes to bed without masturbating. It would just be weird, this soon after talking to Sam. It doesn’t have to mean anything.

On Monday, classes suck and then Dean’s stuck meeting with his collaborators for his group presentation on Wednesday. He’s ready to count that as being social until he gets back to the garage and is promptly ambushed by both Benny and Garth. There’s an irate customer that not even Garth can soothe or Benny intimidate, but Dean lays on the charm nice and thick in exactly the way Bobby doesn’t.

It’s a fine balance, buttering someone up without coming off as a slimeball, but that’s what the years of practice are for. It’s flagrantly easy to tell that what their customer is after, is a simple but thorough explanation of what needs to be done, what can wait and roughly how long, and a basic education in state safety requirements. Without being condescended to—meaning Garth’s child-appropriate levels of enthusiasm—or brushed off—meaning Benny’s brusqueness.

It takes the better part of half an hour, and it is unquestionably the best part of Dean’s day so far. He walks her through the areas of leakage. He takes the photos Garth took of various areas of damage and shows her exactly where they came from on her car. He rolls up his sleeves and gets his hands
dirty while getting a feel for how car-literate she is. He physically points to the bits that aren’t going
to fuck her over immediately but will definitely cost more even if she only waits a couple months.

After, he wipes his hands off and they head into the office where Dean draws up an estimate for the
legally necessary repairs. When she brings up the other two repairs she wants him to estimate the
costs for, they’re even the two most time-sensitive ones, the kind of shit that can turn a fuck into a
clusterfuck.

He keeps his language cleaner than that as they sort out a plan, but she doesn’t. They circle around
the idea of car repair versus replacement, and when she asks his opinion on that, he tells her just how
much he’s biased toward repair.

It’s not a story he’s told lately. Parts of it are on the garage’s website, the before and after pictures of
the repairs from Baby’s accident. T-boned by a sixteen-wheeler, right in the driver’s side, the Impala
isn’t a pretty picture in the first photo.

In the bottom picture on the page, she shines, whole and intact, but Dean still doesn’t like to look at
the picture.

The website doesn’t say this is how John Winchester died, only how Dean restored his father’s car.
People still try to fill in the blanks, though, but they never guess all of them. Not the surprise they all
felt that the accident hadn’t been John’s fault, but that of a long-distance trucker nodding off at the
wheel.

John Winchester was alert and sober when he was hit. Four hours later, he died full of anesthesia, not
alcohol.

And over a decade later, their car is still a beauty.

It’s not a story Dean ever wants to share, but it’s one hell of a closer. They shake on a four thousand
dollar repair, with more to come. He walks her out to admire Baby, and she even pretends to listen
politely when he points to where he installed the seat belts.

After he waves her off with her Uber, he heads back inside only to walk into an abrupt silence as
Garth turns the radio off. Garth is impressed. Benny is biting down frustration with sharp teeth
smoothed into a smile. Both of them are amazed.
Dean shrugs and brushes it off. When the customer is upset, take their side as convincingly as possible and then reassure the crap out of them. Everybody knows that. Garth just went overboard until it sounded fake, and then Benny made it worse, that’s all.

The three of them shoot the shit for a while after that. Dean even makes himself suggest heading out to grab a beer but gets shot down from both sides. Garth suggests Friday, though, and Benny agrees to check with Andrea. Garth immediately whips out his phone to text his own wife, and just like that, Dean is somehow stuck as the fifth wheel on a double date, as is his eternal fate as the one unmarried guy. Bess and Andrea tend to pair off, so it might not completely suck, even if Garth and Benny tend to need a buffer between them to actually socialize outside of work.

Dean splits off to take care of more of the crap in the office, invoices and bills and filing and queries and reports and bullshit, all of it drowned out by his music. Garth knocks hard on the door to say goodbye. Behind Garth, Benny nods.

That has to count as Dean’s socialization for the night.

Later, after a dinner his stomach’s been rumbling for and finishing off the last of the Thanksgiving pie, he dithers around on his laptop. He texts Sam back. He pulls up his personal email and responds to Cas’ latest reply. That probably counts as socialization too.

When it comes time to bed down for the night, his laptop is still open. The year is marching steadily toward December and the depths of flu season, so Dean has a fresh box of tissues on his nightstand. He strips down, pulls up a fresh tab, and does what comes naturally, clicking around for a while on one of his favorite sites.

He finds a few promising leads before biting his lip and giving in. He searches for good boy and sorts by relevance. Then he searches for good boy gay.

It nags at him the entire time. The fact that he didn’t jerk off last night. That he stopped in the shower this morning, even if he was running late. He likes a regular orgasm, so sue him. He’s calling Jimmy to get more orgasms, not fewer.

With this looping in his head, he plays the video. A big burly guy nails a twink without ever calling him a good boy, regardless of the video’s title. Next video has a shitty rating, so Dean skips it. Scanning ratings and thumbnails, he gets caught on CMNM priasing our good slutboy.
Four men in suits surround a buff naked guy. They touch him. They praise him. They grip him by the hair to twist his head into place for kisses. They tweak his nipples and whistle low over his hard, bobbing cock. They make him do push-ups for some reason, a reason which becomes clear as the camera angle changes. The guy’s dick keeps brushing against the floor, up and down, and each time it does, the guy’s face crumples just a little more. The men start placing bets on how long the guy can last. Winner fucks him in the ass.

By the time the men get the guy back up and feed him their dicks through their unzipped suit pants, the guy’s arms are shaking. He’s coated with sweat or oil, but he’s sure as hell gleaming. Dean works himself faster, harder, and then one of the suited men says, “Such a good boy for us, aren’t you?”

Dean’s hand stops.

On its own.

It stops.

Dean closes his eyes and tells himself it’s okay. Then he pauses the video to keep from missing any.

In the time it takes to rally, the rest of the video buffers. He hits play again and starts working himself back up to speed.

The men open up their naked guy like a porn parody of a cooking show: how convenient, a pre-prepared ass we worked on before filming. In they go, taking him in turns and in different positions, twisting him over and over again. The guy keeps pressing back into it, keeps grabbing lapels and ties and belts.

Naked guy never speaks, but he sure as hell moans and keeps reaching for everyone he can get his hands on once given permission. The suited men shower him with yet more praise, and never before has Dean heard slut be used so clearly as a term of endearment. Naked guy is giving himself over to them so happily, so completely. He looks blissed out. Euphoric beyond measure.

He’s being a good boy.

Dean slows his hand. He doesn’t stop, not entirely. But he definitely pulls back.
Hard and aching, he pauses the video again. Frozen, the naked guy arches his back as the man in the checkered tie pushes into his hole. On both their faces: rapture.

Dean memorizes the name of the video, typo-included, and closes the tab before he can change his mind.

Tuesday drags, but texting Sam is technically socialization, not procrastination over the presentation tomorrow. And all the other shit he’s got assigned with December around the corner. He gets through the rest of his classes, plows through office work when he gets home, and keeps getting distracted.

Not much time left with Jimmy. Not much left at all. Dean could ostensibly call Jimmy three nights a week, no matter how much that reeks of desperation. It would be a huge blow to the wallet, but only until the end of the year. Then it would average back out and Dean would just… have to figure out something else.

That’s probably why Jimmy told him to be social. The guy’s pretty smart.

When Dean wraps up work without talking to Benny or Garth any more than necessary, he gives in and admits that probably doesn’t count as socializing for the day, even having texted Sam. He calls Bobby instead this time, calls it practice for his presentation, and then ends up talking shop while baking himself a reward for tomorrow. That’s his excuse for the pumpkin pie, anyway. A completely normal pumpkin pie that he just wants and is totally going to stick in his face.

That night, he watches the video again. He leaves his boxers on, the better to keep from touching himself, and he really should have called Jimmy last night. It’s the wrong night to call now, so Dean will simply have to suffer through.

He watches until he has to touch himself, and then he touches himself until he has to come or stop.

He stops.

A cold rush goes through his head, a crisp gasp of feeling, the sensation of a wet facecloth against
sweaty skin on a sweltering day.

He stays stopped, and the rush remains.

“I’m a good boy,” he whispers, just to himself. It makes his dick beg for his hand, beg for Jimmy’s mouth, or even Aaron’s, but Dean closes his eyes and waits it out.

A couple times throughout the night, he wakes up hard, but he goes back to sleep each time.

Wednesday sees him jittery from too much coffee, a bad but weirdly refreshing night of sleep, and the goddamn presentation he has to do with a team of teenage idiots. To be fair, one isn’t an idiot, but the other two are.

When it’s time to finally take the bullet, Dean is last in line before the firing squad. The eyes of his classmates glaze over before Idiot #1 is finished with his part. They light up very slightly when the non-idiot does her bit, but it’s right back down again come Idiot #2.

Then it’s down to Dean.

He starts talking, and then he keeps talking. He talks to people, rather than over their heads. He throws in a joke or two, and when he forgets what he’d planned to say next, he falls back on years of anecdotes from work. That gets a bit more attention, even a couple laughs. He wraps it up with the final ass-grab he’s always pulling when finishing a job Bobby started: “As my partner before me said…” And he drags it all back in to make it look coherent.

When he sits back down, he’s still vibrating inside, still missing the days when school was something he didn’t try at, and therefore couldn’t fail at. He immediately remembers four more things he’d meant to say.

But he’s finished the presentation and he finishes the class. And he gets home. And he pushes back the urge to duck out of work early until everyone else leaves.

As he’s locking up, his phone rings. Checking the screen, Dean has the sense to groan before
answering. “Hey, Bobby. What needs doing now?”

“You tell me,” Bobby says. While Dean’s mind races to figure out what the hell he fucked up this time, Bobby adds, “You said that presentation thing of yours was today, didn’t ya?”

“Yeah?”

“And?” Bobby prompts, probably with an exasperated roll of the eyes.

Dean tells him about it in as few words as possible before remembering that this could count as socializing. Then, subject exhausted, he does something he can’t remember doing in years. Or ever, maybe.

He asks Bobby about his day.

After a confused second, Bobby even tells him. When that well runs dry, Dean hauls out the stuff Sam’s told him over the past couple days, and that lasts a lot longer, enough for Dean to head upstairs to his place and treat himself to some pre-dinner pie. Bobby asks what in the world’s so important Dean has to eat it while on the phone, and then Dean finds himself in the surreal situation of trying to convince Bobby that the last pumpkin pie he made was crap.

“I don’t care if you think it was crap, boy,” Bobby tells him. “You’re making that again next year.”

Dean rolls his eyes but agrees. They hang up soon after, and Dean eats his dinner in reverse while reading.

He focuses on his school shit for as long as he can, but as the hour grows late, nonsensical anticipation curls tighter in his gut. The flush of arousal prickles across his skin. When he turns the page, he has no idea how the sentence began on the page before, but when he flips back, all he recognizes are the charts.

Yeah, time to stop.

Tonight, he sets up his laptop, pulls out the towel, and makes himself comfortable. Jimmy said he
could do this. Jimmy said this would be the most difficult way Dean could do it, so that’s the way Dean wants to do it. The way Dean has to do it before he speaks with Jimmy again.

He pulls up his new favorite video and doesn’t skip ahead to the good parts. Instead, lying on his back, then his side, then kneeling, he figures out how best to finger himself. Ultimately, he settles on his side, reaching from around the back. It turns his view of the video sideways, but he’s fine as long as he can hear it. There’s something so unnervingly indulgent about watching porn without headphones.

Fingering himself isn’t as good without Jimmy telling him what to do. He relaxes into it all the same. He goes slow. He explores. The point isn’t coming. Coming is the opposite of the point. He plays with his rim. He plays inside. Sometimes he warms the lube, and sometimes he doesn’t. He thrusts and twists and pulls, and he tears his eyes away from the video to watch his own cock dribble onto the towel. It feels like he’s pushing it out from the inside. Maybe he is. Maybe he should check a textbook or something.

Or, hell, he could always just ask Cas. Dean snorts to himself, eyes hazy and back on the screen as he imagines that conversation. Hey, man, I know you’re more social theory than biology department, but what’s with the prostate? God, he can picture the dirty look Cas would shoot him, and not the flirty kind of dirty.

Dean smirks until the video pulls him back under, until the men in their suits start fingerfucking the guy in all his naked vulnerability. He’s never been much for rewatching online videos before, maybe a couple here and there, but damn.

He adds more lube and makes a fleeting mental note to thank Jimmy for telling him to keep one hand for lube. How does a guy even clean lube off his keyboard? But then the naked guy is begging and the hottest suited brunet is pushing the guy’s hair back from his forehead, the better to look into his eyes as he feeds the guy his cock. That’s worth watching. It’s worth watching to the point Dean has to pull his fingers out and clench both fists.

He keeps watching the video as long as he can stand. Finally, he has to turn it off or break.

When he flops onto his back, his hands hold tight to the towel beneath him. His body trembles under his skin and he bites his lip hard, eyes screwed shut. He tries to breathe calmly, the way Jimmy keeps showing him, but just the thought of Jimmy winds Dean back up again.

Shifting, Dean grabs his own hands behind his back, pinning them down with his own body weight. He waits it out. His jerking cock and twitching hole. The flush sweeping up and down his body. He
wants. He resists.

He rides it out, gritting his teeth into a proud grin.

He is such a good boy.

Cooling off and calming down takes a long time. Too long. Even after he’s washed his hands, dumped the towel, and closed his laptop, his body keeps telling him it’s primed and ready to go. It’s as good as it is distracting, full of as many pleasant shivers as his subsequent cold shower is full of unpleasant ones.

One more day. He gets through tonight, he gets through tomorrow, and then he tells Jimmy that he was good, that he took his punishment. He’s sorry for acting like a stalker. He’s sorry for listening to Crowley for as long as he did, but the temptation is still there, so maybe Dean hasn’t learned his lesson yet. Maybe they’ll have to do this for another week. A full seven days, not just five.

Jimmy will see through that. No doubt about it. But Jimmy said all Dean needed to do was ask for it, so…

With that long, trailing thought, Dean finishes getting ready for bed. He lies down under the sheets in just his boxer briefs, and even the slightest friction of movement is enough to get him chubbing up again. Idly, he thumbs at one of his nipples, still thinking.

Maybe Jimmy will punish him some other way. Some kinky, sexy way. Maybe Dean will have to kneel like that guy in the video. Maybe Jimmy will teach him how to suck dick and Dean will have to choke on a cucumber or something. While kneeling on the floor. Pulling his own hair. Chanting “Yes, James” over and over inside his own head and then aloud when Jimmy tells him he can stop sucking.

Could it really feel good, having another guy’s dick in his mouth? Then again, it’s basically just a bigger French kiss, isn’t it? A dick instead of a tongue, that’s the main difference. Or like sucking the world’s biggest clit.

He sucks on his fingers, thinking. Covering his teeth with his lips. Breathing through his nose. Not that difficult. Not that exciting, but the feel of a bedspread’s weight atop his boxer briefs shouldn’t be exciting either.
With great difficulty, he stops touching himself again. He wipes his hand on his bedspread and rolls onto his side. Breathing steadily. Relaxing incrementally. Still thinking about tomorrow.

Thinking about Jimmy.

Thinking about Jimmy telling him to do stuff.

Thinking about Jimmy doing it himself. About Jimmy rolling Dean over onto his stomach and spreading his legs.

Not fast, no. His hands stroking up the backs of Dean’s calves before reaching his thighs, before dipping down in between to urge them apart. Warm paths, too steady to tickle. Jimmy’s chuckle, low and dark and pleased when Dean readily complies.

Not a mocking laugh. Not from Jimmy. Not judging by the firm kisses pressed against Dean’s spine.

A pleased laugh. A pleased man. A pleased man murmuring approval as Dean grinds down against his bed. A playful swat to the back of his thigh when Dean starts humping his mattress in earnest. Strong, warm hands pulling him back.

Dean’s arms on the bed, feet on the floor, ass bare to the world.

Jimmy works him open. Slow and eternal, with Dean’s dick begging for more pressure, for more anything. That thick, full feeling inside.


Holding tight.

Rocking together.
“You’re my good boy,” Jimmy repeats over and over into Dean’s ear. Uses every emphasis. “My good boy. My good boy. You’re my good boy.” Again and again, until it even sounds true, until Dean’s coming.

Coming even though Jimmy isn’t moving, isn’t fucking him, isn’t jerking him, isn’t…

Wait.

With a groan, Dean drags himself the rest of the way awake.

He unwraps the tangled sheets enough to check and groans for another reason.

_Fuck._

Through the rest of the night, through the morning and class and work and dinner and the final straining stretch of evening, there is one thought pounding inside Dean’s skull:

Jimmy promised to forgive him.

Then again, Jimmy has no way of knowing.

Torn by indecision, Dean wastes the evening he spent all day waiting for. He does stop after two beers because Jimmy called him on it last week. He’s not buzzed, he’s not loose, but the idea of wussing out and not calling tonight is even worse.

He gets the towel, just in case. He unplugs his phone from its charger and attaches the headset. He sits and reminds himself to breathe and makes himself call. The number’s saved in there under Jimmy, has been for a while. Though the receptionist of an operator picks up first, as always, it’s still a comfort to see the name on the screen.
Dean waits two minutes and thirty-nine seconds for Jimmy to have a bathroom break or whatever else before the call is transferred and the payment period begins. That’s when his minute starts, that’s the number to watch out for.

Then Jimmy picks up, and all of Dean’s thoughts take an abrupt detour.

“Hello, Michael,” Jimmy greets, his voice rough for all its warmth. The low timbre signals arousal as deep as the pitch, and yet that degree of heat is lacking.

It takes Dean a stunned second, but he figures it out.

“Sure you’re good to talk?” Dean checks. “Still sounding rough there, buddy.”

“I’m fine,” Jimmy promises without a hint of coughing. “This is… You were right. When you said you didn’t know what my normal speaking voice was.”

Dean frowns down at the towel. “And this is it?”

“I can switch back. It’s not a strain.”

“You… do the higher voice so people can’t recognize you.”

“That’s one reason,” Jimmy says, rumbling down the line and all the way through Dean’s nervous system. Jesus, through the headset, right up against both ears, it’s the kind of voice that could make the phone book dirty. Why not use that voice the entire time?

“And the other reason is...” Dean snaps his fingers, because that hurts less than smacking himself. “It makes your normal voice sound like you’re turned on.”

“I hurt my throat the first few weeks, trying to fake it. This seemed easier.”
Easy or not, it’s definitely getting Dean hard. It’s a fucking Pavlovian response: Jimmy down in that pitch means Dean pitching a tent in his boxers. Even if he is entirely alone there. Even if he has been the whole time.

“To answer your original question, yes, I’m feeling better,” Jimmy continues. “Are you?”

“Yeah, I’m good.”

“Have you been?” Jimmy asks, curious rather than commanding.

“I, uh.” Dean closes his eyes, a completely useless shield against a man who isn’t there. “Okay, so, technically, I didn’t mess up.”

Jimmy goes still. The lack of shifting is strangely audible, like a house with the power cut. “Am I correctly assuming you mean your orgasm denial?”

“You said no coming from jerking off and no having sex. Technically-”

“Oral counts,” Jimmy interrupts, as flat and deep as an ocean plateau.

Dean’s stomach drops even deeper. He clears his throat. “I’m not that flexible, man.”

“I’m not sure what you’re trying to say. Did you sleep with someone else?”

Dean’s heart drops down to trampoline off his stomach and lodge up in his throat. Someone else. Was that a slip? Is that how Jimmy thinks of it? Of them?

Are they sleeping together?

“Nobody else,” Dean promises.
“Then you slept with the man from last week again?”


“Whatever you’re trying to tell me, I need you to tell me in actual words,” Jimmy says, blunter in this tone.

“I didn’t sleep with anyone and I didn’t come from jerking off.”

“Are you saying you came from fingering yourself?”

“Um.” His face is burning, but if he can’t get through this, he doesn’t deserve the rest of it. The fact that Jimmy’s attention, whatever the cause, makes Dean’s dick stand at attention, that doesn’t hurt either.

“Is that what happened?”

“I kind of… came in my sleep. A little.”

A lot.

“You had a nocturnal emission?”

Somehow, Dean neither dies of embarrassment nor loses his semi. “I mean, if you’re gonna get all technical about it…”

“I am,” Jimmy confirms, his tone as clinical as the term. Like he’s doing an amazing job of not laughing at Dean. “Five days of abstaining typically isn’t enough to bring on nocturnal emissions. You were pushing yourself. How?”

“You, uh. You said I could touch myself as long as I didn’t come.”
“I did.” The warmth spreads back through Jimmy’s voice. “I also said you could finger yourself. Did you?”

“...yeah,” Dean admits quietly.

Jimmy lowers his voice, sounding like a secret. “Did you like it? On your own?”

Even quieter: “Yeah.”

“That’s very good, Michael.”

Dean’s face gets as hot as his dick gets hard. “Yeah?”

“Yes,” Jimmy tells him with absolute certainty. “I gave you three rules. No sex, no orgasms, and one more. Do you remember the third one?”

Dean completely blanks.

Taking mercy on him, forever taking mercy, Jimmy says, “This was to be the full extent of your punishment. Did you punish yourself in any other way?”

“No,” Dean promises.

“Good,” Jimmy says, but not good boy. “And what was I punishing you for?”

This one, Dean knows. “Listening to Crowley about your personal info. I shouldn’t have done that.”

Jimmy sighs. “This is why I asked. Give me a second. I want to phrase this correctly.”

In the abrupt silence, Dean’s erection quietly pardons itself and attempts to slip away without anyone noticing.
“All right,” Jimmy says, sighing again. “Would you intentionally break something of mine?”

“No,” Dean says, voice tight in his throat. He leans forward, hunching with elbows on knees, legs drawn up to sit cross-legged.

“Do you still want to be my good boy?”

This time, Dean can only let out a tiny hum of confirmation.

“While you are my good boy, you are mine, do you understand?”

Dean nods. Swallows. Forces himself to answer, “Yes.”

“Then you agree that you won’t try to break yourself.”

“I wasn’t. Look, I was… I was bummed out and maybe a little tipsy. I’m not, I don’t know, cutting myself or some shit.”

“I’m glad. If it’s all right to ask, are you talking to anyone else?”

Dean frowns, looking down to his phone as if there will be clues in its screen. “Yeah, no, I’m not trying that again. Crowley was a douche.”

“I’m trying to put this tactfully, but I’m not expressing myself well. Are you seeing anyone?”

“Dude, I’m not a cheater,” Dean says, right before he realizes how that sounds. Hurriedly, he adds, “If I was with somebody, I wouldn’t have boned that guy last week.”

“That’s not what I meant either,” Jimmy’s quick to say.
Dean lets out a small groan. “Okay, I’m getting the idea that tactful isn’t exactly your thing.”

“It isn’t,” Jimmy agrees.

“Just say it,” Dean tells him.

“I think,” Jimmy begins, still taking his time, “that I know a few things that would be beneficial for you to also know. The problem is, I’m not qualified to teach you. And I learned them from a therapist.”

“You think I need my head shrunk.”

It comes out flat, like the rest of Dean. Completely flat, entirely crushed.

“I think you need help handling your present situation,” Jimmy says, cautious and precise like Dean’s about to go off on him.

“I’m not some crazy freak,” Dean snaps. “I-”

“I am,” Jimmy interrupts.

Dean laughs. “Yeah. Right. You got a job full of perverts and psychos threatening to stab your ass, you got a reason to need therapy. No wonder you’re leaving.”

Jimmy sighs at him. This exasperated huff of air like Dean’s failed him, and that shouldn’t hurt even half as hard as it does. “You’re in a transition period for both your job and your sexuality. You’re under the strain of being closeted and you’re doubting yourself. I don’t know what’s going on with your brother, but that can’t be helping.”

“I don’t need the summary, Jimbo.”

“Because it’s overwhelming.”
“Because my memory isn’t that crap,” Dean shoots back.

Jimmy’s silent for a long moment before he sighs again and says, “I told you I’m not good at being tactful. I’ll drop it. Forgive me?”

Dean rubs a hand over his face and then has to fix the mic. “I know I’m fucked up,” Dean says, more furtive than he’s been over even the sex. “I know it, you definitely know it, pretty sure your pal Crowley picked up on that too. But I’m not *that* fucked up.”

“You don’t need a broken leg or cancer to go to the doctor.”

“Yeah, and I don’t need to lie down on a couch and complain about my childhood either.”

“I agree, that doesn’t seem relevant at the moment.”

“Jimmy-”

“You’re not allowed to worry about me if I’m not allowed to worry about you,” Jimmy commands. “You called me twice last week. I can ask after you for five minutes.”

“You don’t have to. Seriously. We can skip that part.”

After the smallest moment of hesitation, Jimmy asks, “What if I need that part?”

“What?”

“What if I need to hear that you’re taking care of yourself?”

“…” In a moment of uncomprehending confusion, Dean actually thinks of hanging up. He doesn’t. He doesn’t even move to try it, but it’s the only response he has.
Jimmy waits for a reply, but for once, not even the burning in Dean’s wallet is going to pry words out through his lips. He doesn’t have any there.

“Michael,” Jimmy says at last, “do you think I’m a decent man? At least reasonably moral.”

“You’re a good guy,” Dean says, as certain of that as he is confused where this is going.

“Is a ‘good guy’ compassionate? Does he care about the suffering of others?”

The outline of a verbal trap comes into focus, but Dean agrees anyway. “Yeah.”

“Then, regardless of whether you believe you deserve it, can you accept that I care about your suffering?”

Having walked into that trap, Dean proceeds to kick it open with one very simple fact. “Look, man, I’m not ‘suffering’ or some crap. I’m just this guy fucking up all this bullshit. I’m not, I don’t know, I’m not homeless or getting beat up or some shit. I’m just a fuck-up, all right? Maybe you think I got something fixable going on, but me being me, that’s not something anybody can fix.”

“You don’t think that sounds like suffering?”

“I think this isn’t what I call you for.”

A long second passes.

“You’re right,” Jimmy says, sounding rebuked. “I have a tendency to think I know what’s right and try to take over. The god complex isn’t the main reason I go to therapy, but it is a factor.”

Sitting there, listening, his mind full but soundless, Dean frowns down at his clenched hands.

Slowly, he opens up his fists.
“This is what I do for a good time,” Dean makes himself say. “I need this to be good, okay? I goof off once a week, and this is it.”

“I see. Thank you for telling me. I apologize for crossing that line.”

Dean rolls his eyes. “Dude, you don’t have to be that formal.”

“Maybe formal is just how I am,” Jimmy counters. Despite the lowered pitch, Dean recognizes the teasing tone instantly. It’s faint and dry, like books hidden away in boxes, but definitely there.

“Uh-huh, yeah. Bet you’re in a three piece suit right now.”

“I’m afraid I’m down to slacks and shirtsleeves. I’ve even loosened the tie.”

“What, no vest? The vest is the sexiest part. After rolled up sleeves. Shows off those forearms.”

Dean may have watched that porn video a couple too many times, but damn. Since when is there good costuming on the dudes in porn?

“I could put the vest back on.”

“Mmhm, sure.”

“You should know, it would be the first time someone’s asked me to wear more, not less.”

Despite himself, Dean cracks a grin. A flush starts creeping back under his skin, too, his body reminding him just how much he needs this. The orgasm. Not Jimmy, just the coming part. “C’mon, suits are hot. Tight vest, get a tie that makes your eyes pop, bam. Instant hot.”

“I’ll keep that in mind,” Jimmy says, and he must be smiling too. “I had something else in mind for tonight besides fashion, but I’m not sure it’s something you’d want to do after all.”
Even if Jimmy just has some dry list of fantasies that he’s brainstormed with Crowley or someone else like him, the mention that Jimmy’s really planned something in advance has Dean sitting up straighter even as he’s leaning back against his headboard. “Like what?”

“First, could I ask what you’ve done before in terms of BDSM?”

“I, um.” Dean clears his throat. “I told you about the, uh. The girl. When we were nineteen?”

“With the panties,” Jimmy confirms, somehow sounding like he relishes the thought.

“So just that,” Dean says in a rush. “But I’ve been reading up on stuff. Researching.”

“I know you have,” Jimmy tells him approvingly, and, god, but Dean’s dick loves him. That voice.

Dean licks his lips. “What, what did you have in mind? For tonight.”

“I thought we’d play a game. If you found it easy, you could come very soon. If I’ve set the difficulty correctly, it could take much longer.”

“What’s the game?”

“It doesn’t have a name, just rules. The first rule is, you have to stay hard throughout. If you start to flag, you tell me, and we’ll pause until you’re ready to keep playing. I’d help, of course.”

“Of course,” Dean repeats, currently needing no help whatsoever. “What’s rule two?”

“Rule two is no arguing. I have pen and paper here, and I will be keeping track of how many times you talk back.”

Dean swallows. “You gonna punish me if I do?”
“Yes,” Jimmy says without hesitation.

Heat flares up beneath his chest and cheeks even as it pools ever hotter in his groin. “You gonna ban me from orgasms for a whole week this time?”

“That wasn’t the punishment I had in mind.”

“No?”

“No. Either you’ll spank yourself twice for every transgression, or you can switch to a mystery option.”

“You want me to spank myself?”

“Spank,” Jimmy repeats. “Audibly, without cheating. But that’s only if you talk back.”

“...You want to spank me.” The idea sits there like a sandwich too big for Dean to bite into. It might even taste good, but if Dean’s going to find out, he’ll need a bigger mouth first.

“I want you to spank yourself, or choose the mystery punishment. Provided you talk back. You might not.”

Dean licks his lips, nodding. Okay, yeah. It’s a non-issue. “So I gotta stay hard and not talk back. While doing what?” Push-ups, like that guy in the video? Doing lots of different little tasks while Jimmy sasses him? Already, Dean’s underwear is back to being too tight as well as a bit damp.

“I’m going to tell you ten things, and you are going to repeat them back without questioning or arguing.”

“It’s not tongue-twisters, is it? Because that’s not gonna happen. I’m not talking back, I’m just saying that won’t happen.”

“It’s not tongue-twisters,” Jimmy promises. “It’s ten facts about myself, all of them entirely true.”
Dean’s heart attempts to escape via his breastbone. It tries to smash open cartilage and pry apart ribs.

“Uh,” he says, very articulately. His mouth dries while his dick leaks.

“If I tell you I like a movie or TV show that you hate, you aren’t allowed to argue. You can only repeat back what I said to confirm that you heard. Do you understand?”

Breaths shallow, air thin and dick thick, Dean nods into emptiness. His mouth is open, his eyes closed. “Yes, James.”

“Two spanks each time you argue, or the option to take an alternative punishment of my choosing. Any necessary punishment will be administered after the challenge but before you’re allowed to come. Do you understand?”

“Yes, James.”

“When you’re ready to begin, tell me you want to start.”

Managing a few more deep breaths, Dean doesn’t steady out in the slightest. “How do you want me?”

“That’s a good point. Thank you, Michael. How are you positioned right now?”

In the futile attempt to hide flushed skin Jimmy can’t even see, Dean ducks his head. “Sitting on my bed, up against the headboard. I’m—I wasn’t sure what you’d want to do, so I’m on a towel.”

“Are you still wearing your underwear?”

Though the question was definitely interested, Jimmy’s response is slightly less so. “You can take
them off if you want to.”

Right, Jimmy likes the bulge. Boxers are too loose. “I could switch to boxer briefs,” Dean offers.

“While I appreciate the offer, maybe we could try something else.”

“I, uh.” Dean coughs. “I don’t got any panties, man.”

“That isn’t what I meant.”

“Oh.” The flood of embarrassment departing feels bizarrely like disappointment.

“If you’re willing to try it, I’d like you to put a pillow on the floor and kneel on it naked.”

Dean’s getting up and grabbing a pillow before he even thinks to take his phone with him. And then
he’s putting it all down again to strip out of his boxers, and then he’s kneeling on the floor facing his
bed, as if in profane prayer. The headset’s cord dips between his ear and the phone, still sitting atop
the towel on the bed.

“I’m here,” Dean says.

“You can kneel tall or sit back on your heels. If your legs start to fall asleep, tell me and we’ll move
you. How do you feel? Think before you answer. Feel it. Everything your body tells you, I’m doing
that to you.”

The cool wood of his bedroom floor makes the small hairs atop his feet prickle. The pillow is lumpy
but welcome beneath his knees. His dick does its absolute best to strain up toward the phone, Dean’s
arousal knowing exactly where its source is. He can’t seem to catch his breath, but he doesn’t seem
to need to either.

“I’m good,” Dean says, and he leans forward, eyes closed. His clasped hands go on the edge of the
bed, and his forehead goes onto his hands. “I’m, I’m really good.”
“You are. You’re my good boy. You’re going under for me, aren’t you?”

He’s slipping. He’s sitting still—kneeling still—but he’s slipping, he’s moving. His mouth is strange and empty and there are no kisses coming. “I want…”

“Is this what you called me for, Michael?”

His forehead presses harder against his hands, his crossed thumbs. If he jerks off now, he’ll come, and he’s not allowed. “Swear to god, I’d suck your dick if you’d let me.”

“That’s not the question I asked you,” Jimmy reminds him, so gentle and pleased that he can only be a fantasy.

“All of it,” Dean tells him. “Call you for all of it.” He’s not even sure what he means, but Jimmy seems to know. Jimmy hums and seems to approve.

“Are you hard for me right now? Do we need to get you ready?”

“So ready.” He chokes on something too small to be a laugh, too manly to be a giggle. “You don’t want me any more ready than this.”

“Breathe with me,” Jimmy instructs.

Dean does.

He cools. Not all the way. no. Not even close. But from something molten to something solid. Something reshaped by wanting and approval, by the peculiar rightness of being on his knees, even without thighs around his head and hands in his hair. Jesus, is it the giving head or the kneeling that he loves? Does it even matter which? He’s so primed by abstinence that one is throwing him fast into the arms of the other.

“There’s my good boy,” Jimmy murmurs. “Are you ready to start?”
Dean already has. “Yes, James.”

“Good. My first fact: I’m sorry I didn’t tell you sooner that I’m quitting.”

Wherever Dean was, somewhere soft and slow and far beneath the surface of his own mind, he’s not there anymore. He comes ripping up through the layers into the jarring electric lights of his own bedroom, eyes open and staring at his phone atop a towel.

“Say it back to me, Michael,” Jimmy instructs.

“You’re…” Dean swallows something down. “You’re sorry you didn’t say you were quitting.”

“Are you staying hard?”

Dean unclasps his hands to work himself. The mood is broken, its shards scattered through Dean’s body.

“Do you need my help?” Jimmy asks. The pitch of his voice hasn’t dropped, but his tone has the edge that Dean once thought meant arousal.

“Don’t, don’t put it on. The voice, don’t.”

“Okay,” Jimmy agrees, dropping it immediately. “What do you need to stay hard for me?”

_You’re not into this. You’ve never been into this._

_You’re so not into this, you’re leaving._

Dean swallows. “I don’t know.”
“I want you to touch yourself,” Jimmy instructs. “Hold your cock for me and circle your thumb just below the head. Do *not* move your hips.”

“I, okay,” Dean says, obeying. The lack of stroking has his body wanting to twitch forward, and the denial in his waist only heightens the want into a need. But Dean, Dean controls himself.

“Tell me when you’re hard, boy.”

It doesn’t take long. “I’m, now.”

“Say it for me.”

Dean squeezes his eyes shut, shivering from far more than the temperature of his room against his naked skin. “I’m hard, James.”

“You’re hard *for me;*” James corrects.

Fuck. “I’m hard for you, James.”

“Good boy,” James murmurs, and Dean sinks back down.

“Number two: the stories I tell aren’t from personal experience, but they are my own fantasies.”

Immediately, Dean rattles back up. It’s bullshit. “What about Mandy? Aren’t you gay?”

“Talking back, first offense.”

Dean sighs but keeps working his dick. Kneeling switches to feeling stupid, but maybe if he keeps at it, it’ll be right again. “Your stories are fantasies, not real,” Dean dutifully says.

“Good. Normally when I do the threesome scene, Mandy is Manny, or Emmanuel. I adapted it for


you, but that doesn’t make it false. Do you understand?”

Those three words go straight to Dean’s dick. He’s been conditioned beyond belief. “Yes, James.”

“Number three: I enjoy this job more than I thought I would.”

“You enjoy the job more than you thought you would.”

“Number four: I had only planned to do it for a year, and that’s why I’m quitting.”

Something in Dean’s gut loosens. “You’re quitting ‘cause you only wanted to do it for a year.” That’s way longer than Dean would put up with the job. It’s got nothing to do with Dean. Dean can’t make Jimmy stay, but, for once, maybe he’s not what’s driving someone away.

“Number five: I’ve enjoyed Thursdays more since you started calling.”

“Uh-huh.” It comes out without consulting his brain, a reflex of skepticism.


Dean’s hand slows on his dick. *He didn’t say because you started calling, you dipshit. He’s just being nice again and technically not lying.*

That makes it easier. “You like Thursdays more since I started calling.”

“Better. Number six: I appreciate that you understand my sense of humor.”

The corner of Dean’s mouth twitches despite it all. “You’re one funny rosebud. I’m not, I’m not talking back, I’m just…”

“I won’t count it this time. Say it anyway. And no more comments or questions until after we’re
“I understand,” Dean says. “You like that I get your jokes.”

“Good. Number seven: it’s important to me that you find more people you can talk to before I leave.”

“...Give me a sec.” It shouldn’t be possible for that many boner-killers to fit inside one sentence, but there they are. “I gotta…” It has to be audible, what he’s doing. He twists his hand around, trying to slick it up with more precome, but that just stopped being a renewable resource.

Shifting on his knees, his feet going cold against the floorboards, Dean hunches his shoulders and drops his head. Focusing on his hand. On the quiet breaths in his ears.

He’s not going to lose it. He’s not some old man who can’t keep it up. He can do this.

He drops his forehead back against the edge of the bed. Jimmy wants to spank him. Jimmy might be in a suit, or part of one, and Dean is kneeling and naked, and Jimmy wants to hear the smack of a hand across Dean’s ass. Eyes closed, Dean can see the porn playing over and over again.

Jimmy says nothing, waiting, but he’s gotta be listening.

Clearing his throat, Dean finally gets himself back to the point where he nearly has to take his hand away. “Okay, got it.”

“Number seven, Michael.”

Dean clears his throat again. “You want me to find a shrink.”

“That’s not what I said. And that’s three counts of misbehavior.”

“I didn’t talk back,” Dean argues.
“The third for inattention, and a fourth for arguing. Is it going to be five?”

It ought to bring Dean back down, but the challenge only riles him up against the task dragging him down. “No, James.”

“Good. Number seven, again. It’s important to me that you find more people you can talk to before I leave. A therapist would count. So would a friend or your brother. Or all three. What is important, Michael?”

“That I find someone to talk to,” Dean says, eyes shut, head bowed.

“Good boy.”

It’s fucked up, how much those words matter. The shivers cascading across his shoulders and down his back. The flex of his feet as his toes curl. The throb of his dick in his hand. It’s all Jimmy.

“You’re doing well, getting this far,” Jimmy continues. “I made this challenge for you, but I wasn’t certain about the difficulty. I think it’s right. Would you like a little help staying hard for the remainder? You can answer.”

“Don’t need it, but I’d like it,” Dean says, fisting himself loosely.

“Number eight: we’ve had conversations where I’ve been aroused.”

Dean sits down on his heels, staring at the phone. The pull of his hand has his eyes fighting to fall shut, though. “You what?”

“Fifth count of misbehavior. No questions, no talking back. I said, I’ve been aroused during some of our talks.”

Dean’s gonna come on everything. All over the floor. On the side of his bed. He’s gonna jizz to death, and what a way to go. “Really?” His voice is deep and ruined, and he’ll spank his whole ass bruised if it means Jimmy saying it again.
“Sixth count. Are you doubting me?”

“No, James.” He squeezes himself hard at the base, mouth fighting to fall open, to gape open. He can’t help but keep picturing that one naked guy, mouth open and waiting for a cock to stuff it. “You, you’ve been...” He swallows, but his mouth immediately waters again. “You’ve been aroused while we’ve talked.”

“Yes, I have,” Jimmy confirms, voice rough and deep, that darkness gilded bright with pride. He knows what he’s doing to Dean. He knows what he’s doing to Dean, and he likes it. “Are you ready for the last two?”

His heart is going to hammer out of his chest. His come is trying to escape his dick. His knees ache and his feet tingle and he has never been more ready for anything. “Yes, James.”

“Number nine: I believe you’re worthy of affection.”

“You believe…”

The words don’t hit. Not right away.

And then they do.

Dean clears his throat.

He tries again.

“You think I’m likable.”

Jimmy tsks. “Seventh count. That’s not what I said. It’s true, but it’s not what I said. Try again.”

“Jimmy,” Dean says, not even sure if he’s asking for something.
“It’s all right,” Jimmy says instead of reprimanding him. “It’s true. There’s no punishment here for saying what’s true. You’re allowed to say it.”

It sticks in Dean’s throat. For no damn reason, it lodges in there.

“Be my good boy,” Jimmy instructs gently.

Dean closes his eyes.

He closes them tight.

“You think I’m… worthy of affection.”

“Yes, I do,” Jimmy confirms. “One more left, a brief spanking, and then you can come however you like. Are you ready?”

Dean nods uselessly. “Yeah.”

“Are you still hard?”

“Oh. Uh. Mostly?”

“Get yourself hard for me.”

It’s so easy to obey. Dean’s good at this. At jerking off. All he has to do is think of how he’ll finish. How Jimmy will help him finish. “I’m good again. Let’s do it.”

“All right. Number ten: I think you deserve to be happy.”
It hits him just the same.

Dean clears his throat. This one, with reward in sight, he manages much faster. “You think I deserve to be happy,” Dean says, rattling it off in one quick rush.

“Good boy,” Jimmy praises. “We’re going to discipline you first, but do you know how you want to come?”

It’s the weirdest whiplash Dean’s ever had. “Uh. Don’t think I’ll last long enough to make fingering myself worth it.” Jesus Christ, did he really just say that? Is that something he says now?

Jimmy hums understandingly. “Should I tell you how to do it, or would you prefer general encouragement?”

“Um. Do I get to ask questions now?”

“You do,” Jimmy confirms. He sounds pleased. Almost proud. He should really be an actor, this guy.

“So Crowley mentioned that you two swap fantasies. Give each other more reference material or whatever.”

“That’s true. Did he mention one?”

“Yeah.” A twisting mass coils in Dean’s stomach, a roil of nerves and anticipation and jealousy. “He said you got this fantasy about a librarian.” Whoever the bookish bastard is, he’d better be attractive.

It sends a hot flush all over Dean’s body—plus a dull roar behind his ears—to picture Jimmy strolling into a public library and smiling warmly at some guy behind the check-out desk. To know that Jimmy’s been thinking about some guy with a sweater vest and little reading glasses to the point of having a fantasy is one thing, but knowing it’s good enough and strong enough to be jerk-off reference material…

“A what?” Jimmy asks, and, okay, maybe Dean muttered that a little.
“A librarian,” Dean repeats.

“I don’t… Oh,” Jimmy says. “It’s not a librarian, it’s a library setting. Or any setting conducive to extremely quiet exhibitionism.”

“Oh.” Everything relaxes, except for his dick. His dick does not relax. “Could we, uh. Do that?”

“Are you in any state for roleplay?”

“Uh.”

“We can do that next week,” Jimmy says. “What else would you like? Anything.”

Dean licks his lips. “I can ask for anything?”

“I would prefer not to pretend to fuck you as a horse.”

Dean snorts. “Yeah, no, I’m good. I’m good. But, uh. Could you maybe…”

Jimmy waits.

“Could you jerk off with me? For real.”

Dean’s face is beyond burning. It’s incinerated. His ears blaze against the sides of his head, hot enough they should be making the headset sizzle.

“…Not tonight,” Jimmy says at last. Says it like they’ve a year worth of Thursdays left, and not a mere three after tonight.
“Right, yeah, sorry,” Dean says, quick about it. “If you don’t wanna, you don’t wanna, that’s cool. Shouldn’t have asked.”

“Michael,” Jimmy says, and he doesn’t sound mad. Or offended. He’s gentle, but it’s a cautious kind of gentle. Like Dean is some wounded creature who might lash out, and Jimmy needs to be wary of claws.

“Okay, we’ll just spank me and figure it out after.”

“Michael, listen to me.”

Dean really, really would rather get on with it. Instead, he fights down a sigh and asks, “Yeah?”

“No one else, in an entire year of calls, has cared even half as much as you do about what I want. You don’t have to repeat that back, but I want you to know that it’s true. You’re exceptional. And not just because you think I’m funny.”

“You are funny,” Dean mutters, the only words of protest he can think of.

“And you’re the only person who, I think, would rather hear me honestly decline than hear me fake it.”

Dean would rather hear him honestly do it.

He doesn’t say this.

“You were talking about spanking?” he says instead.

Jimmy sounds like he’s holding back a sigh, too. “Yes. Are you still kneeling?”

“Yeah.”
“Stand up to make sure your legs aren’t asleep.”

Dean does, and they kind of are. Not all the way, just a little, just enough to set him hissing as his feet pin and needle their way back to full consciousness. Dean swears under his breath, and Jimmy does him the courtesy of not laughing at him.

“When you’re ready, kneel back down.”

Dean does. “Ready.”

“It’s fourteen hits, two for each count of misbehavior, or you can switch to the mystery punishment.”

“Can I switch back?”

“If you switch back, it’ll be three hits for each transgression.”

Twenty-one. Dean could handle twenty-one, but he won’t have to. “You got me curious. Mystery punishment.”

“Are you sure?”

Licking his lips, Dean nods to the phone on his bed. “Bring it.”

“This is harder, so it’ll only be seven.”


“Without losing your erection, tell me seven things you like about yourself.”

Dean immediately starts to fail.
He clears his throat. “Say again?”

“Tell me seven things you like about yourself. Accomplishments count, possessions do not.”

The air itself grows very still. A car drives down the road, as many have during this lengthy chat, but this time, Dean actually hears it.

“Yeah, if I don’t get to talk about my car, I don’t see the point,” Dean says. “I was just curious, so, yeah, let’s tan my ass.”

Jimmy sighs.

It cuts Dean open.

After much too long, Jimmy tells him, “Before we start, clap once, hard.”

“Uh. Why?”

“So I know what cheating sounds like.”

Dean claps. His palms sting against each other.

“Good boy,” Jimmy says, even though Dean really isn’t. “I don’t want you sitting on your heels for this. Are you kneeling facing your bed?”

Not trusting his voice, Dean hums confirmation. He stands on his knees.

“Put an arm on your bed and lean your forehead against your arm.”
Dean does, forearm across the headset’s cord. Ass high and bare, he adjusts the mic. Again, he hums.

Again, Jimmy pauses for too long. Finally, Jimmy speaks again, but he says the wrong thing.

“Do you need to stop, Michael?”

Dean’s eyes are already shut, but he squeezes them tighter anyway. “Nope. Bring it.” His voice comes out too rough.

It must give him away.

“If I push you too hard, I need you to tell me,” Jimmy instructs.

“I can smack my own ass, dude, it’s not a big deal.”

“It’s a big deal if I make a mistake that hurts you. I don’t enjoy hurting people, do you understand?”

Dean rolls his eyes. “You want me to spank myself.”

“You know what I mean. If you’re not comfortable proceeding, we can postpone disciplinary measures until next week. You can count the blows while I explain the library scenario.”

Though on his knees, Dean digs his heels in. “I got it tonight. Ten on both sides, plus one extra. Not a problem. I’m—wait. Do you need to stop?” Jesus fuck, Dean should have asked that sooner. Jimmy’s not allowed to call it quits, Dean knows that.

“I only want to keep going if you do,” Jimmy says, and he sounds marginally less worried.

“I’m good to go.Promise.Only asked about the mystery option thing because you can’t just dangle ‘the mystery option’ in front of a guy and not expect him to ask. I’m into the spanking, let’s do the spanking.”
“All right,” Jimmy says after another one of those awful pauses. “Do you want to count or will I?”

“Um.” Dean licks his lips. “Could we do both? Not the counting, I don’t mean the counting. Could you talk me off while I count?”

This pause is way better. More surprised, less suspicious. “As long as you don’t touch your cock or your hole before you complete the count,” Jimmy agrees.

“Do I still have to stay hard during?”

“You don’t, but that’s not going to be a problem,” Jimmy says with confidence. “Now put your ass in the air and start.”

The wind-up is odd, the angle not quite natural, but he doesn’t pull the blow. “One.”

He winds back up for the second, only to be interrupted when Jimmy orders, “Rub it.”

“What?”

“Rub the pain in. Get your ass hot.”

Dean does as he’s told, and it’s like his skin comes alive. It’s the difference between having an ass and feeling it, the difference between sitting on his butt and having a pair of hands on his ass, pulling him in to thrust deeper. “Oh.”

Two and three are slower, more lingering. His forehead drops off his arm and onto the edge of the bed. He keeps going as Jimmy murmurs approval. After the count of five, Jimmy instructs, “Tell me how hard you are.”

“Harder than I’m hitting.” And he smacks himself with a blow that makes his hand sting. “Six.”
“If I had you here, you’d be even harder,” Jimmy promises, and Dean can’t help the noise that leaks out of his throat any more than he can prevent the precome escaping his dick.

“You’d turn me over your knee?”

“And let you grind against my thigh while you’re being disciplined? No, that’s a reward. You have to earn that. Show me how you’d earn it.”

Dean demonstrates with seven and eight. He starts to show off with nine and ten.

“Good. Switch sides,” Jimmy instructs.

Dean does. While he’s at it, he tugs the towel halfway off the bed. One end goes in front of his knees, the other stays under his forearm on the bed. There’s no way in hell he’s cleaning jizz off the floor after this, and he’s kind of stupidly proud of himself for thinking of this.

“Are you ready for the rest?”

“Yes, James.”

“Do you want to know how I would have you, if not over my knee?”

“Yes, James.”

“Say please.”

“Please, James.”

“Good boy,” James praises. “My good boy. Would my good boy want my cock in his mouth?”

Groaning, Dean drops his head back down to his forearm. “Whatever you want.”
“Hit hard.”

Dean does. His body jolts at the hit to the wrong side, his hand stinging as well.

“Rub it in again.”

Dean does.

“Has my good boy sucked a cock before?”

“I can learn,” Dean promises. “I know my way around a clit, I can handle a dick.”

James hums approvingly. “I’m sure you can. But if you think I’d let you suck me while striking yourself, you’re mistaken. You could bite if you hit too hard. No, if I had you here, I’d have you on the floor, leaning in between my knees with me sitting on the bed. Look forward. What do you see?”

The hand meant to be rubbing in the heat of the blow circles around front. He rubs there instead, eyes fighting to roll behind closed lids. “Your dick.”

“My hard dick,” James corrects. “My hard dick, leaking right in front of your face. And if you want to touch it, you know what you have to do.”

Dean immediately smacks himself again. “Eleven.”

“That was twelve.”


Dean hits and James talks. About pulling Dean by the hair. About spreading his own legs wider. About shoving his fingers into Dean’s mouth and telling Dean to make James’ cock jealous.
Dean’s gone over onto twenty-two and twenty-three before either of them catch themselves and stop.

“Now,” James orders. “Two fingers in your mouth, one hand on your cock. Finish for me.”

Dean goes for it, sucking hard. He immediately has to fold his lips over his teeth, but then he plays with his tongue, insisting, needing, imagining. His ass burns. His palms tingle. All is hot and breathless, even James’ impossibly low voice spurring him on.

“Do it. Do it for me. Your body might try to stop, but I’m telling you to push through it. You’re going to keep coming until you can’t come any more. You’re going to orgasm until I decide you’ve had enough, do you understand?”

The noise Dean lets out around his own fingers is incoherent.

“Answer me,” James commands.

“Yes,” Dean gasps. “Yes, I’m—are you hard?”

With a pause, with the slightest crack of awkwardness in his commanding veneer, Jimmy answers, “I’m getting there.”

Dean comes.

Dean comes so hard, he goes blind. With pleasure. With pain. With the burn of his ass and the oversensitivity of his pulsing. Blind with sheer forgetting that he can open his eyes.

If he makes a noise, he doesn’t hear it but his mouth is open wide. His head is on the bed, cheek against towel and wet fingers. His other hand keeps going, working himself and working himself until his hips are jerking away instead of forward, but he still doesn’t stop, half-crying with it, more than half. He bubbles under his skin like carbonation against the inside of a glass, rising and rising and breaking with tiny gasps of air.
His body riots. His feet flex and explode into pins and needles. His orgasm drains out of his dick and has to take half his life force with it. And still he keeps going, because Jimmy is calling him a good boy, because Jimmy hasn’t said to stop.

When Jimmy gives the order, Dean is in anguish. When Jimmy gives the order, Dean isn’t ready to stop. When Jimmy gives the order, Dean can barely hear him over the singing of his own body. But Dean does hear him.

Collapsing forward, face smacking into the bed, he lets the towel fall. He sits down on his heels and hisses and sits up higher and collapses again. Then he flops his head to the side and adjusts the mic as he starts giggling uncontrollably.

Beyond giggles and heaving gasps and passing cars in the world beyond his windows, all Dean can hear is Jimmy. Proud, soothing sounds. Saying over and over again how well Dean did. Except, not Dean, but not Michael either. He’s Jimmy’s good boy instead.

There’s bliss in that.

“How do you feel?” Jimmy asks, so warm and present that Dean can practically feel fingers stroking through his hair.

“Awesome,” Dean mumbles, the side of his face still planted against the bed.

“When you’re ready, I want you to get off the floor and lie down comfortably.”

“Okay,” Dean says. He takes his time because Jimmy goes back to the praise. About how Dean listened. How Dean came so hard. How responsive he was and how wonderfully he obeyed, and the entire time, Jimmy’s voice is as deep as Dean’s ever heard it. Deeper.

Sometime later, Dean crawls back onto his bed. He lies on his front, mindful of his ass at Jimmy’s prompting. He checks for soreness by hand, not risking ending the call by using his phone’s camera. He reports that he doesn’t think he’s bruised, but Jimmy still urges him to be careful. Spent and exhausted, Dean can’t do more than simply lie there and be fussed over. It’s rapture.

Eventually, tardy to class but not absent, the guilt starts to bubble through.
“Wasn’t really a punishment,” Dean mumbles, more than half-trying not to be heard.

“It was discipline,” Jimmy tells him. “Did you like learning more discipline?”

The answer is already out there, but Dean covers his head with an arm before he can reply.
“...Yeah.”

“That’s good. You’ll learn it faster that way.” When Dean fails to respond, Jimmy adds, “I’m glad you’re taking advantage of the time we have together.”

“Don’t want you to quit,” Dean whispers under his arm, behind the mic. He’s as hidden as he can be, but the collapse of his body has let more than orgasm come spilling out.

“I know,” Jimmy says, sounding regretful. Or maybe just apologetic.

Definitely unhappy.

“Sorry,” Dean says. “Shouldn’t have-”

“You should,” Jimmy interrupts. “This is the part where I look after you. You were my good boy, and now I have to be your good man.”

Flushing, Dean reaches for a pillow to drag over his head, but his second pillow is still on the floor. He leaves the first one under his head.

“What else do you want to do?” Jimmy asks. “The library role play, listening to me masturbate, what else?”

Dean tries to think of something, something beyond embarrassment, but his mind keeps sticking on the idea of not wasting time. Any time, even between calls.
“Could we maybe do that thing again?” Dean makes himself ask. That’s what Jimmy wants, for him to ask. It’s not fair of Dean to keep asking Jimmy to make all this shit up himself.

“Maybe. We’ve done a lot of things.”

“Shut up,” Dean says reflexively. “I meant. This past week. That.”

“You want another week of chastity?” Jimmy comes across more surprised than judgmental, but the difference hardly helps.

“I can do it without coming.”

“A nocturnal emission doesn’t count, Michael. You completed your punishment. You don’t have to do it again.”

Dean bites his lip. Once he stops biting it, he has to fess up. That’s the deal. No more lip pain means fessing up.

Okay.

Dean stops biting.

He says nothing.

“I should tell you why I chose that form of punishment,” Jimmy says instead. “It was less about punishing you and more about making sure you stopped punishing yourself. You seemed to be having a sexual crisis over sleeping with that other man, and I didn’t want you harming yourself with repeat attempts until you were steadier. Being good for me doesn’t mean you have to deny yourself.”

“Oh,” Dean says.

“Did you enjoy it?” Jimmy asks. “We’re only going to do it again if you enjoyed it.”
Dean chokes out, “I can do better.”

“You did good enough for me, and my opinion is the one that matters on this subject. But if you do want to do more, how many times do you think you could make yourself come in your sleep? In a single week.”

Dean blinks, blearily staring at his comforter. “Um. Once, maybe twice?”

“Then we’ll try for that, provided you can maintain the rest. Is that reasonable?”

“The rest?”

“You were going to talk to someone every day. Did you?”

Dean rolls over onto his back, weighs the consequences, and gingerly sits up. Could be worse. “Yeah. Called my brother, called my uncle. I’m, uh. Actually hanging out with the guys from work tomorrow night.”

“That’s good. Is that a standing arrangement?”

“Nope.” He swallows and adds, “Actually, it was my idea.”

“Michael, that’s wonderful.”

Looking down at his lap, Dean coaxes a bit of jizz out of his leg hair. “It’s just grabbing a beer.”

“When was the last time you did that?”

Dean thinks.
He keeps on thinking.

“In the summer, maybe.”

“It’s almost December. That’s a good change.”

Dean clears his throat and gets back on course. “So, what, I keep doing the social stuff and we can do the chastity thing again? If it wasn’t meant to be a punishment.”

“It was, a little,” Jimmy says, and Dean’s heart sinks. “If I didn’t punish you, would you have continued to punish yourself?”

“That’s not what I was doing.”

“That’s what it sounded like, and that’s all I have to work with.”

Though sitting, Dean digs his heels in. “Are we doing it again or not?”

“We can. Though if it wasn’t a punishment, I’ll have to do something else.”

Dean’s dick is too exhausted for even a twitch, but it makes a note to do that later. “Like what?”

“The library role play will be in two weeks. Next week, we do one of my other ideas.”

“Yeah?”

Jimmy hums confirmation without explaining.

“...Leaving me hanging is part of the punishment, isn’t it.”
“You were starting to be a brat.”

Dean doesn’t argue there. “So, uh. Be social. Don’t come while awake. Bonus points for coming while asleep. Got it.”

“Could you take more?” Jimmy asks. His timbre has risen back to what Dean once thought of as his aroused voice. Knowing better now doesn’t help, especially not with that question.

“Yes, James.”

“Next week, before we play, I want you to tell me ten ways you’ve been a good boy. For example, organizing an outing with your friends tomorrow night would count for this week. You can count anything you do, no matter how small, starting tomorrow. Is that reasonable?”

Ten things. Just ten. Worst case scenario, he’ll hold a bunch of doors. “Yeah, I can do that.”

“I know you can,” Jimmy agrees with a voice full of faith.

Turning his head to the side, Dean reaches down for his phone and checks the time. Just started a new minute.

“Is there anything else you want to discuss?” Jimmy asks when Dean stares at the time for too long.

“I dunno. Anything you wanna discuss?”

“Yes, though you’re obviously allowed to say no.”

Frowning more with curiosity than displeasure, Dean asks, “What?”

“Last week, you seemed distressed over a sexual encounter. Can I ask what happened?”
Seemed, Jimmy says.

“It was fine,” Dean says.

“You don’t have to tell me,” Jimmy replies.

“It… kinda sucked.”

“I’m sorry,” Jimmy says. He even sounds it.

Dean picks at his leg hair again. “I don’t know what’s wrong with me, man.”

“Can you tell me what happened?”

“I hooked up with this guy and it didn’t go so hot.”

“I’m sorry,” Jimmy says again, just as sincere as the first time. “Do you think you know why?”

A shapeless, wordless pressure fills Dean’s throat. “No.”

“If you tell me what happened, I might be able to form an opinion, but you don’t have to.”

“I went to this bar,” Dean finds himself saying. “Gay bar called The Paradise.”

“Just ‘Paradise,’” Jimmy corrects, and Dean’s entire body flushes even as a chill fills his spine.

“You know it?” Jimmy’s been? Jimmy’s local, Dean knows that. Dean can’t forget it. But knowing they’ve been to the same place, even if not at the same time, that’s huge. That’s temptation incarnate. Dean’s not a stalker, but the idea of trying again suddenly leaps from impossibility to probability.
“I’m familiar with it,” Jimmy says, not actually confirming whether he’s been. “I’m sorry, you were saying?”

“I went, this guy bought me a drink, we got to talking, we fucked at his place, and it kinda sucked. The end.”

Jimmy’s silent, considering, and Dean’s skin informs him that maybe hives would be a good idea around now. Before Dean can develop an allergy to scrutiny, Jimmy asks, “Would you have bought him a drink?”

“What?”

“Would you have bought this man a drink?”

Dean tries to think about it. His brain resists, but he tries anyway. “Probably not.”

“When did you begin to feel attracted to him?”

Dean’s brain gives up. It tries to take hold of the question. It turns it around this way and that.

Jimmy tries again, speaking into Dean’s silence. “What did he do or say that you liked?”

“No one’s ever bought me a drink before,” Dean explains.

“It felt nice,” Jimmy says.

“Yeah.”

“You felt wanted. Desirable.”

Dean absolutely doesn’t squirm as he admits, “Yeah.”
“Do you remember when you decided to have sex with him?”

“I went there to fuck a dude, it wasn’t really…”

“He could have been anyone?” Jimmy asks.

“Yeah, yeah, I know I’m an asshole.”

“Did he call you an asshole?”

“No. Doesn’t mean I wasn’t one.”

“Doesn’t mean you were,” Jimmy counters. “But I’m more interested in how you felt than in how he did.”

Those words shouldn’t warm Dean as much as they do. But, god, they sound so good. Too bad Dean has nothing to offer him. “I mean, I dunno.”

“When did you decide to have sex with him?”

“I dunno,” Dean repeats. “C’mon, man, I did a stupid thing, I don’t have reasons.”

“Michael, you not having a reason is exactly my point.”

Dean frowns down at the phone in his hand. “I don’t get it.”

“Did you pick him because you wanted him or because he volunteered?”

It’s not a light bulb moment. It isn’t a slow, grand sunrise either. It’s a tiny combination of the two,
like a light on a dimmer switch slowly turning on.

“Oh,” Dean says.

“You’re not going to be attracted to every man,” Jimmy tells him. “That doesn’t make you less bi.”

“Oh,” Dean says again. He clears his throat. “He was an okay guy, y’know? Nothing wrong with him.”

“When you picture attractive men, would he be on the list?”

Dean pictures Blondie. Han Solo and Indiana Jones. The guy from that cop show with the hair, and Dr. Sexy with his boots. Hell, Cas with his hands or even Benny with his grin. The nebulous concept of Jimmy, dark-haired and deep-voiced.

“No,” Dean admits.

“That’s not something wrong with you,” Jimmy says. “Liking the way someone treats you is normal, and confusing it with liking the person is extremely common.”

The inside of Dean’s head is resoundingly silent. The lack of sound echoes impossibly. “Y’know, I think that’s what it was. I mean, shit felt good, but it just wasn’t…”

“It wasn’t what you wanted?”

*It wasn’t you.*

Same difference, really.

“Guess not,” Dean says with a weak laugh.
“Were the sex acts ones you wanted to try?”

“The head was good. Kinda thought I’d feel the beard more for some reason? I dunno.”

Jimmy asks nothing more, simply waiting for Dean to continue speaking.

So Dean does. “He wanted me to fuck him.”

“Is that what you wanted?”

“Look, it’s not like it was bad.”

“But was that what you wanted?”

Dean sighs. “It’s… Okay, fine. No.”

“What did you want?”

Dean’s jaw refuses to budge.

“Should he have fingered you while he blew you?” Jimmy asks.

“I didn’t ask him to.” This isn’t Aaron’s fault. The worst thing Aaron did was have shitty taste in men.

“Did he ask what you wanted?”

“Pretty sure I didn’t ask him either.”
“Michael,” Jimmy says, so very serious, “I think I know why the sex was sub par.”

Despite himself, Dean laughs.

Just a little.

Just a chuckle of a breath.

But he does laugh.

“Yeah, yeah, okay, I get it.”

“Tell me what you get.”

“Only fuck the people I want to fuck. Ask what they want, tell them what I want.”

“Good boy,” Jimmy praises, a smile plain in his voice.

“I, um,” Dean starts to confess, still guilty.

“You can tell me.”

_I wanted him to be you._

Clearing his throat but unable to clear his mind, Dean says, “What do you think I want? I mean, I keep second-guessing, but you keep hitting it out of the park, so. What do you think I want?”

Jimmy hums but doesn’t need to think for longer than that one instant. “To be praised in a way you feel you deserve. For physical sex acts, I’d say foreplay where you made your partner feel good, followed by being fingered open. Blowing you during that would be the obvious route, so I would either kiss your stomach or your back instead, depending on the position.”
“If you liked that well enough, I’d rub the head of my cock over your hole until you asked for more,” Jimmy continues. “I’d make you ask at least twice, once to check in, twice to make you earn it. You like earning it. Then I’d fuck you from behind until your arms gave out, roll you over, and fuck you from the front. We’d finish with whichever side you liked better, and I’d tell you that a good boy squeezes his ass hard when he comes around a cock.

“Of course, if I came first, I’d pull out, roll a condom on you, and blow you while fingering you the rest of the way. I’d make you spread your legs wide and keep your hands on your knees. I think you’d enjoy the challenge. No touching me until after you came, so you could have a reward besides orgasm.

“How does that sound?”

It’s not said sexily. This isn’t dirty talk. This is a motherfucking battle plan, laid out in thoughtful, attentive detail.

“...You are really good at your job,” Dean rasps, throat thick with wanting.

“Thank you.”

“I’m, uh. Gonna be jerking off to that later, so. Yeah.”

“But not coming,” Jimmy reminds him. “If you want to come from that, you have to wait a week or dream it.”

“...You did that on purpose, didn’t you.”

If a smug grin could make a noise, that’s the noise Jimmy makes.

“You fucking asshole.”

“Rosebud,” Jimmy corrects primly, and Dean surprises himself by laughing.
Jimmy laughs too.

Quietly.

Beautifully.

Dean hauls himself back under control, just for a better chance to listen.

“I’m glad you’re feeling better,” Jimmy tells him, sobering much too soon. If they could be drunk off each other, Dean would have them stay that way forever, no matter the bill.

“I was being stupid,” he says. Lies, technically, because he hasn’t stopped. This call is going to cost him big, bigger than usual.

“You were stupid for legitimate reasons,” Jimmy counters. “You sounded surprisingly like a lesbian, but I wouldn’t call that stupid.”

“How the hell do I sound like a lesbian? Besides the liking boobs part, I got that part covered.”

“Your confusion between being attracted to a man and liking being attractive to him.”

“Huh,” Dean says.

“I didn’t mean to imply you only like women,” Jimmy adds.

“Thanks,” Dean says, then clears his throat. “Yeah. Thanks.”

“Of course. You can call as often as you need before I quit. While I’m still here, I’m here for you.”
Something swells up, but Dean at least tries to push it down this time. “’Cause you think I need a shrink.”

“Because I talk to my shrink regularly, and I don’t like the idea of leaving you without that kind of support,” Jimmy counters. “If this is all I can do to take care of you, then I’ll do it.”

There’s too much in Dean’s throat to vocalize. In his chest. Somewhere deeper, too, in some folded dimension both between and beyond his ribs.

“So will you try to find some sort of support this week?” Jimmy asks.

“...Yeah, okay.”

Dean can’t refuse him. Not in this. Maybe not in anything.

“Thank you, Michael,” Jimmy says, warm and fond, taking half-hearted promise as a heartwarming present.

“I should really hang up,” Dean mumbles.

“I was wondering about that.”

“But you didn’t say anything.”

“I didn’t want to rush you, especially not after a scene. Are you feeling steady enough?”

“Yeah,” Dean says automatically. He’s sitting there butt naked, ass flushed and burning with his own body weight, and he’s good. There’s something trembling inside his skin, but he’s good.

“Are you lying down?”
“I can be.”

“Lie down for me and hug your pillow.”

Dean rolls his eyes, but he grabs it off the floor before sprawling out. Then he curls up. His arms tighten around his freshly lumpier pillow. He only realizes he’s matched his breathing to Jimmy’s guiding breaths when Jimmy asks, “How do you feel now?”

He’s good.

He’s awful.

“I wish.” He cuts himself off.

Jimmy waits for him.

“I’ll talk to you next week,” Dean says instead, refusing to let himself check the call length. If a new minute just started, he’ll hang in there, and the night will slip by sixty seconds at a time. “’night, Jimmy.”

Jimmy doesn’t sigh, not exactly, but he does sound like he wants to. “Good night, Michael.”

Hesitating longer than he’ll ever admit, Dean ends the call. He stays where he is, as he is, for a moment longer. A minute longer. Holding his phone and hugging his pillow.

Later that night, he sleeps.

In the morning, he does some work shit. He puts together his school stuff while brewing coffee, and
he remembers to grab Cas’ books. A thought strikes him while he’s filling up his thermos, so he packs up a little something extra, too.

The drive to the library is a slow one today, cars pumping the brakes over slush and snow. Dean has to park farther out than usual in the lot, never a good sign, and he weaves around a maze of puddles and melting ice. Sand and salt crunch under his boots no matter how he wipes them on the sodden mats leading into the library atrium. Like so many others before him, Dean squeaks past the wet floor signs, adding to the tracks.

Upstairs, Dean navigates back to the silent area. It’s mostly full, but not entirely. One small table sports an empty pair of chairs. There’s a small pile of books on the table and a presumably empty travel mug. A blue suit jacket lies draped across the back of the opposite chair. Across the back of Dean’s chair, there hangs a familiar trench coat.

Grinning to himself, Dean unloads his bag. The borrowed books go in front of Cas’ spot, and Dean refills the travel mug from his thermos. He adds the little something extra on top of the books, and then he pretends to get to work. He takes his stuff out, at least.

But Cas has a new pile of books right there.

Checking over his shoulder, Dean can’t catch sight of him. He grabs one that looks like another anthology and flips it open to the first of many post-it notes. _Fergus disagrees_, says the note. A little arrow on the post-it indicates a passage mentioning sex work.

Dean flips back a couple pages to the title of that article, or chapter, or whatever. _Prostitution to Pride: The Role of Sex Work in LGBTQ History_. He turns back to the post-it, but it’s just a passage describing the attitudes of sex workers in excruciatingly academic language. A quick look through the table of contents doesn’t reveal any articles written by anyone with Fergus as a first or last name. Must be some other book.

He takes another glance over his shoulder before closing the book on his thumb and scanning the other assembled titles on the table. None of those, either, but Cas probably has his own bookcases full of these things, never mind the ones in the library or virtual ones online.

With a third glance for approaching professors, Dean reopens the book and flips to the title that had most snagged his eye. _When Sex Sells, We All Pay_. It reminds him of his phone bill.
And then it reminds him of Jimmy.

He’s reading about the commodification of desire in a library. Of course it reminds him of Jimmy.

Maybe it reminds him of Jimmy more than it should, because Dean gets sucked right on in. Distantly, he hears quiet footsteps approaching. He hears that noise stop.

The hand on his shoulder should be more surprising than it is.

Dean looks up. Thick strong fingers and the smooth back of a hand. A bare wrist leading to toned forearms. Rolled white shirtsleeves hug elbows while a blue vest embraces his entire chest. A steel gray tie tries to escape out the vest’s front, the knot loose, the length twisted.

Above it all, atop even the faint but ever-growing stubble, there’s a faint smile. Not on the lips, no. In the eyes.

Refusing to look guilty, Dean makes a show of checking his page number before closing the book and handing it back over. He gestures expansively at the pair of borrowed books on the table and grins when Cas’ attention fixates on the tupperware container stacked on top of them.

Somehow confused about this, Cas points to the container and then back to himself, head tilted in a tiny question of For me?

Rolling his eyes, Dean points at Cas and then the container.

Cas smiles with his entire face. He circles around to sit at his side of the table, his vest emphasizing where his waist meets his ass. When Cas lowers his bag and starts rearranging stuff on top of the table, the renewed weight of his travel mug surprises him. Still bent over the table, Cas looks at Dean as if discovering the kindest, most generous man in the world.

Dean makes himself smile back—it’s not too difficult, not when it’s Cas—and flips open his accounting textbook and his notebook. The math is easy enough, well-practiced enough that he can do it even while Cas gets settled in.
Even if Dean weren’t paying attention, he would have noticed the small *pop* of Cas prying the lid off the tupperware. Careful about it, Cas manages to lift the piece of pumpkin pie a few inches without breaking the slice. Holding the container in one hand and the slice carefully above it, his forearms on display, Cas opens his mouth to take one tiny bite from the tip. Almost immediately, he takes a second, larger bite. His eyes close and he nods along in agreement with whatever his mouth is telling him.

Dean licks his lips.

Cas swallows and opens his eyes.

Dean gives him a thumbs up and puts a question on his face.

Cas puts the pie down and gestures for Dean’s notebook and pen.

Dean passes him both.

*Can I rent you for Christmas?*

Dean presses a laugh down into a grin. *I’m baking anyway.* Then, thinking of his promises to Jimmy, Dean adds, *You bring the ingredients and I can show you how.*

When Dean slides the notebook back, Cas frowns at the answer.

Dean’s stomach breaks through his pelvis and the chair to smack into the floor, spilling acid against the backs of his shoes. At least, that’s how it feels. That’s how it feels the entire time it takes Cas to write his response.

*You overestimate my abilities. I’d be more hindrance than help.*

*What, you think you’re the only one who can teach?* Dean pushes the notebook back with a challenge in his eyes.
As Cas reads, he ducks his head slightly. Just a little. Slow about it, he writes back.

*If you’re up for the challenge, I would be grateful.*

Dean’s stomach magically reappears in its proper location. The acid is still all over the floor, though, warning him to be careful where he steps. *I’m always up for pie. I normally do the Christmas baking on the 23rd, that good for you? Not sure what day of the week that is.*

*It’s a Sunday, Cas writes down without hesitation. Should I come to yours? I have very few supplies.*

Dean almost agrees before remembering that Cas is that strangest of creatures: a pedestrian. *Dude, I’m not sending you home on the bus juggling pie. If you’ve got counter space and a working oven, I’ll drive over with my crap.*

Cas writes down his address and the simple question of 2pm?

Dean nods with a smile.

Cas smiles back.

Glancing away, Dean sips his coffee, and Cas takes another bite of the pie before closing the container and firmly setting it away from himself. As Dean pretends to focus on his homework, he catches Cas repeatedly glancing towards the pie.

Ducking his head down, Dean outright grins to himself.

The next time he looks up, Cas’ eyes are on him instead.

Dean raises his eyebrows.

Cas doesn’t look away. He doesn’t go for the notebook either. He might be trying to beam his thoughts directly into Dean’s mind.
Eyebrows still raised, Dean tilts his head.

Cas clicks his pen and writes, *Would you like to borrow something else?*

*Dude, if you think I’ve got extra time with finals coming up, you’re not paying attention.*

It’s Cas’ turn to raise an eyebrow. *Says the man reading my books instead of working.*

Touche. Not that Dean admits it. *Says the guy passing notes with all his crap still in his bag.*

Leveling Dean a look, Cas pulls his laptop out of his bag and opens it up.

Dean proceeds to ignore him.

Cas ignores him back.

Dean ignores him harder.

After several minutes of this, or at least several pages of reading, Cas moves his books aside in such a way they push at Dean’s stuff.

Dean pointedly straightens his notebook and textbook before exaggeratedly stretching with both arms and legs. His feet hit shins, and he stays exactly where he is.

Cas glares at him, but Dean refuses to look back at him directly. And it’s not like Cas moves his legs away.

It’s a little distracting, finishing his accounting homework like that, but nowhere near as difficult as working at home with the garage open for business. Then he gets started on one of his business class reading assignments and the hell that is his brain freezes over.
A small pressure on the side of his leg breaks him out of it enough to realize he’s been tapping his foot on Cas’.

He looks up, but Cas isn’t looking back, so Dean gets back to work. Or tries to. He switches around what he’s doing, but eventually runs out of other crap. It takes a long, long while, though. Long enough that he probably should have pulled his feet back in by this point, but Cas hasn’t either. Like maybe Cas has forgotten about it. So if Dean moves, he’ll just be reminding the guy.

The fact that it actually feels good is just proof Dean’s been fucking a guy over the phone for way too long. After Jimmy quits, Dean’s gonna need to put himself back out there. Maybe stick to ladies this time and stay where he actually knows what he wants. He knows he’s bi, Jimmy and Cas know he’s bi, he doesn’t have to go around proving it by fucking every Aaron who buys him a drink.

Cas shifts his leg and it’s like a bolt of sensation strikes from Dean’s instep to his knee.

Surreptitiously, Dean looks at him again. While Cas’ laptop blocks Dean’s view of his hands, one of his forearms is still on display, not to mention his actual face.

The more Dean looks at him, the more he becomes aware of their touching legs.

The more Dean looks at him, the more he becomes aware of many parts of his own body.

This is what he was missing with Aaron.

Dean is still officially bi as hell. He lets out a sigh of both relief and annoyance—only to immediately remember just how silent the silent section of the library is.

Cas looks up from his laptop and right into Dean’s eyes.

Dean’s dry tongue sticks to the roof of his mouth. His hand moves, though, and he writes down the thought that was plaguing him earlier.
How do you know you’re studying for finals right?

It might just be Dean’s imagination, but maybe Cas takes an extra second to look away from Dean’s face and down at the paper.

Start with any study guides your professors gave you. If they didn’t, find the areas emphasized in the syllabus or rewrite your class notes to find areas of focus.

As Dean nods along, Cas writes out an entire battle plan for him. Leaning forward, Cas finally draws his feet back, and even though it’s a reasonable motion for balance, Dean’s legs still feel cold. Once Cas is done, Dean’s got a fair bit of reading to do. It’s enough to get Dean’s blood pounding, and not in the good-nervous way that reading Cas’ books brings on.

Maybe Cas sees it. Dean really fucking hopes not, but Cas adds, I’m not sure if they have studying techniques, but the counseling office has additional staff this time of year for anyone who’s feeling overwhelmed.

Dean stares at that a little longer than he should. Got my own health plan, thanks.

It’s included for all full-time students, Cas writes back. Let your classmates know. It should be common knowledge, but it’s not advertised.

As carefully as he can, Dean phrases his reply to look like more of a normal human being. So if I went in with my midterms and showed them where I didn’t do so hot, they could point me in the right direction?

They’re not tutors, but I don’t think it would hurt.

Tutors cost extra, Dean writes back, because that’s something he’s checked. It’s fucked up that he’s paying for Jimmy instead of tutoring, but the heart wants what it wants. And so does the dick.

Blissfully oblivious to Dean’s thought process, Cas nods back. He underlines his previous I don’t think it would hurt.
Two birds, one stone, once he stops to think about it. He’ll go listen to someone who has all the school’s fuck-ups confessing mistakes to them, maybe learn how to slap some duct tape over those problems, and get to honestly tell Jimmy that he’s gone to counseling.

He’s gonna be the best boy Jimmy could ever ask for.

His smile is as reflexive as it is stupid. Dean pulls it in, pulls himself together as quick as he can. Cas definitely saw, but at least the guy doesn’t look amused. Sure, Cas’ eyes are crinkled at the edges, but Dean knows him well enough to know that’s not an insult. That’s just Cas’ pleased face.

Thanks, Dean writes.

Cas nods. If it helps you to study, you can email me. Explaining terms and concepts to someone else is better than doing it silently by yourself.

Dean nods back. Maybe he’ll go back to rambling at Bobby. It hadn’t seemed to annoy him too much, and with Bobby, “too much” is easy to tell. Plus, that has to count as being social. Another rock, another pair of birds. At this rate, Dean will end up murdering an entire aviary.

I already got a guy, but thanks, Dean writes.

Cas looks surprisingly unsurprised, and they go back to their own work. A few minutes later, however, Cas is pulling the notebook back over.

I’ve been meaning to ask, what’s your schedule for next semester?

Okay, cool, Dean’s stomach is back on the floor, totally busted open again. Awesome. Great.

Still working on it, Dean answers, which isn’t technically a lie. Thinking about it is kind of like working on it, and ignoring the crap out of something is a roundabout way of thinking about it. Yeah, sure, registration opened up for freshmen at the very beginning of November, but the deadline is surprisingly lax. He’s gotta put in for something by the end of this semester, and then he can change it up to two weeks into the next semester.
Cas looks at Dean like he just walked into oncoming traffic. *What class are you having trouble getting into?*

Frozen inside, Dean writes, *I study here, I schedule at home.*

Dean does not schedule at home. Dean ignores the entire concept of a second semester, much less a third or fourth. If he signs up for those classes, he’s committing to doing this until May.

He won’t even have Jimmy to back him up.

Cas’ stubbled jaw sets, but though his eyes are just as stubborn, he doesn’t press Dean on the classes. Not directly, at least. *Are we still going to have Fridays?*

...He might not have Cas either. Jesus, he’s fucked.

*What exactly are your not-office hours next semester?* Dean asks.

*Monday and Friday, 2-6pm.*

Biting his lip, Dean nods. That’s something to aim for. Two somethings to aim for, provided the shit he’s meant to be registering for hasn’t filled up yet.

And if it has, well. Maybe then Dean will just have to take a semester off until his actual stuff comes around again. Just a fluke of scheduling, not an actual failure.

Cas taps his foot against Dean’s. He presses down on Dean’s toes until Dean looks up from the paper to his eyes.

Very deliberately, his foot still in place, Cas sits up straight and breathes.

Despite himself, Dean follows along.
In.

Out.

They breathe.

Cas leans forward and circles the studying battle plan he’d made for Dean. His mouth pulls to the side in sympathy and encouragement, and nothing about him is condescending.

Dean knows because he checks.

Work on this first, Cas instructs. *When you need a break, schedule your classes so you have something to look forward to.*

For once in his life, Dean errs on the side of honesty. *What if I hate all my classes?*

Cas frowns at that. *You can do three things. Schedule a day or morning off each week for something you don’t hate, pick an elective for relief, or change majors.*

Dean’s already done the first, and the third is completely out. The second, well. There was all that shit in the university brochure about being well-rounded.

The more he thinks about it, the more the band around his chest tightens, changing to rubber instead of iron.

*What if I wanted to do Sexuality 101 with you?* Dean asks.

Cas narrows his eyes. He looks at Dean, at the notebook, and at Dean again.

*The problem with teaching that class, Cas writes, is never being sure when someone is speaking euphemistically. Speaking literally, you might be bored in 101. I’d suggest something harder more difficult or another subject. You’re welcome to save your money and keep borrowing my books.*
That crossed out word doesn’t escape Dean’s notice, and he’s grateful for the excuse to put on a smirk.

Cas responds with a look reminiscent of a storm cloud that just swallowed a bug.

Quick as he can, Dean whips his phone out of his pocket and takes a picture. Cas blinks after and the photo is blurry, but even Cas’ mouth softens when Dean shows him the pic.

*You’re way too fun to rile up, dude*, Dean writes.

*You are officially not allowed in any of my classes.*

Dean pouts.

Cas glares.

They escalate, but Cas breaks first. Grinning, Dean points at him triumphantly. Smoothing his tiny smile back down, Cas starts shaking his head like he thinks that’s at all convincing.

*Stop being a brat*, Cas writes, and it is a damn good thing there’s this table between them. Or, more to the point, a table over Dean’s crotch.

Because although Dean covers well by rolling his eyes, he still straightens up. He reaches for the notebook automatically, and not to write a response. Jesus, Jimmy has really done a number on him. And not some tiny number like five or eight. Whatever Jimmy’s done is up there in the millions.

Dean knuckles down, trying out a couple of the studying exercises Cas wrote out for him. It eats up time like nobody’s business, to the point where he’s surprised when his phone buzzes on the table. He slaps it silent, the vibrating alert embarrassingly loud, and when he checks, it’s a text from Garth, asking when they’re meeting at the once-regular place.

He fires off a response, shooting for seven, and by the time he’s silenced his phone entirely, Benny’s
responded to the group text too. He and Andrea can make seven-thirty. Then Garth responds that he can do seven, but Bess will have to leave around eight, meaning Garth will need a ride home. Dean rolls his eyes but volunteers, and Benny asks if anyone else is coming.

Dean knows Benny means from the other garage. Maybe Rufus, probably not Bobby. Dean knows that, but his eyes still flick up to Cas.

Back to typing on his laptop, Cas doesn’t seem to notice.

Dean makes himself stare at the computer instead of the man.

If Rufus or Bobby were coming, that would be different. But if Dean invites Cas to come out with him, his co-workers and their wives, that’s like a triple date, right? Or enough like one that Cas might wonder.

He might wonder aloud. In front of everyone.

No. Bad idea. Keep it separate. Let Cas keep thinking Dean isn’t a complete coward, let the guys keep thinking Dean’s just a ladies’ man. No harm, no foul.

Eyes back down on his phone, Dean catches himself chewing on his already chapped lip. He texts back that it’ll just be the three—fine, five—of them.

Checking the time, he gathers up his shit. The notebook and pen, as always, are the last of his items on the table, but though Cas has watched Dean’s clean-up routine, Cas hasn’t gone for either of them. It’s not like they’ve got anything left to say. Or like they won’t email later.

Dean still hesitates. Or maybe he stares a little, eyes caught on bare forearms and strong hands.

Cas stares back. He tilts his head.

Dean should ask.
He doesn’t.

With a quick jerk of motion, he stows his notebook and pen, then loudly zips his bag shut. He pulls on his coat and passes Cas back the trench coat that had served to claim Dean’s spot. Cas nods a curious thank-you.

Dean waves like a dumbass.

Cas lifts his hand in reply, and Dean does what he always does when he doesn’t know what to do.

He bails.

Chapter End Notes

Updates every Monday, time of day may vary.

To see what else I'm working on, you can follow me on [tumblr here](#).
Dean’s body droops. The strings of tension holding him aloft don’t snap or sever themselves; they unwind, each thread uncurling before stretching into nothingness.

“That was a loud sigh,” Jimmy says. “Is everything all right?”

“No, it’s good. I’m good. I mean, I’ve been good, but I’m also...” Dean runs a hand over his face, then straightens his mic. “It’s good.”

“That’s good,” Jimmy deadpans.

“Shut up.”

“I don’t think you want me to do that. I think you want me to talk you off after a long week of denial.”

Dean’s dick immediately agrees. Hell, it preemptively agreed. He coughs. “I, uh.” Very quickly, very quietly, he admits, “I did it again.”

Jimmy audibly smiles, but the question he asks is low and sultry, too serious for teasing, let alone mockery. “What were you dreaming about?”
Jimmy.

Jimmy taking him over the table in the kitchenette. Then Dean had woken up with a raging hard-on to mumble to himself that this wasn’t sanitary. He’d rolled over, dropped back down into sleep, and fallen into the dream in the library instead. Dean grabbing on to the table, his dick grinding down against the flat surface while Jimmy pounded into him from behind.

Then Jimmy had tugged on Dean’s hair, tugged Dean into looking up, and there was Cas, sitting in his usual space and rolling his eyes in exasperation. Cas had raised a finger to his own lips in a silent, stern shush, and Dean had woken riding an orgasm and humping his mattress.

Dean clears his throat. “What do you think I was dreaming about?”

The smile grows louder. “What was I doing?”

“Okay, kinda arrogant,” Dean says. “Wanna put your dick where your mouth is?”

“I’m not that flexible.”

Dean laughs. Not giggles. Definitely laughs.

“Though I’m sure you’d kiss either,” Jimmy adds, and the laughter stops. It converts to something else entirely and immediately goes downstairs. “But enough about that. For now. You were saying you’d been good for me.”

Dean sits up a bit straighter and tugs the leg of his boxer briefs down his thigh where it wants to bunch up. “Didn’t ask how your week went.”

There’s one of those tiny pauses, the ones that mean Dean’s thrown Jimmy off his stride. “Technically, you still haven’t.”

“How was your week?”
“Long,” Jimmy answers. “Help me take a break from it?”

“Always,” Dean promises a bit too honestly. He clears his throat again. “You wanted ten ways I’ve been good this week. There any consequence or whatever if I don’t have ten?”

“You have ten. We’ll work on it until you think of that many. Do you need more incentive than that?”

“If we’re doing the library roleplay next week, what am I looking forward to this week?”

“If I show you now, you’ll be distracted.”

“I can handle—wait, ‘show’ me?”

Jimmy hums in confirmation. “Do you have a laptop nearby?”

“Yeah, hold on.” He unplugs his phone from his charger to bring it with him as he grabs his laptop. Quickly returning to his bed, he sticks the plug back in and impatiently taps at the keys until the damn computer turns on. “We watching porn?”

“They aren’t videos. They’re pictures.”

Dean’s body trembles beneath his skin. What does it say about him that he’d rather have Jimmy’s headshot than anyone else’s money shot? Something he’ll worry about later, definitely. “Okay,” he manages to say through a dry throat.

“We’re going to look at the website for a few seconds,” Jimmy instructs. “Then you’ll close your laptop until you’ve given me your list. Do you understand?”

“Yes, James.” Dean’s got his password in and his search engine up. “What’s the address?”

Jimmy tells him. It’s surprisingly short and also very much not the URL for any porn sites Dean knows.
The page loads.

Panties.

Lingerie.

Lace and ribbon, silk and satin.

Beneath the company name, beneath the banner listing categories, there are two models.

One is a man.

A man with his cock cradled by this wispy little number. It’s red and silky over his cock and balls, lifting them up and showing off the bulge, but the sides are black lace with a deep red bow on each hip.

Dean’s dick strains inside his boxer briefs, overcome with lust and envy.

The woman ain’t half bad either. Her bra and g-string even match the man’s panties. Everything about her looks soft and smooth and inviting—directed toward her co-star on that little photo shoot. Like she agrees that this guy in panties looks fucking amazing.

“I think that’s a long enough look, Michael.”

“How, uh.” His throat doesn’t want to work. “How’d you find this?”

“A friend’s recommendation.”

“You went up to a guy and asked him where he got his panties?” How the hell does anyone even find out their guy friends wear panties?
“I went up to a genderfluid friend and asked them if they knew about any equal-opportunity lingerie, yes.”

Confused but horny, Dean errs on the side of horny. Unlike his dick, it’s not hard. “This is all real stuff?”

“Close the laptop,” James orders firmly. “Let me hear it click shut. Questions later, your list now.”

Dean closes the laptop. It’s already burned into his mind, that homepage. The red and black, the lace and bows.

Dick aching in his briefs—plain and gray, a polyester-cotton blend—Dean reaches over to his bedside table and grabs the list he’d had the foresight to write down. He can always count on Jimmy to distract him out of his mind.

“Okay, so. I fed a friend. Drove another friend home from the bar. I did all my chores and crap. Did all the work crap. I didn’t complain about staying after to finish on time, either. I finally did this thing I’d been putting off. I got my car ready for winter. I listened to my brother complain about stuff. I bought and ate vegetables. On purpose. And… And I followed the rules all week. Yes to masturbation, no to sex, only coming in my sleep, socialize every day. That’s ten.”

He rattles it off nice and quick, this list he’s been adding to since Friday. He’d changed his mind on admitting to the real number ten, but saying those would be committing to the reality of it.

“Is it ten?” Jimmy asks.

Dean’s numbered them. “Yep.”

“Tell me what makes each of them good. I asked how you’ve been good.”

“...Yeah, I knew that was too easy. It’s never that easy with you.”
“You like a challenge. I like challenging you.”

It’s not even said in a sexy way, but that doesn’t seem to matter. Especially not after what Dean’s been doing to himself for nearly two weeks now. It’s fucking with his sleep pretty bad and he knows he has to stop before finals start, but not yet.

“So, what, you want an essay or something?”

“A short answer is acceptable, but you will be graded on syntax and grammar.”

Dean snorts. “You’re sure you’re not into student-teacher roleplay?”

“I’m sure, and you’re stalling. Tell me, or we’re not going to pick out the panties you’d look best in.”

If Dean was ever going to spontaneously combust, now would be the time. The flush in his entire body, his heart sending everything racing around in glorious confusion, it’s an almost painful form of bliss.

“Okay. Um. First one. Fed my friend, so, y’know. Friendship. Is good. Made myself a thing he’d wanted to try, so I fed him too.”

“Friendship and thoughtfulness,” James summarizes, sounding like the world’s most inappropriate children’s program. “Good. Next.”

“Drove the guy home from the bar so he could stay longer. Thoughtful friend again, I guess. He would have had to go home with his wife or have her come back to pick him up. Double-thoughtful, I guess, with her involved.”

“Good. The third?”

“Chores and crap. Y’know. Cleaning, dishes, laundry, all that. Got that done.”

“That’s a list of tasks, Michael. What makes them good?”
Dean takes a second to frown. “Being responsible? That’s not good enough?”

“It is good enough, but it’s not something you said.”

With a strange sort of unease, Dean presses on. “Okay, so number four is kind of the same with work crap. There was extra crap, a lot of it, and that’s why five’s not complaining about it. I know I’m complaining now, but that doesn’t count. You asked.”

“You’re moving ahead without me,” James warns. “Slow down. Tell me why the ‘work crap’ was good.”

“Being responsible.”

“To whom?”

“Did you seriously just say ‘whom’?”

“Did you just talk back to me like a brat?” James counters.

Dean takes a breath and smooths out the list on his bed. “No, James.”

“Then answer the question. To whom were you being responsible?”

“My boss,” Dean says immediately. “‘Cause he trusts me not to fuck up. And to the, uh. Client. Clients. That’s just basic business, giving ‘em what they’re paying for. To, to my employees. Gotta make sure they know I got their backs.”

“Doesn’t that sound better than ‘I did my work crap’?”

It sounds like bullshit. Like a bloated resume printed on a Hallmark card.
Dean’s silence must speak for him, because Jimmy sighs and says, “Being productive isn’t the same as being good. There’s overlap, but I’m not interested in you being my productive boy. I don’t want busywork out of you. I want your thoughts. I want you bending your mind to the tasks I set for you.”

Dean sits in silence a bit longer before asking, “Am I supposed to stay hard through this too?”

“That’s entirely optional. As long as you don’t come before we find the right pair of panties for you, you can play or not play with yourself however you like.”

“Okay.”

“You mentioned not complaining on your list.”

“Yeah. Not bothering people, that’s being thoughtful. Not making annoying shit worse.”

“But you listened to your brother complain,” James points out.

“He’s a little brother, little brothers are whiny.” Especially with a difficult court case he can’t actually discuss. Sam describes the outline of his stress in the vaguest terms, hours of research here, hours of editing and cross-referencing there. A boss demanding this and a client demanding that.

“Was he being bad, complaining?”

“No, but that’s not the same,” Dean shoots back, not about to let Jimmy lead him to a conclusion and rub his nose in it. “I don’t complain to my employees about the job. That’s being a shit leader. You’re outside of it, so, yeah, fine, I’ll complain to you. Happy?”

“Yes, actually. I do want you to ask for help when you need it.”

Dean snorts. “That’s not what complaining is.”
“It can be. What was the next item on your list?”

Not wanting to argue, Dean lets the conversation move along. “I did this thing I’d been putting off like an idiot.”

“Which is good because?”

With that piece of disagreement still alive in his chest, Dean makes himself say, “I stopped being irresponsible.”

“That’s how you weren’t bad. Tell me how you were good.”

“This is stupid.”

Voice dropped low, speaking far more of ire than of lust, James asks, “Michael, what is the requirement for being my good boy?”

It takes Dean a second to remember. More than a second. “I have to want to be your good boy.”

“Do you? Want that.”

Dean takes a second more, just to calm down. He fails, but he becomes not calm in a different way. “Yeah,” he whispers.

“But you don’t want to show me how you’ve been a good boy?”

“It’s all small, stupid stuff.” Dean can’t be good if he can’t be good enough. He’s not even doing phone sex right anymore. He only gets two more calls after this, and he’s already fucking this one up.

“If I wanted big, important things, I wouldn’t have asked for ten of them in a week. Would that have been reasonable?”
Dean’s honestly not sure. “For some people. Firefighters. Nurses. Lawyers pushing for class action lawsuits. People like that.”

“People who help other people.”

“Yeah. Exactly.”

“I’m not interested in everyone around you,” James says, the phrasing sending Dean’s heart back to the races. “How have you been helping yourself?”

“I did mention the vegetables, right?”

“You did, and it counts.”

“Do I need to explain the vegetables?”

“Do I need to explain what being a brat is?”

Dean rolls his eyes. “No.”

“No, what?”

“No, James.”

“Better. Now tell me what makes the rest of your list good. This task you were putting off, what’s improved since you did it?”

“Nothing,” Dean says. He finally registered, or at least tried to. A couple classes, he’s begging and waiting to see, maybe waiting until the next school year to start. Until Dean’s third semester. That’s too many, way too many. How Sam got through years of this, Dean will never know. The only good part of Dean’s schedule is the Monday afternoon he’d managed to keep open for Cas.
“Is the pressure of it still weighing on you?”

Dean swallows.

“I’m sorry,” Jimmy says. Then, almost as awkward as Dean himself: “Do you want to tell me about it?”

“Hell no.”

“All right.”

“There is, uh. I mean, I already talked it out. With my buddy. The gay one. So he’s starting to catch on that I’m a fuck-up, but I did already talk it out.”

“If you call yourself a fuck-up one more time, I’m going to start using the term ‘tongue bath’ again.”

“Fine, I’ll just laugh at how stupid it sounds.”

“Not if it ruins an orgasm you’ve waited a week for,” James threatens. “You don’t get to break what’s mine. You don’t hurt it, disparage it, or belittle it, do you understand?”

Dean looks down at his damp boxer briefs and limp lump beneath.

“Do you understand?” James repeats in a low growl.

“...yes.” He swallows again. “Yes, James.”

“That’s better. I know this is difficult, but-”
Dean snorts. He doesn’t mean to. It just pops out, a sound he should have hidden.

“What’s so amusing?” James slaps down the words like a fucking interrogation, and Dean has the sudden image of himself tied to a chair in an empty room, James’ voice flicking at him from the shadows.

“This shit is easy. C’mon, you sound like fucking Sesame Street, man. You ask me how I’ve been good, I tell you about the power of sharing, brought to you today by the letters B and S.”

“If it’s so easy, why aren’t you doing it?” Though still a demand, the tone is different. Firmer. Not a strike, but a grappling hold.

Dean groans. “I’d tell you, but I don’t want to risk a tongue bath situation here.”

“Michael,” James says, exasperated beyond measure, and this is it. Three weeks early, this is it, Dean’s messed up too far. “Michael, do you think I’m designing these challenges to be easy? We’ve been over this, I can’t push your body, so I have to push your mind. If I’m pushing your heart too far, I want you to tell me. If I’ve miscalculated, I’ll stop.

“But if I understand you as well as I think I do,” James continues, “then you want a reward you’ve earned. You’re capable, you’re just frustrated. Now, I’m going to ask you a few questions, and I’m only going to ask you each one once. Your answers are going to be polite, or tonight is no longer panties night. Do you understand?”

“Yes, James,” Dean says with a minor grumble.

“Is that unreasonable?”

“No, James.”

“Do you want a different challenge? Or no challenge at all.”

Sitting up straight from his protective, half-sulking hunch, Dean blinks. “What?”
“We can skip to the end,” James clarifies without clarifying anything. “You’ve been exemplary all week in terms of denial, and you were very forthcoming about the nocturnal emission this time. Last week, you had to talk around it. Your progress is exemplary. Also, you did list ten good things you did, although I was asking for ten ways you’d been good. I should have been more precise, and it’s unfair for me to punish you for that. I apologize. We can go back to the panties now.”

“No, I…” Expecting to be interrupted, Dean didn’t prepare more words than just those two, but Jimmy leaves him hanging.

Finally, Jimmy says, “You don’t need to indulge my mistake.”

“I want to finish,” Dean tells him. “I want to do it, I can do it, lemme do it.”

“We’re on the clock,” Jimmy reminds him. “You don’t need to pay for what you don’t want.”

“I can do it.” Because, yeah, it’s embarrassing, but if that’s the point… Dean can take it. He’ll suck up so good, Jimmy will think he’s getting a tongue bath of his own. Face burning like a fireplace through a winter night, he adds, “Let me be your good boy.”

“I’ll always let you be that,” Jimmy answers, but there’s the slightest pause before he says it. Maybe surprise, maybe a chink in the armor, a crack in the persona. “What was the next piece on your list?”

It’s the easiest one of them all. “I put the snow tires on my car and got her ready for the roads getting salted up. Safety for me, safety for her, safety for everyone around us. Should I go into that more?”

“Only if you want to.” Jimmy sounds like he’s smiling and Dean fucking basks in it. He’s got this. He’s actually got it, he just needs to keep up momentum.

“Okay, then I did the whole big brother thing. The kid’s not a kid anymore. Doesn’t exactly come running to me a lot these days, so you gotta make it count, you know?”

“Not personally, no. I don’t have any siblings.”
That simple detail is as good as a tangible gift. And in Dean’s defense, it’s not like he starts sporting a chub because Jimmy’s an only child. He simply becomes aware that he already is, just a little.

Jimmy’s right about it all being mental. If Dean can’t get his ass stuffed full of fingers and lube, he can at least pack his head with useless personal trivia.

“Do you enjoy being an older brother?” Jimmy asks, apparently doing the same. “Do you have more than one sibling, or is it just Sammy?”

Without moving, while sitting on his bed, Dean somehow misses a step walking down the staircase of this conversation. “What?”

“What?” Jimmy asks right back.

“How do you know what his name is?”

“You told me, after Thanksgiving,” Jimmy says, the confusion in his voice giving way to gentleness. “You mentioned him by name while confiding in me.”

“While losing my shit at you.”

“I didn’t hear you defecate,” Jimmy deadpans.

Dean’s mouth twitches. “Yeah, well-”

“You haven’t finished the list,” Jimmy interrupts kindly. “There was one more.”

Dean looks, and he knows that what he said isn’t what he has written down. “Called you, didn’t I? My great big weekly indulgence. Blowing off steam, giving myself something to look forward to, that’s good, right?” Maybe it’s not something he’s earned, but it is something he’s taking.

“It is. You said before that you’d followed the rules.”
Right. “I mean, that’s all part of it.”

“And how did it feel?” James asks, voice again dipping down low. Lower even than his natural voice. Is he putting that on, or is it real? “What made following the rules good?”

His boxer briefs cling to the head of his straining dick. It’s wet and more than a little rough, with enough friction to make his thighs twitch and too little to make it satisfying. He’s recovered rapidly from that interlude, far more rapidly than he would have hoped or dreaded.

Clearing his throat, Dean says, “I do the stuff you say, and I’m your good boy. Kinda how it works.”

“But what makes that good?”

Dean’s burning face. His fingers cramping as he kept thrusting inside of himself. The rush of pride every time he writhed on his back, lying on his clasped hands, and succeeded in not coming. The restless dreams. The way he could hear Jimmy’s voice in his head even while he jerked off without him. The unrelenting sensuality of his own body as it kept being denied.

“I dunno,” Dean mumbles.

“I think you do. I know you do. You don’t have to say it, but I would be very pleased.”

Pleased enough to jerk off?

Dean thinks it. But he doesn’t ask it.

“I...” He clears his throat again. “I just like it, okay?” There’s no greater meaning to it than that. No responsibility, no objective, no goal. This isn’t Dean handling his work or taking care of his brother. There’s no moral benefit to jerking off and stopping short. “It feels good, that’s all.”

“And that makes it good,” Jimmy tells him. “It’s all right for you to feel good, Michael. That’s how I want to make you feel.”
“But that’s not, like, doing a good thing. Or being good, or whatever.”

“If you were my pet,” James says, prompting Dean to immediately have an aneurysm in the dick, “if you were my pet dog, and someone scratched your ears and brought you joy, would that be a good thing? A harmless action resulting in joy, is that good?”

“I guess,” Dean manages to say, back to sitting on his hands.

“If it’s true of a dog, it’s true of you,” James tells him. “Even more so, unless you’re going to tell me you deserve less than a dog.”

“Okay,” Dean says, shaky with lust and uncertainty.

“You said you dreamed about me when you came in your sleep.”

“Yeah?”

“What was I doing?”

Closing his eyes tight, ignoring the temptation of his closed laptop, Dean whispers, “Fucking me.”

“How was I fucking you?” James asks with the voice of a man who already knows. “I could fuck you so many ways, sweet boy, you’ll have to be specific. I could push you onto your back and fuck your cock with my ass. Is that what I was doing?”


“No,” Dean says.
“Should I keep guessing?”

“Yes.”

“Did I have you kneeling in front of me? Was I fucking your mouth?”

Dean’s mouth actually waters, and hell if that isn’t a weird moment. “Um. No.”

“If I wasn’t fucking your cock or your mouth, what was I fucking?”

Face burning so bright, Dean mutters, “My ass.”

“Of course. I was stuffing you full with my fingers.”

Both of Dean’s legs twitch, an aborted upward thrust of his hips. “N-no.”

James hums. “My mistake. I was fucking you with my tongue.”

Dean sucks in the biggest breath he can.

“Was I fucking you with my tongue? Were my thumbs pressing your cheeks open? Could you feel my breath against your hole?”

Dean somehow makes a noise of both approval and disagreement.

“If it wasn’t my fingers and it wasn’t my tongue, then what was it?” James asks. “Tell me what it was.”

“Want you to say it.” Dean’s face is on fire. His chest burns with the flush. He’s still not touching himself. “James, please.”
“You want me to say I was fucking you with a dildo? That I had you tied up on my bed, shoved my dildo up your ass, and watched you squirm on it? Is that what you want me to say?”

He’s not touching himself, not coming. Rock hard.

Dean could cry with how good it is. “James.”

“Or was it a vibrator?” James continues. “There are so many ways I could fuck you with a vibrator. The panties site isn’t the only one I’ve looked at lately. I could get a vibrator with a suction cup base and we could impale you while you swallow my cock. Was that how I was fucking you?”

“No, James.”

“Maybe it was a vibrator with a remote. Maybe you were at home with your half and I was at home with mine, and I was ruining your prostate over the phone.”

Oh, Jesus, is that even possible? What’s the range on those things?

“Or maybe,” James says, somehow still not out of ideas, “maybe I was fucking you by hand. Is that it? There are anal vibrators with cockrings attached, so it couldn’t have been one of those, but maybe I was grinding it in more than thrusting. Was that how I fucked you?”

“No, James,” Dean croaks, throat dry, body tense and tight.

“Tell me how I fucked you. Be my good boy.”

“You fucked me in the ass,” Dean confesses in a pained rush. “Dreamed about your dick in my ass and I came in my fucking sleep.”

“Good. Boy.”

Dean sobs, elated and alive and hovering on the edge of both orgasm and tears. His hips twist, grinding his dick against his wetly tented boxer briefs. “Lemme come. Please, I gotta…”

“If you want to end tonight now, you may come.”

Dean’s body seizes.

He struggles.

Hands still restrained beneath the weight of his own body, he succeeds.

He collapses backward, lying on his forearms, biting his lip as his breaths shudder out through his nose.

His dick says hard, even as his breathing softens.

“I’m good,” he rasps, twitching. “I mean, I’m, I can keep going.”

“You are good,” James murmurs. “You are so good. So good for me. Say it.”

“’m good for you.”

“Good boy. My sweet good boy.”

Dizzy, muscles twitching, Dean slowly focuses his eyes on the ceiling above him.

“Have you played with orgasm denial before, Michael?”

Dean hums a no.
“You’re doing so well, so quickly. You’re remarkable. I bet your restraint looks as beautiful as it sounds. Should we keep going?”

“Yes. Shit, no. Can’t, can’t take another week.” He’s got finals. He’s got studying and essays and those fucking finals, he needs to sleep, not to be kept up all night by how amazing his sheets feel against his body.

“Just for tonight,” Jimmy promises. “Tell me another way you’ve been good, or we can switch to the panties. And no coming until we find you the perfect pair.”


“What are you doing right now?”

“What are you doing right now?”

“Nothing! Nothing.”

“I meant, how are you positioned?”

“Lying down. On my hands.”

James inhales sharply. “You’re not even touching yourself?”

“Keep, keep rubbing against my boxers. That’s all, promise.”

“Oh, Michael,” James says, sounding awed. “You must look so beautiful right now.”

Dean’s face, his chest, his heart: it all burns brighter.

“We’re going to take a minute,” James tells him. “We’ll breathe together. We’ll get you calmer. But we don’t need to get you back under control. You’re already under control.”
"I'm under your control," Dean echoes, aching and on fire and blissed out of his mind on absolutely nothing.

"You're under your control. Your control. Your strength. And you're giving it all to me. That's a gift. You're a gift."

"Wanna get you something real."

"You're already real."

"No, like, like something with paper on it," Dean says. "Wrapping paper."

"Some of the panties have bows on them."

Dean lets out this long, mortifying giggle, sounding drugged even to his own ears. "God, I don't wanna stop. You're so... You're just... Shit, man. Not joking about the present thing. What d'you want for Christmas?"

James chuckles, and the emotion crashes over Dean as a physical wave, warm and rich and dark. He wants to drink kisses from the other man's mouth. He wants to drop to his knees and learn how to suck cock. He needs to use his mouth for something other than endless talking.

"I mean it," Dean adds, because talking is all he has unless James agrees. "You guys got a main office or something? Package for extension whatever your number is?"

"We do have a PO box for... tokens of affection. But I would rather we do something else."

"What if I got you really good coffee?" Dean offers. "Crowley said you're a coffee guy."

James goes quiet just long enough that Dean knows he's considering it. "It's tempting," he admits, "but I have a different idea."

"Yeah?" He can't help how breathless he sounds. Dean loves all of his ideas. Maybe not always
during them, but definitely after.

“Write down or remember whatever amount you would consider spending on a gift.”

Freeing his hands, Dean pushes himself back up to a seated position. His laptop sits there, closed and full of potential. “You’re—do you want me to buy panties? Seriously?”

“If a nineteen-year-old could make you put them on, I’m sure I can make you own them.”

It’s not a threat.

It’s not bragging.

It is a simple, unrelenting statement of fact, and Dean’s dick is in love with this man.

He makes a pathetic noise and fails to catch it in time.

“That’s right,” James whispers. “That’s good. That’s exactly how I want you. Now, should we keep playing and pushing your limits, or is it time to pick out how I’d like you to decorate your cock for me?”

The choice feels wrong, each side equally compelling for all Dean is mortified to say he wants either. “You decide.”

“I have decided,” James replies. “I’ve decided to make you decide. Now choose.”

“Uh.” Too horny to think. “Panties.” Has to be easier.

“Be polite.”

Between the blood crowding his dick and his face, the rest of his body should be deathly pale, but
he’s still hot all over. “The panties, please.”

“Open your laptop for me.”

Dean does, punching in the password. “Loaded back up.”

“Where should we start?” James muses. “Style or fabric? Is it more important how they look or how they feel?”

“Feel,” Dean says immediately. Because no one’s going to be seeing these. James will see them on the site, but Dean will be wearing them alone.

They start with satin. They take that tour. Dean pops open a few new tabs as they go, a list of considerations that have him licking his lips. They debate in rough, low voices, and Dean’s never heard James like this before, with a filthy scrape of arousal that might even be real.

“What about the next one down?” James asks. “Next row, the one on the left. I know you liked the bows.”

“Yeah, on the hips,” Dean says, admitting that way too easily. “Not in the center.”

“I thought the lace might be a good compromise.”

“You want the bow in the middle that bad?”

“Of course I do,” James tells him, as natural as anything. “I want to see that bow move as your cock hardens under it. I could suck on that little piece of ribbon until I had you begging.”

That wouldn’t take long. Even without James here, even without the slightest touch, it won’t take long now.

“Maybe,” Dean says, sold on the idea, not the garment. He still pushes his laptop a little further down his thighs to give his dick room. “The lace looks itchy, though. Maybe the next one? Wait, that’s got
a mesh back.”

“I wouldn’t mind the mesh,” James replies. “We could get you a pair of punishment panties. Something for you to wear for me after I’ve spanked you red.”

Dean swallows. “But you’re not going to.”

James takes a second to answer, as if he’d forgotten this. “There is that.”

They keep looking, scrolling down together. They might as well be watching porn. At the end of the satin section, James insists on checking silk before cotton.

“I don’t want you forgetting you’re wearing them,” he explains. “When you go outside, I don’t want you forgetting them for a single second.”

Dean’s breath catches. “You want me wearing them outside?”

“Tuck a t-shirt in, wear a longer shirt over that, and no one would ever know, even if you bent over,” James answers in the tone of a man who has thought about this a great deal. “For special occasions.”

Dean’s dick sits up nice and tall—or at least it tries to beneath his boxer briefs. It’s gotten so used to being ignored these past two weeks that Dean just stares down at the bulge between his legs and the pictures on the screen.

“I dunno about outside,” Dean says quietly.

“That’s fine,” James says. “I would still prefer you in silk over cotton. This should be something special.”

“Yeah, okay.”

They click over to the silk. Thongs and bikini cuts, boy shorts and boxers with an entirely mesh crotch. Dean asks James about that last one, but James says that it reveals too much to be a true tease.
Dean laughs over the unicorn g-string. James points out the teabag panties in a tone of fascination.

They’ve almost exhausted the silk options when they find it.

“That one,” Dean says. He starts clearing out the rest of his tabs. “That one, second to last row, on the left.”

“With the ruffles down the sides?”

Dean licks his lips. “Yeah. What, um. What d’you…?”

“I appreciate the bow in the middle very much,” James replies, “and I think the ruffles on the hips would be good to pet, don’t you?”

“Yeah.” That’s exactly what Dean was thinking. When he clicks through the link, the additional pictures show the actual sides of the panties when the ruffle layer is lifted, and it’s a slimmer band of fabric than even Rhonda Hurley’s panties had. Everything about her had been daring and in-your-face, even the bright shock of femininity embodied by that satiny slip of clothing.

These, though. They’re flouncy. They’re sexy but adorable, with the long ruffles on the sides almost hinting at a skirt, for all they would stop just below his hip bones.

“What color do you think?” James asks. “The cream looks nice, but I don’t know your coloring.”

There’s a blue option. It’s lingerie built for a dick, and there’s a blue option.

“Um,” Dean says.

“Would the pink match the head of your cock when it pops out the top?” James asks.

Shuddering, Dean pulls his dick out. He’ll say it’s just to check. “I’m, uh. A little darker than that.”
“Would you say the pink is somewhere between your cock and your stomach?”

Now that they’re here, Dean can’t stop working himself. “Yeah.”

With the slightest hint of sternness, James asks, “Are you touching yourself, Michael?”

“You, you said, once we found the right pair. You said I could.”

“ Decide on the color.”

“Pink, the pink is good.”

“With the ruffles in black or white?”

Black would be more badass. “White.” Prettier. No one’s gonna see, so it can be pretty.

“Good boy,” James praises, so rough and low, like a hand tightening around Dean’s hip, like fingertips digging into his skin, and Dean nearly loses it then and there. “Now put your laptop somewhere safe where you can still see the picture.”

“Yes, James.” He does. “Can I? Now?”

“Race me,” James challenges, and then there’s a sound Dean knows well. Very well. Has known for years and years.

“Are you…?”

“Is that all right?” Jimmy asks, as if there’s a chance in a balmy hell it wouldn’t be.

“If it’s real,” Dean says, or lies, or hopes. Because he would take anything. Anything at all, anything Jimmy wants to give him, Dean wants to have. So badly. “Don’t, don’t fake it, I can’t…”
Breaths uneven, his voice deeper than it’s ever been, Jimmy rasps, “Real. I like, I really like these.”

“Oh fuck,” Dean manages to say, and then he’s going so hard and fast he has to stop for lube. His dick handles the stopping part way too well, handles it like that’s always been normal. The cool lube goes over less well, but Dean doesn’t care. His sharp hiss makes Jimmy ask if he’s okay, and it stops, the sound of Jimmy jerking it stops with that concern, stops until Dean says what’s happened.

And then they’re working themselves again. Together.

With grunts and twists and pulls and frantic motions of forearm and wrist and hips, Dean pushes himself hard before he hits that wall. Too long denied, his dick refuses. He should be going off like a shot, but he can’t, too well-trained. It’s a sneeze caught in the nose, a burp trapped in the chest, but better, so much better once it escapes, if only it can. He’s barely even paying attention to it.

Jimmy’s breathing turns into an uneven mess. He’s going at it, but not as hard as Dean, not as desperate, but Dean can get him there, Dean has to get him there. Dean’s gonna get Jimmy off, he’s gonna hear Jimmy come, Jimmy might just be jerking off to men’s panties, and Dean doesn’t even fucking care anymore.


Jimmy makes a noise as low and deep and filthy as the gutter Dean’s mind lives in. A noise with his throat, yet more sounds with his hand and dick. So fucking good, so fucking fast.

Dean topples over onto his side, one hand still working to the pace of Jimmy’s breath, other other finding its way back. “Keeping ‘em on. Fingering my hole and keeping ‘em on. I want, fuck, please, man, I want you to fuck me so bad. Want you so bad, I’m so fucking bi for you, feel like I’m going full-on gay for you, wanna be your good boy with a bow on my dick. Wanna learn how to suck yours. Sixty-nine it, dick down my throat, you kissing my panties-”

Dean comes first.

His throat clicks shut, straining for silence. His ears ring with wanting. His ass clenches around his one lubed finger, his waistband digging into wrist and balls and hips as he jizzes.
And then Jimmy comes.

With a low groan. With these hitching “ah, ah, ah” noises in time with his following strokes. He comes like he can’t stop coming, just like Dean, like Dean being turned inside out from ages of holding back, from weeks of teasing.

Entire body pulsing, Dean keeps stroking, keeps fingering. Oversensitivity hits him. He powers through. He yelps—and keeps coming. He comes so hard it hurts. He comes until his face is wet and the towel filthy.

An eternity later, he pulls his hands free of his soaked underwear. He flops onto his back, righting the headset against the pillow without his hands, his dirty fingers loosely gripping the towel. The waistband keeps digging into his balls, but it’s firm. Reassuring. Like Jimmy’s breathing.

Another eternity.

Too short an eternity.

“Did you…?” Dean asks as euphoria creeps into doubt.

“Yes,” Jimmy says, sounding stunned. “Hold on.”

There’s a click of a headset being put down. A creak of a chair. And then, from a short distance, the noise of tissues being pulled from a box.

It was real.

It was *real*.

Jimmy puts the headset back on. He clears his throat. “You should get those panties.”
“Yeah. *Yeah.*” Dean starts grinning the doperiest grin of his life. He sounds drugged. He feels high. He lets out the stupidest laugh. “If this company isn’t paying you commission, it should be.”

“For the calls?” Jimmy asks, and Dean can just hear him frowning. Sounds fucking adorable.

“The panties, c’mon, dude.”

“Oh,” Jimmy says, and there’s a laugh in that single syllable, even though there isn’t.

God, he’s…

He’s Jimmy, that’s what.

“So was it good for you too?” Dean asks before the fear can stop him.

“You’ve been paying attention to my kinks,” Jimmy accuses.

“Uh, yeah. I do that. Kinda why I don’t normally have to pay for it. You probably haven’t noticed with the whole being my gay training wheels thing, but I’m actually awesome at sex.”

Jimmy makes a noise of amusement, but not one of mockery. “Confidence sounds good on you.”

Dean’s lungs empty themselves out even before he exhales. “Yeah?”

“Yes. Very much so.”

Lying on his back in nothing but filthy boxer briefs, Dean turns his head to grin lazily at his laptop screen. He wipes his hand before prodding the touch pad and his screensaver gives way to the panties.

“I like this,” Dean says.
“Happiness sounds good on you, too.”

The urge to cover his face with a pillow rises up, but Dean resists it the way he’s learned to resist orgasm. It feels related.

“I got, um.” He lets his eyes close. Because they’re tired, not because he’s afraid. Nothing to be afraid of. He’s going to get more praise. He’ll say it, and he’ll get more praise. “That thing we talked about?”

“We talk about a lot of things,” Jimmy reminds him, still sounding relaxed and fond in both of Dean’s ears.

“I got an appointment. Haven’t had it yet, couldn’t swing it that quick, but. I got one.”

Jimmy’s silent for a second before asking, “With a therapist?”

A school counselor. For academic stuff. For the upcoming finals. Not for any of the shit that’s wrong with Dean deeper down, but Jimmy doesn’t have to know that. Jimmy probably wouldn’t mind—much—for it just being that.

“I mean, it’s just gonna be a quick thing,” Dean says, hedging. “Not like anything huge or whatever.”

“Michael, I am so proud of you,” Jimmy tells him.

“It’s not a big deal.”

“It is to me.”

He feels flushed pink, as adorable and sultry as anything on this website. “Yeah?”
“Yes,” Jimmy says, and that is heaven.

“You know I worry,” Jimmy adds, and that is hell.

“...Right,” Dean says. “Right, ‘cause I’m-”


He looks away from the laptop, up to the ceiling. Up to fewer distractions. “You don’t sound like you got a disorder.”

“The night I told you about the child who called, I did.”

It takes Dean a second to catch up. “You mean the night the dude threatened you.”

“Yes. But I care more about the boy. Did I help? Did I help enough? Should I have ended the call immediately?” Jimmy’s tone slips from relaxed into tense with each question, barreling down the road to distressed. “What if I made it worse for when one of his parents finds the phone bill? Most of the advice I gave him could easily be found online. What if-”

Jimmy cuts himself off.

He takes a deep breath.

He exhales slowly.

“I did what I could, and now I’m putting it aside,” Jimmy states as if quoting something, or maybe reciting a mantra. “I wanted to help, and this isn’t helpful.”

“What does help?”
“Time. Therapy. Some medication.”

Dean doesn’t know what to say.

“I was off it for a few years, but I had to go back on,” Jimmy continues. “The side effects are worth the stability.”

“If you wanted to quit sooner,” Dean says, because he’s an idiot like that. There’s no second half to the sentence, only the start of it, but Jimmy gets it anyway.

“It’s not the job. It’s more the other job. Here, I get to be more detached. Less invested.”

Dean can’t help the way he snorts. “This is you less invested?”

“I told you, you’re a special case,” Jimmy says.

“No, I, uh.” Dean clears his throat. “I meant the kid.”

“Oh,” Jimmy says. “Him too. In any case, you don’t have to worry about my last few weeks. Being other people can be entertaining.”

“Who— is closest to being you? —do you like best?”

“Steve and Jimmy. Steve is usually the Dom persona, if pressed. For Jimmy conversations, I typically end up in the sub role.”

Dean’s stomach turns over, and maybe this was a bad thing to be thinking about. He wakes up his laptop again, looks at the panties some more. He lies there with one hand on his chest, rising and falling with his breaths. “But you, you -you, which way do you go?”

“I’m a switch.”
“You mean, you do both? Either?”

“I like being what my partner needs.”

“Well, uh. You should like the crap out of being Jimmy. Just so you know.”

“I’d thought so,” Jimmy says gently, “but it’s good to have the confirmation.”

“So you’re gay, but you’re, like, BDSM-bi?”

Jimmy makes a quiet noise of amusement. “That’s one way to put it. Have you considered us switching roles?”

Someone manlier would say yes. Dean knows that. Dean always knows what someone manlier would do, but for once, he doesn’t do it. “I really like this shit we do, man.”

The grin in Jimmy’s voice grows louder. “It’s good to have that confirmation, too.”

“Oh, screw you.”

“If you like.”

Dean chuckles. “Yeah, I walked right into that one.”

They lie there in silence for a few moments. At least, Dean lies there. Jimmy might be sitting down in a chair again.

“What’s therapy like?” Dean asks. “If it was that bullshit you see on TV, I can’t picture you pushing for it so hard.”

“It depends on the therapist. If it helps, think of them as a tutor for emotional situations. Living
through them, coping with them, getting out of them. It’s not lying on a couch and whining, but it’s also not like on TV where the therapist says a random phrase that ties into some other puzzle.”

“Think I know what you mean.” Dean also thinks he really needs to get caught up on *Dr Sexy, MD*, but that is neither here nor there. “Just seems stupid. Not that I’m calling you stupid. You’re not stupid. You’ve got, y’know. Actual shit going on. I mean, I’ve only been bi a couple months and it’s already driving me nuts.”

“I’ve worked very hard for a life where I don’t have to be closeted,” Jimmy says, “but I do remember the kind of strain you’re going through.”

“It’s not a big deal,” Dean says.

“You just said it was driving you nuts.”

“A guy can exaggerate. I’m not lock-me-up crazy or anything.”

Jimmy goes quiet.

“I’m not,” Dean insists.

“I was,” Jimmy tells him.

Dean adjusts the headset. “You what?”

“I was hospitalized,” Jimmy says.

Dean goes from lying down to sitting up with no sense of anything in the middle. The room sways. Lights crackle behind his eyes. His body has no idea what it’s doing anymore, but his underwear is beyond crunchy at this point, so worried or not, he whips it off. “When? Are you okay?”

“I apologize, I phrased that poorly,” Jimmy says, too calm to be calm. “It was over a decade ago.”
“But you’re okay now?”

“Like I told you: time, therapy, and medication.”

Dean needs to hold him. More badly than he’s ever needed to come, Dean needs to hold this man.

He settles for grabbing his pillow and wrapping both arms around it tight. It’s soft against his tired dick, and the touch lends a strange intimacy to the moment. “Why are you telling me this? What happened to that whole, no personal details thing?”

“They can’t fire me that much sooner,” Jimmy says.

“No, I mean.” Dean swallows. “Why tell me?”

“Because if I’d gotten help sooner, I wouldn’t have been hospitalized for a year.”

“For a-”

“I’m not saying I think you’ll be hospitalized,” Jimmy interrupts over him. “I’m explaining my thought process. I told you, I worry. I try to take control of situations I have no business in controlling, sometimes to disastrous results.”

“I dunno, I think we’ve had good results,” Dean jokes with no idea what else to say.

“I didn’t take that control, Michael. You gave it to me. That’s what makes it work.”

Dean rubs a hand over his flushed face. “Still not sure why you’re telling me.”

“I’m invested in your happiness,” Jimmy says bluntly. “I think you’re a good man, and I think your knee-jerk reaction to hearing that is to argue that you try to be a good man.”
Unnerved, Dean closes his mouth.

“I know I’d worry about you,” Jimmy continues. “Two weeks from now, we’re going to say goodbye, and then I won’t know what’s happened to you. I’ve started thinking that if I don’t see you set up now, it will nag at me for a long time.”

“So you’re, what, saying whatever you think it’ll take to get me to go to therapy?”

“Only truthful things,” Jimmy answers, as if he thinks Dean hadn’t taken him at his word. “I’ve been trying to frame it in ways you’ll accept, but sometimes it seems that whenever I tell you something, you believe the exact opposite.”

“It doesn’t have to be goodbye,” Dean says. “And no, I don’t mean, I don’t know, meeting up or whatever. But I could stick something up on Craigslist or whatever. ‘Missed connection: hot dude to phone sex guru, all is well.’ Something like that.”

“...I’d appreciate that,” Jimmy says after a pause. “You don’t need to indulge me, but I’d appreciate it.”

“You’ve indulged me on a lot, dude.”

“It doesn’t feel like it.”

Dean fiddles with the cord of his headset. “You have. And, look. You don’t need to talk me into the therapy thing. I’ve got the appointment, I’ll see how stupid it is, and if anything actually looks useful, I’ll stick around for more. The second someone tells me to meditate with a ‘healing crystal’ or something, I am out of there, though.”

“That sounds more like a New Age yoga class.”

“Wouldn’t stick around for that either.”
“That’s reasonable.”

Cool. He’s only going for Jimmy anyway. And the studying help, because he can’t keep pushing Cas into being his free tutor. Bringing his mind back to better things, Dean reaches back over to his laptop. “Do you really want me to order these?”

“To… Oh. I want it to be something for later,” Jimmy says. “If there’s a night next month when you want to call me, your instructions are to order those panties and not to come until they arrive.”

Dean’s dick might be lying down, but it sure as hell isn’t asleep. “Yeah, I can do that.” He can and he will, no question about it.

“You’re allowed expedited shipping, but you still have to come while wearing them.”

“I can do that,” Dean repeats, raspier than the first time.

“That’s my good boy,” Jimmy praises. “If you want more after that, I want you in a mesh-backed pair, and you’re to spank yourself twice for each day it took to ship. How does that sound?”

“Yeah, I can do that too.” At this rate, Dean’s going to lose his voice.

“Such a good boy. Thank you, Michael.”

“Definitely my pleasure, man. Definitely.”

Jimmy hums and they go quiet again.

Dean settles back down, lying there naked. He looks over at the panties again and pulls his laptop over. “So… Which mesh pair? You still like the bow on the front? Don’t really see any mesh with that.”

“I don’t think there were any with ruffles either.”
They look, pointing each other this way and that. The pair they settle on is sleek and shiny in the front and just the front, the only solid part the area cupped around the crotch.

“I’d love to see you fall out of these,” Jimmy says, not with lust but with curiosity. “Maybe the blue. Would that bring out your eyes?”

“We’d want the green.”

“Oh,” says Jimmy, sounding surprised. Pleasantly so. “You could get the green.”

The green with standard shipping.

“Yeah, okay.”

They get quiet again. Dean can hear Jimmy still clicking around. Guy must be back at a desk or something, because he’s got a mouse. Eventually, Jimmy stops clicking.

“What’re you looking at?” Dean asks.

“The first pair.”

“Oh.”

Still lying on his side, head propped up by one hand, his elbow on the bed, Dean checks the call length. He winces and says nothing.

“Does it change how you think of me?” Jimmy asks suddenly.

“The panties thing?”
“The hospitalization.”

“Oh. Right.”

Jimmy waits for him to say something.

Dean fumbles. “I mean…”

“It’s all right,” Jimmy tells him. “I’d rather hear the truth than be left wondering.”

“I’m paying through the nose to sit with you in silence,” Dean says flatly. “After I already came. Think that says it all, really.”

Jimmy sighs. “It doesn’t. You’ve stayed on while worried about me before.”

“You’ve hauled your ass out of a bigger hole than I’ve ever been in.” He sits up to say it, legs folded. “So if you think knowing that changes how I think of you… yeah. It does.”

A long pause.

“...Thank you.”

“You’re one of my favorite people,” Dean admits, because Jimmy needs it. Because Dean can finally give the guy something, anything. “Seriously. Sight unseen.”

“I wish you had better people.”

“I’ve got good ones,” Dean says. “You’re just awesome.”

“Thank you,” Jimmy says again, shaky but serious. “You should know, you help me look forward to Thursdays, and I am going to miss that.”
Dean’s lungs tremble, stopping his breath. He coughs. “Well, shucks.”

“Don’t be sarcastic,” Jimmy instructs, not at all rising to the bait. “Not unless you want to lose the library role play next week.”

“Yes, James,” Dean says, and he’ll pretend he rolled his eyes.

“Do you have anything in mind for the week after that?”

Their last night.

“Um. I’ll let you know. But if you wanna come up with ideas next week, I wouldn’t say no.”

“I can do that,” Jimmy says. “What about tonight? Are you dropping at all?”

“Nope. Feeling good.” A little embarrassed something simple was so difficult, but if Jimmy knew it would embarrass him, then that’s just Jimmy playing him like a fiddle. Hell, Jimmy plays him like a concert violin, and that’s enough to turn any embarrassed blush into an aroused flush.

“I’m glad.”

“And you’re good? Even with telling me your stuff?”

“I’m good.” There’s even a smile in Jimmy’s voice.

Instantly, there’s one on Dean’s face as well. “Awesome. So, uh.”

“Fifteen seconds left in this minute.”
Dean groans. “Okay, okay. Talk to you next week.”

“Good night, Michael.”

“’Night, Jimmy.”

Dean hangs up, but before he unplugs his headset, he kisses the edge of his very hot phone.

Two calls left.

Chapter End Notes

Don't worry: the library portion of this chapter is coming next week. As fun as it was posting the Monday after each of these events "happen," I'm finally breaking that pattern. I know a lot of you were looking forward to my update on December 24th, what with the promised December 23rd baking date, but real time and fic time are now diverging timelines.

As always, updates every Monday, time of day may vary.

To see what else I'm working on, you can follow me on tumblr here or dreamwidth here.
Opening Up

Chapter Summary

At long last, Dean talks to someone other than Jimmy.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Dean brews his coffee, packs up his shit, and heads out the door without tasting the sandwich he chokes down. Despite banking on a longer commute due to driving during the lunch hour, he gets to campus with time to spare and ends up twiddling his thumbs in the health center. He fills out a form and gets confirmation multiple times that, yes, this is a service provided by the university for all its students.

A girl in the waiting room, maybe twenty or so, also points out that the nets hanging under the raised walkway across campus are also provided by the university for all its students. The receptionist shushes her pretty hard, and it takes Dean a second to wrap his mind around people literally killing themselves over finals.

Was that what got Jimmy hospitalized all the way back then? If he’s Dean’s age, the timing might be right. Or maybe it was something else.

Dean gets called in for his appointment long before he’s reconciled himself to never knowing the answer. Unlike the last five people to get called in, Dean isn’t greeted at the door leading to the back by his shrink-of-the-day. Instead, one of the two receptionists tells him he’s with Pamela and instructs him to go to the third door on the right, around the corner.

Shouldering his bag and carrying his winter jacket, Dean makes the journey. The door in question says Pamela Barnes, and there’s a circular sign with a rotating tab under the name plate. The sign currently reads Come on in! in black text over green.

Dean knocks anyway.

“Come on in!” a woman calls through the door.
Dean opens it and the room is dim. The one window has peach curtains framing a gloomy sky, and that’s it for the light. An unused ceiling light has a friend in the equally dark table lamp between a tiny sofa and an armchair. There’s also a desk against the wall with a computer, a chair, and a woman at it. The woman turns her chair toward him, her hair a long brown wave over the wide neckline of her sweater.

“Dean, right?” she asks, her face angled toward him. The sunglasses make it pretty clear she’s not actually looking at him, but the white cane leaning by the door is also a hint.

“That’s me.”

“I’m Pamela,” she says. “Mind switching the sign?”

“Oh, sure.” Dean slides the gap in the tab over until the message reads *In Session* against a red background. He steps inside and closes the door behind him.

“Thanks,” Pamela says. “Grab any seat you like. Except mine.” She pulls down her glasses and winks with a grin. Her eyes are brown.

After a second of hesitation, Dean dumps his stuff on the couch and plants his ass in the armchair. “So… Not sure how much of the intake form they give you.”

She leans forward a little, hands on her knees, the kind of woman who can make tight jeans look comfortable. “How about you tell me about yourself? Not to be rude, but I couldn’t read your handwriting.”

Dean hurriedly coughs over his own laugh.

“No, I do get a processed version of the intake form, but I’d rather listen,” Pamela continues. She shrugs. “It’s what I’m here for.”

“Well,” Dean says, shifting in the armchair, “I’m a mechanic.”

She smiles. “Do you enjoy it?”
“Hell yeah,” Dean says.

She smiles wider. “What kind of mechanic? Cars, trucks, boats? Androids?”

“Just the cars. Classic muscle cars, if you got ‘em.”

“I don’t drive,” she says with the relish of someone who gets to reuse the same bad joke for the rest of her life. “So no, I don’t got ‘em. Why the classic cars?”

“I’m big into restoration,” Dean says. “Whatever’s on the road is our bread and butter, but if I had to pick one thing and go with it? Classic muscle car restoration.”

Nodding along, Pamela asks, “So what brings you to us this year, Dean? You’re a freshman?”

“Uh, yeah. Business.”

“For the garage? Or auto shop?”

Dean nods.

Pamela waits.

“Yeah, for the business,” Dean says after way too long a pause.

“Did you nod?”

“Yeah.”

“I’m going to need you to vocalize everything you’re trying to convey,” Pamela says with a hint of
polite yet perfunctory apology. “If it’s something that only works with body language, you can make a noise and I’ll try to guess from there.”

“No, I’m good with that,” Dean says. “Do a lot of talking on the phone.”

“For business or pleasure?”

And just like that, Dean is so immensely glad she can’t see him. “Both. The job and, and this buddy of mine. Plus my brother’s out in California, so...”

Pamela nods along. “So what brings you to the health center today?”

“Finals,” Dean says, his pre-prepared answer. “Been a long time since high school and I didn’t do so hot then. Just gotta get through without crashing and burning, and I figure you guys see enough students to know what’s what.”

“Smart,” Pamela says. She leans back in her swivel chair, hands folded in her lap. “There’s a lot of common problems. Not knowing how to study, not knowing how to handle stress, and being distracted by other issues, those are the main ones.”

“I know how to study,” Dean says. “Got a study buddy every Friday, and I’ve basically spent the past week teaching the entire curriculum to my boss. Got a bunch of studying tactics too. Making guides, switching topics, the whole shebang. Didn’t completely fall on my ass for midterms, so I should be okay.”

“Good. How are the stress levels about the tests?”

“I handle customer service bullshit. I can deal.”

Nodding along, Pamela asks, “Are distractions an issue?”

“Like what?”

“The family’s good,” Dean says, because he’s got no problems there, none whatsoever. “Little brother’s becoming a hot shot lawyer, working his way up in the firm as the research monkey. The only reason I’m here is how good he’s doing. Y’know, the problem with putting a lawyer through school is he fucking turns around and argues at you, and when he wins, it’s your own damn fault for getting him trained up.”

With a small grin, Pamela asks, “What did you argue about?”

“Not argue. Not really. Think he thought he had to pay me back or something, and my boss—our uncle, kind of. Not by blood, but family. My boss thought it’d be a good idea for me to get trained up too, so here I am.”

“A business major is a big switch from classic muscle cars,” Pamela says.

“Tell me about it.”

Apparently taking him at his word, she says, “Even a good change has a lot of stress come with it. Uncertainty, confusion. How are you holding up?”

“Fine.”

She looks at him with the angle of her body.

“I’m fine,” Dean repeats. “The job’s fine.”

Nodding, Pamela asks, “Then what isn’t?”

“Told you. Finals.”

“How so?” she asks.
Dean tries to wait her out, but there’s nowhere to prod, no way to make her budge. The options quickly dwindle to admitting defeat and leaving, or continuing to talk. Why the hell did he do this to himself?

Oh, right. Jimmy.

“Okay, I’m distracted,” Dean says. “Friend of mine has an anxiety disorder and I don’t know how to help him. Figure someone in your profession might.”

That gets an actual flicker of surprise across her face. “I can see how that would be distracting. Are things reaching a crisis point?”

“No. I mean, I don’t think so. No.”

“But it’s pressing enough that you can’t ask him to wait two weeks until finals are over?”

“No, he-“ Dean needs a lie. “He’s shipping out,” Dean says. “Right after Christmas.”

Her chin lifts as her head tilts back, mouth open in an oh. “A deployment is a lot to be worried about. How’s he handling it?”

“He’s worrying about me instead. That’s kind of his thing. Gets worried about people, wants to take over and solve their problems, gets in these worry loops when he can’t. He does his whole breathing and calming down thing, but he was still thrilled out of his head when I told him I’d be seeing you today.”

“The good news is, the military is getting better at mental health,” Pamela reassures him. “It also sounds like he already has his own therapist, from what you’ve told me. Has he said why he’s worried about you?”

Dean shrugs. A few seconds later, he remembers to say, “I dunno. He just worries about shit. Kind of his thing. Y’know. Anxiety.”
“Oh, I know,” Pamela says. “But if he gave you a specific example, we could figure out ways around the perceived problem.”

“Um.”

While Dean thinks, Pamela pushes the loose sleeve of her maroon sweater up past her wrist. She touches her fingers around her watch in a quick sweep that Dean initially takes for a prompting to hurry up, but it looks like she’s just checking the time.

Right, there are time limits on these kind of appointments.

Dean grabs the first example that comes to mind, no matter how it makes him want to squirm. “He doesn’t like the way I talk, sometimes.”

“What way?”

“I dunno,” Dean says with another useless shrug. “You mind if I turn on a light?”

“Sorry, go ahead. You haven’t been sitting totally in the dark, have you?”

“Nah, the window’s good.” Dean turns on the lamp.

Pamela keeps waiting.

“Does that happen a lot?” Dean asks. “People sitting in the dark, too afraid to ask?”

“I hope they’re not afraid to ask. I try to stay approachable.”

And she still keeps waiting.

After so long a pause that Dean considers pulling out his phone, Pamela says, “It sounds to me like
he’s worried how you’ll be when he’s away.”

“Yeah.” That one’s easy enough to agree with. “He’s been pushing me to hang out with other people more.”

“Pushing?”

“I mean, not in a bad way. Asking.”

“Do you think he’s trying to isolate himself?”

“No. He just asked me to talk to somebody once every day. Outside of classes and work, I mean. Socialize.”

Pamela nods. “It sounds like he wants to make sure you’ll have someone to talk to while he’s deployed. You must be close.”

The way she says it, like a fact, sticks right into Dean, a clean stab between the ribs. “I mean, he’s… I think he’s awesome. He thinks I’m this mess that’s gonna fall apart without him.”

That’s what all that shit about ordering the panties was about. Dean’s not an idiot.

He’s still gonna do it anyway, but he’s not an idiot.

“Did he tell you that?”

Dean shrugs. After a few more seconds, he adds, “He’s been hinting it.”

With a faint frown, Pamela leans forward. “In what words?”

“The talking with other people stuff,” Dean explains.
“But did he explicitly tell you he thinks you’re going to fall apart?”

“Didn’t need to.”

“Do you think that’s something he’s worried about?” Pamela asks.

“Look, I’m a mess, but I’m not that big of a mess.”


“He worries about a lot of people,” Dean says, feeling kind of like a heel for spilling Jimmy’s shit to someone else. But patient confidentiality’s a thing, right? “The guy’s still worried over this one kid he spoke to once, and that was weeks ago. He doesn’t really need to know you to get attached, you know?”

Pamela drums her fingers on her knee for a second before leaning forward further, elbows on knees, hands clasped. “All right, I’ve got a few ideas for a plan to reassure your friend.”

Dean leans forward too. “Seriously? It’s that easy?

“Not all of them will work, and some of them would only work over time, but I think it’s worth casting a wide net, don’t you?”

“Definitely. What do you have?”

“Sometimes, we need to see good coping techniques modeled for us,” Pamela says. “If we don’t see them done when we’re growing up, they can be harder to pick up during adulthood, but it’s definitely possible. You said he doesn’t like the way you talk about yourself?”

Dean stops leaning forward so hard. “It’s just how I talk.”
“But what kind of thing is it that you say?”

“I dunno. Stuff. I tell it like I see it.” His brain catches up with his mouth. “Uh. Like I find it.”

Pamela grins. “If I only told things like I saw them, I’d never say anything. Point of view is important, Dean. And here’s something I know from my profession that yours probably hasn’t taught you: many people with anxiety have the tendency to assume they know what other people are thinking. If your friend has a good therapist, he’s probably gone over this to some degree.”

“Okay?” Dean says, waiting for the payoff.

“The good part about not assuming we can read someone’s mind is that it helps cut down on assuming everyone hates us,” Pamela explains. “The bad part is that it doesn’t always click when someone else isn’t thinking the same way. Earlier, you called yourself a mess. When your friend hears you say that, do you think he takes you at your word?”

...Oh.

“Oh,” says Dean. “You’re saying I’m making him worry more?”

Pamela smiles. “Is that what I said?”

Dean stops. “Isn’t it?”

“No. I asked you something. I didn’t tell you anything.”

“But you meant-”

She lifts her hand. “That sounds like assuming to me.”

Dean frowns.
“Let’s start that over,” Pamela says. “Anxiety makes us want to assume the worst. If we’re going to cut it off, it helps to give it less fuel. We’re going to try to take some of the fuel away from your friend’s fire. With me so far?”

“Yeah.”

“Some of the things you carry with you, you probably don’t think of as fuel,” she continues. “To you, your coat is a coat. But to a fire, it’s still fuel. What’s useful to you might be harmful to him. Now, I’m never going to tell you to go around in winter without your coat. It snowed this morning, that’s an awful idea. We just need to find ways for you to safely hang your coat up without it catching fire. Still with me?”

It’s only the entire reason he’s here. “Yeah. What do I gotta do? Just give him fewer things to worry about?”

“How would you do that?” Pamela asks.

“You’re the expert.”

“I don’t know your friend. What sets off most of his worries about you? So far, it sounds like thinking you’ll be alone and hearing you be hard on yourself. Is that right?”

Dean mulls it over and can’t come up with anything else. It doesn’t mean there isn’t more, not even close, but it’s what he’s got right now. “I guess. But he knows I’ve got people.”

“Do you tell him about positive things you’re doing with them?”

“Uh…” Not beyond telling Jimmy how Dean’s been a good boy that week. “Yeah, I could do that more. Should be easy.”

“Good.” Leaning back, Pamela crosses her legs. The dim sunlight eking in through the window glints off the zipper of her boot. “What about the other part?”

“What other part?”
“Hearing you be hard on yourself,” Pamela says. “What can we do about that?”

Dean bristles. He knows he fucking bristles, but where another person might back down at his body language, a blind therapist just plain doesn’t care. Instead, Dean says, “Look, it’s just how I talk.”

“What can we do about that?” Pamela asks calmly.

No.

Never.

Rolling his eyes, Dean says, “Fine, yeah, it isn’t. I’m an asshole, sue me.”

Pamela somehow levels a look at him, and in that instant, Dean can feel her looking all the way down into the depths of his bullshit and finding absolutely nothing underneath.

In his mind’s eye, Dean gets up and leaves. In reality, he’s stuck in the armchair, frozen by words.

“I didn’t say this was going to be easy, Dean, but if he’s worth it, he’s worth it.” She’s more matter-of-fact than kind, but that’s what Dean needs. He doesn’t need kind.

Taking a page out of Jimmy’s book, Dean takes that breath and lets it out. Because Pamela can’t see what he’s doing, he pulls out his phone, holds it tight, and closes his eyes. “Okay, fine. What do I do?”

“If he hears you call yourself an asshole, do you think he’ll believe that’s how you view yourself?”

Dean snorts. “I’ll just call myself a rosebud instead, how about that?”

Pamela tilts her head slightly, like she’s not sure she’s heard him. She runs her fingers over her watch again. “In the past ten minutes, you’ve called yourself a mess and an asshole. What’s your goal in
calling yourself those things?"

Dean blinks at her. His hand tightens around his phone. “What do you mean?”

“C’mon, Dean,” she says like they both know the same secret. “If you call yourself a mess and an asshole, what does that accomplish?”

“Nothing,” Dean admits with another roll of the eyes and a vaguely suppressed groan. “It-”

“It does accomplish something,” Pamela interrupts. “It tears you down. It either puts you in that place, or it keeps you in that place, and I don’t think that’s where your friend wants you to be.”

Jimmy might agree with that—maybe—but Dean sure as hell doesn’t. “Bullshit.”

“Really? Then what are you accomplishing with that kind of talk?”

“Look, I’m not gonna do better if I’m not tough on myself.”

“Oh?” Pamela asks. “Okay, give me an example. How has that helped you this semester?”

“It’s how I work,” Dean says. “You said I get to keep my coat. That’s my coat. It’s not my fault Jimmy’s always setting it on fire.”

“It’s not,” Pamela agrees.

“He-” Dean blinks. “What?”

“It’s not your fault,” Pamela repeats. “And I’m not saying you have to stop. I am asking you to consider wearing a different coat around Jimmy, though. Just around him. It would be easier to remember if you switched it out entirely, but that’s a hard change when you’re already dealing with finals.”
There’s a trap in here somewhere. *Why* there would be a trap in there, Dean has no idea, but that doesn’t mean he can’t smell one.

“Plus,” she adds, “I don’t want to leave you out in the cold when you’re talking with Jimmy either. That only hurts you, and anything that hurts you isn’t going to reassure him. How are we going to give you a new jacket, for specifically Jimmy-occasions only?”

Dean stares at her.

“...Am I not making sense?” she asks after a pause.

“What are you telling me to do?” Dean asks right back.

“I’m not telling you,” Pamela says like Dean’s missed the entire point. “I’m asking what you’re going to do. If you talk the way you do to be hard on yourself, and you’re hard on yourself to make sure you succeed, how do you get to that success without adding fuel to Jimmy’s fire?”

Dean tries to figure out a way that doesn’t involve the words *good boy*. “Okay, fine,” he says after an uncomfortably long thirty seconds of thought. “How?”

Pamela tilts her head slightly, and Dean has a weird moment of thinking about Cas. Still, he gets distracted from the distraction the moment Pamela says, “This isn’t a riddle. There’s no one right answer that I know and you don’t. What I know are ways to find those answers. That’s what I can help you do.”

The smell of a trap grows stronger, but Dean’s still not sure why. “Fine, how do we do that?”

“Can you walk me through how it usually works?” Pamela asks. “Maybe we can reverse engineer an answer.”

“Through how what works?”

“The way you talk about yourself that Jimmy worries about. Where’s the usual tipping point where being hard on yourself turns into success?”
Dean keeps staring at her. “What, what do you mean?”

“You said you won’t do better if you’re not hard on yourself,” Pamela reminds him. “How does being hard on yourself help you improve?”

It takes Dean a second before he says, “Helps me focus.”

“So does a to-do list. Or a study group, if you mean for finals.” She tucks her hair behind her ear and flicks more back over her shoulder. “There are lots of alternatives. Is that all that being hard on yourself helps you accomplish?”

“It helps me focus on what I need to do to not fuck up,” Dean corrects.

“But does it help you focus on how to succeed?” Pamela asks.

“That’s what I just said.”

She does another one of those grins, the one where they’re both in on the same secret. “Is it, really? So there’s no difference between a success story and a not-a-fuck-up story?”

“Not fucking up is a more realistic goal,” Dean tells her. “It’s step one.”

“Okay,” Pamela says, still with a hint of that grin. “What does step one look like?”

Dean reaches for words and comes up empty. “Look, just tell me whatever therapy phrase I need to use around Jimmy, and I’ll do that.”

“Sure,” Pamela says. “Answer my question and I will. And before you say anything: I did ask you first.”

Chest tight, mouth empty, Dean sits there. He clears his throat. “Look, it varies case by case. So how
am I supposed to talk to the guy?”

“It varies case by case,” she says.

Phone clenched tight in his hand, Dean’s had enough. “This isn’t helping.” He stands up and grabs his bag off the sofa with his free hand.

“Interesting,” Pamela says.

Already halfway to the door, Dean turns on his heel. He’s looming over a blind woman, and the absurdity of it pisses him off almost as much as her questions. “What?”

“When talking to me didn’t help, you immediately tried something else,” Pamela says. “But by the sound of it, being hard on yourself hasn’t actually helped either, and you’re still trying that.”

A chasm threatens to open up inside Dean’s mind, and if he lets it, there’s no telling what might fall in—or rise out.

“That’s not- It works for me, all right, lady?”

“Then tell me how,” Pamela responds calmly.

Dean… can’t.

Pamela settles back in her chair. Not leaning away. Just getting comfortable. Her expression and general air turn sympathetic. “Sorry, that was a lot to go into on a first session. But maybe your friend is worried about you for a reason, and maybe helping yourself could help him.”

“You couldn’t just come out and say it half an hour ago?” Dean snaps.

He could swear she’s rolling her eyes at him behind those glasses. “You’re a smart man, Dean. I’m not going to go around spelling things out for you when I know you can get there on your own.”
Dean’s not.

Dean won’t.

He can’t say it, but that doesn’t stop him from knowing it’s true.

“Kinda on a schedule here,” he says instead. “Limited time to get there.”

She touches her watch again before saying, “You’re still scheduled for a bit longer, so if you wanted to sit down again, the ejector seat on the armchair won’t launch you for at least another, oh, five or ten minutes.”

Dean stands there like a misplaced piece of furniture, in the way, his colors clashing with the world around him.

“Standing’s fine, too,” Pamela says.

Slowly, not letting go of his coat, bag, and phone, Dean sits.

Pamela smiles. “Do you still want the magical therapy phrases?”

Resentful about it, Dean grunts a yes, and, fucking finally, she tells him.

Dean sits in the Impala for a long while after he’s parked in the library lot. He’s early enough in the afternoon to even have a good spot near the entrance, a few cars down from the handicap signs.

He’s not thinking. Not really.
He keeps trying to think and then he hears, clear as day, Jimmy’s voice in his head saying, *This isn’t helping.*

His head is buzzing. His chest is tight. His fingers ache around his phone.

Something’s touched a nerve.

He won’t look at it. He *can’t* look at it. But something’s touched a nerve. And the more he tries to clap a hand over the wound, the more it stings.

Why is he such a fuck-up?

Why is he fucking shit up even more?

*This isn’t helping.*

That’s exactly the kind of crap that’s got Jimmy so worried.

That’s the kind of talk that let Jimmy know Dean’s screwed up in the first place.

Which means Dean’s gotta stop it. Cut it out entirely before anyone else takes the hint.

*This isn’t going the way I want it to,* Dean mouths to himself experimentally. It doesn’t feel like him, but it doesn’t sound like whining and bitching either.

He looks down at his phone. His thumb strokes the side of the case.

“I’m gonna do better,” he whispers. Aloud, it sounds stupid as hell, but there’s still some ridiculous part of his brain that needs Jimmy to respond with *good boy, Dean.*

No.
Good boy, Michael.

He’s not Dean to Jimmy. Jimmy’s Dean is some made up porn story named Dean by coincidence.

He’s not Dean, but he can still be a good boy. Maybe he only gets to be one or the other. It wouldn’t be that surprising.

A knock on the car window startles him out of his skin.

Before Dean had added the belts into the original seats, he would have gone flying toward the passenger side. As it is, he gets caught around the middle with an uncomfortable “Oof!”

Looking in at him through the driver side window, fist still raised to knock and eyes widened to stare, there’s Cas.

Dean hurriedly lifts a hand. He waves. That motion is totally a wave.

Cas narrows his eyes and leans in. He also gestures, clearly asking if Dean’s okay.

Dean shoots him a thumbs up, but there’s no way in hell he’s going to roll down the window for a chat right now. Or worse, open the door. So he points at the phone in his other hand before holding up a finger in the classic sign for just a minute.

Cas nods.

Shifting his phone so Cas can’t see the screen, Dean loads up his contacts and pretends to dial. He waves at Cas again.

Cas lifts an open palm in his direction, the grip of his black gloves a shiny gray. He points to the library with a question in his eyes and Dean nods. Dean even throws in a smile, just to try to reassure the guy, and it’s clear by the corners of Cas’ eyes that he knows something is up.
Dean throws in another, even more urgent wave before looking away through the windshield, and Cas takes the hint not to wait for him.

Watching Cas walk away with his long winter coat takes Dean out of his own head a little bit. Just a little. Enough that Dean needs to grab another distraction, fast, and the closest one literally at hand is right at the top of his contacts list under “Bitch.”

Dean dials. He gets voicemail, naturally, because it’s still a little early for a lunch break in California, and Sam probably doesn’t take it anyway.

“Hey, it’s me,” Dean says quickly. “Just double-checking plans. You’re flying down in two-ish weeks, right? ‘Cause I thought you were getting in on Monday for Christmas Eve, but Bobby thinks you’re in on Sunday. And you know the twenty-third is pie baking day. Plus I got an assistant this year out of my study buddy Cas, so I really can’t drop shit to pick you up from the airport again.” Not if Cas wasn’t joking about it.

He sits there a moment longer, phone pressed against his ear as the inside of the car grows colder and colder. “Hope the case is going okay,” he adds weakly. “If you’re not sticking around until New Year’s, I’m beating your ass. Okay, see you later.”

Hanging up, he successfully resists the urge to slam on the car horn with his forehead. Instead, he holds his phone tight and he breathes.

If he keeps going at this rate, he’s going to need to call Jimmy again tomorrow. Except he doesn’t. He doesn’t, and he honestly can’t afford to right now, especially not after last night’s binge talk. By the time he has real money to spare again, it’ll be time to buy some panties instead.

He presses his phone back against his ear and does the breathing thing anyway. For a piece of plastic and glass, his phone makes an amazing security blanket.

Eventually, he gets up. He zips his coat, shoulders his bag, and locks the car door behind him with all the manual fuss Baby both always requires and always deserves. By the time he rejoins Cas inside, Dean’s more or less steady, and Cas is already in his usual spot. The rest of the tables are at least partially occupied, and Dean’s tupperware from last week is in front of his usual seat, marking it as taken. Maybe it’s the earlier hour, maybe it’s having seen Dean in the parking lot, but instead of being absorbed in some reading or writing, Cas has an eye on the gap between the shelves, and he spots Dean the same second Dean sees him.
Cas rises from the table, all of his stuff still on it. There’s a question in his eyes and in the tilt of his head, but as Dean approaches, tilting his head right back, Cas doesn’t move around Dean.

Dean points at Cas’ stuff, at his own eyes, and back at Cas’ stuff. He can hold the fort if Cas needs a bathroom run.

Stopped in front of Dean, Cas shakes his head. He reaches, as if to take Dean’s bag by a shoulder strap and remove it. The whole time, his eyes are fixed on Dean’s face, at once certain and questioning.

Dean feels his arms reaching forward, as if his watch has been replaced by a magnet, and then Cas steps forward. Cas draws him in, Cas has to draw him in, because there’s no memory in Dean’s head of the transition. His hands press into the back of that blue suit jacket. His fingers splay over shoulder blades and spine, and though his skin still burns with the transition inside from the winter air, he can feel it all.

Cas rocks up into him, hooking his chin over Dean’s shoulder. One of Cas’ arms is around the opposite shoulder, and the other arm is lower, pressing Dean’s bag more firmly against his back.

Dean holds on.

He holds on tight.

Just for a second. Too confused to let go. He’s startled, so he’s frozen, so he can stand here a moment longer than normal. There’s still people looking.

Cas takes a deep, steadying breath, and Dean inhales with him. Cas’ breath by his ear. Their chests rising against each other. Holding air. Holding bodies.

The slow exhale.

The slower release.

Cas squeezes his shoulder. His eyes as bright as the bags beneath them are dark, Cas looks at Dean
with a question of concern.

Not even trying to feign confusion, Dean tries to wave Cas off instead.

Releasing Dean entirely, Cas gestures for him to sit.

Dean sets down his bag and shucks his jacket. He sits. He glances around but catches no one staring. He swaps the tupperware out with the notebook he totally doesn’t consider his Cas book. He flips it open, reaches back down into his bag for a pen, and is interrupted by Cas passing him one of his own.

*I’m okay, Dean writes. Family stuff.*

Cas’ face hardens. He pulls the notebook back to himself, retrieves the pen with a nod, and starts writing down a list of acronyms, websites, and organizations Dean’s never heard of.

*These are all resources for working with unaccepting families,* Cas writes at the bottom of the list. He looks at Dean with an expression that can only be described as ride-or-die.

Despite himself, Dean cracks a smile. He rubs his face and shakes his head, and though Cas’ expression softens, it never wavers.

*It’s just Christmas stress,* Dean writes. *Fitting the brother’s travel plans in with my finals.*

Cas nods, still looking at him like that. He barely drops his eyes down to write *When are they?*

*Got two final papers due Friday night, 11:59, that whole deal, but I’m halfway done with them. My last final is Wednesday.* Meaning, he’ll have all of Thursday to make sure the final papers are done before he makes his final call to Jimmy. And then he’ll probably get wasted, so the papers need to be submitted on Thursday instead of Friday. Saturday the twenty-second will be spent sitting on his own hands to keep from calling Jimmy on his last night, and then the next day…

*We still on for pie stuff on the 23rd? You actually want to do that?*
Cas frowns faintly at the question but nods. *I don’t dislike baking, I’m just not good at it.*

Dean shoots him a thumbs-up.

Cas turns the notebook back around and writes some more. This time, he slides it back to Dean when he’s finished. *I assume you’ll be here next week, but will you be here the week after that?*

*Sending the projects in by Thursday night at the latest,* Dean writes back.

The corner of Cas’ mouth pulls to the side, just for a second. *If my students were as responsible as you, I wouldn’t be camped out here that Friday for their inevitable last minute panic.*

*Don’t be too bored without me.*

*If you still came by and brought coffee, that would help.*

Dean looks at him.

Cas looks right back.

Slowly, like he’s stretching the muscle for the first time in a very long time, Cas winks, the motion impossibly deadpan.

Dean’s lips twitch.

Cas sits up just a little straighter, his chin set high and proud.

Dean rolls his eyes and reaches down into his bag. Then he rummages around in his bag. Then he takes his books and crap out of his bag, and his dad’s camping thermos still isn’t there. A huge metal tube is hard to miss, but he’s somehow missing it.
He brewed the coffee. He knows he brewed the coffee. He definitely did that before he made his sandwich. And then…

There is no and then.

There’s just a cold pot of coffee waiting for him at home.

Dean closes his eyes and lets his head hang. When he sighs and forces himself to at least pretend to be a mature, functioning adult, Cas is back to looking at him with concern.

I forgot it, Dean writes.

My condolences.

Dean flips him off.

Cas somberly nods.

If you’re this much help to your students, no wonder they’re never here, Dean writes.

Cas gives him the stinkeye to end all stinkeye.

Dean smiles his absolute best.

Cas kicks him under the table, but the pain feels like victory.

I feed and water you, and this is the thanks I get? Dean slides the notebook over in feigned accusation, and Cas’ entire response is to look him dead in the eyes and drink out of his travel mug, head tilted back, throat working. Must be lukewarm at best, to drink at that speed, but that’s small comfort.
Cas writes back, *You stopped watering me.*

*Getting you ready for next semester, that’s all.*

Cas reads and rereads that line. He wasn’t frowning before and his expression doesn’t change, and yet, somehow, he’s frowning deeply. *You’ll be in class the whole time?*

*Yep. I’ll be doing your Monday office hours instead.*

Dean grins at Cas, but Cas narrows his eyes at him as if Dean had threatened to key his car.

Dean keeps grinning. He tilts his head in a way he’s been told is adorable, definitely helped along by his eyelashes.

Watching Cas cave to it is the highlight of Dean’s entire shitty day. Sam’s not the only one who can pull that stunt off.

Finally, in an obvious bid to change the subject, Cas writes, *What classes are you taking?*

Dean gives him the list, the expected and the one surprise. The accounting classes count for math credits, but Dean still had English credits to get out of the way. It’s not him being self-indulgent. It’s something he’d have to get out of the way anyway. And maybe he’d had to contact the professor to argue his way into it as a freshman, but she’d allowed it on the basis of Dean having already done most of the readings.

With a curious kind of frown, Cas hones in on the class immediately. *Why Vonnegut?*

*To make sure everything’s beautiful and nothing hurts,* Dean responds glibly.

Cas’ frown just gets worse, though. More confused.
Rolling his eyes, Dean sticks some quotation marks around the quote and begins to put in the citation like he’s doing a bibliography. He knows Cas gets it once Cas is nodding and reaching out to take the notebook back. Dean doesn’t give up the notebook immediately, first writing the obvious question of *You’ve never read Slaughterhouse-Five?*

Cas shakes his head. *What is it about?*

After only a second of thought, Dean goes with the quick summary: *Free will. How humans are the only ones to believe in it in a universe literally structured by fate.*

Cas’ eyebrows incrementally rise. He looks between Dean and the notebook in the way he usually looks at his laptop when he’s steadily typing. *We may need to start swapping books next semester.*

*I’ll bring mine next week,* Dean writes.

Cas smiles with his eyes. *In exchange for what? If you have a topic, I should have a book.*

Dean shrugs, but his mind goes back to flipping through Cas’ reading material last week. Queer people and sex work. But that’s just him thinking about Jimmy again, and he’ll go nuts if he’s reading about that all through his break. Ultimately, he answers, *Whatever will make the best book club.*

In a motion unironically weighty with responsibility, Cas nods. Then he looks at his own closed laptop and sighs.

Dean looks at his own crap. He looks back at Cas.

Silently, they despair together.

They get to work. They take a break to complain to each other. They get back to work. Cas finishes his coffee and looks at the travel mug like it’s betrayed him. Dean offers no sympathy, but he does watch Cas’ stuff when Cas heads out without a student drawing him away, presumably to the bathroom.
It's a full twenty minutes later—at least—before Dean realizes something has probably gone wrong in the bathroom. After five minutes more and a single page of distracted reading, Dean signals to the three students gathered around the closest table. Getting their attention, he does the universal signal for *Watch my crap for me, and yeah, I'm memorizing your face right now.*

One of the girls shoots him a thumbs-up. Dean returns it and heads to the bathroom himself. There, an unfamiliar man stands at the urinals, and the handicap stall is the only one closed. Dean uses the urinal and takes his time washing his hands. The handicap stall opens, Dean glances over en route to the hand dryer, and it’s some kid so young his face is still full of acne.

Confused but slightly less fidgety, Dean returns to their table. He can’t say for the life of him what he thinks he’s worried about, but it’s just weird. Cas only ever leaves for students or the bathroom, and Dean didn’t see him get a text or anything.

He fights down a yawn and pushes himself back into study mode. When that doesn’t work, he switches to writing mode. A few minutes of that and Dean gives in, tabbing over to his email. He may not have Cas’ number, but Cas has email on his phone.

*Should I send out a search party?* Dean types into the subject line, and then a familiar presence behind him makes him turn.

Face flushed, hair faintly shining with melting snow, Cas holds out a cardboard travel cup. In his other hand, another cup steams through the tiny gap in its lid, and a paper bag with the name of the school coffee shop swings from his wrist.

Cas looks at Dean, at the laptop screen, and he smiles faintly at the subject.

*Never mind,* Dean types into the body of the email.

Cas hands him the coffee. He leans down a little over Dean’s shoulder to read, and he does this little shrug that’s not quite apologetic.

*You went without your coat,* Dean adds like an intelligent person. True to form, the second someone is leaning over his shoulder, his typing skills go to shit and he has to try it twice to get it right.

Cas shrugs again, but he shrugs down looking cold. He pulls over the notebook, and his hand leaves
a damp spot on the paper. *It’s not very far if you cut through the east wing of the library.*

Dean does the mental map on that and nods. He still eyes Cas’ hands, though, clasped as they are around his cup. Good, strong hands for all Cas is an academic. Clean and well-cared for, even chafed with cold as they are.

With a start, Dean remembers basic human protocol. Shifting his weight, he pulls out his wallet. His smallest bill is a five, but he’s not about to quibble over change. He pulls it out and offers it forward.

Hands resolute around his cup, Cas shakes his head.

Dean leans forward just a bit farther.

Cas pulls back the same amount and looks at him like he’s finally discovered Dean’s a dumbass. When Cas releases his cup, it’s only to open the paper bag. He puts down a pair of napkins and then sets down a thick brownie and a golden brown fruit pastry. Lifting his eyebrows, Cas pushes one forward, then the other.

Dean holds out the five.

Cas rolls his eyes and opens his laptop. Very obviously, he puts his full attention into ignoring Dean.

Rolling his eyes right back, Dean reaches over and drops the five onto Cas’ keyboard.

Cas glares at him.

Dean takes the pastry.

Cas glares slightly less.

Because he is nothing if not obnoxious, Dean fits half the pastry in his mouth in a single bite.
Cas’ glare turns into a stare.

Frosted sugar clinging to his closed lips, Dean smirks around the mouthful.

Still staring, Cas quietly sips at his coffee. He pockets the five, and Dean grins outright. Cas looks like he’d roll his eyes again, if he weren’t too busy wondering at how a grown man could be such a chipmunk.

They get back to work only for Cas to be drawn away twice more, these times by students, not by caffeine withdrawal. Cas takes his coffee with him but leaves the brownie, a ridiculous display of either trust or forgetfulness.

The second time Cas comes back, he clasps Dean on the shoulder en route to his seat. Dean looks up and Cas looks down with a long-suffering expression. Dean slides the notebook across the table as Cas sits down, but Cas merely shakes his head. The simple way he sits there and looks at Dean is more melodramatic and full of complaint than an entire shelf of notebooks could ever be.

Dean covers his mouth with a quick hand, successfully keeping down a snicker.

Cas’ face softens.

Dean salutes Cas with his coffee and Cas salutes back.

Not much longer after that, Dean’s ready to call it quits. He sticks around anyway, not studying, not writing. Just poking around the internet on his laptop with Cas right there. For all they’re completely silent, it counts as social interaction miles more than Dean’s little chat with Pamela does.

Way too soon, another student comes for Cas. With no overt sign of complaint, Cas stands up, but so does Dean. Dean starts packing up his stuff, and Cas gets the message, following suit. The only things left on the table are the library books Cas will come back to, no laptops, no private property—the last half of the brownie excluded.

Cas wraps the napkin up around the brownie and pointedly hands it to Dean. Accepting it is an automatic motion. Keeping it is something else, something in the way Cas’ mouth moves in a pleased smile. He’s fucking beautiful, this guy, and despite the waiting student, the laser beam of his focus is all on Dean. They’re standing very close. Cas is standing very close.
Empty cup in one hand, brownie in the other, Dean goes for the hug. Cas immediately meets him halfway. More than halfway. They’re dudes who hug now. Just guys being guys. Hugging. One bi, one gay and absurdly attractive. And solid, and warm.

Despite the student, despite the silent study groups, despite the library and the classes and the stress, the urge to kiss Cas wells up through Dean’s entire body. Stronger than anything Dean had felt with Aaron, even at the height of sex; as strong an urge as he’d felt with his favorite ex-girlfriends.

Dean pulls back with a stupid grin on his face. The stupidest grin, but he’s allowed. He really is bi as fuck. He’s got this.

Cas beams back at him. His hand rides Dean’s shoulder. He squeezes, and a bit of Dean falls inside like it was a Vulcan nerve pinch.

Fighting the urge to duck his head and drop back into another hug, Dean pulls away and shoos Cas after his student. Cas’ look of betrayal is enough for Dean to plaster on a convincing grin, but it’s a close thing.

Cas takes the lead in walking away, but the student looks back to Dean, a silent apology for interrupting.

Like there was something to interrupt.

Because there was.

Holy shit, there was.

And that girl saw it.

People are seeing it.

People are seeing Dean being bi and they think he’s gay.
Jesus, this must be what Cas means about not dating closeted messes.

Dean gets out of the study section, ducks behind a bookshelf, and stays there. He makes himself breathe. It’s just one college kid. Just a kid he’ll probably never see again, except for the rest of the time he’s trapped here. But still a kid who will never meet Bobby or Benny or Garth. Unless her car breaks.

Dean pulls out his phone, squeezes it tight with both hands, and works on that breathing thing again.

_Fuck._

He wants to call Jimmy. He wants to hug Cas again.

People walk by, and Dean determinedly stares at the books on the shelf. British history. Okay.

Okay.

_Breathe._

Chapter End Notes

In response to many comments: while I appreciate the sentiment in telling me your state of excitement or bonus activities while reading, I would also appreciate it if that information remained implied. I am an asexual gay man, and I do not consent to hearing about irl porn activities in the comments below. Furthermore, your fellow readers also perusing the comments haven't agreed to read about your activities either. Emotional reactions only please, not physical.

To see what else I'm working on, you can follow me on tumblr here or dreamwidth here.
Final Assignment

Chapter Summary

Dean opens up, mostly.

Whether it actually helps remains to be seen.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Between work, school, and the approaching holiday, Dean is going out of his mind, but it’s not like he wasn’t getting there already. Beneath the workload, there’s not much room left to think, so naturally the thoughts start creeping in at inconvenient moments. Cleaning his apartment. Doing the dishes. Filing invoices. Driving.

Because it’s only a matter of time now.

Maybe it’ll be the schoolwork. Maybe Dean will flunk out. Classes end this week, and finals start the coming Monday.

Maybe it’ll be the job once Dean has it, trapped in the office away from the cars.

Hell, maybe it’ll be the bi thing. But it’ll be something.

He’s going to let them down.

Sam. Bobby. Everyone.

No matter how he tries to push it down, no amount of powering through or studying harder can get the nagging feeling to subside. He runs through his business study guides with Bobby every other night until Bobby shoos him home.

“At this rate, I’d be getting an A on that test. Now git.”
Dean gits. He gits all the way home, all the way inside, all the way into his bedroom, and then he wonders what the hell he’s doing.

Then, as the best distraction he has, he wonders what the hell he’s going to tell Jimmy. Can he actually reassure the guy without lying to him?

Come Thursday night, Dean’s ready to try.

“Hello, Michael,” Jimmy greets, as steady and warm as always.

“Hey, man,” Dean answers, both hands cupped around the headphones. His blood pressure drops and his dick gets hard at the same time. Jimmy’s voice is a goddamn medical miracle. “How are you?”

“Busy. But good. How are you?”

“Oh, you know,” Dean says with a useless shrug. “Training, working. Getting through.” To what, he has no idea. Getting through to failure still counts as getting through, though.

“What parts do you enjoy?”

“What- Um.” This isn’t the library fantasy he’d been promised. Might be small talk, but it might be another challenge.

“You tell me yours and I’ll tell you mine,” Jimmy adds. “I had a good one this week.”

“I like… Not the desk stuff,” Dean says. “I’m an in-the-trenches kind of guy. But the training is all the desk stuff, so.”

“What did you do in the trenches, Michael?”
Positive words, Dean reminds himself. Jimmy needs positive language. “Less people, more fixing things. More figuring out what’s going wrong, you know? And making it better. You know you made a difference.”

“Helping people,” Jimmy summarizes.

“Yeah.”

“You miss it?”

Dean bites his lip until his silence is its own kind of answer. “Yeah.”

“Enough to go back to it?”

“Can’t.”

“Why not?”

“I told you mine, you tell me yours,” Dean says.

“My favorite caller stole another phone this week.”

Dean’s too busy being punched in the gut to process the second half of that sentence. “What?”

“He’s in his eighties and steals cell phones from the other residents of his assisted living complex. He calls to share gossip, and he has a lot of it. I hadn’t heard from him in a couple months and thought he might have died from complications in his hip surgery, but it was only that the recovery kept him from sneaking into rooms to steal phones.”

Dean… has no idea what to say. “That’s your favorite caller.” It comes out more bewildered than jealous, a tiny blessing.
“He’s a company-wide favorite. He always stays on the line until the phone dies or he’s caught, and assisted living complexes are surprisingly dramatic.”

Dean snorts. “The highlight of your week was gossiping with an octogenarian?”

“And confirming he was still alive, yes,” Jimmy says, absolutely sincere. Because this is a guy who cares about people. About anyone, really. “Why can’t you go back to the previous position?”

Dean’s mental gearbox grinds. “Can’t,” he says again.

“Does the position no longer exist?”

“I just can’t,” Dean snaps. “Jesus, why are you on my ass about this from the get-go? It’s none of your Fucking business, Jimbo.”

From down the line, there is silence.

Rage shifts to terror. Dean checks, and no, Jimmy hasn’t finally hung up on him.

Dean clears his throat. “I don’t want to talk about it.”

“...That was very rude, Michael.”

“Yeah. Yeah, sorry.”

“I’m not here to teach you manners. I’m not going to press any farther—that would cross a line—but I need you to tell me when I’m approaching that line. I need you to talk to me before you yell at me.”

Dean sits up straighter. “I understand.”

“Can I tell you why I’m asking, or do you want to move on? I didn’t ask if you had more of those
excellent dreams you were having."

Dean hasn’t. He’s returned to masturbating with something of a vengeance, but that’s probably not the reason the wet dreams have vanished. He keeps having this one where Jimmy’s pounding into his ass from behind, but every single time Dean looks over his shoulder, his ass is empty and there’s no one there.

He doesn’t need one of those fancy dream interpretation books to figure out what that one means.

“You can tell me,” Dean says rather than admit to the dreams.

“You know I worry. It helps me to check in. The more informed I am, the less unduly concerned I am.”

“You saying you’re worried about me between calls?” Despite the attempt to hold onto his manners, it comes out with a scoff.

“Yes,” Jimmy says simply. “You know I think about you between calls. I’ve made us games. I searched for men’s lingerie websites until I found one with the widest selection. We’ve been talking for months, Michael.”

“That’s not my name.”

“I know. It’s a nickname.”

Dean closes his eyes.

“Will you tell me what’s going on?” Jimmy asks. “I want to know.”

“Only problem with that is, it’s not gonna make you any less worried.”

“My brain turns the unknown into problems. It turns known problems into solutions. I can’t change that, but I know how to manage it.”
“I can’t just tell you it’s gonna be okay?”

“You can tell me, but it won’t work. Especially when you don’t sound like you mean it.”

“Don’t go reading my mind, dude.” That’s something Pamela had mentioned, right? Assuming shit.

“You swore at me over a question,” Jimmy replies flatly. “No one does that when things are okay. If you told me how things are going to be okay, I could believe that, but I’m not even sure what’s gone wrong.”

“I just want a break,” Dean says and, no, he’s not begging. “That’s all I want, man. Just me talking to you, you talking to me, none of the other shit. I need to not have the other shit, okay?”

“...Okay,” Jimmy says, quiet. “Thank you for telling me. I’m sorry I pushed. You’re doing exactly what I asked you to do, thank you.”

“No, I-” He’s fucking this up again, fucking making Jimmy thank him for not cursing him out. “I’m making it a bigger deal than it should be. Being dramatic like a nursing home.”

“Assisted living center.”

“Asshole, rosebud; what’s the difference?”

“A lot of things,” Jimmy says, “but that would be getting sidetracked. And for what it’s worth, I don’t think you’re being dramatic.”

“Yeah, well, I do.”

“Does it matter what I think of you?” Jimmy asks, as if he doesn’t already know.

Throat abruptly thick, Dean grunts confirmation.
“Then I don’t think you’re being dramatic. I think you’re reacting to a situation you feel trapped in. I think you’re a caregiver in some form, and I’ve been wondering if that’s why you’re feeling so trapped.”

“What makes you think I’m a caregiver?”

“The night the boy called,” Jimmy reminds him.

“You mean, the night the dude threatened to stab your ass.”

“Exactly,” Jimmy says. “You’re protective. You care deeply. If you’re willing to pay money to comfort a near-stranger, I can’t imagine what you’d give to support a loved one. You don’t have to answer, but is that what’s going on? Why you’re in your current situation?”

Dean’s knee-jerk reaction is no. Because Sam doesn’t need him anymore. Sam’s the one fucking funding Dean’s education now.

But Bobby needs him. After a lifetime of Bobby supporting them, Dean can finally do something for the guy. Bobby needs him in that job. Trained up. Ready to handle the business side full-time.

“...Yeah,” Dean says. “Yeah, it is.”

“I’m sorry,” Jimmy says.

“Yeah, well.”

“Can I try to help you?” Jimmy asks. “You don’t have to let me, but I’d like to.”

“You’d like to.”

“I’d like to.”
Dean exhales a much longer breath than the one he’d inhaled. “How?” Directing him to some bullshit self-help book? Telling him to go back for more therapy? Or giving him an email address?

“I’d like to ask you a few questions to assess the situation,” Jimmy states in a calm, matter-of-fact tone that Dean can’t help but trust.

“Okay…?”

As if reciting from a survey, Jimmy asks, “If the factors in the situation don’t change, will it improve, worsen, or stay the same?”

“Stay the same.” It’s already bad. Dean’s just the only one who’s realized it. “Maybe get worse.”

“How have you tried to change the situation? To improve it or get out of it.”

“Um. This?” In the resounding silence that ensues, Dean adds, “To, to increase morale and shit.”

“Can you think of anything else right now?” Jimmy asks after a pause too long to not be judgmental.

“I’m doing what I got to, okay?”

“Is that what I asked you?”

“Is this what I’m calling you for?” Dean shoots back. Far too restless to sit still, he’s on his bare feet. He’s pacing, phone clenched in his hand, the cord swinging against his arm.

“I don’t know,” Jimmy says simply, bluntly. “If you’re at all calling for me to take care of you, even the smallest amount, then yes. It is. If you want to get off and hang up without another word, we can do that too.”

Dean’s jaw sets. “I don’t need you to take care of me. You don’t even fucking know me.”
“I know you enough to like you, even though you think I shouldn’t.”

“That’s—”

“Don’t tell me I don’t,” James orders. “The only thing I want to hear you say is whether you want me to take care of you. Yes, and I will. No, and I’ll stop. Yes or no, Michael. Which is it?”

Dean can’t answer.

James waits.

Dean can’t even keep pacing.

“...I’ll stop,” Jimmy says. “I’m pushing too hard. I can’t make you want what I want. We can take a minute, get back to a better mood, and do whatever fantasy you like. It’s all right. Is it? All right?”

Dean sits down at the end of his bed. Drops his phone beside his boxer-clad hip. Presses the heels of his palms into his eyes.

He breathes.

Jimmy breathes with him.

Dean keeps breathing.

Dean says, “I need help.”

“I’m here,” Jimmy says.
“I don’t think I can do this, man,” Dean says, and he’s fucking crying. “I wish he’d picked someone else, anybody else, but it’s just me. Sam’s already got his whole life and shit, there’s just me left. It’s always just me left, it’s not fucking fair.”

“It’s not,” Jimmy agrees quietly, gently, and Dean breaks down like a house of cards on a railroad track. He’s bawling. He’s sobbing. It’s being wrenched out of him like an unending tapeworm, this relentless parasite that’s still chomping down even while being torn out. He cries until he uses the sex towel for his tears and snot.


“You deserve better.

“You shouldn’t be left.

“You shouldn’t be left alone.”

Dean hiccups to an aching stop.


“I can’t do it,” Dean confesses. “I’m not strong enough.”

“You’re strong enough to save yourself,” Jimmy tells him. “I wish you didn’t have to do the rest of it alone, but we’re going to figure out how. Together. Do you understand?”

“Yes.” It’s an awful croak of a word, but Dean’s said it. He’s said it, and now James calls him a good boy.

But that’s not what happens.

Instead, Jimmy says, “Thank you.”
Deeply.

Sincerely.

Like this is what he wants.

Dean sags down against his bed. Feet on the floor, back against the winter comforter.

“What do I do?” Dean rasps.

“You get some water and take something for the headache you’re about to have. Then I ask you a few questions to sort out priorities, and then we think of ways to make those priorities work.”

“Okay,” Dean says, not moving.


“Who the hell actually says ‘sports drink’?” Dean grumbles, slowly dragging himself upright.

“I do. Now be my good boy and hydrate.”

Dean’s mouth twitches. “Yeah, yeah.” He stands up. “Is, um. Is it okay if I put you down for a minute?”

“Whatever you need.”

Chest warm, body cold, Dean puts the headset and phone down. He washes up in the bathroom. It’s a goddamn mercy Jimmy can’t see him, the mess he’s made of himself. It’s a far cry from the sexy kind they usually make.
Dean comes back to his bedroom with a glass of water, another of orange juice, and a headache already pressing up against the inside of his skull. He sits and sips, then sticks the headset back on. The pressure against his ears hurts, but he’ll deal.

“I’m back,” Dean says.

“Can I ask how you’re feeling?”

Dean doesn’t even need to think about that one. “Probably a bad idea.”

“That’s fine. Do you want to start problem-solving now?”

Dean rubs a hand over his face. There’s still water on his cheeks. “Yeah, fine, sure. Hit me.”

“In your ideal scenario, what happens?”

“I do the job,” Dean says. “Bo- My uncle gets to retire.”

“How does your uncle talk about you doing the job? Did he ask if you wanted it?”

“Uh. Kinda just assumed it. Asked me to help out more here and there, and I’ve just been picking up shit as I go, y’know?”

“Have you told him you don’t want the job?”

Dean shakes his head to an empty room. “Look, he needs me in there. I can’t burden him with that shit.”

“He can burden you with an entire profession you don’t want, but you can’t tell him what you want?”
“It’s not an entire profession I don’t want. It’s just the office crap I don’t need. But someone’s gotta do it.”

“Someone does,” Jimmy agrees. “But why is that someone you?”

“Because it’s the family business. I’m the family.”

“The lack of blood relatives means it has to be you? Even a prince can renounce a throne, Michael.”

“No, I— I’m not blood. It’s not about blood. It’s about being there for him. He’s been there for me my whole life. Mom dies, the house burns down, we go and live with him. Dad dies, he handles the funeral. I need a job, Sam needs money for college, he gets it done. I owe him.”

“Because he loves you,” Jimmy says softly.

They’re not the type to say it, not any of them, but: “Yeah.”

“Because he wants what’s best for you.”

“Yeah.” His traitorous voice cracks again.

“Michael,” Jimmy says, as gentle as he is firm, “I don’t think being this miserable is what’s best for you. And if you told him, I don’t think he’d think so either.”

There’s no one to turn his face away from, but Dean turns away all the same. He wastes time drinking his juice, then drinking his water. He’s gonna have to piss like a race horse, but at least that’s another escape from this conversation.

“Job still needs doing,” Dean finally says.

“That’s what job postings are for,” Jimmy tells him. “Whatever you’re training to do, other people have already been trained to do it. Your uncle can always get a new employee. He can’t get another nephew.”
“He- I’m not gonna kill myself, man.”

Jimmy lets out a hard breath. “Thank you.”

“Are you- Were you seriously worried about that?”

“I’ve been there,” Jimmy says. “I’ve felt trapped enough to want to try, and I don’t want you to know what that feels like.”

There’s gotta be puke under Dean’s bed, because his stomach just dropped through the mattress and burst open. “You… Seriously?”

“Yes. I don’t want to anymore. But I can remember how it felt.”

Dean leans forward. He picks up his phone like he can somehow protect Jimmy through it. “Did you ever…?"

“I was hospitalized before the attempt, but I did have a plan.”

There are tears back in the corners of Dean’s eyes. He blinks them away, holding his phone tighter. “What happened?”

“I tried to be everything I’d been told I should be, and I broke. I had a panic attack involving a spontaneous nose bleed, and a bystander called an ambulance thinking I was having a seizure. I answered a few questions honestly at the hospital and was willingly committed to another facility for over half a year before a few more months of out-patient therapy.”

Jimmy says it like a story. Like it’s not his life, but instead something that only influenced his life.

“I learned a lot of things,” Jimmy continues. “I had facilitated family therapy. We discovered we’d been talking past each other for years, and my father had never meant to call me an abomination for being gay.”
“He what?”

“It was by implication,” Jimmy says, as if that makes anything better. “He never spoke up because he was too afraid to risk his own position. He never knew he was hurting me until I told him. He’s encouraged me to be ‘as gay as possible’ ever since, and I think I have been.”

“Jesus.”

“Yes, religion was a factor,” Jimmy states dryly. “My father has since become far more controversial in our church community, but now there’s a rainbow flag outside each door of our parish.”

“That’s...” Dean takes a deep breath. “That’s good. That’s really, really good.”

“I know now I can’t be closeted. It was more than just that: I thought I was meant to be a priest, but seminary was breaking me. I have a different job. I talk to my family as openly as I can. And I will never be closeted again. I need to preach my own gospel and write my own sermons. That’s what I need to stay sane. What do you need?”

For a long moment, Dean can’t even speak.

“You’re a badass, you know that?” Dean finally says.

“Thank you,” Jimmy says. “Will you let me help you now?”

“Yeah. Yeah, okay.”

“Thank you,” Jimmy says again. “If you don’t want to roleplay after this, I’d understand.”

“The headache’s not that bad,” Dean says. “Besides, orgasms are good for headaches, right?”

Jimmy pauses. “Yes. Typically.” He clears his throat. “In that case. Um. What do you think would
happen if you told your uncle you didn’t want the job?”

“Probably be pissed. I’ve been making him help me study for fucking months.”

“How long do you think he’d be angry?”

Dean shies away from it. “I dunno.”

“Is there anyone you know who annoys your uncle?”

“Yeah,” Dean says without needing to think. “His buddy Rufus.”

“His buddy,” Jimmy repeats.

“Yeah?”

“He annoys your uncle, but your first impulse is to call him your uncle’s buddy?”

“Yeah, so?”

“So your uncle sounds like a forgiving man.”

“Never forgave my dad,” Dean says.

“You said he arranged your father’s funeral.”

“That was for us, not him.”

“All right. What do you think would happen if you told him you’d do the job until a suitable
replacement was found?"

“I mean, he’d have to keep me around until we found a replacement.”

Voice filled with concern, Jimmy asks, “Does your working relationship overshadow everything else that badly?”

“How d’you mean?”

“If you stopped working for this man, do you believe he would cut you out of his life?”

When Jimmy puts it that way, it does sound kinda stupid. But when Dean tries to answer, the words refuse to emerge from the shelter of his throat.

“Is your brother involved in the family business?”

“No. But he’s never wanted to be. The guy’s destined for greater things anyway.”

Jimmy hums with the general sounds of listening. “And your uncle no longer speaks to him.”

“What? No. Why-”

“Then their relationship is strained.”

“No, what are you-”

“How long did it take him to forgive Sammy?”

“Okay, stop, I get it,” Dean snaps. “That’s different. It’s different. That’s- that’s Sammy.”
“No,” Jimmy says. “That’s your uncle.”

Dean swallows hard. “Get to the point.”

“Can you tell me what you want to do? Professionally. Your job before the training? Something else? Something more? You said you liked the industry.”

“What I want,” Dean repeats.

“Yes.”

Dean chews his lip. “It was fine before, man. I guess that.”

“What was the best part of before?”

“I dunno, actually working?”

“You’re not working now? Because of the training?”

“I mean, I am working,” Dean says. “It’s a fucking slog, I’m definitely working. But it’s not my category of shit, you know?”

“It’s not the point of your job.”

“Yeah. Yeah, exactly.”

Jimmy hums, that low purr of consideration that has nothing to do with him being sultry. “What is the point of your job?”

“I make things work,” Dean tells him as easy as he knows his own name. “Some crap, there’s no point, but sometimes, the best stuff, the oldies and the goodies, they’ve just been neglected. Fix that
on up and you know you’ve done something right.”

“That’s lovely,” Jimmy says, and he even sounds like he means it.

“Yeah, well.” Dean swallows again. “It’s nothing special.”

“It’s special to you,” Jimmy insists. “I hope you get to experience more of it soon.”

Running a hand through his hair, Dean’s motion is interrupted by the headset. With a sigh, he flops onto his back. “Not really in the cards, man.”

“It can be.”

Dean’s eyes fix on the ceiling. “…What do you mean?”

“Tell your uncle you want to specialize and explain why it’s in the best interest of the business to at least let you try. You’d be showing initiative and passion. Tell him you want to be an expert or a consultant.”

Slowly, Dean unsticks his tongue from the roof of his mouth. “That’s… not what I’ve been training for.”

“You don’t like what you’ve been training for.”

“We’ve poured so much money into it,” Dean tells him. “So much time.”

“How does that time measure against the remainder of your life?”

Dean stares at the ceiling.

The ceiling fails to stare back.
“Would you force your brother into this position if you knew he didn’t want it?” Jimmy asks.

“Haven’t told my uncle I don’t want it,” Dean mumbles.

“That’s not what I asked. Would you force your brother?”

“No,” Dean says quietly.

“Then I need you to treat yourself as well as you treat your brother,” Jimmy tells him. “Can you do that for me?”

Dean wants to.

Dean doesn’t deserve to.

Jimmy wants him to, but. That’s not real. That won’t last.

That shouldn’t matter half so much as it does.

His voice a rough scrape, Jimmy asks, “Please. For me.”

Dean squeezes his eyes tight against the ceiling. His ribs squeeze his heart tight against the world. “Yeah,” he rasps. “Yeah, okay. What do I…?”

“Tell your uncle where your passions lie. Be reasonable about time frames for transitions and your own breaking points. If you’re anything like me, you might think a breaking point is something you’re supposed to reach, but I’ve learned the hard way that it isn’t.”

Pressing the heels of his hands against his closed eyes, Dean can’t breathe. “I don’t wanna make it worse.”
“Doing something different might make it worse. Doing nothing different will make it worse.”

Taking tiny sips of air, Dean struggles to trust the logic of that.

Jimmy helps him breathe through it. Words like soft touches. Rhythm like a heartbeat.

“I can make it an order,” Jimmy offers once Dean’s grounded again. “I can give you rewards and consequences. Would that help?”

After a weak pause, Dean says, “Yes.”

“Next week is our last week,” Jimmy tells him like that information isn’t already haunting Dean’s brain like a horny and mournful spirit. “If you tell me you’ve spoken with your uncle on the issue, I’ll believe you. Tell me you’ve told him you don’t want the new position, and we’ll proceed as usual, no questions asked.

“If you tell me you haven’t, there will be no sexual content to the call. If you attempt to orgasm while on the line, I will repeat ‘tongue bath’ over and over until you stop.

“Lastly, if you haven’t spoken to your uncle but tell me you have, I won’t call you on the lie. We will proceed as usual. Afterwards, as you will have no means to contact me and make amends, your memory of our final night will be forever tainted.”

Fear grips Dean’s soft cock like a warm hand.

“Do you understand?” James asks.

Dean swallows. “Yes, James.”

“Is any part of the plan or consequences unreasonable?”
“No, James.”

“Are there any changes you’d like to make to the plan?”

“No, James.”

“Tell me you're my good boy.”

“I’m...” His dick stirs against his leg. Tears threaten to trickle out the corners of his eyes. “I’m your good boy.”

“Yes you are,” James agrees. “Tell me who you belong to.”

His voice cracks. “You.”

“Are you going to break what’s mine, sweet boy?”

Dean squirms, turning his burning face away from nothing. His dick grows just as hot, plays at growing heavier than his heart. “No.”

“No,” Jimmy agrees. “What are we going to do with what’s mine, sweet boy?”

The tears leak out. Dean knows the right answer. Saying it is hell.

“Gonna… gonna treat it right.”

“Good boy,” Jimmy praises. “My good boy. Let’s treat you right.”

Crying and aroused, Dean is somewhere beyond speech.
“I want to treat you right,” Jimmy continues. “I enjoy that, in whatever form it takes. Do you want me to keep talking? Or do you want a minute?”

“Keep talking,” Dean begs thickly. “Please.”

“You’re all right,” Jimmy tells him. “You’re going to be all right. You’re my good boy as long as you want to be. That won’t change. That’s your decision. Do you want to be my good boy?”

“Yes.” He clears his throat. “Yes, James.”

“Say it. All of it.”

His stomach plummets. His arousal climbs. “I’m, I wanna be your good boy, James.”

“And you are. You want to be and you are. That kind of thing is possible. That can happen. I promise.”

Dean takes in a hitching, sucking breath.

“Good. Just like that. Get yourself steady for me. Do you still want to play with me tonight?”

“Please,” Dean whispers.

“I’m glad,” Jimmy says. “I want to play with you too.”

Slowly, Dean gets himself back under control. He wipes at his face again. He finishes off his liquids.

“Sorry,” he tells Jimmy. It’s not enough, but it’s the word he has.

“Thank you for trusting me,” Jimmy answers. “I don’t think that comes easy for you.”
Dean coughs and clears his throat, but the lump in there just won’t go. “Yeah, it’s, uh. No.”

“Then I’m honored.”

“It’s really not an honor, man.”

“If I thank you for a gift, what do you say?” Jimmy prompts, stern in exactly the way that makes Dean’s dick weep over lost potential. The sexy professor roleplay this guy must be capable of, if only he were into it…

“I say ‘you’re welcome.’”

“Good boy. Tell me how you’re positioned right now.”

“Bed,” Dean says, the topic jump barely registering. “On my back, legs kinda hanging off.”

“How naked are you?”

“Down to the boxers.”

“Is there a chair in your bedroom?”

“Yeah?”

“Put on as many layers as you like and sit there.”

Dean sits up. “Put on?”

“Put on.”
“This is still the librarian fantasy thing? ‘Cause I don’t have the sexy glasses thing going on.”

“I told you, it’s not about a librarian. It’s about extremely furtive public sex.”

A smirk climbs onto the shaky surface of Dean’s lips. “Hence the clothes.”

“Hence the clothes.”

Holding onto his phone, Dean fishes a couple layers out of his laundry basket only to pull on a flannel without buttoning it. He grabs a pair of sweatpants and sits down in his computer chair. He swivels back and forth, putting the phone on the cramped surface of his desk. Fucking textbooks everywhere.

“So what are you wearing?” Dean asks, reflexively twitching a grin at the question.

“A dress shirt with the sleeves rolled up,” Jimmy whispers. “I’ve unbuttoned my collar and loosened my tie.”

“Why are you whispering?” Dean whispers back.

“Because we’re in a library. And if we make too much noise, we’ll attract attention.”

Shivers race each other down Dean’s neck and across his shoulders in the wake of Jimmy’s deep voice. “What kind of attention?”

“The kind that stops me from doing what I want to you.”

Dean’s head aches. His eyes still faintly itch. His stomach feels strange, and he’s tense enough to feel individual muscle groups trying to relax, or maybe break like tightly tuned guitar strings.

All of that goes farther away the closer Jimmy’s words rumble into Dean’s ears.
Dean swallows, the noise of his throat taking on a faint, uncharacteristic squeak. He reaches down, already needing to adjust himself through boxers and sweatpants. “What do you want to do to me?”

“Everything you’ll let me,” Jimmy murmurs.

Dean closes his eyes. He gives a couple good squeezes, not bothering to stroke through two layers of fabric. He might not remember which kid told him he could static shock his own dick doing that, but it’s been a hopefully irrational concern since the fifth grade.

“How does that sound?” Jimmy asks.

“You ready to get arrested for public indecency?”

“And be put in separate cells? No. Stay quiet.”

“Okay,” Dean whispers, eyes still closed. He’s at the library. He’s at his table, his empty table. “You, uh.” He licks his lips. “You behind me?”

“I might start there. Maybe you sat down first. Maybe I’ve been staring at the back of your head and devising a plan to approach you. Of course, that depends where you’re sitting. Armchair? Desk? Table?”

“Table. Off in the back.”

“In an alcove of shelves,” Jimmy adds, getting it exactly right. “Somewhere no one could accidentally see us from down the row. They might still hear us, however.” He shushes Dean softly, the breeze of his voice somehow tickling Dean’s ears through the headset.

Dean shakes his way through a shiver. It’s ridiculous and he’s given up caring. “I’m here,” Dean whispers. “Waiting for you, c’mon, come get me.”

“You haven’t been waiting for me,” Jimmy corrects. “You’ve been baiting me. Haven’t you?
You’ve been riling me up until you deserve everything that’s coming to you. Including me.”

Dean snorts despite himself. “Crap joke, dude.”

“It isn’t.”

“No, seriously, awful joke.”

“It isn’t a joke,” Jimmy tells him.

The implication hovers in the air before dropping into Dean’s gut. “...Really?”

“You’ve earned it, if you want it,” Jimmy offers, low and hot and earnest in the praise. “I just put you through your personal hell. You deserve this.”

Somehow, Dean keeps his hands off his dick. “Please,” he begs.

“Tell me you deserve it. This is just like being my good boy. Say it, and you can have it.”


“Yes you do,” Jimmy murmurs back. “I know you do, because the only person who decides how much of my body you deserve is me. I tell you how much of me you deserve, and I say you deserve to hear me climax tonight. Ask me for something else.”

“Finger yourself?” Two words, but Dean barely gets them out.

“No,” Jimmy answers simply, less of a slap to the face and more a light pat to the rear. “Not in a chair, and I’d have to trim my fingernails first. Ask again, for something else.”
If he can’t have the fingering, Dean just wants to hear him come. “Could, um. This is going to sound stupid.”

“No, I will not pretend to be a centaur.”

Dean laughs.

Jimmy shushes him.

Dean bites the first knuckle of his fist.

“What is it?” Jimmy asks.

“I, uh. I get to hear you come, right?”

Jimmy hums warm confirmation.

“Could I hear you come… on something? Like, uh. Hear your jizz hit something?” It’s too hot in his room with clothes on. It ought to be too cool, but the headset is burning up his ears.

“That’s very possible. Give me a moment to find something.”

There’s the shifting and click of Jimmy’s headset being put down on a desk or table. There are carpet-muffled footsteps, the turn of a doorknob, and the authoritative footsteps of a sturdy man in dress shoes. Distantly, there’s the sound of something else opening, some rummaging, and then those footsteps hasten back.

“This should work. I’m going to drip some water on it. Tell me if you can hear the sound.”

There’s a quick pitter-patter of liquid hitting a semi-hard surface. It sounds like beer spilling onto a pizza box.
“Is that cardboard?” Dean asks.

A tiny pause, and Jimmy says, “You’ve a good ear. It’s a cereal box I took out of the recycling.”

Heart racing, Dean smirks. “You gonna frost your flakes, Jimmy? Maybe captain my crunch? Make me coo-coo for your Cocopuffs?”

“It’s Raisin Bran.”

“. . .I had like five more jokes, but you had to go with the least sexy cereal ever.”

“Clearly, you’ve never tried muesli,” Jimmy deadpans.

Dean’s chest swells with the effort of keeping down his laugh.

“Sexual attractiveness of my breakfast aside, if you can hear it, I think we’re ready to proceed. Tell me where you are. How I find you.” His voice flatlines into another joke: “What are you wearing?”

With a big grin, Dean clears his throat. “I’m-”

Jimmy shushes him. “Quietly.”

“I’m in jeans,” Dean whispers, ignoring the reality of his sweatpants and flannel. “Got a Henley over a t-shirt. Not as fancy as you.”

“But you still make a lovely view from behind,” Jimmy whispers back, stating it as fact. Tingles shiver their way from Dean’s ears and down his back, tickling at his shoulder blades. “What are you doing? Reading? On a laptop?”

“Laptop.” Eyes closed, he can picture the library easily. His open laptop, the letters carved into the edges of the table, Cas’ empty seat. “Don’t worry, I’m not looking up porn.”
“You won’t need to,” Jimmy promises. “Do you have headphones in?”

“Yeah, sure.”

“Then when I approach you from behind, I have to touch your shoulder for your attention. Are you going to look up at me, Michael?”

Nodding, eyes closed, Dean pictures it—and sees Cas looking back down at him. Not the vague concept of Jimmy he usually has floating around in the back of his head. Cas. Except even more disheveled than usual, the collar further unbuttoned, the tie extra loose. Those thick forearms on display.

...Okay.

Okay.

Dean can work with this.

“Staring up at you, man. Got that tie of yours right in my face, don’t you.”

“Can I use the other chair?” Jimmy asks quietly, and Dean somehow knows Jimmy’s voicing himself inside this little fantasy.

“I’m just gonna nod,” Dean whispers back. “Gotta be quiet, y’know.”

“Do I sit down across from you or next to you?”

“Across,” Dean answers before considering his options. Side-by-side would probably have led to a handjob fantasy, maybe some kissing. Maybe this’ll get them on top of the table, though. That would be kinda hot.

“Then I can look at you over your laptop screen.”
“I can, I can look at you,” Dean fails to counter. “Over my laptop screen.”

“We’ve been looking at each other for a while now. We keep seeing each other around, don’t we?”

“Not enough of each other,” Dean agrees.

“Not at all. I hope you’ll forgive my staring. Do you catch me at it?”

“Uh-huh.” He can’t stop picturing Cas, eyes insistent across the table as he slides the notebook back. Dean licks his lips.

“And what are you going to do about it?”

Dean works his hand under the waistband of his sweatpants. “What do you want me to do about it?”

“I want you to welcome me in. Maybe smile. Maybe close the laptop. One fewer barrier between us. Or you could whisper something.”

Dean grins. “I’m gonna kick you.”

“Really.”

“Not hard. Just a little tap on the side of the leg. Maybe step on your toes for a second.”

“Your breathing’s changed. Are you touching yourself?”

Dean’s hand freezes. “In a library?”

Jimmy’s eye-roll is somehow audible. “Right now, in reality.”
“...Do you not want me to?”

“I want you to hold off until I tell you I’m touching you. You don’t have to, but will you do that for me?”

“Yeah,” Dean promises immediately. He pulls his hand back out. Sticks it down on his desk and then fidgets until he’s holding his phone with both hands.

“Good boy,” Jimmy practically purrs. His voice is so absurdly deep. “You’re such a good boy for me, aren’t you?”

“Yeah,” Dean repeats, a bit slower this time.

“My good boy,” Jimmy calls him, and the pride in his tone goes directly to Dean’s dick. “And since you’re the one who started playing footsie, I’m going to have to play right back.”

“I’m not playing footsie.”

“Then when I hook my foot around the back of your calf, you want me to stop?”

Dean pictures it. Against the backdrop of his closed eyelids, across the table, Cas stares back at him with a clear challenge on his face. “…Yeah, okay, keep going.”

“Keep going?” Jimmy echoes. “What if I toe off one of my loafers, what then?”

“Then I tell you I’m not really into feet, but I am curious.”

“Do you say that in the library?”

“No. No, I just, just kinda nod. A little.”
“Are you looking back at me this entire time?”

Dean needs water, or a beer, or something. “Yeah. Um, no. I’m pretending to pay attention to my laptop.”

“I don’t hear you typing.”

“Yeah, I can’t focus on that right now.”

Jimmy lets out a pleased hum. “Of course you can’t. I’m working my toes up the cuff of your pant leg. Up inside. Pushing it up a little. It’s not much, but at least I get to touch you. Do I get to touch you?”

Dean clenches his hands around his phone as his dick demands more physical attention. “Yeah.” He swallows. “However you want.”

“But you don’t tell me that, do you?” Jimmy asks in a murmur. “I have to find that out for myself. I keep moving my foot higher. Trying to get to you. Watching for your reaction. Do I see you turning red?”

“Yeah.”

“Do I see your eyes getting dark?”

“Yeah.”

“Just from me touching your leg? With my sock on?”

Dean clears his throat. “I mean, it’s a damn fine sock. All, uh. Smooth.”

“Silk,” Dean says. That’s more sheer, right? Closer to skin-on-skin. To have Jimmy touch him. Any part of Jimmy. Any part of Dean. To actually, physically touch him.

Dean’s never been into any of that porn with some guy getting stepped on, but sheer desperation for contact might just be teaching him the appeal.

“When I get my foot as far up your calf as your jeans will let me. What do you do?”

“Reach down. Pull at my pant leg.”

“Do you.”

“Yeah.”

“Good boy.” And Jimmy shifts his voice just enough that Dean knows it’s meant to be a line in the library. A thing Dean’s perverted brain pictures Jimmy-as-Cas actually saying to him, and he nearly folds in half from the need to grab hold of his own dick.

“I’m going to bring my foot higher now,” Jimmy continues. “Outside of your jeans now. Up the inside of one leg, and then the other. Just to the knee. Back and forth. What do you do?”

It takes Dean a few seconds to whisper it.

“Louder for me,” Jimmy commands.

“I spread my legs for you,” Dean repeats.

“Good. Do you know what I do?”

“No?”
“I push them wider,” Jimmy tells him. “I put my foot on one knee and I push. I put the side of my foot against the other knee, and I push. Do it. Do it now, as wide as you can.”

Dean whimpers in his obedience.

“You can touch your legs if you’d like. That’s where I’m touching you right now. That’s where you’re allowed to touch. No higher than that.”

“I, uh. I scoot my chair in.”

“You want my foot on your cock?”

Dean would fuck the crook of Jimmy’s elbow if it meant coming from the other man’s touch. “Anything, man.”

“Anything?” Jimmy echoes in a dangerous tone.

Dean makes that pathetic sound again. It’s so pathetic, but it’s okay—Jimmy makes a noise like he likes it. Like Dean’s pleasing him by being so totally gone on him. Like this is what a good boy is for. And it is. This is what Dean is for. It’s what he is, what he’s meant to be, and he’s good at it. He’s a good, good boy.

“I’m going to slide the tips of my toes from your knee... to almost... all the way... down your thigh. Almost.

“But not quite.”

Dean’s own hand stops inches from the bulge in his sweats.

“And the other side,” Jimmy instructs. “Before we stop again. I can feel the silk of my socks snag against your jeans. I like tracing that seam. Should I keep doing it?”
“I want your foot on my cock.”

“Say pleas-”

“Please.”

“Say ‘please, James, I want your foot on my cock.’”

Dean squeezes his eyes shut hard. “Please, James, I want your foot on my cock.”

James shushes him. “Not so loud. You don’t want someone interrupting us, do you?”

“No, no no no. Just want your foot on my cock. Please. James.”

“Do you want to rut against my foot?”

Dean’s a good boy, and he knows what to do. “Please, James, I wanna rut against your foot.” He’s gonna fucking die if he can’t touch his dick soon.

“Do you want to feel silk against your bare cock?”

“You, I wanna feel you.”

“Then say it,” James orders in whisper.

Heart fighting to beat out of his chest, Dean whispers, “Please, James, I wanna feel you.”

“Against?”
“Against my bare cock.”

“Take yourself out for me.”

Dean squirms in his seat, working his sweatpants and underwear down. His unbuttoned flannel hangs open on either side of his aching dick, the proverbial curtains that don’t match the rug. “Can I…? Please, James, can I?”

“Are you looking me in the eyes?”

Dean snaps his head up. His eyes can’t open, but he still can’t stop seeing the table. The shelves. Cas staring back at him.

“Yes,” Dean rasps. “Yes, James.”

“I’m going to press my foot right up against your cock and you’re going to come all over my good socks, aren’t you?”

“Yeah, yeah, please, let me.”

“Do it.”

Dean starts to jerk off hard and fast. With the sheer amount of precome he’s been leaking, it’s sleek and smooth, the callouses of his hand aside.

“You’re humping my foot,” James murmurs, his voice fallen deep into a chasm of arousal. “You’re thrusting into all of me you can reach. You’re looking at me, you’re seeing how turned on I am. I brought a book but I haven’t even been pretending to read. I can’t. I’d rather see you come. I reach out and close your laptop because I want to see you come.” He shifts his voice, again speaking inside their little fantasy: “I want to see you come.”

“James,” Dean keeps saying, his inner eye still fixed on Jimmy-as-Cas, on Cas’ equally hot and way
more perverted twin. “James, James...”

“Good boy,” James praises. “You’re my good boy, but you have to stay quiet. Don’t let anyone hear us.”

“Uh-huh, uh-huh, I won’t, I’m good, I promise.”

“You are good,” James agrees. “So good, so good for me. Is this all you want? Just my foot?”

“More?” Dean asks. “I can have more?”

“Sweetheart,” Jimmy says, and it’s a word like no other. “This is our fantasy. Of course you can have more.”

Dean comes so hard, he can’t see. He can’t even imagine seeing. Muscles tense, voice strangled, he comes against the underside of his own desk. He’s fucking shaking. He’s fucking flying. He’s stuck on an exhale, dizzy with it, dizzier still when he finally sucks in air.

“Oh my god,” Dean gasps, collapsing forward, one protective arm curled around his phone. “Oh my god, James.”

“Did you come all over my foot, sweet boy?”

Dean manages a noise of confirmation through his panting.

“I’m pulling off my sock, and then do you know what I’m doing to you?”

“Anything,” Dean mumbles. “Fuck me. Come on me.”

“I’m coming around to your side of the table,” Jimmy tells him. A zipper unzips. His voice grows impossibly rougher, and there’s a wet, fleshy sound Dean knows so incredibly well. Faster, faster, that sound. “I’m getting you out of that chair, sweet boy, I’m getting your chest on the table and your ass in the air. Don’t make a sound. Don’t let anyone catch us before I can get mine. You’ll make sure
I get mine, won’t you?”

“Yes, James.” Dean lurches to his feet. He lets himself collapse forward, onto his arm already on the desk. Somewhere between Jimmy’s harsh whispers and the aftershocks of his own orgasm, Dean keeps shaking beneath his skin.

“I’m going to push between your legs now,” Jimmy promises. “I don’t want you to spread them now, I want you to press them tight. Give me something to thrust against. Get your hand down there, clench your thighs around it. I want my cock to hit your balls with each thrust.”

Dean obeys, one arm beneath his head, the other clenched tight between his own thighs. The sound of Jimmy jerking off gets faster and faster, Jimmy’s breathing more ragged. Body twisted, his mind in a place beyond time, Dean floats and drifts and floats. He closes his legs ever-tighter around his hand, his wrist. His sweatpants and underwear fall further and further down his legs in a cloth caress. He works his other arm free, his cheek directly on the desk, and he slaps his own ass to the rhythm of Jimmy’s strokes.

And it happens.

A muffled groan.

A wet splatter.

Slowing motions.

Breaths, being caught.

Dean collapses back into his chair.

“Oh my god,” he says.

Jimmy hums.
“Did you really come?” Dean asks.

Jimmy hums a second time, just as pleased as the first.

“Holy shit,” Dean says. “That was…”

“That was really good,” Jimmy says, sounding nice and fucked out. Like this was real phone sex.

Damn if that’s not a thought Dean needs to stay away from.

But…

“So it was good for you too?” Dean pretends to joke.

“I just told you it was,” Jimmy answers, sounding indulgent in Dean’s ears. “Did you like hearing me come on the table?”

Dean needs to clean up his desk and he doesn’t fucking care. “Yeah.” He takes in a long, slow breath. It does nothing to calm him down. He’s flying. He’s sitting with his bare ass on his chair, his pants around his ankles, and he’s fucking soaring. “God.”

Jimmy chuckles.

“I swear I’m not normally like this,” Dean promises.

“That’s a pity,” Jimmy says. “What aren’t you like?”

“Like…” A pleasant flush lingers in his cheeks. “Not normally such a fucking slut. You just do shit to me, man.”

“You’re wonderful to play with,” Jimmy tells him. “Do you believe that?”
Maybe. “How come?”

“Because you’re so responsive,” Jimmy says. “Because you’re my fucking slut.” *Sweetheart,* Dean hears again.

“Bet you got a whole bunch of ‘em.”

“Fewer than you might think.”

Dean shivers, slowly getting cold. Fumbling, he strips out of his flannel shirt and wipes down the desk with it. That’ll have to hold it for now.

“Michael?”

“I’m good, just cleaning up. Gonna get back in bed.”

“All right.”

Dean strips down until he’s naked and then grabs his phone. Under the covers, he turns out the lights. He reaches around for something to ask about. “Do you have a foot fetish?”

“You started the foot contact,” Jimmy points out, which isn’t saying no. “You responded fairly positively when I continued with it, so I kept going.”

Eyes closed, body snuggly, Dean says, “You could’ve had me choking on your dick against the shelves, you know.”

“...I didn’t know,” Jimmy says after a tiny pause. “Do you want to suck my cock, sweet boy?”

Blushing hard, Dean doesn’t even try to deny it. “I mean, I could try, at least.”
“Is that what you want next week?”

“I guess.”

“If it’s not what you want-”

“No, I just mean,” Dean interrupts, then stops.

“Yes?”

“In the least stalkerish way possible, I mean I want, y’know. Your actual dick in my actual mouth.” His entire face burns, but orgasm keeps his limbs mellow.

Jimmy lets out a sigh.

Dean’s mellow decreases immensely. “Sorry. Didn’t meant to be that creepy.”

“No, that’s… No. It’s simply been a very long time since I’ve had my actual dick in anyone’s actual mouth.”

Dean snorts. “Seriously?”

“Seriously.” Jimmy answers, seeming to mean it. “I’ve two jobs and an essentially non-existent social life. I spend half of my nights pretending to have sex, typically with people uninterested in me getting off. It can be very… frustrating.”

Jesus. When he puts it that way…. “Yeah, I bet,” Dean says. “You stuck playing PG-13 and pretending to be a centaur?”

Jimmy groans. “No more centaurs.”
Dean grins, pressing his ear against the right side of his headset. “But tonight, that was one of your fantasies? Having to stay quiet in a public spot?”

“Semi-public. I told you, it’s the furtiveness.”

“You wanna get caught?”

“I think I want to almost get caught,” Jimmy says. “I- oh. Where did I-” There’s a paper shuffling noise. “I had plans. That’s the problem with improvising, I skipped over too many of my bullet points.”

“What, you mean you wrote some kind of choose-your-own-sex-adventure book over there?”

“...Yes?”

Dean laughs. “You’re fucking awesome, man. What parts did we miss?”

“I meant to fuck, finger, or frot you against a bookshelf, so we’d have to freeze and muffle you when someone walked by on the other side. I would have timed the interruptions to keep edging you, or maybe threaten to spank you later if we got caught…” Jimmy clears his throat. “I’d planned on at least something up against the shelves, but that would have been more for me.”

Dean whistles low. “Just so you know, that would have been plenty for me, too.”

“Really?”

“Yeah.” Even without closing his eyes, Dean can see it. Jimmy pinning his hands over his head against the bookshelf, their bodies grinding together. Cas’ squinty Don’t You Dare face, eyes narrowed and nostrils flared…

...except, no, not Cas. Not all hot dudes in libraries are Cas. Dean can’t seem to stop picturing him, though.
“Should we do this one again next week?” Jimmy asks.

“Huh?”

“If you complete the goal I’ve set for you by next week, would you like to check off the rest of this scene? Or something else?”

Oh. Right. Dean’s supposed to talk to Bobby.

There goes all the good his orgasm did him.

“Michael?”

“I’m thinking,” Dean says, reeling in the panic. He sets his phone atop his chest, its tiny weight still blazing through the sheets. Or maybe it just feels that way. He breathes himself calm. “I’ve got an idea.”

“I’m open to your ideas.”

“You as open to my ideas as I am to your dick?” Dean hears himself ask.

Distantly, Dean hears Jimmy chuckle. He sounds like he’s smiling. “As open as you are to my fingers, at least. Tell me.”

“I wanna blow you in the back of my car,” Dean says, as quiet as he was in the midst of their scene. “Head out somewhere. Fog up the glass. Maybe get someone calling the cops on us if we’re not careful.”

“In the back of your big black car?”

A stupidly strong flush of pleasure bursts through Dean at Jimmy remembering. “Hell yeah.”
“I’m going to have you come with your lips stretched around your own fingers.”

Dean swallows before his mouth can water too much. “Promise?”

“Yes.”

He shivers against his sheets. With low, lethargic motions, he reaches down and squirms his underwear off to lie naked.

“How are you feeling?” Jimmy asks softly, as if he can pet Dean’s sweaty hair away from his forehead with voice alone.

“Tired,” Dean answers, equally quiet. Trying to touch him back the same way. “Wanna fall asleep just like this.”

“You should brush your teeth first.”

Dean snorts. “Screw you.”

He makes himself comfy. Wasted seconds slip by in silence.

“Hey, Jimmy?”

“Mm?”

“What’s, um.” Something long for Jimmy to talk about. Something he’ll want to tell Dean. “What’s your support system like? How’d you build it and all that?”

Even before Jimmy says a word, Dean hears him smile. “It starts with my family,” Jimmy says. “It didn’t always, and that was the most difficult period of my life. But now we’re all on the same page, as much as we can be.”
Dean cringes back from the implications, but he prompts Jimmy for more anyway. “Because you tell them shit.”

“But we tell each other shit. And we agreed that the truth of God is love and forgiveness.” Somehow, it doesn’t sound hokey as shit when Jimmy says it. “Or, in less religious terms, we had a lot of talks over what we wanted our goals for our family dynamic to be.”

“Kinda intense.”

“They wanted me out of the hospital enough to try,” Jimmy says simply. He swallows. “I’m very fortunate, Michael. I know I am.”

Inside Dean’s heart, he wraps his arms around this man and crushes him against his chest.

In reality, Dean lies there, arms empty, hands clasped around his phone. “...What if I’m not? Fortunate.”

“Then you’ll find another way through. But what if you are? What if your family—who you would do anything for—cares about your well-being even a quarter as much as you care for them?”

Dean closes his eyes tight. “I can’t talk about this right now.”

“...You’re right. This is supposed to be the cool down period. I’m sorry.”

“Yeah, well.” Dean clears his throat.

Jimmy says “Thank you,” or at least something that sounds a lot like it. Except that makes no sense.

“Sorry, what?”

“Thank you,” Jimmy repeats. “I don’t want to cross your boundaries, so thank you for stopping me.”
Dean tries to wrap his head around that for a second before entirely giving up. “You’re so fucking weird, you know that, right?”

“I’ve been reliably informed, yes.”

Dean rubs his thumb up the side of his phone. He checks the call time and can’t even bring himself to care. They fall back into silence, and it doesn’t matter that Dean’s technically paying for nothing.

“I’m, uh.” He rolls onto his side, ignoring the awkward press of the headset against his ear. The microphone is unimpeded on the other side and that’s what’s important. “I’m gonna miss this. I mean, the sex is freakin’ awesome, but, um.” He sighs, hands cupped around his phone. Not a sad sigh. Tired. Strained and worn and somehow almost relaxed. “I’m gonna miss this.”

“...I think I will too,” Jimmy says, enough faint surprise in his voice that Dean actually believes him.


“I don’t have very many people I can talk to about this job,” Jimmy tells him, turning strangely formal. “I appreciate it. This might sound strange, but I do consider us friends.”

The unfurling stops. It furls right on back in, curling in on itself to keep out a sudden chill.

Friends.

He’s Jimmy’s friend.

Already curled on his side, Dean wraps a protective arm around his stomach, his vulnerable underbelly.

It’s more than he’d ever thought he’d get, and therefore more pain than he knows how to take.
“Michael?”


“Understandable. Are you going to be all right tonight?”

“Yeah, I’m fine.”

“Michael.”

“I’m fine for the night, okay?”

“Okay. It’s all right if you’re not. You know I like taking care of you.”

“If I need you, I’ll call again.”

“Do you promise? We touched on a lot tonight.”

“I promise,” Dean says, not sure if he’s lying. “How about next week we keep to touching on our dicks instead?”

“We’ll see,” Jimmy answers with a hint of a smile. He sounds beautiful. “I have faith in your ability to earn it.”

God, it fucking hurts. It has no right to hurt this much.

“Thanks.” Dean’s voice rips out thicker than it should. “I’m, I should sleep.”

“I’ll wear you out in a better way next week,” Jimmy promises, too matter-of-fact to be sultry.
“I’ll, I’ll wear you out.”

“You’re welcome to try.” A small shifting noise. “We’re nearly at a new minute.”

“That’s okay,” Dean says.

“Okay,” Jimmy says back to him, and then they listen to silence.

If Dean closes his eyes and ignores the headset, pretends he’s holding onto his phone for no reason at all, he can almost pretend they’re lying there together. Almost.

There’s nothing left to say beyond the things Dean shouldn’t.

“Good night,” Dean says instead.

“Sleep well,” Jimmy bids him.

Dean doesn’t.

In hindsight, he should have tried to grab another appointment with Pamela. He has no idea what he’d say, but he knows that he wants to say something, and that’s almost as bad.

He makes sure to remember the coffee this time, but he nearly forgets the extra book. He wipes his feet and climbs the steps back up to his apartment, and writes his name on the back of the front cover. With one last double-check of his bag, Dean heads out for real.

The library lot is parked up as bad as ever, even worse than it was the week before midterms. Plus, the snow has melted in patches only to freeze anew in the worst possible places. Once Dean finally manages to find a spot big enough to accommodate his car, he goes skidding. He doesn’t faceplant,
but it’s close.

Inside, the library is loud. People talking, papers rustling, boots squeaking and sneakers squelching; noise, noise, noise. It’s better than the garage, but that’s a low bar to stumble over, a literal threshold. The atmosphere is definitely worse, though. A miasma of anxiety and exhaustion chokes the entire building.

Trusting Cas to have his back, Dean adjusts the strap of his bag and makes his way past students clustered around tables and slumped in armchairs. Two groups bicker in hushed tones over one of the private study rooms. Dean keeps on keeping on to the silent study area. Inside the alcove of shelves, there are more people than chairs. A few students have planted themselves on the floor, backs against the bookshelves.

Much more pressingly, there’s one in Dean’s seat.

Great.

Standing between the shelves, Dean lets out a sigh of defeat. Across the study space, across their tiny table, Cas looks up. He smiles and nods Dean over. As Dean approaches, frowning, Cas reaches across the table and taps the kid’s notebook. The kid looks up, twists around to look at Dean, and then he starts packing up his shit.

Blinking, Dean watches the quick, efficient process against the backdrop of Cas leaning down to grab something from under the table, beside his chair. Cas straightens up with a plastic supermarket container in hand, a trio of little cupcakes still inside. With a noise that would have been cringe-worthy any other week, Cas pops the lid and the student grabs a rainbow-frosted cupcake before giving Dean his seat.

The kid waves at Cas, Cas waves back, and Dean sits down in a way better mood than he’d walked in with.

Cas nudges the cupcake container at him.

Dean takes one, does the impossible by not immediately stuffing it in his face, and pulls out his notebook and pen instead. Then the coffee and his copy of Slaughterhouse-Five.
Flipping his notebook open to the last of their many pages of conversation, Dean writes, *Is it somebody’s birthday?*

Cas is shaking his head even before Dean passes the notebook over. Looking at Dean with a question in his eyes, Cas separates a single paper from the rest, still blank, and mimes a tearing motion. Dean nods. Cas tears. Cas folds the paper into fourths before hiding it behind his open laptop as he adds something in pen.

It gives Dean a lot of time to stare at him. A lot of time to remember last night and feel weird about even the good parts. The problem with that is, even if his chest feels tight, so do his pants.

When it’s clear Cas is turning whatever this is into some kind of project, Dean pulls out his own laptop and opens up his own projects. He’s a lot farther along than he’d thought he’d be with those final papers, enough that he’s gotten both first drafts back from the writing center. Turns out they accept emailed drafts. The papers aren’t even due for a full week.

Dean grits his teeth through corrections and alterations. He manages all the quick shit before Cas is done with his thing.

The thing, it turns out, is a card.

*Happy No More Classes Day!* it exclaims in Cas’ familiar blue ink on the front. There’s a couple hastily drawn balloons and what’s either meant to be streamers and confetti or a bunch of bleeding snakes.

An incredulous grin spreading across his face, Dean opens the card to find a shitload of cramped writing. On the first page:

*Fall Semester Progress Report:*

*Attendance: A+*

*Coffee Providing: A-*

*Coffee Quality: A*

*Food Providing: C*

*Food Quality: A+*
On the second page:

Additional notes:

A pleasure to have in office hours.

Shares well with others.

If my actual students displayed your study skills and consistency, I would be much less annoyed as a person.

Congratulations on finishing your classes, and good luck on your finals.

Dean’s wearing the stupidest grin of his life, and he can’t seem to stop. He rolls his eyes and flips Cas off, but he still can’t stop grinning.

Cas rolls his eyes right back, tugs the card out of Dean’s hand, and adds a note.

Dean’s Overall Company grade has been marked down to an A-, for profanity.

A hand over his mouth, Dean doesn’t laugh—but it’s close.

He looks at Cas, and Cas looks right back, so obviously proud of himself. He’s such a fucking dork.

You’re such a fucking dork, Dean writes on the notebook. The card goes carefully into his bag.

They don’t let you teach if you aren’t, Cas answers. You’re sure you won’t be coming next week?

Straight to business, then. Dean hasn’t even eaten his cupcake yet, which has to be some kind of personal best. Nope. Last final is on Wednesday. You gotta bring your own coffee next time. Maybe leave early?
The way Cas droops while reading is answer enough. It’s slight, but Dean knows his body language extremely well by now. *I’ll be here the whole time. There’s always a final Friday rush for the papers due at midnight.*

There’s something Dean actually gets to feel good about. *Almost done with mine, actually.*

Cas looks at Dean with a look Dean doesn’t receive often. Or maybe ever. It’s a look that says, *I would like to strangle every single person in the world—except for you.*

Dean shrugs like the silent praise doesn’t feel great or anything. He covers by swapping books with Cas, then carefully refilling his travel mug for him. They stow their new books and pretend to get back to work. Absently licking the frosting off his cupcake, Dean rereads his papers until he starts to believe his own bullshit.

Distantly, he feels Cas looking at him, but it’s way too soon to switch subjects, let alone for a break. Still, when Dean looks up, Cas is definitely staring. He looks only slightly sheepish to be caught at it, and his eyes flick down to Dean’s mouth when Dean frowns.

Dean looks down at the rainbow swirl of sugar in his hand that tastes of plain vanilla. Oh. Dean sticks out his tongue, crosses his eyes a little, and, yep, he’s got a food coloring explosion going on in his mouth.

Cas looks at him like he’s never seen a grown man being a child before.

Dean responds the only way he knows how and stuffs the entire cupcake in his mouth in one go, popping it out of the wrapper and directly into his piehole.

The face Cas makes is entirely worth it.

Dean chews with an open mouth and a great big grin.

In exquisitely sarcastic resignation, Cas shields his eyes with one hand, looking down at his laptop. He pecks at the keys with his free hand like he’s trying to punch each one with a single finger.
Way too soon, Cas gets dragged away by a bunch of his students, but he leaves enough of his crap with Dean that Dean doesn’t even have to fight to save the seat. Still, just to be sure, Dean scoots his chair forward and props up both his feet on Cas’. Just to be sure. Not at all checking to see whether Jimmy actually could have…

Anyway.

Work.

He keeps going until he thinks he might actually be finished with one of the papers. Time to let that thing sit. Cas still isn’t back, but this is probably around when he’d signal break time.

With that in mind, Dean sinks down in his chair until he can rest his head on the back of it. His feet slide further across Cas’ seat until he’s almost comfy, arms folded and as sprawled as he’s going to be. He closes his eyes and breathes.

Immediately, the thought: how the hell is he going to tell Bobby?

How’s he supposed to tell Bobby he needs to get someone else? Thank him for the job and the life and every opportunity he could ever toss Dean’s way, and then throw the biggest one back in his face?

Hell, how’s he supposed to tell Sam that, yeah, apparently Dean can do this college shit after all, but he just doesn’t want to? How’s he supposed to tell Sam he’s wasted so much damn money, coming here and doing the classes and calling a fucking sex line to cope? Not that he’s going to ever, ever tell Sam the last part, but it’s a huge waste of funds all around.

The thoughts loop, repetitive and tense. Angrier. Louder. Dean grits his teeth.

He doesn’t have to do it. He can continue the way he’s been. He can just lie to Jimmy. Jimmy already said he’d take Dean at his word.

Their last night together can be a lie.
But he can’t tell Bobby. Can’t do that to him. And what kind of brother would he be to waste Sam’s money like that? He’s started his degree, he can’t fucking stop now.

He has to keep going. Cas even seems to think Dean’s a halfway decent student. The guy doesn’t have any first-hand experience, but he’s signed off on Dean’s study habits. Maybe Dean can squeak through. Maybe Dean can hold on with his fingertips long enough for something else to give. Something that puts failure outside his control. Something where he can fail and stop and go back to being just a mechanic, where people will pat him on the back and tell him it’s impressive he hung on as long as he did.

He doesn’t know what that would be.

He has no idea how long he’ll have to wait.

And what about the employees he’d be screwing over, failing like that?

*This isn’t helping*, a mental voice cuts in, sounding very much like Jimmy. *This isn’t helping. What helps?*

Dean doesn’t know. He can’t exactly start humming Metallica in here.

*Breathe.*

Dean breathes. He loosens his arms crossed over his chest, inhaling deeply, slowly.

And an exhale.

He breathes like he has Jimmy in his ear, calling him a good boy.

Mind on Jimmy. Mind off his own life. Think about Jimmy, disappointed he didn’t get to shove Dean up against a bookcase, fill his ass with dick, and stuff fingers in Dean’s mouth to keep him quiet.
More determined than horny, Dean thinks about that instead. The noises inside his own head calm. Their anxious energy gets subsumed into his image of Jimmy, of Jimmy-as-Cas. Stubble against the back of his neck. Gorgeous fingers pressed between his lips. Praise in his ear. Jimmy’s rumble. Cas’ strong hand giving him a reach-around.

Eyes closed, body relaxing in some ways more than others, Dean slides further down in his seat, making sure his crotch is securely hidden by the table. He keeps his face blank. Bored. His jaw unclenches. He drops his chin to his chest, pretending to take a nap.

What if it was Jimmy sitting across from him instead of Cas? What if Dean got his foot on the chair just the way he’s doing right now, except with his boots off, and kept tapping his foot against the gas? What if he got that engine running?

Jimmy unable to say anything in the silent section. Jimmy at Dean’s mercy, for once.

Jimmy furtively rocking in his seat. Jimmy clenching his thighs around Dean’s leg.

It’s Cas Dean ends up picturing, as fucked up as that is. He just can’t visualize anyone else in that seat. But damn if it isn’t hot. Cas with his face in a huge scowl, his cheeks turning red as he rocks against the only piece of Dean he can reach. Cas biting his own knuckle while glaring at him. Dean putting both hands on the table to prove he’s not touching himself. Cas planting his elbows on the table, dropping his face into his hands, still rutting against Dean’s foot.

Maybe Cas would want to fuck him up against the shelves too. Maybe Jimmy would be pounding into Dean’s ass up against the bookshelves, and Cas would hear the skin-slap and the lube-squish. And maybe Cas would say something like You’re fucking him wrong, except Dean kinda hears it in a Jimmy-esque voice because why the fuck not. Dean should definitely calm down what with the whole public space situation going on, but the second he stops fantasizing, he knows he’s going to fall back into the dark pit of anxiety.

Instead, he rides it through. Arms securely crossed, hands gripping his sleeve and shirt. Body absolutely motionless. And maybe he thinks about Cas fucking him on the table while Jimmy watches, while Jimmy holds Dean’s wrists down and Cas gives some kind of detached yet passionate lecture on the prostate. And then they flip Dean over onto his front for Jimmy to take his turn, so Dean can keep avoiding the fact he has no idea what Jimmy actually looks like. And maybe Cas would kneel down on the other side of the table to put their faces at the same level, looking at Dean in his intense way.

Maybe, after, they would stagger off to one of the armchairs. And Dean would sit in the cradle of
Jimmy’s lap, face tucked against Jimmy’s neck, Jimmy’s hand petting his hair. And maybe Cas would drape his longass trench coat over them and Jimmy would say something about wanting Dean to socialize more.

He thinks about that. Snuggling up. Being told he’s such a good boy, he deserves a banging hot threesome.

Maybe Jimmy Domming Cas too, if that’s something Cas is into. Jimmy telling Cas and Dean how to fuck each other. Even over the phone, even just that would be okay. Just to have someone there, afterward. To be the little spoon. To be quiet with someone without paying out the ass for it.

*When it comes to being quiet,* Dean’s brain whispers in a voice surprisingly his own, *Cas ain’t half bad.*

A touch on his ankle throws Dean out of his reverie.

His eyes snap open. He yanks his feet in, smacking his knees on the underside of his table. The solid thunk spreads through the entire study alcove, so it’s a good thing the pain kills the rest of his boner as people twist to look at him.

Foremost of people staring at Dean is Cas, because of course he is. Standing beside his own seat, clearly just wanting his chair back, and now holding one hand outreached toward Dean as if to say, *Stop, don’t hit your knees.*

Better late than never, and all that, but sooner would have been better, too.

Leaning forward to hold his aching old man joints underneath the table, Dean angles a look up at Cas that hopefully passes for a firm middle finger.

Shamefaced and concerned, Cas sits down and offers him the remaining cupcake.

Dean pretends not to be so easily bribed for all of three seconds.

They settle back into their usual pattern while Dean tries to keep his mind out of the gutter and
frosting off his face. He finishes up on the second paper, reviews his study guides, and then has no idea what else to do without it feeling redundant. He could always head home, but he hasn’t even finished his coffee yet, let alone actually gotten to talk to Cas.

*We still on for Sunday after next?* he scribbles down in his notebook.

Cas nods with a faint smile. *2pm*, he writes. He adds his address again, like he thinks it could have fallen out of Dean’s notebook somehow.

Dean gives him a thumbs up.

In return, Cas gives him an odd look, clearly noticing that Dean’s not finished.

*Since you’re grading me now, does that mean I can take one of your classes?* Because if anything is going to make next semester more bearable, that would be it. That’s what would be helpful.

*NO*, Cas writes back, then underlines it.

*I promise I wouldn’t sass you the entire time*, Dean lies.

Cas levels a look at him.

Dean puts on his best customer service smile.

Cas’ look intensifies.

Dean ups it to his flirty grin.

Cas’ expression hits a plateau.

Dean winks.
Cas breaks first, rolling his eyes for an obvious excuse to look away.

Dean grins like the piece of shit he is.

Cas visibly wonders why they’re friends.

Dean drinks coffee at him until Cas remembers.

Just to be even more of an asshole, Dean starts to write *How am I supposed to know if you’re a good teacher?* but he remembers another way halfway through. He scrawls out the rest of the question before opening his laptop and pulling up that professor rating website.

Cas looks concerned.

Dean turns his laptop around with a triumphant grin. Cas’ overall quality might be ranked four out of five, but so is his difficulty. His profile is laden with tags like “skip class? you won’t pass” and “get ready to read.” But, more pressingly, there’s a big ol’ red chili pepper on the profile. Dean points at it and Cas gets downright uncomfortable.

*Never mind, looks accurate to me,* Dean writes down.

Cas fucking *squirms.*

Dean grins so damn wide.

Shoulders hunched, eyes set in an intense squint, Cas starts typing on his own laptop. He clearly finds whatever he was looking for, but he takes a while longer to show the results to Dean.

Dean starts grinning slightly less wide.

Cas’ eyebrows shoot up.
Dean stops grinning.

Cas turns his laptop around, and it’s the fucking employee profile page for the garage. There’s Dean in his blue, grease-stained coveralls, looking like he’s been lined up against the wall and shot with something other than a camera. It’s a godawful picture, but it’s the best posed one they could manage. Bobby firmly rejected all of Dean’s Blue Steel impressions, and the rest just look awkward.

Dean reaches over to click to a different part of the company website. Cas does that panicked look everyone gets when someone unexpectedly uses their laptop, but Dean only does it to pull up what is essentially his entire resume in before-and-after photos. He scrolls down to the pics he wants, because Cas has actually seen Baby.

Cas looks.

Cas frowns.

Cas looks closer.

The first picture is a ruin. A corpse of a car, a t-boned wreck. It hurts Dean to look at, but they keep it on the restoration page because the Impala’s rebirth is, without question, the best work Dean has ever done.

Several more pictures show the transition back to life. The second picture is grainier than the rest, one Bobby had to take through a window when Dean wouldn’t let him get close. In it, Dean’s attaching an entire replacement door, his jeans stained with grease, his ripped undershirt a gray shadow of its white store-bought self. The next few pictures show Dean in rolled down coveralls and a slightly better-off A-shirt, more sweaty than grimy as Dean reassembles the engine piece by piece on a tarp and reafluxes the exhaust system from underneath.

The final picture is the best one, an exterior shot taken from a spot in front of the wheel. Baby gleams, shiny and black and restored. Arm slung out the window, his other hand on the wheel, Dean beams with her in equal measure.

Cas looks at Dean with something very close to awe.
It’s a good look on him. A very good look.

Dean shrugs a little, in a bragging kind of way.

Cas keeps scrolling. The rest of the website has pictures of everyone else, but the restorations section is almost purely Dean. Just Dean and beautiful cars for days, the way reality ought to be.

Keeping an eye on Cas, Dean pretends to get back to studying. They both turn their laptops back to themselves, but Cas noticeably refrains from typing. The line of his mouth is soft. When Cas glances up and catches Dean looking, Cas is the one who looks like he’s been caught doing something.

There’s something going on here. It’s not just Dean’s overactive, porn-filled imagination. Not even his mistrust of his flimsy gaydar can persuade him otherwise.

Cas is into him.

Cas is actually, really, honestly into him.

Dean does their signal for going to the bathroom, watch my shit and gets the fuck out of there. Cas just nods like he’s been checking out Dean this entire time, and Dean flees. In the bathroom, he heads directly into the single handicap stall and stares down at the toilet like he’ll find answers inside it.

Part of his brain keeps listening. The door opens. Dean’s heart pounds. Light, squeaking footsteps enter. There’s a zip, a piss, another zip, and more squeaking footsteps without the little shit stopping to wash his hands.

Dean’s dick informs the rest of his body that it is Disappointed.

Even though it’s not like Cas was going to follow him into the bathroom. Or into the stall. The odds for hot monkey sex are very low here.

The hope for it, though.
That’s pretty high.

Dean paces in the handicap stall.

He thinks about Aaron. He thinks about Cas. He thinks about liking someone, versus liking the way someone treats him.

He thinks about having a real, honest-to-god actual person in his bed for once.

And then he thinks about Cas swearing off closeted men. He thinks about Jimmy’s reasons for echoing that position.

He thinks about a whole lot of things before flushing the toilet with his foot, and then he still washes his hands on the way out.

Back at their table, Cas is again typing away. It’s his turn to be slumped down in his seat with his feet propped up on Dean’s chair. Cas, it turns out, is wearing black loafers today. His navy pants ride up his legs a little, revealing a glimpse of toned calves encased in sleek brown socks.

Dean shoves him just above the ankles. The socks are soft, the muscles firm.

Cas rolls his eyes and surrenders Dean’s seat.

Dean sits down and tries not to pop a boner. Again. Involving Cas.

He does what he can, but his focus is shot. He pretends to edit his papers before giving up and poking around on the internet. Cas writes him a couple more notes, and yeah, okay, Dean’s sticking around just to spend time with him. That’s a thing Dean does now. That’s a thing Dean’s done for a while.

His stomach churns, and it’s not the fault of the cupcakes.
He’s not cheating on Jimmy.

He *can’t* be cheating on Jimmy.

No one can be unfaithful to a relationship they’re not in.

And yet his stomach churns on.

Looking at Dean with growing concern, Cas adds another few words to Dean’s notebook and slides it back over. *What do you need help with?*

Dean looks at the question. He looks at Cas, at his earnest eyes and tilted head. Dean lies, *Work emails.*

Cas’ smile turns apologetic.

Dean shrugs.

He perseveres only a little longer before he can’t take it anymore. Packing up his crap, he gives Cas a little wave, but as Dean pulls on his coat, Cas stands up too. Cas comes around the table, and Dean?

Dean is weak.

No hug on earth ought to feel this good. The solidity of another body against his own. The firm press of arms against his back. Cas’ stubble scraping against Dean’s cheek as they pull away. The warmth in Cas’ eyes, and all of it for Dean.

Their setting aside, their studying audience aside, being closeted aside, Dean could have kissed him there and then.

He drives the long way home, and even when he gets there, he still has no idea what to do.
To see what else I'm working on, you can follow me on tumblr here or dreamwidth here.
Dean successfully freezes his face into a smile. He holds up a finger and turns off the music. Each step toward the speakers is an eternity, but it’s still not long enough to take up an entire verse.

“So?” Bobby says, a six-pack hanging from one hand. “How’d it go?”

“How’d what go?” Dean echoes, voice on automatic.

Bobby rolls his eyes up toward the brim of his trucker hat. “The fashion show, what did you think? I’ve only been throwing flashcards at you for three weeks.”

“Right, yeah,” Dean says, and he gets that smile back up. “Went great, really great.”
Up go Bobby’s eyebrows. “That great, huh.”

“Yep,” Dean says. “All finished up for the semester. Everything done.”

Dean keeps the smile going, but Bobby still doesn’t look pleased. His mustache doesn’t hide the stiffness of his mouth and his beard does nothing to disguise the set to his jaw.

Dean’s stomach turns over and turns over, but his brain just won’t start. If only he were a car, he could just fucking fix himself and be done with it.

“Uh-huh,” Bobby says. He jerks a thumb over his shoulder. “Let’s have a drink in your office.”

Bobby leads the way, just expecting Dean to follow.

Dean takes his time about it. He washes his hands. He pulls back up the top of his coveralls, zips it shut, and then rolls up his sleeves. By the time he gets into the office, Bobby’s sitting in the spot for customers, his old chair ready and waiting for Dean. One open beer sits next to two-thirds of the six-pack on the desk, and the last is in Bobby’s hand.

Heading straight into a goddamn trap, Dean sits. “What’s up?”

“How’d it go?” Bobby asks in a voice soft enough to hurt. “Really.”

“It went… good.” Dean grabs the beer off the table and picks at the label. He thinks them over, the exams, the papers. “No, it, it actually went good.”

Bobby swallows and nods. “All right.” He doesn’t look like he thinks Dean is bullshitting, either. If anything, he looks unsurprised.

“Uh, yeah,” Dean continues, not sure what else to do. “Had all the terms down for everything. Thanks for that. And there was some stuff I was shaky on, but it was one of those ‘pick two of three questions’ deals, so it didn’t really matter.”
“Good,” Bobby says, still obviously waiting for more. “Glad to hear it.”

“Yep,” Dean says.

They sit and drink. Dean peels half the label off before it starts ripping, and then he tries to stick it back on.

“Okay, what?” Dean finally demands, breaking against the implacable mound of weariness and flannel that is Bobby.

“Just wondering,” Bobby says, setting down his beer and looking at Dean much too closely, “why if it went so well, how come yer moping around here?”

Dean starts working on the label from the other side. He shrugs but puts the smile on. “After all the ways you’ve seen me fix up my car, you’re surprised I’m keeping an eye on what the salt and sand’s doing to her?”

“No,” Bobby says. “I’m surprised you made it through an entire semester, did well enough on your exams to know it, and still don’t think you can do this.”

Dean makes the mistake of looking at Bobby.

Because Bobby is sure as hell looking back.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Dean asks, and Bobby doesn’t even pretend to act like that doesn’t sound hollow.

“It means I wouldn’t trust you if you were half the idjit you think you are.” Bobby scratches his head through his hat, effectively grinding the trucker cap against his skull. “Would’ve thought the schooling would help.”

“Look, Bobby, I’m doing my best here, okay?”
“And you just said it went good. Which, knowing you, means better than that.”

*That’s not what it means*, Dean thinks but doesn’t say. Leaning forward in Bobby’s old chair—leaning into the punch, Dean just rolls the bottle between his hands.

“Now, maybe this is something I’m missing,” Bobby continues. “Never went to college, myself. Had libraries and bookstores and that used to be enough. But even Sam let me know that when finals are over, you celebrate.”

Bobby leans far enough forward that, even with the desk in between them, Dean wants to lean back. “Why aren’t you celebrating, Dean?”

“Still got those papers,” Dean says. “Not out of the woods yet.”

Bobby levels a look at him like Godzilla levels a cardboard skyscraper. “You just said you were all finished.”

“I mean, I submitted them,” Dean says, cursing his own stupid mouth. “But I can still update them and shit until Friday night, so it’s…”

Dean trails off rather than keep trying in the face of Bobby’s absolute skepticism.

“Cut the crap,” Bobby tells him. “What’s wrong?” When Dean doesn’t answer, Bobby asks, “You dyin’?”

Dean comes close to rolling his eyes. “No.”

“You find out some big business mistake I’ve been making?”

“No,” Dean says again.
Bobby sighs. “Dean, you don’t tell me what I’m doing wrong, then I ain’t gonna do it right.”

Dean blinks at him. “What?”

“I remember you getting that GED,” Bobby says. “Only time I ever saw you as proud was at Sam’s graduations. Only time I ever saw you half as proud of yourself was when you got the Impala up and running again. Don’t try and tell me you’re less proud of doing more.”

“It’s just one semester.” He’s halfway done with just one year. Finding out that he might be able to survive that hardly helps if he’ll only crash and burn afterward. Or worse: succeed and be trapped behind the desk forever, ink staining his hands instead of oil.

“Dean-”

“I don’t wanna talk about this,” Dean says. “It’s been a longass day in a longass week, and it’s only Wednesday. I need a break.”

Bobby looks at him.

Dean forces himself not to back down. Or to keep going. Because that’s sure as hell not the hardest he can push back. It’s only as hard as he would need to push back against Jimmy.

“All right,” Bobby says, but then he cracks open a second beer, popping the cap on the edge of the desk the exact way he used to yell at Dean not to. “You hear the latest bullshit Rufus did?”

“I… No.” While Bobby talks, Dean drinks too fast; he grabs a second beer and opens it the same way, but Bobby continues not to give a shit. He just keeps telling Dean shit from his side of things, mostly from the scrapyard. Dean waits and waits for the other shoe to fall, but when Bobby heads home an hour later, there’s still nothing.

Dean’s been left alone.
That night there are dreams. Confusing and foggy, full of closed garage doors that can only be opened by hand-operated car jacks. His palms blister, and each door is wrong. Behind one, he can hear Bobby and Jimmy talking, Jimmy coming clean on Dean’s behalf. Dean has to run to find a new car jack when the old one vanishes, and he finds the replacement in a toaster oven in his glove compartment.

He races back from the library parking lot, but by the time he finds the right garage door in his classroom hallway, Sam’s voice has joined in too. Dean works the car jack as hard and as fast as he can before wriggling in beneath. Inside the lecture hall, Cas and Cas alone sits at Bobby’s old office desk.

“Where’d they go?” Dean demands, leaning on the desk with both hands as he pants.

Cas shrugs and shushes him.

“No, seriously, you gotta help me, Cas,” Dean begs.

Eyes wide, Cas gets up, saying nothing. He grabs Dean by the hand and leads him out a door hidden behind the blackboard, out to the side of a deserted highway. They walk, still holding hands, and Dean can’t stop rambling about how bad he needs to find Bobby before Jimmy spills the beans. He tells Cas everything, frantic as he waves at the sporadic passing cars and rollerskaters. Some douchebag on a skateboard goes whizzing by at sixty miles an hour, and Dean could fucking cry.

“I gotta get there, I gotta stop him,” Dean tells Cas.

“Dean,” Jimmy says from behind him.

Dean turns around, but Jimmy’s gone. It’s just Bobby and Sam staring at him from beneath a rest stop sign. Dean’s hand is empty and Cas is gone.

“I can explain,” Dean swears, but when he tries, he wakes up out of fear.

He lies there, heart pounding against his winter blankets. One foot is freezing, the other trapped in a tangle.
He grabs his phone with hands he can’t fully feel, and he blinds himself with it to learn that it’s only 3:27 in the morning.

Muscles twitching, he flops back down. He presses his hands over his eyes, shoving his phone against his own forehead.

Bobby knows.

Bobby already knows, so what the fuck does Dean tell him?

By four o’clock, Dean’s sat up. After that, he turns on a light, goes to grab his notebooks, and sits down on his couch with a beer. He flips through, stopping wherever he finds blue ink, and he eventually finds what he’s looking for. Yeah, it’s Cas’ advice for writing essays and shit, but if there’s an argument coming for Dean, Dean might as well come right back at it just as hard.

He draws up the battle plan. Because maybe, just maybe, if Dean can convince Bobby that Dean stepping down is actually what’s best for everyone, it’ll be okay. The more he reaches for reasons, though, the more obvious his bullshit becomes. School’s going well. Dean’s always been able to handle the office just fine before.

The only problem is that he doesn’t want to, and that’s the one thing he can’t say.

Exhausted, Dean slumps against the couch arm. He pulls his notebook close and starts picking his way through, twisting it this way and that as his conversations with Cas curl around the pages, filling all available space on each. Like a strange and non-fictional bedtime story, he reads it all, sometimes struggling to fill in the gaps he knows were once bridged by looks and gesture. A whole semester of conversation, and Dean gets through it half-asleep before his alarm can even try to go off.

Shifting onto his side, Dean closes his eyes. He hugs his notebook. He sleeps.

His phone beeps on the coffee table. Aching and shivering, Dean curls up tighter on the couch before staggering back into his bedroom, phone in one hand, notebook in the other. He falls face-down into bed. There is no more sleep.
He gets up and makes coffee instead.

He tries to read Cas’ book while it brews.

He stares at the places Cas has underlined, seeing nothing else. Each line reminds him of Jimmy, and not just because it’s a book about the history of queer prostitution.

His brain snags on a line, on “a profession hidden twice over,” and he can’t seem to move on.

The pot beeps.

Dean drinks.

He could stand to drink something stronger.

It is almost seven o’clock, and the world through his blinds is winter dark, the air whistling.

Dean holds a scalding hot cup with both hands. He can last until tonight. Twelve hours, maybe just eleven if he’s lucky. Talk to Jimmy then. Ask him what to do.

Admit he failed to do it.

Dean goes for his laptop instead. He wracks his brain over it but can’t figure out when the earliest class Cas teaches is. He could be doing one as early as eight. Dean could figure out whatever building Cas teaches in, probably somewhere close to the library, and maybe he could hang out in the hall until Cas’ class was over, and then he and Cas could grab a quiet corner somewhere with Cas giving him one of those big, tight hugs so Dean could ask his help without actually looking Cas in the eye.

Except, no, that’s too pathetic.

And it’s finals week. There aren’t classes.
There’s no Cas until tomorrow afternoon.

No Cas until tomorrow, no Jimmy until tonight. Benny and Garth, he can’t breathe a word to. Sam can’t know. Talking to Bobby is just detonating the bomb early.

On the off-chance the guy is up, Dean starts an email to Cas. Nothing comes out. He writes some shit like _hey, I started that book you gave me, interesting choice of topic_, and that’s where everything stalls out.

His heart is trembling in his chest. His hands are cold around the steaming mug. The hum of the fridge wages war against the rumble of passing cars.

“Fuck,” Dean says to himself. “Fuck, fuck, _fuck_."

He needs Jimmy to calm him down. He needs that voice in his ear, telling him what to do.

No, he needs to be grounded. He needs something _real_. He needs Cas holding him tight and helping him breathe. He needs…

He needs to get in control of himself. He needs to get his fucking act together and man up the way his dad would’ve done and get kicked out of Bobby’s life just the same way. John never moped over this crap. John just went and did it, and he’d be fucking ashamed to see Dean tiptoeing over an entire damn year through college applications and classes out of the fear of hurting one man.

Everything tilts too hard, and when Dean starts to breathe again, there’s a bubbling flash of colors. He sinks down in his couch, even though his laptop was on the kitchen table. Where’s his coffee? Also on the kitchen table.

He has no idea when he moved.

He lies there, trying to breathe, trying not to think.
He manages until 7:18. That’s what’s blinking on the microwave when Dean gets up, doubles back for his coffee, and drains it. He gets dressed. He grabs his keys and wallet. He goes downstairs and comes back for a coat before finally making it out to the Impala.

He drives.

Despite already being in his office at the other garage, Bobby sees Dean in with a look like he thinks Dean’s still asleep. Though none of the other mechanics are in yet, Bobby locks the door from office to shop before sinking down into his new chair. “Mornin’,” Bobby says dryly. “You could’ve called out sick over the phone, you know.”

Dean shakes his head. “I’m not sick, Bobby.”

Bobby shoots him a look. “That’s no hangover I’ve ever seen.”

Dean shakes his head. He just keeps shaking his head, and Bobby frowns deeper and deeper.

“Out with it,” Bobby says the way he does when he’s scared.

“I can’t do it,” Dean tells him in a rush. “It’s not gonna work, I’m not the right guy, you gotta get somebody else. Look, I’m sorry but I tried, and it’s not working. If shit stays the same, it’s gonna explode, you have to get someone else, Bobby. I can’t do it.”

Bobby frowns so hard, the brim of his hat lowers. “Hold on. What’re you on about?”

Dean can’t breathe.

“Dean?”

Dean can’t breathe.
Bobby gets up. He comes around, Dean hears the footsteps even with his eyes tight shut, and then there’s a hand pressed against his chest and Dean starts breathing again, looking up into a very worried pair of eyes. He can’t remember sitting down, can’t even remember getting near the chair.

“What the hell’s in your head, boy?” Bobby asks. He lets Dean suck in air a bit longer and moves his hand to Dean’s shoulder. He doesn’t sit back down. He doesn’t even stand up straight, still leaning down into Dean’s space the way only family can get away with.

Ultimately, Dean doesn’t actually cry, but that’s the only piece of mercy he gets.

Once Dean is more or less stable, Bobby sits back against the edge of his desk, arms folded. “You want to run that by me again?”

“No,” Dean says.

“You can scare me or you can sass me. You don’t get to do both.”

Dean looks away.

Dean looks up.

“I can’t do it,” he tells Bobby. “I can’t be shut up in an office for the rest of my life. I don’t work like that. I need…” He drops his gaze. He stares down between his hands, his elbows planted on his knees. “I need to be doing things. If I can’t get my hands on it and fix it myself, what’s the point? So I can’t do it.”

Bobby’s real quiet.

He stays real quiet for a real long time.

And then he sighs.
“Dean,” Bobby says, “how long’ve I been torturing you with office crap?”

Still looking down, Dean shrugs.

Bobby sighs again. “All right. Forget that. What do you want to do about it? ‘Cause apparently I don’t know what the hell you want.”

“I’m sorry,” Dean says. “I wanted to want it. I know I’m being an ungrateful piece of shit, but-”

“Screw that,” Bobby interrupts, so abruptly harsh Dean has to look up. “If I give you something you don’t want, that makes me shitty at giving gifts. Now cut the bullshit. Sam’s been waiting for you to have a little ‘I’m not worthy’ fit for months, but this ain’t that.”

“He what?”

“If you don’t think you can do it, that’s one thing,” Bobby continues over him. “But you not wanting to do it, that’s news to me.”

“Yeah, I know.” He wipes at his face with one hand, not sure why the hell he’s sweating when he can still vaguely see his breath as the heater clunks to life. “I should’ve told you guys sooner, I thought I could push through, I don’t know. Should’ve told you before all the school crap started, but Sam was just so psyched over me going, and I… I don’t know, I just couldn’t wreck that for him. But now he’s wasted all that fucking money on me.”

Bobby stares down at him, looking fucking horrified.

Dean looks away in search of some hole to crawl into.

“I’m gonna tell you the plan,” Bobby says, each word a deliberate step across a tightrope. “The plan I thought we all agreed on.”

When Bobby waits for Dean to say something, Dean just answers, “Okay.”
“You’ve been working in the garage and office for years now. Do pretty much everything I already do. Sam comes along, points out most places want to see some kind of degree on you nowadays if you’re in charge of a business. I figure it’d be wasted on me, this late in life. We all figure—I’d thought we’d all figured—that it should be you instead.”

Looking down again, Dean nods.

“Now,” Bobby continues, his words now carefully entering a field of landmines, “I’m trying to figure out when we all decided you had to stop being a mechanic.”

Dean looks up.

Bobby looks back.

With an honest question on his face, Bobby looks back.

“You want me to take over for you,” Dean says.

“Yeah,” Bobby says. “So?”

“You don’t do any garage work,” Dean says. “You haven’t for years.”

Bobby rolls his eyes heavenward. “Because I’m old, ya idjit. My back aches and my feet won’t take it. You think I want to lose what hearing I’ve got left banging around in the garage?”

“But I’m,” Dean says, running out of words.

“What about all that talk about restoration?” Bobby demands. “That whole pet project of yours. You go and have the entire website redone to show off our classic car restoration, and you think I want you to stop doing it to push papers instead?”

“But if I’m in charge-”
A step away from strangling Dean, Bobby throws his hands up in the air. “If you’re in charge, you can hire someone to do the paperwork! Mostly.”

Dean can’t breathe, but he is strangely, distantly okay with it.

“Dean,” Bobby says again.

Dean manually inhales. Exhales.

Stares up at Bobby.

“You’re… you’re not mad?” Dean asks.

Bobby looks back at him, mouth twisted above his beard. “No, boy. What kind of piece of shit do you think I am?”

“I don’t,” Dean says. “Bobby, you’re…”

They look at each other.

“I’m not your dad,” Bobby says. “I’m not my dad either, and that’s a good thing on both counts. You hear me?”

“I hear you,” Dean says, which isn’t the same as agreeing. He can’t remember Bobby mentioning his father before, though.

“Good,” Bobby says anyway. “What’s the plan, then? Keep on as we are, never try to make the jump into that market niche or whatever it’s called? ‘Cause we could still try for classic restoration without you getting that degree, but Sam says that alumni network of that school of yours could link us in there nice and easy.”
There’s a ringing in Dean’s ears.

There’s a thudding in his chest.

There is at once too much feeling and an extreme lack of it, a tornado impossibly contained behind bullet proof glass.

“You want me to go to school… to work on the cars I want to work on.”

Exasperated to the bone, Bobby tells him, “I want you to do whatever the hell it is you want to do. What’s the point in me giving you a leg up if I’m throwing you over the wrong fence?”

Dean doesn’t know what to say to that.

He just sits there.

Bobby just stands there, leaning on his desk, arms crossed.

Dean rubs at his eyes.

“Jesus,” Bobby mutters, but not at Dean. With stiff motions and clear difficulty, Bobby kneels down in front of Dean the way he would when Dean was six and Bobby’s hair was all brown. Getting down on Dean’s level. Making sure Dean’s looking, making sure he’s paying attention. “I thought you were getting into the college thing. All that studying we’ve been doing, well. Guess that’s what I missed out on, not having kids. But if you don’t want it, stop it. We’ll do something else.”

“What about needing a degree?” Dean can’t help but needle, can’t help but throw that back in Bobby’s face.

“You don’t need one as long as you’re here,” Bobby says. “You see me with a diploma on the wall?” He jerks this thumb toward the row of framed certifications. “But if we go under or you want to head out someday—follow Sam out to California, wherever he goes next—then you can move on. Simple.”
Simple.

“But I can stop?” Dean asks.

“Dean, you’re a grown man. Of course you can stop.” With that and a few more grunts and groans, Bobby gets himself standing up. He leans back against the desk again and rubs at his knee. “Gettin’ too old to do that,” he mutters to himself.

Dean can’t seem to think.

Dean can’t seem to feel.

“Now help me pop my back,” Bobby says in a grumble, holding out his arms impatiently.

Dean stands up.

Dean steps in.

He squeezes hard.

Bobby’s back cracks two times.

“Almost there,” Bobby says, arms much looser around Dean.

Dean keeps holding on.

Nothing else pops, but Dean keeps holding on anyway.

“Don’t think I’m gonna get it,” Dean says eventually, letting go.
Bobby shrugs, rolling his shoulders to make another joint crack. “Thanks for trying, though.”

They stand there like that could really be the end of it.

Like that is the end of it.

“What, I got something on my face?” Bobby demands when Dean can’t stop staring.

“You’re sure,” Dean says, not quite asking it. “I could really just stop all of it if I wanted.”

“You’d have to figure the money thing out with Sam, but we all know you paid a hell of a lot more for him than he has for you.”

“He really wanted me to do this,” Dean says. “Go to school. All that crap.”

Bobby shrugs. “He used to want to be Batman. He’ll live.”

“I mean, I’m good at it,” Dean says, and Bobby looks at him, surprise across his face. “I mean-”

“You are,” Bobby says, no room for question in his voice. “If I didn’t think you could do it, I wouldn’t’ve pushed you. Now, stop or go, that’s up to you. Got it?”

“Yeah,” Dean says. “Got it.”

“Good,” Bobby says before giving him a squeeze on the shoulder. “Might want to make that decision when you don’t look like crap.”

“Kinda didn’t sleep,” Dean says.
“Would never have guessed.”

Dean shoves Bobby’s arm off.

They don’t smile at each other, in the way that means they do.

“Anything else you want to tell me?” Bobby asks. “Any deep dark secrets I ought to know about?”

Zipping back up his jacket, Dean pauses.

Bobby blinks before looking at him expectantly.

Dean clears his throat. “So, uh. I don’t know when it’s gonna happen, but it’s probably gonna happen. Been thinking about it for a while, and I’m, I think I’m gonna ask out my study partner.”

Bobby lets out an exasperated huff. “Dean, your love life isn’t a ‘deep dark secret,’ as fascinating as I’m sure it is.”

“His name is Cas,” Dean adds, eyes fixed on Bobby’s face. “My study buddy, he’s… His name is Cas.”

After far too long a pause, Bobby says, “Weird name for a man.”

“Yeah, it’s short for something,” Dean says way too fast. “He’s a professor at school, but not one of mine.”

Bobby shifts his weight and folds his arms. “What’s he teach?”

“Uh. Gender studies.”

“I have no idea who that is,” Dean says.

Bobby doesn’t look terribly surprised.

“So...” Dean says, still waiting.

“When you bring this man of yours over,” Bobby says, “am I making the five alarm chili, or just the two?”

“Um.” Dean swallows hard. “I’ll, I’ll ask.”

Bobby nods. “Good. Man’s gotta be able to handle family meals.”

Dean’s fucking shaking. He’s fucking shaking so hard, it doesn’t even make sense.

“Oh, Dean says in a very small voice.

Bobby just nods again, not wavering. “Now, you gonna finish cracking my back or not?”

Dean cracks him so hard, Bobby actually says “Ow,” but Bobby holds on anyway.

Dean goes home and naps, and when he’s done napping, it’s almost time for dinner. He sits up and stretches, aching from tension and the couch. Bits of him are unwinding, or maybe relaxing. Maybe he’s coming unraveled.

The nap casts a dreamlike quality over this morning until Dean checks his phone. A single text waits for him from Bobby, who never texts.
When it’s two men, which one of you do I threaten to be a gentleman?

Both, Dean texts back, his brain full of static. Then, half an hour later of reading Cas’ book, Dean has a heart attack. Scrambling for his phone, he texts as fast as he can. *I haven’t told Sam anything yet don’t tell him.*

Then, for clarity: *Either thing.*

A full hour later of cooking dinner and eating while trying not to get Cas’ book dirty, Dean’s phone rings.

“Yeah, Bobby?” Dean asks, pulse thrumming hard in his throat.

“You told me before you told Sam?” Bobby asks.

“Yeah,” Dean says.

“Oh.” The single syllable comes out rough, as scratchy as Bobby’s beard against a sleeping kid’s forehead. Bobby clears his throat. “Just wanted to check.”

“Yeah, makes sense.”

“Right.”

They take an awkward ten seconds to hang up, but that’s fine.

It’s all gonna be fine.
“Hello, Michael.”

“Hey, Jimmy,” Dean answers, grinning fit to burst.

“You sound happy,” Jimmy says, a smile plain in his voice.

“I- Yeah. Yeah, I guess I am.”

“Michael, that’s wonderful,” Jimmy tells him, as if this is a feat to be proud of. “You’ve been a very good boy, haven’t you?”

Dean ducks his head, flushed and beaming where he sits in his boxers. “I told him.”

“That’s wonderful,” Jimmy repeats. “Answer my question, and then I want to hear everything.”

“What question?”

“Have you been a good boy?”

The flush creeps down from Dean’s face to his chest. “Yeah.”

“Have you been my good boy?” Jimmy rumbles.

Shivers join the heat. “Yes, James.”

“Who have you been a good boy for?”

“You, James.” Dean lets his eyes fall shut. He sits up straight, nearly standing at attention, but at the same time, everything inside him melts. Relaxes into the bed.
“That’s right,” James praises. “What are you, for me?”

“I’m...” Dean licks his lips. “I’m your good boy.”

“Always,” James agrees. “Now tell me how you were good this week. Your talk with your uncle, how did that go?”

“For the record, I just wanna say you shouldn’t give people boners and then ask about their families.”

“For the record, it reassures me that you think that.”

It takes Dean an incredulous second to catch that drift. “Ew.”

“Yes. How did the talk go?”

“It... Man, I don’t even know.” Despite his earlier nap, exhaustion flares through him at the memory. “I’m- Can I lie down to say this?”

“How are you positioned now?”

“Sitting on my bed. On the sex towel.”

“Good preparation. How are you dressed?”

“Boxers only. Boxers and headset.”

Jimmy hums. “Put your pillow on the floor and kneel.”
Arousal pumps in time with his heartbeat. “Okay.”

“What was that?”

“Yes, James.”

“Good boy.”

Dean grabs his pillow and drops it on the floor. As he gets up, Jimmy adds, “If you wanted to rest your head on the side of the bed, you’re allowed. You may pet or pull your hair for me in my absence, but you will not rest your arms on the bed. Do you understand?”

Dean sinks down, in so many ways. “Yes, James.” He turns his head to keep the microphone unimpeded, but he uses one hand to stroke his hair experimentally.

“What is ‘your shit’?”

Dean hums. He catches himself, but Jimmy must think it’s a good enough answer.

“Good boy,” Jimmy says again, making sure Dean stands at attention while he kneels. “Tell me what happened. How did it go?”

“He never wanted me trapped behind the desk,” Dean says, his mouth easily wrapping around words that his mind cannot. “Seriously, man, I don’t even know.”

“What did he want?” Jimmy asks.

“For me to be doing my shit, I guess?” Dean keeps petting his own head, fingers sliding along where they meet the headset. God, if he could do this in Jimmy’s lap, he would willingly skip the orgasm.

“What is ‘your shit’?”
“The stuff I’m good at. Shit I want to be doing. In the trenches kind of stuff, way more hands-on.”

“Really?”

“Yeah.”

“But that’s not the impression you were under,” Jimmy says, a question touching his words.

“Yeah, not even close.” Dean rubs at his head a little harder, then tries pulling. Nope. He soothes it down, and that’s better. “I don’t know what to tell you.”

“Do you know why you thought what you did?”

Finally, an easy question. “If you’re taking something over for somebody, you’re supposed to do the exact same shit, right?”

“Not necessarily,” Jimmy says, sounding like he disagrees entirely.

Dean whistles. “Man, my dad would’ve hated you.”

“Is that what your father would have expected? You to follow in his exact footsteps?” The way Jimmy asks it, he’s clearly encouraging Dean to say no. To realize that the premise is absurd.

“Yeah,” Dean says, no doubt, no hesitation.

“Oh,” Jimmy says.

Eyes closed against his comforter, Dean keeps petting his own hair.

“I’m sorry,” Jimmy says.
“He died a long time ago,” Dean says, and today it even feels true.

“I’m sorry for that too.”

Dean kneels there in silence, feeling the sincerity there.

“Thanks,” he says.

“Of course. Michael, I can’t tell you how relieved I am to hear this. Not just your uncle’s response. That you did it. I can’t imagine how hard that was for you.”

Dean snorts. “Says the guy hospitalized for panic attacks. Kinda think you can.”

“Maybe I don’t want to imagine,” Jimmy says, and that, Dean believes. Then, bizarrely, Jimmy adds, “Thank you.”

“I said I was gonna do it, man.”

“Not for telling him,” Jimmy says. “For being able to joke about the hospital. Most people won’t.”

“Anything that doesn’t kill you makes a really shitty story you gotta laugh over later, right?”

“Right,” Jimmy agrees, an invisible grin touching his unseen lips. He sounds gorgeous. He feels warm and enveloping, just the sheer aura of the man coming over the phone.

“I, I wasn’t gonna,” Dean admits, because Jimmy should know that Dean’s still a piece of shit. Dean shouldn’t lie to him about that, shouldn’t mislead him. “Only did it today.”

“I could tell,” Jimmy says, all reassurance, no surprise.
“Tell which? That I wasn’t gonna, or…?”

“Both. I told you I wouldn’t question your answer for a reason. And you sounded happy enough that you must have told him very recently.”

“Look at Sherlock Holmes over here.”

“Don’t be fresh,” Jimmy chides. “Either tell me why you decided to act, or tell me you’ve earned your reward. Sucking my cock in the back of your big black car, wasn’t it?”

Dean takes a deep, shuddering breath. He has to lift his head, the comforter too hot against his cheek. His spine protests, so he sits up straight, kneeling with his weight back, off his knees. “I mean, I talked to him, so it counts, right?”

“It does, even if he was the one to initiate the conversation.”

“Hey, I initiated,” Dean says. “I went over his place, I initiated.”

“Michael, I’m trying to tell you that this is a pass-or-fail question. As long as the conversation happened, for any reason at all, you pass. And you’ve passed. You don’t have to tell me how if you don’t want to.”

A hot pressure expands so hard in Dean’s chest, it has to come out his mouth. “No, man, I did it. I didn’t just pass, okay? I was scared shitless but I did it. I’m not saying I got an A or anything, but that’s way better than pass-fail.”

After just a hitch of a pause, Jimmy asks, “Are you saying you’re proud of yourself?”

The pressure breaks. It crumples inward. Dean wants to put his face back against the bed but shouldn’t. “Maybe.”

“You should be,” Jimmy tells him. “I hope you’re as proud of yourself as I’m proud of you.”
Dean’s cheek hits the bed and stays here.

“Are you proud of yourself?” Jimmy asks, not with tiptoeing gentleness but with his pragmatic curiosity. As if he’ll accept any answer, simply because he really wants to know.

“Yeah,” Dean says, more exhale than word.

“You should be,” Jimmy repeats.

“Shouldn’t be such a big deal,” Dean mumbles against his mattress. “Just talking to a guy who basically raised me.”

“Are you saying the people we love shouldn’t matter? Anyone we love becomes ‘a big deal,’ Michael.”

“I guess.”

“I’m proud of you,” Jimmy says again, sweet words for thirsty ears and a parched heart. “You can be proud of yourself too. You don’t have to take that away from yourself. I don’t want you to.”

“Okay,” Dean says.

“Do you want to tell me more about how it went?”

“Nah, that’s, uh. That’s kinda it.”

“Okay,” Jimmy says.

“I freaked out a little, before,” Dean adds.

“Understandably.”
“I mean, I kind of freaked out a lot.”

“That’s all right.”

“No, I mean, a lot. Like.” He shifts higher, then realizes he’s resting his head on his arms. Not supposed to do that. He sits up straight instead. “I couldn’t breathe and I stopped being able to feel my fingers and shit.”

“Panic attacks will do that,” Jimmy says, so simple and matter-of-fact that Dean forgets to argue with him. “When is your therapy appointment scheduled?”

“Um. Already had it.”

“That was very quick. When is the next one scheduled?”

“Sometime next year,” Dean says, which isn’t technically lying. Probably.

“Next year as in two weeks? Or longer?”

“A little longer than that. But I’m okay.”

“Have you had more than the one panic attack?”

Dean shrugs. “Not your problem there, buddy.”

“No, but I am something of an expert.”

“I’m fine. We talked it out, problem’s gone, no more panic attacks.”
Even as Dean says it, he can feel the flaw in his logic welling up, but he doesn’t have to turn around and actually look at it.

“Michael,” Jimmy says, looking that flaw full in the face. “Just because you’re not being triggered doesn’t mean the triggers aren’t in place.”

“I’m good,” Dean insists. “We figured out the job thing, and I came out to him too. Everything solved.”

“You came out to him?” Jimmy asks, immediately going after the distraction Dean threw out for him.

“Yeah. It, uh. Yeah, it went well. Hugged it out and all that crap. He, uh, was pretty surprised I told him first.”

“Before your brother?”

“Yeah.”

“Have you told your brother?”

“No,” Dean says, immediately feeling bad about it. “Figured two big talks in one day was enough.”

“It is,” Jimmy says, maybe agreeing, maybe going easy on him.

“Sammy’s pretty liberal, too. Should be fine.”

“Good,” Jimmy says, and yeah, he’s trying to reassure Dean.

“I mean, I could tell him, it’s not a big deal.”

“How did you tell your uncle?” Jimmy asks.
“After the work stuff, he asked if there was anything else he should know, so…”

“That was a good opportunity.”

“Yeah.” Dean shifts his weight, his knees starting to ache despite the pillow.

“Do you think you’ll tell your brother the same way?”

Dean snorts. “Warn him there’s this guy I might be asking out?”

“Is there a guy?” Jimmy asks, all curiosity, no jealousy.

“Maybe,” Dean says like that wasn’t a kick in the teeth. Expecting it doesn’t help the pain any.

“Is it your gay friend?” Jimmy asks, because the guy somehow manages to be a fucking bloodhound over the phone.

“He’s out of my league, but I’m pretty sure he likes me.” That’s a step up from Jimmy, who’s just out of his league. It doesn’t matter what the guy looks like: anyone with a voice and an imagination like his is Grade A material.

“Do you actually like him back?” Jimmy asks, a real emotion finally staining his tone. It’s worry, not jealousy, but Dean will settle for that much. “I’m sure you remember your last time out.”

“No, I, um.” Dean clears his throat. “I’m good. With him. I mean, he’s no chatty Cathy, but I’d rather sit in silence with him than talk to half the people I know, so… So yeah, I like him.”

“Tell me about him?”

Dean squirms but obeys. “He’s smart. Way smarter than me. Dorky little guy. Stupid hot, but a complete rosebud. Funny, though. Dedicated. He’s like Mr. Consistency. He…” Dean looks over to
his bedside table, to the slapdash little card sitting on top of it. “He’s got my back, y’know?”

“I’m glad,” Jimmy says. “What makes you so certain he’s out of your league? You’re already friends.”

“You haven’t met him. Seriously, my buddy hugs better than the other guy fucked.”

“That’s a high recommendation,” Jimmy says, “but I know you well enough by now to know you’re selling yourself short.”

“Maybe.” Even entertaining the idea is too strange, too stressful. Dean leaves it alone pretty quickly. “Y’know what, screw this. I’m telling Sam too, hold on.”

“Are you sure?” Jimmy asks while Dean grabs his phone and opens up his texts, still kneeling.

“Yeah.” It’ll be better, with Jimmy here.

Dean types it out quick as he can, scans once for typos, and sends the short message of *Gonna ask out my study buddy.*

“Okay, sent it,” Dean says. It worked well enough the first time. Doing it via text has his heart fucking pounding in his chest again, but that’s because he was for some reason expecting an immediate response.

“You texted?”

“Yeah, I’m immediately regretting that decision,” Dean says.

“It’s all right,” Jimmy tells him. “You said he was liberal and your uncle is already on your side.”

“I could go for a distraction right around now.”
“What kind? Should we wait until he texts back, so we’re not interrupted? Assuming you still want to play tonight.”

“Not dating my buddy yet,” Dean points out. “No scheduling conflicts on my end for one last hurrah.”

“‘Yet,’” Jimmy echoes.

“What?”

“You’re sure he’s out of your league, but you’re still saying ‘yet.’ Maybe you’re more confident than you think.”

“Nah, I’m just an adorable bullshitter. Landing him ain’t the problem.”

“You’re concerned about keeping him?”

“I got a great, big, ugly mess in my head,” Dean says bluntly. They both know it, there’s no avoiding that fact. “He’s smart enough to notice that.”

“That doesn’t have to drive him away. You told your uncle some of it, and he’s still here.”

“Pretty big difference between ‘guy I want to fuck’ and ‘guy who’s basically my kid.’”

“There should be,” Jimmy sighs in a tone of trauma.

“Seriously, ew.”

“It’s a part of the job I’ll be glad to leave behind,” Jimmy agrees.

“Yeah, no shit.”
“Back to my point, as long as you keep going to therapy and avoid using one person as your entire support network, I don’t see why you couldn’t successfully date.”

“You sound like a dissertation paper sometimes, you know that, right?”

“You’re not the first person to say so. That hardly invalidates my point.”

“It’s not like I’m gonna go ask him out tomorrow,” Dean says.

“Is that something I’m supposed to have said?”

“No, but-” Dean takes one of those deep, calming breaths Jimmy’s so fond of. “I’ll make it a New Year’s Resolution or something.”

“That-”

“Hold up,” Dean interrupts as his phone beeps at him. He opens the text only to read Sam’s short response of *Okay?? Good luck I guess?*

“He texted back?”

“Yeah. I don’t think he got it.” Dean tries out a couple experimental responses, but Sam sends a follow-up text first.

*Wait, I thought your study buddy was a guy? Did you get a new one?*

Heart in his throat, Dean responds, *Same one, Cas still a guy.*

“Here goes nothing,” he mutters more to himself than Jimmy.
“You’re all right,” Jimmy murmurs. “I have you.”

They wait together.

Dean’s phone beeps again.

Okay, Sam’s message reads. Good luck!

Dean sinks down in his kneel, his phone clutched in both hands.

“Michael?”

“It’s okay,” Dean says. He checks the message again. He keeps checking it. “Holy shit, it’s okay.”

“Congratulations,” Jimmy tells him warmly.

“It’s okay,” Dean keeps saying. He’s dizzy in the best way. Leaning forward, forehead pressed against the very edge of his bed, he starts laughing. “I, I think I just ran out of problems. What the hell.”

Jimmy’s silence is a gentle presence in its own right, but Dean knows him well enough by now to know he’s holding something back. At least, he knows once he calms down from the laughing part.

“What is it?” Dean makes himself ask. “You gonna start talking about how coming out isn’t a onetime thing?”

“No, you already know that.”

“Then what?”

“What would you say the best weather for roof repair is?”
Dean sits back on his heels, the motion sending pins and needles down his shins. Fuck. He bites his lip hard but pushes through it. “Cloudy, so you don’t fry while you’re up there.”

There’s a pause like Jimmy hadn’t been expecting so practical an answer. “I was aiming for ‘not raining,’ generally. Outside of a crisis, it’s easy to think we don’t need the help, but once the rain comes back, we find we still haven’t patched the leaks on our own.”

“Gotta park the car before you fix it,” Dean summarizes.

“Essentially.”

“This you tryin’ to tell me you still want me going to therapy?”

“Yes,” Jimmy says with insulting certainty. “I want you well-equipped.”

“Yeah, yeah, I got it. I don’t need the PSA announcement.”

“And I don’t need you being a brat,” Jimmy counters. “You also don’t need to call it a public service announcement announcement.”

“How about you deposit that little factoid in your ATM machine,” Dean shoots back reflexively.

“Get off the pillow.”

Dean sits up straighter. “What?”

“Get. Off. The pillow. Kneel directly on the floor until you’re ready to be a good boy again.”

Dean doesn’t.
“I’m waiting,” Jimmy informs him.

“I’m ready,” Dean says, quiet.

“Prove it.”

Dean shuffles back onto the floor, his legs trying to seize up as sensation floods back in. He flexes his toes, hissing.

“Are your feet asleep?”

“Just a lot.”

“Get up. Get your circulation going.”

It hurts. It fucking hurts. Dean’s foot wants to wobble off, like he’s planted his numb ankle on an ice block. But Dean does it.

“Tell me when your legs are back to normal.”

It takes about half a minute more, but Dean pushes through, walking around in stupid little circles in his boxers. It’s an easy challenge, and one he’d have to do anyway.

“I’m good,” Dean says.

“Are you?” Jimmy asks, meaning far more than just Dean’s legs.

“Yeah,” Dean says, quieter again.

“What are you ready to be?”
Dean mumbles it.

“My good boy isn’t ashamed of being my good boy,” James tells him. “Now, last chance, what are you ready to be?”

“Your good boy,” Dean says.

“Do you think you’ve earned the pillow back?”

Dean looks down at it, the two indents from his knees. Faintly, he tastes bile. “No.”

“Kneel on it anyway.”

Dean does.

His voice a warm purr, James rumbles, “Good boy. Now you’ve earned it. Tell me you’ve earned it.”

“I’ve… I’ve earned it.”

“Are you ready for me to play with you?”

Dean swallows. “If you want to.”

“I asked if you were ready, not if I wanted to.”

“I’m…”

James waits.
Even his silence makes Dean hard.

“The sooner we play, the faster this is gonna be over,” Dean says.

“That’s a very honest answer,” James praises. “That’s exactly what I want from you. I’m not going to begin until you tell me you’re ready, and then I’m going to feed you my cock in the back of your car, do you understand?”

Chills race down his back while heat rattles upward. It's a highway of sensation, a blaze of oncoming white with red speeding away.

“Yes, James.”

“We can talk as long as you need tonight. We don’t need to hang up after we play. The order of events is entirely up to you. Tell me what you want, and you can have it.”

Something real.

Jimmy can’t give him that.

But maybe Jimmy can help him get that.

“How do you ask a guy out?” He’s on his bedroom floor, kneeling for one guy while asking advice for another. Because that’s just how his life works now, apparently.

“How do you ask a woman out?” Jimmy asks right back.

Dean gives that a think. “I’m not sure if that’s helpful or not.”

“That’s the most help you’ll get. I’m very bad at asking men out.”
“What, seriously? You got a voice like you just drank sex-flavored whiskey.”

There’s a pause, adorably flustered and hilariously embarrassed. “I’m much more awkward in person.”

“Anxiety thing?”

“I’ve been told I give people second-hand embarrassment.”

“Okay, anxiety thing.”

“No, it’s apparently just as bad when I’m confident.”

Dean laughs before realizing it’s not a joke. He coughs. “Sorry.”

“No, shattering the illusion is probably for the best. I’m an awkward, bookish man with mental health issues.”

“Plus a snarky sense of humor and a dirty mind I’d love to see on a porn director,” Dean adds. “Seriously, you’d break bank.”

“Yes, that’s it, you’ve guessed my career change,” James deadpans.

Dean laughs again. This time, he can hear James smiling.

“I’ll miss this,” Dean also hears.

It takes him a second to realize he’s not the one who’s said it.
“You what?” Dean asks.

“I like making you laugh,” James tells him. “I’ve mentioned before, most people don’t think I’m funny.”

“Dude, you’re friggin’ hilarious.”

“We both know you’re only saying that to get in my pants.”

“They’re really nice pants.”

“Thank you.”

“They’d look even better on my floor, though,” Dean says.

“That is exactly how you shouldn’t ask a man out. Don’t do that.”

“I could have a, a pants collage on my floor. Modern art. You don’t know.”

“Is the title of your art piece ‘I Need A Hamper’?”

“Yes. Yes it is.”

Jimmy doesn’t make a noise, but Dean knows he’s smiling.

“You’re a lot of fun,” Dean tells him, just in case Jimmy honestly doesn’t know. “Not even talking about the sex. Just you.”

Jimmy goes kind of quiet, in a different kind of way.
“I know I don’t know you,” Dean continues in a rush, getting that in before Jimmy can interrupt. “I know that. I’m digging your customer service persona. Or your roleplay persona, whatever. But you’re the one doing that shit, so if, if ‘Jimmy’ is hot and hilarious, then so are you. Whatever your name is. I don’t kneel on the floor for just anybody.”

“...Thank you.”

Dean clears his throat. “Yeah. ‘Course.”

“You’re special to me too,” Jimmy says. “I want you to know that.”

Dean closes his eyes.

He feels too much.

“I’m proud of you,” Jimmy continues. “A few months ago, you couldn’t tell me you were bi. Now your brother and uncle know, and still love you. You’re more capable than you realize. You’re more than your job. You’re more than a caretaker. You pulled yourself out of that hole in only three months. Michael, you’re remarkable.”

“You helped,” Dean mumbles. “Fucking answer to my prayers, man.”

“Because you chose to ask.”

With another little cough, Dean tries to kneel taller, to sit straighter on his heels. “C’mon, Jimmy, you gonna quote Hallmark cards or fuck my face?”

If the abrupt transition surprises Jimmy, he doesn’t show it in the least. “If you want me to fuck your face, you have to ask me to fuck your face.”

Conceptually, it’s a nice thought. The face-fucking. Even the asking.

Getting there is harder.
“I don’t hear you asking,” James says. “You must not be interested.”

“I...” Dean swallows.

James waits.

“I want you to fuck my face,” Dean makes himself say.

“I want you to fuck mine first,” James answers. “I want you to drive that big black car of yours to an overlook, somewhere with a view nearly as good as your lips stretched around my cock. And on the way, we can see just how well you can handle road head.”

Dean can’t breathe in the best possible way.

“Does my good boy like that plan?”

“Yes, James,” Dean whispers, hands tight on his thighs, fingers on skin, palms on boxers.

“You don’t sound very enthusiastic.”

“Tryin’ not to touch myself.”

“Such a good boy for me,” James murmurs.

“Can I?” Dean asks.

“Can you touch yourself?”

“Please.”
James hums, considering. “No. Now get up and sit on your bed or in a chair. You’re driving.”

Shakier than he had been on sleeping limbs, Dean climbs to his feet. Sitting down on his bed, he adjusts himself, but he has to. That’s not cheating. “I’m here.”

“Where are we going?”

“We- Wait, hold on.”

“All right.”

Dean goes to his laptop, opens it up, and gets his sex playlist going. There’s nothing outright lewd about the classic rock that plays, but there doesn’t need to be. “There we go. Can’t drive without music.”

“I was brought up in a silent car household.”

“Wow, that must have sucked.”

“Maybe I didn’t know what I was missing,” Jimmy says, and there are layers in his tone like the sweet coffee-tinged taste of tiramisu. “Where are we going?”

“There’s this lake I know. Used to go fishing there with our dad. ‘Bout half a mile upstream from the dock, there’s this bridge you can park under.” Dean cracks a grin. “I used to catch couples making out there every summer. Climb up on the bridge, swing a line down and slap a live fish against their windshield.” Typically, he didn’t get the fish back.

“This doesn’t seem like a very secure location.”

“No one fishes there this time of year. Not supposed to, at least.”
“I don’t think you’re supposed to slap cars with fish even when they’re in season.”

“You’re a regular party pooper, you know that, right?”

“Yes.”

“Okay, good. ‘Cause that’s where we’re going.”

“Is it a long drive?” Jimmy asks.

“Not that long. Couple narrow roads. Pretty scenic.”

“Secluded?”

Dean sits up straight, hands carefully set upon his thighs. “Yeah.”

“Not too difficult of a drive?”

“I can handle it.”

“Even with my hand on your thigh?”

“As long as you don’t push down on my knee,” Dean boasts. He flexes his right hand, fingertips gently scratching at his leg hair.

“I’ve always liked to hold hands while driving,” Jimmy tells him. “I’m not sure why. Something about traveling makes me want to touch.”

“You gotta hold hands to cross the street?” Dean teases.
“I don’t have to,” Jimmy says, unoffended. “I like to. But if you need your hands on the wheel, I’ll just keep my hand on your leg.”

“How high on my leg?”

“Higher than you’re imagining. High enough that you glance at me when it’s safe to look.”

“And you’re looking at the bulge in my pants, huh?”

“Not yet. I’m looking you in the eyes, because I want to see when you notice the bulge in mine.”

Dean breathes out hard. “‘Cause I’m gonna blow you when we park.”

“Because I’m going to blow you while you drive,” Jimmy corrects. “You know how much I love your cock in my mouth.”

“God, I wish I did.”

Jimmy hums. “I like the way you twitch against my tongue. You can keep your hips still, but you can’t control your cock itself.”

Tenting his boxers, Dean’s dick clearly agrees. “Can I touch myself now?”

“You can touch you when I touch you, and I want to touch your thighs right now. I want to slide my hand between your legs. I want to run my fingers up and down your inseam. I like watching my good boy’s legs spread. Not very far apart while you’re driving, but you are going to spread them.”

Dean complies, teasing himself with light fingertips between his thighs. He lets out a sigh.

“Eyes open,” James orders. “Eyes on the road.”
Dean obeys. “Got it.”

“Good boy. Such a good boy. Should I take you out of your pants for that?”

“Please.”

“I’m going to lower your fly and pull you out of your underwear. Your clothing stays on.”

“Yes, James.”

“You can pull out your cock now.”

Dean obeys.

“Clap,” James commands, and Dean does it without thinking. “Good. Keep your hands off your cock now. You need them on the wheel, don’t you?”

“Y-yeah. Yes, James.”

“How hard are you? Half-mast? Standing up?”

A flush takes over his cheeks, and Dean fucking loves it. “Getting up there.”

“How can you hold that for the rest of the drive? Without touching.”

“If you keep talking,” Dean promises.

James keeps talking. He talks about the weight and the taste on his tongue, about taking Dean bare. He waxes borderline poetic about the heady musk and the way Dean’s stomach jumps under his hand. He tells Dean exactly how he’d play with Dean’s balls through his jeans, working a hand down between his legs to press two fingers up beneath them in the search for Dean’s covered hole.
He nearly jarrs Dean out of the fantasy when he talks about having to be careful around the stick shift between them, but for once, Dean is too far gone to quibble about the minutiae of his car.

“Tell me when you have to touch yourself,” James orders, the reminder threaded throughout the pornographic tapestry he weaves. “You’re allowed to give in as long as you tell me.”

Fingers clenched in his sheets, Dean lasts as long as he can. The music encourages him too far, but it’s James who puts it over, sucking his own fingers in between extremely specific commentary on what kind of head he’s giving.

“You win.” Dean’s surrender comes between clenched teeth, his control about to break. Even shifting uncomfortably on his bed is just grinding his own ass down at this point. Flexing his ass cheeks for any kind of stimulation at all. “You win, I give up.”

“Good, we’re there. Park the car and get into the back.”

“What?”

“Kneel on the pillow.”

Dean’s back down in a heartbeat. “Here, I’m here.”

“I know you are, sweet boy.”

Over his own music, Dean hears an unmistakable zip.

His breath catches.

He licks his lips.

“James, are you hard?”
“I have been for a while. Now are you going to suck my cock, or am I going to have to come all over your face?”

The way James says it, it’s not dirty talk. It’s a game plan. It is a practical question with two outcomes James clearly enjoys.

Dean swallows. “Both? I can, both?”

With a smile in his voice, James murmurs, “I should have known better than to make a bi man choose.”

Dean laughs, a breathless chuckle.

“Lean forward and suck your fingers,” James commands. “Start with two. Keep them cushioned with your lips. What feels right? Don’t answer, just do it. What feels good? Not on your hand, not imagined on your cock, but inside your mouth? Between your lips, with your hands on my thighs and me petting your hair.”

With a groan, Dean tries to focus on anything more than the rumble of James’ voice and the ache of his own dick.

“Do you still need to touch yourself, sweet boy?”

Dean hums around his fingers.

“Good. You should. I want you working yourself while you suck me. Show me how much you want it.”

Dean switches hands to jack himself, spit-slicked fingers adding to the slide of slippery precome.

Over the line, there’s another noise.

Dean groans.
“That’s it,” James pants. “Just like that, do what you’re doing.”

Dean has to pull off. “Are you really jerking off?”

The sound stops. “Michael, if you’re not going to suck me, I’m not going to come.”

Dean shoves his fingers back in his mouth. He slurps and sucks and he makes a porn moan so ridiculous, James laughs. Breathless and horny, but still a laugh. Still pleased.

Trying to listen, trying to time it, Dean sucks his fingers and jacks his dick to the same rhythm he hears James using. The coordination is harder than he’d have thought, but the challenge is good. His jaw starts to ache, and he tries to relax it. Mostly, he suckles and strokes, and he makes noises he can’t be ashamed of, not when James is listening for them.

“Are you going to come for me?” James starts to ask, panting, strained. “Are you going to come with your mouth on my cock? You’re going to take my come, aren’t you? You’re going to let me come inside you. I’m inside you, I’m inside your mouth, I’m swelling that last little bit, I’m-” His words choke off as the slick sounds of his hand accelerate. “Coming. Coming inside you.”

Dean sucks down hard. He swallows his own spit, his mouth watering impossibly fast. He swallows and swallows and there’s nothing there but his fingers, except there is, there’s James’ fingers in his hair and a cock in his mouth and Dean’s jerking it and jerking it with his toes curling against the floor and his knees pressing into the pillow and his hips thrusting into in his hand and he is coming, he is coming hard, so hard, he has lost it, he is gone, he’s jizzed on the side of his bed and doesn’t fucking care because Jimmy is coming down from an orgasm and still muttering “good boy, good boy” over and over and over again like he’s never going to stop.

Jimmy keeps whispering it even once Dean’s back on the bed, sprawled out and naked with his ass on the sex towel and his junk bare to the world. When the whispers stop, Dean honestly doesn’t notice, too busy thrumming, too wrapped up in the echoes inside his own head.

“Wow,” Dean croaks.

Jimmy hums.
“The shit you do to me, man,” Dean manages to say. “stuff doesn’t even make sense.”

“It doesn’t have to,” Jimmy says, words quiet, voice comforting.

“No, I like it.”

Another hum from Jimmy. Smug, but not obnoxious. “I’ve gathered.”

“You calling me obvious?”

“To me, at least,” Jimmy says.

They lie there a while longer. At least, Dean does. Jimmy might be in a chair.

“I don’t wanna hang up,” Dean confesses as time—the inevitable bastard it is—keeps stretching on.

“You’re going to be all right without me,” Jimmy promises. “You’re-”

“No, I know that,” Dean interrupts. “Didn’t think I would be, but here we are.”

“Here we are.”

They’re quiet a moment longer. Something twists inside Dean’s chest, fighting against the lethargy in his limbs, but Dean’s not willing to claim that mewling pile of whimpers as his heart.

Jimmy breaks the silence first. “Do you remember the scenes we have prepared?”

“What?”
“With the panties. If you want to keep playing.”

“Oh. Oh, yeah.” The abstract idea floats there, somewhere between Dean and the ceiling, or maybe between Dean and outer space.

“Do you remember your instructions?” Jimmy asks in his aftercare voice. No orders, only attentiveness.

“First pair, order it and don’t come until it arrives. Second pair, order it and, um, some number of hits for every day it takes to ship.”

“That’s right,” Jimmy says. “That’s very good.”

“I don’t know,” Dean says, not sure about what he doesn’t know.

“What’s wrong?” Jimmy asks.

“Feels weird.”

“If you don’t want to do it without me, you don’t have to. But if you do decide you want to be my good boy a little while longer, you know how.”

When Jimmy puts it that way…

“I’ll keep it in mind. It’s only, my splurge fund? Getting kinda low.”

“I’ve wondered about that,” Jimmy admits. “We do have very impressive call lengths.”

“Yeah?”

“I wasn’t exaggerating when I told you most people don’t last five minutes.”
“No, no, I meant, you wondered? About me?”

“Yes?” Jimmy says, like he’s surprised Dean could doubt it.

“Huh.”

Sprawled on his back, Dean lays a hand over his heart just to feel it pound.

“What have you wondered about?” he hears himself ask, better judgment be damned.

“If you’re all right,” Jimmy says. “How alone you must feel if I’m the person you turn to for help. Whether I’m mishandling our scenes or whether I really am helping you.”

“You help. Dude, you help so much, I can’t even tell you.”

“I’m glad. I’m sorry I’m leaving when you still need me, but-”

“Hey,” Dean interrupts. “I’m good. I’m okay.”

“You’re not.”

“Wow, blunt much?”

“I am, yes.”

“I’m as good as I’m gonna be,” Dean rephrases.

“No. You’ll get even better.”
Ears burning, Dean clears his throat. “I’m trying to talk, buddy, let me talk.”

“Right. Sorry.”

Skin prickling with cold, Dean stays exactly where he is. His heart pounds against one hand, and his phone burns hot against the other. “I don’t need you anymore,” he says. “Want, yeah, definitely want. But I’ve been thinking about it, and I need something real now. ‘Cause no matter how much you tell me you got my back, I’m still paying you to say that.”

He turns his head, looking at that stupid little card on his bedside table. “I gotta find someone who’ll do it for free.”

“You deserve that.”

“I dunno about that,” Dean says to the card. “Think I’m gonna get it anyway, though.”

“You deserve it,” Jimmy repeats.

Dean clears his throat and looks back up at the ceiling. He should really turn his music off, but he can’t be bothered to get up the same way he can’t be bothered to get under the sheets.

“What are you doing for aftercare?” Jimmy asks.

“Uh.”

“Do you have water?”

“No.”

“Are you warm enough?”
“Um.”

“Michael,” Jimmy chides.

Dean gets up, phone in hand, body strange, and turns off his music. He pulls on pajama pants, going commando. His phone goes in his pocket as he gets some water. He figures out how to mute the call before taking a leak, and when he unmutes, Jimmy actually laughs at the sound of Dean brushing his teeth.

About to climb into bed, Dean groans and has to clean up his own mess with the sex towel, but screw it, he’s got time for laundry tomorrow. The pillow gets plumped and returned to its home. Dean plugs in his phone, sets it on the bedside table, knocks over the card, and carefully stands the card back up.

He shucks the pants before getting under the blankets, answering Jimmy’s questions about Dean’s plans for the holidays. Jimmy doesn’t volunteer any information on that front, but he’s still pleased to hear Sam’s flying out for Christmas Eve until New Year’s. Dean adds that he’s hanging out with a friend over the weekend too, and Jimmy makes that proud little hum. A more intelligent person would have made a recording of that sound by this point, but Dean’s stuck with what he’s got. He’ll make do with memories.

For now, he’s warm and cozy, and he turns off the lights. The conversation tapers off as the call stretches and Dean’s wallet cries. He’s reaching for more shit to say, and he knows it.

“Should probably hang up now,” Dean mumbles into the night. “Let you get back to your Netflix binge.”

“I have one caller waiting on hold, but no one I like,” Jimmy answers. “I don’t mind staying on the line.”

“Is it the centaur guy?”

“Worse.”
“If I had the money to hang out all night, man…”

“I know,” Jimmy says.

Dean decides, as he’s decided for months now, that a couple more minutes can’t hurt. “Anything you want to ask me before I go? Last chance and all.”

Jimmy’s quiet for seconds that feel like minutes. “How would you say your understanding of your sexuality has changed from our talks?”

Dean blinks up at a dark ceiling. “Uh. More confident? Not just owning it. Being it. I wasn’t sure, before. Called you to test it out. Got a lot fucking kinkier real quick, but, uh. Maybe that was there before, I dunno. When, when she made me put her panties on.”

“How does your attraction to men compare to your attraction to women?”

It’s official: Cas and Jimmy would get along like long-lost twins. “It’s different,” Dean answers. “Women, I always knew I wanted to fuck. Men, I think I figured I wanted to fight. Maybe. Haven’t really thought about it that much. Is that something that matters?”

“I was just curious,” Jimmy says. “Different people say different things. But I do think it’s interesting the urge to ‘fight’ has become the urge to submit during sex.”

“…Huh.” Drumming his fingers against his chest, Dean mulls that over. “Guess I took giving in to being bi a little too literally.”

“I’ve enjoyed watching you.”

“Perv,” Dean says with a grin.

“Yes. I’m the pervert,” Jimmy deadpans.

“Uh, yeah. ‘Cause I’ve rubbed off on you.”
“...That was awful.”

Dean grins to himself, but the expression fades. “Anything else you wanted to ask?”

“You’ve given me enough,” Jimmy says with an impossible amount of sincerity.

“You’ve, uh. You’ve...”

“You’re welcome,” Jimmy says simply. “I’ve valued our talks and our time together. I hope you can believe that.”

“I can try?” Dean offers.

“Please.”

“...Yeah. Yeah, okay,” Dean takes a deep breath. “Gotta say goodbye now. Can’t keep stretching it out all night.”

“All right. Good night.”

“No,” Dean says. “Not good night, you always say good night. It’s gotta be goodbye, okay? A real one.”

“No, you’re right,” Jimmy replies. “That makes sense.”

They’re both quiet for a moment longer. Dean reaches over and puts a hand on his phone.

“I like you,” Jimmy says. “I respect you. I firmly believe you deserve to be happy, and I hope you keep reaching out, even when you’d rather hide. If you’d like me to pray for you, I will.”
Eyes screwed shut, Dean bites his lip, and he bites it hard.

“Goodbye,” Jimmy tells him.

“Bye,” Dean echoes, and he hangs up.

Friday is strange. Dean wakes up. He does his laundry and finishes Cas’ book at the laundromat. He folds his crap and puts it all away. He heads out to go grocery shopping and winds up getting Christmas presents first, and then it’s time for a late lunch. He wraps the presents—booze for Benny, Rufus, and Bobby, an obnoxiously cheerful mug for Garth, and, as always, the absolute worst porn he can find for Sam—and then he still has the rest of the day to get through.

He goes downstairs, nods to Garth and Benny against the backdrop of loud music and louder tools, and pushes through paperwork in the office. It’s not as bad, knowing it’s not forever. He boots up the computer and starts looking around for their closest competition in terms of classic car restoration, and then he starts making a battle plan.

Looking it over, it registers just how much he’s actually learned in a single semester.

They could pull this off.

Dean could turn his day job into his dream job.

It might actually be possible.

He sits there in Bobby’s old chair, marveling, and his phone buzzes. Text from Sam.

*How’d it go???
Frowning, Dean texts back *How'd what go?*

*Asking out Cas?*

Dean looks at that message long and hard before checking the time. He double-checks Cas’ office hours. He thinks about it.

*We’re hanging out on Sunday. Christmas baking at his place. I'm asking him then.*

*Oh okay.*

Dean puts his phone away and keeps fleshing out his business plan. He googles networking opportunities. He thinks about firing off a couple quick emails, but the Friday before a Tuesday Christmas probably isn’t the best time. He’ll do it after the new year, make sure the emails aren’t buried in the inboxes.

He checks the time again.

*Screw it.*

With another quick wave to Garth and Benny, Dean heads upstairs and grabs the book. Then he tears out a notebook page, writes a short message in his best handwriting, and pulls on his coat. He got Bobby and Sam yesterday. Grabbing Cas, he can go three for three.

He brushes a light dusting of snow off Baby and drives through the white-flecked blackness of a wintry afternoon-turned-evening. Rush hour traffic is picking up, but the campus itself is more or less abandoned. If Cas packed up early, Dean’ll kick himself, but Cas depends on the bus, doesn’t he? He’ll be here.

Dean parks with ease. He leaves the book but takes the note, crunching salt and sand into the sidewalk. Inside the atrium, he wipes his feet with purposeful swipes before squeaking over to the stairs. His hands are cold and his face is flushed. He opens his jacket, the zip jarringly loud in the cavernous emptiness of the library. He passes only a few students, all squirreled away individually as they battle to the end of their final essays, due tonight.
Down the way, past bookcases and a shelving cart, is the silent study alcove.

In the alcove, at their table, is Cas.

His laptop is open, his head tilted up, his eyes closed or on the ceiling. He’s gorgeous and real and right fucking there. He’s always right there. Always has been. Sitting there, waiting for people who probably won’t come, just because they might need help.

He’s also rumpled and tired and maybe napping in his seat.

Dean taps his knuckles against the side of a bookcase.

Cas lifts his head, squinting blearily and looking around in confusion.

His eyes fall on Dean.

Cas smiles.

Dean smiles back.

Cas smiles wider, even as he tilts his head in clear confusion, his eyebrows pulling down.

Hands stuffed in his coat pockets, Dean shrugs and walks over one steady, casual step at a time. He stops in front of Cas, standing by the legs of their regular table instead of behind his usual chair. He reaches inside his open coat, pulls the note out of an inner pocket, and hands it over.

Cas takes it with one large, strong hand, and Dean tries not to squirm as Cas unfolds it.

_I didn’t bring any coffee, so you’ll have to let me take you out for a cup._

Cas looks up at him.
Dean presses his hands down tighter into his pockets.

Cas reaches into an inner pocket of his suit jacket, pulls out a pen, and tears off the blank bottom half of Dean’s note. He checks his watch before scrawling a quick *Office hours finished for the year, enjoy your vacation!* That blue-inked note gets slapped down in the middle of the table, but Dean’s note gets folded and put into Cas’ jacket alongside the pen.

Dean grins like the goddamn idiot he is.

Cas grins back just as hard. He starts packing up his shit and Dean just stands there like a dumbass, watching, waiting to make his next move. Because it’s a good move, it’s a great move, and he makes it once Cas has his overcoat on and his bag’s strap over one shoulder.

Dean holds out his hand.

Cas looks down at it.

Dean spreads his fingers and raises his eyebrows. His heart pounds so hard in his chest, he can feel it in his throat and feet, but he’s doing it. He’s gonna hold a dude’s hand in public, even if that public is a mostly deserted library.

Cas’ grin condenses down into a shy smile, more intense for its smaller size. He slides his fingertips across Dean’s palm, and Dean grabs hold a little too soon. They adjust their grips, side-by-side and hand-in-hand, still looking at each other with the stupidest kind of happiness. Cas’ hands are just as strong as expected, but infinitely smoother. He has pen callouses, and nothing more. Dean’s gonna kiss those hands. Dean’s gonna kiss him in a whole lot of places.

With a small tug, Dean leads the way out, but the space between the rows of shelves is more than large enough for two men to walk abreast. They’ll have to weave a little around the table and the shelving cart up ahead, but that’s a minor complication against this giddy backdrop.

Exiting the silent section, they keep swapping looks. It’s the most bashful Dean’s felt in years. They open their mouths at the same time, only to close them to hear the other speak.
Dean bites his lip on a grin, but Cas rolls his eyes. The show of annoyance is readily proven false by the way his thumb strokes the side of Dean’s hand.

Dean squeezes back.

Giving in to a smile, Cas opens his mouth.

He asks, “Where are we going?”

And he does it with Jimmy’s voice.

“Holy fucking shit.”

Dean springs away. He tears his hand back and jerks away and slams his hip into the loaded shelving cart. He doubles over the cart, loudly swearing again into the nigh-silence of a college library.

Everyone within earshot shushes him. Everyone who saw that mess—a pair of students a decade younger than him—stares at Dean like they don’t know whether to help him out or help him out of the building.

Everyone, that is, except for Cas.

Pushing himself back upright with two hands on the cart, Dean gets a good clear look at Cas’ face. At his wide eyes and still-outstretched arm. At the incomprehension warring with inevitable understanding across his features.

At a man who was literally too good to be true.

And in the last voice Dean ever expected to hear again, Cas whispers a single confused, “Michael?”
Happy New Year!

To see what else I'm working on, you can follow me on tumblr here or dreamwidth here.
“Michael?”

His eyes so very wide, Cas takes a step forward.

One hand clutching at his bruised hip, Dean scrambles around the shelving cart. “Nope, nope, no—I’m, I gotta—bye.” He pulls the cart along with him all of a foot, wedging it between an occupied table and the end of a bookshelf.

“What, Dean?” Cas hisses from the other side, surprised and urgent and clearly pained.

Also very pained, Dean hobbles away, but Cas circles around the table to catch him within seconds. He grabs Dean by the shoulder, and when Dean reflexively turns to look at him, Cas’ face is one of panic.

“I swear to god, I didn’t know,” Dean promises in a hurried whisper. “Don’t call the emergency line, I’m leaving, you don’t gotta worry. I’m not stalking you, I’m, I’m gonna go anti-stalk you now, I’ll just—”

“Dean.” Even harsher than the first time.
Cas renews his grip on Dean’s arm and drags Dean between the shelves, away from prying eyes and listening witnesses. The part of Dean’s brain that is forever dedicated to porn announces that he’s about to be slammed up against the shelves, kissed senseless, and then blown with his jeans around his thighs, but that part of Dean’s brain is exactly what got him in this mess in the first place.

The saner part of Dean’s brain braces for a far less pleasurable kind of tongue-lashing. He shuts his mouth and readies his apologies, and then Cas whispers, fear-hoarse, “I can explain.”

“Teaching pays shit, that’s fine, I get it,” Dean answers in a rush. “I’m not gonna tell anyone, I’ll just-” And Dean jerks his thumb over his shoulder. Cas has let him go, that means Dean can bolt, right?

“My department head already knows,” Cas tells him, shifting his weight to stand in the center of the aisle. “That’s not what I should explain.”

Dean backs up in the other direction. He’ll have to loop around to the exit, but his leg is recovering out of sheer adrenaline. “No, no, it’s okay, I’m gonna go find a rock to crawl under and stay out of your life, it’s cool.”

“I need to explain,” Cas insists, not moving. Not chasing but not budging from where he blocks the quickest route out. His voice is hard, his shoulders tense, his gorgeous hands held in low, tight fists. “Somewhere we can actually talk.”

Dean should leave him alone.

Dean should calm him down and get him a coffee.

There’s so many things Dean should do, he has no idea where to start.

“Uh. Study room?” Dean suggests in a strained whisper.

Looking no less terrified, Cas nods. “This way.” He sets off with a quick stride, only to check over his shoulder nearly every third step.
Following, Dean tries to keep his distance. To stay out of grabbing range. Because he knows he’s not gonna do anything untoward, but Cas still looks scared as fuck. In charge, in control, and scared as fuck.

By unspoken agreement, they head to the study rooms with the great big windows. The lights are off inside, and when Cas tries the door, it’s locked. They try the next two and definitely need to get the key.

“Wait here,” Cas orders. He points at Dean with a shaking hand. “Don’t go anywhere.”

Heart in his throat and blood rushing south, Dean silently nods.

Inscrutable, Cas looks him over the once before setting off. He’s back within a minute, well before the frantic static in Dean’s head can even attempt to clear. Cas is Jimmy. Jimmy is Cas. It loops around inside his brain, a garbled distress call from the sinking ship of reality.

“I can’t find the librarian,” Cas says, cutting through Dean’s mind static. “Let’s try the coffee shop instead.”

“Dude, we are not hashing this out in public.”

Eyes narrowed, Cas frowns at him but doesn’t disagree. “Did you drive here?”

“Jesus, Cas, you’re supposed to be calling some emergency police thing, not climbing into my car to be kidnapped!”

Cas shoots him a bitchface to rival one of Sam’s. “I’ll sit in the front, you’ll sit in the back, and we’ll talk.”

Dean swallows. “You don’t owe me shit. Seriously, I’ll just go.”

“No.” Cas lifts his chin, jaw set, eyes bright in his flushed face. He tugs his tie looser, but his hand is
trembling. “Hear me out before you avoid me. That’s not unreasonable.”

“Cas, you’re fucking shaking.”

“And overheating.” Cas agrees, putting up his coat sleeves enough to unbutton his cuffs. “I’ll cool down outside.” He sets off and says over his shoulder, “I remember what your car looks like, it’s very distinct.”

Dean’s big black car. More embarrassed than he’s ever been in his life, Dean catches up.

Walking side-by-side, there’s no hand-holding this time. The sideways glances swap out flirtation for nervousness. The butterflies in Dean’s stomach have become idiot moths, bashing themselves uselessly against the light of his heart.

Cas exits the library without buttoning his coat, the strap of his laptop bag the only thing that holds it shut against the wind. The snowflakes fall fat and wet, gleaming as they pass the yellow glow of the streetlights. Keys in hand, Dean trudges into the parking lot. He brushes off a thin layer of snow to unlock the passenger side door, then circles around the trunk to unlock the rear driver’s side door. Looking paler under the yellow streetlight than he had inside under sickly fluorescent bulbs, Cas stares back across the frosty roof of the Impala.

They climb inside. Cas closes the door ineffectually but tries again when Dean says, “It’s okay if you slam it.”

Cas slams it. He looks down and picks something up off the front seat. The book he’d loaned Dean. He opens his laptop bag, slips the book inside, and pulls out something that rattles. A pill bottle. He pops the safety lid, gives the orange bottle a shake, and tilts his head back to take it dry.

“You really were hospitalized,” Dean says like a goddamn idiot.

“Yes,” Cas answers, zipping his bag shut. “Sorry, I assumed you were done with the book.”

Cas is sitting shotgun. He’s sitting where he—where Jimmy—said he would blow Dean last night. The exact spot. Dean’s in the back, right where Jimmy wanted him to return the favor.
That was last night.

“Uh,” Dean says. “Yeah.”

“That’s helpful,” Jimmy—Cas—says, twisted around to face Dean. He has one arm along the back of the bench seat, his cuff still unbuttoned, his tan overcoat sparkling with melting snowflakes. His hand is nearly steady on the leather. “Marginalized people are pushed into marginalized positions—or positions become marginalized due to the marginalized people working them.”

“I just said I read it, I don’t need the summary.”

“I heard you. It’s something I wanted to talk to you about before I publish.”

Dean’s blood runs colder than the air in the car. “Before you what.”

“Publish,” Cas repeats. “My department head knows where I’ve been, er, moonlighting, because it’s part of a research project I’ve been conducting.”

“No,” Dean says. “No, you can’t. Seriously, you can’t fucking do that, you can’t put the crap we said down in writing and fling it out there, that’s—”

Raising both hands, both shaking hands, Cas interrupts. “It’s not about you. It’s about us.”

“I don’t give a shit if you’re putting your parts down too, that’s—”

“My project is about the long-term effects of sex work on the worker’s sexuality and mental well-being,” Cas says over him. “The company wouldn’t let me interview their operators without becoming one.”

“...What?”

“I’m not publishing about you,” Cas says. “I’m publishing about me.”
Dean stares at him.

Illuminated only by the light filtering in through the snowy windshield, Cas doesn’t seem real. A vague phantom of a man, exactly as Dean somehow always knew Jimmy would be.

“I was going to bring it up incrementally,” Cas continues. “I didn’t want to surprise you.”

“Wait, you knew?”

“No, I-”

“Holy shit,” Dean says over him, a million tiny moments recombining, a shattered mirror coming together to reflect a new and awful image. “You knew I was reading up on kinky crap, you knew-”

“No,” Cas interrupts emphatically. “No, this is unexpected.” He gestures between them, and Dean can’t stop staring at those hands. “I knew you were researching BDSM because I can tell when someone’s done the reading. I’m a teacher, it’s a sense I’ve developed.”

“That’s all? Seriously?”

“Dean. Michael. I swear to you, I didn’t know. I’ve barely ever seen you nervous before, let alone…” He doesn’t finish that sentence.

He doesn’t need to.

Dean knows exactly what kind of wreck he’s revealed himself to be.

And despite all of that fuckery, Jimmy’s—Cas’s voice still does him in. Dean shifts in his seat, adjusting the lay of his jacket over his lap by means of leaning forward. “Then why plan to tell me, huh? About…” Dean gestures helplessly. “If you didn’t think I was calling, you could’ve gotten away with never mentioning it. I’m not exactly going around reading scholarly articles.”
Cas frowns, eyes narrowing. “Dean, that’s exactly what you’ve been doing for the entire time I’ve known you.”

Something inside Dean’s head tilts. “Yeah, but,” Dean says before running out of words for that sentence.

“I realize this complicates things,” Cas says.

“Christ, yeah.” Dean rubs at his face. He looks out the snow-dappled window, the world outside a dark blur of street and buildings. “Look, I’ll, uh.” He clears his throat. “I’ll leave you to it, okay?”

“What do you mean?”

When Dean dares to look, Cas is frowning harder than ever.

“I told you, I’m not gonna tell anyone,” Dean reminds him. “I’m not gonna bug you anymore, I’ll figure out somewhere else to study—”

Cas catches him by the wrist mid-gesture. His thumb wraps over Dean’s pulse. His fingertips are colder than they were in the library in a way that has nothing to do with the biting weather. His grip is twitchy yet firm, as if there’s some possibility of Dean fleeing from the back of his own car.

“I like you,” Cas says. “Very much.”

Dean pulls his arm back until Cas lets go. “No you don’t.”

Cas frowns.

“I get that you’re not Jimmy,” Dean forces himself to say, just as he’ll force himself to understand. “But you weren’t into Michael, and Michael was as Dean as it gets, so I don’t see where you’re going with this.”

Looking Dean full in the face, Cas tells him, “You are the most infuriatingly insecure person I have
ever met.”

Dean loves his car too much to ever vomit on the upholstery, but on days like this, it’s a close call.

Instead, he swallows hard and says, “Yep.”

Cas studies him. Cas fucking contemplates and analyzes him from right up close. Then he looks around the dim interior of the car and says, “I was picturing an SUV.”

Dean blinks at him.

“This is much nicer,” Cas adds.

Dean has no idea what the fuck to say.

“It was an assumption I made,” Cas pointedly tells him.

“I’m not just assuming -”

“I like you.” His face is stupidly open, infuriatingly beautiful. Cas is serious and focused and visibly nervous beyond measure. “I can only assume I’m the gay friend who’s ‘a complete rosebud’ and supposedly out of your league-”

“You are a complete rosebud.”

“But I still like you,” Cas says over him. “Even if you like my customer service persona more than you like me.”

“That’s not-” Dean cuts himself off. “You want fantasies, you like people; that’s different.”

Cas slowly lifts his chin, like he’s stuck halfway through a nod.
“What?” Dean demands, trying not to squirm. It’s his car, he reminds himself, and he can kick Cas out of it whenever he wants to.

Carefully, deliberately, Cas sits up straighter, even twisted as he is to face Dean from the front seat. Though the nerves clearly remain, the posture is commanding, the line of his stubble-rough jaw as masculine as it gets. “Dean, do you still want to be my good boy?”

The bottom of Dean’s stomach drops out, but his dick absolutely doesn’t get the message of panic. Dean’s dick only gets the part where Cas’ lips move and Jimmy’s voice comes out. His dick is an idiot, and Dean is a worse idiot for listening to it.

Dean swallows.

Cas watches him so intently.

Heat riding high in his cheeks and low in his gut, Dean looks away.

“Please talk to me,” Jimmy begs. When Dean’s not looking, it’s Jimmy. “Dean, I need you to talk to me.”

“You should head out before you miss your bus or something,” Dean says, and that counts. He’s talking, it counts.

“I already did. I saw it pull away a minute ago.”

Dean looks at him.

Cas looks back, patient and terrified.

“You’re having another panic attack.” Dean doesn’t even need to ask it.
“I have been the entire time,” Cas states, voice level, breathing steady. “It’s the same one. I can push through them when I have a clear goal.”

“Okay, got it, I’m bad for you, I’ll-”

“So is red meat and bacon,” Cas interrupts. “I’m not giving up those either.”

Dean can’t deal with this. Cas clearly isn’t thinking straight, and he’s not about to calm down and think it through until Dean’s not in the picture. “When’s the next bus?”

“This time of night, thirty or forty minutes.”

“You can wait in the library.”

“Or you could drive me home,” Cas counters.

“Seriously, dude. Emergency number.”

Cas looks at him like Dean’s the one being an idiot. “You already have my address. You have my email. You know my real name and my place of employment. Because we are friends. Obviously, you can retract your offer and we don’t have to see each other this weekend, but you are my friend and you matter to me. I refuse to let that change.”

“Friends,” Dean repeats.

Cas reaches into his overcoat, into his suit jacket, and he pulls out that folded piece of notebook paper. He unfolds Dean’s carefully written offer of a coffee date and holds it out. “Do you want to take it back?”

“No,” Dean says quietly.

Exhaling hard, Cas sinks against the seat back. He tilts like somebody just yanked all the caffeine out of him, but he settles against the leather of the bench seat like it’s that of a giant armchair. “Okay,”
Cas says, voice weak, the word strong. He folds the paper up and sticks it back inside his coat. His other arm remains resting on the top of the seat, and the side of his face goes atop his arm. He looks at Dean like he’s survived some great emergency and needs to sleep it off.

“Cas?”

“I’m dizzy.”

With no idea what else to do, Dean feels Cas’ forehead with the back of his hand. Kinda clammy. Eyes falling shut, Cas leans into the touch.

“You really want me to drive you home?”

“Yes please.”

Tentative, Dean lifts his hand. He smooths Cas’ unruly hair down. Without so much as a flutter of his closed eyelids, Cas sinks lower against the seat.

“Did you just pass out?” Dean asks, honestly not sure.

“No,” Cas says against the leather. He opens one eye and vaguely tilts his head in Dean’s direction. His hair brushes against Dean’s fingertips. “Adrenaline crash and a sedative at the same time. This happens.”

“Short burst.” Dean’s still vibrating. He’s not gonna stop for another ten years, minimum.

Cas closes his eyes again with a tiny shrug. “It cuts out when I know I’m safe.”

Dean opens his mouth and absolutely no words come out.

Serene in exhaustion, Cas moves only in the slight rise of his chest and shoulders. As the windows fog, the streetlight diffuses into a permeating golden glow. A profound artistry suffuses Cas’ features, from the furrow of his brow to the strength of his jaw. The bags beneath his eyes compel as much
attention as his parted lips.

“Sorry, I know it’s pathetic,” Cas mumbles, eyes still shut, more polite than embarrassed.

“It’s, it’s okay.” Dean clears his throat. “You want that ride home now, or do you get car sick or something?”

The corner of Cas’ mouth pulls to the side, just the way it always has. “I won’t vomit.”

“Right, cool.” Dean opens the door and slides out into the bracing cold, grabbing an ice-scraper off the floor as he does. The air and flakes are a wet slap to the face as Dean brushes off the windows, dispelling the thin layer of snow, if not the inner fog.

He unlocks the driver side door.

He opens it.

He ducks inside, and Cas is still there.

He shuts the door, and Cas is still there.

He sticks the keys in the ignition, and Cas is looking at him.

“C’mon, man, buckle up,” Dean tells him, turning on the engine and the defrost. “I didn’t go through the bother of installing seat belts for people not to use them.”

Sitting up straighter, Cas feels around with a frown, his fingers following the crease of the bench to where the belts extend out of it. They’re lap belts only, but still safer than none, and the retracting belts mean there’s no sloppy mess ruining the Impala’s classy interior. Cas scoots over, centering himself, and straps in, slipping the belt between his laptop bag and his lap.

Dean follows suit and waits for the windows to clear.
He turns the wipers on, and they squeak back and forth in the silence.

He turns the tape deck on, and he quickly switches over to the radio when last night’s soundtrack plays. Christmas music blares at them from a channel Dean thought he could trust. He shuts the radio off. The squeak of the wipers continues to keep time.

“What are you thinking?” Cas asks.

They’ve jerked off together, that last time. And again before that.

Or maybe they haven’t.

Maybe that really was just Dean.

“I’ve got your address in my notebook, but I didn’t actually memorize it,” Dean says instead, like the functioning human he’ll pretend to be. He pulls out his phone. “Where am I going?”

Cas looks at Dean’s phone. His coloring visibly shifts, both paler and redder in odd splotches. In a rougher voice, Cas says, “I’ll give you directions as we go.”

“If you need a nap, nap.”

Cas swears he’ll stay awake, but he gives Dean an address to punch into the GPS anyway. Dean turns up his phone’s volume. Pulling out of the parking spot, he puts his arm over the back of the seat, and just like that, he’s got an arm around Cas.

Dean pulls his arm back in as soon as they’re going. Both hands on the wheel. He absolutely doesn’t think about last night. He doesn’t so much as think about road head. There’s not a thought in his head about driving his big black car down Cas’ driveway and into his tight little garage.

On an unrelated note, his face heats up and he unzips his coat to cool down. Which may, coincidentally, involve pulling one side of his coat forward just a little, just a bit past his crotch.
Nothing to see there. Eyes on the road, ears fixated on his GPS, Dean is the pinnacle of a responsible driver.

It’s a fifteen minute drive. The giant falling flakes shrink into something closer to sleet. It’s not sticking on the road, but there could be ice. There could be potholes Dean doesn’t expect beneath the slushy puddles. There is every reason to focus outside the car, and absolutely no reason to fixate on who’s inside it. They pass the bus. Dean knows they both see it, but he doesn’t offer to pull over to let Cas off at the next bus stop, and Cas doesn’t ask him to.

At a stop sign, Dean dares a glance. A quick one, a tiny one.

Cas is already looking back.

Dean stares.

Some asshole behind him honks.

Dean drives on, but not before flipping the bird back through the rear window.

A minute more, and Cas asks, “What are you actually thinking?”

If Dean doesn’t look at him, if Dean only hears the voice in just the one ear, it’s like old times. Not even using the headset, just his phone pressed to the side of his face.

Dean shrugs.

“You came out to your family yesterday?” Cas asks, like he’s not the guy who said he doesn’t date anyone closeted.

“Yep.” He drums his fingers on the steering wheel.

“And immediately decided to ask me out.”
“I was on a roll,” Dean says with another shrug. “Figured I could go three for three.”

The force of Cas’ eyes presses into the side of Dean’s face.

Dean checks his mirrors, hits the turn signal, and follows his phone’s prompts.

“Are you changing your mind?” Cas asks in a voice empty of the emotion that is its best characteristic.

“About going three for three?”

“We’re not getting coffee right now,” Cas points out. “Unless you’re planning on coming inside for coffee, and not euphemistically. That would be a little too fast.”

A weight settles in the bottom of Dean’s stomach and keeps pressing even further down. “Right, okay, so you didn’t jerk off too. Good to know.” He drums his fingers faster, waiting for the light to turn green. Saying it out loud is too much. He shouldn’t have done that.

“I did,” Cas says.

Dean looks at him.

“I did,” Cas repeats, eyes dark, face flushed beneath the cover of shadow. His fingers are woven together, his arms looped in a tight embrace around his bag. Cas glances. Down to Dean’s lap. To the back seat. Back to Dean’s face.

Dean’s throat works. “Did you… want to?”

“I’m glad I did,” Cas says, dodging the question.

“You-”
“The light’s green.”

Dean snaps his mouth shut and keeps driving. The next light is near a bus stop, the snow blowing at just the right angle to soak the covered bench.

“I could get out here,” Cas says, “if I’m making you uncomfortable. That’s my usual stop.”

“It’s fine.”

“I’m making you uncomfortable.”

“I’m not kicking you out to walk home in this.”

“I’ve walked home in worse.”

Dean sets his jaw. “Fine. You wanna jump out, jump out.”

Cas lets out a long-suffering sigh, like Dean’s being difficult and Cas isn’t being literally impossible. “That’s not what I asked you.”

“Don’t remember you asking me anything,” Dean shoots back, deliberately a brat. His traitorous dick chubs right on up, waiting for Cas to verbally slap him back into place.

“Dean, this isn’t a scene,” Cas retorts, reading him perfectly. “Even if it was, you can use basic manners or I can get out of your car.”

The light turns green. Dean goes again.

“All right, I can’t get out of your car,” Cas says.
“What do you want?”

“What?” There’s a frown laced through the word. That single syllable, it’s pure Jimmy.

“What.” Dean demands, “do you want? ‘Cause I have no idea what the fuck is going on.” He grips the wheel too hard, his eyes fixed on the road.

For too long a moment, Cas goes quiet, as if reality itself has dropped their call.

Finally, firmly, Cas says, “I want coffee.”

Dean looks at him despite driving. “What?”

“You asked me out for coffee,” Cas says, and Dean gets his eyes the fuck back on the road. “I accepted, but this isn’t a coffee date. Therefore, I want coffee. I-”

Dean’s phone informs them their destination is five hundred feet away, on the right.

“I can’t do this,” Dean tells him in a rush. He definitely can’t do it if he has to fucking look at Cas while he says it. “It’s too crazy, I- Fuck. Sorry.”

“Why is it ‘too crazy’?” Out of the corner of his eye, Dean can see Cas doing the finger quotes.

“I didn’t mean it like that.”

“I didn’t think you did, so what did you mean?”

“Dude, you know all my shit, you know why.”

“You have anxiety,” Cas says simply, like that’s just a thing people have without being fucked up beyond repair. “If I didn’t know you were reaching out to your family and going to therapy, I
wouldn’t be comfortable dating you. As long as you have a support system outside of me, I don’t see the issue.”

A pause as Dean stops in one of the guest spots in the residential complex. Dean presses down hard on the brakes, holding them in place. He doesn’t put it in park, much less kill the engine.

“Unless,” Cas says, “this is an extremely indirect and infuriating way of rescinding the offer.”

Jaw clenched, Dean shakes his head at the visitor parking sign.

“Is there something else I’m supposed to think, when you refuse to even look at me?”

Between saying nothing and losing Cas, the choice is clear, but it still fucking sucks. “I’m embarrassed, okay?”

“You think I’m not?”

Dean looks at him.

Cas looks back, still Cas, still Jimmy.

Dean shifts into park before running both hands down his face. “I don’t know what’s real. Do you even like Domming or any of that crap?”

“I’m a switch, so yes.”

“I don’t think I can do both,” Dean says, because he knows an easy escape route when he sees one. “You’d be better off with someone else.”

“I’m a man,” Cas tells him.
Dean frowns at him. “Kinda got that by this point.”

“You like both,” Cas continues in a voice flat enough to have an edge. “Clearly, you’d be better off with multiple casual partners.”

Dean kills the engine. There’s not enough gas in the world to burn on this conversation. A blunt object against Cas’ sharp edge, Dean counters, “You’re not into me.”

Cas turns up the frown, not angry, just tilted in confusion. It’s like the more freaked Dean gets, the more steady Cas becomes. “What part of accepting a date and publicly holding your hand means I’m not into you?”

“That was before you knew.”

If Cas tilts his head any harder, he’ll be using the seat back as a pillow again. “I still like you,” Cas says, as if that’s not one of the most terrifying sentences to utter. As if people actually put themselves out there without bracing against the inevitable impact.

“I’m Michael,” Dean tells him, because Cas still doesn’t get it. “All that crap, all that bullshit, that’s all inside me, that’s what you’re dealing with here.”

“I understand that,” Cas says, clearly doing the exact opposite. His voice is careful, calm. Jimmy’s. He sets his laptop bag down in the foot well and unbuckles his seat belt, eyes following the way the strap retracts into the seat.

Then, head still tilted down, he lifts his eyes back up to Dean’s face. The lights around the complex are more blue-tinged, that environmentally friendly kind of glow, and the soft, ethereal tint does nothing to lessen Cas’ quiet magnetism. The blue softens his edges. The angle is coy, his eyes anything but.

Slowly, as if expecting Dean to flee from his own car, Cas lifts his left hand, his arm rising to rest along the seat back. His fingertips press down against the edge of Dean’s shoulder, and Dean turns to stone. Not frozen with terror, but pressed solid, a raging sandstorm flattened into motionless sandstone.

Cas shifts closer. His eyes glitter. His hand shifts higher. His palm presses through jacket and shirts,
through skin and muscle into bone.

The rise and fall of Dean’s chest becomes exaggerated in his own stillness, a parody of breathing. It’s not giving Dean any air. When light is thick and air is thin and friends are strangers, there’s no sense to be found. There’s only Dean, frozen, yet somehow turning at the waist. There’s only Cas, drawing incrementally closer.

Cas’ hand leaves his shoulder. Fingers skim his neck and a palm settles on the side of his face, Cas’ fingertips now warm against Dean’s ear.

“I still want you,” Cas says, barely a kiss away. “If you can’t believe that, then you’re right. We shouldn’t have a romantic relationship. But I would like you to say if you still want one.”

Throat thick, Dean nods against Cas’ hand. He nods more than necessary.

Cas exhales hard, his breath stale but not unpleasant against Dean’s lips. “Good,” he says, voice rough with released strain. And then he pulls back as if he can’t tell Dean needs to hold onto him and never let go, being the clingy mess he is. Very nearly, Dean almost grabs on and pulls him back in.

“I’m not sure what’s real,” Dean tells him instead. “I mean, what’s you. I know you’re not Jimmy, I just…” Dean shrugs, entirely out of words for the situation.

“But Jimmy is me,” Cas finishes for him, nodding like this all makes some semblance of sense. He picks his bag up out of the foot well. “If you come inside, I can show you what’s real.”

Dean’s mouth goes dry. Both he and his dick sit up straighter. “Sorry, what?”

“I haven’t taken down my setup yet,” Cas says. “I can show you how I make which sounds.”

“That’s… not exactly the kind of real I meant.”

“I could still show you.”
If Dean follows this man inside now, it’ll all end in tears, humping his leg, or both. “Nah, I’m good.”

“I could show you on Sunday,” Cas says, prompting yet more confusion in Dean’s already exhausted brain. “If you’re still coming over.”


With disappointment clear in his eyes, Cas nods. “That’s more than reasonable.” He starts to button his overcoat shut, and he drops his chin to watch the progress of his own hands. “Thank you for the ride home.”

“Yeah, ‘course.”

“I’ll… see you around?” Cas asks.

“Yeah, sure.”

“Dean,” Cas says.

Dean looks up from Cas’ hands.

More serious than Dean has ever seen him, Cas asks, “Am I going to see you again?”

Dean swallows hard.

“You don’t know,” Cas says.

“I shouldn’t have told you all that shit,” Dean says, not able to look at him. “That was stupid, I should’ve kept my mouth shut.”

“Dean,” Cas says again, Jimmy says again, and fuck every wish and dream Dean ever had of Jimmy
calling him by name, by his real name. Reality’s ruined them all.

“Can you give me one goddamn minute to cope,” Dean yells at the steering wheel.

Cas goes silent.

Cas shifts on the seat.

Dean’s eyes snap to him. This is it. This is Cas leaving. This is Jimmy doubly gone.

This is Cas, looking back at him with narrowed eyes and a tilted head. He’s weirdly calm.

And then, making a small lifting gesture with his hands, Cas inhales.

Dean copies automatically.

They breathe together while the snow falls. Slowly.

In and out.

Just the two of them.

Breathing.

Once air returns, Dean’s energy cuts out. He doesn’t slump down in the seat the way Cas had, but it’s close.

“Are you safe to drive?” Cas asks, voice soft.
“Can I ask you one more question?” Cas asks, and he asks it like he needs it.

Dean nods again.

“Did I help? These past few months, as Jimmy. Did I help? At all.”

Dean almost laughs at the absurdity of the question. “Yeah. Yeah, man. You gotta know that.”

“Then everything you told me is exactly what you should have said,” Cas replies.

“You’re not gonna tell anyone?” Dean checks.

Cas rolls his eyes. “Dean, you know I’ve pretended to sodomize a man as a centaur. Multiple times.”

“Didn’t know it was multiple times.”

“It’s been multiple times,” Cas says with the face of a man who can never go horseback riding again.

Dean laughs. He covers his mouth. “Sorry.”

His eyes soft, Cas’ mouth pulls to the side. “I’d like to have a friend I could talk to about it. About all of it. I haven’t told my coworkers, and I’ve been hesitant to bring it up with my friends.”

“You sure you want that friend to be me?” Dean asks. “I’m sure I did a bunch of stuff you need to vent about.”

“You didn’t,” Cas says, looking and sounding as surprised to say it as Dean is to hear it.
“Seriously.”

Cas nods. “You were a challenge. Occasionally obnoxious but overall very sincere. You cared more about my preferences than a few in-person partners I’ve had. Some other callers care, but not like that. You never forgot I was a real person. I think that’s because you wanted a real person, but the point still stands.”

“Oh,” Dean says.

“Do you?”

“Do I what?”

“Want a real person,” Cas says.

Dean shrugs like he’s not itching to get out of this conversation. Casual. Nonchalant. Like he’s not ready to crawl out of his skin, like Jimmy—Cas—isn’t still giving him a boner. “C’mon, man, I asked you out for a reason,” he tells the inspection sticker on the windshield. He touches the wheel with his right hand, hoping his jacket will shift enough to keep his crotch hidden. He clears his throat. “I mean, if you only want a friend, that’s, y’know. That’s cool.”

He’ll have to break himself into pieces to manage it, but if that’s what Cas wants…

If that’s what Cas wants, then it’s not gonna work.

Dean can’t go around breaking himself like that anymore.

“Thing is,” Dean forces himself to say, “I don’t think I could swing that.” He risks a look at Cas, who is staring at him, mouth actually fallen open. The reaction ought to burn, but it’s easier now. He’s already on the road to rejection; he might as well finish walking down it. “I’m into you. You-you, Jimmy-you, whatever, you do it and I like it.” He clears his throat. “A lot.”

“I prefer to be friends first, when I date,” Cas says. “Unless I’m wrong, we’re already friends.”
Dean stares at him, checking from eye to eye in incomprehension.

“What?” Cas asks.

“You’d date me,” Dean says, waiting for the contradiction.

Cas looks to the ceiling but manfully refrains from fully rolling his eyes. “I’ve been telling you that for at least half an hour now, yes.”

“But you’re not- you weren’t into it. Into me.”

This time, the full-body eye-roll breaks free. “Dean, if you’re asking whether I’m ‘into’ the extremely flirty man who brought me coffee every week for months, then the answer is, I was hoping you’d try to seduce me this Sunday. If you’re asking whether I’m ‘into’ one of my clients, then I have several books worth of material already written on the subject.”

“Guess I should probably read that, huh,” Dean jokes weakly.

The corner of Cas’ mouth pulls to the side.

“And I’m not ‘extremely flirty,’” Dean adds. Unlike Cas, he doesn’t do the finger quotes.

“Yes you are,” Cas replies with absolute conviction. “When you backed off, I assumed you really were too busy, or you decided you preferred us as friends.”

“You said you don’t date closeted guys.”

“You didn’t seem closeted,” Cas says, and the way he lifts his eyes to Dean’s is a sudden flash of heat. “You were very open in your… attention.”

That sudden flash of heat must be entirely inside Dean’s cheeks. “I’m new at the checking out dudes
thing, okay? My brain still gets confused at guys being hot.”

A real smile spreads across Cas’ face, slow and wide.

“...Fuck,” Dean says.

Cas grins wider.

“Shut up.”

Absolutely silent, Cas doesn’t shut up.

“Okay, that’s enough, get out of my car.” He’d push Cas’ shoulder, but there’s no way in hell he can risk touching the guy, not even for only a light shove.

“Give me your phone number first,” Cas counters.

“No,” Dean says, just to be a dick about it. He doesn’t stop Cas, though, when the guy picks up Dean’s phone from the seat, still unlocked and displaying their location, and dials a number. Cas silences his own ringing phone through the fabric of his slacks, and the sight of Cas squeezing his own thigh does things to Dean that he’d rather not admit to.

“There,” Cas says, putting Dean’s phone back on the seat between them.

“You seriously are a complete rosebud.”

“I’m all right with that,” Cas says, “Will I still see you on Sunday?”

Dean bites his lip.

“I promised my family pie, I need to know if I should make contingency plans,” Cas explains.
“...Yeah. Yeah, okay.” Dean nods. “We can do pie.”

Cas’ entire face lights up.

His entire body. Sitting taller. Shoulders relaxing.

God, he’s beautiful.

“Seriously, get out of my car,” Dean says instead.

Rolling his eyes but still smiling, Cas slips one arm through the strap of his bag. “See you Sunday,” he says, reaching blindly for the door handle and missing about five times. Soon enough, they’ve swapped smiles and glares. “Shut up,” Cas says, finally looking at what he’s doing.

“No chance!” Dean calls after him as Cas makes it out of the car.

Dean turns on the wipers and they wave. Dean watches Cas’ retreating back amid the continuing flurries, past the row of parked cars in numbered spots, all the way up to one of the big apartment buildings. Dean keeps an eye on him all the way until Cas is indoors.

With one final backwards glance toward Dean and one last wave, Cas goes inside.

Dean drops his head into his hands and groans out a heartfelt “What the fuck.”

He sits there like that for a very long time, beyond thinking, beyond feeling, and then he drives home.

Chapter End Notes

Again, thank you all so much for the support and enthusiasm you’ve all shown. It’s honestly a bit overwhelming, but definitely appreciated.
To see what else I'm working on, you can follow me on tumblr here or dreamwidth here.
Chapter Summary

Dean reads research notes and learns more about Cas' personal sound effects studio.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Dean gets home, there’s reading material waiting for him.

He doesn’t immediately find it. No, first he faceplants into his couch with a groan and stays there until thin air and stifling heat force him to lift his head.

Several beers and a bit of hard liquor after that, he remembers he never ate dinner. He wobbles into his bedroom anyway, again belly flopping. Then there’s a little bit more whiskey. More lying still and trying not to think.

If he thinks, it’ll well up inside him, and there’s no one to tell, no one to vent to. Jimmy—Cas—is the only one he could tell. God, that must be why Cas wants to keep him around. Or maybe Cas actually doesn’t, Cas plays so many people, Cas was just keeping Dean calm for the ride home, or-

“This isn’t helping,” Dean grumbles to himself. “Fucking stop.”

He lies there a bit longer.

He flops onto his back. Sits up. Uncorks the bottle and drinks, replacing the burn in his throat with a better one.

He needs to talk to someone. Someone who can’t spill his secrets.

Pamela.
Dean climbs off the bed, sloshes nearly to the point of spilling, and sits down heavily. He puts the bottle down on his bedside table, and that stupid little card standing there mocks him. Dean picks it up, staring at Cas’ shitty little drawing of balloons and confetti. It’s so goddamn awful.

He tries to read the inside, and his heart fucking breaks open. Was Cas real? Is anyone?

Who is Dean even supposed to ask about that?

Oh, right. Pamela.

He puts the card down and walks to his desk and laptop with exaggerated care. He wheels back his chair. He sits. He spins back and forth, pushing off the desk with his feet. He may or may not let out a mournful “Whee…”

When the spinning keeps going even when his body stops, Dean plants his hands on the desk. Regaining equilibrium, he risks opening his laptop. It takes three tries to enter his password. It’s a bit harder opening up his email. That’s how he’s supposed to schedule an appointment, right?

...Wait a second.

Dean frowns at his inbox.

*From: Castiel Novak*

*Subject: December notes—Invitation to Comment.*

*From: Castiel Novak*

*Subject: November notes—Invitation to Comment.*

*From: Castiel Novak*

*Subject: October notes—Invitation to Comment.*

*From: Castiel Novak*
Dean stares a bit harder.

Drunk but far from numb, he clicks open the September one. *Castiel Novak has invited you to comment on the following document: September notes,* the email reads in a form letter. Below that, there’s a more personal touch: *Dean, I’m linking you to my personal notes on my project for the relevant months. I trust you not to share them with anyone.*

Dean’s stomach flops over. He presses his mouth shut, but it’s not that kind of stomach flop.

Holy shit.

He tries to type out a response, only to realize he didn’t hit the Reply button first and he’s been hammering jibberish into the search bar.

“Don’t do that drunk,” he tells himself sternly. “No drunk… stuff.”

He needs to get food and water. Food and water, and then tell Cas things. Or not tell him things. Decide things? After food. And water. He’ll go do that.

Resolved to that responsible course of action, Dean clicks open the link and starts reading instead.

It’s a lot. Long. Very orderly, very Cas. The entries start with the date and day of week, the start and end time of his on-call time, the number of calls he actually took, and the total time Cas was actually on the phone. It’s a way smaller percentage of the total time than Dean had assumed. Somewhere in the dark and lonely corners of his mind, Dean had figured Jimmy was always taking back-to-back calls. At the end of each week, there’s a little survey as to what kinks Jimmy — *Cas* — finds tame, extreme, hot, or upsetting.

For a guy writing about phone sex, Cas somehow managed to take out all of the naughty bits. It’s no less compelling. *I still enjoy playing Steve more than Emmanuel, but I’m no longer certain if that’s because flustered and uncomfortable is my default, or if it’s because I don’t have to use up a fantasy on the encounter. I messed up as Lucien with a fantasy repeat, but I was able to spin it as a punishment for inattention. Still enjoying Lucien least.*
Some entries, Dean knows he shouldn’t be reading.

_I feel filthy. I’m helping a man cheat on his wife. I’ve been treating him worse, but I think he gets off on it. Unfortunate._

Some entries, Dean can’t stop reading.

_A self-professed twink called today and asked for “the full experience.” I have no idea what he thought that would mean, but the end result did highlight how much my tastes have changed since I was an undergrad. I wouldn’t say no to pretty, but I’ve definitely moved past twinks._

Some entries, Dean even laughs.

_I can’t masturbate to porn anymore. I keep pausing to take notes._

A few entries touch on people by name, or at least by moniker. The tone remains largely factual, oddly formal, and then there’s a few recurring names with emotion attached. But then, closing in on the end of the month, Dean finds what might be the first mention of himself.

_I’m not sure when I became the go-to operator for self-professed straight men, but there’s something very enjoyable about it. I know I can’t ‘turn’ a straight man, but the fantasy is still immensely satisfying._

Rubbing at his eyes, Dean pulls out his phone, looks at the info for the sex line number, and scrolls far, far back through his call history. The dates match up.

He rereads those lines. He licks his dry lips, then coughs. His stomach is tight and aching, so he pulls himself back to his feet to heat up some leftovers in the kitchen. If he weren’t sure he’d drop it, he’d bring his laptop with him.

Instead, he brings his late dinner into his room.
A man (straight Michael) called again today for breathing exercises. I’m confused. On the other hand, the ASMR practice seems to be paying off.

And:

Straight Michael is Bi Michael. I’m the first person he’s come out to. I’ve never experienced that with anyone other than my students. I also started telling him the Michael fantasy but had to change the name for obvious reasons. I need to remember that for Bi Michael, the Michael fantasy is now the Dean fantasy.

Dean chokes. He rereads. The words stay the same, which is not how being drunk normally changes reading.

The threesome attempt went over very well with Bi Michael. I changed Manny to Mandy without slipping on names or pronouns once; obviously, I need to try harder with my non-binary students. Back to the point, I’m not sure, but Bi Michael might believe Mandy is real. I’m getting very good at this.

His cheeks burn. Maybe he should’ve taken Cas up on that offer to see his little sound design studio. He remembers the panting, the slapping flesh, the wet, squishy noises, and that’s what has him fondling himself through his jeans when he reads the next Thursday entry.

I’ve started Domming Bi Michael. It’s nothing official yet, but there’s something breathtaking in watching someone discover his sexuality. I don’t think he’s subbed before, but he’s wonderfully responsive. Vastly preferable to Owen. I continue to dread the nights Owen calls. That continues to ruin Saturdays.

He reads until he has a headache, and then he gets water. He reads until his eyes are blurring, using the search function to find every instance of the name Michael.

Michael called me “the Scheherazade of porn” today. I’ve been thinking of myself as a very specific kind of improvisation specialist, but I like that much better. I do feel uncomfortable exaggerating about anal, though. It’s an obvious fixation for him and I’m trying to encourage him to pursue his interests, but I’ve started feeling guilty. Especially since he had subdrop today. That’s still the hardest part of Domming over the phone...

...the FCC routine went over well with Michael’s sense of humor. I’ve missed laughing during
...The longer I work, the more I want someone to actually talk to. Even with the few callers who actually want to talk (Herbert, main Michael, Owen) I don’t get to talk about myself. I only use fake versions of myself. It’s starting to feel like being closeted in reverse: the only part of me that’s out is my sexuality. Sometimes, not even that. For example, Owen can never know that I sub. I’ve implied to Michael I’m bisexual as well so he could have someone to relate to. I miss connecting as myself...

... spoke too soon about connecting as myself. A child caller slipped through. If that happens again, I’ll need to take the rest of the night off, no matter what. I made the mistake of taking the next two calls. I shouldn’t have taken the second after the vitriol of the first, but it was the usual Michael and I know he needs me, but I put my troubles on him instead tonight. I wish I hadn’t. I couldn’t do anything to shield that child from homophobia, and wound up exposing Michael to even more of it. I asked Meg to flag the number of the man, but that’s hardly a solution...

...less guilty about the anal now we’re sure Michael likes it. I was braced for him to dislike it. It felt like I was misleading him...

...an alarmed text from Fergus about Michael. When I checked in, Fergus confirmed that Michael didn’t rise to any of the bait, but he’s still convinced Michael’s a stalker. A harmless one, but still a stalker. I tried to explain Michael’s caretaker personality, but Fergus wasn’t reassured...

...Michael called to report Fergus for trying to sell my personal information. Fergus also told Michael I’m quitting. I’m not sure what revenge is suitable, but I’m sure Gabriel can think of something...

...I wonder how much self-care I can slip into a kink setting before Michael catches on. It’s much more challenging than Owen, but building a sub up is so much more satisfying than tearing one down. I hope I’m doing this right...

...worked out which of the websites Hannah recommended would be best for Michael. I need to find a partner who’s willing to wear lingerie...

...always feels strange when I jerk off with a caller. It made sense at the time to use my orgasm as a reward for Michael, but I’m not sure how I feel now. It definitely made me more vulnerable. I think that’s why I told him about the hospitalization. He didn’t noticeably withdraw...
...Herbert finally called again. Everyone was relieved to hear about the hip surgery. It’s surprising. I feel like we’re actually friends. I’ve only been getting that from Michael since Herbert’s calls stopped...

...finally asked for help. I’m so proud of Michael. It’s a very strange line we walk. The entire situation is innately sexual, but parts of him feel like a student to me, which is immediately desexualized. After our talk we still did the Dean fantasy (not the Michael fantasy I renamed the Dean fantasy for him, the Library Dean fantasy)...

It’s at this point that Dean’s brain gives out.

He’s...

They’ve...

When they were roleplaying. Whispering about footjobs under the table.

While Dean was picturing Cas, picturing Jimmy-as-Cas, Jimmy was… picturing him?

Dean stares at his laptop, at once too drunk and too sober.

Mind whirling, he puts his head down on his arms to think, and when he sits back up, everything hurts.

Blearily rubbing at his eyes, he nudges his laptop awake. Ignoring the hour, so late it’s become early, Dean fights to finish reading the pertinent bits before he once again falls asleep.

...continue to be proud. It’s been a strange week of saying goodbye, but at least I know Michael will be all right. It’s very frustrating, not being able to keep friends from this job...

And that’s it. That’s the last mention of Dean by name. Or by Michael’s name.

Dean scrolls up and rereads until exhaustion grabs at him with too-strong hands, dragging him to
bed. Without so much as turning off the lights, he collapses and stays down.

The lights, it quickly becomes clear, were a mistake.

Groaning, Dean shields his eyes with his arms. He grabs his pillow and puts that over his head. His pounding, broken head. Sullen about it, he staggers up, still covering his eyes, hits the lights, and staggers back to his bed in darkness.

He stays there until everything hurts a little less.

He fumbles around for his phone, squints at it, and accepts the surreal reality that this is four in the afternoon, not four in the morning. Nearly five. The winter sun’s already risen and set without ever seeing him.

The front of his brain motionless, but the back of it whirling, he makes himself act like a functioning human being. He gets water. He forces down food. He gets even more water and something for his head.

And then he sits back down at his laptop and looks at a ridiculous, dumbass display of trust.

This is basically Cas’ diary. Worse than that. Bigger than that. This is Cas’ thoughts and jarringly straightforward analysis of his second job. There are fucking charts plotting self-survey data on Cas’ personal and professional opinions on kinks over time. It’s more blackmail material than he’s ever had in his lap before, and Sam was a pretty embarrassing kid. It’s blackmail material on a scale he’s never even seen before, outside of a TV show.

Dean feels kinda sick.

Maybe more than kinda.

He clicks back to the original email, only to be punched in the face by another moment of terror. But
no, that’s a drunken draft, not a sent reply. Swearing, he deletes the rambling, misspelled paragraph of uncomfortable emotion.

He stares at his screen for a long time, the cursor blinking, his mind buzzing blank.

*Why did you send me this?*

That’s it, the entirety of his emailed response. Simple, to the point. Dean sits there, gut churning, and Cas’ answer shows up within two minutes. He must be on his computer, too.

*You’ve been double-guessing whether I like you the entire time I’ve known you. This was the closest thing I have to evidence. The September through November documents haven’t been edited since those months. You can see that for yourself.*

Something inside Dean starts shaking. He takes in a deep breath. He lets it right back out. He does that a couple times, but the world still won’t start making any sense. He pulls up the chat function in the corner of his school email, punches in Cas’ full name—real full name—and sees the guy’s online but busy.

*You saying you still want to date me?* Dean types out anyway.

Dean chews his lip until pain makes him stop, and then he hits send.

Almost immediately, those dreaded words appear: *C. Novak is typing…*

*I’ve been saying that, Cas replies. You still haven’t said anything either way, however.*

Dean goes back to chewing on his lip.

*It’s all right if you don’t,* Cas adds, very quickly. *I know sex work makes some people uncomfortable.*

*That’s not it,* Dean shoots back, his fingers bypassing his brain at the thought of Cas sitting there
dejected. From there, his entire body stalls.

His computer screen informs him that C. Novak is typing. It pauses in this mention, and then repeats it, several times. Long seconds pass. C. Novak is typing again.

Oh, C. Novak replies. That’s fine. I understand.

Wait no, Dean sends before he can puke. That’s not what I meant, and still processing, and I wanna date the shit out of you, hold on.

C. Novak responds with a smiley face, and Dean nearly dies in relief. He’s dizzy, his head hurts, and his stomach still claims to be empty. But at least he hasn’t fucked this up.

He sits there, getting himself back under control and honestly wondering if he ever will be again. This is so fucking weird. They gotta be better off going their separate ways, but…

But.

Before Dean can figure out the rest of that sentence, Cas says, I’m going to set up for work soon, but I can leave chat on.

Just like that, Dean has a very different sentence to figure out.

You wanna talk while you’re working???

It could be a slow night.

Okay, Dean sends back. He stares at the screen for what’s gotta be a long time, but Cas doesn’t respond further. Eventually, Dean shoves some more food down his throat and does the dishes. He showers. By the time he comes back to his computer, he’s got a few more messages from C. Novak.

So far, a very slow night.
Followed by: *We’re still on for tomorrow, right? What should I buy?*

And: *Dean?*

Dean sits down heavily and forces his fingers to type when all he wants to do is keep freezing. *Sorry, was afk. Still on for tomorrow, I’ll bring whatever and we can split the groceries if you want.*

Cas sends back a smiley face.

Dean chews on his lip. He stares down that smiley face like his eyeballs can interrogate it.

He asks, *Still a slow night?*

*3 min of work in an hour,* Cas answers.

*Wow.*

Cas answers with a -__- like it’s still the fucking nineties.

The conversation dies again.

Which shouldn’t be bad. Shouldn’t be weird. They’re good at silence. At least, they used to be.

Now, though…

*You offered to show me your setup,* Dean types and sends before he can think better of it. His heart subsequently attempts to explode. Or maybe it does, his entire chest abruptly too tight to contain it.

*Yes?*
I mean, if you’re not doing anything...

For an unreasonable length of time, C. Novak is typing. Then he’s no longer typing, only to be typing again.

Are you asking to come over tonight?

You sounded bored, Dean deflects. When C. Novak again is typing, Dean hurriedly types, Forget it, I can see whatever tomorrow.

Before he can send it, though, Cas answers, You’re certainly welcome to entertain me.

Dean hears static. He deletes his attempted message. He licks his lips.

Seriously?

When I get calls, I’d need you to go outside and pretend not to listen, Cas adds, much to Dean’s dick’s disappointment. I’m not sure I could work with you in the room.

I’ll be good, Dean promises by accident. The words sit there on the screen, already sent.

C. Novak types, and then he doesn’t, back and forth until he finally says, I know you will.

Dean slaps his laptop shut.

He puts his hands on his thighs and breathes and doesn’t touch his dick.

He gets up and has to adjust his pants, but he doesn’t touch his dick any more than that. Because that’s not what Cas meant. That’s what Jimmy would have meant, but that’s not real. Jimmy’s not real. This is Cas, he’s gotta expect Cas things. Like Cas showing him a homemade sound effects studio for porn noises, all while being completely serious and not even slightly embarrassed.
So Dean’s gonna look at that, and then they’re just gonna… hang out? Until Dean goes home. Because he’s not spending the night. He’s just going over.

He tells himself that while he changes his clothes, putting on his ass-hugging jeans, the tight black t-shirt under his red flannel, even his good work boots.

He keeps telling himself that the entire drive over. The snow’s picking up, but it’s not that bad.

He parks. He zips up his coat. He gets out and locks the car, checking each door with increasingly frozen hands.

He leaves footprints in the snow leading up to Cas’ front door. There’s one of those buzzer intercom things, but Dean texts instead.

*I’m here.*

A couple seconds later, the door buzzes, and Dean yanks it open just in time. He’s not sure where to go from there until Cas texts down the number and a simple line of instructions: *Don’t knock, I’ll open the door when I’m done with this call.*

Stomach flipping over, Dean heads on up. He climbs the stairs, but his heart stays somewhere around the ground floor. His eyes catch on a tiny plastic shoe, a lost piece of some kid’s Barbie, but the stairwell is quiet. No shrieks of kids being put to bed or resisting a bath. The liminal space turns the lack of noise into a font of tension, the prelude to another, much larger shoe dropping.

He checks his phone again before exiting onto the correct floor. He walks down a hallway with way fewer doors than expected. Big apartments. Family-sized, for people in their thirties who have their shit together.

With absolutely none of his shit together, Dean stands outside what his phone claims is the right door.

He doesn’t knock. Or lean, or pace.
He pockets his phone. Unzips his coat.

He stands there and fights the pressing need to flee. His muscles shake under his skin. His head reports exhaustion, his chest insists on adrenaline, and his hands fidget inside his coat pockets.

Very faintly, he thinks he hears footsteps through the door.

The door opens.

Cas.

Eyes wide, almost surprised.

A tiny smile, faint but present. Pleased.

“Hello, Dean,” Cas says, and Dean’s knees try to give out. Is this swooning? This might be what swooning is. Or maybe it’s another brand of panic attack. A little more detached. Out of body? Dissociating.

“Hi,” Dean manages in return, compulsively looking Cas over. A university t-shirt hugs Cas’ chest and upper arms. The sweatpants are an unexpected change, as are the bare feet that poke out beneath. But, really, taking the entire look in, there’s only one thing Dean can possibly say:

“What’s with the fanny pack?”

Cas blinks and looks down at himself as if having somehow forgotten the neon blue fanny pack hanging off him like the world’s ugliest belt buckle. Unzipped, it clearly contains nothing.

“Oh,” Cas says. “That’s a prop.”

Dean can’t often feel his own eyebrows, but something about them shooting up that fast makes him
hyper-aware of them. Or maybe that’s just Cas making him hyper-aware about all of his body. “Seriously?”

Moving back to make space, Cas gestures Dean inside. It should be enough. The space between them, that is. A totally normal, human amount of space for Dean to come through and for Cas to close the door behind him. And it’s a very usual, run-of-the-mill thing for a guy to lock his own door at night. Or whenever.

It’s a little less usual for Dean to be struck dumb by the sight of bare forearms.

It’s a lot less usual for Dean to be lusting over a man wearing a fanny pack.

He clears his throat, hard. “No, seriously, what’s with that thing?”

Cas looks him dead in the eyes and reaches down to his own crotch. To the fanny pack, really. Which just happens to be over Cas’ crotch. And without looking away from Dean for a single second, Cas slowly, achingly, zips the stupid thing closed with all the agonizing anticipation of a strip tease.

Dean’s mouth falls open. “Are you shitting me.”

Cas shrugs. “It’s the loudest zipper I could find. You can hang up your jacket.” He points at wooden pegs on the wall, and Dean abruptly finds himself already stripped out of his coat, just that hasty to comply. He hangs it up next to the familiar trench coat. He stamps his boots on the mat before remembering that people actually live downstairs.

Wincing, he says, “Sorry.”

Cas cocks his head to the side.

Now trying to wipe his feet like a normal person, Dean says, “Downstairs neighbors?”

“The soundproofing is very good,” Cas says. “Believe me, I’ve checked.”
Dean clears his throat as the reason why catches up with him. “Right.”

“You can take those off,” Cas says, indicating Dean’s boots.

“Right, yeah.” Dean kneels down.

Cas’ throat clicks.

Dean looks up.

And up.

Color rides high in Cas’ cheeks. A strong red flush under deep blue eyes, staring right back down.

Hands frozen on his icy laces, Dean swallows hard. His eyes dart down to that stupid fanny pack. He doesn’t mean to lick his lips. They’re dry, is all. Chapped. It’s fucking winter, give a guy a break.

Cas turns away with the gait of a man sporting the beginnings of a chubby. He scratches at his nape, and his t-shirt rises up, pulling beneath the strap and plastic clasp to reveal a glimpse of skin and spine. “You can- I should get back to my computer.” Cas points, but for once, Dean’s not staring at his hands. “Come in when you’re…”

“Yeah,” Dean says, tugging blindly on this shoelaces. “Yeah, I’ll- Yeah.”

“Good,” Cas says.

“Yeah,” Dean says.

Cas strides away quickly, his bare feet cushioned by a beige carpet once he passes the kitchenette. That’s how the apartment starts, kitchenette first, then long living room.
Dean makes himself focus on his goddamn boots and then he focuses on that. The space. The odd mix of IKEA and old furniture. Not old the way a lot of Dean’s crap is, though. Old the way heavy wooden furniture gets when it’s been in the family from move to move, not old like crap rescued off the curb on garbage day. Papers adorn every conceivable surface: a spread newspaper on the dining table, mail and coupons on the kitchenette counters, stapled essays on the coffee table before an immense TV.

And that’s not even getting into the bookshelves. The way some people decorate with paintings, Cas decorates with shelving.

Forcing himself not to stall, Dean stops scanning for titles and instead follows Cas’ path to the right, into a tiny cube of a hallway, big enough for three doors: bedroom, bathroom, office. Cas is in the office. Sort of a combo office and gym, actually, with a pull-up bar in the door and a purple yoga mat on the floor.

Cas sits at a truly impressive desk, big enough for his laptop off to the left, a landline off to the right with a wireless headset dropped on it, and a pair of immense binders in the middle. There’s a bunch of other crap too. Cas spins the chair around, moving with his arms as Dean enters on sock-clad feet.

“So…” Dean starts to say with no idea how to finish, or even how to middle.

“You wanted the sound effects tour?” Cas prompts.

“Yeah,” Dean says, hands in his jeans pockets. “Anything else as weird as the fanny pack?”

Cas gives him a look. “That’s fairly normal.”

Dean raises his eyebrows. “Compared to what?”

Cas bends over and reaches into what Dean had assumed was a trash bin. Except that would have meant two trash bins, but whatever, that’s not the thing to focus on here. Dean knows enough about gay sex for his dick to care about Cas holding a jumbo jar of Vaseline.

“Oh, okay,” Dean says, abruptly wishing he had a fanny pack too, or any other decent kind of crotch
Cas sets the jar down on his desk like a magician readying a trick. He pulls a towel out of the bin, too, and lays that across his lap. He picks back up the jar, uncaps it, and looks to make sure Dean’s watching.

Oddly entranced, Dean nods.

Using two fingers, Cas fingerfucks the jar.

It squelches. It squishes.

Dean lets out a strangled giggle of compromise between absurd arousal and incredulous hilarity. As Cas adjusts speed and number of fingers, it goes from sounding like fingers in a pussy to a dick up an ass.

When Cas stops, he primly puts the jar on the desk, wipes his hand off on the towel, and then caps the jar. He looks up at Dean with a tilted head and a bemused expression.

“Oh my fucking god,” Dean mutters.

Cas grins.

Dean ventures closer, looking down into what is now clearly the prop box. On top, there’s a single flip-flop and a rubber band ball. “How many of these do you have?”

Cas slaps the flip-flop against the desk with a fantastic cracking noise. “Spanking paddle.”

Cas snaps the rubber band ball. “Anything with straps.”

Deeper in the box, there’s one of those little pharmacy vibration massage things. “Vibrator,” Dean guesses easily.
All told, it’s a pretty small kit, and Cas goes through it way too quickly. The clicker, one of the dog-training kind, Dean remembers all too intimately. Dean leans his hip against the desk, knows he’s standing too close, and can’t stop. “What’s, uh.” His voice sticks in his throat when Cas looks up from reorganizing his prop box. “What’s with the binders?” He nods down to the hefty pair on the desk.

“Reference materials,” Cas answers. He points to the one on the right. “This one you can look at.” He points to the one on the left. “This one, you can’t.”

“How come?” The one on the left is way bigger.

“Because,” Cas starts to say, only to be interrupted by a ding from his laptop. “One second.” He clears the screen saver—assorted stock photos of wildlife, nothing like Dean’s loop of family pics—and enlarges a chat screen from one corner. “Sorry, I’ve…”

“No, it’s okay,” Dean immediately says, pushing off from the desk with a casualness he doesn’t remotely feel.

“No, wait.”

Cas’ fingers brush Dean’s sleeve.

Dean turns at the touch.

Steadily looking up at him, Cas says, “You could stay for this one, if you wanted.”

“I- what?”

“It’s the man who steals cell phones in his assisted living complex,” Cas quickly explains. “It’s not actually sexual. He wants me to tell stories sometimes, but no one orgasms.”

A few more dings from Cas’ chat window.
Cas turns back to type a confirmation before picking up the wireless headset beside the landline and turning it on. He looks up at Dean again. “You don’t have to stay, but it’ll be a very long wait if you go.” With one hand, he types something else into the laptop, then flips open the binder on the left, jumping all the way down to an orange sticky note.

Despite the instruction not to, Dean looks. Dean reads.

Name, approximate age, physical description, relationships, which persona Cas uses for him: a list like a letterhead, all filled out. And below, bullet points of stories written in Cas’ familiar handwriting.

The landline rings, Cas presses a button on the headset, and a rougher, dryer voice than Dean’s used to hearing out of Cas says, “Hello, Herbert.”

Whatever Herbert says in response, Dean hears only as a slight buzz of noise. Or maybe that’s just the sound in his own ears. Stay or go?

Licking his lips again, Dean risks putting a hand on Cas’ shoulder. He points at himself with the other, then points down. You want me to stay? he mouths.

Cas nods like he means it.

Pulse thundering, Dean nods back.

“I’m doing very well, thank you,” Cas announces to this alleged Herbert, his own posture changing. Cas sits differently, taller despite the way he leans. “But you’re right, it is my last night. I wanted to make it special, so I brought a friend along. Is that all right?” Throughout, he keeps his eyes on Dean. He nods. “Good. I’m going to put you on speaker.” Cas reaches over to press a button on the landline.

“-kind of friend?” asks an old man who sounds like an anti-smoking ad.

“A friend from college,” Cas says, apparently having heard the full question. He gives the tiniest of shrugs at Dean, as if to point out that this isn’t a lie.
“But not your boyfriend?” Herbert asks pointedly.

Looking down at the open binder, Cas clears his throat. “Michael, why don’t you say hello.”

“Hi, Herb,” Dean says, not doing much better.

“Hi there, Mikey,” Herbert says right back. “You two having yourselves some fun tonight?”

“You know it,” Dean announces to the landline. His hand comes down on the back of Cas’ chair, his thumb accidentally skimming against Cas’ shoulder through his t-shirt. He’s hot. His skin, that is. Through the t-shirt. Cas is hot despite the t-shirt. Or, uh.

Dean would turn his brain off here, but it’s obvious that it’s already gone and done that on its own.

“You and Steve, just friends?” Herbert keeps asking like some kind of prying grandpa.

“Michael, why don’t you get a chair,” Cas prompts, clearly regretting this decision as much as Dean is.

“Right, yeah.”

He’s not even gone thirty seconds, but Cas looks surprised when Dean comes back, hefting a kitchen chair in front of him like a shield. He sets it down on Cas’ left, in front of the phone and its speaker, wincing at Cas’ extremely awkward attempt to explain their relationship as It’s Complicated, a la Facebook.

“I’m new to the whole liking dick thing,” Dean interrupts. “So we’re kinda figuring it out, taking it slow. Right?”

“Right,” Cas confirms gratefully. “Herbert, I thought Michael might benefit from knowing more of our history.”
“Oh, am I history now?” Herbert asks. “Am I that ancient?”

“You’re the oldest person I know to have thrown a pair of high heels at a policeman’s head,” Cas answers.

“What, wait?” Dean asks. Cas nods confirmation. “Okay, I need this story now.”

Herbert tells that story. Then he backtracks and tells another, waxing poetic about old music halls and showtunes and group sing-a-longs around pianos, each queen trying to out-diva the next. He talks about being the quiet boy in the corner, a wallflower among sunflowers. He tells them about old friends and jumps story to story in a way that has Dean lost but Cas nodding along. Regardless of the continuity, the man is dark chocolate bitter and bitingly funny.

At one point, maybe twenty minutes in, Herbert cuts off, shushes them, and then there’s an abrupt rustling noise followed by silence. Cas immediately hits a mute button on the landline.

“He might have been caught,” Cas explains. “The staff knows to search him whenever a phone goes missing.”

“This guy is amazing,” Dean says, unable to stop grinning. “Kinda confused why he doesn’t call for nookie, but hey, whatever works.”

“I think he’s asexual,” Cas says with a slight squint for emphasis.

Dean snorts. “Doesn’t sound it to me.”

Cas looks at him with the facial equivalent of a deadpan.

“What?”

“How about you teach my class for a semester, and then you can define asexuality for me,” Cas says.

Dean holds up both hands. “Fine, teach me your gay ways, Master Yoda.”
Cas rolls his eyes with enough bitchiness for an entire swamp of muppets, but there’s another rustling from the landline before he can say anything.

“I think I’m in the clear,” Herbert says. “Just an old man yammering to himself, that’s me. How about you boys handle the conversation while I pretend I was ranting to the TV.”

“Whose phone is it today?” Cas asks.

“Short Matthew,” Herbert answers with a relish not even his smoker’s rasp can taint. “He was telling Carla to go back to Mexico again.”

Cas leans forward, lifting one page of his notes to reveal yet another. He could probably fill a whole library on this guy alone. “Isn’t she from Puerto Rico?”

“If he was a smart man, I wouldn’t be able to steal his phone so often,” Herbert replies.

Cas laughs, stretching out the sound in a way that’s somehow both deliberate and sincere. Dean catches himself looking at Cas, his mouth and his throat and the flash of his teeth. Over the line, he can practically hear Herbert preening under the attention, the implied praise, and, okay, Dean more than kind of gets why Herbert’s calling without asking for the obvious benefits.

Plus, it’s probably pretty awkward to be caught whacking off when people come to recover their stolen phones.

“I’m going to miss our talks,” Cas says, addressing the landline and absolutely sincere. In voice. In face.

Dean doesn’t just buy it. Dean believes it.

Believes Cas.

“You still there, Mikey?” Herbert prompts. “Been quiet.”
“Huh? Yeah, I’m, I’m here.” He lifts his chin out of his hand, shifts his elbow on the back of the kitchen chair where he sits sideways. He tries to make himself stop staring so hard, but Cas has his own personal gravity that keeps pulling Dean in to focus on him. “Just drifting off for a sec.”

“You gonna let an old man wear you out that easy?”

Cas makes a noise of disbelief. “Herbert, you talk until phone batteries die.”

“Stevie, if your boy got less stamina than a battery, you might as well go and get yourself a vibrator.”

Dean’s mouth falls open, his brain too incredulous to register offense.

Cas, on the other hand, calmly thrusts one hand down into the prop box and pulls out the personal massager. He flicks it on and off for a series of rhythmic buzzes. “Already did,” he tells Herbert with the pride of a truly terrible joke.

Herbert laughs hard, but immediately begins coughing. He wheezes his way through a strained recovery, and Dean knows it’s serious by the way Cas abruptly sits at attention. Once Herbert’s breathing steadies out, his rasp turns even worse.

“Think I might not outlast this battery, myself,” Herbert admits. “Go on, one of you talk.”

For some reason, Cas looks at Dean, as if Dean might possibly jump on that grenade.

With an impatient sigh, Herbert asks, “Stevie, what’s your boy look like?”

Dean raises an eyebrow at Cas.

Answering the challenge, Cas confidently tells the landline, “A decade ago, I would have called him a twink.”
Dean chokes on his own spit. “Hey, screw you.”

“You are very pretty, Michael,” Cas points out. Just, just fucking says it. Right to Dean’s face. “You’re too muscular now to be a twink, though. I give it another decade before you go from beautiful to handsome.”

Dean’s goddamn face is on fire.

“You, uh, you’re...” Dean catches himself in time and just barely avoids accusing Cas of being beautiful.

“He blushes very well, too,” Cas adds to the landline, his expression dead serious and his eyes alight with the joy of being a complete fucking asshole. He looks back to Dean and, with an unbelievable confidence, continues to say, “It brings out the green in his eyes. Not that they need the help. They pop even more than his freckles.”

“Shut the fuck up,” Dean mutters.

Herbert starts laughing again, and Cas looks abruptly concerned for a couple of reasons. But Herbert doesn’t start coughing again and Dean tries to shrug it off.

“It surprises me,” Cas continues after a moment. “For someone so aware of how good-looking he is, Michael is very reluctant to take a compliment.”

“ Heard it too much?” Herbert suggests. “Or too little.”

“Girls don’t really, uh,” Dean tries to say.

“Too little,” Herbert and Cas agree in unison.

“You should work on that,” Herbert adds to Cas. “Short Matthew can pay for me to listen.”

“If you don’t mind, I’d rather do that in private,” Cas replies.
Herbert lets out a cackle and a wolf whistle, followed almost immediately by the sound of a door opening and the rasping words “Oh shit.”

Someone shouts “Hey!” and the call abruptly ends.

Dean exhales hard. Technically, it comes out like a laugh. One slow “heh” followed by another. His eyes directed forward, Dean avoids looking at Cas as long as he can.

“Sorry,” Cas says quietly.

Dean looks—Dean has to look—and it’s just Cas again. The slightly altered posture, the extra and absurd levels of confidence; those are gone. No more Steve. “You got into it,” Dean makes himself say. “It happens.”

Cas looks at Dean like he’s being an idiot, and that’s way more like it. “Yes,” Cas says plainly, never so much as glancing away. “I got very into it.”

Dean swallows hard, and Cas’ eyes drop to his throat.

At some point, Dean’s knee started to press into the side of Cas’ thigh.

At some point, Dean twisted almost entirely in his chair toward the other man.

At some point, a lot of things happened.

With a tiny, forced cough, Cas pulls away. He reaches for the binder on the left, flips forward to a blue post-it, and pops the three-ring clasp. He pulls out every piece of lined paper until the next post-it, and he hands these to Dean.

“Thought I wasn’t supposed to read from that one,” Dean says.
“These are yours,” Cas says, pushing the papers into his hands. Quick about it, he turns his head and types something into the chat on his laptop. His shoulders rise. Just a hair of a hunch, but they do.

Dean looks down at the pages. The lines and the scrawl. Crossed out words and added sticky notes.

“Oh,” he says.

Name: Michael
Age: 30s
Appearance: white, brunet
Persona used: James, Jimmy James while Domming, Jimmy for conversation and yellow, Jimbo for red
Relations: uncle, brother (Sammy), father deceased
Orientation: bicurious? Bi

Encourage: confidence. Self-care.

There’s more details, more notes to himself written in different colors and thicknesses of ink, so much information accrued over time. After that, the play-by-play begins and continues over to the next page. Dean scans down what’s essentially an itemized list of everything they’ve done together. Of everything he’s done with Jimmy.

After each, there’s a little write up. A note of what not to do. A mention of what to do more. A reminder of what else “Michael” showed interest in or what Cas promised to do the next week.

“Oh,” Dean says again.

“I don’t want you worried about me having that,” Cas explains, stubbornly trying to catch his eye. “You can take it, or I can put it in the shredder. That’s where the rest are going.”
Biting his lip, staring hard at the notes, Dean keeps going, flipping over pages until he reaches the last one. *Fantasies/games*, reads the underlined header, and very few suggestions beneath are actually crossed off.

Dean looks up at Cas. “What’s with the list?”

Cas points at the binder on the right. “It’s alphabetized by category.”

Frowning but curious, Dean folds Cas’ book report on him in half and sticks the pages under the landline, freeing up his hands to pull over the binder. He opens it in his lap, and *holy shit*. Just thumbing through the tabs on the side, it goes all the way from ageplay to yiff, whatever that last one is. Some of the pages are print-outs with a three-hole-punch. A surprising number are handwritten. Even on the print-outs, there’s a bunch of handwritten notes, little things like *pause here* and *repeat*.

Just skimming through, Dean’s neck and ears start heating up. The weight of the binder on his thighs increases, like it’s sticking to his jeans with warmth.

Cas clears his throat. “It’s been a full year. I had to find a way of preventing repeats.”

Dean clears his throat right back. “Yeah, no, makes sense.”

Their legs are very nearly touching. Their shoulders.

Swallowing hard, Dean grabs that last page of his personal packet. “Do you mind if I…?”

His eyes as open and vulnerable as the rest of his face, Cas gestures for him to go ahead. Like Dean could actually go ahead and read this with Cas right there, looking at him.

He skims the list, stalling by trying to go alphabetically. “...Cock warming?”

“Orally, as a transition to blow jobs,” Cas explains, somehow not embarrassed.
Despite himself, Dean has to ask. “How would that have gone?”

Cas gives him a look. “You can check the binder, or I can bill you five dollars to explain.”

Dean’s laugh surprises them both. “Okay, fair.” He flips over to C and keeps going way, way past the CBT portion. Jarringly, the cock warming page is just that: a single page. And written entirely by hand.

For months, Cas’ voice has been his handwriting. Jimmy’s the one with the voice—with too many voices—but the abrupt combination of the two smacks Dean upside the head and below the belt. He can hear Jimmy while he reads. He can see Cas in every letter.

... on your knees. Should I put you under my desk? Or put you on display in front of my armchair? [pause] Good choice. Make sure you’re comfortable, you’re going to be down there awhile. [area detail] Relax your jaw. You’re going to take me soft now. Don’t suck, don’t pull. Just open your mouth and let me inside. Use your thumb and your imagination...

...pet your hair, is that all right? Good boy...

...keeping you like this. You feel so good around me...

Dean’s erection pokes up against the binder. His color is high, his breathing shallow. “Did you, uh.” He licks his lips. Looks at Cas who’s sitting there, waiting for judgment. “Is this one just for me?”

Cas nods.

Slowly, giving Cas every opportunity to stop him, Dean pops open the three-ring clasp and pulls out the sheet. He folds it and adds it to his packet under the landline. Out of the corner of his eye, he looks back at Cas, looks up the line of his torso until he reaches the tension of Cas’ mouth.

Dean clears his throat. “Would you ever...”

“Yes.”
“Yeah?”

“Yes,” Cas confirms, voice even deeper than his eyes. His mouth is... Well, it’s right fucking there. And then Cas reaches for Dean’s lap.

For the binder.

On Dean’s lap.

Right over his boner.

Cas hooks a finger into the G tab. Dean helps turn the not-insubstantial amount of paper.

“Games?” Dean reads aloud. In his periphery, he sees Cas nod, but he’s too focused on the section’s table of contents to look away. Some are self-apparent, like *Red Light, Green Light* and *Master May I*. Others aren’t, and those have short descriptions.

“Dean?” Cas prompts.

“Mm?” Dean hums, still reading.

“I’m getting another call,” Cas says, and oh, yeah. There was that pinging noise from the laptop. Somehow, Dean hadn’t heard it over the heartbeat in his ears. “It’s a repeat, generally short, but I’d appreciate it if you waited in the kitchen or bathroom.”

“I mean, I could go,” Dean offers, not moving.

Cas types something into his laptop, hits enter with an authoritative index finger, and puts his headset on to cover only one of his ears. “Or you could stay,” he says, still looking at the laptop screen.

“I can stay,” Dean says. “I’ll go, um.” He jerks his thumb over his shoulder. “Bathroom?”
Cas nods. “Can I have that back?” He indicates the binder. The one hiding Dean’s erection.

“Oh, yeah.” Dean closes the binder, grabs his papers, and engages in a painfully blatant hand-off. He stands, putting himself behind the slats of the kitchen chair instead of brushing up against Cas’ side. Or worse, grinding against him on the way past.

Dean scurries away and closes the bathroom door securely behind him, but he can still hear Jimmy—and it is Jimmy, that original, higher voice—croon, “Oh, baby.” Brain fizzling, knees weak, Dean slaps a hand down on the counter. His ears strain, tracking Cas’ abrupt transition to mid-porno, and then he saves himself from his own libido by turning the sink on full blast.

He sits on the closed toilet lid, hunched over his own dick like a stomach ache of arousal. Because he’s weak, so fucking weak, he unfolds his personal pages and reads the list of games and fantasies. At the very bottom, there are assignments instead. Things like do something you’ve been putting off. Things like Tell me three things you’ve always wanted to do, and do one this week.

Another reads, Find a man you want to fuck.

Shying away from that, Dean skips back up to the games. Some are checked off, like dogging. Some aren’t, like push-up challenge. Dean immediately has a flashback to that praise porn, men in suits openly lusting over the naked man doing push-ups in front of them.

He licks his lips and adjusts his pants. The rush of the sink’s starting to make him need to pee: just a bit of a problem with an erection this hard. He risks turning down the tap, only to immediately hear a rising litany of “fuck me, yeah, fuck me” from the other room.

Maybe… maybe Dean can take the edge off. He’s probably got a couple minutes left. He’s got the sink masking his noises. Plus Cas has the headset on.

Like the goddamn idiot he is, Dean’s standing, his folded pages set on top of the Sudoku book on the back of the toilet. He’s got the lid up, his belt unfastened, his fly unzipped. He is actually, insanely about to do this, listening to Jimmy let out these keening grunts of being well and truly fucked.

The grunts cut out.
It’s abrupt.

Instant.

And then Dean hears Cas deadpan, “Goodbye to you too.”

Just like that. On, then off again.

“Dean?” Cas calls. “You can come back in.”

Dick in hand, Dean shouts the first excuse he can think of. “I’m doing your Sudoku!” he calls back, wincing even as he says it.

“You can bring it!”

Dean tucks himself away as fast as possible, turns off the faucet, and grabs the book and his papers. The embarrassment should be a boner-killer.

*Should* be.

Somehow isn’t.

Dean comes back inside the office, and there’s Cas. Still sitting there. Still being Cas. Not even pink in the face, for all he was just moaning to be fucked up the ass by a big, thick cock.

Walking back around the yoga mat, Dean returns to his seat. The Sudoku book’s a decent shield, and at least there’s a pen stuck inside between the pages. But because Dean’s just doomed like that, Cas’ eyes are immediately drawn to the book, and therefore Dean’s crotch, prompting Dean to hurriedly point anyfuckingwhere else with his free hand. “What’s, what’s with the yoga mat? This your workout room too?”

“In part,” Cas says, eyes maybe just a little bit darker than Dean remembers. “It also helps with the grunting.”
“With what now?”

“I need to make certain noises. Push-ups and crunches help. Sometimes I use the chin-up bar.”

That does explain the unreasonably toned arms. “Cool,” Dean says, an absolute filler sound. “So you don’t do yoga.”

“No, I do.”

“Awesome,” Dean makes the mistake of saying aloud.

Cas looks at him inquisitively. “Do you?”

“No.” He just likes the thought of Cas being flexible. And then he immediately needs a way less sexy thought. He finds it. “I think Sam does.”

“Oh.”

They sit there for about five seconds. On some unspoken cue, they both look to Cas’ laptop, where there is absolutely no notification of another caller.

Dean endures it maybe ten seconds more before taking the plunge and admitting, “I don’t know how to talk to you in person.”

Cas shakes his head. “I’m always this awkward,” he explains, as certain as he is comfortable with it.

A laugh chokes Dean like an unexpected hiccup. “You’re really not, dude.”

Cas doesn’t look remotely convinced.
“Look, I’m tired as fuck, and we only ever talk about sex stuff,” Dean says, glossing over the recovery from his hangover bit.

“That’s not true,” Cas says. “We also talk about gender presentation.”

“I… have no idea what that means.”

Cas responds by pulling up a new tab on his laptop and navigating a string of folders on his bookmark bar. He does it too quick for Dean to read them all, but it’s not entirely a surprise when a familiar website fills the screen. “A man expressing himself through satin and lace,” Cas continues, as matter-of-fact as if giving a lecture in class. “That’s an example of gender presentation. The same as your jacket or my suits.”

“Right,” Dean says, somehow managing around the tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. The panties taunt him from the laptop screen, so soft and shimmery on the close-up of the male model’s crotch. And Cas is still just sitting there, like he has no idea what he’s just done to Dean, how badly he’s short-circuited the last functioning piece of Dean’s brain.

Then, very faintly, Cas smirks.

Mentally unable to touch Cas directly, Dean smacks him on the shoulder with the Sudoku book.

Cas smirks wider.

“You’re a fucking asshole,” Dean tells him.

“Do you want me to keep Domming you?” Cas asks, as if the question could logically follow.

Dean can’t meet his eyes.

“I’d like to,” Cas continues calmly. If he’s still smirking, it doesn’t touch his voice. “If you don’t want to or can’t ask for it, we obviously won’t. But I thought I should ask before-” For the first time, Cas hesitates.
Eyebrow raised, Dean looks at him.

“I like to make plans,” Cas tells him. “I like clear directions and expectations. It’s one of the things that makes me a very choosy sub and a very communicative Dom.”

“You’re asking before, before what?” Dean prompts. “Before your next call, before we date, before what?”

“Before tomorrow. Unless you’re intending a purely platonic baking session.”

“A...” The pie-baking had entirely flown out of Dean’s head. Hell, little facts like what day it was kept floating away. He may have slept through most of it, but it’s still Saturday. It’s not that late either, no matter how much his body keeps telling him he’s running on fumes and Cas-induced adrenaline.

“Are you?” Cas asks, taking a turn for the tentative.

Dean desperately smashes his last two brain cells together in the hopes of creating a spark. “What, what d’you wanna do?”

“I’d like to kiss you, at the very least,” Cas states. Plainly. Openly. Directly to Dean’s face.

Dean licks his lips, his eyes dropping to Cas’ mouth. “Yeah.” He swallows hard, forcing down the roughness in his throat, pushing past the sense of something monumental that wants to keep pressing up behind his teeth and threatening to ride out on any thoughtless word. “Yeah, okay.”

“Do you want me to kiss you?” Cas asks, too sincere to be baiting him.

Dean keeps nodding. He leans in, twisted in his chair to do it, and Cas’ hand comes up, two fingers brushing up the side of Dean’s face until they reach Dean’s temple—and gently push, turning Dean’s face aside.
The way Cas leans forward in return transforms the motion into anything but a rebuff, Cas’ breath hot on his ear as he softly asks, “Can you wait for me? Until I’m finished working? I don’t... I’m not sure if I would be able to switch back and forth.”

A full-body shiver shakes through Dean. It rattles him, mentally, physically. Every part of him. He drops the stupid Sudoku book on the floor when he should be calling Cas a fucking tease.

“Dean?”

“’m good,” Dean mumbles, eyes closed, his skin tight as it strains for any touch. The side of Cas’ knee pressed against his own. The fingers on his face. The air on his ear. Anything, anything Cas. “Thought you weren’t gonna Dom the shit out of me yet, though.”

Cas’ nose brushes the curve of Dean’s ear as he whispers, “Do you like it?”

Eyes still closed, Dean takes a shuddering breath. He nods just to get more contact.

“Do you like it enough to keep going?”

“God, yeah,” Dean breathes out, a reflex of the mouth.

Very possibly, Cas nudges the tiniest of kisses against Dean’s ear. Or maybe that’s an accident. Or maybe it doesn’t fucking matter. Dean’s frozen and waiting and thrumming, and Cas is barely doing anything, him and his magic goddamn voice.

Slowly, drawing it out, Cas asks him, “Do you like it enough not to come tonight?”

The noise that escapes Dean’s lips is nothing short of humiliating. He starts to twist away on instinct, but Cas follows. Cas presses in, Cas presses his mouth to Dean’s ear, and he rumbles “Good boy” deeper than Dean’s ever heard it out of him.

Dean makes a second, possibly even more embarrassing noise, and this time Cas murmurs, “Such a good boy.” And it is a kiss now, a solid kiss against Dean’s ear.
Pulse high, breathing shallow, Dean can’t move. He can’t even open his eyes. In the dark, it’s Jimmy and easy. When he sees Cas, it’s real and impossible and too hard and fucking insane. So he keeps his eyes shut and tries not to explode from the tiniest pieces of contact. Their legs press tighter. Dean’s hands grip his own thighs.

Cas’ hand moves to the back of Dean’s neck and squeezes. Dean’s chin jerks up, following the abrupt rise of his shoulders. Even as his shoulders relax back down, his chin remains lifted, his throat bared to the desk, his profile on display for Cas.

Gently, gradually, Cas squeezes, the tiniest of neck massages. One kind of tension drains out of Dean, immediately replaced by another.

Distantly, through a dully roaring fog, it occurs to Dean that the heavy breathing he’s hearing isn’t his own.

He blinks his eyes open, the lids heavy and fighting to fall back shut. For just a second, he risks a glimpse of Cas…

...only to stare, transfixed.

“You’re beautiful,” Cas murmurs, awed.

Somehow, Dean’s body locates some extra blood not already dedicated to his dick and uses it to set his cheeks on fire.

“You don’t like that,” Cas notes in the same tone. “That’s fine.”

Acutely aware of the hand behind his nape, of the thumb and fingers framing his neck, Dean swallows. “I, um…”

“Do you like it?”
There’s no judgment in the question, only need, and that’s how Dean can allow himself to nod.

Cas strokes Dean’s pulse with the pad of his thumb. “You’re always so beautiful,” Cas continues, voice as soft and firm as his hand. “I’ve been distracted for months, Dean. I’d be trying to document the changes in my own sexuality, and you’d sit down in front of me. Do you know how hard it was to be analytical? To try to be objective with you right there?”

Dean will claim it’s a prompting noise he means to make. Definitely not some little, self-satisfied moan.

“Tonight’s data is going to be so skewed,” Cas says, almost directly into Dean’s ear. “But...”

“Do you care?” Dean asks lowly, leaning into him: his voice, his presence, his everything.

“Not if you want to keep playing. I can’t—it’s too intimate—I can’t switch from kissing to phone work, but I can, we can, we’ve already played a lot, maybe we could...”

“Yes,” Dean gasps, somehow keeping his hands to himself, and not on himself. “What do I, it’s not ‘James,’ what do I...?”

“Castiel for full compliance,” Cas instructs. “Cas for negotiation. Cassie for when you want to stop.”

“Castiel,” Dean says immediately. Such a fucking mouthful, such a pleasure on the tongue. “Castiel.”

Castiel rips himself away with a solid, heartfelt “Fuck.”

Dean’s neck goes cold, his entire body, as his eyes snap open. “What-”

What did I do wrong now?

But that’s not what’s happening here. One look at Cas, and that’s not the question Dean needs to ask. There’s no question Dean needs to ask, no fucking words to say at all, because there’s Cas,
visibly straining, visibly trying to calm himself down.

“I’ve had you like this,” Cas realizes, the words trapped between accusation and awe. “Multiple times.” Fists atop his thighs, his forearms frame that stupid fucking fanny pack. The fanny pack that’s been pushed up from below, tilted off to the side by tented gray sweatpants. “I’ve heard you come. I’ve made you come.”

“Just realizing that, Casanova?” Dean responds, and it’s not entirely a joke, not with how stunned Cas looks.

“It’s...” Cas clears his throat, but his voice only deepens. “Retroactive arousal is very strange.”

“No shit.”

Cas looks at him properly. Thoroughly. His eyes linger on Dean’s face and his crotch and his hands. “You haven’t tried to touch me.”

“You, uh.” Fuck, his mouth is so dry. “You haven’t told me I can.”

“Are you talking about consent? Or orders?”

Trying to look anywhere but that neon blue fanny pack and the bulge beneath, Dean licks his lips. “Yes?”

Cas pulls in a hard breath through his nose. He lifts one hand, reaches, and Dean leans into it like the pathetic dog he is. Gets that hand back on his neck, gets short fingernails scratching against his scalp. Cas strokes up to the top of Dean’s head, and he fists his fingers in Dean’s hair where it’s long enough.

It’s not a tug, not a pull. It’s a long, slow draw of tension. Dean sits there like an idiot, making some dumbass sound just from that, from baring his neck and having Cas watch him like a prize.

“You really are my good boy,” Cas murmurs, marveling at him.
There’s nothing Dean can say. There’s nothing Dean wants to say.

He only wants to stay there, just like this, Cas looking at him just like that.

They hold position. Their breathing syncs. With undeserved wonder in his eyes, Cas twists his hand, gradually tilting Dean this way and that. Inspecting him. Approving of him.

Time passes. It might not, but Dean thinks it does. It has to be a long moment, too monumental to be a short one.

When it comes, the notification noise from the laptop feels inevitable.

Cas closes his eyes. He exhales. He looks at Dean again before letting him go.

“Looks like I gotta go to the bathroom,” Dean jokes weakly.

“The shower mat,” Cas says, still looking at him just the same.

“What?”

“The mat in front of the shower,” Cas says, like he thinks maybe Dean’s confused about non-slip surfaces. “Kneel on it.”

Dean stares at him. His pride has one answer, his dick another.

“I won’t check on you. Go.” Cas leans down, grabs the dropped Sudoku book off the floor, and holds it out.

Dean takes it.
“Dean?” Cas prompts.

“Yes, Castiel,” Dean says.

A smile pulls at the corner of Cas’ mouth as he turns back to the laptop and grabs his headset.

Dean goes to the bathroom, shuts the door, and sits on the toilet. He puts the Sudoku back, its pen now lost somewhere under Cas’ desk. He looks down at the shower mat with a roiling tightness in his stomach.

It’s fluffy. White. Looks soft, unlike the rest of the linoleum floor.

Through the door, through the wall, Cas’ voice is a low rumble. The words are vague, the tone unmistakable.

Dean did that.

Dean got him there.

By doing nothing. By holding still. By just… letting Cas play with his hair, basically.

Dean did that.

He kneels on the shower mat.

He kneels tall. He sits on his heels. He shifts and curls his toes, feeling his legs fighting to fall asleep. And all the while, his ears strain for what has to be a litany of filth.

It’s over soon. Too soon? Long enough.

He comes out walking a little stiff when Cas calls, and Cas fucking beams at him like Dean’s a wet
dream come true. Sitting in the chair again is abruptly strange, the yoga mat newly compelling. If Cas liked it so much when he couldn’t even see it…

Another call comes in too quickly, but it also ends too quickly. All told, Dean kneels in the bathroom four times before Castiel asks him to get them both water. Dean downs an entire glass in the kitchen, his body reminding him about stupid things like dehydration and exhaustion and getting wasted just last night over this guy.

He brings back two full glasses. It must be the signal for some kind of break, because Cas starts in on their plans for tomorrow. Which pies Dean makes for his family, what kinds Cas’ might go for. A grocery list for baking supplies. The horrifying revelation that Cas owns a grand total of zero pie tins and has no idea whether his oven bakes evenly.

“Maybe we should do this at my place,” Dean says.

“That might be for the best,” Cas agrees. “Drive me home after?”

Dean pretends to reread the grocery list. “Like, right after?”

“Not immediately after. Just… after.”

“After,” Dean repeats.

Cas looks at him. It’s a hell of a look. Restrained lust and careful eagerness. Hands and hopes kept to himself, but only barely.

Dean catches himself licking his lips only because Cas’ eyes drop to watch his mouth. “I mean, we, uh. Gotta wait for stuff to cool and all.”

Cas nods, momentarily baring the stubble of his neck, the scruff of his jaw.

“Or you could-”
The laptop pings, immediately wresting Cas’ attention away. He types something rapidly.

Stay over, Dean doesn’t finish. Instead, he starts to stand.

Cas catches him, a light touch on the forearm. “Dean, can I ask you a favor? It’s all right to say no.”

“Okay,” Dean says, frowning.

“This caller has a humiliation kink,” Cas begins, and Dean nearly taps out there and then. Except Cas is looking up at him all hopeful, stroking his thumb up and down Dean’s forearm, and maybe Dean’s brain stops working despite the sleeve separating their skin. “Normally, I don’t enjoy these calls, but I think you’d change that. It’s not a persona I would ever use with you, not the way I usually use it, but I-”

“What do you want me to do?” Dean interrupts.

“I want to praise you at his expense,” Cas explains. “I’d tell him his call is part of our scene. That you’re keeping me entertained. You wouldn’t have to actually do anything.”

If Dean’s not doing anything, why have him stay? It’s the obvious question, but the way Cas is still looking at him, Dean has his obvious answer.

Dean sits back down. “Yeah. Okay.”

Cas searches his face, then nods. “Okay.” He puts on the headset and thumbs through his binder of people. He flips through the porn prompt binder too, but even once he’s found whatever it is he’s looking for, he still doesn’t touch the landline or the laptop. “You’ll be Michael, but the persona I use for Owen is Lucien. If you need to leave, tap me anywhere three times and I’ll make your excuse. Do you understand?”

Maybe someday, Dean will be able to hear that question again without getting hard. Today is definitely not that day.

He nods.
Cas nods back. Then he pinches his nose like he has a headache and hums, going up a scale. He says “Hello” a few times in a voice Dean’s never heard out of him before, as high as Jimmy but nowhere near as light. This is more pinched, more nasal. Infinitely more judgmental, just in a single word.

And then he looks at Dean, as Cas as he gets, and says in that new voice, “Don’t laugh.”

Dean salutes like the smart ass he is, Cas rolls his eyes in true Cas fashion, and the call begins.

“Back again, are we,” Cas drawls like he just found a mouse in his kitchen or gum under his shoe. It’s jarring enough that Dean has to do a double-take, but Cas responds with a light, fleeting touch to Dean’s thigh.

The other side of the conversation is too quiet to hear, but just Cas’ side of it is quickly enough to make that shower mat extremely inviting.

“Yeah, yeah, I don’t care,” Cas says in response to whatever the guy says. “Tell me how you’re going to put yourself together after I break you.” Listening, his face entirely at odds with his voice, Cas reaches for his pen. He uncaps it, starts to write something on his binder, and then stops. He puts the pen back down and looks at Dean as if to say, Final night, I don’t need to take notes on him anymore.

“Mm, that’ll do,” Cas tells the caller. “Now go to your kitchen and kneel.” Cas cocks his head, listening, and Dean knows him well enough by now to know Cas’ resulting exasperation isn’t feigned.

“Is your wife out of the building or not?” Cas snaps, holy shit.

Distantly, Dean feels his own mouth fall open. Cas just nods at him.

“Are you going to kneel, or are you not worth my time?” Cas says, eyes on the binder, clearly talking over the other guy. Another pause. “Better. Before you kneel, open and close the fridge so I can hear it. I wouldn’t need proof with a sub I trusted, but here we are.”

Cas looks over at Dean, and his voice changes. Not in pitch or timbre, but in tone. “Michael, get a
cup of ice. From the fridge door is fine.”

Dean points to himself.

Cas nods before rolling his eyes at something the caller says. “I know you’re not Michael. I was talking to my actual sub. Michael, say hello.”

Standing, Dean says, “Hi.”

The way Cas looks up at him is entirely undeserved. As if one fucking word could ever deserve that much praise.

Dean works his mouth and asks, “More water while I’m up?”

Handing Dean his mostly empty glass, Cas says to the caller, “He’s very thoughtful like that. But I don’t hear you moving.”

Dean gets the water and ice. He returns and hands both glasses to Cas, but he doesn’t sit back down. Should he? Would Michael be kneeling?

“Thank you, Michael,” Cas says, turning those cold tones warm. “I’m giving him the ice challenge you did so well at. Do you want to compete, or do you want to be my little cock warmer?”

Ice challenge? Dean might not know what that is, but he definitely knows how to play along. “I thought I wasn’t allowed to come tonight.”

Cas swivels his chair, almost lounging as he looks up at Dean. It’s pretty good character acting, but it’s the eye contact that fucking kills him. “Dealing with this idiot made me reassess. You do deserve a treat. You can come, or you can suck my cock. Pick one.”

Dean’s body might be frozen, but it’s still on fire.

Cas waves his hand as if to negate everything he’s said. Like he thinks he’s pushed Dean too far.
“I wanna suck your cock,” Dean tells him, right to his face. He swallows hard, tells himself he’s playing it up. “Please.”

Cas stares up at him. For just a second, his mouth works. “Then get into position. Don’t get me off until I’m done with this.” Though Cas points down at the yoga mat behind Dean, the tilt of Cas’ head is an entirely different question. *Are you all right with this?*

“Yes, Lucien,” Dean says, kneeling with much more grace than he would have just yesterday. The power of practice.

Hell, the power of submission. The look on Cas’ face as Dean sinks down. Cas goes so far through hope, he comes out the other side, devastated by disbelief.

Dean nods. Dean wets his lips and tears his eyes away from the wreck he’s turned Cas into, all without a single touch. The prop box has to have a condom in it somewhere, right?

The tap of Cas’ sock-clad toe to Dean’s knee stops the investigation. Cas gestures, a thumbs-up against his own lips, and it takes Dean a second to realize he’s not actually getting a dick in his mouth. He’s just supposed to kneel here and suck his own thumb? Seriously?

There’s no time to negotiate, Cas already quashing a protest of the caller. “Of course Michael gets to call me by name, you imbecile. Do you think he calls me ‘Master’ while we’re having Sunday brunch with my mother?”

The guy clearly has something to say about this. Maybe listening, maybe not, Cas fixates on Dean instead. Visibly grounding himself, he leans forward to touch Dean’s hair again. He closes his eyes and gently scratches Dean’s scalp.

“You are a plaything. Michael is a playmate.” For a quick second, Cas lets go. His hands go to the fanny pack, and he unzips it, slow and aching. Obscene. The sound. The sight of Cas’ fingers so close to his crotch, so close to Dean’s face. “Michael, open.”

Dean reaches.
He grasps Cas’ wrist.

Cas’ mouth falls open, but he doesn’t resist. He inhales, hard and sharp, when Dean ducks his head to lick the pad of Cas’ thumb. Cas’ fingers touch Dean’s cheek, a first a tentative tap, then a solid press. Dean draws him in with tiny nods, his lips wrapped around Cas’ thumb, the rest of Cas’ hand cupping his face.

His breathing short and shallow through his nose, Dean deliberately makes a porn noise.

It comes out way too sincere.

Staring down at Dean as if Cas should be the one on his knees, Cas presses his thumb down against Dean’s tongue. It takes a bit of coordination, but they work out how to swirl around together. Cas’ fingers keep curling, fingertips stroking the curve of Dean’s jaw. He’s a cat kneading Dean’s face, literally pawing at him.

“Are you touching yourself?” Cas snaps without warning.

Dean pops off immediately, but Cas reaches for him just as fast, shaking his head. His thumb shines with Dean’s spit. It goes back in, stoppering Dean up.

“Did I say you could start?” Cas continues, clearly speaking to the caller now. “Here I am, getting settled, and you decide you won’t bother with today’s game. What kind of toy are you? I don’t play with toys that come pre-broken.” There’s only the slightest of pauses before Cas cuts the guy off. “Beg,” Cas orders.

“I said, beg.

“You’re not even going to try to compete for my attention? Not that you’d manage it, Michael’s oral skills being what they are, but you could at least make the attempt.”

As he talks, Cas guides Dean down with both hands, one on his cheek, one on the top of his head. Resting the side of his face against Cas’ thigh is so simple, so easy. He’s kneeling, but he’s lying
there, listening to Cas telling some guy to leave them the fuck alone. He’s kneeling, but he’s standing at attention, dick aching in his jeans from the position, from the skin against his tongue and between his lips. From the hand in his hair and on his face, from the unrelenting command of Cas’ voice.

His back is already aching as Cas explains the rules of the game. Kneel on the floor, hold an ice cube until it completely melts, and then try to jerk off within a minute despite freezing hands; repeat until orgasm or surrender.

Despite his knees, despite his back, Dean doesn’t make a sound of protest until Cas stops petting his hair. Dean tilts his head, opening his eyes to look up past the open fanny pack. He hears more than sees Cas pick an ice cube out of the glass. Dean pushes his cheek against Cas’ hand, trying to look, and Cas is holding a cube, fist clenched.

Cas urges him back down, but the idle petting slows. It stops. Strain enters Cas instead, and Dean thoughtlessly tongues encouragement against his skin. Cas’ fingers flex against his cheek. They relax.

Slow but not tentative, Cas draws his thumb out an inch, dragging Dean’s lips with it before pressing them back in over his teeth.

“Hm?” Cas hums, distracted as he works in and out of Dean’s mouth, gradual yet relentless. “If you can’t stay hard through holding the ice, that’s not my problem. You know I’ve got a gorgeous pet with his mouth between my legs, and that’s not enough for you?”

“Oh wait, you don’t know. I haven’t described Michael to you, have I. He has a mouth made for fucking. Those sweet, soft lips.” Castiel traces them with the spit-slicked pad of his thumb. The shake in Castiel’s voice might be from the ice, might be from Dean. God, let it be from Dean.

“It’s his eyes that do it for me the most. He gets hazy when he goes under. He looks like he’s dreaming, like he thinks he has to be if he’s got my cock in his mouth.” Castiel pushes his thumb back between Dean’s lips, thrusts it in all the way. “Are you dreaming, sweet boy?”

Dean groans around the digit, arousal and embarrassment forcing the sound out. Then he has to slurp up his own spit or risk drooling on Castiel’s leg. There’s no way the caller didn’t hear that sucking sound, but that’s not the important bit, that’s an afterthought compared to the way Castiel hums in approval.
“It’s so ironic,” Castiel muses to himself, his Lucien voice dropping deeper despite the ice he’s still clenching in his other hand. “The one sub actually worth my praise, and it makes him squirm with embarrassment. Unless I tell him to hold still. He holds position so well, but it’s a shame to miss him squirm. I can feel his face heating up against my thigh, he’s so embarrassed to be shown off. A man with his face stuffed full of cock shouldn’t be able to look adorable, but here we are.”

The entire time, Castiel looks down at him, talks about Dean, at Dean. He dominates Dean’s tongue with the hard press of his thumb. For a guy playing it up, he’s way too sincere. He talks like he fucking means it. Every time Dean tries to look away or close his eyes, Castiel taps his fingers on Dean’s cheek. Makes him look. Makes him take the words more deeply inside than a dick could ever reach.

“Mm-mm, no,” Castiel drawls in an abrupt change of tone. “Unless your hands are freakishly hot, you still have a sliver of ice left.” He finally looks away from Dean, to his own wet hand. He drips into the cup on the desk, but never onto Dean. “But fine, if you want to break the rules and start early, let’s see if you can do everything faster. Michael, sweetheart, get the timer from the toy box.”

Dean pulls off, blinking against something that can’t be merely blinked away. His legs ache as he shifts. His back pops as he reaches for the prop box. He rummages with hands that have forgotten how to move. He offers Castiel both a digital egg timer and the dish towel.

With a gentle smile that doesn’t at all match the persona, Castiel takes the towel and dries off both his hands. “Set it for forty-five seconds.”

Dean complies, his fingers trying to fumble. He forces them under his control and beeps out the correct length of time.

“Give it here. And… begin.” Castiel starts the timer and leaves it on the desk beside the glass of ice, its surface sweating the way Dean ought to be. “Michael, resume position. If I have to listen to this cheating little failure jerk off, you’ll have your work cut out for you, keeping me hard.”

Dean resumes position.

Castiel looks at him like he was joking.

Dean starts to sit back on his heels, but Castiel reaches for him. Castiel presses a frozen palm against Dean’s cheek, and Dean shudders, pressing back, leaning in.
“Good boy,” Castiel whispers.

Licking his lips, Dean noses against Castiel’s palm. He takes that cold thumb between his lips. His cheeks must be on fire, to make Castiel’s skin feel so cold, ice or not.

The chill in Dean’s mouth doesn’t stand a chance, but the egg timer beeps before Castiel fully warms against Dean’s face.

“And stop,” Castiel commands, clicking off the timer with his other hand. “Not you, Michael, you keep going.”

Round two begins. This time, Castiel doesn’t hold another cube. He’s probably timing it on his laptop or something, but that’s the last concrete thought Dean has for a long while. Castiel forces the rest out, once again aiming that blinding beam of praise directly at him.

“Where Michael excels most is the motivation,” Castiel muses, leaning forward, leaning over him. He keeps Dean’s head on his other thigh, and with his warm hand, he squeezes Dean’s shoulders, rubs the back of his neck. “He doesn’t bargain his obedience for orgasms. He certainly could. He’s pretty enough to get away with it. No, Michael submits because he wants to be good. Good for me, good for whatever I tell him to be. If I want him to have pleasure, he has it. If I tell him to abstain, he puts himself in chastity through force of will. He doesn’t need to be locked away to obey me. Not that it isn’t a pretty sight, his cock locked away for my sole use.

“He’s not straining for an orgasm, is my point. Unlike someone else I could mention. What would I even want with some unthinking creature of mere obedience? What I require is devotion.”

Too far gone to hold it in, Dean groans around Castiel’s thumb. He moves his hands from his thighs to the base of Castiel’s armrests. Has to move. If he doesn’t grab something farther away, there’s no way he’s not going for his own dick.

“Unlike someone, Michael’s been hard for me this entire time. Unlike someone, he has staying power. He doesn’t complain about how his knees hurt or how his jaw aches. He knows when it’s his job to kneel there and look pretty, and he’s very good at it.”

As Castiel talks, he places his free hand around Dean’s wrist. Castiel sets Dean’s hand against the outside of his thigh, shifting Dean so he’s essentially hugging Castiel’s lap. It helps with his
shoulders. Dean wraps his other arm around Castiel without prompting or guidance. He clasps his hands over Castiel’s ass and nearly pulls back at the way Castiel’s thumb twitches inside his mouth, but Castiel pets his face and murmurs approval.

Dean sinks into it. Falls deeper. Listens to Castiel talk about how pretty his eyelashes are against his freckled cheeks, and it’s okay. It’s a game. It’s Castiel getting a jealous rise out of some guy. Dean’s not the one who’s supposed to feel embarrassed, being described like a girl in a romance novel. It’s not even Dean, it’s Michael. Michael can be gorgeous instead of handsome. Hell, Michael can have beautiful, cocksucking lips and not have it be an insult. He can, because James says he can. Jimmy. Castiel.

Across a soft, cocooned distance, Castiel orders his caller to jerk off again. He sets the timer before petting Dean’s hair. Feels good. Feels right. Dean nearly startles awake when the timer goes off, but Castiel soothes him back down.

There are more rounds. Dean doesn’t count how many. All he knows is that Castiel keeps talking about him, about Michael, so sexy, so sincere. Castiel likes him aggressively, shoving it in the caller’s face, and the words just start to exist, floating around in some space where Dean can’t argue with them.

“I don’t see why you’re having so much trouble staying hard,” Castiel tells the caller, so matter-of-fact, it nearly doesn’t sound cruel, only truthful. “I could take Michael grocery shopping, and if I told him to stay hard for me, he’d have to hide behind the cart.” Castiel keeps petting Dean’s head, gentle, so gentle, as he presses against Dean’s tongue with his thumb. “He’s such a good boy that way. It wasn’t the deciding factor in my choice to keep him, but it’s up there.

“If you could see him right now, you’d have no trouble coming. He’s so relaxed with my cock in his mouth, you’d think he was asleep. He chose touching me over having an orgasm, did you hear him? You can see why, looking at him.

“But, hm, no. I wouldn’t let you look at him. I dislike sharing my toys, but I loathe sharing my pets. Showing him off is one thing, but sharing? No. No, neither of us would like that. Would we, Michael?” Castiel taps him on the cheek. Gently, then more urgently. “Answer aloud, Michael. Do you want me to share you?”

“No,” Dean mumbles around Castiel’s thumb. He doesn’t open his eyes, can’t open them. Too heavy.

“But you want me to keep you all to myself?”
Dean sucks back in his spit before agreeing with a fuzzy, “Yeah.”

“But you’re mine.”

Dean hums, and Castiel lets out a pleased rumble.

“Say you’re mine,” Castiel instructs, and his thumb pulls out of Dean’s mouth, tugging at his lips.

“Yours,” Dean agrees. He cracks open his eyes, hazily focuses on Castiel’s hand, and nudges his chin forward. Too heavy to move, so damn heavy.

“Do you want to keep sucking me?”

“Can I? Please.”

Castiel switches hands. Moves Dean to rest against his other thigh. Traces Dean’s lips with dry fingers. “Sit up and drink your water first.”

Dean blinks his eyes open fully, then keeps blinking. Without Castiel leaning over him, the room is too bright. His mouth is too empty, his jaw awkward.

He sits back on feet that are well and truly asleep, and he accepts the glass of water from Castiel with both hands. His mind as clear as the liquid, he drinks. He’s not thirsty, but he downs the whole glass and still wants more. Castiel takes the empty glass and offers the one full of half-melted ice. Dean drinks that carefully, but still gets a shock of ice to the face when the cubes finally decide to obey gravity and abandon the bottom of the glass.

Castiel extracts the glass and offers the towel. Dean dries his hands and face. Castiel takes the towel back, folds it, and sets it onto one of his thighs. The other has a damp mark in his sweatpants.

“Roll your shoulders.”
Dean does. They ache.

“Now your neck.”

Dean does. That aches too.

“Arch your back.”

Dean does. His spine pops.

“Resume position.”

Dean does. He kisses Castiel’s thumb on its way in. His lips fold over his teeth, dragged that way by Castiel’s inward thrust. Dean wraps his arms back around Castiel, clasping his own wrists to keep from grabbing Castiel’s ass without an order.

Castiel starts talking to the caller again. Tells him to make another attempt. Asks him why Castiel shouldn’t just take his real sub to his bedroom and have a satisfying experience instead of putting up with this wait.

A dim, distant piece of Dean wakes up at that. Bedroom? Pretend or real? Castiel soothes him back down, lays Dean to rest against this thigh, unable to see how hard Dean’s gotten kneeling on the yoga mat. It comes and goes, a steady rhythm of arousal that doesn’t build, merely circles. Castiel sounds so fiercely proud of Michael for staying hard. Would that be true for Dean?

Castiel keeps petting his hair. Alternates with thrusting his thumb in and out of Dean’s mouth.

Dean… drifts.

He doesn’t open his eyes again until both of Castiel’s hands are still. Until he hears Castiel say, “That certainly took you long enough. I hope your phone bill serves as adequate punishment for wasting so much of my time.” There’s a bit more after that, mostly Castiel repeatedly, pointedly saying goodbye.
Dean sucks hard on his thumb.

Castiel blinks down at him, as if surprised to see Dean still there. Finally, Castiel sighs and pulls off the headset. “I need to type for a minute,” he says by means of apology, withdrawing his other hand and wiping it off on the towel.

Fighting against the ache in his legs, Dean shuffles back on his knees to let Castiel swivel the chair. Dean tries to cross his legs, his legs try to wake up, and he fights himself silent. Biting his lip. Focusing on the surreal sight that is the fanny pack, still open, still around Castiel’s waist. Despite the pain, Dean’s eyes try to droop shut.

Castiel shuts the laptop with a decisive snap and turns back to Dean with an alacrity that has Dean’s head spinning. “I’m taking twenty minutes off, maybe longer. No calls for at least that long.”

Dean starts to nod, but Castiel barrels past any verbal response Dean could make, too quick to ask, “Dean, are you all right?”

“Legs hurt,” Dean admits. He doesn’t get a chance to add that it isn’t so bad: Castiel is already standing, already reaching down for him.

“Let’s get you up.”

Taking Castiel’s hands instinctively, Dean lets Castiel help him to his feet. He hisses at the first solid contact of his feet on the ground, vague sensation outlined by sharp needles. Castiel tucks himself under Dean’s arm, supporting him like he thinks Dean’s got some kind of broken ankle. It’s absurdly unnecessary, but it has Cas taking his hand. It has Dean’s arm around Cas’ shoulders. Not to mention Cas hauling Dean protectively against his side.

“Here, sit,” Cas bids him, offering up his own seat, cushioned instead of wooden.

“Nah, I should walk it off,” Dean says, because standing has suddenly become awesome. Every shred of nonchalance from Cas’ phone persona is gone, absolutely eradicated. Instead, Cas watches him earnestly, urgently, like Dean’s the human equivalent of a season finale and Cas is his biggest fan. God, that’s a hell of a look. And from close range, too.

“Do you want more water? You can sit, I’ll get it.”
Reflexively tightening his grip as Cas pulls away, Dean clumsily moves along with him. “Dude, I’m not a plant, I can water myself.”

When Cas stalls, Dean takes a risk and pulls away instead.

Immediately, instantaneously, it’s wrong. Not touching Cas, it’s incorrect on a fundamental level—but Cas’ hand slots against the small of Dean’s back, drawn there like a magnet to the iron of Dean’s spine.

They move out into the living room and kitchenette with equal amounts of shuffling and touching. Cas keeps fussing over Dean like he thinks Dean’s about to melt into a pile of radioactive slime or something.

“’m just tired,” Dean insists, cheek on his folded arms atop the counter. Even his dick is exhausted, too much time spent aroused and doing nothing about it. His back and legs excluded, his muscles have gone loose. Cas could pour him into a bucket right now.

“I’m sorry,” Cas says, his hand hovering over Dean’s head. Like he’s trying to check Dean’s temperature from four inches away or something. “I shouldn’t have made you do that, I don’t know what I was thinking.”

“Hm?” Dean lifts his head.

“I shouldn’t have made you participate.”

Dean sits up as straight as he can. His mind has run off with the rest of his energy, leaving him slow and calm and befuddled. “Huh?”

“Being party to adultery is one of the parts of the job I’ve never been comfortable with,” Cas explains, moving around like he’s trying to pace. Do people actually pace? Is that a thing people really do? Cas seems to be trying it, some modified version where he’s tethered to Dean by a three-foot, invisible rope. He doesn’t so much circle Dean as crescent him.

“I’m sorry,” Cas continues, painfully sincere and sincerely pained. “I wanted- It’s not important what
I wanted. I shouldn’t have put you in that situation. I know you’re bad at saying no to- You’re not bad, I’m not calling you bad. I only mean-“

“Hey,” Dean says. He grabs Cas’ hand on the counter top, basically slapping his palm down on Cas’ tense, splayed fingers. “Hey. I’m just tired. Not an idiot.”

“I know you’re not, I’m sorry,” Cas says, looking away.

“Are you dropping?” Dean squeezes Cas’ hand until Cas looks at him again. “That’s a thing Doms can do too, right?”

“I can take care of myself. I have to take care of you first,” Cas says, convinced.

Dean laughs.

Doesn’t mean to.

Just goes ahead and laughs, this stupid sleepy scoff that has Cas staring at him.

“Cas, buddy? When you sound like me, that’s how you know you’ve fucked up.”

The stare turns to a squint, uncomprehending, but Cas still doesn’t pull his hand away. His body still leans toward Dean, tilting like a frowning sunflower. “This is what I meant,” Cas starts to say. “You’re not a fuck up, I shouldn’t have-”

“Can I have a hug?” Dean asks for the first time in his adult life. Maybe for the first time in his whole life.

In the pause between Dean’s question and Cas’ response, Cas’ mind visibly moves behind his eyes. Receiving the question. Processing it. Realizing the significance.

Cas steps against him, crowding up against the chair he insisted Dean take. “Of course.” He wraps his arms around Dean’s head and shoulders, giving Dean complete access to his back. Dean rubs in
little circles. He presses his cheek against Cas’ chest, holds his ear to Cas’ heartbeat and waits for it
to slow.

Gradually, no more than a nod at first, Dean starts to sway. They rock back and forth. Their
breathing syncs.

“I liked it,” Dean mumbles into Cas’ t-shirt, into the skin and muscle beneath the thin cloth.
“Could’ve gotten up and left. Not like I was tied down.”

“I shouldn’t have involved you,” Cas says, exactly like a guy who isn’t listening.

Maybe it’s just because Dean’s tired, but everything looks stupidly simple right now. Everything is
as warm and solid as Cas’ hand cupping the back of his head. “Did you want to handle that guy on
your own?” Dean asks.

“I could have.”

“Yeah, but you didn’t want to.”

“That’s not a reason to involve you.”

“Yeah. Yeah it is.” Dean shifts, craning his neck to try to look up at Cas’ face. “Hell, it’s kinda
cute.”

Now that gets Dean a full-on stare of confusion.

“What?” Dean asks. “You’re big on praise and shit. Don’t think you’d get off on abusing people.”

“It’s one thing to say those things,” Cas says, dropping his gaze. His body tenses within Dean’s
arms, but he doesn’t pull away. “It’s different to mean them. It’s… awful. And infuriating. To tell a
man you honestly despise him, only to hear him orgasm from it.”

“...Yeah, that sucks,” Dean says after a static-filled pause.
Cas strokes one hand down the back of Dean’s head, and Dean just nuzzles closer, tired enough and attention-starved enough to be willing to play the part of therapy dog. It’s a long moment before Cas whispers, “I’m sorry I involved you in that.”

“Didn’t hear a word he said,” Dean promises. “Just you.” He pulls back, needing Cas to look at him. His face starts to set itself on fire, but fuck that, Cas needs him. “You sorry you said that stuff about me? You lying about me being a better sub?”

“You’re a better everything,” Cas tells him.

“Awesome,” Dean says, like the conviction in Cas’ eyes doesn’t skewer him in place. “That’s, yeah. All I heard was you telling some asshole you weren’t interested. Not your fault he gets off on it and you can’t hang up.”

“You’re sure you’re all right?” Cas asks, completely missing the point.

Dean rolls his eyes and plants his face back against Cas’ chest. There are way worse things in life than being this guy’s human teddy bear. “I mean, probably shouldn’t drive home without a nap and some coffee, but yeah. I’m good.” He snuggles in, but it’s purely to prove his point. Besides, Cas smells good. Masculine, but not gross. It’s a minor olfactory miracle.

Cas holds him steady, centering himself around Dean. “You don’t have to.”

“I know I don’t have to be okay, but I’m serious, I’m actually okay.”

“No, I meant… You don’t have to drive home. Tonight. We’re going to spend tomorrow together anyway. It would be more efficient for you to say here.”

“The second I go horizontal, I’m conking out,” Dean warns. Then again, the thought of Cas touching him in his sleep, of Dean coming in his sleep for an actual reason… well, that’s something, isn’t it.

“That’s why you shouldn’t drive.”
“Huh?” Refusing to stop leaning against Cas’ chest, it takes Dean a second to piece the conversation back together. “Right, yeah.”

“You can take the bed,” Cas continues, the rumble of his voice amazing. Dean’s ear pressed against his ribs.

“Does it smell like you?”

Cas stops rubbing Dean’s back. Dean’s not even sure when Cas started. But then Cas resumes and says, “I don’t see why it wouldn’t.”

“Awesome,” Dean says, not moving. No reasons to move, only reasons to hold on.

“Come on, Dean.”

No reasons to move until Cas makes him.

Dean sleep-shuffles after him, then beside him as Cas returns his hand to the small of Dean’s back. Cas’ bedroom is small compared to the office, or maybe that’s just because of the queen mattress eating up space. Maybe it’s just the winter season, but Cas fucking nests, blankets lumped across the partially made bed in some order presumably conducive for transforming into a human burrito.

“I should have cleaned,” Cas apologizes. “I told myself if it was a mess, I’d have to go slow.”

“‘S fine,” Dean mumbles, because it all is. He sits down heavily, looking blearily around at bookshelves and bedside tables and art hung in actual frames, the way a functioning adult does it.

“Do you want pajamas? I have a clean pair.”

“Nah, ‘m good.” Dean goes to pat Cas in reassurance, but he’s down too low. He avoids smacking Cas on the ass, though. On the hip instead. “What about you?”
“I’ll be fine.”

Dean tugs on him again, because it’s obvious Cas still needs him to. “Don’t wanna ask this like an asshole.”

“All right?”

“You got panic attack meds? Something you can take?”

Cas shakes his head but still wraps Dean up in a hug. He can’t seem to stop touching Dean’s hair, and Dean’s not complaining. “I’m not having a panic attack, Dean.”

“Sounds a lot like mine, I dunno.”

“It’s not a panic attack.”

“M’kay.” Dean sways back a little.

“I’ll let you sleep. I’ll get the light.”

“Hey, Cas?” Dean says before Cas can go too far.

Infinitely, destructively attentive, Cas turns back.

“You’re gonna take off the fanny pack before you come to bed, right?”

Cas stares at him.

“No, seriously,” Dean says. “You can’t sleep with that on, there’s no way that’s a kink thing.”
“I’ll take it off before I come to bed,” Cas promises, speaking with a significance far too great for Dean’s tired mind to grasp.

“Cool,” Dean says, and he shrugs out of his red button-down. He flops onto his back, pops his fly, and shimmies out of his jeans. He has to sit back up to pull his socks off, and that’s a challenge in itself.

The sitting up part. Not the socks part.

Dean dumps it all in a little pile. Not like Cas should mind, not with his laundry basket overflowing in his open closet. Groggily, Dean looks up to check anyway.

Cas stands there in the doorway, struck dumb. Awed and staring. Beholding. It’s like he’s never told Dean to get naked before or something. Dean in a t-shirt and boxer briefs is nothing.

“Night,” Dean says, his mind and body tapping out in unison.

“If you need me, just open the office door. I won’t be far,” Cas promises.

“That was twenty minutes?”

Cas checks a clock he has on a bookcase. “No. Should I stay?”

Dean pulls his legs up and pats the bed next to him.

Cas approaches, but he does so like Dean’s some glass idol on an altar. Like Cas is a supplicant about to be struck down by lightning.

Dean pats the bed again.

“Lie on your stomach,” Cas tells him.
Dean lies on his stomach. The pillow, the sheets, they all smell like Cas.

The bed sinks down beside his hip. Two strong hands start to knead his back.

Dean moans.

Cas touches him harder. Circles down his back, framing his spine. Thumbs pushing tension off over his shoulder blades. Firm presses of palms, long passes of soothing fingers.

“’m gonna date the shit outta you,” Dean swears against the pillow.

“I’d like that,” Cas whispers back, sounding exactly like Jimmy, sounding exactly like himself.

Cas holds his hand steady on Dean’s back for a long moment before standing. His stubble scratches at Dean’s temple for one fleeting, blissful second, or maybe that’s just a dream. Either way, Dean’s out before Cas even hits the lights.

Chapter End Notes

We now have a banner! It's posted at the top of chapter one, and it's lovely. A big thank you to dragonpressgraphics, I love it.

To see what else I'm working on, you can follow me on tumblr here or dreamwidth here.
Preparations

Chapter Summary

Dean wakes up but keeps on dreaming.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Reluctant and slow, Dean wakes to a firm mattress, an amazing smell, and an annoyingly full bladder. It takes him half a minute to roll onto his back. It takes another couple seconds to piece together where he is. Following the light creeping in from under the door, Dean shuffles his way out of Cas’ bedroom and to the bathroom.

Cas’ voice escapes through his closed office door, so pornographically surreal that Dean stops to listen. If there’s an ear equivalent to staring, that’s what he does. Then he shuffles on into the bathroom, does his business, and just barely catches himself in time before he flushes.

Phone work. Flushing sounds.

Not a good combo.

He washes his hands thoroughly before brushing his teeth with his finger. It doesn’t taste like Cas, and not just because of the toothpaste. His eyes keep sliding to the side and down. To the fluffy bath mat in front of the shower, still indented from Dean’s legs.

In the mirror, his face is strange. He spits out the toothpaste but puts his finger back in his mouth. He turns his head this way and that. What did he look like to Cas? What did Cas see?

His mind feels light, as if parts of it are missing. Though he can wonder, he can’t seem to worry. Everything is what it is, nothing more than that.

He cups his hands to rinse his mouth, spits one final time, and goes back to bed. He’s down and out and dreaming. He’s rolling over and dreaming again. He’s cracking his eyes open at furtive noises, and then he’s pretending to be asleep. He hears a dresser drawer open and close. Clothing shifts and rustles.
Dean opens his eyes fully, but the room’s too dark. Cas is little more than an outline of a man, changing into his pajamas with his back to the bed. Dean closes his eyes again well before Cas can turn around.

Quiet footsteps cross the room. The mattress sinks. The blankets shift.

Dean lets out a questing little “Mm?” like he’s only just woken up.

Cas freezes behind him.

Dean rolls over. “You done?” he mumbles.

“I am,” Cas whispers back. He stays put, mid-way through crawling onto the bed, blankets lifted in one hand.

“You’re lettin’ the heat out,” Dean complains. Lethargy commands his eyes closed again.

Cas finally settles in. The bed settles around him, but Cas himself doesn’t move again, unnaturally still.

“Y’okay?” Dean asks.

“You were right about my panic attack meds,” Cas answers quietly. “I did end up taking them.”

Dean pulls an arm out from the shelter of the blankets and pats more or less blindly in Cas’ direction. He’s pretty sure he gets a shoulder or something. His hand wants to stay where it lands, but the chill makes that a bad idea. He bundles back up.

Cas still doesn’t move at all. His breathing is nice, though. Even. Steady. Dean matches to it.

“Dean?” Cas whispers.
“Mm?”

“Can I hold you?”

Dean rolls onto his side, his back to Cas.

It takes him half a minute to realize Cas hasn’t followed.

He slaps the bed behind him twice, two thumps of the hand.

The mattress shifts. The blankets pull. Cas’ breathing, far less steady, warms the back of Dean’s neck.

Cas’ hand starts on Dean’s elbow. Moves to Dean’s forearm. Dean fumbles at him, grabs, and wraps Cas around him like a better blanket. Cas’ chest along his back. Cas’ arm over his side. Cas’ palm against his chest, held in place by Dean’s hand. Cas nudges him with one cold foot, Dean kicks back a little, and they work out the leg situation. Cas rocks him forward a little, the pillows moving as he sorts out arm placement, and fuck, if it doesn’t feel good to be under him, even just a little.

The tickle of Cas’ breath has Dean shivering. Dean pulls harder on Cas’ arm, and Cas wraps around him tighter, lips nearly against Dean’s nape.

“If I come in my sleep again, that’s totally your fault,” Dean reminds him groggily.

Cas’ abrupt lack of noise is all the response Dean needs.

Grinning to himself, Dean wriggles back into a tighter snuggle, heedless of his ass against Cas’ crotch. No, strike that: he heeds it very much.

“Don’t be a brat,” Cas reminds him, voice quiet and strained.
“Mmhm.” Dean rearranges Cas’ arm across his chest, getting comfier. Cas’ pajama sleeve is soft, but his skin is better. “’m a good boy.”

Cas says something in response, Dean knows he must, but sleep rises up faster than comprehension, spurred on by comfort. He has a vague impression of shifting during the night, of rolling over and grabbing, of moving and being followed. If he dreams, he can’t tell it apart.

Dean drifts awake on his back, held in place by a warm, solid weight on his chest. Something soft tickles against his jaw. A vague investigation reveals the tickle to be Cas’ hair and the weight to be Cas’ head. About half of his upper body, actually, flopped across Dean like Cas normally sleeps hugging a pillow.

Dean wakes the rest of the way up at that point.

Cas does not.

Somehow, they’ve slept late enough that there’s winter sunlight creeping in through the gaps in the curtains. Dean can see a lot more than he could last night. Little things like clutter on the bookshelves, like the framed diagram of bees on the wall beside it. Or the navy bathrobe hanging on the back of the door. Looking straight up, Dean’s pretty sure that’s a cross hanging over the bed.

Mostly, though, he looks at Cas. Breathing steady, but still faintly frowning in his sleep. His arm slung across Dean’s chest is a tight one. His hair sticks up, too adorable to be smoothed back down. The fucker sleeps in honest to god striped pajamas, too.

This is the man who had Dean on his knees last night.

This snuggly dork who looks like he was dressed by a teddy bear.

Dean sticks a hand behind his head, propping himself up as much as he can before his neck starts complaining. Cas doesn’t stir in the slightest, his only motions that of his breathing, or of Dean’s breathing lifting him in turn.
Last night turns unreal.

Too dream-like. Too peaceful.

Things like that don’t actually happen, do they?

Mulling that over, Dean ignores his mouth, dry and gross, and the rumblings of his empty stomach. But there’s only so long he can think, and there’s only so long he can put off the demands of his body. He shifts slowly to the side, starting with his legs and trying to pull the rest of his body along.

The attempt to slide himself out from under Cas quickly fails. Almost immediately, Cas grumbles and tightens his arm around him. He fucking nuzzles in against Dean’s throat, and Dean has to stop moving before his heart can explode. Cas responds with a vaguely satisfied, vaguely proud noise, like he thinks he’s solved a problem.

Dean’s resolve to wait him out lasts maybe thirty more seconds.

He starts with Cas’ arm this time, only to immediately prompt another sleepy grab. Cas grunts and follows, but Dean lifts up onto his side until he’s almost sitting, sliding Cas back off onto the bed in a warm flop. That gets an eye cracked open, plus a vaguely dragon-esque grumble. Who dares disturb his slumber?

“Dean,” Cas answers for himself. He reaches again, but stops short of grabbing. “You don’t have to...” He inhales hard through his nose like the opposite of a yawn. “Don’t have to go.”

“Bathroom,” Dean promises.

“Oh,” Cas says, immediately slumping back down.

“Unless you’re actually into watersports.”

With a rustling of blankets, Cas frees one hand into the open air and blindly flips Dean off.
Dean ruffles his hair, because he’s an asshole like that. Cas quits it with the grabby act after that, shifting around to lie half on top of Dean’s pillow instead. Gathering up his clothes and checking the time on his phone, Dean pretends not to watch. He does a furtive sniff check on both his shirt and himself once he’s sure Cas’ eyes are closed.

“Hey, uh, mind if I use your shower?”

Cas grunts something that probably passes for permission.

Dean makes it quick, though. Or at least he tries. The second he pops open the shampoo bottle, scent memory smacks him in the face. One whiff, and he’s back in the library, right after his appointment with Pamela. He’s getting hugged, warm and secure. He’s safe, protected, and immediately sporting the boner he swore he wouldn’t let himself get in Cas’ shower.

He ignores it, insofar as such a thing is possible. He washes his hair and he scrubs at his pits. Choosing not to think about it too hard, he reaches around and rubs soapy fingers over his crack. Just getting clean. Nothing special, no matter what his dick thinks.

He dries off, gets dressed, and wastes too much time figuring out where to stick his damp towel. Uncomfortably aware of his lack of deodorant, he comes out, running his fingers over his stubble. Does Cas like stubble? It’s hot, so probably.

He checks in on Cas. Still asleep, or trying to be, never mind the hour. Standing in the doorway, Dean feels his brain start to fray—what’s he supposed to do now?—but his stomach rumbles.

In the kitchenette, the Keurig is very possibly the only appliance to have ever been used. Before long, Dean’s heading back into Cas’ bedroom, his hands on the full side. Everything goes on the bedside table, just to be safe, but before he can wake Cas up, Cas snuffles his way to vague awareness.

Eyes only half open, Cas lifts himself up on his elbows, a human periscope rising from a sea of blankets. Groggy and unshaven, he aims himself toward Dean. “You made coffee.”

“Yes.” Dean climbs back onto the bed, staying on top of the blankets this time. He crosses his legs at the ankles, his bare feet exposed. He reaches over for the coffees as Cas shoves at pillows.
Once Cas is slumped up against the headboard, Dean risks passing the mug over, a white one with black font asking “How does Jesus make his coffee? HEBREWS it!” around a monochrome Jesus. Dean keeps the bright orange one for himself, the one with a prescription label for coffee, take one cupful by the mouth until conscious.

Cas’ head dips over the steaming mug, but rather than scalding his entire face, he tilts to the side instead, his temple on Dean’s shoulder. Cas moves the blankets around to shield his hands from the heat, cupping the mug with that cloth buffer, and Dean holds very still.

“Thank you,” Cas murmurs.

Careful about it—not that he’s nervous, he just doesn’t want to spill, that’s all—Dean shifts one shoulder lower. Cas hums and uses it as a pillow. Heart pounding in anticipation of caffeine, Dean tilts his head until his cheek’s against Cas’ hair. Not resting there. Just against the top of his head.

They take quiet sips.

“I’m taking you out for breakfast,” Cas states, apropos of nothing.

“It’s after eleven by now.”

“I’m taking you out for lunch,” Cas says, the certainty in his voice unchanged.

“I’m the one driving.”

Cas lifts his head from Dean’s shoulder to narrow his eyes at him. “You’re driving, I’m paying.”

Dean’s not about to say no. “Then groceries, then pie at my place.”

Cas nods, then puts his head back down. He shifts a bit, working his arm behind Dean’s. They’re unquestionably cuddling, as pressed together as they can be with Dean on top of the blankets and Cas beneath. Dean’s back begins to ache as he holds his tilted slouch, but he can take it. The pain doesn’t put him floaty the way it did last night, too humdrum without Cas in charge, but Dean can still take it. The position keeps Cas close. It makes his silence better.
“You okay now?” Dean asks once Cas’ mug is halfway empty. For all Dean can tell, the guy’s been drinking in this hazy little trance. Calling Cas fully awake probably still wouldn’t be accurate.

It takes Cas a second to respond, but when he does, it’s first with a flash of tension against Dean’s side.

“What do you mean?” Cas asks, his voice neutral in a way his body gives immediate lie to.

“You were dropping pretty hard last night, right?” Dean checks. “I was still kinda, uh.” He wets his abruptly dry mouth and swallows the last of his coffee. “I was still just doing the shit you told me to, so. Didn’t really take care of you.”

“I didn’t let you,” Cas corrects.

Dean angles his head, trying to look at him.

Cas looks up, a glimpse of a single eye.

“You gonna let me next time?” Dean asks.

“I didn’t want to presume,” Cas explains.

“Cas, buddy, you’re the one who called me out on being a caretaker and all that crap. Presume.” He leans away for just a moment, putting his mug on the bedside table. Coming back, he slings an arm around Cas. They settle in, and Dean pretends his heart isn’t about to burst out of his chest just from this.

Cas leans into him. Cas leans into him hard.

And then, after a long moment, Cas leans into him, soft.
“This what you needed?” Dean asks, so far refraining from kissing Cas on the ear or the hair.

Technically, Cas nods. More accurately, he moves his head in these tiny motions until his temple finds Dean’s cheek.

“I’m sorry,” Cas whispers. “I shouldn’t have rushed things.”

It’s immediately Dean’s turn to apologize, because he reflexively laughs. He coughs and clears his throat instead. “You, uh. Let’s just say you don’t need to worry about me using the brakes here.”

Cas shifts to squint at him. It’s only for the better angle to look at him; it only feels like Cas pulling away. “What do you mean?”

Without moving, Dean’s arm transitions from being around Cas to being pinned between Cas and the headboard. Dean licks his lips, looking up at the ceiling. “There’s stuff you could’ve done. After the call.”

“Stuff,” Cas repeats.

“Stuff,” Dean confirms.

“Did you come over last night… hoping for… stuff?”

Every instinct Dean has tells him to laugh it off. Add some distance, play it safe.

“Kinda hoping for a lot of things,” Dean says instead, and it’s fucking terrifying.

Looking down at the mug in his cupped hands, Cas faintly smiles.

Worth it.
“I did math last night,” Cas says, and Dean blinks.

“Okay?” Dean says.

“I added your call times together, then applied my cut of the rate.” Cas pauses for a second to let that sink in, holding Dean’s gaze with his eyes. “I’m not comfortable keeping that money.”

Dean’s too aware of his finances not to have an inkling of the amount—the total amount, not however much Stimulating Conversations actually let Cas keep—but, even so…

“You fucking earned it,” Dean tells him.

“I think it should be our date fund,” Cas says over him.

Dean blinks a bit more. “Our what?”

“When we go out, your half of expenses comes out of the date fund,” Cas continues. “Once the date fund is depleted, we can go dutch.”

Dean stares at him.

Cas stares back. “Is that… all right?”

“Last night, you didn’t want to ‘presume’ when you needed a fucking hug, and then you did math banking on a couple hundred bucks worth of dates?”

To his credit, Cas doesn’t look remotely ashamed by this summary. “Yes.” Another one of those pauses, and: “Initially, I thought about buying you the panties instead, but that was definitely too presumptuous.”
Dean’s mouth falls open.

It’s definitely open, just hanging there.

Cas shifts a little, at least slightly embarrassed now. But his eyes flick down to Dean’s crotch with this furtive, involuntary kind of look, and okay, yeah, hell yeah.

“We can order them,” Dean says, voice rasping abruptly low. “If you want.”

“I’d like that,” Cas rasps right back. He shifts against Dean’s arm around him. He tilts in, leading with his chin, but before Dean’s brain can progress from a string of question marks to one of exclamation points, Cas turns his face away. “I should brush my teeth.”

“I mean,” Dean starts to say, but his stomach rumbles over him.

“And I should feed you.” Cas just gives him one of those faint smiles. Up close and personal, it makes Dean want to touch it with his fingertips.

Somehow, Dean tears his eyes away, fighting to keep his hands to himself. The arm around Cas is already a bust, but his free hand, the one not already splayed over Cas’ ribs, that one, he keeps to himself. “Dude, I’m not your dog.”

“But you are my good boy,” Cas says, so simple, so certain. A pulse of electricity sparks all the way down Dean’s body, from his ears down to the soles of his feet, and then it vibrates through his skin. The entire surface area of his body, electrified.

“You can’t just, just decide not to kiss me and then pull that.”

“I thought it would be good compensation,” Cas explains, still not getting out of bed. Despite the clear sexual energy, there’s still a bit of droop at the corner of his eyes.

Dean lets go of him and pushes him on the shoulder. “Go brush your teeth. I’ll fill up your tiny ass travel mug for the car, and we’ll hit up a diner or something.”
Cas doesn’t move, too busy looking at Dean.

“What?” Dean asks.

“I’m keeping you,” Cas tells him.

Dean’s face does something absolutely stupid. The biggest dumbass grin of his life. Involuntary and unstoppable, it fucking hurts his cheeks. “Shut up.”

“I’m keeping you,” Cas repeats, eyes gleaming.

Dean shoves him harder. “Go brush your fucking teeth, asshole.” He takes Cas’ empty mug and climbs off the bed, grabbing up his own. He doesn’t hesitate in the doorway. Just pauses there. For dramatic effect and all. That’s why it takes him a second to turn back and demand, “You gonna feed your good boy or not?”

Rolling his eyes, Cas finally gets out of bed.

By the time Cas is dressed and ready, almost casual in jeans and a blue sweater, Dean’s not only located and filled the travel mug, but also washed the mugs. “You didn’t need to do that,” Cas says, nodding toward the drying rack as he follows Dean to the front door.

Shrugging, Dean just laces up his boots. “Where we going anyway? You got a place nearby you like?”

“Despite the name, the Deli Counter has good breakfast foods,” Cas answers, slipping on his loafers while still standing. He’s got good balance. Totally the trait Dean admires from where he kneels by the welcome mat. Balance.

Rising back to his feet, Dean reaches for his coat on the peg, but Cas intercepts. Cas steps forward, not at the coats but toward Dean. Cas’ hand blazes heat through Dean’s layers, burning into his arm, but that’s nothing compared to the heat of his mouth when Dean finally closes that gap. Cas’ lips are just as winter chapped as his own, yet infinitely softer. Plush and firm over his teeth.
Dean’s got coffee breath and Cas tastes sharply of mint, but that doesn’t stop either of them from pressing closer. Cas opens up to him, holding onto Dean by the shoulders. Dean’s the one with a hand around Cas’ waist and another in his hair, guiding him into position as their mouths open and tongues meet, warm and wet and electrifying.

Cas goes for deep, so Dean goes for light and playful, just because he’s an ass like that. Cas’ hands move, but only barely, gripping along Dean’s shoulders and upper arms. Dean flicks his tongue against Cas’ lips, and Cas retorts with a hard nip at Dean’s. Their breaths mingle as the tastes of their mouths converge, forming that unique *me-with-you* flavor.

Dean draws him in tight: drags Cas in with a hand on the small of his back; sucks on his tongue; curls his fingers in Cas’ hair. The negligible height difference is perfect on his neck, but, fuck, it’s Cas’ chest that’s blowing Dean’s mind. He’s so fucking sturdy, so undeniably solid. He’s impossibly touchable, and almost hilariously awkward about touching Dean back.

“Don’t know where to put your hands, huh?” Dean baits, the taunt pressed against the side of Cas’ mouth.

Cas pulls back.

Just for a second.

Just long enough for Dean to think *oh shit* before there’s a hand on his sternum, a hand behind his head, and—three quick steps later—a door behind his back.

“I know where to put my hands,” Cas tells him, fingers brushing down Dean’s arms until Cas seizes him by the wrists. “I know where to put your hands, too.” And he pins Dean’s arms over his head, just like that, up against the door.

Making a noise he can’t even recognize as himself, Dean strains his neck forward for a kiss. Cas shoves him back, mouth hard against Dean’s, and Dean’s knees go so weak, the door and Cas have to be the only things keeping him standing. He sinks down anyway, reveling in the sensation of having an exposed underbelly, like a dragon bested by some really kinky knight.

Cas tightens his grip and lifts Dean’s wrists higher. Dean’s not even properly kissing back anymore, instead panting against Cas’ mouth like even the air inside him needs to get closer.
“We should head out,” Cas rumbles against his mouth, their arms framing their heads.

Dean licks his lips and ends up getting Cas’ too. Pretending it was deliberate, Dean rolls his hips. “Or we could go back to bed.”

Cas shifts his grip, the fingers of his left hand splayed over Dean’s crossed wrists. With his right hand, he taps Dean’s cheek, a tiny smack Dean immediately wants more of. “Dean, I can feel your stomach growling.”

His dick hasn’t won over his stomach since before he dropped out of high school, but there’s nothing upsetting about this major upset. “I’ll live.”

Cas pushes himself back. “I’m not fucking you distracted.” He lets go of Dean’s wrists.

Dean keeps them where they are.

With a shuddering breath, Cas takes one shaky step backward. And another. The deliberate motion shows off the bulge at his crotch, visible beneath the hem of the sweater, and Dean can’t help staring.

“Can I…” Cas reaches into his jeans pocket, and there’s a split second where Dean thinks Cas is about to touch himself through his pants. Then Cas pulls out his phone instead. “I’d like a picture.”

Dean starts to lower his arms.

“Or not,” Cas quickly adds.

Dean puts his arms back, one hand gripping the opposite wrist above his head. That sensation of a vulnerable underbelly grows, expanding higher than his stomach, lower than his dick, until it covers his entire front.

Riding high on it, Dean winks.
Cas lifts his phone.

Dean adds, “Only if you’re gonna jerk off to it.”

For just a second, Cas pauses.

He takes the picture.

Dean’s back on him in a second. The phone gets pressed against Dean’s back, but what’s pressed against Dean’s front is far more interesting. Theirs is a collaborative shuffle, the struggle of two people trying to get closer without falling down.

Ultimately, it’s Dean who has to step back, just for balance, but Cas takes the opportunity to grab Dean’s jacket and shove it at him. “Dean, the sooner we get everything done, the sooner we can get back to this.”

“So we could fuck first,” Dean says very reasonably.

Shaking his head, Cas pulls on a long winter coat. The guy seriously puts the great in greatcoats. “Once I get you back in bed, you’re staying there.” He grabs his travel mug off the counter and gives Dean such a pointed look that Dean’s putting on his own jacket before he realizes what he’s doing.

“Y’know, I’m okay with that,” Dean promises, but he has to follow Cas out the door. Which is promptly locked behind them. Damn.

“Are you fine with…?” Cas holds out a hand.

It’s a poor compromise, but Dean grabs it anyway, heart pounding. “Yeah, all right, bossy.”

On the walk downstairs, they pass people coming up. Dean’s stomach might turn over, but reflex has him holding on harder, not letting go. It’s Cas who lets go first, actually, leaning against the banister to let a woman carrying a bicycle pass. And they grab hands again afterward.
Walking out to the car, Cas tucks both their hands into his giant coat pocket. The warmth’s gone from Dean’s fingers by the time he’s done scraping ice off the windows, but it’s kinda nice to duck inside afterward with Cas sitting in there with the heater on.

“You spill that, you’re walking,” Dean warns, pointing at the travel mug before shifting into reverse.

“I don’t think there’s enough left to spill.”

Dean pauses in putting his arm over the back of the seat. “Seriously? That was like five minutes.”

“I don’t need much sleep, but I don’t do mornings well,” Cas says.

Dean points at the clock on the dashboard. “It’s almost noon.”

“Which is why I’m conscious,” Cas agrees. “Though spending that much time in bed probably helped.”

Dean backs out of the parking space and gets the show on the road. “Speaking of bed. Could’ve sworn I heard you sitting down on it a couple times.”

“You woke up when I went to bed, if that’s what you mean,” Cas says, sounding confused.

“No, I mean. Y’know.” Eyes on the road. “Over the phone.”

“Oh,” Cas says.

“Oh?”

“You’re very observant,” Cas says. “I’d work in either room, depending on what else I was doing.”

“Oh,” Dean says. Meaning, last night had been a deliberate attempt to keep things out of the
bedroom. Or at least from starting in the bedroom. “Okay.”

“Do you have any other questions?”

Sanity would say no. Dean, on the other hand, says, “So you don’t actually like anal?”

“I don’t mind it,” Cas says as smoothly as if answering a normal question. “Prostate stimulation is pleasurable, but the mess isn’t worth it. Generally.”

“You mean, mess on just you, or...”

“I don’t like the way lube feels inside me afterward. But I don’t think that’s what you’re asking.”

“I mean, that’s, that’s good to know.” Dean’s a couple seconds late on moving when a light changes to green, but he’s never slow when it comes to flipping off people who honk at him. He puts his arm down along the back of the seat again, as obvious as a teenager stretching next to a movie date. He doesn’t actually touch Cas. Not for lack of wanting to.

“Are you going to ask me the real question?” Cas prompts after half a minute.

“Yeah, where’s parking for this place?”

“Dean.”

“Hang on a sec, parallel parking can be a bitch.”

Cas sits in silence while Dean manages it. He parks and kills the engine, and Cas is still looking at him.

“Do you remember the rule, Dean?”
“I...” Dean swallows. Manages to look back at Castiel for maybe half a second as he says, “I have to wanna be your good boy.”

“The rule after that.” There’s a smile in Cas’ voice now, and Dean has to look to make sure it’s not mocking.

It isn’t. At all.

“If you want something, you have to ask for it,” Cas reminds him.

Past Cas, outside the car window, bundled pedestrians walk by. Behind Dean, it’s a world of lazy, lunchtime traffic. They’re in a bubble, but they’re not alone. Not invisible.

Dean swallows harder.

“You can ask me later,” Cas tells him, unbuckling.

Dean’s hand leaves the back of the seat. It grabs Cas’ shoulder.

Cas looks at him.

“I want you to fuck me up the ass,” Dean gets out, leaning forward and lowering his voice. “Today. Tonight. Whatever.”

Cas looks at him and looks at him, eyes dark and cheeks flushing. “When we go grocery shopping, will we need to get supplies?”

“I’m stocked.”

Cas nods. “Do you want a scene?”
“Cas, c’mon,” Dean says, and it’s not just because he should be too anxious to start popping a boner here. “You don’t have to keep doing this, I’m not—” paying you. “You’re not my made-to-order sex robot or something.”

“No,” Cas agrees, but he gets this thoughtful look in his eyes. He doesn’t smile, but his mouth looks like it wants to. “You’d be the sex robot. I’d inspect you.”

“Shut up,” Dean warns, leaning in, pointing a warning finger at Cas’ face.

“Quality control is very important,” Cas continues, that faux-innocent expression still in place. “Or I could be your owner.”

Dean’s dick should not respond the way it does to that idea. “I’m trying to say we can do what you want for a change, okay?”

“Dean, I’ve had a very long, very sexually frustrating year,” Cas answers plainly. “My only priorities are kissing you, coming in you or on you, and watching you squirm like that.”

“I’m not squirming,” Dean says. Shifting, maybe.

“Of course you’re not.” Cas opens the passenger door. “Lunch?”

Lunch is a strange affair. Paranoia creeps over Dean in waves as they sit at the counter, two men out on a date in public. They don’t touch more than the brushing of shoulders. “You okay?” Dean asks as Cas pops a pill and dry swallows it.

“That one’s routine, not for panic attacks,” Cas explains. “I’m supposed to take it with food.” He shrugs a little, opening his menu.

They order. They talk. And they do it like normal people. Not passing notes, not into headsets. Just sitting there on their stools, limited to topics acceptable in public.
Dean listens to the full story of how Cas was originally in seminary, had to quit, and then segued into gender studies after studying how different translations of the Bible treated homosexuality. Talking around it as “your research project,” Dean learns that Cas’ parents actually know what he’s been up to over the past year. Cas had mentioned the working arrangement as a theoretical possibility, an absurd one, and all three of them had been surprised when Cas’ department head Gabriel approved it.

Cas asks about Bobby and Sam. What kind of law does Sam practice, how big is the auto business. How far away it is, as if there was the possibility of Dean normally living on the other side of the country. It’s gratifying as hell, the way Cas visibly relaxes when Dean tells him the garages are local.

“Seriously, if you had a car, odds are we would’ve met ages ago,” Dean points out.

“Just as long as you’re not moving away after college.”

“Hell no,” Dean says, and they smile into their coffees.

Turns out they can talk. Outside of studying, outside of sex.

It’s corny as shit, and such a wussy kind of worry, but: Dean’s relieved.

“I can drive,” Cas adds, momentarily speaking more to the crumbs on his plate than to Dean. “I just shouldn’t operate heavy machinery anymore.” And he touches the pocket he’d put his pill case inside.

Dean shudders dramatically. “That’s how my mental breakdown would *start*, not finish.”

Cas’ faint smile is more than the weak joke deserves. “If you’re not getting enough driving time, I could certainly use a chauffeur.”

“I’m literally taking you grocery shopping after this. I’m already your Uber.”

“You are great, yes,” Cas replies, playing it completely straight.
“Shut up,” Dean mutters, totally not holding back a grin or anything. He is, in fact, frowning, because his supposedly endless mug of coffee is empty. Definitely where he’s focused.

Not on Cas, who leans in. Just a little. Maybe a little more than is usually acceptable, but the stools at the counter are all crammed in. So it’s not Dean’s fault that Cas only has to tilt just a few inches to achieve tingling proximity, as if static electricity’s giggling cousin has taken over for the day.

“No,” Cas says, simply and plainly. Holding Dean’s gaze. Gentle. Steady. Firm and undeniable. “I’m going to say it as often as I want to.”

“Then you can get your own damn groceries,” Dean says. Intelligibly. Not muttering it at all. Not while pushing down the kind of embarrassed giddiness that would be excessive on a fucking teenager.

“I could,” Cas agrees, clearly knowing he’ll have to do no such thing. He has such a lack of expression, and yet Dean fucking knows him in the angle of his head and the tilt of his eyebrows. Half a school year sitting across from the guy, and suddenly they’re side-by-side and Dean’s not supposed to touch.

Still looking at Dean, Cas moves his hand, pushes his mug forward on the counter. “Thank you,” Cas says.

“Wha-” Their server’s back behind the counter, topping them up. Dean’s mug is somehow already full.

Once the server continues down the counter, watering them all like a row of jittery potted plants, Dean pulls his mug close and says, “Stop being such a rosebud.”

“You like me,” Cas says, still looking at Dean like that. How it’s not mocking, Dean will never know. It’s not even smug. “You like me.” Like he’s trying the thought on for size, somehow unaware that it’s already been custom tailored for him.

“Kinda slow on the uptake there, teach.”
Cas just smiles and quietly blows the steam off his coffee.

Last night, Castiel told a man he could order Dean to stay hard while grocery shopping, and Dean would have to hide his boner behind the cart. That was incorrect.

Cas doesn’t order Dean to do anything, and Dean still has to hide. For safety’s sake. He leans forward, forearms folded on the bar of the handle like he’s bored or tired. Cas, thank fuck, doesn’t see anything amiss in this.

Instead, Cas takes direction like a champ. He doesn’t do the Bobby grumble or the Sam box inspection. He slides through crowds and cart barricades like it’s not Christmas Eve Eve, snags whatever Dean’s sent him after, and darts back like he wants a scavenger hunt high score. He listens when Dean gives him the rundown on apples, and he doesn’t mock Dean for having opinions on flours.

Despite being a teacher, he doesn’t try to pull that I Know More Than You bullshit that’s resulted in Dean sending more than one prospective new hire packing. Like Garth, Cas’ few follow-up questions are made of curiosity, not posturing. They’ll probably get along all right.

Dean’s less sure about Benny. Garth probably won’t care about any of it, will probably get his friendly on with Cas the way he does with everyone, but Benny’s a tight bit of worry, a different brand of man. It’s one of the kinds that Dean’s always wanted to click with. This vibe from the start where they were either gonna end up in a fight fist-against-fist or back-to-back. Garth’s great and all, but losing Benny would be a blow.

Although, it’s not like Dean has to bring anything up. Give it a couple months, make sure shit’s working out. If any of the guys get confused at Cas coming around, Dean can always pull the old I Thought You Already Knew. Rufus won’t give a shit; he’s got too tight an allotment of shits to give. And if he does care for some reason, Bobby will have Dean’s back.

Right?

Probably.
“Dean?” A light touch on Dean’s shoulder has him blinking back to reality.

“This is a stupid long line,” Dean says.

Cas glances at the crowd in front of them before looking over his shoulder. “That’s an understatement.” And he looks back to Dean, the way he’s always looking at Dean. Someday, they’re gonna be in a space where there’s something better to look at, but until then, Dean’s gonna soak up every second of it.

They trudge forward, shoulder-to-shoulder behind the cart.

Dean elbows him.

Cas elbows back.

By the time they finally get rung up, Dean’s going out of his mind. The gentle, gingerly ineffectual way Cas tries to close the trunk only cements it. Dean slams it shut just the right way, and once they climb into the front seat, he’s fucking beyond caring. Before Cas can buckle in, Dean slings an arm around his shoulders, drags him in, and kisses the shit out of him. Right there in the goddamn fucking parking lot, in broad daylight, with untinted windows in an attention-grabbing car.

And yeah, maybe Dean’s shaking a little. Sue him. But half of it has to be Cas, has to be that surprised little hum that comes before Cas starts kissing him back. They shift together, side against side, thigh pressed against thigh, bodies twisted and necks turned. There’s maybe a couple seconds where Dean could swear he was gonna keep this short, but then Cas opens his mouth and invites Dean in, and Dean’s not gonna be rude, okay? There are some invitations a guy can’t turn down.

Cas’ fingers dig into his shoulder. Cas’ broad palm cups the side of his face. Dean’s hand makes a quick circle of indecision before he realizes that he can totally touch a guy’s chest in public. Not to the point of getting his hand up Cas’ sweater, but fuck. There’s so much to get his hands all over.

A honk has Dean jerking his head back, but it’s a more distant sound, someone the next row over fighting over parking. Cas pursues on automatic, catches himself, and looks at Dean in that way of his. With eyes alone, he puts an entire internet of porn to shame. With pink cheeks and pinker lips, with shallow breathing and an angle of intent, he has complete command over Dean’s dick.
“Maybe...” Cas rumbles. Looking at Dean’s, Cas licks his own lips. “Post-coital baking?”

“Dunno, man. Am I gonna be able to walk after?”

Cas nods seriously at the breathless joke. “Baking first, then I tie you to the bed as long as you can take it.”

“Gotta, tomorrow, gotta get my brother from the airport. Tomorrow afternoon. Drop you off home on the way? Unless you got something.”

“I don’t have anything tomorrow until evening mass,” Cas answers, and that’s gotta be the first time that sentence has ever been sexy.

“Maybe I should run back in for Gatorade and protein bars,” Dean says, entirely serious.

They sit there for a second, wedged together from hip to knee, each with an arm around the other.

“Yeah, we’re not getting out of this car,” Dean agrees.

With his free hand, Cas takes Dean by the chin. He turns Dean’s head and leans in, bringing his mouth to Dean’s ear. “You’re going to drive now. Before we begin baking, I’m going to blow you. Once we finish, I’m going to fuck you. Do you understand?”

Held in place more by the heat of Cas’ voice than the grip on his face, Dean stares sightlessly through the windshield at the sea of empty, parked cars around them. “Yes.”

“Yes what?” Castiel rumbles, the promise of teeth so close to Dean’s ear.

“Yes, Castiel,” Dean breathes out.

Castiel nips his earlobe. “Good boy. Now drive.” He releases Dean’s chin but keeps a firm grip on Dean’s shoulder, using Dean as an anchor to ease himself back. When Castiel buckles in, Dean can’t help looking, can’t help staring at the strap crossing over the bulge in Castiel’s pants.
Dean buckles, turns the car on, and immediately tunes the radio to the first blast of obnoxiously cheery Christmas carols he can find. Halfway through the drive home, he has to change the station, because some dumbass decided to do a cover of *Santa Baby* as *Santa Buddy*.

Mercifully, they get back to the garage before Dean dies of blue balls or, worse, dings Baby on something while driving distracted. He has to get out of the car for a minute, unlocking and opening up one of the garage doors to a port without a customer car already waiting, but then they’re inside, the shop lights off, the engine killed. The only illumination comes in from the open garage door behind them, the only sound from the street around the corner, now out of sight.

Dean unbuckles and reaches for the car door, but Cas catches him by the elbow. Dean looks back at him, but Cas is looking over his shoulder, twisted to peer out the back of the car. Dean looks too. Nothing there but the usual: a couple parked cars lining the edge of the small lot, and a scrawny smattering of trees behind them.

“What?” Dean asks.

“Oh obviously, we could wait until we get upstairs,” Cas begins, looking a bit nervous himself.

“Oh my fucking god,” Dean says like a teenage girl. Except twice as old and male and in a way better car.

“I’m still trying to get a feel for how kinky you want to be,” Cas starts to explain, like he thinks he has something to apologize for, *holy shit*.

“All my condoms are upstairs. Haven’t- Wait.” He reaches over to rummage through the glove compartment. The immediate presence of Cas’ hands on his back can only distract him so far, though, so it’s quick work to realize that while he still has some BBQ joint wet wipes and an unopened pack of tissues, he’s officially past the time of life of keeping condoms in his car. “Fuck.”

Warm hands stroke around to the front of Dean’s coat. Pressure against his shoulder implies a kiss. “Handjob?”

Dean twists around. Gets that kiss on his mouth, where it belongs. Cas catches his hand when Dean reaches.
“Handjob?” Dean asks right back.

With strong fingers wrapped around Dean’s wrist, Cas looks him dead in the eyes and says without a single trace of shame or uncertainty, “You can have my cock when your ass is ready for it.”

What happens to Dean is not an orgasm. A shitload of fireworks go off inside him, twisting and shaking and vibrating and wanting, but it’s not an orgasm. It’s like his brain smashed down on the Deploy Orgasm button before his body was done loading one. He wasn’t even fully hard, but that was a second ago. Right here, right now, his fly needs opening before his dick breaks his zipper.

Cas releases Dean’s wrist to grab the tissue packet from the open glove compartment. The packet gets tossed onto the seat. After just one more look out the garage door, Cas reaches for Dean again, left arm around his shoulders, right hand on Dean’s thigh.

“We can still go upstairs, if you’d prefer my mouth,” Cas offers.

Dean’s gotta be fucking insane, taking a handjob over a bj, but Cas is right here, right now. A handjob means Cas kissing, Cas talking. Means Dean having Cas inside the Impala, inside the garage. It’s the Sunday the day before Christmas Eve; nobody’s gonna try to come in and interrupt.

Dean gets as far as “I fucking swear to god, if you don’t touch me” before Cas cups him through his jeans. Dean’s head jerks back, almost pinching Cas’ arm around his neck. Desperate, Dean fumbles at his fly. Barely even bothers pushing them down, just gets them down to mid-thigh before watching, entranced, as Cas squeezes him through his boxer briefs. God, those hands. He’s blocking the light, that gray winter haze behind them, but shadow can also be sexy.

Turning his head, Dean tries to nose in for a kiss, but Cas is too busy staring at his own hands, too. The fabric stretches and itches against Dean’s Dick, and still Cas just keeps plumping him up.

“So gorgeous,” Cas murmurs. His breath burns the side of Dean’s face, makes Dean burn on both cheeks.

One hand gripping Cas’ thigh hard, Dean swallows. “You gonna take it out or what?”
“Oh,” Cas says. “I was waiting for you.”

Dean pulls himself out through the flap of his underwear. The cloth presses in from both sides,angling his cock to the right, as if even his boxer briefs know which way it is to Cas. Cas, whose breath is even hotter on Dean’s cheek, a goddamn flame that has nothing to do with embarrassment or nerves.

“And your balls,” Cas adds.

Dean pulls them out too.

Cas touches them first, his fingertips so light that Dean’s legs jerk from the tickle. “Bad?” Cas asks.

“No, no, it’s good. Kinda, uh, kinda ticklish.”

“Okay.” He kisses Dean’s cheek.

Dean kisses him.

Cas’ hand works up and down, this soft inspection that doesn’t even need to push his foreskin back. He starts too light but firms up without further prompting. He slicks Dean down with pre-come while Dean overheats beneath his jacket. Still kissing Cas, Dean unzips. He unbuttons his shirt, he parts the sides, and he’s still got his t-shirt as a barrier over his chest.

That done, there’s nothing left but to grab Cas’ thigh and wrap his hand around Cas’. Dean changes up the rhythm, tries to get Cas to do the right kind of twist over the head, and Cas breaks their kiss.

“Do you want to play, Dean?” Cas asks against his lips.

“Do you?” Dean asks right back, too fried to have his own opinions.

Cas hums confirmation against Dean’s jaw. “I kept thinking while you drove.”
Dean tries to work their hands faster over his dick, but Cas loosens his grip. Dean makes this pathetic noise, straining up off the seat with a flex of his thighs and hips. It doesn’t help.

“I like how your hands look on the wheel,” Cas continues. “You’re comfortable and reverent at the same time.” He nips at Dean’s ear, tugging at the lobe with his teeth until Dean swallows hard. “Confidence is a good look on you, Dean. It’s very… arousing.”

Eyes closed, Dean gets one hand on the wheel, but only out of the instinct born of habit. The other hand keeps squeezing Cas’ fingers tighter around his dick.

“Both hands, Dean.”

Groaning, Dean obeys.

Cas sucks on his ear. “When you’re about to come, pull your t-shirt over my hand. I don’t want to make a mess in your car. Do you understand?”

“Yes, Castiel.”

“Good boy.” The words do things to Dean that not even Castiel’s hand is doing.

It goes on like that an indeterminable length of time. Dean’s eyes shut, head lolled to the side. Hands white-knuckled on the steering wheel, arms tense. Castiel working him steadily, confident and smooth, but nowhere close to enough. Dean plateaus, the only spikes of pleasure coming from Cas’ mouth on his neck.

“Is this good?” Castiel rumbles.

“Yeah,” Dean groans.

“Is this what you want?”
Dean licks his lips.

“I asked you a question, Dean. Is this what you want?”

...Oh.

Oh.

“Harder,” Dean says, and Castiel immediately gives him harder.

“Faster,” Dean says, and Castiel gives him that too.

“Can you, uh, rhythm?”

Castiel hums confirmation.

“Fast, fast, slow?” Dean asks, and Castiel gives it to him. Jerks him with the slick sounds of Dean’s pre-come coating Castiel’s hand, his thick fingers. Dean’s own hands tighten on the steering wheel as he manages to open his eyes and look down. Immediately, he closes his eyes again. Bites his lip to stave off the noises that beg to well up.

Cas starts to throw in some other bits of variety too. Twisting his hand over the head. Thumbng tight circles on an agonizingly slow pull. Every time Dean says “That, do that,” Cas does it more. It quickly becomes an extremely approved selection, the kind that can whip out an orgasm in record time.

Once Castiel knows exactly what he’s doing, they start making out again, enthusiastic despite the awkward angle. Dean’s neck aches, his arms shake, but he’s got Cas’ arm around his shoulders, Cas’ hand on his dick, Cas’ mouth against his. Pain doesn’t matter. With Castiel around him, the only thing pain can be, is pleasure.

It’s a little early, but Dean lets go of the wheel to pull at his own t-shirt, to stretch the hem down over Castiel’s hand. Making a noise of approval, Cas keeps going. He nips at Dean’s lips.
“Do you want to come?” Castiel asks, low and filthy, sounding the way Dean feels.

“Uh-huh,” Dean whines, hips jerking to follow Castiel’s hand.

“Do you want to come when I tell you?”

Fuck. Dean nods, a trembling motion that keeps their faces close.

For too long, Castiel strokes and plays with him just the same. Knowing Dean’s on the edge. Knowing Dean’s straining to hold himself back.

“Cas, please,” Dean begs.

“Come now,” Cas immediately orders.

Dean does.

Hard. Soundless. Clutching at his t-shirt and the steering wheel. Hips bucking up against Castiel’s hand. Mouth open to a sudden onslaught of kisses. Toes curling in his boots.

As Dean’s ability to kiss back dwindles, Castiel gives him a moment to rest. Dean’s head lolls back against Castiel’s arm. He lets go of his t-shirt, and the come-streaked cotton drops back against his stomach, clinging there. His other hand keeps twitching on the steering wheel even as Cas carefully cleans Dean up with the tissues from the glove compartment.

“You can let go of the wheel now,” Castiel reminds him.

Impossibly heavy, Dean’s arm thunks down. He sits there, the vibrations within his own body turning the seat into a massage chair. God. Fuck.

“You’re really good at sex,” Dean says like a brainmelted moron, eyes closed, mouth on the slack
“I’ve had a lot of practice at the talking part,” Castiel answers, no longer kissing the side of Dean’s neck or sucking on his ear. “More practice than I’ve had with the rest of it, to be honest.”

Dean cracks an eye open. Tilts his head enough to look at Castiel.

Castiel, who’s looking at Dean, Dean’s body. Drinking him in. Chest and hands, not just his spent cock.

“We should get you cleaned up,” Cas murmurs, but he looks at Dean’s t-shirt like it’s soaked with Castiel’s come instead of Dean’s.

Speaking of… “We should get you off.”

“Later,” Cas says with a small shake of the head. “Sometimes, I like waiting, too. Not as much as I think you do, but...” His eyes drift back down, his attention compelled. “The heightened sense of awareness is good.”

“Heightened? Think you mean distracted.”

“Both,” Cas says, and kisses him one more time. “If you carry the tissues, I’ll carry the groceries.”

“Yeah, okay,” Dean says in the post-coital tone of a man who’d agree to anything. He shifts to tuck himself away—then laughs.

“What is it?”

“My foot was on the brake, like, the whole time.”

Cas exhales hard through his nose, but that’s as good as a laugh. He watches intently as Dean puts away his dick and straightens his clothing. The fucker even smirks when Dean grimaces at the come against his stomach.
“You're just trying to get me out of my shirt, aren’t you,” Dean gripes, finally making himself pull away. He buttons up, zips up. Fails to exit the car.

“You underestimate my ambition,” Cas deadpans, voice still rough and low. His coat fails to conceal the bulge at his crotch, and some part of Dean’s brain is convinced Cas is going to lick his hand clean, never mind that he already wiped it on Dean’s t-shirt.

Cas comes back in for a kiss, and Dean pushes him back on the shoulder. “You overestimate my patience,” Dean warns, sticking a finger in Cas’ face. “You, groceries. Us, upstairs.”

Without the slightest trace of sarcasm, Cas kisses Dean’s fingertip. He smiles as Dean stares.

“Anything you want,” Cas promises.

Chapter End Notes

Grand finale coming next Monday! Come back then for pies and porn, more or less in that order.

To see what else I'm working on, you can follow me on tumblr here or dreamwidth here.
“Dean, that’s not fair,” Cas tells him the moment Dean reemerges from his bedroom.

“What?” Dean says, spreading his hands. Clearly, the only thing he’s gotten up to in his absence is an emergency bedroom cleaning. He’s absolutely innocent.

Cas’ eyes remain fixed on Dean’s chest, now freed from his dirty t-shirt. Or any shirt at all. Dean’s perky nipples have naturally responded to the cool air of his apartment, because why bother turning the heat up when the oven’s already pre-heating? Compared to Cas’ place, Dean’s home is downright cramped; things will warm up real soon.

“What?” Dean repeats, coming closer and grinning like the asshole he is.

Rooted to the spot, Cas watches Dean approach like he’s getting ready to be pounced on. Clearly, the growing bit of chub over Dean’s belly has been overlooked, or at least dismissed. Dean’s shoulders have to be a good distraction.

“You’re not actually going to cook like that,” Cas states, looking unsure.

“Course not.” Dean pulls open one of the cabinet doors and pulls out more of the necessary supplies, apron included. He ties on his favorite, the black one with the crowned spatula and the words Burger King. The strings itch against the small of his back, but it’s well worth it for the way Cas acts like a guy desperately trying not to stare down a chick’s dress. Fucking hilarious.

Sorely wishing he had a Kiss The Cook cliché hanging around, Dean sticks his older apron on the counter. The worn tan fabric still has most of the cooking conversions printed on it, all upside-down for easy reading. Cas studies it as he puts it on, only to get some unintended revenge on Dean as he blithely rolls up his sleeves.
“What first?” Cas asks, his eyes focused on Dean’s face with an obvious display of effort.

“Crust, then filling,” Dean says. “C’mon, I’ll show you.”

Normally, the first time sharing a cooking space is a bumping, nudging affair. Today is anything but, each of them too aware of the other’s position. Cas measures flour. Dean takes care of the actual mixing, pinching in butter and shortening by hand.

“Swear to god, my hands are clean,” Dean says when Cas watches just a little too intently. “The grease stains are kinda permanent at this point.”

Cas blinks a little. “I wasn’t worried.”


Cas complies, getting in Dean’s space only a little and yet somehow filling it up entirely. Dean mixes with a fork now, some of the dough still clinging to his fingers, and Cas keeps watching like he’s taking notes or something. Knowing Cas, he probably is.

“Get the plastic wrap ready,” Dean tells him, pointing toward the right drawer. As Cas goes to get it, Dean’s entire side goes cold, his bare skin missing the warm brush of Cas’ sweater.

Four dough bundles go into the fridge, and Dean pretends the scarceness inside is a mark of preparation, not stress. After setting a timer, Dean washes his hands off, interrupting Cas while the guy tries to rinse the bowl out, but being next to him again is good. Warm.

“Your turn,” Dean tells him, handing Cas his dishtowel. “Same thing I did, recipe is still on the counter.”

Cas frowns. “How many pies are we making? I thought you said three.”

“Yeah,” Dean says, nodding. “Three for me, three for you.”
“Dean, that’s six.”

“Three each.”

Cas narrows his eyes, more in confusion than in suspicion. “You know I celebrate with just my parents. There’s only three of us.”

“Yeah, and?” Dean asks. “It’s just me, Sam, and Bobby. One pie per person, that’s the human-to-dessert ratio.”

“You’re joking,” Cas says despite clearly knowing Dean isn’t.

“You don’t want to do three, just do the math.” Dean shrugs, immediately drawing Cas’ attention back to his bare shoulders. He grins at the resulting slackness to Cas’ expression. “One batch is four crusts. For me, that’s one double-crust and two single-crust, but you could go with two double-crust.”

After a long pause, Cas tears his eyes away to look between Dean and the recipe. He holds out the skirt of his apron, squinting as he reads the flaking numbers and letters of the fading conversions once printed there. Finally, he says, “I don’t want to do math.”

Dean grins. “Three pies?”

Cas sighs, like this could somehow be a bad thing. “Three pies.”

With a hand still damp from washing, Dean pulls Cas in by the hip. He kisses at a frown only to suck in a breath at Cas’ hand splayed across his bare back.

“I can do the math for you,” Dean offers, standing nose-to-nose.

Cas shakes his head slightly, forehead against Dean’s, brushing their noses together the way their lips should. “I asked you to teach me. I should do all of them.”
Dean rolls his eyes even as his feet shift closer. “This isn’t all of them. Strawberry rhubarb is Easter, cherry for the Fourth of July. So, uh.”

His hand gently exploring Dean’s spine, Cas nods. “We’ll make them as we go.”

“Yeah?”

Cas nods again, their faces so close the kiss might be an accident. Prying themselves apart is a trial in itself, but they manage eventually. Dean takes up a watching role this time, making himself obnoxious by watching over Cas’ shoulder, arms wrapped around his middle. He can even spoon in the water from there. He only lets go when it’s time to grab the plastic wrap, but he presses a kiss to the side of Cas’ neck before he goes.

“You’re trying to make me regret my decision in the car,” Cas mutters darkly as they load Round Two into the fridge.

“I thought you liked edging,” Dean says, completely innocent. Well, at least as innocent as anyone can be about edging.

It’s Cas’ turn to roll his eyes, that familiar full-body movement that shows off his neck and his disdain in equal measure. “What’s next?”

“The pecan and pumpkin can all bake together, so those. Make one filling, start the blind bake, make the other filling, pull out the blind bake, do the real bake. Easy.”

“Easy,” Cas repeats with an absolute lack of understanding in his eyes. “Why are we baking blindly?”

Dean blinks at him for a second. “Oh. ‘Cause the pumpkin filling can make the crust soggy. Cook the crust halfway first, stop the soggy problem. It’s called a blind bake.”

Cas nods along a bit better at that. They huddle around the stove, Dean nearly regretting his lack of shirt, Cas close along his back. Cas keeps watching like he’s actually interested in what Dean’s doing. Mostly, they don’t talk, Mostly, they don’t even need to.
“This is the filling for both pumpkin pies?” Cas checks after a comfortable silence, squinting down into the pot as Dean stirs.

“Yep.” The timer beeps. “Keep stirring.” Dean presses the wooden spoon into Cas’ hand before arranging Cas just where he wants him. Cas treats the poor excuse for manhandling as a matter of course.

Cas keeps watching him, the way Cas always keeps watching him. Like there’s something fascinating in a guy rolling out dough, sticking an upside-down plate on top of it, and using that to cut out a pair of perfect circles. Those go into the tins, Dean’s glass one and Cas’ grocery store aluminum stopgap. Dean weighs them down just so with baking parchment and a load of beans taking a detour on their path toward chili-hood. Into the oven those go, another timer gets set, and Dean can return to the important business of crowding Cas.

“Think you can keep an eye on two of these?” Dean asks.

“How do you do all of this by yourself?” Cas asks right back.

“Practice,” Dean says with a shrug. “But seriously, you ready?”

Cas nods, and Dean puts together the syrup for the pecan pie for him. Then that’s two more crusts rolled out and put into their tins, and Dean’s still got a couple minutes left to show off.

He pours in the pecans, and the pie he’ll be having with Sam and Bobby gets a perfunctory pattern, the pecans spiraling out from the center. The Cas pie, on the other hand, well. The Novaks are religious, right? And any idiot with even the semblance of fine motor control can make a cross. So he makes the cross, and maybe he fills the rest in by turning the pecans sideways and making them fan out like the cross is shining or some shit.

The timer beeps again. Wiping his hands on his apron, Dean grabs the oven mitts and Cas gets out of his way so Dean can pull out the crusts. The beans get set off to the side to be ignored, revealing a good half-bake beneath.

“Pouring time,” Dean announces. He makes sure to point to the right filling. “That one.”
It’s a basic enough skill to trust Cas over, but Cas still looks to him for approval. “This high?”

“Yeah, put a little more in the other one. Awesome.” Those two get set off to the side for a minute, and Dean carefully carries over the pecan pair one at a time. “Careful over these.”

Cas’ eyebrows fly up at the sight of the second one. He smiles at Dean so serenely, so completely, it’s a marvel the guy doesn’t burn himself.

“What?” Dean says. “We gotta tell them apart somehow.”

“The baking tins are different,” Cas says like the world’s most pragmatic smartass.

“Shut up and pour.”

Cas pours syrup over the pecans and Dean has to get a fork to poke around until the patterns are fixed.

“Shut up,” Dean repeats, not at all distracted by the blaze of Cas’ hand on his back.

“You’re much more artistic than I am,” Cas murmurs.

“Uh-huh. Says Mr. Sound Design over here.”

Cas tilts his head and makes a noise of consideration. “I hadn’t thought of it like that.”

Dean just shrugs, going for the tin foil and covering up the pecan pies. True to form, he somehow gets sticky despite touching only the tin foil, but he doesn’t give into any unsanitary impulses until all four pies are in the oven and two corresponding timers are set. Then he gives in and licks his fingers. Hell, he grabs another spatula to scrape out the remains of pecan syrup.

Like a gentleman—like an idiot—he offers it to Cas first.
Cas, who goes ahead and sticks half the spatula head in his mouth in one go. While maintaining eye contact. The asshole doesn’t even need to play it up. Dean’s more than half expecting a porn parody out of the guy, but no, instead he gets this unthinking pseudo-innocence.

Dean’s reaction must show on his face, because Cas clearly sees it. Cas pops off instead of doubling down and, holy shit, he actually looks embarrassed. Dean offers him the sauce pan and a smirk.

Cas takes the sauce pan, but only to stick it in the sink.

“Hey, no, I’m washing,” Dean interrupts. “You’re on apple peeling duty.”

“Because you don’t want to,” Cas assumes.

“Hey, it’s a valuable skill.”

As it turns out, Cas’ ability to grumble silently isn’t constrained to just the library. Friggin’ hilarious, though.

Dean cleans what needs immediate cleaning, dries it all off, and gets the dry parts of the filling ready. And maybe he grins a little to himself the whole time. Because maybe, possibly, he can feel Cas’ eyes on his back. The hair on his nape prickles, and not just from the apron’s fabric against his neck. Maybe the apron string in the back is falling just right over his ass, too. This little bow and two long strings swaying as Dean hums Metallica to himself.

Drying his hands, Dean turns around. Does it count as catching Cas looking if Cas clearly lets himself be caught? Dean wipes a bit of dish soap foam off his elbow and leans back against the sink counter. He smiles, playing it cool in the face of Cas’ heat.

“Havin’ fun?” Dean asks.

“I’m learning a lot,” Cas answers delicately, seated at Dean’s tiny excuse for a table while he peels. Or, while he pauses mid-peel. His eyes linger low on Dean’s forearms.

Dean smiles wider. “Got any questions?”
“I can handle it.”

“I was thinking,” Dean says. “Wondering, I guess.”

To say Cas looks at him attentively would be like saying Dean’s fond of his car. “Yes?” Cas asks, clearly willing to be strung along.

“If I was baking in just an apron and the panties, would you want me in the frilly ones or the mesh-backed?”

Cas abandons the apple and slaps the peeler down on the table. His legs devour the distance between them. He grabs Dean by the head, slams Dean’s ass against the counter using only his own hips, and he kisses Dean with every ounce of patience Dean’s transformed into exasperation.

Dean melts. He clings, arms draped around Cas’ neck, mouth open to fading sweetness.

“You’re intolerable,” Cas growls against his lips. Even with two aprons bunching between their jeans, Cas’ bulge is an unmistakable hot pressure against Dean’s upper thigh.

Dean starts to say something—no idea what, probably something mouthy—but Cas yanks the hair on the crown of Dean’s head, and the noise that comes out instead has to be a pretty good summary.

“Do you want me to fuck you that hard?” Cas demands.

The question’s rhetorical, but Dean’s face still burns hotter than his scalp. “Uhh...”

Cas looks at him.

And Cas looks at him.

And, pulling in a hard, shaking breath, Cas releases him. Plants a hand on either side of Dean on the
sink counter, caging Dean in, rallying his own restraint even as Dean refuses to let go of him.

“How much longer is this going to take?” Cas asks.

“Like an hour and a half.”

Cas gives in and groans his dismay directly into Dean’s shoulder. That much vibration, breath, and stubble against Dean’s skin is delicious beyond measure.

Holding shamelessly tight, Dean offers, “We can wrap up what we got and do the apple tomorrow morning?”

Forehead against Dean’s shoulder, Cas shakes his head only the smallest amount. “I don’t do mornings.”

“I can do the apple tomorrow morning?”

Cas presses a kiss against his skin before pulling back. “We finish what we’ve started, and then we stay in bed as long as possible. And I would want you in the mesh-backed pair if you were wearing the apron over them. If I don’t get to see the little bow in front, I’d want to see your ass, at least.”

“Yeah, okay,” Dean finds himself saying.

“You said something about Easter?” Cas prompts, leaving Dean by the sink to return to the apples. Dean follows automatically before rerouting to grab the cutting board.

“Easter is strawberry rhubarb and apple,” Dean says. “So. Something new for you to learn, I guess.”

Apple in one hand, peeler in the other, Cas doesn’t move. Just looks with those goddamn eyes of his. “So we should order the panties before then.”

“If you want,” Dean says with a little shrug, like it doesn’t matter. He quarters an apple, cuts the core out in practiced little triangles, and successfully doesn’t cut his fingers off.
“Dean,” Cas says. “I want what you want. That’s not the kind of discomfort I get off on.”

“Yeah, we should order them,” Dean mutters, reaching for the next apple.

Cas hands it to him, and then they both just kinda hold it together, getting sticky for no good reason. Cas quirks a smile, and Dean pretends not to melt.

“I’d like that,” Cas says, his expression open.

“Yeah, me too,” Dean says quietly, and Cas smiles.

They work in a new kind of silence after that, the background noise of Dean’s apartment a far cry from the muted sounds of the library. Passing traffic instead of distant voices. The hum of appliances instead of turning pages. Half a dozen times, Dean thinks to put some music on, but he never does.

When they cook the filling on the stove, it’s less a demonstration and more an excuse to cuddle. Cas wraps himself around Dean’s back, murmuring something about not wanting Dean to get cold. Chin hooked over Dean’s shoulder, Cas pretends to watch. Dean pretends to be focused on anything other than pressing his cheek against Cas’, than Cas’ hands riding his hips. Heat in front, heat in back, all with the scents of cinnamon, cloves, and sugar filling the air, riding high over pumpkin and apple. Dean doesn’t stir as often as he should, but nothing burns.

They have to separate so Dean can teach Cas how roll out a pie crust and lay it into a tin, but unnecessary contact remains the theme of the day. They communicate more by touching than by words, at least until Dean’s transferring the filling from sauce pan to the tins.

“That seems like too much,” Cas says.

“It’ll cook down,” Dean assures him. “Gotta go overboard to make it look even.” For his pie, Dean just cuts a couple slits in the top crust, but, hell, why not get fancy? “I’m gonna show you how to do a crisscross crust.”

“A what?” Cas asks, which is fair. That’s probably not the right name for it.
“When it’s all woven.”

Cas nods along and Dean shows him, cutting strips and laying them down. Folding them back, adding more, straightening them out again. Cas catches on pretty quick and can take over when the first timer goes off for the pecan pies. Dean grabs them, going a full five feet away from Cas, an aching distance. The pumpkin pair still need more time, like the little bitches they are, but the two pecan go on the cooling rack.

Dean comes back to add the finishing touches on the apple pie crusts, and Cas resumes his position behind Dean. This time, Cas slips both hands beneath the front of the apron, a furtive motion, as if he thinks Dean might somehow fail to notice the touch over his sides and stomach. Cas’ sweater scratches at Dean’s spine, but Dean sinks back against him anyway. At least, up until Cas says something that makes the boner against Dean’s ass wildly inappropriate.

“Are you trying to impress my parents?”

Dean chokes on his own spit. “What?”

“Drawing the cross in pecans, making the more complicated crust for mine,” Cas says. “You’re trying to make a good first impression.”

“It’s not like it’s hard, man. Just looks better.”

Cas hums skeptically.

Dean finishes up before the pumpkin pies do, so he just ends up standing there, wiping sugary hands on the chest of the apron and feeling Cas’ hands through the cloth. Cas tightens his hold. It’s almost a waste, not turning around to kiss him, but turning around would mean Cas letting go, would mean Dean getting a cold back.

Better to hold on. Better to lean into Cas the way Cas leans into him. Cheek against cheek. Breathing steady. Wanting, but calm.

Eyes closed, Dean’s not entirely sure which one of them started swaying first. It’s a hug’s best
impression of a silent slow dance. Cas’ chest against his back. So fucking firm. Those arms wrapped around him. Dean’s brain goes somewhere low and ready, sleepy without being tired. The room narrows to the hands over his stomach, to the breath against his ear, to the slow grind between the cheeks of his ass.

The timer going off again startles Dean out of it, and yet his body’s strongest reaction is a slow blink.

“Are they ready?” Cas asks against his shoulder.

“Yeah, I should…”

Dean doesn’t move.

Cas doesn’t let go.

The timer keeps beeping.

Finally, annoyance overtakes inertia.

“Yeah, yeah, all right,” Dean mutters at the stupid timer, turning it off. He flicks on the oven light, opens the oven door, and has a look. He groans. “Five more minutes, I think.”

“That’s fine.” The low register of Cas’ voice is accompanied by the shifting sounds of cloth.

Closing the oven door, Dean straightens, looking back at Cas as Cas folds up his apron. Hesitant in his expression but not in his approach, Cas stands beside Dean and drops his folded apron onto the floor in front of the oven.

“You can watch.”

Dean pulls off his own apron. He folds it mess-side-in and puts it down on top of Castiel’s. His chest warm in the oven’s heat, his back freezing without Castiel against it, Dean kneels on top of the aprons. He keeps his eyes on the oven door, on the little glass window.
Fingers touch his hair, the top of his head.

“Do I need to get you a pillow?” Castiel asks.

Dean licks his lips and shakes his head.

Castiel tightens his grip on Dean’s hair. Not enough to hurt, just enough to hold. “What do you say, Dean?”

“Yes, Castiel,” Dean says, eyes fighting to stay open. “I mean, no, no pillow. I’m, I’m good.”

“Yes, you are,” Castiel agrees. He draws Dean to the side, pulls him in by the head. Maybe it should be embarrassing, hugging another man’s leg in his own kitchen, but none of that seems to register. Keeping one hand on the counter for balance, Castiel pets Dean’s hair. The urge to look up grows and grows, but Dean’s in control. Dean’s under control.

He looks only ahead.

“They’re ready,” he says some time later, and that’s when he finally looks up.

Standing above him, standing over him, Castiel looks down as if transfixed.

“They’re ready, Castiel,” Dean corrects himself.

“You’re mine,” Castiel says, as if that follows. As if it’s a thought he’s trying on for size, a daydream he’s afraid to mistake for reality. He tightens his fingers in Dean’s hair again, no longer petting. He tilts Dean’s head back even more, baring his throat to the heat of the oven.

Dean’s eyes flutter shut. Somehow, he keeps breathing, drawing in just enough air to keep his body singing.
“You’ve been mine for weeks,” Castiel realizes. “Haven’t you?”

That touches too close. Dean turns his face away, insofar as he’s able.

“I think I should mention that ‘James’ actually is my middle name,” Castiel adds.

Dean looks up at him. “Seriously.”

“Seriously.”

“Huh.” That strange, blank curtain falls back over his mind. It drapes across his thoughts, warming them. Slowing them. Adding weight and a sense of static electricity to every motion.

“You said the pies were done,” Castiel prompts.

“Right, yeah,” Dean says, not moving.

Castiel takes a step back. He fetches the oven mitts before helping Dean up. It can only have been minutes, but standing has turned strange. Being taller than Castiel, if only slightly, is even stranger. Ignoring it as best he can, Dean takes the pies out and turns up the oven temperature.

“That’ll be a couple minutes.”

Castiel eyes the room. The cramped excuse for a living room with Dean’s couch and awesome TV setup. The rest of the kitchenette with the cooling pecan and waiting apple pies. He looks back at Dean, biting his lip against a thought.

“What?” Dean asks.

“How long for the apple to bake?”
“Uh, forty-five minutes, maybe an hour? Probably an hour.”

Castiel nods thoughtfully before looking back at the couch. While it can fit three if they’re friendly, it’s hardly enough for two grown men to go horizontal on.

Dean clears his throat. “I mean, I could bring the timer into the bedroom. If you wanted.”

“I have a different idea,” Castiel says like he thinks there’s a chance of Dean saying no. Like Dean’s perky nipples are pebbled from the air and not Castiel’s proximity.

“I like your ideas,” Dean promises. “What is it?”

“If we have that much time, I’m going to teach you how to blow me,” Castiel tells him. “Get a condom and a pillow, and kneel in front of the sofa.”

“Still gotta stick them in the oven,” Dean points out, because pie still wins out over his dick. Without the handjob in the car, it might have been a different story, but Dean can ignore that.

“I can do that much.” Cas presses a kiss to the corner of his mouth, only to pull away when Dean chases him for something deeper. Cas pushes Dean on the chest. “It beeps when the temperature is right, I can’t possibly mess that up. Now get the supplies and kneel.”

Cas does make a stupidly compelling point.

“Yeah, okay.” Dean still leans back in for one more actual kiss before doing as bid. He takes a tiny detour to empty out his jeans pockets—doesn’t want anything digging into his thigh when he kneels—and he snorts quietly to himself as he plugs his phone into its charger.

*How’s the date going?* Sam had texted a couple hours ago.

Dean leaves the phone on his bedside table without responding; too much Sam can only kill the mood. He goes through the drawer instead, shakes open an old box, and tears a pair of condoms off the strip. They’ll need both eventually, if not more.
He leaves the box out on his bed, along with the lube, only to nearly forget to bring the pillow. Reemerging back into the main room, he blinks at Cas’ back. “The dishes can wait, man.”

Cas looks placidly over his shoulder. “You’re not kneeling.” He nods toward the couch.

Involuntarily licking his lips, Dean goes where bid. He pushes back the coffee table and gets settled, going so far as to pull off his shoes. Looking over at Cas, catching that unfairly attractive profile, Dean fights down the urge to squirm.

“Kneeling,” Dean points out.

“Good,” Cas answers, still scrubbing, not looking. “Are you thinking about my cock?”

Dean swallows. Regardless of Cas’ calm, pragmatic tone, he is now. “Yeah.”

“Do you want it in your mouth?”

“Yeah.”

“I want you to think about it a little longer,” Cas says.

Folding his arms on the sofa cushions, Dean reminds himself that Cas is the desperate one here. He’s gotta be. He just was, no matter how quickly he put himself back together while Dean was in his bedroom. “What am I thinking about, exactly?”

“How deep you want to take me,” Cas says to the pots and pans. They clang their responses beneath rhythmic scrubbing. “Whether I should come in your mouth or pull off the condom to come on your chest. Whether I should thrust into your mouth or leave you in charge of the pace.”

The practical tone does nothing to negate Dean’s knee-jerk response to Castiel’s voice.
“Do you want me to instruct you, order you, or simply praise you in the right direction?” Castiel continues.

“You want me to help with the dishes?” Dean counters, already starting to stand up.

At that, Castiel whips a look in his direction. “Kneel,” he orders, and across the dividing counter between them, the command cracks Dean across the face.

Breathless, Dean sinks back down.

Castiel stares back at him as if, between the two of them, Dean is the creature of beauty. Instead of Castiel, strong and tall, his shoulders wide and clad in blue, his forearms bare and wet. “You’re going to wait for my cock like the good boy you are.”

Castiel pauses. Lets Dean hear the words before they’re even said.

“Do you understand, Dean?”

“Yes, Castiel,” Dean answers, sitting on his heels, hands flat atop the sofa seat.

Castiel doesn’t tell him where to look, so Dean keeps looking at him. Through the rest of the washing. Through the drawn out process of Castiel drying off his hands and forearms. Through, finally, finally, the oven beeping its readiness and Castiel putting the last two pies in.

“What do I set the timer for?” Castiel asks.

“Uh. Forty-five? Yeah.”

Nodding, Castiel sets the timer and leaves it on the counter with an authoritative click. He comes striding around into the living room portion of the room, moving with the efficient yet awkward gait of a man with a painful boner. Cool air prickles across Dean’s bare shoulders and back, or maybe that’s just the heat blazing up from inside of him.
With a gesture, Castiel orders Dean to shift back.

Dean does, hands on his thighs to intentionally frame his own semi.

Castiel sits in front of him. Makes himself comfortable, legs spread wide on either side of Dean. There’s so much in Castiel’s face, but it’s Castiel’s crotch Dean can’t look away from.

Jesus, that looks big.

That’s going in his mouth.

That’s going in his ass.

Castiel unbuckles his belt.

He unbuttons and unzips his fly.

He takes himself out. His dick. His balls.

Holy shit.

Dicks aren’t supposed to look hot.

Dicks are floppy, and embarrassing, and kind of weird. They’re good in porn the way weird things can be good in porn, in the heat of the moment, in the dubious judgment inherent to jack ing off.

This dick is still hot.

Dean lifts a hand. Almost touches.
Looks up to Castiel, who nods with dark, dark eyes.

It’s just as hot to the touch, but even hotter is Castiel’s strained exhale at the contact.

Careful of his own rough palms and fingers, Dean wraps a hand around the base and another around the head. He works his thumb in circles over the slit, over the pre-come leaking out from a head even pinker than Castiel’s lips.

“Breathe,” Castiel reminds him in a low rumble.

Dean sucks in air and only grows dizzier.

“Are you okay?” Castiel asks.

Dean nods, the world still tilting.

Castiel cups his cheek. Takes hold of Dean by one wrist. “What’s wrong?”

Shaking his head, nuzzling into Castiel’s palm, Dean doesn’t relinquish his grip on Castiel’s dick for an instant. “Want you so fucking bad,” he grits out, his eyes shut tight.

“Give me the condom and you can have me,” Castiel promises. He leans forward and, low in his kneel, Dean has to crane back to meet him in the kiss. Dean shoves his tongue into Castiel’s mouth immediately, starts working one hand up and down that hot shaft, and Castiel clutches at him like Dean’s something unbreakable.

With a groan, Castiel puts an end to the kissing. He grabs at Dean’s wrist again. “Dean, if you’re not going to use your mouth, I want you where I can touch you.”

“I’m gonna, I’m gonna,” Dean swears. He reaches around, checks his pockets, and finally remembers the condoms on the coffee table. He starts to open one up before a fortunate flash of insight. “You gotta—I already got your spunk on my hands.”
Castiel responds by whipping off his sweater. Not exactly the solution Dean had in mind, but nothing to sneeze at either. The white cotton undershirt could stand to go too, though.

“Wipe your hands on me.”

Dean totally gropes him. He hadn’t thought there’d be that much to grope on anyone without boobs, but he was wrong and has happily learned his lesson.

“Dean,” Castiel chastises in a growl.

“I’ll be good,” Dean answers, the only reaction he has left in him. “Let me be good, I’ll be good.”

“Condom,” Castiel reminds him.

Dean rolls it on him, and hell if that isn’t a distraction in its own right. The way the unlubricated latex clings to Castiel’s skin. It wrinkles up a little bit, and as Dean smooths the condom down, he smears more of Castiel’s pre-come down inside it. There’s this extra layer of motion, condom sliding over skin over the flesh beneath, a subtle difference from the feel of his own dick while jerking off. This shouldn’t be sexy, should only be a practicality, but something about the shift in shade, the heat, the responsiveness, it pings the part of Dean’s brain that wolf-whistles at pantyhose and stockings.

“Dean,” Castiel urges, but Dean keeps on looking, using only his hands. He opens his mouth a little, knows it’ll be a stretch, and incredulously feels himself salivate even more.

Dean leans forward and licks at latex-wrapped heat. The taste clings to his tongue as Dean works his way up to the tip, one hand holding Castiel steady at the base. With a groan, Castiel sinks back into the couch cushions, but he never stops looking down at Dean, chin resting on his chest.

Getting his mouth around the head is the first big thing. Literally. It takes two tries to even attempt it, and then it’s not as bad and just as big as Dean had thought. His lips stretch, he panics over his own teeth, and he pulls off with a sucking pop, and there. He’s done it. Started to do it.

Dean just sucked a dick.
“Go slow,” Castiel urges, hands stroking Dean’s forearms.

Dean gives it another try, enough to feel Castiel stiffen and twitch between his lips, against his tongue. He feels like he’s going fast, too fast, but Castiel keeps murmuring praise, a low “That’s it, that’s it” as wanting as it is gentle. Taking in just the head, Dean tries to swirl his tongue around the slit the same way he’d tongued at Castiel’s thumb the night before, but the empty tip of the condom makes it weird.

“Different angle,” Castiel orders, or maybe asks. The strain in the body beneath Dean’s hands makes it difficult to tell.

Dean tries moving his head around, feeling more like a choked chicken than anything sexy, but Castiel’s hand threads through his hair and tilts him. Doesn’t slam him down and make him swallow. Just moves him a little, pivots him, gets the head of Castiel’s dick against the roof of his mouth like it was fucking made to fit there, and Dean groans at how absurdly easy it just became.

Castiel groans for very different reasons, reasons Dean immediately reproduces. He tongues at the base of the head. He sucks, pulling with his mouth until it feels like he’s gagging himself. He has to pop off once or twice more, swallowing his spit and working his jaw, but the challenge, the heady musk, the incredible responsiveness, it all has him chubbing up way more than he would have thought possible.

Or maybe that’s just the sounds Castiel makes. The litany of “So good, such a good boy for me” and “Like that, like that.” The order of “Don’t forget your hands, use those too.” The hitching breaths. The tremble in Castiel’s thighs.

Using his hands is a fucking awesome idea. He tilts Castiel around inside his mouth, moving his head, really getting that tongue swirling action on, and Castiel sucks in a hard breath, his hips jerking beneath Dean’s forearms.

“Sorry, sorry,” Castiel apologizes in a rush, petting Dean’s hair. “That was, do that.”

Stretching his mouth open wide, Dean tilts his head to the side, Castiel’s cockhead pressing up from the inside of his cheek. Managing eye contact, Dean raises his eyebrows.

Staring down at him wordlessly, Castiel touches himself through Dean’s cheek. The reverence in those fingertips. Dean closes his eyes against the sight but can’t deny the feeling.
He uses his hands even more, doing that following the mouth thing he’s always liked chicks to use on him. He touches down low, fondling Castiel’s balls where they peek out the slit of his underwear. That contrast, latex and skin, it has Dean sucking harder on reflex even before Cas spreads his legs wider.

“Press,” Cas gasps, so Dean presses with his tongue. Licks hard at that one spot until Cas’ grip on his forearm turns painful. “That too.”

Dean hums a question, unwilling to pull off now. He’s gonna make Cas come. He’s gonna make Cas come.

“Under my balls,” Cas manages to get out. “Press up there.” And then he says something that might be one big mumble or might be something like “perineum,” if that’s a word.

Dean presses, knuckling up against cotton and the covered cushion of pubic hair. Cas’ dick jerks in his mouth, fucking gets bigger in his mouth, holy shit.

Dean works at it and works at it, shifting to knuckle up through jeans and underwear both as Cas spreads his legs wider, and blunt pressure has to make up for the lack of dexterity. Cas gets harder and harder between his lips, over his tongue, Cas’ fucking pulse pounding in Dean’s mouth.

“I’m close, I’m, Dean, I’m-”

Dean pulls off.

Has to. Has to see.

He rears up. One hand going for Cas, his shoulder. One hand staying on Cas, his dick, stroking hard and fast through the condom.

“Come on me,” Dean demands, and Cas’ eyes snap shut.
Cas’ head snaps back.

His mouth stretches open, their hands entwined and jerking him fast. Each pull of Dean’s hand pulls a corresponding little “Ah” out of him, like a half-second clip of Cas climbing into a hot bath, but stuck on a loop. By the time Dean gets the condom off him, Cas is down to a weak little spurt, so Dean does the sensible thing and plants himself on top of Cas, his socks sliding on the floor, one arm around Cas’ neck.

He gets a hot splash around his navel, just that, but Cas clutches him close, reflexively rutting against Dean’s stomach until he hisses, sensitive dick hitting Dean’s jeans. Then Cas pushes him back, pushes him down off the couch and back onto the floor.

“Sorry,” Dean apologizes reflexively, but Cas follows him down. Legs spread on either side of Dean’s, kneeling over Dean’s kneel. Cas hugging him tight, his arms strong, his back a tired slope.

Cas kissing the side of his neck. Slow kisses, but many, like he’d pepper them on if only he had the energy.

“All that practice on your hand really paid off, huh?” Dean jokes weakly. Maybe he didn’t take Cas down deep or anything, but he still knows a good orgasm when he sees one. That’s gotta count for something, right? He eases Cas down the rest of the way to stroke the curve of his spine. “Cas?”

Cas lets out a grunt of a mumble.

“That was okay, right?” Dean checks.

Propping himself up with a forearm on Dean’s shoulder, Cas smooshes their foreheads together. He kisses Dean in lieu of a verbal answer. A long kiss. Almost long enough a kiss.

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Cas pulls back to look at him with heavy-lidded eyes. He rubs his thumb over Dean’s lower lip. “Gorgeous,” he says, as if this is the new name for Dean’s mouth. As if it’s been the real name all along, or some other fanciful, stupidly romantic bullshit that Dean wouldn’t be caught dead believing.

“Shut up,” Dean says instead, but he still kisses Cas’ thumb.

The couch is still too small for two grown men, but that somehow fails to matter. They clean themselves up with paper towels—rather, Dean cleans them both up with damp paper towels—and then there’s some creative sprawling. Dean ends up on the bottom, or maybe it’s more accurate to say Cas ends up on his lap. Because of course Cas wants to sit on his lap while Dean is hours away from his last orgasm and has his arms full of sexy.

Arms draped around each other, the coffee table pulled close for use as a footrest, they vaguely dose. Cas tucks his discarded sweater around Dean like a blanket. Dean gets a hand up Cas’ undershirt. The scent of apple pie grows and grows, and every time Dean considers grabbing a snack, Cas shifts against him, immediately reclaiming Dean’s full attention. Stroking Dean’s arms. Petting Dean’s hair. Pressing his mouth against whatever bits of Dean he can reach.

In return, Dean stretches out, lounging however gives Cas the most access. Whenever Dean rocks his hips up, Cas hums a negative as he continues his lethargic exploration.

“I can take my time fingering you open now,” Cas explains, having the sheer fucking balls and complete lack of shame to tell Dean this to his face. “I’ll be calm enough not to rush now.”

“A little rush ain’t bad.”

Cas shakes his head, his eyes as soft as the hint of his smile. Soft and heated, the molten metal of his intent. “I don’t want to rush. I want you coming as hard as possible, as long as possible, when I say you can.”

Dean should have a better comeback than licking his lips, but at least Cas seems to find that a captivating response.
Tearing his eyes away, Cas lets out a long groan and stretches, his ass and thighs grinding against Dean’s lap. Cas wraps an arm back around Dean’s shoulders. “It’s been too long since I’ve done this,” Cas confides.

“What? Fucked a guy to death?”

Smirking, Cas shakes his head again. He squeezes Dean, only to adjust the sweater draped around Dean’s neck like the best smelling scarf in the world. “Any of it. Had sex in person. Touched someone. Wanted to touch someone.”

Dean sneaks his hand higher up Cas’ shirt. “Good thing I’m hot.”

“Dean.”

Dean unrepentantly thumbs Cas’ nipple. “What?”

“It’s not just because you’re ‘hot’,” Cas answers, and the fucker even takes his hand off Dean’s thigh to do the air quotes. But his hand comes back down on Dean’s bare stomach, so that’s fine.

“Right, I’m hot and I bring you coffee.”

Cas rolls his eyes, and this time, Dean gets to feel it, the full motion of Cas’ indulgent annoyance. “You’re more than a gorgeous man with a giant thermos, Dean.”

Dean’s instincts say to shove Cas off him. Dean’s dick says to keep him exactly where he is. His heart ran off somewhere making gibbering noises, so he settles for his brain’s response of a skeptical, “Uh-huh. ‘Cause you learned so much about me at the library.”

Cas gives him one hell of a side-eye. “Only that you stick to schedules, come prepared, and dedicate yourself wholly even to things you dislike. And that you reach out for help with a speed I frankly envy.”

The urge to push Cas off grows with each word, but the way Cas speaks them to Dean’s collarbones is a bit of a distraction. Not to mention the thumb Cas keeps brushing over them, or the fingers on
Dean’s shoulder.

“So I’m a whiny bitch, that’s what you’re saying?”

Without the slightest change in expression, Castiel pinches the hell out of Dean’s nipple.

The first noise Dean makes shall not be repeated, but the second one is a prim “Ow.”

“I used to admire your confidence,” Castiel continues, rubbing the pain into something hot and tight. “Now that I know better, I admire your composure.” Another threatened tweak. “Mostly.”

“Yeah, I cover pretty well for being a mess,” Dean says, testing the waters for another pinch.

He gets an eye roll instead. “Dean, you’re talking to a man who destroyed his own social life for an entire year to listen to strangers orgasm.”

“Yeah, for research.”

Cas actually smiles at that, for some reason. “We’re all messes. We’re supposed to be. If there’s a single shortcut I could give you, it’s that one.”

“That everyone’s fucked?” Dean asks, eyebrows raised.

Shaking his head, Cas shifts over Dean’s lap again, maybe teasing Dean’s dick, maybe making himself more comfortable with his ass wedged between the couch arm and Dean’s thigh. “I used to think that, because we were made in God’s image, we were meant to be perfect. That we fell from grace by failing somewhere along the line. Any deviation from the righteous path meant damnation.” Visibly choosing his next words, Cas strokes his fingers over Dean’s shoulder.

“We are… fallible,” Cas says, his eyes fixed on some distant place beyond Dean’s skin. “The law of the universe isn’t perfection, it’s entropy. Pure creation, perfection, that’s beyond human limitations. All we can do is try to do our best in a world where it’s too easy to be our worst.
“What I’m trying to say is, everyone’s trying to unfuck themselves,” Cas concludes. “I don’t think I’m broken anymore. I think I came unassembled, without instructions, and missing the pieces I was meant to gather along the way, but I think it’s my job to create myself now. Not into perfection, but the best I can manage.”

Slowly, a gradual change, Cas’ eyes refocus on Dean’s collarbone. They lift to Dean’s face, and Cas quirks a small, self-conscious smile. “I’m sorry, I’m rambling.”

“For what it’s worth, man,” Dean says softly, “you would’ve been an awesome priest.”

Cas ducks his head a little.

“I mean, I’m glad you’re not,” Dean adds. “Way less hot monkey sex that way.”

With faint but downright mischievous smile, Cas replies, “If you can’t call me ‘Sir,’ I can hardly see you calling me ‘Father.’”

Dean shoves Cas off his lap.

At least, he tries, but Cas gets a foot planted on the floor and an arm around Dean’s neck, and maybe Dean doesn’t want to dump Cas onto his own legs, propped up as they are on the coffee table. That’s the only thing that saves Cas: the potential knee injury.

“Such a fucking rosebud,” Dean mutters against Cas’ shoulder. He’s shaking with silent laughter, the asshole.

“I’ll make it up to you,” Cas promises once they get settled into a slightly less clinging position. There’s some squirming involved, some cracking of backs, but Dean’s not so far gone as to suggest the floor just yet. Still, despite being only a couple hours away from his last orgasm, it feels so much longer. Especially when Cas traces Dean’s lips with two fingers.

Running on automatic, Dean licks them.

Cas pushes them into Dean’s mouth. Stares at Dean’s mouth with heavy-lidded eyes that speak more
of satisfaction than lust.

With a sharp nip to Cas’ fingertips, Dean pulls off. “The blowjob was all right, yeah? I know I didn’t go deep, I didn’t wanna bite off more than I- okay, wrong expression,” he quickly amends at Cas’ horrified, wide-eyed blink.

“It was a lot better before you said that.”

“No, seriously.”

Again daring to touch Dean’s mouth, Cas looks at him very seriously indeed. “I’m glad neither of us choked you.”

“So it sucked,” Dean summarizes.

He sees the nipple pinch coming this time but does nothing to block it.

“Ow,” he says again.

“I look forward to you practicing,” Cas tells him, the diplomatic piece of shit.

“Uh-huh. Practice.”

“Yes,” Cas states firmly. “Because if someday, you can kiss my cock half as well as you kiss my mouth, I’ll be a very happy man.”

“Oh,” Dean says, abruptly more like five weeks removed from the last time he got his rocks off.

In the resulting make-out session, there’s a lot of squirming around and repositioning. Dean finally gets Cas under him only to get pulled down and wedged against the back of the couch. Dean’s legs stick out, Cas’ are bent at the knee, but their legs are intertwined and their heads are more or less on the same level, propped up on the couch arm only a little. Cas drapes his sweater back over Dean, and then it’s slow, lazy kisses until the apple pie timer goes off.
“How was that forty-five minutes?” Cas asks, like he’s never lost track of time making out before or something absurd like that.

Dean just groans while the timer beeps itself out. “Don’t wanna.”

“I thought you loved pie,” Cas says directly against his mouth. It comes out as more of a low buzz, but Dean gets the gist.

“It’s still gonna be like ten more minutes or some shit, just gotta monitor it now.”

Cas squeezes Dean’s hip, his fingers playing at a casual touch on Dean’s waistband. “I have an idea.”

“A sexy idea?”

Cas nods very seriously.

“A new sexy idea?” Dean asks. “Or just me kneeling in front of the oven again.”

“A half-new sexy idea,” Cas says, working his hand up Dean’s side like he’s got all day. Hell, the guy’s like half an hour away from an orgasm: he really does have all day to lie here and thumb Dean’s abused nipple. “You kneel in front of the oven...”

“Okay…” Could be five minutes, could be a full fifteen. Hell, even twenty.

“And I wait for you in your room,” Cas continues. “Naked.”

Dean bites his lip.

“What do you think?” Cas asks. As if Dean’s gonna be thinking with his dick pressed up against Cas’ thigh.
“Um… Maybe for Easter?”

Cas blinks.

“If that’s okay,” Dean adds.

“Of course.” In nodding, Cas rubs his head against the armrest, ruffling his hair even worse than Dean’s already done. “…Can I ask why not today?”

“Yeah, uh. It’s.” Dean licks his lips. “Okay, it’s not stupid, I just don’t want you stripping without me watching.”

“Oh,” Cas says, and that’s what has him turning red. “In that case.”

“I mean, we can do the same deal again,” Dean hurriedly points out. If he didn’t have to keep an eye on the oven, maybe he’d have Cas grab him by the back of the head, force Dean’s face against his crotch, and hold him there. Which is a mental image as amazing as it is out of the blue. And definitely not something he’s ready to ask for.

“Or,” Cas says, pulling back with a clear sense of purpose. He gets up stiffly, and a rush of cold air slaps Dean in his absence.

“Shit,” Dean says immediately, realizing just how long it’s been since the timer went off. He gets up a lot faster, shoving Cas’ sweater against that undershirt-clad chest as he passes. The blast of heat as he opens the oven door gets a sigh out of him, and not just from relief. “Okay, cool.”

He gestures Cas over, and Cas crouches next to him. Not even feigning the need for balance, Cas wraps one arm across Dean’s shoulders like he can’t imagine not touching Dean.

“See how the filling’s kinda bubbling a little?” Dean asks, pointing.

“That is much flatter than I remember.”
“Told you.”

Why that’s worth a kiss on the cheek, Dean will never know, but he ain’t complaining. “I’m deferring to your expertise for a reason, Dean.”

Dean clears his throat. “So, yeah. Five, ten more minutes. Ten minutes past bubbling’s usually good.”

“Good to know,” Cas says, no longer looking into the oven.

Dean closes the oven door.

Cas straightens up, but he keeps his hand on Dean’s shoulder exactly where it is, pressing down.

Somehow not falling on his face, Dean shifts down into a kneel, back onto the abandoned aprons. Cas squeezes his shoulder, a silent good boy.

“Am I waiting with you?” Cas asks.

“You really get off watching me on my knees, huh?”

“I just did, yes.”

Dean snorts. “Touche.” He licks his lips, looking up and up at Cas. “You sure you’re gonna be good for round two?”

“Round three,” Cas corrects. “And I’m sure my cock will recover before I wear out both hands.”

“Both hands?” Dean repeats, voice sneaking upward.
“Not at the same time, obviously.” Cas lifts his hand from Dean’s shoulder to press his thumb against Dean’s lips. To press there like he knows just how much he owns Dean’s mouth. "Although... that certainly is an idea." He withdraws his hand before Dean can get comfortable. “But I was saying. I have a compromise.”

“On what?”

Biting his lip, Cas puts a hand on the fridge for balance and steps out of his loafers, pulling his socks off as he does. With one long look at Dean, Cas pulls off his undershirt, revealing skin far paler than the tan of his face and hands would suggest. His happy trail barely makes it up to his navel, but that just means an uninterrupted view.

Cas folds his shirt. He drops it on top of his loafers and socks. His hands return to his fly.

“Are you getting naked in my kitchen?” Dean asks, eyes wide, brain imploding as two of his major drives conflict, warring over sex and sanitary cooking spaces.

“Almost,” Cas says.

“Hell yeah,” Dean answers.

Twitching a nervous smile down at Dean, Cas unzips his fly, drops his jeans, and steps out of them. He starts to bend down, but Dean picks them up for him. Hell, Dean fucking folds them before adding them to the clothes pile, and that’s him moving on automatic.

God, those thighs. The loose curl of hair, decorating the skin adorning that muscle. Holy shit, those thighs.

The boxers ain’t half bad either, and there’s something surreal as fuck about the thwarted need to see a cock he’s already had in his mouth.

Bending down for his clothes, seemingly unaware of the show he’s putting on, Cas exudes nerves far more than domination, but he still looks Dean full in the face when he straightens up.
“Like I said,” Cas tells him, “I’m going to wait in your bedroom. You’re finished out here whenever you decide to be.”

“You fucking asshole,” Dean says, not going anywhere. He sits up taller, if anything, moving his hands to make sure Cas has a clear line of sight at the bulge in Dean’s jeans.

“Whenever you’re ready,” Cas reminds him, and then he fucking goes to Dean’s bedroom and closes the door behind him without looking back.

An eternity of seven minutes later, Dean takes both pies out of the oven, turns the damn thing off, and tries to do basic inventory. Pies on the cooling rack, check. All the dirty crap, washed via Cas. Oven, definitely off. Spices, sugar, flour, so on; all put away. Oven, triple-checked to be off. Absolutely no chance of the fire alarm interrupting them.

The few steps to Dean’s bedroom have never felt longer, and he’s never taken them faster. He knocks like some kind of deranged idiot and pushes the door open in practically the same motion.

In the back of his mind—hell, in the forefront of his mind—he’d been expecting… something. A sexy tableau. Some kind of a show. Something. Anything.

Well, not anything.

Not the heart-stopping, adorable sight of Cas snuggled down under Dean’s covers.

“I got cold,” Cas says defensively.

Dean’s face breaks itself grinning. “That’s, that’s cool. I mean, okay, not, not temperature.”

“Shut up,” Cas tells him.

“I dunno, maybe I should get you earmuffs and a hot cocoa or something,” Dean says, pointing out the door even as he closes it behind him.
“You should come over here and warm me up.” Cas pushes back the covers to prove his point, and hell if that isn’t a compelling argument.

Dean shrugs like he needs more persuading, but he unzips his fly and kicks off his jeans before helping Cas pull down the sheets. Cas crawls back onto the bed after, and ain’t that a sight. So is the play of skin and muscle as Cas reaches for the box of condoms Dean had left out on the bed, plus the abandoned lube.

“Do you want to put a towel down?” Cas asks.

“Oh yeah, baby, talk linens to me.”

The resulting eye roll has to be one of Cas’ best, and that’s saying a lot.

“Yeah, I’ll grab one.”

Dean grabs two. More space for fooling around, right?

When Dean comes back, Cas takes the towels out of his hands, tosses them onto the bed, and drags Dean in for kissing. Arms wrapped around each other, bare chests getting acquainted, mouths fighting in a physical contest to say no, I missed you more.

One of them pushes the other back to the bed, but it keeps twisting, their path rotating, two comets orbiting around each other on the road to impact. The bed hits the back of Dean’s knees, and he goes down, trying to drag Cas with him. Planting both hands and one knee on the bed, Cas braces himself over Dean, a looming wall of nearly naked masculinity, and shit. Shit goddamn.

This is gonna be amazing.

“Time to be naked, Dean,” Cas orders. “Lift up.”

Leaning back on his elbows, his legs hanging off the side of the bed, Dean lifts.
And Cas, Cas doesn’t just push Dean’s boxer briefs down. Cas pulls them down, guides them down, moves with them. His mouth goes to Dean’s stomach, travels across one hip, switches to his opposite thigh, and presses a firm kiss above both Dean’s knees.

Now kneeling before Dean’s closed legs, Cas places a large, hot hand on each knee.

He looks Dean dead in the eyes.

And he pushes Dean’s legs apart.

Cas looks over him, across him. He keeps Dean’s legs spread despite Dean’s initial, involuntary twitch to close them. Cas looks and keeps looking, all the way back up to Dean’s face, even with Dean’s dick sticking up in the way, waving high and all in the desperation to be called on by teacher.

“Relax,” Cas urges, voice already lower than the gutter Dean’s lived in these past months.

“You relax,” Dean fires back, doing the exact opposite.

Rolling his eyes, Cas strokes his fingertips up and down the insides of Dean’s thighs. Those tiny trails of heat set off shivers, all of it entirely outside of Dean’s area of experience. Though Cas is the one kneeling for a change, it’s somehow a position of power on him, never mind that he’s doing it in the exact same spot Dean’s knelt for him over the phone.

“We can both relax,” Cas tells him like some kind of indulgent compromise when Dean’s the only one here who can barely breathe.

Cas just keeps stroking Dean’s thighs, up on the outside, down on the inside. Inhaling on the up. Exhaling on the down. Pulling in with anticipation. Letting out as, once again, Cas’ hands reverse their trajectory without touching Dean’s dick or balls or hole.

Their breathing syncs, Cas taking control of him down to his very lungs.

“Relax,” Cas repeats in a murmur. One hand still circling, he replaces the other with his mouth. Covering a much smaller range, he kisses and sucks at the inside of Dean’s thigh, seemingly
oblivious to Dean’s leg hair beneath his lips and tongue. He lifts his eyes back to Dean’s, way too fucking up close and personal to Dean’s crotch to be eyeballing everything this intently. But then he bites and sucks Dean's thigh, tongue flicking over the flesh pinched between his teeth, and fuck.

Still propping himself up on his elbows, Dean clenches the towel with both hands as his foot jerks, involuntary.

“Good or bad?” Cas asks, lips buzzing against his skin.

“I, I dunno,” Dean answers even as he spreads his legs wider.

Cas goes and does it again. Slower. Longer. Harder. Builds it up from a light pull, to deep into hickey territory, and that’s Dean down, his back hitting the bed.

“Fuck,” Dean swears, and it comes out as a shaking sigh.

Cas keeps up his goddamn exploration like he went and packed provisions for a five year mission to where no man has been before. Gets Dean spreading wider until it’s anyone’s guess why his legs are trembling: Cas’ mouth venturing higher, or the effort in giving him that access.

Gradually, Cas’ shoulder slips from against the side of Dean’s knee, to under it. Cas’ hair tickles Dean’s dick, just for a second—and then Cas is back down, starting over on the other leg.

“I swear to fucking god,” Dean starts, only for Cas to shut him up with a hand beneath his ass, making good use of Dean’s leg over his shoulder. Cas presses not against Dean’s hole, but above it, that space behind Dean’s balls, and Dean swears again, more breathlessly this time.

He gets a knuckle pushing there. Not opening up his hole, not intentionally toying with his balls. Just a firm piece of pressure that starts shifting around until Dean has a full-body twitch of do that again. It’s not as good as a finger to the prostate, but it’s sure as hell related. It’s the difference in sensation between wearing a rubber and going bare, dulled just enough to remind Dean of what he’s missing.

“Do you like that?” Cas checks, sounding just as wrecked and wondering as Dean’s trying not to feel, and Dean makes the mistake of opening his eyes and looking back at him.
A beast of anxiety, tied up and restrained by pleasure, rears up at the sight. At his own dick, hard and wanting so close to Cas’ mouth. To Cas’ attention everywhere else, to his unrelenting focus and uninterrupted staring.

Dean’s heart pounds the wrong way, and what comes out his mouth is, “You know I’m not a girl, right?”

Cas tilts his head. The stubble of his cheek scrapes against Dean’s inner thigh. “That’s a significant amount of your appeal, yes.”

“I mean…” He tries to prop himself up again, but looking at Cas just highlights the distance. “It’s not like you gotta get me wet or something. I got the lube right here and everything.”

“You don’t like this kind of foreplay,” Cas pieces together, squinting a little, except no, that’s wrong too.

“Feels good,” Dean reassures him. “Just… weird.”

“Weird like you need something else with it?” Cas asks, one hand going back to stroking Dean’s leg, the other paused near Dean’s backdoor.

“I dunno,” Dean says, but he pushes down into it. “No one’s ever… What?”

Cas shakes his head like a grin hadn’t just flashed across his face. “I’d assumed no one had.”

Heart shaking harder than the arms he’s propped up on, Dean cracks a joke instead of himself. “You got a virgin ass waiting for you, and you wanna go plant a flag on my legs?”

With a faint smirk, Cas ducks his head to suck at already reddened skin. *Fuck.* The way Cas flicks his tongue, god-fucking-damn. But the asshole keeps his eyes open, keeps looking at Dean and his dick and all of him, all the while being out of reach. Dean having his knee over Cas’ shoulder doesn’t exactly count as grabbing hold of him, either. This isn’t some kind of leg-hug; it’s being splayed open for inspection. Indulgent and pleasurable, but still an inspection.
“What, you don’t like dicks once the underwear comes off?” Dean asks.

Cas shoots him that familiar look of determined exasperation. “You know how to ask nicely, Dean.”

“I’m just asking,” Dean says, all casual like his upper half isn’t cold and alone and fucking useless with Cas all the way down there. “I mean, if that’s your thing, more power to you, but seriously: not a girl. Not getting wet until you stick the lube in.”

Either Cas cocks his head to the side, or he simply lays it against Dean’s thigh. Either way, it’s one hell of a sight. “You need to relax to take a finger, let alone a cock.” With another one of those laser-focused scans up Dean’s body from dick to face, Cas narrows his eyes. Dean’s arousal can only tighten in response, but so does everything else.

“...This isn’t helping,” Cas realizes. “I’m making you more nervous.”

“Look, just—just come up here, okay?”

Cas doesn’t so much rise to his feet as push himself from floor to bed, climbing in directly on top of Dean. The more Dean moves back to give Cas space to settle, the more Cas follows, body as intent as his eyes.

Naturally, Dean has to flip them, and Cas goes down like someone who never wrestled in high school. After just one startled second, Cas pushes back, not with his hands, but with his hips. They exchange grapples and gropes, Dean’s dick riding along Cas’ thigh or against his boxers. Finally, fingers entwined, hands pinned to the bed on either side of Cas’ head, Dean gives a particularly slow thrust against Cas’ semi.

“Not disagreeing on the bulge thing being hot or anything, but you gonna keep those on all night?” Dean asks, aiming for coy, probably coming out desperate and whiny. There’s no fucking reason to go all clingy: yeah, Cas might not be going directly for Dean’s ass, but Cas is still only an hour out from a blowjob. Cas still wants him. It’s fine. It’s fine.

Pinned under Dean, Cas looks up at him with heavy-lidded eyes and asks, “Did you get tested after Thanksgiving?”

Dean frowns. “Midterms was before.”
Cas knocks his foot against Dean’s shin. “Did you get tested after you slept with that man from Paradise?”

“Oh,” Dean says like an idiot. Because before Aaron, it was a bunch of chicks over the summer while Dean was fucking his way through denial, and Dean hadn’t even thought of getting tested. “Yeah, no. I was careful and all, but okay, putting a hold on the direct dick contact.”

Cas nods up at him thoughtfully, the play of his muscles broadcasting his intentions. Cas tries to roll him, so Dean shoves him back down just to prove he can, and the look on Cas’ face.

“Oh,” Dean says, floored in an entirely different way. “You like a little manhandling, huh.”

It’s not a question.

Cas wets his lips. “Maybe,” he rasps.

Dean shoves Cas’ hands up higher, up under the pillows and against the base of the headboard. His dick gets some good pressure against Cas’ stomach, and they let out matching groans. Cas’ arms flex as he strains to move, but he’s going about it the entirely wrong way, straining to lift directly up instead of pulling his arms down and in first. All the effort can’t budge Dean in the slightest, can only show off Cas’ arms instead.

At least, Dean thinks that’s the aim, Cas showing off how fucking gorgeous he is, but then Dean looks down, looks at Cas’ flushed face and deep dark eyes, and fuck. Fuck, Cas doesn’t give a shit what he looks like right now.

“I can hold you down so easy,” Dean takes a risk and says. “Shit, I could just rub one out on you, couldn’t I? Cover your chest in my jizz.”

Making yet another one of those deliberately ineffectual struggles, Cas tilts his head back, baring his throat. “You want to mark your territory, Dean?”

“Is that the deal with the twelve million thigh hickeys I got now?” Dean asks right back, and there’s not a hint of apology in the way Cas outright grins, beaming up at Dean with his eyes unfocused and
peering into horny recollections. Dean gives both of them another one of those dragging thrusts, rubbing his dick all over hot skin. “That’s why, huh? Am I your territory, Castiel?”

“You are,” Cas answers immediately, no time for hesitation or thought, and he keeps trying to talk even as Dean keeps trying to kiss him. Things like “I want you.” Stuff like “Give yourself to me.” Romantic, poetic bullshit like “Even your skin knows you’re mine.”

Dean kisses him hard at that. Goes after his ears and sucks on his neck, leaving Cas’ mouth free for talking. Strokes Cas’ arms more than restrains them. Keeps grinding down against his stomach.

“I want you looking at it,” Cas tells him. As Dean shifts, one of Cas’ arms gets free and immediately winds up around Dean’s shoulders. “I want—later, don’t go, stay here—I want you looking. When the doubt comes. Pull down your pants, look at those marks, and jerk off knowing I want you to.”

“Oh, fuck,” Dean groans into Cas’ neck.

Cas strokes his back with both hands now. “Will you that for me, Dean? Will you think about me down between your legs, sucking on your skin?” He presses one palm into the small of Dean’s back, anchoring them even as he rides the wave of Dean’s hard thrust.

Shit, but that’s good. Easily too good if Cas keeps talking. “You gotta fuck me before I lose it.”

“I can fuck you after you lose it,” Cas says with absolute confidence.

“No, I want,” Dean starts to say, and Cas says “Okay” with his hand sliding down to Dean’s ass, middle finger guided down the spine to crack and hole. Dean makes a noise, and Cas makes a better noise.

“This is better,” Cas tells him. “Much more relaxed.” Cas presses a kiss to his cheek like punctuation, or maybe a simple reward. “Maybe you should stay on top.”

“Like, ride you?”

Cas grunts in the affirmative before giving a hard squeeze to Dean’s ass. “Sit up. Kneeling across my
“Again with the kneeling,” Dean pretends to complain, already obeying.

Cas sits up under him and pulls Dean back down to straddle his lap. Wrapping an arm around him, so solid and present, Cas nips at his collarbones. “I can open you up from here, as long as your legs can hold out.”

“I can hold out,” Dean promises thoughtlessly, his knees on two different towels, Cas’ boxers a warm interruption of cotton between swaths of skin.

“Where’s the lube?”

“There.”

They strain to grab it together, only just managing it without getting off each other.

“You’re on lube and condom duty,” Cas informs him, holding one hand in the space between them. “I’m about to be very slippery.”

“Cool.” Dean kisses him. Gotta pass the time while the lube warms up. A good chunk of time, with a tongue in his mouth and hands in his hair. Cas tweaks his nipple again, but when arousal is up, pain is down. His body’s singing only one song, and every sensation gets rewritten into the chorus.

“Let me finger you,” Cas growls against his mouth, and that’s pretty great too.

Dean shares the lube, a generous amount. He kneels higher as Cas reaches down between his legs, as Cas’ wrist befriends Dean’s dick and balls, as Cas’ big, slick finger starts to circle Dean’s hole. Making sure not to drop the lube, Dean wraps both arms around Cas’ shoulders, holding on as wide circles grow smaller, tighter, closer… only to widen back up after the slightest direct pressure.

“Faster,” Dean mutters against his own arm, telling himself he’s too turned on to be embarrassed. He’s got Cas breathing in his ear, got Cas’ heartbeat pounding against his own chest.
“You’ll get faster when you’re ready for it.”

Dean drops his head against his own arm, against the side of Cas’ head, and he holds on tight.

Slowly, Cas works those tight circles back out, the pad of his finger dragging around and around Dean’s hole from the center outward, stretching his rim without ever entering. The first time Cas moves Dean back, pushes Dean out of their tight embrace, Dean nearly loses his arousal to abrupt panic, but Cas asks for more lube and gives more kisses. Enough kisses for them to last through the next round of fingering.

Dean’s thighs shake. Lube drips down their insides, drips down onto Cas’ lap, onto the towels. His hole opens as his body trembles. One wide fingertip, hooking inside and teasing him wider. Dean’s twitching motion downwards is half-thrust, half-exhaustion. Kneeling has never been so hard.

Another round of refreshing the lube, and Cas asks for it in both hands now. One hand back down Dean’s front. The other, around Dean’s back, his ass. A second finger. Two fingers, one from each side. Two fingers, tugging him open in two directions, opening him so damn fast, and then the first finger really gets in there, gets to the point where Dean’s ass drags it in on its own, and that finger starts pressing against the right area.

“You’re there, just a little bit more, more up? Up, yeah, there, it, there, fuck, Cas, god.”

Pressing wet kisses against Dean’s clavicle, Cas rumbles a deep hum and explores that tiny territory. The finger farther back keeps working in there, too, tightening the stretch, deepening the push, and Dean’s fucking riding him now, can’t stop it.

“Slow down,” Cas orders, and he bites Dean when he disobeys. “Save that for my cock.”

“Then put it in me,” Dean shoots back, totally not breathy.

“Mm, no,” Castiel says, like he’s getting that big a kick out of having Dean writhing in his lap, skewered from front and back. Which, well, fair. Realizing the sight he must make, Dean gets one hell of a guilty kick out of it too. Lube dripping down his legs, pre-come leaking out his dick and onto Cas, Castiel’s hands leaving shiny slick trails everywhere they touch…
From behind, Castiel starts fitting another finger in. He does that pulling motion from either side and starts dipping inside from the middle, pressing the other two fingers in there tighter. Tighter against his rim. Tighter against that hot spot, against the pleasure zone of prostate play.

Dean holds on so damn tight. Presses his cheek to Cas’ temple. Presses into the mouth against the crook of his neck. Shoves down on top of wide thighs and into thick fingers. Thrusts against an increasingly slick stomach.

One palm on Dean’s ass, the other against Dean’s balls, Castiel keeps his hands in place. Dean twists and threatens and whines. Castiel gives him nothing but pressure, but pressure’s one hell of a thing. Filling him up so good, and then, *oh*, and then finally moving. Thrusting into Dean, but not all at once. Two fingers in, one out. One ramming back in, stuffing so full, and then the other two almost out. In while out, out while in, filling him and emptying him, all at once.

Porn comes back to smack Dean between the eyes, a mental library sorting itself down to a few highly relevant clips. In and out, both at the same time, both in and out of his ass, and Dean lets out a noise he’s never heard before, a moan that has nothing to do with his prostate or even Castiel’s beautiful fucking hands, and everything to do with the realization that *this must be what double penetration feels like.*

“Oh shit, *oh shit, ”* Dean groans into Castiel’s neck. He twitches his legs wider, straddling Castiel’s lap, straddling legs spread to make space for Castiel’s thrusting hand. They could, fuck, with a dildo. Hell, with a *vibrator.* Have Castiel bend him over, shove the toy in, and himself after. Get rhythmically fucked into oblivion. Have Dean clutching at the sheets the way he’s clutching at Castiel’s shoulders. “We gotta, Cas, *Castiel,* we gotta, I need, fuck, *please,* I-”

“Put the condom on me,” Castiel interrupts, his hands mercifully, tortuously slowing. “Sit up tall.”

With that, Castiel pulls out one hand, and then the other. Thighs shaking, Dean tries to obey, needs to push on Castiel’s shoulders to manage it, the lube impossibly still in one hand. With a lot of squirming and rocking, they get Castiel’s boxers down to his thighs. Dean tears the condom packet open, nearly sticks it on Castiel backwards, and course-corrects just in time. They roll it down and slick him up, Dean pressing demanding kisses against Castiel’s slack mouth all the while.

“On top, are you sure?” Castiel asks, but Dean has him. Dean *has him,* has Castiel under his hands and under his thighs and between his legs, has Castiel lining his dick up against where Dean’s gone empty. Castiel rubbing the head, back and forth. Castiel breaching him, entering as easy as falling in. Uniform and wide in a way fingers working together can never be.
Dean cries out.

Castiel clenches slippery fingers around Dean’s ass, but he can’t hold on tight enough for a good grip. “Dean?”

“That was good, that was good,” Dean promises, sinking down lower. As slow as he can, legs trembling. He swallows hard, pulls Castiel tight against him. He needs to hold on. If that dick had felt huge in his mouth, that’s nothing compared to the reality of it in his ass.

“If it starts to burn, stop,” Castiel orders. “Even if you like it.”

“No, I’m good.”

“It means we need more lube,” Castiel continues.

Dean shakes his head. Risks letting go of a shoulder to grip at the back of Castiel’s head. Tugs on Castiel’s hair. Gets eye contact, up close and personal, with the man whose dick is currently up his ass.

“I mean it,” Dean swears, breathless. “I’m good.”

Castiel’s expression alters, changing from stern concern to something wondrous and wonderful.

“You are,” Castiel agrees. “My good boy.”

Dean’s ass squeezes all on its own, and it’s that—not any of Dean’s many conscious attempts—it’s that which finally breaks Castiel’s control. Castiel who rocks up, his hips, his dick, he, pushing, pushing up, sliding in, he, “Castiel.”

Castiel strokes his back, a soothing motion set in fast forward by the demands of a baser need. Castiel’s hips and legs move under Dean in tiny, desperate thrusts, and that’s Dean, that’s Dean all the way down, Castiel all the way in, so fucking far in, he’s in. They clutch at each other, Dean’s thighs trying to close around Castiel’s waist, Castiel trying to hold all of Dean’s back from head to ass.
“Go slow,” Castiel urges, and Dean tries. His legs shake too hard to lift up more than an inch, but the inch itself must have gone and taken a mile, because that much distance is suddenly huge beyond reckoning. Somehow not understanding that this is amazing, Dean’s dick drunkenly flops against Cas’ stomach.

“I gotta, uh.” Letting go of Castiel’s shoulder with one hand, Dean sits down even harder on Castiel’s dick, fucking impales himself. He groans and fists his dick, and for all he’s leaking pre-come faster than ever, his dick has lost its fucking mind and decided to ignore the fact that Dean is fully turned on.

“We should change position,” Castiel says. He starts on it without Dean, planting his feet, getting his thighs up. Dean leans his ass against those, slides down against those. The fullness is amazing; having his wilting boner on display, less so.

“Swear I’m into it,” Dean promises in a hurry, pumping himself ever faster. Pre-come, pre-come everywhere, like Dean’s ass is stealing all of Castiel’s jizz and funnelling it out on his behalf.

“I’m blocking your blood flow,” Castiel says, jarringly smug.

“What?” Dean lifts his eyes from his jerking hand—from his kiss-mottled thighs—to Castiel’s proud smirk.

“My cock is blocking the blood for your erection,” Castiel explains with way too pleased of a glint in his eyes. Putting his weight on his arms, Castiel leans back, displaying his dirtied chest. “Do you know what that means?”

Dean immediately refuses to admit how sexy a look arrogance is on Castiel. “Yeah, yeah, you’re huge, congrats.”

“Do you know what that means?” Castiel asks again. He gives another one of those rolling thrusts, and Dean moves with him, riding the impact instead of getting hit by it. God, maybe he should get hit with it. He tries for that, and the whole length of Castiel’s cock goes sliding through him like nothing else ever has. *This* is what getting fucked is like, and getting fucked is amazing.

“Dean?” Castiel prompts, the single syllable broken into many by exertion.
“Tell me, can’t think,” Dean admits.

“I get to *fuck* you.” Castiel punctuates the profanity with a motion even more obscene. “And while I *fuck* you-”

“Oh god,” Dean gasps, still working his half-wilted dick.

“-I’m not letting you come, Dean. While I *fuck* you-”

“*Please.*”

“-I *own* your orgasms. Don’t I?”

Dean nods frantically, head bobbing faster than even his leg muscles tremble. “Yes, yes, Castiel.”

“Who *owns* your orgasm, Dean?”

“You.” It’s practically a sob.

“And if you want them back, what do you do?” Castiel asks, clearly leading somewhere Dean’s overloaded brain can’t follow.

“Keep them,” Dean begs. “They’re yours, I’m, keep me, Castiel, please, fuck me, own me-”

Castiel drags Dean forward, hauls him into a kiss. The angle’s wrong, too far, stretched long instead of wide, and Castiel’s dick falls out of his ass. Dean whines in protest, in apology.

“Put it back, put it in, Cas, you gotta, c’mon,” Dean pleads, reaching around and getting nowhere, his legs giving up on him.
“On your back,” Castiel orders, and he pours Dean over. “Put a pillow under your ass.”

Somehow, Dean manages to get the pillow under both his ass and the lube-wet towel. Castiel takes the tiny respite to finally kick his boxers all the way off. He comes back to Dean immediately after, crawling over him, caging Dean down against the bed, trapping him, owning him like it’s important Dean be owned, be kept.

Holding himself up on one arm, Castiel pushes more lube up Dean’s ass. The fucker grins at Dean’s gasp, at the way Dean’s legs clench around him at the cooler slickness. Dean gets his own back mere seconds later, clenching down as Castiel pushes back in.

The sound Castiel makes.

The sounds Jimmy made.

They’re all the same.

They’re right here, and real, and made for Dean.

“Fuck me, c’mon, I’m right here, what are you- yeah, god, yeah.”

The rhythm drags low, pulling through Dean in a sharp counterpoint to earlier. Castiel remains above him, not against him. Dean can’t clutch at him from here, not with his arms. If Dean could fold in half to get Castiel closer, to have their torsos rubbing together again, his own dick against Castiel, fuck, he’d take up yoga to get that.

Castiel fucks into him with a slack mouth and barely open eyes, but he stares at Dean as if seeing a dream. He grabs at Dean’s dick too, follows the motion of Dean’s hand until the need for balance overwhelms him. Even the short break and change of position have Dean plumping back up, or maybe he’s just getting used to it. Maybe all he needs is to be fucked and fucked and fucked again, until his dick learns to share the attention.

He tells that to Castiel, and Castiel starts ramming into him, driving him farther and farther up the bed, until Castiel kneel-walks onto the ass-propping pillow and they have to stop again to reposition. Dean groans at the loss of that cock again, groans absolutely shamelessly because there is no shame. There is Castiel, frustrated in his need, blatant in his desire, Castiel’s attentiveness turned to
determination, and it’s Dean’s, it’s all for Dean.

“I want it harder,” Dean tells him, actively feeling himself fail to be embarrassed. The shame’s gone, the embarrassment’s vanished; they’re both off somewhere, wherever Castiel banished Dean’s uncertainty to. “What’s the best position for hard?”

“Turn over,” Castiel orders, and Dean turns over. He presses his ass up against Castiel’s hands and then against Castiel’s dick and then around Castiel’s dick. They’re fucking, harder, harder, stopping for more lube, and harder again. Dean’s hands climb from the bed to the headboard. His dick waves, bouncing between his thighs and stomach as Castiel drives into him.

Castiel’s hands join Dean’s on the bedframe, Castiel’s hands cover his. Castiel sucks hard kisses against Dean’s shoulder blades, his balls slapping up behind Dean’s, so stupidly hot. Their skin, the friction, the sensation beneath, between, so hot. Not even adding lube can slow them down for long now, and Dean starts to get that strange inner tightness that has nothing to do with his dick.

“Fuck,” he cries out, or something like that. Castiel’s dick gets huge in his ass, pulsing, except it’s Dean’s ass, he’s the one doing it, he’s coming around Castiel with his dick straining to keep up, his dick straining to get up. Which means, holy shit, he realizes as he comes down, as Castiel groans against his back, it means Dean’s got another orgasm left in him.

“I’m close,” Castiel gasps against Dean’s skin. “Do you want me to, I could, we, turn over?”

“What? Wha- Yeah.”

Castiel pulls out, Dean twists around and sinks down, but instead of yanking off the condom and coming all over Dean’s chest, Cas sinks down too. He spreads Dean’s legs like the putty they are, shoves back in, and goes to town for all of five seconds before his eyes, locked on Dean’s face, finally have to shut.

Hands clamped on Dean’s hips, cock buried in Dean’s ass, head thrown back, Castiel comes inside him.

Dean squeezes his ass for all he’s worth. Clenches, pulls with it, makes it as good and tight as he can, as hard as he can, watching enraptured as each of Castiel’s final thrusts punches a noise of out Castiel’s own chest.
Face shining with sweat, stomach shining with pre-come and dripped lube, Castiel pulls out before collapsing onto Dean. Not for kisses of the mouth, but the dubious pillow of Dean’s chest. Even with his dick poking Cas in the abs, Dean holds Castiel in place, gets hands in his damp hair.

After a wait Dean’s dick measures as an hour and his heart claims as a second, Castiel lifts his head and says, “Condom.”

A bewildering combination of sated, lust-drunk, and frustrated, Dean snickers incredulously. “Dude, it’s on your own dick, you can take it off yourself.”

Cas shakes his head. “New one. Where?” He looks around, but Dean just looks at him, the flush of his cheeks and lips and chest. “There, grab one and wear it.”

Dean blinks, but he’s not the kind of fool to turn down a blowjob from a beautiful man who claims to love giving them. He sits up a little stiffly while he’s about it, though, moving the ass-propping pillow back up against the headboard again, because he’s also not the kind of idiot who doesn’t watch his own blowjob.

Castiel is clearly of the same opinion about watching. Having tied off and discarded his own, Castiel’s eyes follow the condom’s path intently, and then he cozies on down to lie between Dean’s legs. “Should I draw it out or finish you off?” Castiel asks almost lazily, one hand pumping Dean through the condom.

“Finish,” Dean answers emphatically.

Castiel grins but quickly eases back on the teeth. His first kiss to Dean’s dick is all lips, an acclimatizing kind of pressure. He escalates quickly, the intensity of his mouth at odds with the slackness of his body, draped as he is across Dean’s bed in a post-coital slump.

Eyes closed, face relaxed, he sucks on Dean as if for his own benefit, but not the way people do in porn. Those actors pretend they’ve got a g-spot down the throat. They act like the push and pull of a dick in their mouth is as pleasurable against the lips as it is against a pussy or, as Dean now knows, a rim. They suck like it could satisfy their own need to come.

Cas, though. There’s nothing hurried about this, nothing rushed, only relentless. Cas sucks him like a comfort item. Like he’s tired and sated but still wants to play, and is therefore delighted and amused to do shit to Dean with his mouth. Cas blows him like he could do this in his sleep. Like Cas is
prepared to do this in his sleep, willing to out-stubborn any dick in order to satisfy his pride.

Tilting his head, pressing the head of Dean’s dick up against the inside of his cheek, Castiel looks up at him, so calm, so pleased. Dean fights his own hips still, and Castiel’s lips stretch around him in a busy smile. Castiel slides a finger back up inside Dean’s sore ass, squelching lube and curling Dean’s toes.

Crooking his finger inside Dean, he swirls his tongue and bobs his head down. He does it again and again, curling his finger harder each time, beckoning orgasm closer and closer. It hurts in there, burns from overuse, and it’s that realization, that split second of taking stock of his own body, this is what does Dean in.

One arm a bar across Dean’s stomach, Cas goes down deep for him. Stays there with a brief choking sound that Dean can’t do anything about, his body locking up under Castiel’s commands, under his mouth, around his fingers.

Dean’s head thunks back against the headboard as the fireworks shake themselves out of his skin. Exhaustion grabs him by the feet and pulls him down, like sinking through a floor of pillows. Castiel pulls Dean down, too, gets him lying in bed. Both of them lying in bed, sweaty and breathing heavy on their damp towels.

Clean-up is a sluggish affair. Cas somehow does the majority of cleaning their bodies without getting out of bed, using the least gross towel. Dean gets up, ostensibly to chuck the condoms out, actually to see whether he can still stand. He checks his range of motion putting his boxer briefs back on, and he gets a lazy grin out of Cas by briefly modeling for him on the way back to bed.

They fall into each other. Dean pulls the sheets up over them. Cas cuddles close, encouraging Dean to do the same, so Dean climbs on top of him. He settles down low, his head beneath Castiel’s chin. Soft and warm, Castiel’s bare dick serves as an absolute distraction against Dean’s stomach, but somehow a relaxing one.

Dean lies there. Lower half between Cas’ legs, the last of the lube slowly leaking out his ass and into his underwear. His cheek against Cas’ breastbone, his hands framing Cas’ ribs. Cas’ chest lifts and lowers him with their breathing. Cas tucks the blankets in around the back of Dean’s head. He pets Dean’s hair.

Out of habit, Dean gropes around for words… but he doesn’t need to.
There’s no more next minute to watch out for. No timer.

No library signs saying they can’t talk either.

Nothing forbidden, nothing mandatory. Only options.

Dean exhales long and slow. He closes his eyes. Listening. Breathing. That’s all he has to do.

He falls asleep, or something close to it. A couple times, he opens his eyes and they’ve moved around a little. Cas pressed up along his back, one arm around Dean’s chest, one leg slung over Dean’s hip. Cas on top of him, essentially faceplanted on the pillow.

Until Cas actually tries to move somewhere beyond the bed, Dean simply drifts. When that motion finally comes, Dean tightens his arm, because somehow they’ve switched around for Dean to be the big spoon.

“Where y’ goin’,” Dean grumbles against Cas’ back, not bothering to open his eyes.

“I’m grabbing something.”

“Nope,” Dean says, holding fast. “Stayin’ here.”

Cas makes a noise like an audible eye-roll but only strains away just a little before settling back down.

“Ha,” Dean says in triumph.

“No, I got it.”

Dean cracks an eye open, but Castiel’s nape tells him nothing, besides that Cas is maybe a week or two removed from his last haircut. With an aggrieved sigh and a sore ass, Dean props himself up on one arm to look over Cas’ shoulder at what he’s holding.
There’s no way Cas misses the way Dean freezes. No way in hell.

But instead of mockery, Dean gets an amazed little smile, directed back at him.

“You kept it,” Cas says, holding the stupid little End of Semester card he’d made for Dean.

“Shut up.”

“You kept it,” Cas repeats, grinning wider.

“No, seriously, shut up.”

Cas shakes his head. “No. I can talk to you as much as I want now.”

Dean ducks down, ineffectually trying to hide his face behind Cas while Cas rolls over. “Not if I fucking strangle you,” Dean threatens very seriously.

“I’m glad we have breathplay in common,” Cas answers, at least outwardly sincere.

Dean gapes long enough to know he’s lost the argument, but when he says “Put the card back,” Cas puts the card back. Cas even takes care to stand it up properly.

“...Thanks,” Dean says.

Cas frowns a little as he settles back into what can only be deemed a snuggle. “For what?” he asks, visibly confused at Dean’s confusion, like needling Dean where he’s vulnerable was never an option.

Dean shrugs with the shoulder he’s not lying on and puts on a smirk. “You gonna adjust my grade now?”
“That would be unethical,” Cas deadpans.

“Smartass.”

“You like my ass.”

“Lemme check,” Dean says, and he channels that shaky feeling in his chest into a bit of a grope. “Yeah, it’s a pretty good ass.”

Cas reciprocates the reach, keeping a light touch over Dean’s boxer briefs. “How are you feeling?”

Like he took the worst shit of his life but would totally do it again. “I mean, it hurts, but…”

Looking at him gently, his face mere inches away, Cas waits for Dean to finish a sentence he doesn’t have the words for.

“...I liked it,” Dean says lamely.

Cas smiles like poetry. Like a sunrise through a rainy morning, like a single flower unfurling in a yard of weeds or some shit. He puts the flutters back into Dean’s stomach, all of them, the jingle-jangle nerves of liking someone too much, and Cas doesn’t even know he’s doing it.

“I’m glad,” Cas murmurs, pulling Dean in with a hand on the small of his back, pressing himself in the rest of the way. Cas uses Dean’s arm as a pillow and folds his own arm between them, touching Dean’s chest with the back of his hand. “I’ve seldom found the preparation and aftermath worth it, personally.” Eyes closed, he presses his forehead to Dean’s. Their lips nearly touch as Cas whispers, “I’m glad I didn’t disappoint.”

Dean snorts at the idea. “Dude, worst case scenario, you talk me off. You don’t gotta worry there.”

Incrementally, so slightly it would be imperceptible if they weren’t so closely tangled together, Cas relaxes. “I suppose you’re right.”
Stroking Cas’ back, looking at the lightened lines in his forehead and around his eyes, Dean shouldn’t have to ask. He shouldn’t.

“So, uh,” Dean says. “You, how’re you doin’?”

“Happy,” Cas murmurs, low and warm. He tightens his arm around Dean. “We need to shower, but I don’t want to get up.”

“It’s a shower tub thing. Big enough for two to stand.”

Eyes closed, Cas hums but still throws a leg over Dean’s thigh.

“Should do something about dinner, too,” Dean adds.

Cas groans. “No more cooking.”

“Hell no. I meant, like, order something. Get a couple pizzas or something we can reheat as we go.”

“Meatlovers?”

“Duh.”

Cas presses his smile to Dean’s lips. Dean shifts his own grin into kisses, and the wet sound of a languid make-out session takes over inside his head. The background noises of the apartment fade away. Humming appliances, passing traffic, all of it. There’s nothing but warm, shifting blankets; a hot, pressing body; and a mouth determined to adore his.

And then something thumps from below.

Dean pulls back the full three inches his new octopus of a bedpartner allows him.
Cas frowns up at him, Dean frowns back, and more thumps follow. Not the sound of something falling in the garage downstairs, no. This is much more off to the side, and rising. This is footsteps coming up the stairs, heavy ones. They sure as hell ain’t Bobby’s, and Bobby’s the only one with a key.

“Dean?” Cas whispers, but Dean’s already sliding across the bed to climb out the other side. The apartment front door audibly opens. “Dean.”

Faced with the option of his bathrobe hanging on the back of the door or grabbing a book—defense or weapon—Dean grabs a hardcover off his dresser. He whips open his bedroom door, aims, and throws in one motion—and nearly decks his asshole brother with it.

“What the fuck?” Sam yells, still bundled up in his Californian excuse for a winter jacket, the strap of a backpack over one shoulder.

“What the fuck!” Dean yells back.

“Should I call the police?” Cas calls from back in the bedroom, rifling naked through his own jeans.

“No!” Sam and Dean answer in unison.

“Sammy, what the fuck?” Dean restates, pulling his bedroom door mostly closed behind him.

“Dude, where are your clothes?” Sam yells like Dean's boxers don't count.

“Your flight’s tomorrow! You’re not supposed to be here!”

“Neither are you,” Sam shoots back, half-shielding his eyes. “You said the pie thing was at his place. Your car’s not even parked outside.”

“I’m parked in the garage, dumbass.” And the penny drops, not that it had much of a chance of floating away unscathed by gravity. Eyes narrowed, Dean points at Sam. “What’s in the backpack?”
“What?” Sam asks, face going lawyer blank.

Dean’s bedroom door opens, and Dean glances over his shoulder to be rewarded with the fantastic sight of Cas wearing his bathrobe. Fucking score.

“This is Sammy?” Cas asks.

“Yes,” Dean says the same second Sam corrects, “Sam.”

“Hello,” Cas says in the tone of voice most people use while meeting Sam, a timbre that translates any sentence into a poleaxed You are very tall.

“Hi, uh, Cas,” Sam says, turning red from so much more than the cold outside.

“What’s in the backpack?” Dean demands.

“Uh, my stuff?” Sam answers with the poise of a lawyer and the tone of a little brother.

Thing is, Sam’s not the only one who can lawyer. “Bobby gave you his key, so you left your shit with him. You fucking checked to make sure my car wasn’t here. What’s in the goddamn bag?”

With a full-body groan, Sam unslings the bag from his shoulder and tosses it across the narrow space of Dean’s living room. Dean leans to catch it, pulls something, and is kept upright through his swearing by his own personal Castiel, Sexy Bathrobe Edition (TM).

“You okay?” Sam asks, making the mistake of coming closer. Apparently, there’s a limit to how far the scents of freshly baked pie can mask the reek of sex. Or maybe it’s noticing the hickeys on Dean’s thighs that has Sam’s nose wrinkling. Serves the fucker right either way.

“Fine,” Dean grunts, definitely needing to sit down. Carefully. And not in front of Sam. He pushes through and unzips the bag. The first thing he pulls out is a big folded square of fabric, still sealed in plastic. “What the hell?” Pink, purple, and blue: not exactly Dean’s colors.
“It’s your flag,” Cas says, a warm rumble over Dean’s shoulder.

“Thought that was this one,” Dean says, numbly pulling out the next sealed fabric piece, this one rainbow.

“There’s a bi-specific one,” Cas explains.

Dean looks up at Sam.

Hands in the pocket of his coat, Sam shrugs.

Under the flags, there are fucking rainbow streamers. Under those, there’s the kind of horrifying crap Dean can only assume Sam got by mugging a bachelorette party: a bag of penis candy and a plastic dick necklace.

While Dean rifles through, Cas asks Sam, “Did you come early just to set this up? Changing your flight this close to Christmas must have been next to impossible.”

“I was already coming early,” Sam says, and Dean stops looking through the bag.

“Seriously?”

With another one of those It’s Not A Big Deal shrugs, Sam says, “Thanksgiving ended pretty badly, so I changed my flight then. Still sucked, but it was doable.”

“And you got all of this since Thursday night?” Cas asks.

“Yeah,” Sam says, sounding surprised. “How do you know that?” He looks between the two of them and answers himself. “Dean came out to you first, huh.”

“I am an openly gay gender studies professor,” Cas explains.
Sam says “Wait,” no doubt about to ask about the professor thing, but that’s when Dean gets to the bottom of the bag.

“I fucking knew it!” Dean brandishes the jar of rainbow glitter at Sam. “You were gonna glitter-bomb me!”

“You can use glitter for a lot of things,” Sam says with his stupid, lying face.

“This was going in a bucket over my door,” Dean accuses, pointing at the doorway Cas still stands in as Dean engineers the obvious prank out of the supplies. “All this crap was going in my room so I wouldn’t suspect anything until the glitter came down.”

“That’s pure conjecture,” Sam says.

Cas clears his throat. “I think I’ll just... shower. Unless I should head out.”

“What? No.” Dean grabs him by one terrycloth sleeve. “We’re getting food delivered.”

“I can go,” Sam says, scratching the side of his neck. “Not exactly the way I meant to surprise you.”

“No shit,” Dean says, not giving the bag back.

“Dean,” Cas says, and they look at each other.

After a second of enduring that steady gaze, Dean sighs. Cas faintly smiles, squeezes his shoulder, and abandons Dean for a shower.

“Sammy, look, hold on a sec,” Dean says as Cas goes.

“Dude, I know you’re about to go bang in the shower, I really don’t need to be here,” Sam says, zipping his coat back up.
“Just stay put so I can put on some pants.”

Sam actually cracks a grin. “Dean, we’re good. Seriously.”

“You want your crap back, sit down a minute.”

“It’s your crap now,” Sam says, but he sits on the couch. He’s still there when Dean reemerges from his bedroom, dressed in yesterday’s jeans and fresh top layers. Sam’s got the book Dean threw at him, one of the books from his classes. Damn thing opened mid-throw and changed trajectory. Probably for the best, but still on the embarrassing side.

“So what’s up?” Sam asks, shutting the book. Everything in his face and posture declares that he is Fine With It and absolutely determined to stay that way.

“This isn’t about Cas,” Dean starts, trying to pull his attention away from the sound of running water. He sits down on the coffee table, the better to face Sam. Not that sitting on a wooden surface is a particularly smart idea right now, but he succeeds without wincing. He could grab the abandoned pillow, still under the coffee table, but drawing attention to both the cushion and Dean's sore ass is hardly a smart course of action.

Leaning forward, elbows on his knees, Sam nods along. “No, I know. It’s not like one guy came out of nowhere and changed your sexuality for you. I got it.”

Dean holds up a hand.

Sam frowns a little, just around the edges. Like Sam would be more frustrated with Dean’s refusal to go along with whatever prepared scenario Sam already thought out for them, if Sam weren’t also trying to be supportive.

“I hate school,” Dean says.

Sam blinks.
“I’ve tried to like it,” Dean continues, “but I’m not gonna. It’s like sitting through mandatory training videos every fucking day with a bunch of kids half my age who still think getting drunk counts as getting wild and crazy.”

“I, what?” Sam says.

“I’m still doing it,” Dean adds. “Bobby’s right: there’s a lot of places that’ll want to see me with some kind of degree if I’m running the family business like, well. A business. So I should get that. Get more connections with that alumni network, see where that goes, all that. But it’s crap and I hate it, and I’m done pretending.”

A long, slow moment passes. Dean’s heart rattles silently in his throat as Sam studies his face in clear confusion.

“Do you need more help?” Sam asks at last.

“Dude, I literally have a professor for a study buddy.”

“Yeah, but not in your area. Maybe-”

“Sam,” Dean interrupts. “I didn’t fucking say it was too hard. It’s… It’s not. I can do it. I’m doing it, it’s getting done. But I don’t like it. Okay?”

Sam frowns at him like, well. Like he was supposed to when Dean told him he was bi. “But if you’re good at it-”

“I’m good at pie,” Dean says, pointing to the half dozen examples of his handiwork still sitting on the cooling rack. “I am really, really good at pie, but you remember that pumpkin caramel bullshit I made for Thanksgiving?”

“Yeah, that was kinda nasty,” Sam agrees, still frowning, now frowning between Dean and the kitchenette.

“It came out fine. Bobby loved the shit out of it. But I don’t want caramel in my pumpkin, you get it?
I’m just a pumpkin guy. And look, if caramel’s what we need for this to work, I’ll go and fucking make the caramel, but I’m not gonna keep pretending to be happy about it.”

Sam takes a moment to mull that over. He might be past the protest stage and into analysis, which means Dean ought to let him stew until Sam reaches the problem-solving stage.

“You get me?” Dean asks, just to be sure.

“Do you want to quit?” Sam asks.

“I want to get it done,” Dean says.

“Did you even want to start?” Sam continues, now with a growing note of betrayal. “Dean, you could have said something.”

“I’m saying it now. I told you, I’m gonna finish it, I wouldn’t waste all that money like that.”

Sam outright stares. “You think this is about the money?”

“This is employee training, Sam, it’s literally a business expense. How is that not about the money?”

Slowly, Sam leans back on the couch. He folds his arms and tilts his head and looks at Dean like he’s seeing a stranger. A person he’s sure he doesn’t know, instead of an assumption of a brother. As if to underscore his silence, the shower shuts off.

“Huh,” Sam says.

“What?” Dean dares to ask.

“I dunno,” Sam says, clearly meaning it. “I guess I just thought we were on the same page or something.”
“Yeah...” Dean looks away, staring through his own kitchen counters. “I wanted to be, y’know?”

“Yeah,” Sam says.

Dean looks at him.

“No, really,” Sam says. “You ever feel like we just don’t, I don’t know. Connect? Anymore?”

“Yeah.” His voice comes out too rough. He clears his throat and tries a second, even rougher
“Yeah.”

Sam lets out this awkward little laugh. “I mean, I used to want to be you, but I feel like once I figured out who I am instead...” He shrugs. “Just didn’t click anymore.”

“You used to want to be me?” Dean asks, because there’s no way he heard that right.

Another one of those awkward laughs comes out of Sam, stronger this time. “Uh, yeah? Why do you think I spent so long trying to care about cars?”

They both start to grin, and then they just stare at each other.

“Oh,” Sam says.

“Huh,” Dean agrees.

From Dean’s bedroom come the muffled noises of Cas getting dressed. Quick shower, but then again, Dean wasn’t there to stretch it out for him.

“So, uh, good news,” Sam says. “You don’t have to pick me up from the airport tomorrow. So if you needed to sleep in or something...”
“Pretty much takes a forklift to get Cas out of bed in the morning, so, yeah, sleeping in would be good.”

Sam’s eyebrows shoot up. “You sure you only asked him out today?”

“Friday,” Dean says with a shrug. “Got tired of waiting.”

“Well, uh. Congrats,” Sam says.

“Thanks.”

They listen to Cas finish dressing. It’s more or less complete silence as Cas cracks open Dean’s bedroom door.

“Hey,” Sam says, lifting a hand in an awkward wave.

“Hello,” Cas says.

Dean twists around to look at him. At wet hair and clinging jeans and one of Dean’s sweatshirts stretching across his shoulders. Damn. Congrats is right.

“Is Sam staying for pizza?” Cas asks.

Dean twists to look back at Sam. “Sammy? Beer, pizza? Watching whatever on TV? Unless you got plans with Bobby.”

Sam looks between the two of them before nodding. “No plans involving food.”

“Awesome.” Dean forces himself to stand without showing pain, but he’s a little stiff as he walks back to Cas, even more bow-legged than usual. “Grabbing my phone,” he says, ‘cause Cas seems to think Dean’s coming in for a hug.
“Of course,” Cas says, only barely making room. His hand snags on Dean’s hip, trailing there just out of Sam’s line of sight.

Dean grabs his phone off his bedside table. Listening to Cas getting settled in the living room, he moves the card back, standing it up just the way he likes it. As he dials his usual pizza place, the only one that’s figured out how to deliver to the garage’s side door, maybe he eavesdrops, too.

Even with the TV turned on to cover up their conversation, he hears something like Sam furtively saying, “Did you know he wanted to quit school?”

And hears Cas simply answer, “Yes.”

“And you’re okay with that? With your job and all.”

Dean misses the next bit as the pizza place picks up. By the time Dean’s ordered a large meatlover’s and a small veggie supreme, Cas is saying something like “Diversifying his schedule should help a little next semester, but it’s still his choice. I think he’ll perk up once his classes meet his ability level.”

“You talking about me?” Dean calls over, pocketing his phone and closing his bedroom door behind him. Sam definitely doesn’t need to see the state of the bed in there.

“You’re all we have in common,” Cas says bluntly. “I was saying you’re bored in class and insufficiently challenged.”

“That’s the excuse why I can’t take your classes now?” Dean teases with more panache than he truly feels, moving to sit down between his brother and his, his boyfriend? Are they boyfriends now? Or can Dean still make the argument for partners and pretend to be a cowboy? He sits down nice and careful, face turned toward Cas.

“No, because you’d sit in the front and mime blowjobs the entire time,” Cas answers.

Sam chokes his way into a laugh, a huge one that only gets worse when Dean flips them both off.
“I’m not that bad,” Dean says, daring to sling an arm around Cas’ shoulders.

“You would totally do that,” Sam says.

“You can shut up too.”

“Mm, no,” Cas says, making himself comfortable under Dean’s arm. “You’re too enjoyable to talk to.”

Sam makes a truly obnoxious “aww” noise.

Leaning against Cas, Dean kicks Sam on the ankle, but he’s grinning all the while. “Nah,” he says, shrugging his arm further around Cas. “Think I’m all talked out for now.”

“Seriously,” Sam says, passing Dean the remote. “That was more heart-to-heart than I usually get out of you in a decade.”

“That’s okay,” Cas says, and he smiles up at Dean in that soft, sincere way of his. “I’m willing to wait.”

Chapter End Notes

And there we are! A big thank you to my eternal cheer-reader, Vyc, always my first audience, and two more thank you’s to Seiji and Itleflrt for the continuity and character beta’ing. Our lovely banner on chapter one was a gift made by dragonpressgraphics.

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