May Sunbeams Find You

by LittleAngelCassie

Summary

He always belonged to him.

Before his first heat, Dean Winchester knew nothing of what would come. He believed in what he could touch and witness in the sunrays of daylight: Loyalty to his family, faith in Baby’s ever-turning tires, and hope in Sammy’s potential. These things were honest and true.

Then …the life altering scent came that calls to all unmated alphas within miles. The scent turns even the most docile alphas insane with lust and a feral desire to own, dominate, and mate. Dean found the blanket of safety in years spent behind the high walls of the Omega Center, where no unmated alpha is allowed.

Now Dean has discovered a connection to an alpha he can’t explain with anything but his intuition. Loyalty falls to unseen blue eyes, faith in a man he’s never touched, and hope towards a future he once thought ridiculous.

Fighting to reveal the sunshine of his true mate’s smile might kill him. Shit, what’s not to love about an outrageous adventure for a sexy and yet frustratingly cryptic alpha?
Dean refuses to hide from a challenge.
No matter the outcome, he belongs to him.

Notes

Hello! To all my lovely readers new and old a big hug and lots of love. This is a Work In Progress that will post on Thursdays. That's right once a week for this bad boy.

Give a glance at the tags for me so we are all on the same page.

Any chapter specific tags will be posted at the end for those who need it without spoiling anything to those who don't.

Comments and Kudos are always encouraged.

To those who have questions about my health and life in general feel free to drop a comment.

A quick shout out to Shelby who is fighting the good fight with me. You rock and I think about you all the time. Also thank you to MoniJune and WinchestersRaven for keeping me in line and cleaning up my chaotic mind.

XOXOXOXO,
Angie
A soothing beat blares through his headphones, blocking out the world around him. Dean’s eyes remain closed; no need to see where he’s going, the omega’s been running the course for three years now. Inhaling, he perfectly maps out the people ahead of him. A slight edge to the right keeps him clear of Garth, who exercises only when forced too.

Dean loves the freedom. Good tunes, tied sneakers, and he can go for hours. His breath remains fluid and controlled; around mile ten he might stutter. The omega hums along to Sweet Home Alabama, dodging to the left and narrowly missing Jo. Her shouts of annoyance are mere high-pitched background noise.

The aroma of swamp mud alerts Dean to jump and snag the rope, swinging across the mucky brown obstacle. Picking up speed, he counts his steps, clearing the two-foot stone barrier. His toes barely grace the ground between each of the six hurdles. Immediately he leaps, snatching the cargo net and climbing up thirty feet before hurling himself over the top and quickly making his descent. His sneakers hit the floor as the omega sprints down the hundred-foot dash.

Raising his face, Dean curses the lack of sun. One day he’ll be able to race with sunrays bearing down on him, but today the underground facility will have to do. The grey cement walls and faux grass simply pale in comparison to the lush lawn and fresh air of the outdoors he hasn’t seen in a very long time. The specialty lighting in the facility may mimic the sun for their health, but it doesn’t lift his spirits the same way. Hence the choice to not look, allowing his imagination to shape a beautiful path in the woods. Don’t Ask Me No Questions comes on as an open hand makes brutal contact with his abdomen, knocking the shit out him. Dean crashes to the ground, sputtering for air.

“What the fuck?” he shouts, glaring up at Crowley.

“My office, Winchester.” The director smirks, “just because you can doesn’t mean you should. No one likes a showoff.”

Brushing off the bits of Astroturf stuck to his legs, Dean retorts, “You’re an ass, Crowley.”

The alpha shrugs. “Still stuck with me. Come on, we have to finalize your selection for the trials.”

Unable to halt the shaky tone of his voice, Dean replies, “I’ve got like two weeks to nail that down.”

“No,” Crowley ushers him through the expansive track and field space with a separate work-out gym, “you had two weeks ten days ago. Decisions need to be made. You’re a third year, so no more playing it easy.”

“I never do that,” Dean scoffs pausing by the bank of elevators.

A rather young first-year pushes the call button, avoiding eye contact with either of them. Dean doesn’t blame the kid; everything is new and frightening those first few months. All omegas end up in an Omega Center after their first heat. A family member can come collect them if they can provide documentation of ways to keep their omega sheltered from alphas during heat. The scent of an unmated omega in heat can turn any alpha feral with lust. Those omegas with families who can’t afford a fancy heat saferoom will spend the next five years at the center. For some it will be a lifetime.
The elevator doors open and everyone strides inside.

“You are an excellent specimen of omega strength. We can’t hide you forever, Winchester,” the Director answers as the doors swish closed, zipping them up from the sub-basement to the top where Crowley’s office resides. Most teachers and staff have an office on the first floor. Since he lords over all, the director gets a huge corner office done completely in black and red at the highest level.

The voice from above announces, “Floor 12.”

Both men exit as the first-year scurries into the computer lab. The space is separated by a wall of glass, so the kid vanishes behind a monitor. Dean only visits to check email and keep up with his family on the outside. However, per usual, his roommate, Ash, waves from his spot. Oreo crumbs are all over his wrinkled shirt.

Eventually they make their way to the grand entrance. Dean glances at the gold-plated sign hanging on the door: Director of Omega Center 80Q3. Crowley immediately opens a file, sitting at his larger than necessary oak desk. Dean plops down on the cushy leather red couch, waiting for the interrogation to begin. His eyes watch a flock of birds floating by the sky-high window.

“Are you still set on the Hunter option?” The alpha raises an eyebrow.

“Really, Dude? Do you see me in the House Omega or Arts challenges? Out of the 10 possible choices, I think Hunter is the only one for me.”

Nodding, Crowley flips on his computer, glancing back at Dean as the machine warms up, “It’s a prime-time slot. Are you prepared for the attention?”

“All the Omega Mate Challenges are televised. What does it matter the time of day mine are played?” Although, he’s not stupid. The Hunter and Erotica challenges are the most watched hours on their local OMC network. Everyone is pulling for their fave as they prepare and face six trials created for their selected specialty.

“House Omega runs at seven in the morning,” Crowley types on his keyboard as he speaks, “no one gives a fuck who can sew baby clothes the best.”

Rolling his eyes, Dean huffs, “Someone must because they always find mates.”

“Their final exam is cooking a five-course meal and hosting six prospective alphas. Everyone loves to eat. HUNTERS have a God Damn survival overnight final exam, playing a dangerous game of cat and mouse with their interested alphas. NO cap on the number of alphas allowed to enter. Last year twenty alphas chose to participate with that one blonde chap.”

“Please,” Dean picks up a pen, tossing it in the air, “for the first few hours the alphas knock each other off before the omega ever enters the field of play.”

Snatching the pen, Crowley slams down his fist violently, “DEAN! No third year has ever attempted the Hunter Challenge. It is usually reserved for at least those omegas in their fourth year who have had some interactions with alphas. Why not go easy on yourself? You enjoyed the Sports challenges as a second-year.”

“Boooring,” he lies back in his seat, singing the word. “In your second year you only compete against other omegas in the first two trials. Now I’m going all the way, and if I gotta choose a method to test my future mate then I’d rather join a wicked game of hide and seek in the woods than kicking a ball around.”
Crowley drums his fingers loudly on the oak. “I have openings in the Erotica Challenges?”

“Because those guys perform some pretty messed up stuff on television. No dice, Hunter is my pick.”

“The Erotica doesn’t run until after 10 p.m. You’re a very handsome Omega, and Hannah thought —”

“NO! I don’t care what your mate thought would be a better match for me. I get to decide, and my gut says Hunter.” Dean glances away, hoping to hide any hint as to why he wants Hunter so bad. Omegas in the Center are supposed to be void of any dreamscape images.

The alpha goes back to his computer screen, mumbling, “Fine, good for you there is a slot available.”

“Don’t bullshit me. Nobody wants the Hunter challenges due to the high potential for,” Dean waves his hand nonchalantly, “…accidents.”

“Causing loss of limb, loss of consciousness, loss of blood, and my personal favorite, loss of life.”

Rubbing his face, Dean rises to pace the spacious office. “It’s been three years since an Omega has died.”

“My Hannah adores you. It would destroy her to collect your corpse.”

The only way an Alpha can work within the Center is if they are mated. Crowley’s Omega, Hannah, is the doctor for their little crew. Unfortunately, this means she would be the one to announce a death during the game.

Tilts into the other man’s space. “I’m not going to change my mind.”

Ash crashes through the closed door, shouting, “Dean! We gotta jet; it’s pot roast tonight, and I’m starving.”

“I’ll make the arrangements.” Crowley shoos them out.

As they wait for the elevator Dean queries, “Have you turned in your challenge selection?”

“Yup, Erotica.” Ash bounces his eyebrows as the doors slide open. “Gotta make sure my mate is up to snuff in the bedroom.”

“Ew, I’m not watching.” He pushes the button for their home floor. All the years have their own floors where they live in dormitory style housing with a kitchen, lounge and dining room immediately off the elevator banks.

The soft voice announcing, “Floor 4.”

A football nails the back wall as someone yells, “Do not hit the pot roast!”

“Damn straight, you heathens,” Ash counters, walking towards the five 10-person tables set for their evening meal.

The open concept allows for the dining space in the center with couches, bean bags and pillows galore to the right and a full kitchen behind a half wall to the left. All the walls are a bleak white with dull grey carpeting, but the furniture has all the colors of the rainbow. Nobody wants to live a bleak existence even stuck at the center.
This is home until they find a mate or choose a life beyond the challenges.

His roommate snags a seat at their typical table, his eyes taking in the massive spread. Oddly, food is always in abundance. Dean sits next to him, yanking a dinner roll as his best friend Charlie drops in on his other side.

“Hey Charlie, what did you pick?”

With a dramatic pause she flips a wavy strand of red hair from her face, “House Omega.”

“What? You’re joking?” She’s the last human on Earth he would choose for a House Omega enthusiast.

“Yes, you moron.” She smacks his forehead with a green bean. “I’m doing Gaming. Pretty sure chuckles over there is leaping into Erotica.”

Ash smiles big through a mouthful of food. “Alphas are gonna be all over me. Rowena swears its like one huge fiesta at the final challenge,” he rips off his shirt, “but naked.”

“Finally, a good use for the party in your back,” Charlie smirks, pulling Ash’s ugly mullet.

Dean laughs so hard his root beer comes out his nose.

Once the meal has been cleaned up and all the dishes washed, Harry shouts, “Poker!” He drops the large case holding the multi-colored chips and playing cards. “What are we playing for tonight?”

Ed stands with authority on a chair. “The winner gets to choose a chump to clean their room for a week.”

“Agreed,” Dean shouts as he shuffles the cards. “I’m first dealer; who’s in?”

Charlie winks, “Me, bitches. I hate cleaning up my room for inspection.”

Everyone takes turns counting their share of starter chips to determine the piles are equal. Dean deals out the cards, ready to take down the reigning Queen. Harry tosses all the players fat cigars made of pink chewing gum. Smoking is prohibited anywhere in the center - can’t be harming the merchandise.

Ninety minutes later, his stack of chips has dwindled significantly as he stares at the two Kings in his hand. “I raise ten, children.” Dean flips a white chip to the pot. “Ash?”

“I fold.”

Ed peers at his cards, then glares at each participant as if he can read their minds.

The elevators open and the familiar noise of a squeaky medical cart has the group turning their heads. Hannah approaches with a smile on her face, wearing her typical pale blue suit and long white medical lab coat. “Good evening, third-years. Time for your evening meds. Please approach when I call your name.”

“Ed, play or stay, but quit wasting time,” Harry snaps.

“Fuck you, Harry,” Ed shrieks as he spreads out his cards. “Call.”

Red hair flies about as Charlie shouts, “Idiot, you gotta pay in your ten before you can call. Now we know your cards.”
Ed’s got only a blue worth five so he blushes, “Oops.”

The wrestling match that erupts is even more entertaining. Dean sips his root beer, cheering Harry on from the sidelines. Charlie throws ice at them for good measure.

When his name is called, Dean bounces up taking the tiny white cup with a purple and a pink pill inside. He used to ask what they were for; Hannah never answers. He pops the pills in his mouth, taking the cup of water and swallowing the liquid. He opens his mouth to show it’s empty and returns to his seat. Only once Hannah’s moved on to the next person does he carefully place the pills in his sock to be dealt with later.

At exactly 10 p.m. the lights in the common room dim, announcing bedtime to the omegas. Dean helps clean up the poker chips, which have now been scattered across the room.

Ash pats his shoulder. “We can finish tomorrow, man.”

Nodding, he wanders down the hall waving and smiling to his fellow hallmates as they all make their way to bed. His shared space with Ash is at the end of the hall. Strutting in, his eyes sweep past the two beds against each wall with two desks in each corner. A single window reflects the clear night sky. Once the door is shut, Dean crashes onto his fluffy mattress. It’s not memory foam; but hey, can’t have everything. Lifting his foot, he digs out the two pills from their hiding spot.

Without the help of posters and artwork from Ash their room would be nothing but grey and depressing.

“Hand me the pink,” Ash requests, raising his hand to catch the pink pill Dean tosses him. His roommate takes two pink pills and slips them into a tiny hole, no bigger than the pills themselves, in the wall concealed by an AC/DC poster. Then he grabs two bottles of water from a mini fridge under the window, “Now take your suppressants.”

“Not my first rodeo.” Dean swallows the purple medication, once again thrilled he was paired up with Ash his first year. “I remember what happened to the omega last year.”

“Terrifying travesty, and they replayed it for the national highlights,” Ash shakes his head, “poor girl’s heat hit at the beginning of her final trial with six alphas in the same room. God, sometimes I can still hear her screams.”

A shiver of fear has Dean shuddering. “Why didn’t they just cut to commercial?”

“The powers that be had to remind us,” Ash’s voice ice cold, “the system exists for a reason. Without the centers we’d all be attacked in our homes. Slaughtered in the process of alphas fighting over the omega in heat or mated to someone we never wanted. In the challenges we have a chance, and our word is final.”

Slipping into the bathroom off to the left, Dean snatches his toothbrush, adding toothpaste, “Harry said she was on suppressants. The scent of a true mate forced her heat to override the medication.”

“Harry’s a dumbass. Sometimes shit happens, and no one can stop it.” Ash does the same as they stand quietly brushing. After a quick spit, his roommate continues, “Are you really taking on hunter?”

“Yeah,” he mumbles through his rinsing. “It’s what I want.”

Ash turns off the lights as the two omegas climb into their beds.
With the curtains open, Dean gets a spectacular view of the stars as they shine brightly. The center is somewhere in Kansas, but far enough away from any city that all they see out the windows is miles of green broken only by the cement walls keeping anyone out. One positive to the challenges is he’ll be air lifted to a disclosed location to perform the trials with any interested alphas.

Inhaling softly, Dean reminds himself that if his dreams come true then the blue-eyed alpha will be there waiting for him. Slowly his eyelids droop, and Dean feels himself fall asleep.

His last conscious thought sashays through his mind. His alpha has never failed him yet.
Darkness. Devoid of natural light, Dean can barely see two feet in front of him, the lit torch held in his right hand at least giving him some sight. His clothes are filthy jeans and a black tight t-shirt, both heavy with salt water. Huge green leaves from a tropical tree smack into his face, forcing Dean to bounce the torch side to side to not set the entire place ablaze.

“Where the hell am I?” he announces to the empty night.

A thunderous crashing noise startles him, and Dean whips around to look. Black mist zips by his torch, nearly blowing the flame out. “Lost? Seriously? I’m gonna kill Charlie and her Evangeline Lilly obsession.”

Dreamscapes are bizarre. They are a culmination of an alpha and omega creating a place in their minds to meet. Unlike ordinary dreams, these places are exquisitely real; the individuals inside can literally smell, hear, see, touch, taste, and sense everything around them. Due to the authentic sensations inside the dreamscapes, some omegas struggle to tell truth from imagination. Dean’s always been able to notice the slight difference, especially when the scent of orange zest and cinnamon hits him.

Inhaling, he picks up only the sand, beach, and greenery surrounding his location. An intense desire pushes him farther into the mysterious island. An alpha is here. Unfortunately, opening his mind up to dreamscapes can be dangerous. Until a claiming bite graces his neck, any alpha with the desire and mental capacity to link with his own mind can take advantage. Alphas with evil intentions might stalk unsuspecting omegas in their subconscious and do unspeakable acts against them. Since the actions would only be in their head, prosecution of such heinous crimes is impossible. A decade ago blockers were invented to halt an omega from even having the ability to enter or use dreamscapes. Omega Centers have the strictest of rules. Ash and Dean have never thought once about taking the blockers. Fear of their own minds is not an option.

An invisible string tugs at his heart, showing him the way. The thick jungle gives way to a simple brook. Pausing, Dean bends to drag his fingers through the cool water. A crack of a stick jolts his attention, the orange cinnamon aroma striking him next.

“My alpha,” Dean murmurs to himself.

The man stands proud on the high embankment on the opposite side of the stream, a blazing torch in his hand. The flickering illumination casts shadows against his tan skin, broad shoulders, chaotic black hair and the blue eyes Dean knows for a fact are there. Thighs! Must not forget thick, luscious thighs.

Without a doubt this is his true mate. Although the alpha has never uttered a word to him, only communicating with gestures and facial expressions. Dean would kill to hear the man’s voice. Ash believes the alpha is mute, but he thinks otherwise.

Slowly the alpha descends, the splashing of his feet in the stream echoing in the silence. Frozen with anticipation, Dean waits. A strong hand stretches out, cupping his cheek, stroking the evening
scruff. There is nothing but the delicious scent of his alpha filling him up, easing the nervous energy but sparking lust simultaneously. Unable to battle the erotically charged moment, Dean rolls his face, taking a finger into his mouth.

A small audible gasp escapes from the alpha. So, not a mute. Dean grins over the finger, suckling softly as his tongue glides up and down the calloused digit. With a grunt the man snatches back his hand, waving his pointer finger in a no-no gesture.

Flirting is a Winchester specialty, so he winks. “You know you liked it.”

The flame catches against the right eyebrow of the man rising in a spectacular show of dominance, yes almighty Lord in heaven, Dean’s found his true mate. Both men stick the torches in the ground to free their hands. Feeling bold, Dean strides closer, their chests brushing delicately against each other. Lowering his head to the left, he exposes the perfect spot for a bite.

Fingernails scratch down his throat, nipping at his pulse point. Lips replace the fingers dropping chaste kisses, a slip of the tongue sends chills over his flesh. God, he wants the alpha. Dean wishes this were a genuine moment between them where his alpha could claim him body and soul. Release him from the tall walls and locked doors of the Center. A breeze has the alpha’s hair fluttering over his forehead.

Dean craves to touch. He listens to the internal plea building under his skin as his hands massage up the man’s back, stroking in circles. Muscles ebb and flow under the omega’s attention. The world is cruel. In dreamscapes he can experience the safety of his alpha’s arms without ever leaving the security of the Center. This will never be enough.

“What’s your name?” Dean whispers into the alpha’s ear.

Jerking back, the other man moves, taking the strong bouquet with him. Swirling his wrists in a beautiful movement, the flame from the torches lift from their posts into the sky. Dean watches, amazed. The flickering light dances into one word: Castiel.

His eyes read over the name multiple times as the pronunciation builds on Dean’s tongue. Eventually his gaze returns to dark blue eyes, “Castiel. I’m Dean.”

A quick snap of those long, luscious fingers has the flame returning to the torches.

“What are you so quiet?” Dean’s allowing his curiosity out to play.

Castiel moves elegantly back to the embankment, leaving the omega alone standing in a gentle brook. The alpha never reclaimed the torch, so his body stands enveloped in shadows. Another wave of his wrist has the flames trickling out to form two words. A touch of sadness overwhelms Dean because the man, Castiel, always departs with these two words written somewhere in the space.

“Don’t go.” Dean splashes to the edge of the creek. His heart is breaking as the alpha vanishes farther into the darkness, his aroma dissipating. All the omega can do is take in the words still illuminated in the sky.

Hunter Challenge.

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Rain trickles down the window, speckles and streams of water slide along as the dark clouds above darken the classroom. Dean closes his eyes, wishing he could smell the alpha … Castiel. He could
live on the scent alone. Even the bright overhead lights can’t keep the grey away. Sorrow swirls outwardly from the omega.

“Dean Winchester,” a thick Scottish accent shouts, “are we boring you?”

“A little,” Dean jeers, watching Rowena’s eyes narrow with annoyance.

She flips the long red curls off her shoulder as she teeters towards his desk in her six-inch black heels. “Most students love my subject.”

“You covered the mechanics of a first knotting the past two years. I think by now we’ve got it or we don’t.”

Rowena MacLeod teaches all the Omega Sex Ed classes and coaches the Erotica Challenge. She’s an amazingly open professor who never lies to her students. However, she’s not covering the topic that has invaded his every thought.

“Well, sex outside of heat is particularly tricky with an alpha’s knot. Forgive me for reviewing the basics. Why don’t you share with the class what you have clearly mastered?” Her sparkling blue dress catches the light blinding Dean for a moment.

Rubbing his eyes, he answers with a complete lack of emotion. “An omega’s heat opens the body to make it ready for a knot without the need for prep. However, total mating sex outside of heat can be painful if the omega has not been stretched by either fingers or a toy.”

Crossing her arms, Rowena counters, “Correct. What would you prefer to discuss?”

“Dreamscapes.” The word slips from his mouth unintentionally.

The entire class sits up, suddenly interested in the teacher’s response. Rowena glances around, a smirk stretched across her face. “What exactly do you want to know?”

“We’ve all been told the horror stories of unwanted Alphas entering an Omega’s dreamscape and forcing them to do things. But why can’t the omega stop them or simply wake up?” The question’s been bugging him a lot lately.

Strolling to the front of the classroom, Rowena picks up a purple dry-erase marker, scrawling out three words: REM Vocal Control.

“Who can give me a definition?” She scans the class, yet no one raises their hands. Dean’s never heard of it. Rowena paces back and forth in front of the white board, then pauses to speak. “REM Vocal Control is why alphas are dangerous inside an omega’s mind. During a dreamscape an omega’s body goes into rapid eye movement, or REM, which is a level of sleep necessary for our health. In this state of rest, the omega brain becomes completely submissive to an alpha’s voice. Therefore, an alpha could enter an omega’s dreamscape and command them to act or behave in a certain manner. Also known in certain despicable social circles as Doll Play.”

“Oh my God!” Charlie shouts from Dean’s left, her hand clasping over her mouth. “The omega is powerless to say no.”

“Exactly, sweet girl. Imagine having someone use you to their liking, you have no say, no choice. Their every whim is your future. Now, my lovely little omegas, take it one step further. Until you are mated and your mind links with that alpha, you are completely vulnerable to the inklings of disgusting humans who have watched you on TV. They only need your image to hunt down your dreamscape.”
Harry's voice cracks, “But aren’t you hindering your own true mate from entering by taking the blockers?”

“In September of 2008 the Directors of every Center in the country came together in Washington, D.C., to discuss that very issue. Blockers had recently been approved by the FDA. Should Centers enforce the use of blockers by the omegas in their care?” She taps the marker against her perfectly sculpted eyebrow. “Which is the priority, keeping omegas safe from mental harm or deny them access to their true mate? Thoughts.”

“Obviously they chose safety,” Harry answers. “We may never know if the alpha we choose is our true mate.”

“Yes, when you mate it’s forever, and the mental connection can only be accessed by your specific alpha. So, does it really matter?”

“Fuck yeah it does!” Ash stands, slamming his palm on the desk. “We deserve more than being hoodwinked by a system predominated by alphas.”

A few other heads nod in agreement. Dean’s roommate carries on, swinging his arms, “We should be allowed the right to choose our destiny. I think first-years should be required to take the blockers, then take the time to educate the omegas about the options. We,” he twirls referencing the room, “should not have the decision taken out of our hands.”

Garth silently raises his hand, remaining quiet till Rowena points at him. In a tender voice he queries, “I’ve heard rumors of a spell which can stop harmful Alphas. Why not teach us how to stay safe?”

Ash points to the guy, shouting, “YES! Instead of reviewing knotting techniques for the third year in a row, I want to know how to stop alphas with wicked ideas.”

“Sit down, Ash,” Rowena snaps, a fire behind her tone. “Now, why would I instruct students on such a spell when they are required by law to take the little pink pills?”

Silence from the room.

Once Ash settles back in his chair, Rowena strides towards the window, her finger chasing a thick stream of rain. When she speaks again her words are softer, almost regretful. “Before the invention of blockers, omegas were trained in how to perform a certain spell.” Crossing her arms, Rowena rests her head on the window. “Not all omegas have the inner magic to properly perform such a difficult incantation. In my fourth year a girl in my class went mad over the horrors in her head that she could not halt. Her elder brother led the charge for blocker usage and yes, Ash, he was an alpha.”

“What happened to her?” Dean whispers.

“As you would expect, she never found a mate in the Challenges. Tried three different options, never making it past the second trial. The absolute shock of possibly coming face to face with her attacker rendered her motionless.” Turning from the window Rowena asks the room, “What are the three choices given to Omegas after their fifth year?”

Quickly Charlie answers, “Teaching at a center, birthing for those who can’t at a Surrogacy home or sterilization to live outside as a beta. Which did she choose?”

“She always loved children. Last I heard she’d birthed ten.” Rowena leans into Ash, not blinking once, “She’s never missed a dose of her blockers. Calls them a Godsend.”
Later, Dean’s sitting on his bed, the two pills resting on his palm. He could take them. Perhaps he’s been seriously lucky the only alpha ever to enter his dreamscape has been Castiel. Any given night his luck could turn.

An odd thought passes through his mind as the sound of Ash in the shower overshadows the storm beyond their window. Castiel doesn’t talk. His alpha desperately wants Dean to decide on his own about the alpha. The man with gorgeous blue eyes refuses to use his REM Vocal Control to persuade him. How can he give it up?

The door opens abruptly, Ash staring at the pills, his hands drying his mullet hair. “Are you going to let Rowena’s terror tactic work?”

“I don’t think it was a ploy. She seemed genuinely upset over it.”

Ash replies in a harsh grunt. His roommate pulls out a pair of sweatpants to sleep in. “I wish we had the spell. Just in case.”

A glass of water is thrust into Dean’s hand. First, he hastily swallows the suppressant his mind torn between losing time with Castiel to the possibility of some rogue alpha taking advantage. “Do you think alphas don’t even try because of the blocker laws?”

“Dude! I bet that’s totally true. It’s not a secret, omegas taking the blockers are mandated by all Centers. No reason to stress, right?”

Biting down on his lip, Dean grimaces. “How many alphas have you met in the dreamscape?”

“A dozen, maybe more,” Ash huffs, realizing he just shot down the theory. “They were all really nice. Almost like going on beta dates.”

Pulling up the poster, his roommate pops his pill into the tiny, barely noticeable hole. “What do ya think?”

“The thought of not seeing Cas tonight physically hurts.” He passes the pink pill over, watching it vanish into the drywall.

A loud crack of thunder has both omegas jolting. Ash chuckles, “not ominous at all.”

In the dark, Dean listens to Ash tossing and turning in his bed. The decision made, even the idea of falling asleep brings a cold panic over his flesh. In a dreamscape there are no rules. Cautiously he inhales, letting the late hour pull him under. With a quick prayer, Dean hopes to meet his alpha.

There are sounds of birds fluttering by his head. Gentle feathers are brushing against his exposed skin; the sensation of jeans and a flannel give him an air of security. Dread keeps his eyes shut tight.

What if …Castiel isn’t the one to come?

Sunshine warms his cheeks as the scent of orange zest and cinnamon heats his insides.

A hand slides into his, and Dean opens himself to the possibilities.

Chapter End Notes
Big hugs and lots of love. Comments, Questions, and Concerns are always adored.

XOXOXO - Angie
From his perch on high, Dean surveys the workout field. Omegas are running the obstacle course, practicing karate on the soft mat center, and scaling the climbing wall. He really should be doing laps. Yet, his mind continues to race with thoughts of Castiel, the alpha whose scent has bewitched him so completely he will never take another pink blocker pill. Could he be in love? True mates don’t always find love and mates who were never true can find it. One of his favorite songs comes on his iPod, and Dean closes his eyes letting The Rolling Stones take him far from the sub-basement of the Center.

I see a red door and I want it painted black

No doors anymore …

Perhaps he can’t love anyone; the pain of watching his mother die in a white hospital bed when he was four has scarred his very soul. Obviously marking the omega as an unwanted mate in the scrolls of fate.

No colors anymore I want them painted black

Her blue eyes were staring into his face as the life simply drained away, little tears of pain trickling down her cheek. She’d been in a terrible car crash, her face burned from the fire that had erupted. She lived long enough to kiss her boys goodbye. Maybe the experience with his mother explains his obsession with Castiel’s sapphire gaze, or the guy’s just really fucking sexy.

Black as night, Black as coal

A pencil smacks Dean in the arm, causing him to nearly lose his precariously balanced seat at the top of the ropes course. He yells down, “What the hell is your problem?”

Billie’s deathly serious scowl replies from the ground, “Winchester, get your ass down here; we have work to do.”

“Gimme a minute,” Dean grumbles, turning off his music as he slides down a single piece of rope that graces the bottom. Once he’s back on his feet, the omega grins at the grumpy lady. “Where’s the rest of the class?”

Now with the Challenges almost upon them, every afternoon is spent with the coaches of the omega’s selection. Billie’s the main trainer for Hunter. Most betas would never work in an Omega Center, the profession too below their status, but Billie is an unusual one. She’s never been seen wearing any color; greys and blacks are her go-to items. Today it’s black jeans, black t-shirt and charcoal leather jacket.

“You are the only third-year stupid enough to sign up for Hunter. I told my fourth- and fifth-year omegas to give us an hour alone. You have a shit ton of catching up to do, Dean.”
“Are you going to try to convince me to pick something else?” Dean crosses his arms hoping the stance shows his complete lack of interest in another challenge.

Shaking her head, the curls around her face bob. “Nope. You being eaten alive by the other competitors will be pure entertainment.”

“Aren’t trainers supposed to be supportive?”

“I will clap while you crash and burn, does that count?” A tight-lipped smirk etches her stoic expression. Pushing his shoulder, she leads him towards a corner. “Ever been through the red doors?”

A menacing set of double doors sit behind the ropes. “Always been locked when I’ve given them a tug.”

Rolling her eyes, Billie retrieves a key from her jeans pocket. “Not all practice space is appropriate for unsupervised children.” She tips her head back to the giggling gaggle of girls rolling in a sand trap. “Especially the nursery.”

All omegas must be 15 a month before the challenges to be considered a first-year. Without enforcement of the age restriction, some omegas could be extremely young in their third years. Thus, the nursery or preschool as Dean calls them. The entire crew are barely adolescents but unable to reside outside of the Center after having their first heat.

“Must protect our innocent virtues.” Dean laughs, stepping back as she jerks the door open.

Inside the space is one massive shooting range with differing types of targets. Billie unlocks a solid metal cabinet, sliding a barn door to the side, “The first trial will be Accuracy. You need to select three different weapons to showcase your talents. Take a look.”

A slew of shining, sharp and threatening weapons glint in the fluorescents; knives (a dozen different types and sizes), axes, spears, wooden and metal bows. Towards the edge of the hanging closet every gun imaginable.

“Yes!” Dean exclaims, snagging a silver one with a coral handle. “I want to try this one first.”

Across the room is a wall full of locked drawers; Billie opens one, revealing several boxes of ammunition. “Have you ever shot a Colt Nickel Taurus PT92?”

Shrugging, Dean loads the gun, holding the sleek metal with precision. The comfortable action brings a raised eyebrow from the trainer. “My dad’s a retired Marine. Saturdays at the firing range was a family affair.”

“Maybe you’re better suited for Hunter than we thought.” She gestures to the open rows. “For each of the three weapons you choose, you will also have to expertly decide the type to best hit the three different targets. First, is a traditional round target twelve feet away. Second, will be a smaller human size target thirty feet away. You will need to hit the heart or head. Finally, a row of three-inch dots with merely a nine-foot distance.”

Scoffing, Dean rolls his eyes at how easy the first trial will be for him.

Billie taps the gun, pointing to the square piece of black paper with ten white dots. “They move, side to side and front to back, at will. Give it a go, big shot.”

Stepping in front of the farthest target, Dean lets the cold metal meld into his palm. Memories of his
father teaching him how to shoot bring a smile to his lips. He aims with one eye before closing both and firing four times consecutively. “Hello, Sweetheart.”

He never misses with a Colt.

An hour later Dean’s shown a talent with guns and knives. He sucked at bows. Guess playing Robin Hood will have to be left for another. Spears, on the other hand, are awesome! They are putting the items back in the heavy safe when a group of omegas Dean’s seen around enter the shooting range.

“Billie! You’ll scare off the newbie.” The guy steps forward, shaking Dean’s hand, but also squeezing it dominantly. The smile on his face isn’t genuine. “Hello, I’m Arthur Ketch.”

“I know who you are.” Dean grips tighter, hoping to hurt the guy. “I’m friends with Kevin.”

The older omega yanks out his hand, “A very brilliant young man. Kevin made us all proud at the Academic Challenges last year.”

“Not because of you.” Dean seethes because everyone in the entire Center has heard how Ketch bullies Kevin relentlessly for being the youngest and smallest fourth-year. The kid couldn’t help having his first heat at 13, meaning he’s only 18. Arthur, on the other hand, didn’t have his first heat till 22, meaning at 25 he towers over Kevin.

“Now, now children, can’t we all get along?” A thin blonde who could almost be Jo’s sister announces. “I’m Ruby, fourth-year.” She points to the two guys flanking her, “On my right is Gordon and my left is Mick, leaving Bela by the door. All ready to kick some ass for the fourth-year gang.”

Gang certainly sums them up, Dean notes; Billie simply leans against the wall with her arms crossed. Clearly not going to interfere. Just behind her stands a giant size guy who makes the girl leaning against him appear tiny.

Without moving, huge dude tosses out, “We make up the fifth-years for the Hunter Challenge. I’m Gadreel and this lovely individual is Eileen.” His fingers are flying in front of him as he speaks. “She’s deaf. Make fun of her, and I’ll break your nose.”

What a delightful way to meet the team!

“Crowley mentioned there weren’t a lot of people interested in Hunter, but I would have expected a few more.” He poses the statement more to Billie than anyone else.

Arthur answers, his need to always dominate totally aggravating. “The numbers vary year to year. We are on the small side as Centers go. You are quite the brute taking on Hunter as a third year. What did you do last year?”

“Sports. Had some laughs but I need more of a thrill.” Dean steps into Ketch’s personal space, “I’m guessing this is your first year at Hunter?”

“You would be right. Participating in Erotica helped get my main talents out there for our viewing audience. Now, I want an alpha who knows what they are getting. Gadreel and Eileen are the varsity team around here. Although, we all have been training for months.”

Nodding Dean winks, “I’m sure catching up won’t be tough.”

A cold laugh rings out from Bela. “Be careful. Injuries are rampant around here.”
Before anything goes further, Billie pushes off the wall shouting, “One hour of Obstacles. Go!”

Trailing in the rear, Dean watches as the group not only does the standard obstacle course but also adding new stuff. He never falters. Fuck them and their puffed-up egos, he’s battling for one specific alpha. In the end he just has to survive. The glint in Bela’s and Ruby’s eyes lead Dean to believe survival might be a little trickier than he originally thought.

Two hours later, Dean’s got sweat in new and interesting places as he lies on the track staring into the grey rafters. Everything aches. A shower is a priority once the omega can get up. The fourth-year Hunters are assholes, but pushing himself to keep up with their pace will be awesome training. The image of Cas’s face is all the motivation he really requires.

A familiar face bends over into his view. “Please, Charlie, let me die in peace.”

“No happening, Winchester. You and I have kiddie duty in twenty minutes.” She holds out her hand, helping Dean to his feet. “Thank God, children won’t notice your personal bouquet.” Charlie pinches her nose.

“I’m sure there are those who would find my sweaty ass delightful.”

With a shrug, the redhead pushes the elevator button. “Oh, of that I’m sure. Your ass in particular will always draw a crowd.”

When they step out on the first floor, they meet up with the next shift. As a group they take the steps down to the underground tunnel leading to the daycare. As a small form of revenue for the omegas and an excellent child-rearing education, the Center has a daycare for the local community. Several betas run the front desk, collecting the kids and walking them behind locked doors to their unmated omega caregivers. Cameras allow parents to see the classrooms, and email is used for conversations. Everyone in the Center has to do six hours a week, broken into two shifts. Those in the Child Rearing Challenge do more.

The color scheme alters dramatically when they enter the daycare. Instead of bland walls and grey carpet, the view has every color of the rainbow, including blue carpet with smiling clouds. Dean’s often wondered what a stoned person would think. The idea makes him snicker.

Charlie and Dean typically sign up early when the monthly schedule comes out so they can work together. Scratching his scruff, Dean mentions, “I almost forgot we had the rugrats today.”

“What would you do without me?” Charlie gives him a playful shove as the tunnel opens into the main hallway of the daycare. “The fact you love the itty bitties is surprising.”

“I do.” Actually, Dean dotes on them constantly. He wants his own one day, so the practice is helpful. However, a dozen two-year-olds can be a lot, but he’s not gonna gripe because the job brings him so much love.

They both knock on the half door with a big yellow two on it. Dean announcing, “The cavalry has arrived.”

“Deam!” A sweet little girl with bright hazel eyes and blonde hair in pigtails screams, waddling towards him with her hands raised high. “My Deam!”

Following his orders, Dean picks her up for a hug. “Hey little alpha, how has your day been?”

Alpha children don’t have reactions to heat scents, at least not until puberty. Therefore, the daycare has kids from all three designations playing together peacefully. Not all facilities allow mingling...
even at a young age, but in the Centers there is an attempt to teach equality from the start.

“My Deam.” She snuggles into his neck, sniffing. To be honest, young alphas may not react to smells the same as their older counterparts, but they do love scenting. “All done.”

“Sorry darlin’, I’ve got to manage all you scoundrels, no playing favorites.” He kisses Layla’s head, putting her back on the ground. A proper scowl fills her face.

Checking the lesson plans for the day turns Dean’s smile upside down. Finger painting. He looks at Charlie rolling on the floor with two munchkins. “We’ve got finger painting in ten minutes.”

“Quit whining, not like a little paint in your hair ever killed you.”

“TWICE Charlie! The blue doesn’t come out for days.” With a huff Dean begins pouring out little cups of the three primary colors. The educational goal here is to teach how yellow mixed with the other two can make orange and green. Usually, the end result is a mucky brown. Still an important skill to learn.

Halfway through art time, Dean smells it. The unmistakable stench of a dirty diaper. Now, all the kids in the two’s room either wear diapers or pull-ups, but they are supposed to attempt using the toilet. “Okay, guys who made a stinky?”

A litany of tiny giggles makes Dean grin. How can anyone not adore the noise? Charlie is busy cleaning up a tidal wave of blue so it’s up to him to find the culprit. Cautiously he walks around the little tables inhaling behind each kid. Ten seconds later, and it’s undeniable.

“Todd. Man, you should ask when you feel the need to poop.”

The little guy’s fingers are swirling in a sea of crap colored paint. Not appetizing at all. Todd shrugs and goes back to his swooshes. Lifting the toddler up by his underarms Dean carries him to the short sink for a quick hand wash. Then it’s off to the changing table.

“Todd!” the little guy yells, smiling brightly at Dean’s demise.

“Yes, your name is Todd. Jesus man, what did they feed you at lunch?” He’s wiping the tooshie and holding back a gag.

“Todd POOP!” He wiggles wildly, nearly falling from the table.

Nodding, Dean snags a fresh diaper. “Brilliant deduction but,” he leans in close to Todd’s face, “you should have pooped in the potty.”

Little hands pat his face, which is pretty sweet. “Todd BIG POOP!” the child says with awe.

“You’re all good.” He places the mini beta on the floor to charge over to his circle table shouting, “I am TODD!”

Nobody even glances his way, completely immune to his antics. Throwing away the trash then wiping down the changing space, someone tugs at his pantleg.

His blonde alpha smiles big. “Poop,” she says, pointing towards him.

“Yeah, we all know Todd’s the deuce master.”

He leans down to give Layla a hug when for the first time ever she steps away. Again, pointing and exclaiming, “Poop.”
He notices Layla appears to be gesturing specifically to a place on his cheek. “Must of got some paint on me.” He wipes it away with his hand and looks at what wet substance is swept away.

The entire world halts. That’s not paint.

Snagging twenty wipes, Dean violently scrubs his hands, cheek and everywhere on his skin the shit might have touched. He needs alcohol to kill EVERYTHING!

“Charlie! I need alcohol!”

“Dude, we’re working with toddlers. We all need a shot.” She’s helping Tracy wash her hands and take off her smock. “What is wrong with you?”

He’s now taking to shimming across the room while searching frantically for a huge bottle of rubbing alcohol. “Shit on MY FACE! On ...my ...face ...Charlie.”

Laughing hysterically, she replies through gulps of air, “First-Aid kit in the staff lounge.”

Not giving it a second thought, Dean sprints towards the hall. Solely focused on reaching the precious rubbing alcohol, he doesn’t look down at the half-door blocking his exit. The wood catches him right in the groin. Momentum flips Dean over the half door and flat on his back.

“Fuck!” Dean gasps, his breath lost somewhere between his flattened cock and his ribs.

Charlie is crying as she fights to breathe.

Little people’s voices sing like a choir, “Shit on my face.”

“Awesome.”

Chapter End Notes

You guys are awesome. Lots of love from me to you.

XOXOXO,
Angie
Sundays are the Centers’ free days. Unlike on the outside, where individuals get a two-day weekend, omegas get one. Mainly because there isn’t much to do to stay busy; idle hands and all. This happens to be the day when the computer lab bursts at the seams with bodies. Again, Dean thanks the powers that be for Ash. He forces both omegas to rise before 7 a.m. to beat the crowds.

Leaning heavily on his palm, the omega’s eyelids are battling to close as Dean opens his email, scrolling through and deleting all the spam.

The surly unmated older omega who oversees the labs and coaches the Gaming challenges grumbles at his laptop, his thick brown glasses sliding farther down his nose and whispering a slew of curses. Frank Devereaux has been at the Center for four decades, and it shows. For some strange reason, Charlie worships him, and Ash hangs on the guy’s every word. His desk sits in the back corner so he doesn’t miss a thing. As if an omega would steal? They literally have nowhere to hide. To Devereaux’s left is the cage; a square room, locked with a gate around it that holds ten to fifteen computers for the Gaming omegas. Top of the line, and every type and brand imaginable. Ash is next to him since he chose Erotica.

An email from Sammy catches his attention as he scrolls. He’s really the only person who writes regularly. The scrawny alpha is four years younger; at 16 his brother is always abounding with energy and questions. Their dad would engage more, but life always gets in the way.

Hey Dean,

One more month until the Challenges for your Center. I’ve been keeping tabs through the alpha network. Had my rut last spring, and my alpha ID card came last week. I can officially join the challenges. Dad says I should wait a couple of years, don’t want to make a fool of myself on television. Anyways, we are in Portland right now but WE WILL BE IN KANSAS for the trials. If we stayed in Oregon, we’d only catch the highlights on the National channel, and I want to see you. What challenge did you pick? Dad says you’ll stick with Sports again or maybe Child Rearing. You definitely got enough practice with me.

How are you? Tell me a funny story about your life. There has to be something hilarious happening between Charlie and Ash. It’s lonely here. Dad’s working and hanging out until late, so I spend my days in school and the library. Once we find a place near your Center maybe you can call?

Write soon.

Sam

A pang of sorrow crushes Dean’s heart. For all his complaining, the omega’s life improved immensely after entering the center. Gone are the days of putting a drunk John Winchester to bed,
scrambling for food when the money runs out and jumping from one town to the next. His Dad is a kind man. An alpha who loved his mate with his entire being; when Mary Winchester died their father’s soul went with her to heaven. Only the shell was left to raise two young boys.

Leaving Sammy was the hardest thing he’s ever had to do. There was no choice. Five months after his 18th birthday, the omega spent the first hour of his heat locked in a rundown motel bathroom. His father was holding back the feral alphas with a baseball bat. Dean will forever be grateful his dad was there. Blood relatives are unaffected by their family’s heat scent. Sam immediately called the Omega Safety Task Force. Ten walking mountain-size alphas wearing thick black masks tazed all the alphas, collected Dean and dropped him with Crowley. End of story.

Hannah held his hand as he learned how to deal with heat, her tender voice soothing. Now, he has his supplies under the bed so he can stay there for the duration. Heats are a normal occurrence at the Center. There may be problems with the system of Centers in the United States, but overall they are a blessing. A shielded place where Omegas are all equal. Dean’s heard Crowley’s management is one of the best, Hannah holds his balls in line.

Hey Sammy,

Look at you! Big card-carrying alpha. I’m proud of you, man.

Well, I have a surprise for you. I’ve decided to take on the Hunter Challenges this year. The trials are right in my wheelhouse after all the training sessions we had as kids. I’ve heard Oregon’s pretty nice this time of year, or does it rain all the time?

You think my life is here for your enjoyment? It is. So, the other day I was in my Two’s class teaching them about mixing colors.

A hand slams down on his computer, startling Dean. “Hey!”

“Mr. Banes!” Frank shouts, “One more time and it’s detention.”

“Sorry,” he raises his hands in a sign of peace, “just need Dean for a second.”

Devereaux mutters, “Fuckin’ kids,” returning to his monitor.

“What can I do for you, Max?” Dean saves the email, deciding to finish tomorrow. Alicia stands behind her twin brother; the two omegas are never apart.

Max nods at the glass door. “Let’s go for a walk.”

Intrigued by the mystery, Dean passes his station off to the next person in line. He follows behind the Banes siblings as Alicia pushes the button for the elevators. Alicia and Max Banes are second-years who started the same time as Dean, but they were 14, which puts them the same age as Sam. The pair are a little peculiar but always cordial to him.

The trio exits on one of the classroom floors, completely empty on a Sunday. They choose the nearest room, flipping on the overhead lights. Dean chuckles. “Deserted classrooms are always a fun spot.”

Alicia snags a chair, gesturing for Dean to do the same. “A friend suggested you might be in the need of a certain outlawed spell.”

“Perhaps.” Dean’s going to kill whoever squealed. His mind is already organizing a list of suspects.
“Flying blind in the dreamscape is stupid,” Max huffs, leaning against the white board and dragging his finger through the math equation left there.

Shrugging, Dean replies, “I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

Wiping the ink from his finger, Max rolls his eyes, “It's your mind, but hey, maybe you’ll enjoy being a doll for some pathetic alpha who can’t have the one he really wants. I thought you were brighter than that.”

“Let’s just say even if I were traipsing through the dreamscape garden I’ve only ever run into one visitor, and he’s awesome.” Dean crosses his arms defiantly.

A long pregnant pause is the Banes’s response.

Alicia breaks the silence with a quick, “What?”

Dropping all pretenses, he leans in closer. “I’ve had exactly one alpha. His name is Castiel and he’s cool, respectful and unbelievably hot.”

“What?” Max adds.

Jesus, these two need to add more words.

Shaking off the shock, Alicia finally clarifies, “How many times have you been?”

“I don’t know exactly,” he holds out his fingers trying to grasp a number. “We’ve been meeting for months, maybe a year. Before Castiel I would sit in my dreamscape literally picking the daisies.”

“What?!” Max screams, grabbing Dean’s shirt and yanking him up. “That is not fucking possible.”

“I’m lucky, I get it.” He shoves the other omega off.

Suddenly Alicia also rises, “Dean, an omega can’t create a dreamscape without the help of an alpha counterpart and until you mate your mind can latch onto any alpha who wishes to find you.”

“Okay, so I’m not a popular—”

“YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND!” Max exclaims, his eyes wild. “You should have met dozens of alphas by now. I mean you can have tons of repeats, sure, but only one isn’t possible. Dean you are number four on the watch list. Alphas are clamoring for your attention, and sliding into your open thoughts is the first place they will try.”

The omega watch list is legendary. All second-years are rated after their first challenge experience ends. The top twenty are published in Alpha Weekly to get more individuals interested and jockeying for a place in the local Challenges.

“You need an Alpha ID number to access the watch list.” Dean’s pretty certain these guys are yanking his chain. Number four, please.

“Or snatch Crowley’s copy of Alpha Weekly with you and five other omegas on the cover.”

A memory of Hannah spending a day trying out her new phone camera now makes a lot more sense. She made him wear his Dad’s old leather jacket and best pair of jeans. “Okay, smarty pants, if it’s so impossible then why have I only ever met Cas?”

The twins glance at each other, having some unheard conversation. Max eventually puts it to words,
“You’ve met a dreamweaver.”

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Fresh, cool air breezes over Dean’s face, tickling his brown hair. The open window lets just enough wind into his dad’s 1967 Chevy Impala. The omega’s fingers tighten around the well-worn steering wheel. A taste of gun oil and leather create a perfect moment. Dean’s missed driving. He would happily give a major organ to have this in real life, but alas a dreamscape will have to do.

Tires squeal as he takes a turn too quickly, shouting, “Baby, you are awesome.” The setting sun lets rays seep in through the bright clean windows. John Winchester never let dirt or even dust remain on his beloved vehicle.

Without preamble the passenger seat has been taken by his alpha, Castiel. Orange zest with cinnamon pummels Dean’s nostrils, overpowering the car’s delightful aroma. “Hey Cas!”

The other man smiles brightly; the shiny expression touches Castiel’s eyes.

Alpha and omega ride in a comfortable quiet, observing the pinkening skyline. The black tar road stretches out before them into the horizon. Dean’s heaven. Once the sun has vanished and night is upon them, the omega finally pulls the car over, turning to Cas, “Are you a dreamweaver?”

No answer. Dean really wasn’t expecting one, but it would have been nice. Instead, Cas snaps his fingers, and the two men are catapulted to a large room resembling a movie theater. The rows of seats face an oversized screen; red velvet curtains frame the white rectangle. Castiel motions for the omega to sit. Dean obliges.

Straightaway the screen comes to life with a hand appearing holding a black pen. The image writes out a quick reply: Why do you ask?

“A couple friends mentioned I should have met dozens of alphas in my dreamscape. They were worried about the dangers of not taking the blockers.” He shrugs, placing his hands on his lap. “I’ve heard some scary shit, Cas.”

The sole hand scratches along the faux paper: You are safe.

“How do you know? Like maybe in the next couple of days another alpha catches wind of my dreamscape and saunters in for a round of Doll Play.”

A thunderous crack twinges in Dean’s ears as the lights flicker dramatically. Castiel’s hands fist by his side. The alpha seems livid, rage billowing from him like lightning. A larger, bolder version of You are safe repeats indefinitely on the screen.

Dean stands, his knees shaking slightly because, holy hell, Castiel is a badass. Stepping in closer, the omega tilts forward, their lips almost touching. “So, you are shielding my mind from others?”

A gentle nod from Cas has the skin of their mouths barely grazing against each other.

“Can you protect Ash or my other friends?” Dean appreciates Castiel’s caretaking, but it shouldn’t be merely for him.

Castiel’s tongue darts out licking his lips as his head shakes. The pen on the screen revealing a new sentence. I try my best with your roommate, but I must remain diligent on you.

“According to the rumors, dreamweavers died out decades ago. Without someone to train you, how
are you able to do it? Max says the government would snag you for research purposes if you are found out.”

_We still exist but remain in the shadows. People often lash out at things they don’t comprehend._

Underneath, in a visibly trembling hand: _You are worth the risk._

“Shit.” A quiver of desire awakens in Dean’s body, slick beginning to leak from his hole. “You’ve never met me. How do you know I’m worth anything at all?”

His eyes flick back to the screen, observing the familiar hand’s script: _Your heart is pure. You are a righteous and admirable man, Dean Winchester. There is no denying the light within you. Please don’t ever believe anything different._

“Cas, your wooing skills are stellar.” He follows the alpha’s tongue, craving to taste and chase it with his own.

The red velvet curtains close, hiding the screen and darkening the room. Illumination comes from the dimmed lights on the wall. Dean’s body tingles with want. He’s never experienced such a powerful need to caress and feel another person. Reaching out, his fingers glide down the blue tie. The silky material adds to the sensations of his emotions.

A sapphire gaze leaps around the omega’s face, clearly waiting for a sign. Castiel won’t do anything unless he has Dean’s full consent. The notion is overwhelming. Dean’s not completely lacking in the kissing department. Experimentation is key to success. However, nothing could prepare him for the wealth of stimulation exuding over his skin, through his veins, pummeling his senses.

“Kiss me.” For once Dean believes Castiel should make the first move. Having stated his desire so blatantly, there should be no denying his open invitation for the alpha. A few seconds tick by. With each passing moment, the omega’s brain clutters with self-doubt. Inhaling slowly, he inches in his own lips, brushing against Castiel’s chin. “Please.”

A heavy aroma of cinnamon clings to the air, burning his nostrils.

Sometimes a guy just has to take matters into his own hands, alphas can be so dense. Dean jerks back and snaps his fingers, focusing on the specific place he wishes to land. A lost road somewhere in Kansas leading to nowhere. The Impala parked, moonlight dancing over the pristine black car. The omega slips his hand into Cas’s, directing the man to his precious Baby. Cautiously, Dean places his bottom on the trunk, opening his knees wide.

“Come here.” He winks, giving the silky tie a yank.

Perfectly on command, Cas slides between the omega’s thighs; the awareness of the alpha’s position intoxicating. He knows the man won’t speak. Tilting forward Dean’s lips almost touch Castiel’s mouth before he darts in the last minute to the left slipping an ear lobe between his teeth. Suckling the flesh as he works his way over the shell.

An intense growl reverberates from Cas’s chest. Dean’s breath hitches at the noise as his arousal leaps into a higher gear. Using his tongue to trace the veins in the alpha’s neck, his fingers twist in the tan trench coat, tugging the other man closer. God, for a dream the crushing sensations have Dean battling to inhale.

Castiel’s erection drags against Dean’s own swollen cock. They go any longer the omega will come in his pants screaming with frustration. Tears build in his eyes as his aggravation builds, a wave of anxiety bubbles to the surface. Perhaps the alpha doesn’t want to kiss him.
The shocking revelation has Dean’s mind spinning out of control. What the hell is going on?

In the next moment, the omega’s sitting up in his bed at the Center. Sweat clings to his t-shirt as Dean pants with uncertain defeat coiling in his belly.

Cas let him go.

Why?

Chapter End Notes

Busy afternoon so I posted early.
Comments, Questions, and Concerns are always appreciated.

XOXOXO,
Angie
The roof of the Center has always been restricted. Not a single omega Dean’s ever met has even an inkling on how to access the top of their building, much less climb on it. Billie has other plans. The Hunter Challenge omegas are assembled in Crowley’s office as their trainer explains the activity for the night.

“At midnight exactly, you will be blindfolded and guided up to the roof by one of the teachers. You may not speak. Each contestant will be timed on the trial; utter a single word and a minute is added to your finish time for each syllable. Do you understand?”

In unison the group nods silently.

Exasperated, Billie huffs, “Now is the time to ask questions. Once you have a blindfold on your face is when the silence begins until I say your end time.”

“Why are we doing the practice run at night?” Gadreel voices Eileen’s query.

“You both know, only the first three trials of the Hunter Challenges are set in stone. First, is accuracy with weapons. Second, is a five-mile obstacle course against other omegas and the third is the chase chute. Now the finale usually is the hide and seek overnight, but the particulars are never the same. You need to be prepared for anything.”

Everyone mutters agreement, although Dean’s barely heard about the chute.

Billie turns a chalkboard towards them; there is a drawing of the center. Using chalk, Billie draws a rope starting at the top and ending on the eighth floor. “The center instructor who guides you to the roof will remove your blindfold and shout go. This means your time has started. You need to get down the rope quickly and enter the building at the open window. Once inside, immediately dash to the emergency stairwell and head to the sub-basement. When you emerge from the stairwell look for the yellow mat. I will be waiting for you there.”

“Easy.” Gordon puffs out his chest. “I thought you would make it difficult.”

Dean’s glaring at the guy, because how is climbing down the side of a twelve-story building in the dark easy?

Billie smirks. “There will be interference. Don’t stop. Don’t talk until you’ve hit the yellow mat.” She overly enunciates the color yellow, which sets off a warning signal in the omega’s mind.

“Anyone else?”

“Why the silence?” Dean wonders to the group.

“You don’t want the obstacles to hear you.” Billie answers, her dark brown eyes shimmering with joy. This woman loves her job.
His eyes roam around the room, attempting to get a read on the other participants. Everyone appears stoked, but he can see tiny tells. Dean’s not the only one scared as hell.

Bela raises her hand, “What’s the chute?”

Okay, good to know he’s not alone.

The Hunter coach sighs. “In your third trial, 25 omegas will be put inside a circular never-ending chute four miles in diameter. You will run. Round and round you will go like hamsters on a wheel. Alphas will be released in groups of five from the ceiling to catch you. They earn points by yanking the flags hanging from your waist. There will be differing apparatuses to help you hide and block alphas. After all the omegas’ flags have been caught, the next group goes in and so on and so on. It’s fun.”

Gadreel speaks up, “I think terrifying is more accurate. Eileen and I ran it last year. The mere scent of alphas entering the chute will fuck you in ways no one can describe.”

“Damn,” Ruby mumbles.

“One year the chute was pitch black. No light at all.” Billie yanks blindfolds from her back pocket. “So, yes, working in the dark has relevance.”

“Explain the point system.” Dean’s new to Hunter so he needs information desperately.

Ruby cracks her fingers. “In Hunter not everyone automatically qualifies for the fifth and sixth challenges. Those on the bottom get cut.” She leans in, her breath tickling Dean’s neck. “Nobody knows the cutoff until it happens, so you better be on top, big boy.”

“Alphas also receive points.” Gadreel watches Eileen’s fingers, giving her a voice. “This allows them to pick which omegas they want to focus on. Number one in the point system puts in their top three. The final trial doesn’t have a max, although the fourth and fifth do, and omegas can deny alphas for their last trial. Also, throughout the competition where and when they enter the playing field is determined by their ranking.”

“It’s all very well thought out.” Gordon grins widely, “Can we get on with the party?”

What if Cas doesn’t get the points? Dean’s chest tightens with worry, “Wait. How can two proper mates be put together if its all done with points?”

Billie squeezes his shoulder, “Scent experts add points and suggestions to possible true mates. You will have one assigned to your case and meet with the them before each of the alpha trials. Have faith. The system won’t let you down.” She never releases the grip on Dean’s bicep. “We will go in order of seniority, which means Dean, you’ll go first. Ruby second followed by Bela …”

“Awesome.” Dean tunes her out. His mind keeps spinning back to Castiel’s smile. Anything to stop the twisting in his gut. His alpha is amazing, but why in the hell would he deliberately pick Hunter and choose to put him in danger? Too late now.

A shuffling behind him pulls the omega from his thoughts. A group of instructors enters the office, collecting blindfolds from Billie.

Hannah bumps him with her shoulder. “Feel like a stroll?”

“What are you doing here?”
“Billie needed volunteers, and I am required to be here anyways in case of a medical emergency. Two stones and things.” She waves it off.

Well if he’s going to fall from the top of the Center, having the doctor available sounds appropriate. Shit Billie’s talking, “…remember tonight we will use easy-release harnesses, but at the trials there will be nothing to aid you from plummeting.”

“Are you fucking kidding?” Gordon’s smarmy grin goes sliding right off his face. “We could croak?”

“Yep.” Billie shrugs. “You guys chose Hunter. Welcome, and try not to die. The paperwork is killer.”

Hannah glares at Dean, her soft blue eyes screaming at him. Perhaps Cas has a death wish.

“Alright boys and girls, blindfold time,” the Hunter coach announces. “Remember, your time begins when you are told …go.”

Dean’s world goes black. Movement and whispers surround him as the omega grows accustomed to the lack of sight. His mind drifts back to the last three dreamless nights. Castiel hasn’t returned to him since the night in the movie theater and the almost kiss. A pain has developed in his chest. One that never disappears, only comes and goes like the tide. Dean’s asked himself every question about what went wrong or taken Ash’s advice that Cas simply has been busy prepping for the Omega Challenges. He knows nothing about the alpha’s life in the real world. Does he have to take time off work? Will it be a long journey? What if he never planned on showing up?

Castiel is without a doubt Dean’s true mate, but the mere discovery of your mate doesn’t give a person an immediate happily ever after. Fairy tales wouldn’t be special if they always came to be.

The doctor’s soft hand takes his elbow, aiding Dean as they twirl around the room a bit, through a door, turn down a hallway, through another door and finally come to a halt ten minutes later. If he had to guess, it was an elaborate plan to hide the fact they are right where they began: Crowley’s office.

With a low voice, Hannah directs, “There is a rope ladder in front of you. Climb up, and someone will help you over the ridge of the hatch.”

She wasn’t kidding. The rope swings as Dean ascends into the rafters. Fresh, open air swoops onto his face as the omega inhales deeply. Damn, it's been too long. Perhaps, one day they will find an alternative to locking up omegas, letting the designation play in the sun like their counterparts.

A strong arm nearly lifts Dean from the ladder, placing him on his feet.

Again, Hannah speaks gently, “Someone is going to place your harness on in a moment.”

He follows the commands lifting feet, holding out arms praying everything is tight and secure. Gloves are slipped onto his hands, protecting the omega’s palms from severe burns.

“Listen.” Hannah’s mouth is directly at his ear, her voice almost undetectable. “The quick release tab to remove the harness lies at your belly button. Once you are inside, remove it. You don’t want to wear all the added gear longer than necessary.”

Wind blows harshly. Honestly, he would revel in the moment if he wasn’t terrified about hanging from the building. Hannah guides him forward, placing his hand on a ledge.
The blindfold is jerked away as she shouts, “GO!”

Dean doesn’t even think twice. Moving totally on instinct, he grabs the thick white rope with both hands and throttles himself over the edge into oblivion on the other side. He can see lights in the distance, but he keeps his focus. As efficiently as possible, the omega places his feet on the glass siding of the Center, walking his way down.

His arms are shaking by the point he notices the end of the rope. However, he hasn’t crossed an open window. Fuck. Glancing side to side, he finds his entrance into the building ten feet to the right. Hastily, Dean shimmies across, sliding inside without a single mishap. Instantly his fingers release the harness.

Darkness swallows him whole. Light from the open window is the only illumination as Dean slows his breath, paying close attention to the shadows. The emergency stairwell is at the far east corner of the building. Dean entered on the northern side, so he will need to weave his way over. Cautiously Dean slips out of the office he entered and into the main hallway. A foul stench of rotting seafood has the omega gagging without a noise. The center of the hallway must be a mess; if Dean didn’t keep to the walls, he’d step in some nasty fish parts. A few feet from the stairwell his boot does hit some oil, causing his foot to slide, but he catches himself. Ugh! Billie has a terrible sense of humor.

A red glowing exit sign screams hallelujah to the omega. Peeking inside, Dean sees zero action as he tactfully descends the cement stairs. He attempts a swift pace while still observing every corner. No way in hell would Billie let them simply traipse to the sub-basement.

Whack! The blaring thud of his head slamming into a plastic obstacle has the omega pausing to check for injuries. He mouths a few obscenities. Holding out his hands, Dean’s palms glide over the smooth yet immobile plastic that hangs above him, stopping just below his shoulders. The weird hanging wall of sorts forces him to bend over in order to continue. Uncomfortable, but not unbearable.

With a subtle slope to it, the plastic forces Dean lower and lower as he makes his way farther down the rabbit hole. For better or worse, when the omega has to drop to his knees and crawl the harsh cement steps are replaced with a cushy mat. Thankful for the comfort he pushes onward, sliding and slipping on the slick material under him.

Again, the plastic barrier slopes down, shoving Dean lower until his body is plastered between the mat and faux ceiling. If he turns his head to the left, he can still breathe. Claustrophobia launches an assault of mini panic attacks. He prays for the end. Dean can’t recall when his body was upright as he slithers along pinned to the ground. Maybe it’s the omega’s imagination, but it feels like the space has grown smaller, the mat material pushing against his cheek. His chest is barely rising within the tiny space. A wave of raw terror sweeps through him as the black night gives him no comfort. All he can do is breathe.

After several minutes battling the rising desire to scream, he scents it. Instead of fear, Dean’s now pushing forward with a craving to close the space between himself and the aroma ahead. Orange zest plunges into his nostrils, filling him with complete peace. Cinnamon swaggering in behind leaves the omega in control. He can do this. Dean swivels his hips, moving faster, not giving a damn how tight the space has become because the scent of Castiel drives him onward.

His mind floats to visions of his alpha, forgetting the claustrophobic horror show he’s currently starring in. Nothing settles him quicker than Cas’s bouquet.

Out of nowhere, Dean’s head is released followed by his shoulders, chest, hips and then before his feet are fully free the omega is falling. Actually, it's more like sliding. A piece of him wants to crawl
back to inhale more of his alpha’s odor, but the weird slip-n-slide won’t allow it. He curls his feet in to make a ball and zips down the stairwell at an alarming rate. In the light of day this could be a riot. Tumbling blind down a metal chute is heart-pumping insanity, but an improvement to the birthing flashback hell. He lands hard, the omega’s forehead clipping the floor ruthlessly. Definitely going to leave a mark. Rolling over to the open door, he takes a moment to clear the spinning in his brain. His vision is still blurry; however, time is not his buddy tonight.

Peering out he sees seven different mats highlighted by single strobe lights of varying colors. Ah! Only the person paying particular attention will dash for the correct mat. Which one is yellow? The strobe lights are wreaking havoc on his impending headache and they seem to be changing colors. Billie is one twisted beta.

Cautiously Dean slips around the doorway keeping his back on the wall to the expansive sub-basement work-out area. A different person appears to be guarding each mat. The sentinel has on a body suit of padding and holds a thickly swaddled stick. It won’t do damage, although the sting is going to last.

He scans the open arena when he notices one of the lights in the sequence of colors is white, which means he should be able to find the yellow. Slinking on his belly, Dean elbow walks himself farther inside, checking each pattern. Closest mat is white, next one is blue, and then he has to hold his mouth to stay quiet.

On the far left his goal; a yellow mat guarded by none other than Billie. She’s got the padded stick, however no body armor. Wow! One hell of a lady.

Snaking his way towards her, Dean avoids bringing attention to himself by remaining in the shadows and moving methodically. One guard appears to be filing their nails. The hunter coach turns her back to him whispering something to another bouncer farther out whose mat is red.

Inhaling several times, the omega rises to his feet and sprints with all his might. His legs pump harder with each step. Dean can feel how close he’s getting to the yellow mat, and Billie hasn’t turned back around. Overconfidence will be his downfall.

A mere second before his foot lands on the mat, Billie swings her stick around, slamming it into Dean’s gut. He flips over, crashing onto the mat on his back. Air totally escapes his lungs as he can’t even shout in the chaotic mess.

Ugly, painful lights explode as Billie’s grinning face comes into his view.

“Your time is 22 minutes 23 seconds, Winchester. Are you injured?”

His brain isn’t sure if speaking is a current option, so he shakes his head.

“Good.” She holds a hand out to help Dean to his feet. “Impressive time. I’d hate to break you so early.”

“Happy to …” Dean passes out amid a wave of flashing lights and the lingering scent of his alpha.

Chapter End Notes
Lot's of love to you all!

XOXO - Angie
For the fifth time since he was brought to the Center medical clinic, Hannah flashes a light over his eyes and queries the omega with silly questions about the year and his favorite color. Pushing her away, Dean flops back onto the bed’s starched, cold white sheets. The entire area has zero colors save for the black buttons on the equipment; even the cabinets are bright white.

“Can I go to my room yet?” Dean scoffs, praying silently for a yes.

“Dean, you have a mild concussion. I had no choice but to wake you hourly through the night.” She’s placing a blood pressure cuff around his bicep. “Although, you seem to have weathered the hit quite well. Perhaps if your vitals are strong you may return to your own room, to sleep. Do you hear me? No class today. I want you to rest the morning and only come out for lunch.”

“You give me a pass I’ll sleep the day away.” Dean’s exhausted and has every intention of following doctor’s orders.

She’s typing his blood pressure into her laptop, “I’ll email the staff giving you the entire day off which includes no Hunter practice today either.”

“Fine by me.” The younger omega stretches.

“However, before I can release you we need to chat.” Hannah’s gaze remains on the screen. She clears her throat, pausing her work. “The other Hunter omegas had differing reactions to a certain scent Billie had me add. Some merely became agitated, others found themselves befuddled for a moment, while two could not complete the course. You, however, inhaled deeper and moaned.”

“I’m sorry, what now?” Dean’s face is attempting to show a neutral response. He knows exactly what Hannah’s talking about, but sharing any information would tip off the doctor on his lack of dreamscape blocker usage.

She can’t look at him. The omega worries his lip between his teeth as his anxiety reaches an all-time new level of – fuck! “Dean, you seemed to appreciate, maybe even were familiar, with a sensory stimulus we introduced onto the mats. Do you remember it?”

Scratching the back of his neck, Dean asks, “Hannah, can you maybe give me a hint?”

“One aspect of the challenges that often throws omegas off is smelling an alpha for the first time. Billie wanted to prep each of you for all possibilities. Your reaction was …odd.”

“Maybe he’s my true mate. Do you know where the sample came from?” Dean’s crossing his fingers and toes for more on Cas.

The doctor swivels on her seat, scooting closer to his bed. He’s never before taken notice to the shade of her blue gaze. “Do you?”
“No, why would you think such a crazy thing?” There ya go, Winchester master of manipulation.

“You said ‘he’ instead of ‘the alpha’.” Her eyebrow rises with interest. Suddenly, Hannah deflates, her hands coming to rest on Dean’s. “Please, if something is going on, I want to help. I take patient/omega confidentiality very seriously. Feel free to share absolutely anything with me without fear of reprimand.”

A small piece of Dean wishes he could. Having a person who might be able to help the omega find answers sounds amazing. But no, the chance of shutting down his dreamscapes is too painful. Cas might be ignoring him, yet he’s not given up on them. Life sucks unless you make your own way.

“I’m tired Hannah.”

“Of course,” she helps him to his feet. “Just remember what I said. Anything I learn would be kept between us. I promise. Crowley understands.”

“Have a good one.” Dean waves, walking through the sliding glass doors. The medical clinic is on the 11th floor and shares the space with the library and a few science labs. At the elevators he doesn’t breathe any easier until the familiar swoosh of the doors gives him total silence. Only then does he crash against the wall, tears spilling down his face. Hannah may know Cas’s real identity. She clearly was able to get a sample of his scent for last night’s activity. What does this even mean? Telling her the truth has a slew of possible outcomes. Dean won’t gamble with his future. He exits on floor 4, waving at the few hallmates who are eating breakfast. Class doesn’t start till 8 a.m., but some have challenge practice before or just like getting an early start to the day. As he stalks down the familiar stretch, he spots Charlie and Ash in front of his room scraping crap off.

“What the ---?”

His best friend whips around, her eyes wide. “I will find out who did it and destroy them. We’ve been out here for thirty minutes, but they must have used a ton of Mod Podge.”


Unable to listen to his roommate's advice, Dean scans the door. It’s completely covered in a single magazine page that’s been used over and over. No surprise it’s the pic Hannah took of him and underneath in big, bold, glossy-green letters: “Dean Winchester, our #4 pick.” Whoever decided to vandalize his door added their own comments in black Sharpie along with several devil horns, a couple mustaches, and the mature choice of blacking out his eyes and teeth.

Some of the additions were unoriginal; stupid, ugly, not worth the time. Others were far more hurtful, including: pathetic excuse of a person, unwanted omega, attention seeking, and dreamscape hore. The last one hitting him hardest. Shit, have people started piecing it together, or was the comment merely a shot in the dark? No way to tell, he guesses.

“Leave it.” Dean grabs the scraping tools from both Charlie and Ash. “You guys are going to be late to class.”

“No way I’m keeping such trash up,” Ash states. “Fuckers messed with the wrong omega, and I don’t want lies and grammatical errors on my bedroom door. Whore starts with a w, dipshit.”

A smile tugs at Dean’s lips. “Thanks man. Maybe we’ll work on it after y’all get back, right now I need sleep.”

Charlie stands. yanking the taller omega into a hug. She whispers, “Pretty sure it was a fellow
Hunter omega. Billie posted the rankings from last night in all the common rooms. You beat the lot by a full minute, which means at the moment you’re at the top. Jerks can’t handle being shown up by a third-year.”

He lets himself hold her longer than necessary. Dean’s desperate to be reminded he’s not alone, especially with Castiel being a no-show recently. “Go to class. I got a pass for the day, so I’ll catch up with you at lunch.”

His roommate’s dressed for the day, so he shoots Dean a peace sign before heading towards the common room. “I’ll ask around for a better way to remove the,” his hand gestures to the artwork, “jealous tantrum.”

“Excellent.” Dean watches them tossing their supplies in a bag and strolling away. If only the vandal understood the God Damn placements mean nothing to him. His alpha already knows him. They don’t need special time in a room under the watchful eye of the scent expert. Although, with Castiel MIA it might not be a bad idea to meet Cas in real life. Build their life together within the rules of the omega challenge, instead of hiding their connection in a forbidden dreamscape. Dean chuckles at the absurd Harlequin romance trope. Glaring at his face with black eyes and devil horns, the omega worries he’ll never see his true mate again. Where do you even begin looking for a ghost?

The gross combo of sweat and sick clings to him. A shower is first on the list before crashing to his mattress. Grabbing some flannel sleep pants to put on after, Dean saunters into the bathroom, adjusts the temperature then strips hastily. The intentionally scalding water washes the night away. Dean’s grateful for the tranquility because he needs to take the next part nice and slow. The memory of Castiel’s live and very real personal bouquet has Dean’s dick plumping up. Lowering his hand, Dean does loose teasing strokes.

With his head resting against the tile wall, Dean pictures deep stormy-blue eyes, dark chaotic hair and a mischievous expression. Cas wins at the stoic and knowing while being playful glance. It should be criminal for alphas to have so much hotness rolled into one muscular body. A groan bounces against the walls of the shower, giving the vision power.

“Castiel.” The omega allows the name to roll over his tongue. “Castiel,” tasting the letters with the swirl of orange zest and cinnamon.

Dragging the fingers of his free hand down his chest, Dean’s wishing the digits were his true mate’s. Being able to feel those hands searching his flesh, seeking out pleasure only Dean can provide. His busier hand tightens slightly as the omega’s hips thrust into the hold. The other one works behind him, sliding a single finger inside himself pulling, tugging, and generally tormenting his entrance. Rolling his shoulders, the omega imagines fingernails scratching across his flesh, leaving marks in their path. He craves a bite. Timed perfectly with an alpha’s knot swelling inside him stretching him in ways no toy ever could touch. When he adds a second finger, Dean grunts harshly, searching out a very specific spot. Tears drip down his cheek at the frustration of never having enough. The one he wants has vanished.

“Yahtzee!” The omega yells, torturing his hole with delicious sensations.

“Cas.” Both hands speed up, adding to the painful need for release. “Cas, Cas, Cas.” The name commands his inner omega to sway and give into desire. His voice stutters as the orgasm bubbles under his skin with a freeing, “Ca ..st ..ie ..l.”

After a quick rinse, Dean dries himself off, dresses and finds himself asleep in moments.
The weathered wooden rowboat rocks gently. Bright, clear blue skies shine over him warming the omega’s skin. A fishing pole leans against the bow. Lying on his back, Dean inhales sorrowed by the smell of water and wood; not an orange to be found. Once again, he’s alone in the dreamscape. Damn it.

“Castiel!” Dean screams. “Show yourself, alpha. Hiding does not become you, jerk.”

Okay, there might be legitimate reasons for Cas’s disappearance, but Dean’s not really in the mood. The lake scene is great, although a blue-eyed alpha would undeniably turn it towards amazing. The slapping of water against the tiny boat has a soothing quality. The omega won’t deny he misses fishing with Sam and their dad. Every summer they’d head up to Bobby’s hunting cabin for a week of outdoor merriment. Maybe it’s why Dean struggles with the lack of sun in his life. Dreamscapes are a close second to the real thing, though.

“Dude, I know you’re out there in some form. Can’t have a dreamscape without you, big guy, or am I in some fancy ass Dreamweaver shit?”

A bird sings off shore somewhere. Not really the answer he was hoping for, instead Dean shuts his eyes, wishing Sam could be sitting next to him. The dorky younger brother, his nose deep in a book, whining about the bugs. Stretching out on the floor of the boat, the omega lets the calm envelope him. He hums his favorite Metallica song.

Suddenly an eerie sensation of being watched has the hair on his arm standing up. Dean sits up, searching the coastline for Cas or anyone. Nothing. The silence in the air brings panic to the forefront. Even the water has gone perfectly still, which gives Dean’s stomach a twist.

“Castiel?” he croaks through a constricting throat.

A terrifying quiet settles over the dreamscape. This isn’t right.

Charcoal clouds erupt above, blocking the sunshine. A thunderous clap has chills washing through the omega. What the hell? Spinning as best he can in the tiny rowboat, Dean knocks the fishing pole into the lake; not even a splash can be heard.

Rain pummels Dean’s body, drenching his black t-shirt and jeans. If another alpha has somehow gotten into his mind, why the theatrics? How would he know to hide? Unless … that’s the alpha’s kink. Fear. Attempting a strong powerful tone, he shouts, “Who’s out there?”

The downpour thickens, making it hard to stay in the boat. He should row to shore, but Dean has no intention of following the dangerous instinct. Where the hell is Cas?

A lightning bolt strikes next to a particularly gruesome-looking old tree, illuminating a dark human figure.

“Fuck this,” Dean mumbles, praying for the dreamscape to end.

The storm worsens without his consent. Everything on him weighs twice as much from all the water, and the boat itself is filling quickly. Murmuring under his breath, Dean tries again, “Castiel, Castiel please. You said I was safe. Where are you? Don’t forsake me now.”

As if on cue the sound of a whip cracking halts the storm instantly. The familiar sight of a trench coat materializes on the shore as Castiel turns to the stranger. Dean’s too far out to hear the words. The voice is deep and tantalizing. Immediately the omega grabs an oar, paddling towards his true mate. If there is a battle to be fought, they will stand side by side.
Squinting, he can nearly make out his alpha wrestling with a hooded person. The tan trench coat, dark from the rains, is swinging against his shoulders as the two throw punches. Castiel’s hand shoots out in Dean’s direction as his little boat halts all movement.

“No, no, no, no.” Dean exhales the word, the sound carrying as it rises in volume.

Giving up on the useless attempt at rowing, Dean stands, observing the battle on shore. The two individuals appear evenly matched, leading the omega to believe his Cas isn’t the only dreamweaver around. The stranger’s hands ignite with flames. His chosen to-be mate shrieks in pain as the fire touches Castiel’s beautiful skin.

A hypnotic white light blows the unfamiliar figure back against the tree as a spear materializes in mid-air flying at the intruder. It never touches. The darkness is gone within seconds. Blue skies return, the slap of water having no effect on the omega’s raw, stressed nerves.

“Castiel! TALK TO ME!” Dean shouts to the trench coat, which never turns to face him.

In the next breath he’s sitting up, back in his bed at the center. Rushing to the toilet, Dean vomits what little food he has in his system. True, visceral dread pounds through his veins. Something evil entered his dreamscape. All the terrible stories he’s heard of what happens to omegas locked in their minds with a sadistic alpha has a second wave of heaving overtaking his body. He couldn’t leave until Cas released him.

What if his alpha had never arrived?

Plunging to the cold tile floor Dean allows the coolness against his cheek to aid in his need for peace. The final image he saw before waking is burned against his retinas.

*I will always come when you call.*

Chapter End Notes

Questions, Comments, and Concerns are always loved like adorable Pugs.

XOXOXO,
Angie
Caution can be overrated

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

The omega’s shoulder bumps against his roommate as the two men spray water, soaking the magazine-covered door. Dean pauses to rub his eyes, “Are you sure this is going to work? It’s just plain water.”

“I found the remedy on the internet. Gotta trust your sources.” Ash shrugs, continuing to swoosh water up and down the wood.

Shaking his head, Dean follows suit. Eventually he gathers his courage to ask, “Have you ever had a malicious alpha in your dreamscape?”

“SHHHHH! Dude why don’t you scream the topic on Level 12, the man in charge will at least hear it faster than a slow ride up the rumor mill.” Ash grabs a rag, testing a particularly wet corner. Nothing moves. “I think it needs to be absolutely water logged.”

After a few moments, Dean tries again, “But seriously, have you?”

Ash’s hand halts as his forehead drops, “I won’t be deterred by assholes. The alpha regime may have found the perfect way to deal with a few twisted minds, but I plan on learning the damn spell. You know the Banes twins?”

“I do. Why?”

“They agreed to teach me. According to Max they were cleaning out Rowena’s office for detention one day when they came across a fucking old leather-bound book, like could pre-date Stonehedge. Being curious little omegas, they stole it and have been slowly copying it by hand into their own notebook for reference.”

“And Rowena hasn’t come looking for her missing spell book. Sounds extremely suspicious.” Dean scrubs a spot where the Mod Podge has turned a milky white, and the magazine wipes away fairly easily. “Well shit it works.”

“Never doubt your friendly cyberspace God.”

“Oh, Charlie?” he jeers. The other omega punches Dean harshly on the bicep. “Fucker.” After a moment, “Charlie is the Queen, sovereign of all zeros and ones. I am the one true God.”

“And not modest at all.” Those two will rule the world one day even if it’s behind the walls of a Center.

“Speak of the devil.” Ash exhales, handing over his supplies to Charlie. “I’m off to Erotica practice, wish me luck. We are expanding our energies through Tantric exercises.”

Giving his friend a shove, Dean says, “No details man. There are some aspects of your challenge no
one needs to know about.”

“Orgasms lasting multiple hours, how do you not want details?” Ash winks, sprinting towards the elevators. Near the end of the hall he bellows, “HOURS!”

Charlie picks up where Ash stopped; watching her for a bit Dean suddenly has a thought, “I don’t need babysitting.”

“My Gaming stuff ended early.” Her voice squeaks in the all too familiar sound of his best friend attempting to lie. She’s terrible.

“Out of all the drama in my life right now, a vengeful Hunter omega is not even a blip on the radar.” He’s nearly got half the door clean. Deciding a break is in order Dean snags a stool and drops down to sip some water. “I think Ash is hiding something.”

His friend’s eyes swing downward. “Ash is ALWAYS hiding something. You should see how long he spends clearing his browser history at the end of the day. I bet he’s sending alphas mass hate spam or funding the Heat Liberation League from the Pentagon’s accounts.”

“Probably.”

The Heat Liberation League is an underground movement whose sole focus is to abolish Centers, Challenges and the use of Blockers. No one knows who runs the group, but their symbol of the Greek letter for Omega with flames erupting from the top and a dagger hovering in the background is hard to miss. They are known for staging coups within companies that publicly support omega incarceration (their words, not Dean’s). According to the literature Ash has shared, the group believes there are other ways to calm an omega’s heat scent. He remains skeptical. Why would the government keep them locked in the Center; it’s gotta be crazy expensive? Adding in the costs of the televised challenges the price tag has to be astronomical.

“So, are you going to tell me the big secret?” Charlie continues to stare at the door, but her concentration seems to be on the spot that lost all its paper a minute ago.

“Nothing to tell.” He loves Charlie but Ash knowing about Castiel is one too many. “How are things in Gaming?”

“I’m still in the number one spot. Of course, it doesn’t really matter, being as the one individual I want to notice me has nothing to do with my challenge.” Her hand halts as she turns to Dean. “I would be awful at Arts.”

The beautiful, talented and slightly older Gilda has been Charlie’s one true crush for over two years. The omega teacher is unmated, but omega/omega relationships are highly frowned upon. Crowley wouldn’t give a damn. However, if they ended up together, leaving their specific Crowley-run Center could have some difficulties. Another obstacle is the lack of Charlie actually talking to the Arts professor.

“Doesn’t she help out in daycare?” Dean suggests.

“Yeah,” his BFF sighs with a dopey look in her gaze. “The woman adores children. When she’s not teaching I’ve seen her playing in every class BUT ours. I think someone tipped her off to my intentions. Assholes.”

He doesn’t have the stones big enough to add a very real problem. If Gilda wants kids, she might not be willing to have a relationship with another omega, even though there are alphas willing to donate the necessary additions to make it work. Which is why Charlie should really speak with the
Deciding his favorite person needs a distraction, Dean swipes his nasty, gooey rag through bright red hair shouting, “On guard!”

“Winchester, your ass is grass, and I’m the lawn mower.” She slaps a bit of wet magazine in his own brown strands.

“You know I have been needing a trim down there.”

“GROSS!”

The two plunge onto the floor as the Mod Podge war begins. Success!

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Dean hates Geometry. Let it be known a weird window is still a window; who gives a damn about the area of a parallelogram. Yes, education is important, but he slams his forehead against his desk grunting, “math sucks.” Give him British Lit or biology any day.

The door to the room swings open as Ash enters, a concerned look causing his forehead to crease. His roommate gives a quick wave before yanking out a thick black book and lounging over his bed. Okay, guess they are both going to do some late evening studying.

He returns to the puzzle of oddly shaped glass.

Three minutes later, Ash whispers, “I may have met a jerk alpha.”

“What happened?” Dean whips around in his seat so fast he knocks his book on the floor.

Neither one moves to snag the fallen geometry text. Instead, Dean comes to sit next to Ash, placing his arm around the other omega as Ash leans his head on Dean’s shoulder. “Lately, there has been this one alpha who keeps returning. He enjoys dark and wet scenes. It’s as if he’s draining all the joy from my dreamscape, and I hate it. Why won’t he go? I refuse to give him the time of night, but every few days he returns with his creepy vibe.”

“Does he touch you or talk?” He’s got a souring feeling in the pit of his stomach.

“Nope. In fact, I’ve never seen his face. Couldn’t even tell you if the alpha’s a girl or guy, just stands in the background making the entire dreamscape scary as shit. At any moment things are about to go south quickly …” Ash gulps dramatically, “like deadly.”

Giving his friend a gentle squeeze Dean adds, “I had something similar in my dreamscape last night. A shadowy figure I only saw from afar.”

“That’s him.”

“Max or Alicia might be able to help; did you chat with them?”

Pulling back to lean against the wall full of pink pills, Ash grins. “Yes. They said it will take a few weeks to get the ingredients collected, and I asked them to snag enough for two. Our shared shadow man made it clear he would be paying you a visit.”

Suddenly, an icy chill clamors over Dean. “How?”

“In the dreamscape, we were standing in a graveyard with torches lighting the area. He gestured to
one tombstone, and it read,” Ash inhales, taking Dean’s hand, “Here Lies Four.”

“Maybe he or she’s just fucking with us for fun. There are some jacked up alphas who delight in scaring omegas.”

Scratching his chin, his roommate closes his eyes. “I don’t know, man. Not speaking makes it worse because I was able to leave without delay. Woke up in a sweat. But isn’t it weirder the alpha refuses to use REM Vocal Control to observe me squirming for longer than a few minutes? I mean, what’s the purpose?”

“Who knows.” Dean answers yet in his own mind a different thought forms; to make sure you’re coherent enough to tell me about the dark figure in your dreamscape. Cas fought him off. His true mate appeared stronger and more powerful, so maybe it’s a vain attempt for attention Dean will never give him. “Alphas are an enigma to us.”

With a grunt Ash knocks on his head, “See, my smart thinking gives us a leg up this year. We won’t be all doey-eyed by the designation standing next to us.”

“You’re a true humanitarian.”

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Hunter practice starts in twenty minutes. Dean arrived to the sub-basement jogging trail early to get his attitude on because one of these guys is trolling him. Billie sent notice they were to wear workout wear, so he’s got black basketball shorts from last year’s challenge and a green t-shirt. The omega easily scales the floor to rafter rope, taking a spot in his preferred perch. Watching the House Omegas finagle into their yoga poses is hilarious. Some people were just not meant to bend.

A rope near his sneaker smacks his ankle, getting Dean’s attention. Gadreel’s tall, muscular build snakes up the rope with minimal effort. He plops in next to Dean. “It wasn’t me or Eileen.”

Ah! Word of his door art has hit the fifth-years. Giving the other omega a slap on the shoulder, Dean sighs. “Don’t really care. Some people are taking the whole ranking thing way too seriously.”

“Agreed. However, you need allies. Eileen’s pretty adamant you have a particular alpha in mind, and she wants to aid you in finding him.”

“Does everyone know?” Dean hisses, not wishing to draw more attention to the topic.

Gadreel’s shoulders bounce in a non-committal gesture, “This is a pretty tight-knit Center. If someone shit purple, the entire omega body would know in less than a day.”

“True. Should I worry about certain individuals taking an interest?”

“Nah, Crowley will never admit it, but Hannah’s got the alpha wrapped around her finger. She believes in omega independence as best served within the given system. I wouldn’t be surprised if they turn a blind eye to a lot of other things going on.”

Now, the larger than life omega has his full attention as Dean turns away from the yogis. “What does that mean?” Thinking ignorance is bliss he shakes his head, “actually, don’t answer.”

“Whatever you want. I don’t care about a second-place ranking because I just like the challenge itself. Hunters get to participate in the wildest crap. Winning means nothing to me. Now, the fourth-years are a very rare breed. They have a ring leader who was a transfer from a different center last year. Not all places are equal.”
“Bela Talbot.” Dean scoffs, “She’s irrelevant. I think Ketch might be more of a threat.”

“It only takes one worm to ruin an entire apple.” Gadreel counters, stretching out his forearms. “Talbot has never cracked the top twenty-five nationally, and now in our little list she’s third. The woman has a wicked bite and outrageous determination to squash everyone in her way to the top. Arthur is your classic bully, all puffed-up air and no backbone to show for it. He’s number five currently, and I have no idea of his national position. Although, perhaps the two are in cahoots, as they say.”

“Well the hell would they care?” God, Dean’s regretting switching from Sports. There were omegas who fought to be the best, but they kept the battle on the field where it belongs.

Scratching his head, Gadreel squints. “Reputation, I suppose.”

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A fresh, pure perfume of oranges enters Dean’s lungs, enveloping the air inside him and going farther with each breath. The aftershock of cinnamon leaves a delicious burn. The supple slip of silk against his naked body glides across his chest as the omega rolls about a lush mammoth-size bed, his toes tickling the high-count threads. Afraid to open them, Dean keeps his eyes locked down. It’s been ages since he’s properly been in his true mate’s presence, taking the final leap and seeing nothing but a room would destroy him.

Rolling over, he slides to his knees, permitting the silk sheet to waft from his ass and revealing a needy hole. The responding growl has one hell of a wicked grin on the omega’s face. Bingo. Rubbing his temple against a pillow, he slowly drags a pointer finger over the crack of his entrance. The snapping of solid wood forces a chuckle from Dean’s throat. Someone’s struggling to keep his alpha cravings in check.

“Not sure the silky laden bedroom is from my dreams. What about you?”

Silence. Dealing with Cas’s obsession with the mute routine, Dean chooses to push the boundaries because being thrown against a wall as his soon-to-be mate rides him rough sounds tantalizing; no tantric sex needed. He tugs at his rim enthusiastically.

The scent of his alpha thickens. Dean’s becoming intoxicated on the powerful bouquet taking up all the air in the space. Slick dribbles from him wetting his fingers. Facing away with eyes closed, Dean thrusts two fingers in, gasping at the sensation with a whisper of “Cas” on his lips.

Dean shoots out his other hand, reaching in the direction of the growl and beckoning his soul mate nearer. The unmistakable sound of shoes clicking against a wood floor obeys. A tiny thread of fear has him cracking open one eye just to make sure it’s Castiel. He’s in a dreamscape, which means anything goes including aroma manipulation. Can’t be too careful.

Aroused, stormy blue eyes search over his exposed flesh: Cas. The messy, windblown hair adds to one hell of a fuckable alpha. With the nerves gone, Dean adds a third finger, riding them harshly as his face enjoys the soft champagne sheets. A hand takes his, squeezing it. He can work with that. Yanking, the omega forces the fully dressed, trench coat included, alpha to fall over his exposed flesh. Taut muscles roll over Dean’s back as invited hands slide around his middle, exploring everywhere, fingernails leaving light scratches.

In a desperate croak the omega summons his alpha for information; he hopes the answer is obvious. “You weren’t avoiding me after the kiss? You were watching over Ash because of the alpha who’s been lurking in his dreams and stalking me.”
The undeniable nodding of Cas’s head relieves Dean of all the pain he’s been carrying. His protector never left without good reason.

Flipping around out of sheer need, Dean wraps his legs around Castiel, snatching his chin and bringing the alpha in for a kiss. Their lips meet, and it's like the worlds collide. Time stops. If they were in real life the omega would worry about actually having a heart attack as the competing pungent odors of alpha and omega cling to every ounce of oxygen between them. Opening his mouth, Dean tickles the other man’s lips until they open as they are able to taste each other for the first time. The taste of his alpha’s scent is shattering his will to breathe. The kiss doesn’t just deepen, it dominates Dean’s entire body.

Drops of water splash against his face as the two men grind and kiss. Reaching up, Dean feels tears along with the added salty spice in his lungs. Relenting to his desire to see, the omega glances at the alpha above him, and the image singes into his memory. His alpha not only looks wrecked, his sparkle brightens with each sweep of his tongue.

Lust overtakes him as Castiel’s erection presses against his own hard cock. His alpha adds a finger to the ones Dean has thrusting into his hole, and it’s game over. Dean cums violently, screaming incoherently. The alpha follows, sans a single noise.

Castiel never removed a single piece of clothing.

Shaking, Dean attempts to calm his gasps for air and gives up to lift his face and drag kisses down the long expanse of flesh on his true mate’s neck.

Talking is definitely overrated.

Chapter End Notes

You all mean so much to me. Thank you for being here.

XOXOXO, Angie
Muscles burning with an excruciating heat Dean’s never felt before, his unified mind, body and soul have a single goal: to not drop or even tip the crystal glass of water teetering behind him. Either Billie’s imagination leans to the sadistic side or the creators of Hunter trials really hate omegas, because the current position crosses the line into pure torture. His hands have been holding a rough natural rope wrapped twice around his palms in a spot a few inches above his head for an un-Godly amount of time. If he moves his hands too far down, the movement of the thick string will tip the pedestal that carries the flute of water, sending it crashing to the ground; also, if he lets up on the rigging the same result will occur. You’re damned if you shift in any direction more than a millimeter.

Ruby and Mick have already lost, their cups shattering against the cement floor of the training sub-basement. Everyone but the winner is required to clean the mess. Dean wishes he could view his opponents’ faces, gauge their struggles with the task. However, they stand in a straight row facing the red doors to the shooting range. No way in hell will he risk turning his head. Billie paces, weaving in and out of sight, her hair taut against her head today with her ensemble all in black. A drip of sweat rolls down his temple. Fighting the urge to wipe away the moisture, the omega puffs out a few deep breaths, hoping to center his mind and release the brutal into nothingness. Awesome idea in theory. Not so helpful when your entire body wants to melt into a pool of goo and sleep for days.

“Are you sure this might be a trial, Billie?” Gordon grunts through clenched teeth.

The Hunter coach literally laughs. “Yes. The notion I receive pleasure from tormenting my charges are completely unfounded. Six years ago, the fourth trial was three perseverance activities; the first one was an exact replica of where you stand.”

“THERE WERE THREE OF THESE?!” Bela bellows with an undercurrent of misery.

“Alphas on one row facing omegas in a second. As the trial went on, each side’s aroma grew in potency, causing another layer to the fun. Be grateful we won’t be doing the treading water or hanging inverted until,” their faithful and cruel leader adds, “tomorrow.”

“FUN!” Ketch shouts gleefully, “Bring it on; I could go for hours, love.”

A slew of curses whispered under heavy breathing takes to the air.

“Perhaps we could continue in silence,” Gadreel states in total control of his voice. “Find a happy place and hang out there …in quiet.”

“Gadreel’s not wrong, people.” Billie points to where the tallest Hunter must stand. “Using your mind to create a safe, comforting place might help alleviate some of the discomfort.”

“FUCK!” Gordon yelps as the noise of breaking glass is music to Dean’s ears.
Taking their trainer’s advice, Dean lets his thoughts slide back to the champagne sheets and powerful hold of his true mate. Cas’s lips on his. The two rocking their hips in tandem as the omega feels the sensation building in his groin.

“Wrong kind of moment, Winchester,” Billie chuckles, “although omega arousal can mess with an alpha’s head pretty fast.”

“Brilliant,” Bela squeaks from next to Dean. “Thanks for the pointer, Newbie.”

Afraid of rocking his rope, Dean battles the urge to roll his eyes at the shot from Talbot. She was in Arts the years before. Probably perfecting her magical talents prior to attacking her true goal. Such an ass. Deciding to return, Dean pictures Castiel’s hands. The long fingers, calloused palms skimming across his belly. His alpha’s veins visible as he strains to hold himself back for Dean’s consent, which he will always give willingly to the dreamweaver.

Agonizing pain shoots from his biceps as Dean’s thighs shake from straining to stay upright. One crazy twitch might send his glass plummeting. Not going to happen. If one of these omegas think Dean’s going to lighten up his focus after vandalizing his door, they are an idiot. Huge dummy of epic proportions.

The loud familiar crashing of glass brings a smile to the omega’s face. Ketch’s red cheeks and sour puss scent pass in front of Dean. Yippee! One more jerk down. If he’s counting correctly that leaves Eileen, Gadreel, Bela and himself. Really, Dean’s ultimate goal is to beat all the fourth-years. Eileen or Gadreel receiving the win would be fine by him. Although, his competitive nature may not agree with his mental assessment of who should take the victory.

“AAAAHHHHHH!” Gadreel screams. The man doesn’t give up, but obviously the fifth-year is hurting.

A particularly noisy scuffle to Dean’s left ends with a smashing glass and Eileen stepping into view. Dean’s bummed to see her. She’s always supportive of him and quick to give the omega pointers on how to do better, unlike the fourth-year bastards. Eileen’s fingers are flying in a frantic pattern, undoubtedly encouraging her fellow fifth-year to kick Talbot to the curb.

Ketch saunters into Dean’s vision drinking from a bottle of water. “Wouldn’t be a terrible idea to let someone else take first, Winchester. No one enjoys a spoil sport.”

“How is taking another first being a spoil sport there, champ?” Dean’s voice trembles, but he gets the question out, thank God.

The annoying older omega steps in closer, nearly bumping him. Billie immediately snags Arthur’s arm, “You touch him and the consequences will destroy your own chances in the actual trials, Ketch. Please attempt to pretend we are a team.”

“Total mistake, I can assure you.” He gives Dean a wide berth, shrugging in the general direction of Bela. Ah, so the fourth-years are a team; they just see him as the enemy and maybe Gadreel.

“I don’t give a shit if it’s a mistake or stupidity. You will hate the ranking I send in to the Hunter Challenge officials. Capiche?” Billie’s gaze is dark and thunderous.

“Crystal, Oh Captain, My Captain.” Ketch raises his hands.

“Damn it!” Gadreel announces, the cup behind him breaking into millions of tiny pieces. He signs a few choice words to Eileen. She breaks out in a hiccup laugh, clearly finding the other omega hilarious. Dean should learn the language because it must come in handy.
Regrettably, he’s now pitted against Bela alone. The bitch is going down.

Dean Winchester would rather eat all the glass shattered today before he permits Talbot a win. Closing his eyes, the omega pictures bright blue eyes similar to the endless blue of a clear summer day in Lawrence, Kansas. One day Dean will see such beauty again, until then the irises of his true mate will have to suffice.

Calming his rattled inhales, he lets his breath match, forgetting about the challenge before him. The steady rhythm of a machine swishing in and out aids in the quest. What would bring him complete peace? The bouquet of fresh oranges against the spice of cinnamon lessens the sting of his aching … everything. Sweat droplets roll down his nose and cheeks at a higher rate; however, Dean’s high above the pain. The memory of Castiel is striking the exact balance of strength and tranquility to forge forward and beat Bela Talbot. He bites back a laugh at all the things he will find stuck to his door after her second defeat in a row. He’ll inform Ash and Charlie to leave it up as a badge of honor. Stupid woman doesn’t bother him.

“I know, he does appear to be sleeping,” Gadreel stage whispers for all to hear.

Time passes, yet Dean’s lost in his own private Idaho. In this fantasy he finally gets to see what the alpha is keeping underneath the trench coat. His tongue collecting all the data. A steady beeping is always bubbling in the background.

Cas’s personal aroma thickens, pushing Dean deeper into a trance. Bela gruffly exclaims, “What is that stench?”

“You are pretty ripe,” Dean counters.

Suddenly the omega comes out of his mind, noticing the sweat on his forehead has dried up. Oh, sounds as if his body needs water. Meh! He’ll worry about dehydration once he’s creamed Bela into the ground with one broken flute.

“Man, not to be helpful in the least, but you’re pretty pale.” Ruby’s tone is almost a perfect resemblance of sincere.

Smash! Whack!

“DEAN WINCHESTER TAKES FIRST!” Gadreel shouts, pumping his fist into the air with one hand, the other signing for Eileen.

Billie’s sitting next to Talbot, who appears to have passed out. Still a win.

Glancing over to Eileen, Dean mouths, “help.”

She and Gadreel are next to him in an instant, cautiously removing the rope from his hands and letting down his arms, both limbs battling the new position. A bottle of water pushes against his dry lips. Dean gulps down several swallows, then realizes his mistake as it comes right back up.

Out of the shadows, or maybe she was next to Bela, the good Dr. Hannah shoves Dean back into a wheelchair. “They are both severely dehydrated. Dean, sweetie this might sting.”

An IV needle pushes into his vein as a bottle of saline hangs on a silver rod behind the wheelchair. Hannah snaps in front of Gadreel, “Tell Eileen to take Dean up to Gilda. She’s teaching her challenge kids in the Visual Arts classroom.”

Spots of all colors prance in front of his vision, and the next thing he knows giant brown eyes are
“Can you get on the massage table?”

“Charlie’s right, you are really pretty.” His head rolls back to where Dean’s glaring at the ceiling. A hand guides it back in place, “Sorry, where am I?”

The small room has bottles of all differing sizes filled with anything a proper spell caster might require. Gilda does teach Arts. A table lined with a pale green towel covering a white mattress rests in the center, a fluffy pillow at one end. Eileen pops Dean’s nose, pointing at the draped mattress.

“Might be nice.” He goes to rise and nothing happens. Eventually Eileen and Gilda both take an arm and between the three, in an extremely uncoordinated mishap, the male omega flops on top of the table. “Ooooh, so soft. BUT not like a baby’s butt; I’ve had some troubles with poop lately.” He lowers his voice an octave, “Nobody knows the poop problems I’ve seen, nobody knows my troubles. On my face, ladies.”

“Dean!” Gilda yells, her sharp stare serious. “I’m going to make you a tea that will put you to sleep for around ten hours then use a collection of ointments to massage your overstressed muscles. The IV should do the trick with your delirious mental state and dehydration. Hannah will be by in an hour to change out the bag. I’ve called Charlie, and she will find someone to take your daycare shift, Ok?”

“Charlie likes you,” Dean stutters, his gaze chasing a green seahorse diving in and out of Gilda’s curls. “Probably the hair.”

The teacher chuckles. “There are rules, Winchester.” Although, the rise of her brow leads Dean to think his friend has a chance.

Clinking glass reminds Dean he beat Bela, “Woohoo! Bitch went down.” More seahorses join the first and they have started the Bunny Hop. An entire rainbow swirling around. “Rainbows are awesome,” Dean’s hand reaches out to touch but catches only air, “Damn, we need to make better seahorses.”

“Guess, I can put a check in the hallucinations box.” Hannah giggles, holding Dean’s hand. “I’m going to speak with Crowley about Billie’s training methods.”

“Nah, don’t want to fuck up on TV.” Dean leans in closer to the doctor, “Why are we here?”

“All the fourth-years are in medical whining about their aches and pains. More like bruised egos. Thought being with Gilda in her apothecary storage room would actually give you peace.”

Nodding, Dean’s head spins. “They’ve changed to the Limbo. Try as hard as they might seahorses just won’t bend that way, poor little fellas.”

From somewhere to Dean’s left, wait right, no the other right, Gilda adds, “Bela Talbot has turned the fourth-year floor into the worst cut-throat group I’ve seen in ages.”

“Can you blame her? The girl was formerly housed in Azazel’s Center. Crowley won’t reveal much; however, it seems the omegas there are punished if they aren’t top of the rankings in their challenges.” Hannah runs her fingers through Dean’s hair, “Bela was severely underweight when she arrived.”

“Centers can’t starve the omegas they would lose funding.” Gilda stirs something in an antique kettle.

“No, but they can deny luxury food options or sleeping in actual beds vs. sleeping bags on the floor.
We can afford our life here in part to the patrons who purchase a spot for family members. Bribes are completely legal.”

A dark handmade mug hovers near his mouth. Gilda’s smile is tender. “You need to finish the tea.”

He obliges the Arts professor. Lavender and ginger dominate the flavors, allowing him to swallow it all in a few gulps. Several minutes later Dean’s eyes slide closed, yet his mind remains partially lucid. The spectacular sensation of ointment being kneaded into his left arm is completely magnificent.

“You know, Hannah, I was reading over Winchester’s file recently. I try to keep up with the Hunter omegas since they often require my talents.” The woman’s touch is from a different realm. A noncommittal hum from near his arm with the IV. Gilda muttering, “Very interesting material. The taskforce chose to pass by three maybe four Centers to land here.”

“My mate’s worked very hard to create a sought-after home.”

Fingers change to settle a spasm in Dean’s quads. “True. Normally I wouldn’t think twice, yet his family was barely surviving day to day in a crappy motel. How did the name Dean Winchester make the official list? Some parents pay more than the cost of a house for the privilege.”

The intriguing conversation pauses as the women flip him over so Dean’s face lands in a little hole. His shirt is cut from his frame, freeing his back for Gilda’s miraculous hands. A few beats and Gilda’s voice teeters on, “Must be nice to have an official scent expert in the family. How’s Gabriel’s mate?”

“Pregnant. Again.” The words are icy cold, which is odd in Hannah’s voice.

“I suppose Matchmakers can’t help but save an especially fertile omega for themselves.”

The doctor’s response edges on sadness, “An excellent true mate pairing doesn’t equate to children.”

“Of course.” The teacher clears her throat, “A lot of magic brewing in your family tree.”

“My inability to carry allowed me to excel in the field of Omega healthcare. Being an auntie has its benefits.”

The two work in silence for a while as Dean’s brain stumbles in and out of consciousness. He finds himself melancholy, unsure as to why.

Gilda’s next comment yanks him back to reality, “The concoction I gave him will give our winner the deep rest his body needs to heal. He won’t be traipsing in any dreamscapes tonight. You know, in case you want to pass along the information.”

“Careful.” Hannah warns.

“Wouldn’t want to cause your cousin any undue stress.”

With that a door clicks shut and the omega slips away.

Chapter End Notes
Questions, Comments, and Concerns are always welcomed.

I am thankful for you all.

XOXOXOXO, Angie
The door to the Erotica challenge classroom opens, pummeling Dean with a barrage of competing smells. Oils, candles, and sweat are both pleasant yet gag-inducing in the same moment. Ash approaches him. His roommate’s smile doesn’t quite reach his slate grey eyes, “You waiting on me?”

“Nah, got a few queries for your sex Goddess leader.”

His friend only nods before heading for the elevators. Dean’s got to investigate Ash’s reaction, further but the omega didn’t cut his weapons training early for nothing. Well, also Billie said the others needed more practice. Bela’s face was utter perfection.

Once the room cleared, Dean gives himself a quick, curt nod, pushing his feet inside and closing the door behind him. “Hey Rowena.”

“Mr. Winchester, to what do I owe the impromptu visit?” Her normal sequence ball gown is replaced with an emerald silk robe, her curls swept up in a messy bun.

“I’ve got a question for you.” Specific aspects of a recent dreamscape have been eating at his subconscious.

“You can help me re-set the space for class tomorrow.” She’s wiping oil off a few desks, so Dean snags a rag to join her.

He pauses for a moment, paralyzed with nerves, although out of all his professors Rowena is the number one truth slinger among the bunch. “How can two alphas enter the same dreamscape?”

“Oh, now Dean you know the answer. Only one alpha may enter an omega’s dreamscape. Why?” Her gaze hints at something further.

Breaking every pact he’s made with Ash, the omega caves. “Because I’ve had two. One invited, one definitely not. How is that even possible?”

“Dean Winchester, I’m very cross with you.” She holds a stern look for about five seconds then bursts into giggles. “Sorry, had to at least pretend to be shocked.”

“Please, straight up. Everything I’ve read, been told, rumors from others say its completely impossible yet I swear to every God you worship there were two alphas.”

Scratching her nail at a bit of dried candle wax, she says, “Tell me about these alphas.”

“I am certain one is my true mate.”

Immediately Rowena cuts him off, her hand frozen as she was spraying cleaner. “True mate? Hmmm, …an intriguing development. Go ahead, you were sharing.”
“Yes, no doubt the alpha for me; he’s gorgeous, kind, respectful and brings sunshine to my life. I’ve never seen the stranger close up, he’s a dark shadow lurking in the periphery, observing. The dude literally brings storms to my dreamscape. Guy’s creepy.”

The teacher retrieves his used rag, tossing both aside, and pushes two chairs facing each other. Rowena perches politely on one gesturing to the other, “What do you know about the equilibrium principle in mystical practices?”

“I paid attention in Gilda’s Magical Arts for Beginners class. The natural world craves balance, dark and light, life and death, dusk and dawn. When casting spells, finding an equilibrium will enhance the strength but also add an overall willingness of the unknown to play ball.”

She nods, tapping a blood-red, perfectly manicured nail to her chin. “Exactly. There are larger pieces on the board when it comes to your mating choice, Dean Winchester. Most omegas are playing plain old checkers; the duality is there with the red and black round chips, but it’s simple. You my sweet, dear boy, are in a game of chess. The pieces started moving a few years before your heat.”

“You lost me.” He feels stupid because the explanation isn’t adding up. “What?”

Sighing, his professor laces her fingers together. “The world as we know it is gearing up for a massive power play. Many individuals across all the designations have spent decades prepping the perfect game. It’s been a long time coming, and several families have been joining ranks. Those who lean to the dark pairing off their children to leaders of the light; for balance. Have you ever wondered why I teach Erotica when my talents are more Arts specific?”

“Gilda teaches the Arts classes.” Another memory tickles at his mind, but Dean can’t recall anything.

“Yes. Gilda who is full of light, love, and healing.” Rowena tsks, rolling her eyes, “Boring if you ask me. Although, if one were poising a scale in our Center, having us under one roof would accomplish such a task. As you roam our hallowed halls, Dean, pay attention; we even have the embodiment of death and life here.”

Dragging his hands over his face, Dean grumbles, “Please, what the hell does equalizing the chi of our center have to do with my dreamscape?”

She places one of his hands between hers, patting it softly, “Give it a minute, my dear. How did you originally describe these alphas?”

“Sunshine and shadows. Still doesn’t answer my original question Rowena.”

“T’m getting there.” She scoffs, standing up.

Leaning into his seat, Dean retorts, “Get there faster.”

The Erotica coach snatches a green dry-erase marker, drawing a straight line down the white board. “Consider the natural order of things as a straight line.” Using a purple marker, she makes an S looping in and out of the original line. “Magic alters the accepted norm. A person might wake up in the morning with a zit. People get them, this is part of the natural order, an omega or perhaps even an alpha might perform a vanishing spell to clear their skin. An easy modification, even a first-year could do it. Now most would never, ever endeavor to alter a dreamscape; the consequences are significant and severe. Doing so would take serious devotion to the omega and an outrageously amped up incantation, but maybe the alpha felt the actions were worth it.”
Dean’s getting a headache. “So, everyone says its not possible because no one’s willing to accept the side effects. Even though having two alphas knocking each other around in a single dreamscape can actually happen.”

“Tis the beauty of the beast. We get to throw out the rules. Magic is amazing, don’t you think?” She smiles brightly, clearly assuming he’s on the same page.

“I need a Tylenol,” he announces, rubbing his temples. The woman has created more confusion, not helped with alleviating any queries save one. Castiel thinks he’s worth it. “Hold on, why is my mating choice a chess game?”

Rowena erases the board, her voice a tad shaky. “Let’s tackle your next big life question another day, Mr. Winchester. Rome wasn’t built in a day.”

Totally catching her dismissal, Dean stumbles out of the classroom, his head to full of conflicting emotions and his nostrils overwhelmed with just as many odors. He collides with the Academics teacher, both men stumbling to the floor.

“Oh, Dean, my apologies. I was just deciding where to have dinner.”

“Probably my fault, Chuck, weird day. The third-years are having spaghetti.” The entire Center knows Chuck Shurley hates cooking for himself. All the omega teachers who can’t leave live in an apartment complex on the opposite side to the daycare. There’s a tunnel that pops up at the first floor; Dean’s never been, but he’s heard Hannah and Crowley talking about their condo. Chuck persists in asking his students what their floor is serving for a meal and appearing just in time for a plate if it meets to his liking. He’s an awkward guy.

The two pace around, waiting for an elevator. “Hmmm, not really feeling Italian.”

“I think the fourth-years are serving steak and potatoes.” He remembers Gordon going on and on about the juice levels of his meat. The conversation was more uncomfortable than appetizing.

Chuck scrunches his nose. “Their food always tastes of tears, aggression and desperation.”

Dean can’t help the laughter, the stitch in his side has him doubling over. The man has a way with words.

With a swish they are greeted with a huge smile and cheerful, “Hey you Guys. What’s so funny?”

“Our younger counterpart has an odd sense of humor.” Chuck shares as he turns to face Donna before stepping in, “What are the preschoolers having for dinner?”

“They prefer to be called pre-years. Preschoolers or the nursery is demeaning,” Donna answers. She’s the caretaker to the omegas too young to be first-years. Since they often still need supervision, Donna provides round the clock services: emotional support, cooking, discipline. Basically, a glorified nanny but nobody says it. She’s fiercely protective of her charges, and Dean’s seen her bite. It will leave scars. “Tonight is chicken pot pie. You wanna join?”

“Yes,” Chuck supplies with a grin, “joyful chicken with boundless peas and carrots of love.”

“Winner, winner, chicken dinner.” Dean chuckles to himself as the two omega adults stare at him. “Family joke.”

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Dean despises with all his being the third Fridays of the month. His alarm goes off at 4:15 a.m., and his muscles ache at the thought of the work ahead of him. Fridays are delivery days for the Center. All the food, toiletries, clothes, pretty much everything they need down to the new socks he ordered, comes in a semi which arrives on Friday mornings. Everyone on his floor takes a Friday to keep things fair and well today is his.

After a quick wake-me-up shower, Dean’s toweling off as he enters their bedroom. Ash isn’t having a nightmare, per se, but his skin color is off and he’s squeaking.

“Hey Ash!” Dean kicks the bed, with no response.

Last night the omega went to bed early in preparation for his shift so he never got to talk to his roomie. Tonight, it becomes priority number one.

He meets the rest of the third Friday team for their floor, and in moments they are on the ground floor waiting for the scent locks to be checked by the beta guards and a thumbs up given. An expandable chute connects to the back of the semi, but only betas actually open the doors. They will do a sweep of the area, then the work begins. The truck will be filled with boxes, hundreds of them. Each with a number stamped on the top or the name of the professor who ordered the items. Of course, the teachers don’t rise at the crack of dawn to collect their things. Staff members will deliver the items to their office or apartments depending on the shipping list on the side.

So, it’s a little odd to see Billie standing in the corner observing. Downright bizarre.

“Good to go, little omegas,” the guard shouts, and a grunt at being called little leaves the mouths of all the babes.

Nearly two hours into the unloading, Dean can finally spot the last two rows of boxes. He’s reaching down to snatch one with a four on top when movement in the corner of his eye has him leaping in the air, “Holy shit!”

“It wasn’t that bad,” Gordon sighs.

“What?” Dean counters, his heart beating painfully fast.

“The fart I just dropped, man; ain’t gonna kill you, Winchester.”

Before Dean can clarify his exclamation wasn’t in response to the wretched gas he now can’t deny, a boy steps out from behind a stack. The kid can’t be more than 12, naked as the day he was born and what’s even stranger, he’s not in heat. Unfortunately, people do attempt to stow away their omegas, especially to the better Centers praying they won’t be turned away. In fact, Dean would bet the candy bar he swiped now hidden in his back pocket the boy is months, maybe a year, from a first heat.

“What’s your name?” Gordon moves a little ahead of Dean in important information.

“Jack. I’m here for –”

His next words are loudly interrupted as Billie and Hannah rush into the truck. The doctor covers Jack with a fluffy robe as Billie turns to her students. “Tell no one. You saw nothing. Fuck this up, and I will make the next few weeks a living hell.”

“Dude, who would believe us?” Gordon states the obvious. “A little dude appears next to the asparagus, which I know for a fact the beta guards checked.”
Hannah’s already ushering him into the waiting arms of Donna. The nursery leader has a bottle of water and power bar in her ever-present white apron. Interesting.

Billie snaps her fingers. “Stuff won’t move themselves, boys.” Suddenly her nose turns up. “Jesus, guys, people eat the food in those boxes.”

Filling his cart, Dean schleps it up to the fourth floor to unload. The third-year House Omega candidates always work Friday mornings. Those guys enjoy, no not in a hit in the head kind of way, they actually choose to unload all the supplies, putting them away and organizing the kitchen. Takes all types, he supposes.

Andrea Barr, who on any other day speaks softly, has a word of encouragement for everyone and can even make Charlie chuckle at the butt ass crack of dawn, is shouting directions to her crew of minions. She's the top-ranked House Omega, and the woman takes it seriously.

He’s nearly to the hallway when Andrea’s laser-focus brown eyes latch onto him. “Dean, a moment.”

“Sure thing.” All in all, he likes her. The other omega has never been anything but caring to him, especially when a heat hit Dean out of nowhere and his fake knot’s battery decided to die. But she runs delivery day with the precision of a drill sergeant.

She comes out of the kitchen with a small white clothing package in her hands. “Your suit arrived. After dinner I’ll need you to try it on so I can do the alterations.”

“I didn’t order a suit.” Dean’s never owned one; why start now?

Andrea rolls her eyes, blowing a stray brown ringlet from out of her face, “You have your Hunter interview soon, and Crowley wanted everything in place.”

“No way. I keep it simple; last year I wore jeans and a green button up. Brings out my eyes.” He bats his lashes; the action having no effect on the girl. She’s his age and has no time for his shit this morning.

“The top twenty omegas get twenty-minute interviews, not the quick one-minute tops the rest of us get. They will run them on a special for the National network to get more interest in our challenge. Crowley wants you in a properly tailored suit with a green tie. I went ahead and picked out a grey one, which should match your features nicely.” Her face softens as she picks at the cardboard. “Maybe you might mention my name when they ask about your suit. It’s Hugo Boss. Crowley was clear, only the best for you.”

There are more House Omega participants than any other challenge; poor Andrea’s simply trying to get a leg up on her competition. Dean gives her a hug, whispering, “Find me an awesome picture, and I'll hold it up making sure I give the name of the suit maker at the same time so they can’t cut it out.”

“ARE YOU SERIOUS?” The female omega roars with excitement. “THAT WOULD BE AMAZING!”

She squeals, jumping up and down. “Yes, yes, I will have it ready with your suit. Thank you, Dean.”

“Why should I get twenty full minutes?” Dean can’t even figure out how the host of the interviews will fill his time slot. He’s pretty dull.
Andrea spins around with glee which becomes short lived as Garth pops his head out of the kitchen. “You might want to come back in; there seems to be a disagreement about the proper placement of almond milk. Is it milk, is it a beverage, inquiring minds want to know?”

She deserves to find a proper mate who will give her tons of children. If Dean can open a few doors for Andrea, he will do it. Now, if Bela Talbot or her gang come begging for favors that’s a different story. Slipping out of sight, Dean’s mind is on a long hot shower when he freezes the second his door opens.

Ash lies on the floor, his hands motionless in the air like he paused mid-fight. “Ash. Not funny man,” Dean says, rushing to his roommate’s side, “…Ash! ASH!!” The other omega’s eyes are open, but his friend isn’t responding.

“Fuck, this is bad.” He jumps up, punching the red button next to their door, and alarms blare through the building. He returns to kneel next to the unmoving man, “It’s okay, Ash. Hannah’s on her way.”

Tears spill off his face as the seconds tick by and the panic becomes unbearable. Dean doesn’t want to believe it, but obviously something went terribly wrong in Ash’s dreamscape and he did nothing to help.

“I am so sorry.”

Chapter End Notes

Comments, Questions, and Concerns are welcomed.

XOXOXO,
Angie
The piercing siren bleeds into Dean’s soul, triggering a raw, unimaginable loss of control as the omega holds his friend. He can’t stop repeating, “I am so sorry.” Logic has left, leaving fear, regret, and rage pummeling his psyche. Ash deserves a better roommate. Somewhere in the mess he knows the other omega would have entered his dreamscape with or without Dean’s approval. However, all he knows is blame.

“Sweetie, let go. We need to take care of him now.” Hannah’s words are gentle as she eases Dean’s grasp, placing Ash back on the dirty carpet.

He can’t recall the last time they vacuumed; it’s probably filthy.

Gilda and Rowena join them, the women working together in unison calling out antidotes and spells to save Ash’s mind. No one questions what happened. Obviously, they’ve seen the havoc of a dreamscape gone wrong before.

Crawling to the door, the omega knows his friend’s body will be properly cared for; yet there is one place Dean can go to be of service. Snatching an important item, he exits silently. Crowley leans against a wall; his eyes full of unshed tears.

“We,” the alpha’s voice cracks, “they have ways …all is not lost.”

“No, Crowley, it is not.” Dean heads to the elevators, unaware of the quiet trailing in his wake. Eyes scrutinize behind bouquets of anxiety. Once inside, he pushes the floor for the second-years. When he arrives, the omega is met with a myriad of queries from those demanding info on why the omega-in-danger alarm was ringing.

Ignoring all the ruckus, Dean shouts, “Which room is Max and Alicia?”

A small girl leads him to a door with black contact paper covering half, the other side in a shiny silver; poetic. Banging loudly, Dean screams, “Let me in; we have work to do.”

Seconds later Max answers, letting him in and shooing away any onlookers. Alicia brings Dean over to an altar under the window, her voice strong, “He’s not trapped. We gave him the spell against REM Vocal Control two days ago. I assume he did not share it with you?”

“No, but we haven’t been talking much. If he’s not stuck then what the fuck is happening?” Dean shouts.

Max steps in, knocking him back, “Barring actually going in and finding out, all we can do is hope.”

“I’m ready to go in coach.” Dean twirls to face both twins. “Show me what to do.”

“Absolutely NOT!” Alicia screams, a touch of terror in her words. “We can get you in easy enough, but at what cost? Dean, the hard part will be getting out with your own mind intact. I don’t
think Max and I have the talent for an extraction.”

Sitting down on the closest bed, Dean’s voice remains sure and true, “I won’t be alone for long.”

“No, no, no.” Max shakes his head violently. “What if your dreamweaver doesn’t have the juice either? Dean, he could leave you in there permanently, destroying you both. No way.”

“Do it. Castiel will always come when I call.”

A silent conversation blares between the twins before Alicia speaks again, “Lie down. We will prepare a tea to put you to sleep, but we need a piece of Ash to make this work.” Opening his palm, Dean holds out his roommate’s hairbrush. “The man loves his party in the back.”

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Dean’s feet appear in unfamiliar territory as he rotates, assessing the new arena. He’s in a wooded space with multicolored leaves falling all around him. A wind sweeps over his face as the omega inhales; do all Center residents dream of the outdoors? However, unlike his dreamscapes, Ash has put his own bizarre spin on it. A pool table stands abandoned, the eight-ball rolling from the strength of the blowing breeze. Across a green lawn stands a long, properly polished wooden bar with a neon beer sign hanging, magically in mid-air behind it. A few pints of beer have been turned over in a possible struggle.

Sniffing the air, he can only scent the dying leaves and stale ale. It may have been years since Dean snuck beers from his Dad’s treasure trove, but the odor is unforgettable. It sucks most omegas don’t smell each other, only the possible alphas vying for their attention.

“Ash!” Dean calls out, uncaring of who hears his rough desperate voice. “Ash, buddy, you out here?”

An instant response gives him a shiver. Rolling, thunderous clouds cover the clear blue sky as the pleasant breeze builds violently. Rain beats down on Dean’s face as he shouts louder, “ASH!”

A tug in his gut shoves him to walk away from the bar as glasses shatter onto the ground. The outdoor bar leads to a tall grassy hill, where a shadow figure stands above Ash. The bastard has his foot over his friend’s chest as if he was a trophy kill instead of a human being. Fucker’s lucky Dean can’t murder him.

The turbulent tempest makes the omega’s vision blurry. Why did it only kick up once he announced himself? Huh? Definitely a quandary for another time.

“LEAVE HIM ALONE!” Dean bellows over the storm. The water pelts his face, stinging the exposed skin as the omega climbs the hill, drawing himself closer to the enemy. Realizing he might need back-up, Dean mutters, “Cas, anytime you want to show, buddy, it would be awesome.”

The unseen, shrouded alpha holds his hand up when Dean’s about twenty feet from the two men. A glowing yellow string connects the alpha’s temple to Ash’s chest, as if his friend’s heart is at the other’s whim. Oddly, the stranger’s not speaking. There is no doubt in his mind this alpha has zero interest in respecting Dean’s opinion and rights, so why the quiet?

The alpha wishes to obscure Dean’s vision and hearing. Fascinating. “Just walk away. You want to remain all mysterious and shit; have at it. I merely want my friend. If you part ways right now, I will never know who you are before the challenges.”

A twinge in the alpha’s shoulders leads Dean to guess he might have nailed it. If this alpha wants to
woo Dean inside the trials, that would explain the cloak and dagger cosplay. A silver glint in the alpha’s hand has the omega’s stomach flipping painfully.

“Harm him and I will end you,” Dean screams with a powerful boom.

The storm continues to rage, but it appears as if they are placed in some kind of bubble. The rain sends a wave of puddles all around them, yet his feet remain dry. Weird.

Again, Dean pleads under his breath, “Castiel, please come. You promised.”

Laughter rings out over the noise. The dark figure’s head is thrown back to match the eerie high-pitched chuckle. The guy’s hand gestures around them, clearly pointing out they are all alone in Ash’s mind.

“Screw you, jackass!” Dean’s temper flares. The feeling of blame and vulnerability sets aflame a deep hatred for everything alphas have ripped away from his designation. The sunshine, merely the beginning of a seriously long list. Taking off in a run, Dean leans down, body-checking the alpha with all the strength he can muster. They both crash to the mud, snapping the golden strand. Ash gasps for air.

In his next breath Dean’s got the silver weapon in his hand. Knife training for the Hunter challenge is coming in handy early. Without warning the charcoal cloak of his opponent goes limp as only the cloth remains. The solid body vanishes. The omega plunges forward into a puddle, his face smashing into the wet, gooey dirt.

“Nasty,” Dean huffs, battling to right himself from all the mess. He spits, wiping his face.

Quickly, he checks over the other omega. Ash is alive. The guy’s frozen save for his lips, which seem to be repeating an incantation, so the Banes twins were right. His roommate’s not trapped by the dark alpha, yet Dean can’t get either of them out.

Closing his eyes, Dean collects his thoughts, going through every spell, incantation or rhyme he’s learned during his time at the Center.

“Whenever things seem blue, take a look within you. The powers that be, always reside first within me.” He snickers to the absurdity of recalling the little rhyme all first-years learn. “Wait.”

Using a nearby puddle of water, he washes his hands and face before slicing his palm with the knife. Using the blood, Dean draws the symbols necessary for a purifying ritual. First, one on each cheek followed by the top of each hand and finally repeating the markings on Ash. Next, Dean sits cross-legged at Ash’s feet, making sure his roommate’s legs cross at the ankle.

“Heart to Heart, connect us one to one.” Dean chants, sliding his fingers over Ash’s exposed flesh till he discovers a strong beating pulse point.

In moments the two men rise three feet into the air. Lastly, he mutters “Katharístē to myaló mou; Clean my mind, Katharístē tin kardía mou; Clean my heart, Katharístē tin psychí mou; Clean my soul.”

Three deep inhales then again, three more inhales then again.

Orange with cinnamon strikes his senses, trailing behind a delicate touch wiping away tears of panic. Turning his head, Dean stares directly into a sea of blue. The eyes of one who came as soon as Dean swept away whatever barring ritual the jerk had set before dashing out like a weenie.

“Cas.”
Carefully, with complete caution, Castiel lowers both omegas to the dirt. Grasping his true mate’s wrist, Dean squeezes, “Release us, give me time to care for him, but please, Castiel, visit my next dreamscape. I need you.”

A heart-wrenching, pitiful, whine releases from the alpha. The dreamweaver plummets to his knees. Guilt is the scent overwhelming any other odor. Dean’s never witnessed such visceral emotions from another human being directed at him. Castiel was horrified at being blocked. The conversation required will be in depth and lengthy. Praying he can convey his dedication to his alpha, Dean raises his hand, caressing Cas’s cheek. Laying his lips over the alpha’s, he allows himself one perfect orange-flavored kiss.

“Thank you, Alpha.” Stealing one final chaste kiss, Dean mutters, “Can you send me back?”

The cheeky dreamweaver gives him a wink, and Dean tumbles back, falling farther back than the ground once belonged. Round and round, feet over head the omega circles; faster and faster till he screams as his soul slams back into the correct body.

Alicia and Max chanting loudly in the background, Dean rises, jeering, “And you two were worried.”

He totally deserves the punch to his chest.

Racing back to his room, Dean circumvents the elevators, taking the emergency stairs two at a time. He has to see Ash. Visually check that the man made it back before he can breathe easy once more. Throwing open the door, he finds his roommate on the bed sipping a tea with Gilda perching perfectly at his friend’s feet.

“What did you do?” Hannah howls in anger.

“Don’t worry about it.” Grabbing Ash by his shoulders, Dean yells, “Seriously, dude, what the hell happened?”

The normally mild-mannered doctor uses strength Dean never thought she could muster, tossing him against the closest wall. Hannah’s tone is chilling, “Don’t make me ask you again.”

“You better listen, mate. She’s the scariest one in the room.” Crowley sits at Ash’s desk, his arms folded nonchalantly.

Clearing his throat, Dean tests the waters, “A little purifying ritual to ward off the alpha in Ash’s dreamscape.” There. An answer without actually …

“Which can only be done within said dreamscape, Winchester.” Hannah’s eyes blaze with a deep-rooted fear and possibly curiosity. “Explain, or I pump blockers into your system through an IV.”

“You would never.” Dean’s around 95% sure she wouldn’t but again he really crossed a few lines today. Actually, he’s got no idea if it’s still day. The sun could be either rising or setting, doesn’t matter; the omega never gets to feel the warm rays.

The woman flinches, “No, still, how did you get out?”

Glancing around Dean suspects everyone present already knows his connection to his personal dreamweaver. “Getting in was easy. A pair of second-years could perform the spell.” He shrugs with his witty double meaning, “We both know exactly who has the juice to yank my ass back from this knucklehead’s mind.”
“Whoa!” Ash’s gaze scans the small dorm room. “I wanna be awake longer next time. That was like taking a serious hit of acid while someone else watches from the inside. Well, the Dean part not the scary ass alpha locking me inside.”

“You knew I was there?” Dean never really noticed how coherent his roommate was during the experience.

Scratching his scruff Ash replies, “The creepy guy grabbed me and it all went black. I couldn’t see shit. BUT, I heard you yelling and smelled burnt oranges. Then,” the omega snaps his fingers, “I was back, and Rowena was dancing naked while Gilda screamed it wasn’t necessary.”

“Buzzkill,” Rowena announces from her spot in the corner.

“Mother, not all incantations require nudity.” Crowley sighs, poking at his eye sockets, “I’m scarred for life.”

The Erotica teacher tuts loudly, tying her emerald silk robe, “We used to dance together when you were a wee little one. You loved it.”

“Stop!” Hannah shouts. “Ash needs to spend the day in the medical wing. He’s had quite the shock.”

“Score. No class for Ash.” His roommate attempts to fist bump Hannah, frowning when she merely glares at his hand.

The room clears, leaving Crowley and Dean.

Leaning heavily against his dresser, the omega releases a violent puff of air. “Someone informed me of great consequences for entering another person’s dreamscape. Gotta say, I feel fine.”

“I don’t believe they were completely clear. The consequences are violent and painful but you … won’t feel a thing.”

Now it’s his turn to be drowning in guilt. His poor true mate will be hurt because two omegas have been playing with fire.

Tired of all the half-truths, Dean stands taller. “Castiel is Hannah’s cousin.”

“A riveting family, brimming with light and goodness.” Crowley rises to his feet, sauntering closer to the omega. “Although, they were missing a few key components.”

With a smirk Dean thinks back to his discussion with Rowena, “immorality and darkness.”

“Me? Immoral?” The alpha mocks, surprise on his bouncing eyebrows.

“Rowena was part of the deal, I presume.”

Laughing softly, Crowley pats Dean’s arm. “You aren’t wrong.”

Realization stumbles across his brain as the omega steps back, “Am I evil? Is that why they want me paired with Castiel?”

“My dear boy, why would you ask such a ridiculous question?” Crowley legitimately seems disturbed by the idea.

“Light and dark, dawn and dusk, everything must balance for …” he waves his hand around,
“whatever the hell is happening. If Cas is from the family of light and love then …”

A little sorrow touches the alpha’s features. “No, Dean Winchester, you are not dark or anything wicked coming this way.”

The pain begins as a tinge in his heart which gains power as the idea rips over Dean’s soul. Snatching the lapels of Crowley’s black suit, the omega’s voice lowers to a dreadful whisper, “I was never meant to be Castiel’s omega.”

Solid dead air strangles Dean’s ability to inhale. The elaborate plan decades in the making between smarter and obviously powerful individuals never included him mating Cas. Neither man can find the words, because the sound of silence says it all.

Chapter End Notes

I always enjoy hearing from y'all.
All my love,

Angie
The alarm clock next to Dean’s bed beeps obnoxiously as the omega greets another day. He’s rested, his mind clear, prepared to face the challenge of beating the fourth-year Hunters’ asses and his normal schedule. Clarity of his thoughts doesn’t outshine the worry about his missing Alpha. Castiel has remained MIA ...again. After his conversation with Crowley, the omega’s not surprised because if Cas is rolling around in agonizing pain he’s not going to be leaping into a dreamscape. The shadow alpha has been quiet too.

Maybe sleep isn’t a terrible idea. Today Dean’s got a preliminary meeting with his scent expert. As a third-year, he will be allowed to spend time with a selected group of alphas on- and off-camera. The pit in his stomach lurches with fear Cas won’t be in the number. His discussion with Crowley is a distant but agonizing memory. Hopefully the scent expert caseworker will ignore the naysayers and actually listen, putting them as a good match. Dean will refuse any other. Fuck the director, he don’t know shit.

Ash’s own alarm goes off as Dean’s brushing his teeth.

“Oh, man, had another awesome rock concert under the stars.”

Inhaling over the lump in his throat, Dean nods, spitting in the sink and letting his roommate have the bathroom. Ash appears unaffected by his negative experience in the dreamscape. The guy is either amazingly resilient or crazy; perhaps for the other omega the two are not mutually exclusive.

Because all scent experts are omegas, they can enter the Centers unaccompanied. Dean checks the note Billie handed him yesterday. One of the rooms on the preschoolers’ floor is scribbled in red ink. Wanting to make a good impression on the person who holds the Royal Flush to his future, he shows up early. Instantly he grins at the warm, inviting bouquet of waffles.

“DEAN!” Donna shouts from the kitchen, “your caseworker called; she’s running late. Come have a waffle.”

“There not?” He waves to the assembly of youngsters in various stages of dress.

Propping his hip against the doorway, Dean observes Donna hard at work. The woman’s megawatt smile never dims. “We’ve got berries and cream for toppers.”

“I’ll just take syrup.” He turns, noticing the newest addition at a table all by himself. “Tell me the new kid’s name, again.”

“Jack.” For the first time her gaze falls melancholy, “He’s having a rough time acclimating to Center life. Maybe you might give him a few pointers.”

Accepting his fresh breakfast, Dean follows his marching orders, plopping next to the omega who resembles a disgruntled kitten. “Hey, I’m Dean.” He points to the untouched soggy-bottomed waffle, “Donna’s food is legendary. I was so bummed when they put me straight in with the first-
years.”

Jack stares at him. Not in an angry or aggressive manner but as if Dean’s a puzzle without an answer. “Sugar will rot your teeth.”

Weirdest-answer-ever award goes to baby face in the corner. Dean scoops up a massive spoonful, shoveling it in with a sigh. “Beta dentist visits twice a year. Never had a cavity yet,” tilting forward he mumbles, “how old are you?”

“Do you feel better understanding my time on this plane is shorter than yours?”

“Wow.” Dean mouths the answer, because new guy is batting a thousand in the oddball category. No wonder he’s sitting alone. “More curious as to why your scent seems pre-heat.”

“Centers claim omegas for a variety of reasons.”

Swallowing his recent bite, Dean replies, “Are you playing a game? You say the first bizarre comeback you can think of without cracking. If so, you’re winning.”

The smaller omega places his hand over Dean’s. “Forget about the distractions and listen to what’s not being said.”

“Fuck dude!” Dean snatches back his hand. “Has anyone ever mentioned your ability to be headache inducing?”

“All the time.” Jack grins as if it’s a prize.

Dean wipes syrup from his mouth, “Well, Donna’s worried about you. She thinks you're not happy here and just between you and me our center is top notch. Seriously, what’s your deal?”

“Were you immediately comforted by the stark, cold surroundings? Dean Winchester, even you have found the Center lacking.”

The comment strikes a chord with the older omega. Rolling his shoulders, then cracking his neck, Dean attempts to find a comeback. “Look, man. We get a real education, three meals a day, and freedom to make our own choices.” Dean rejects any other opinion because his entire future with Castiel banks on his right to select his mate. “Sounds pretty good to me.”

The younger man’s head tilts to the side, which feels oddly familiar. “Your definition of freedom needs work. We shall discuss your conclusions in detail once you have given the word time to permeate.”

Mouthing the word “permeate,” Dean silently observes Jack leave the table and disappear into a dorm room down the hall.

He’s finishing a second helping of waffles when a small, feminine hand raps on the table. “Mr. Winchester. Follow me.”

The woman’s dark, shoulder-length hair hangs in loose curls. Tight, dark-denim jeans do nothing to hide the round pregnancy belly. A black leather jacket adds just the right touch of rocker mom to be. She unlocks a room at the end of the hall. Instead of the typical roommate setup, there is a couch, table, four chairs, shelves with tons of electrical equipment, huge LCD television on the wall and a plush recliner.

“WHOA!”
He’s carefully selecting a movie he wants to bring down here when the lady chuckles. “Sorry, Dean-o. Only scent experts have keys to the viewing lair.”

“What’s with,” he spins around, already saddened he can’t catch the new *Ant Man* in here. “the incredible set up?”

“First, we want our omegas to feel comfortable as we talk; gives you options. Secondly, some alphas’ schedules won’t match up for proper face to face time, so the TV up there can Skype or do the new Facebook thing. Lastly, we work magic, so we get the best toys.” Holding out her hand, the woman winks, “I’m Meg.”

Shaking her solid hand, he counters, “Gotta ask. First kid?”

“Center omegas are always so mystified by pregnancy.” She gently settles on one end of the couch yanking off her boots. “Swollen feet are the pits.”

Something about Meg is different. Not in a baby-making way or pushing the norms of every omega he’s met, but the way she immediately puts him at ease. Dean’s curious. She’s the first scent expert he’s ever met, so maybe they have a soothing effect on other omegas.

“You and baby here have the number-four position. After three previous rugrats holding court in the uterus, my tummy pops early. I’m right at eighteen weeks.”

He snags the stellar leather seat, reclining immediately. Dean can’t help but shimmy his hips in a happy glee because omega pampering kicks total ass. “Can we meet all the time?”

Laughing, she yanks out a laptop smothered in rock band stickers. Yeah, she’s the caseworker for him. “Actually, you are my numero uno client, rocking the top five and all. Once the challenges begin you will see a lot of me, but most of our hang time will be on location.” She flips open the computer typing away. “Initially, I’ve thrown out any alphas whose scent was completely wrong for you.”

“What are you looking for? In the smell?” Dean lets his gaze focus on a night sky painting to the right of Meg’s head. Probably meant to be romantic or some shit. Just reminds him of scaling a building; clutching on for dear life.

“Hannah gave me a live slick sample collected during your last scheduled heat. I’ve got a few notes to review, yet you need a fresh, maybe fruit, bouquet.” She doesn’t glance up, so Meg misses the shock in Dean’s expression. Damn!

Silently he whispers to her, oranges with cinnamon, please. Totally a fresh fruit.

Drilling his fingers nervously into the armrest, Dean watches the scent expert closely. “Can I give you a specific name?”

“You can,” she replies, her whiskey eyes glancing away, “we can put him on the list, but this early in the game you want to keep your options open. Entice as many Alphas to your Challenges as possible.”

“My list is super easy. I have one name, don’t want any other.” Dean snaps his fingers, getting her attention because there should be no question. Meg must be on the same page with him. “Castiel Novak. Done.”

“Shit.” The woman sighs, rubbing her eyes harshly, smudging the heavy mascara and black eyeliner. “I thought Hannah was kidding.”
Attempting to not sound excited, he queries, “Hannah mentioned my interest in Cas?”

Holding up her pointer finger, Meg puts it to her lips. Quickly she pulls a few plastic vials from a case at her feet. The scent expert reads the labels, retrieving a specific one and unstopping it. “Sniff the specimen and tell me your thoughts.”

Maybe it’s the sample Hannah’s been using during the Hunter training sessions. If Dean identifies Cas as his true mate, all the pomp and circumstance can be avoided, and he can go home with his alpha sooner. Letting down the footrest, Dean tilts forward, inhaling deeply. Not even two seconds pass before the omega’s coughing hysterically. “Smells like rotting plums with cinnamon. Terrible.”

Meg’s eyes track his movement, clearly analyzing every single tic to his reaction along with his verbal denial of the alpha’s horrible vial odor. “Nope, not my alpha.” The cinnamon isn’t disgusting, but the decomposing plums with an extra sweetness layer leaves a thick film on Dean’s nostrils. Icky.

“Fuck.” The woman replaces the stopper, hiding the vial and spraying a cleansing solution into the air. “Give it a minute and the plum will clear.” Closing her eyes Meg scooches to the end of her spot on the sofa; whispers a count to sixty, then taps her neck, “Smell me, exactly on this spot.”

“Omegas don’t really smell each other unless they are attracted to the designation. I want an alpha. Just not dead-plummy dude.”

Rolling her dark chocolate eyes, Meg huffs, “I’m pretty damn good at my job. Just take a whiff, Einstein.”

Her personal odor from the moment Dean met her was pleasant, which leads Dean to obey. Inching in to her body, he’s blatantly aware of the baby belly bumping against him; a tad of want trickles through his mind. Placing his nose exactly where Meg instructed, Dean sucks in a long drag.

Open orange fields with a delicate splattering of cinnamon. The bouquet has the omega snatching both Meg’s arms and holding the woman in place as Dean deepens the inhale; opening his mouth slightly, letting the air flavor his tongue. God he’s battling against a wave of desire to lick the poor scent expert.

“Castiel.” Dean mutters.

Raw, pure, on the neck of another, yet again there is no rage. His mind spins with possibilities as to why Meg would not be a threat to him. The answers so simple it’s like a breath of fresh air, “family.”

“My mate, my Alpha, is in fact related to the man who deposited a sample of his sweat on me. I have no desire for anything south of his belt to be anywhere near me, and my Angelic half would throttle Cassie regardless of stature.”

“You know Cas?” An overwhelming sensation has a few tears in Dean’s eyes. “He’s real?”

A tiny piece of the omega always believed his true mate was some kind of cosmic joke. Only existing in his dreams. However, in this moment Castiel Novak becomes … an absolute. Dean Winchester will never be with another; no one can ever take the place of his genuine Alpha.

Pain, sorrow, and perhaps regret crosses the woman’s expression as the two omegas stare at each other. Finally, a powerful resolve has Meg straightening her back, her fingers twisting into fists.

“No matter what happens, I need you to always remember one thing.” Her hand opens stroking the unborn child between them, “I speak the truth. My loyalties will be tested; I might have to tap dance
for the rest, but when it’s you, me, and junior here, no one lies. Got it?”

“Okay.”

“From this moment until the conclusion of the final Hunter Challenge you have a right to speak to and see me. If you need anything, simply announce to a teacher, coach, or trial official that you must speak to your caseworker. No one can deny my access to you. Ever. Understand?”

“Ummm,” the intensity of her words worries Dean a bit, “alright.” She’s not answered his original question, “Meg …Cas is real …right?”

Panic begins to twirl in Dean’s gut because, holy hell, he won’t survive a twist that harsh. Meg lays a palm to each of his cheeks, pulling him in closer. Her lips ghost against his ear, “Yes, but I can’t pull you from the Hunter challenges to mate him.”

“WHY?” Dean’s voice cracks with fear. “It’s my choice.”

When she leans back, her eyes mirror his with tears splashing against her cheeks. Black streaks paint her face with shadows. “We need you to play a vital role in saving every omega from a system that is broken. Please, for my children who are omegas, for those who don’t have any way out. God, Dean, listen to me.”

“I don’t understand.” He tries to pull back farther, but Meg’s grip rivals the elasticity of iron. “It’s my choice. You know my Alpha, he’s unmated, and we can be together. There is no reason to do the challenges.”

“Cas was supposed to guide you towards the right path, teach you how to use your skills to win the battle, keep other Alphas from entering your dreamscape,” her soft tears bubble into a sob. “Fuck, I hate hormones. You falling for him was not part of the plan.”

“Meg, what plan??” The scent expert is spouting riddles, and Dean’s fuming with annoyance. “Tell me! I will not follow some stupid plot or whatever if it means not getting to mate Castiel. No fucking way; he’s my true mate. It’s my choice.”

“I’m not sure it’s my place to dump a shit pile of reality on you. Maybe Hannah or” Meg can barely speak through her crying, “who do you feel safe with?”

“Castiel,” Dean answers without hesitation.

Hastily Meg jumps up, her socked feet patting against the floor as she paces. “Damn it! I should not have been the one to tell you. I suck at emotions.”

“You’re a scent expert! Isn’t it your job to help omegas through the emotional roller coaster of deciding on their alpha?”

Everything he’s ever been told about the Omega Challenges appears to have been a lie.

“Didn’t Crowley explain?”

Wait, what? Dean’s rising to his own feet, halting Meg’s path, “Castiel is my mate. I don’t care what anyone believes.” Bile builds in his throat with terror. “Cas wants me too?” Now, his mind spins with different images trying to pinpoint when his true mate returned his sentiments. “Don’t mess with me Meg. You said, trust you.”

A calmness falls over the other omega as Meg wipes away the tears, her face still stained with black
layered veils. Dark and light make them stronger.

“Castiel asked me to wear his scent as a test to prove your beliefs. He wants you as his Omega. Yes, without a doubt, he desires you as his true mate and has forgone the bidding of his family to force my hand.”

Dean’s knees give way, plunging him to the couch as Meg grabs the seat next to him. His chest releases the tight hold, allowing the omega to breathe easier. Cas loves him too.

An intriguing sparkle in her brown eyes gives Dean hope as Meg taps a black, chipped nail to her chin. “We could do both.”

“Both?” He’s kind of impressed with the woman’s ability to toe the line on multiple sides. Evil is undervalued. Gilda would never have twirled back so quickly.

“You continue with the Hunter Challenges. However, instead of staying in the background and never entering as an Alpha. Castiel flips the whole script. As a scent expert, I can register an Alpha as a special request of the omega. In fact, I can keep his identity a secret for security reasons, even holding the requesting omega’s name too. We wouldn’t want a rogue alpha messing with your first choice before the games begin. Happens all the time with top ten.”

Anxiety levels reach new heights as Dean considers all the perils before him if he and Cas go through with such a wild idea, yet it’s one thing Crowley couldn’t give him: hope. “And the psychotic, super, stealthy scheme to save all omegas?”

“We could win, although Dean Winchester, you must begin utterly blind of any wrongdoings. Unfortunately, even a hint on camera would destroy decades of hard work people have slaved over, which means you would have to completely trust me and follow my every command.”

“I would have to meet other alphas? Participate in the challenges? Act like I have no clue something else is going on? Pretend Cas is just another guy vying for my attention?” Dean searches her face and scent for deception.

“Yes. Be the good little omega and play your part.”

Tucking his nose back into her neck, Dean inhales the aroma of his true mate. “Deal.”

Chapter End Notes

Comments, Concerns, and Questions are always loved and answered.

XOXOXO,
Angie
The world spins out of control as Dean stumbles from his meeting with Meg. Colors, sounds, light sear into his senses, burning with the heat of a wildfire. His breathing quickens. All his thoughts jumble together, creating a brown goo where nothing comes through but the stink of terror. They have the wrong omega. Dean Winchester is a nobody, absolutely not a hero.

She will contact him in a few days to review more details. He can’t absorb any more information, until the omega processes the first round of nuttiness. The scent expert might have spoken after Dean agreed to the secret scheme; he knows zero about it, and the ringing between his ears kept him from hearing shit. His vision blurry and heart beating chaotically, the omega is glad for the empty hallway. The kiddos must be in lessons.

At the elevator he pushes a button. Dean doesn’t care what floor; he’s probably going to pass out soon so not relevant. All the emotions are twirling inside his body with no chance of release. Throwing up might be another action coming soon. Swish, the doors reveal the medical wing.

Hannah. Not a poor choice. Dean would be proud of himself yet he walks into a glass door, nearly breaking his nose; so not his finest moment. The doctor in question lets him inside, checking his nostrils for damage.

“Dean?” she queries, helping his ass to a stark white gurney. “Are you alright?”

“Talked with Meg.” Dean grins brightly because he made a sentence. Yay.

Concern deepens the creases beside her bright blue eyes, “Oh, how …” her hands gently hold his trembling ones, “can I ease the shock?”

Crowley mated one of the best omegas, her intuition for helping those around her is superb. Dean feels exposed lying on the high-framed bed in front of massive glass doors. Instead he searches for a place to tuck in for sanctuary. He did the same thing for months after his mother’s death. Hannah stands back, letting him move at his own pace. Dean shoves a filing cabinet in the corner to the side, creating a small cubbyhole barely large enough for his frame. Curling down, the omega shoves his back against one wall, resting to the side of the other. He simply needs a second of peace.

Understanding what Dean’s working towards, Hannah dims the overhead lights to 50%, jerking a privacy curtain across the space. She kneels in front of him. “Better?”

With a pathetic smile, Dean gives her a thumbs up. He doesn’t trust his voice.

For an instant the doctor vanishes, returning with a warmed blanket. She drapes the fabric over the cabinet and down to his head, closing Dean in further. The assault on his senses calms vaguely as the heat trickles into his skin. He’s got an abundance of questions. Unfortunately, Hannah isn’t the person he wishes to find the answers with; his true mate would be the perfect fit. She has to know how to reach him.
Inhaling Dean mumbles, “Castiel.”

A soft touch drags through his hair, a loving smile catches his view, and an iPhone is placed on the white laminate floor. “I need to run a few errands, so I’ll be locking the door. Probably won’t return for at least an hour. Crowley’s number’s in here for emergencies. The passcode is 0416. Wouldn’t want you to be left without a way to reach someone because with the curtain drawn no one will be able to tell you’re inside.”

With a kiss to Dean’s forehead, Hannah exits.

Hastily he reaches out, typing the passcode into the phone and opening Hannah’s contacts. Of course, right above Crowley is one Castiel. Is he ready? Dean weighs the reasons for dialing against the single one holding him back; Cas won’t answer. Not that the alpha would have any clue it’s not Hannah calling yet the doubt remains bubbling up with fear. In the end Ash’s voice rings out “not trying would be worse, dumbass.”

Before he can change his mind, Dean taps his alpha’s name and hits the green dial button.

The first ring doesn’t even finish before a click halts the noise as a thick, rich, scratchy voice speaks with a rushed panic, “Hannah? Is Dean ok?”

He asked for him. A fresh wave of tears falls, but these aren’t from pain or anxiety. Simply hearing his true mate’s voice for the first time rights something deep within the omega. Castiel won’t fix all his woes, yet it’s a fantastic place to begin. Like asking for an unseen emotional hug he reaches out through the phone.

“Cas, its me.” The omega’s thrilled his words are comprehensible.

Immediately the man replies, “Hello Dean.”

“Hey.” He wipes at his cheek. Cas seems genuinely happy to hear from him. “I don’t …”

There doesn’t seem to be a word great enough, powerful enough, and scary enough to describe Dean’s current inner battle. He whispers the truth, “It’s too big.”

“Yes.” Cas pauses, possibly allowing Dean time to add anything further, but the omega has spent all their previous time talking. He chooses to listen. Eventually the alpha continues, “We can’t ignore the important work ahead. ALL Omegas deserve freedom.” A touch of silly disappointment squeezes at Dean’s nerves. He wanted to be the Alpha’s priority. Cas sighs roughly. The omega imagines the man dragging a hand over his mouth with a deep, serious expression. “God forgive me, I don’t want you harmed. If the world were different, I’d be at your Center’s gate demanding an audience to request a mating. You deserve better from me. How can I be so selfish?”

“Be selfish.” Dean utters, surprised by the conviction in the statement. “Tell me how things …might be.”

“Such dreams of fancy are cruel, Dean.” The alpha’s gravelly sounds against the whiskey-soothing delivery are all sorts of arousing. “Our fate can’t be ignored. You were selected as the one to finish it.”

“Have they even told you what I have to do? Pretty sure it’s a lot more dicey than the House Omega Challenges.”

“Knowing too much creates unwanted risks. We must focus on our roles. There is too much at stake for us to play pretend and hurt ourselves further.”
“Fuck it, Cas I …need a dream to hold onto when it all goes to shit.” He leans farther into the cold, harsh wall, allowing his feet to slide out into a more comfortable position. “Please.”

“In a perfect universe, I would have Meg present me to you as a true mate. She would have confirmed our bond and let you choose what would happen next.”

Dean responds without hesitation, “I’m your Omega, Cas.”

“No, you have it backwards. The person who would be doing the claiming is you, Dean. I’ve always belonged to you.”

Gasping for air the omega drops his head back against the wall. “Cas.” The desire dripping in the single syllable. Flawless devotion from someone blends intoxication and fear beautifully.

“My family has been working towards this goal for decades. Matings selected for their mystical-strengthening ramifications. As the sole dreamweaver in our numbers, my task was clear; yet the moment I entered your dreamscape, took in your scent of soft, supple leather and freshly roasted almonds, I was lost to any other. If you push, I may not have the strength to say no. Think of Ash, Charlie, all the omegas. In this one case, the end justifies the means, Dean.”

Glancing at the ceiling, Dean lets the weight of Castiel’s words settle on his chest. Instead of shoving him further into a panic the opposite happens; a resolve to do it blossoms. “On one condition.”

“Name it.”

“Meg will come to you with a proposition. A change in the plans only the three of us will be privy to until the last minute. Promise me you will agree.”

The quiet between them isn’t upsetting because Dean understands his Alpha is truly contemplating Dean’s offer, and his answer will be set in stone. It brings air into his lungs at an easier pace. Cas will only agree if he’s 100% in, and that’s liberating.

“My faith lies with you, my true mate. I agree.”

“Crap, Cas, you really enjoy the formal statements.” Dean chuckles.

Clearing his voice with annoyance, Castiel replies, “Clarity in what you say has value.”

“Okay, Alpha.” The playful teasing washes away another layer of stress on Dean’s shoulders. “Can I make a more personal request?”

“Within reason.”

Yeah, he could spend the rest of his life listening to the gruff grumble of the man, “Come to my dreamscape, stay for a bit; maybe we can lose a few layers of clothing in the process. Finally get a peek under the trench coat. I know it’s not real, but I want to feel you.”

“May I make a counter offer?” Even when discussing the naughty deed Cas is all business.

“Lay it on me,” he smiles at his brilliance, “or in me.”

A fit of coughing has the banter taking a pause, “We move our physical relationship further along; however, in the dreamscape you do not ask me to speak. I will never control your actions, Dean. Silence ensures us both you are of sound mind in our activities; consent is crucial.”
This is what safety, trust, and love feels like, “Fine. How did I get so lucky to score such an awesome Alpha?”

“Be prepared, Dean; you are still meant to be for another.” For the first time there is a hint of rage behind Cas’s tone. “Your survival rests on being able to play your part convincingly. No matter how difficult it will be for us.”

Puffing out a harsh breath of air, Dean rolls his shoulders, attempting to discover his footing.

“Everyone gets to choose except me. How is that freedom?”

Again, a pregnant pause stretches the seconds out painfully. Cas’s breathing is the only sound until he finally croaks out, “I have no answer. Your query rings of truth; although altering anything might cause the house of cards we’ve built to crash. Destiny can be merciless. Stay alive, Dean, you survive, and I will find you.”

An unseen grin spreads on Dean’s face, because Cas’s ability to find him will be easier than the alpha believes. His true mate envisions watching his omega on the television battling through the trials while being wooed by other possible mates. Nope, Meg’s new twist gives him hope.

“I promise to do my best.” Dean refuses to be the one to hang up.

“Excellent. Now I’m sure there are classes or training you are missing. We say goodbye now and tonight Dean our dreams will intertwine.”

Snickering the omega scoffs, “So fancy.”

The click of the call ending has never sounded so dire. Dean’s fingers dance over Castiel’s name, daring himself to call back because he wasn’t ready, probably would never be. Intrigued by the other names on Hannah’s personal cell phone, Dean scrolls down the list. She had to know he’d snoop. Given the chance, what person in their right mind wouldn’t take a peep, especially when the omega’s barely held a phone in the last three years.

He’s nearing the bottom when a single name pops out; Winchester. Odd. Dean doesn’t have a number other than the main switchboard for the Center. His only form of communication directed at him is an email address. Yet, here it lies in the list, lacking a first name. Huh?

What could it hurt?

Unlike with Castiel’s number, the ringing seems to span on for an eternity. Without preamble the call switches over to voicemail. “You’ve reached John Winchester; leave a message.”

Dean hangs up, tossing the phone to the floor. Why in the hell is his dad’s number in Hannah’s contacts list? At first the omega attempts to convince himself it’s because the doctor has close relatives to all the Center omegas on file. Scanning the list, he proves himself wrong. Honestly, Dean doesn’t have it in him to handle another shocking revelation; he’s met his quota.

The good doctor returns with a stressful grimace. “How’d it go?”

Laying her phone on the gurney, Dean shrugs. “We are go for liftoff.”

He appreciates her nodding in quiet solidarity. Before exiting the medical wing, he turns to face Hannah. “What was the challenge that won over Crowley?”

“I never stepped foot into a Center until after I was mated to Crowley.”
The statement startles Dean. “Wait. Your family had the money for a proper scent-sealed room?”

“No.”

“Umm, pretty sure the options for omegas in heat are a list of two.”

Glancing out the window, Hannah leans in to his ear. “Have you smelled our newest omega, Jack?”

“Dude’s weird,” recalling his breakfast interlude, Dean scratches his chin, “way young and pre-heat, why?”

“Wrong.” Hannah opens the door, shooing him out as Donna bops in with a kid yacking into a bucket. “Figure it out, Winchester.”

He’d stay to pester her further, although the stench of vomit encourages him to climb on the elevator and head back to the fourth floor. A quiet day of reflection is in order.

Dean’s got his head in the fridge, picking out a tasty snack to pair with his contemplation, when he feels someone tap his shoulder.

“I’m so sorry, Dean.”

The voice is wracked with guilt and when he looks up, he sees a devastated Andrea in front of him. Her hands are shaking as she carries a pile of torn fabric. “I kept your suit in a safe place under lock and key. How anyone would be so horrible as to spoil Hugo Boss? It’s criminal.”

“Fourth-years,” Dean mutters. Really, he could care less about a damn suit for his interview, but Andrea put a ton of work into getting the measurements perfect. Bastards have gone too far. “Not your fault. Someone’s trying to ruin my chances in the ratings. I assume not wearing a suit will make me look stupid, and there is no time to have a new one delivered.”

“Crowley sent a message your interview is tomorrow morning. I went to collect your ensemble for a final fitting when,” the girl’s eyes are welling with tears, “I found the piece in shambles.” Her cheeks are bright red with anger. “Pretty sure they rubbed dog poop on it.” Andrea waves around the offensive material as she screams, “How the hell did they find a dog?”

“They are assholes, resourceful and creative, but assholes.” He snags a plastic bag from under the sink. “Let’s get rid of the crap threads, then we can figure out an alternative,” he rolls his eyes as he adds, “ensemble.”

After scrubbing both their hands with heavy-duty anti-bacterial soap, Dean takes poop removal seriously, the two omegas plop down on a couch with a bag of potato chips. Salty crunchy goodness always lifts his spirits.

The conversation with Cas has him asking, “If you were free from the confines of the Center, what would you do?”

“Create my own clothing line. The extra closet in my room is packed with samples I’ve made, but no company will back an unmated omega.” Andrea announces over a sip of root beer.

Chewing on his lip, Dean grabs a handful of Lays. “Make anything in my size?”

“How do you feel about vintage?”
Happy Holidays to all my readers. I adore you all.

XOXOXO,
Angie
Wiping the sweat from his hands, Dean explores the unassuming house. A quiet place with not a single neighbor within view. Perfect. The cabin itself is one story with a simple wooden front porch, low ceilings, two bedrooms, and a centrally located red-brick fireplace. A nip in the air has the omega kneeling down to build a fire. Once the flames are roaring high, Dean removes his jacket and rolls up the sleeves to his grey Henley. Hopefully, the heat will spread to the bedrooms.

Eagerly Dean peeks out the window, hoping to spot a tan trench coat, but only sees thick forest dusted with snow and a single-lane road leading up to the house. Night has tipped the scales of dusk so the last touch of light leisurely disappears. Breathtaking scene, yet Dean grunts as a violent rumble from his tummy portrays the truth. Maybe planning sex was a mistake. His poor stomach has been twisting and turning since his arrival.

“Castiel.” Dean announces scanning the open living space.

Not wanting to waste time later, the omega kicks off his boots, lining them up nicely by the front door. When he turns back, he’s not alone. Cas stands next to the well-loved navy couch looking how Dean feels. Yeah, next time spontaneity might be the better option. The Alpha’s faint green shade has him frowning.

“Wanna sit for a bit?” Dean points to the sofa, hoping to calm the other man.

With huge edgy eyes, Cas sits, placing his hands tightly against his thighs. The Alpha appears to be holding on for dear life. Inhaling, Dean settles directly next to his true mate, their legs delicately touching. A wall clock ticks off the passing of time.

The comforting thought that his true mate will never rebuke him throws a switch inside Dean.

He chuckles, taking Cas’s hand in his and bringing the knuckles to his lips. “I want you,” is quickly followed by a pass against his cheek. “Castiel Novak, we might be two fumbling fools this first time, but if we don’t try then I will never know,” he kisses the pads of each finger, “the sensation of your skin against mine.”

A rush of bravery has Dean tilting in, placing his lips over Castiel’s. The kiss is gentle as their jaws relax, allowing more access for wandering tongues. Hands start sliding over layers of fabric. His true mate stands to grant them room yet their mouths are never far apart. The omega decides to glide the trench coat off the alpha’s shoulders until the familiar outerwear crumples on the rug. Cas must work out, because his shoulders are full, robust and erotic. Lying back, he grasps the blue tie dangling between them, jerking swiftly to bring the Alpha between his knees. Unfortunately, he gave the necktie a bit too much power as Castiel slips, tumbling forward uncontrollably and cracking their foreheads together.

“Son of a bitch,” Dean bellows. Alpha and Omega rub their injured heads. “Let’s try for a smoother approach.” Cas gingerly falls into place. A proud expression paints the other man’s face as he proves his ability to not wound anyone in the process.

Dean snatches those gorgeous lips in lingering, yummy kisses.

Next, with a flip of his wrist, the tie flies in the direction of the kitchen table. A few popped buttons
expose glorious collarbones. Jesus, they should be criminal. Their lips part momentarily so two layers of shirts can be pulled over heads. Finally, bare flesh. In the dim light of the fire, Dean’s gaze peruses a muscular torso before diving back into his Alpha’s delicious mouth.

Fingers slide in and out of Dean’s hair, caressing his neck. At some point the sound of Cas’s shoes being kicked to the floor makes the omega grin. Needy little sounds permeate from his throat. Dean’s not even embarrassed. Being held by his true mate with the aroma of oranges and cinnamon invade every inch of him. His pores will carry the scent for days. The ritual of scent claiming is old and respected by all other Alphas; in fact, Cas could kill anyone attempting to take Dean. He will be free, as all will know he’s been with a real Alpha who marked him in a primal demand to be his omega.

No, they won’t. Dreamscape smells, marks, and everything they touch will stay here. In fact, all will fade the moment Dean opens his eyes in the real world. A tap to his cheek tells Dean his Alpha has noticed his off-topic thoughts.

“For a second I forgot we are playing pretend,” Dean mutters, dragging his fingers over Cas’s face. “When I wake, everything will vanish forever.”

Instead of answering with a shrug or attempting to communicate his own view of the situation, Castiel lowers himself to Dean’s neck, trailing his tongue up the omega’s clavicle to his chin. The cinnamon in the air thickens with lust. His true mate pulls back barely an inch so their eyes hover extremely close to one another.

Castiel desires him. However, if Dean decided against them knotting his Alpha would stop. The bluest eyes he’s ever witnessed dance with shadows against the flames. Using a single finger, Dean traces Cas’s spine, taking in each vertebra and feathering his hand over each shoulder blade. The man above him is shuddering but never moving. Waiting, completely still in the calm of the cabin.

A comment from their phone conversation breaks the silence, “You belong to me.”

The Alpha’s mouth turns upward in a knowing grin, his head bouncing.

“You will always belong to me.” Dean’s voice grows stronger.

A broadening of Castiel’s lips reveals a hint of teeth. Again, he nods.

“The world can believe what they will, the truth lies here in our minds.” Dean cups his true mate’s chin. “It doesn’t matter if I carry your scent, because when it matters you are mine, Castiel.”

Their lips crash together in a blend of desperate yearning and release. His body responds to the building pheromones as his jeans become damp with slick. Between each deep tangle of tongues, Dean exclaims, “Bed, Cas. We need room to stretch.”

Sturdy alpha arms lift Dean by the ass, the omega instantly dropping his feet to the floor. Their lips never leave the other’s for more than a breath of air. Clanking of belts, swishing of material, shuffling of feet, and by the time both men are in the bedroom there’s not a stitch of clothing between them.

Praising Jesus, Dean’s hand reaches out catching the pull chain for the small glass lamp on the nightstand. No way in hell he’s missing the sight of naked Castiel. The alpha shoves the quilted bedding to the side, flopping on his back and holding out a hand for Dean.

“Not yet,” the omega supplies. He ogles all the skin served up like a salacious buffet. Castiel’s firm sculpted thighs catch his eye along with the solid erection pointing to a tight belly. A delicious man
all for him. Climbing onto the Alpha’s thighs, Dean rolls his hips, relishing the feel of the legs sliding against his own scrotum.

Cas’s head drops to the bed as the Alpha growls, “Dean.”

Tingling explodes over the omega’s groin from his name leaving the deep scruff cry of desperation.  

“Shit!” he mumbles. His true mate hasn’t even noticed his slip of the tongue breaking his number one rule. Simply grinding his backside against those glorious thighs is incredibly sensual. Slick wets them both; their cocks gingerly gliding together has Dean’s eyes rolling back into his head. “Cas.”

Craving to connect in more ways with his Alpha, Dean ghosts his fingers over Castiel’s hips, up his sides and scratches them back down again. The rocking adds so many layers to the movement he may climax from the friction alone, but Dean’s reminded of what he absolutely needs. On the next pass the omega grazes his fingers up to the alpha’s face, paying particular attention to those Zeus-like sculpted shoulders.

Tapping lightly against Cas’s scruff, “Take me.”

Oceans of blue flash, shooting lava of desire over Dean’s body. Cas snatches Dean on the waist, chucking him onto his back so the Alpha can stretch over his entire frame. Miles of skin touch his lover. Now it's his turn to shout, “CAS!”

A warm, orange flavored mouth tangles in his, testing the waters tenderly before diving in with a passionate kiss, curling Dean’s toes. The omega wraps his legs around Cas’s thighs, encouraging their bodies closer. Nothing else matters.

F**k the trials. Screw the grand plan. Damn the world outside their dreamscape.

Dean won’t be with anyone other than Castiel. He’s for eternity. Happily.

A finger cautiously enters Dean’s hole, and the omega swears he sees stars dancing in the shadows of the lamp. “YES, Cas!”

Lips roam down his neck, nipping lovingly. As the second digit slides in with the first, Dean rides the Alpha’s hand with enthusiasm. A suckle on his nipple sweetens the luscious mind-blowing experience as Cas plunges three fingers deep inside of the omega, spreading them wide and tugging at his rim. He’s secretly praying Castiel nails his prostate when lo and behold his body lights up with the perfect shot.

“F**K! CAS!” Dean’s blubbering incoherently with an enormous desire to find release.

It all stops. A crash of anger has his eyes sharply popping open as he tracks Castiel’s movements. The Alpha lines up his cock against the properly stretched rim, slowly pushing in. There’s a tinge of discomfort as his body adjusts to the much larger intruder. However, a gush of slick helps ease the way. For a few beats they freeze in unison, Dean puffing out air and deciding when he’s ready for more. Eventually he taps Cas’s chin so the alpha’s gaze locks with his. “Go.”

No one prepared him for the overwhelming feeling of being so connected with another human being. Castiel’s thrusting in and out of his hole, their mouths and tongues grasping for every embrace possible. The previous shooting stars have now been joined with a rainbow of seahorses spinning faster and faster. God, his brain is weird. All he prays for is more, yet Dean can’t decide how one could achieve the request. Suddenly Castiel’s body provides an answer. The swelling of his Alpha knot tugs against the Omega’s rim, which is amazing. A choir of moans sing within the little house.
Knowing Cas will tip over the edge soon, Dean lowers his hand, stroking his dick for the grand finale. Screams of pleasure ring out as they orgasm, neither man able to use words. He’s not sure he recalls his own name. Castiel’s cock surges to knot them together; the Alpha continuing to ride out several more aftershocks, filling Dean’s hole with cum. Eventually his Alpha snuggles in, tucking his nose to hide by the omega’s neck.

There is no rush, first-time knotting can last longer than the usual twenty minutes. Cas doesn’t move. If the man begins snoring, Dean’s going to punch him in the shoulder. Instead the light grazing of a hand feathering up and down his thigh speaks to the Alpha being awake.

In their current position they can’t see each other so communicating becomes difficult. The omega watches shadows prance across the ceiling. “I don’t regret tonight.”

A shake of the head tells Dean his true mate agrees.

Carding his hands through the dark, chaotic hair of his Alpha, Dean sighs. “What makes something real, anyway? I know your scent, the feel of your skin, the taste of your mouth, how your knot stretches me in ways I never thought possible, and the sensation of your weight on my body. Even the sound of your voice calling out my name. In my mind you will be there and all this will come rushing back to me. How does reality alter any of those memories?”

Surprised, Dean gasps as a soft, cautious voice reply, “It doesn’t.”

Another wave of heat tingles over the omega’s body as the two words give Dean hope. The night will end. Any moment the rising sun shall crash their party, forcing him to wake, leaving the warm embrace behind. Yet, the omega can discover peace because this won’t be the last time the lovers meet.

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“Smoking hot, Winchester.”

“Shut up, Charlie, I’m not even your type,” Dean grumbles as Andrea finishes her placement of his interview ensemble.

Charlie chuckles, waving him off. “Meh, hot is hot. Andrea, you will definitely get mentioned in the interview now, total upgrade from the boring Hugo Boss.”

“Don’t tease,” the seamstress mumbles over a mouthful of pins, “I was up till 4 a.m. tailoring it for Dean’s measurements. Ugh, the hem needs an extra stitch.” She tugs at the pantleg vigorously.

“Seriously woman, not joking. You’ve recreated Davinci with wool.”

Tired of his best friend’s antics Dean scowls, “Don’t you have somewhere to be?”

“Nope,” Charlie leans back, gingerly blowing on her nails. “It’s the final week before the first trial so classes are suspended, and I don’t have challenge practice for another hour. I’m all yours.”

“Great,” Dean grouses, flinching as a needle scrapes his flesh.

A knock at the door has all three omegas staring at the closed wood. Ash was up at dawn and would simply open the door, which means it’s someone who’s come to guide Dean to his challenge cross-examination by an Alpha.

“It’s open,” Dean shouts. He refuses to let his nerves show.
Gilda tiptoes in, her silver-lined white dress hovering above the ground, her long curls plunging down her back. The Arts professor is beautiful, and Charlie goes silent from the woman’s entrance. “Good morning, Dean. Are you ready?”

“Five minutes,” Andrea huffs from the floor, “need to finish the hem and fluff everything up.”

“The camera crew took forever to set up, so no rush.” The teacher leans against the wall, smiling brightly in the direction of one red-headed computer geek. “The fourth-years hadn’t even begun their one-minute interviews.”

“I thought they were longer?” Dean’s going to be pissed if he got all gussied up for a single minute.

“Everyone usually gets a minute. You, Mr. Winchester, will seduce the alphas watching for twenty minutes. Pays to be number four.” Gilda’s answering Dean’s query, but her eyes haven’t left Charlie. Interesting.

Sweat trickles off Andrea’s brow as she stands to review her work. She snatches a little brush and lint roller from a basket in order to finalize his suit. The poor omega has yesterday’s outfit on and her hair seems to be leaning towards the electrocuted look. Girl’s dedicated.

“Maybe flatten down that bit.” Gilda points to a ruffled piece of fabric.

The seamstress busies herself announcing, “I enjoy the fluffing part, makes the ensemble picture perfect. No stray hairs, no white bits or soot, shoes shined. The fun stuff.”

“You could make a profession of it,” Gilda encourages, bouncing her head.

“I would make an awesome professional fluffer —”

Dean can’t halt the conversation fast enough, “Stop!” He shakes his head. “Nope, no, nada.”

Kneeling in front of him, Andrea counters, “What? I could be a professional fluffer—”

“Dear God, no.” He yanks her to standing. “That is not what you think it means.”

Charlie in the meantime has fallen off the bed rolling on the floor convulsing in silent fits of laughter so harsh tears are leaking from her eyes. She may not be breathing.

“It’s not that funny,” Gilda supplies.

“No,” Charlie wheezes, “it’s fucking hilarious.”

Deciding there is no saving his friend, Dean turns to Gilda, “I think I’m done here.”

As he trails down the hall the omega can hear Charlie choking out, “Porn, Andrea.”

The elevator doors open on the first floor, Gilda’s dress sweeping in the direction of the tunnel towards the faculty apartments.

“Hey, where are we going?” Dean remarks following the teacher.

“Unmated alphas means we use the fancy Parlor with a scent-blocking door.”

Ceasing his step mid-air, the omega coughs out, “Unmated? How …Why …Holy Shit unmated alphas in the Center?”
“Not the Center, technically, the front parlor of the faculty apartments. The Alpha matchmaker will be mated, most are, but the production crew can’t exclude people from doing their jobs based on designation or mating status. It would be discrimination.”

“Hello?” He swirls around, “literally locked away for life because of mating status.”

“Trust, the irony of the situation has not been lost on me.” The teacher inches closer to him her voice going softer, “If you play your part, Centers and double standard laws will be a thing of the past. Please pay attention to the bigger picture here, Dean. Billie can legally mate a student because she’s a beta, I can’t.”

“I know for a fact there are omega/omega pairings.” Although, at the moment they may only be characters on TV and movies.

A large steel door blocks their progression as Gilda places her hand over a handprint screen on the right. “Rare sightings do happen, but those are usually widowed omegas who were once mated to Alphas. Okay, Billie has a Taser gun; if things go south run towards her. I’ll be watching a live feed from this side of the door to let you in but it takes a second.” She taps a screen mounted on the wall next to them, which comes to life instantly. “Have fun, be charming, and don’t fuck it up.”

“Thanks.” He answers while Gilda shoves him out the door, immediately locking it behind him.

Inhaling deeply, Dean mutters, “Here we go.”

Chapter End Notes

May your New Year be amazing.

XOXOXO, Angie

Comments are always loved.
A spacious, lush parlor in varying shades of gold, cream, and sky blue meets Dean as a jolting bang marks the locking of the steel door. Faint shades of green pop on the walls from scenic artwork. Dean’s hit hard with the unmistakable glare of a dozen or more people in the space. He gives an awkward wave.

Bela and her gang are hovering around a gold sofa in the corner as Ruby sits on a high-back, extravagant cerulean chair, her eyes shooting daggers at his obvious disturbance of her interview. Two cameras are pointed towards the blonde dressed to impress in an ankle-length, black silk ballgown. She’s cute.

“Sorry,” Dean mouths, scooting over to the group.

His buddy Ketch saunters over, hissing in Dean’s ear, “An odd wardrobe choice for your formal interview, Winchester.” The anger in the other omega’s tone is undeniable. “But I guess you had to scrounge for something to wear last minute.”

Shrugging, Dean tugs on his grey wool fedora. “We’ll see, Arthur. Appears my target audience disagrees.”

The production crew has completely stopped watching Ruby to drool over him. Powerful arousal aromas cascade from behind the cameras. Crossing his arms, Dean winks before stepping to the side to give himself distance from the fourth-years. Their jealous scowls are thoroughly entertaining.

A shorter Alpha decked out in a slim-cut, tan suit with peach accents coughs before returning to his discussion with Ruby. Not giving a shit about what Ruby is spouting, Dean scans the room. The interviewing Alpha has a jovial feel to him with a twinkle in his pale-brown eyes. Scruff on his face and shaggy brown hair is an odd counterpoint to the fancy duds. He’s perched on a matching blue chair with several lollipops in his jacket pocket. Does he hand them out for good omegas?

There are about six Alphas and a couple betas rounding out the crew. Billie stands just out of view of the camera shot to Ruby’s left, a very intimidating Taser gun hanging from her jeans belt. The woman may be a beta, but if any Alpha tries something Dean’s money is on her. She’d love a reason to cause an Alpha pain and humiliation.

“Thank you, Ruby, for your illuminating beliefs on Omegas having no use for underwear.” The host shakes her hand as a girl in the back shouts. “Cut.”

Dean can’t help but snicker. Seriously, Ruby just announced to any interested alpha that she goes commando. He can’t help but sigh, “Desperate.”

“Says the guy sporting the latest from Gangsters R Us.” Bela shoves his shoulder as she passes, “Classy is leaving the building.” She shouts, banging on the door for Gilda to open. Nothing happens. Bela tugs anxiously on her sparkling silver low-cut dress, which she’s wearing with dangling diamond earrings. “Some of us are pretty enough we could wear a paper bag and win a
“Rich Alpha,” she snaps, banging on the door a second time.

Nothing happens. Dean’s reveling in Gilda’s choice to leave the bitch standing there like an idiot.

“A friend made it for me.” Dean grins. “A lot of us want the right Alpha, not a rich one.”

Someone from the crew comments, “Are we rolling?”

“Always, Boss.” A third camera on a dude’s shoulder steps in front, getting Bela in all her shocked glory.

A moment later the scent door swings open as Gilda smiles brightly. “These doors can be so confusing.”

“That’s fifteen,” a woman shouts. “Remember, no smoking around the omegas.”

The short, brunette Alpha in question steps forward with a headset hanging from her neck, “Dean. You can sit on the couch while we take our union break. Unless you need to pee? Omegas always have to pee at the last minute.”

“I’m good.” He adds, “and you are?”

She ignores his question, tearing off her equipment while rushing the door with a cigarette in hand.

“Eve, our on-location director. She likes to believe she’s the mother of all, but really, I’m the one in charge.” The host guy grins. “Gabriel.”

His name seems familiar, like spoken in a hazy dream or something, but the omega can’t recall.

“I’m sure my reputation precedes me.” Gabriel’s smile falters with Dean’s blank look. “Surely Meg mentioned me, or Hannah?”

Thinking back, he’s pretty sure it wasn’t Meg who told him about the Alpha; he gives a shrug.

“I’ve only put four kids in her belly, but sure, don’t talk about me to THE Dean Winchester.”

“Oh!” Dean snaps, “You’re Meg’s Alpha. She never gave a name.”

The Alpha rolls his eyes with hands on hips, “Didn’t give my name? I’m the best Matchmaker in the business; you’d think my Meg would want to flaunt the connection. Or my own fucking sister, Hannah’s always pretending we didn’t come from the same DNA tree.”

Matchmakers are to Alphas as Scent Experts are to Omegas. Having a mated pair working together is odd since favoritism could be played during the challenges for those Alphas who are assigned to a different matchmaker. Not to mention the sibling connection to a specific center. It seems a tad shady?

Hannah looks more like Cas than her own brother. He’s curious if Gabriel’s in on the marvelous plot.

Answers arrive swiftly as Gabriel glances over his shoulder then jerks Dean closer by his coat, “Meg’s ready to keep up her part of the bargain. Step one starts here, Dean-o. Remember your training and give the impression you are open to meeting as many Alphas as possible. We need hoards of the unmated goofs scrambling to get an invite to your district’s Challenges. Play the role you were born for, understand?”
“Sure.” Dean steps back, flattening the wrinkles left from Gabriel’s fist. He chuckles at the mental image of fluffing himself. “She knows the deal.”

“Oh yes,” the Alpha’s caramel eyes bounce playfully, “your …dream Alpha is waiting for you.”

Dean knows Gabriel added dream to the description on purpose; the guy pops a lollipop in his mouth, his teeth clacking against the candy.

The crew begins to shuffle inside, stinking of smoke and sandwiches; man, Dean’s suddenly hungry. Gabriel taps his shoulder, “Fascinating choice of a wool trench coat. Give us a bit of a show on camera when you remove it. Capiche?”

“Yep, play my part.” He’s not a child. Shit, his dad’s been teaching him how to charm unsuspecting Alphas and Betas his whole life. Usually, in the meantime Sammy’s quick hands relieve them of wallets and watches. It kept food on the table.

Stretching out a few muscles, Dean watches the crew finding their places and Eve settling back in a black director’s chair. Her voice boldly barks, “Action.”

“Please, Dean, make yourself comfortable.” Gabriel smiles, gesturing to the seat vacated by Ruby.

Not missing the tap to his jacket, Dean flashes a seductive grin at the camera while tipping the fedora. He smoothly tosses the hat onto a couch, sliding the grey wool trench coat off his shoulders before unbuttoning the royal blue jacket, giving a superb shot of the matching taut waistcoat.

Relaxing into the seat Dean, pats down the supple material. His Alpha host allows the lens to linger on Dean before plopping into his own matching chair. “Now, a little birdie told me you’re wearing a vintage handcrafted replica circa 1940s.”

The omega retrieves the photograph from his inner pocket. “Correct. Andrea Barr from the House Omega Challenge created the entire get-up.” He makes sure to hold the image for a clear shot, “Andrea’s a talented lady who has high hopes for a happy home with many children.”

“Well, Dean, House Omegas are a special bunch, but what drew you towards Hunter? Are you a thrill seeker, crave the attention of a dangerous trial or simply wishing for an Alpha who can tame even your adventurous appetite?”

“I love the intense competition.” He tosses his head back, discharging one hell of a charming smile, “Never really one to take the easy route, and I hope there are Alphas out there willing to try. A healthy chase gets my,” a dart of the tongue wets his lips, “blood pumping.”

The gasp of “Holy fuck” from a random crew member puts an extra sparkle in Gabriel’s gaze.

The matchmaker runs the gamut about Dean’s background. His mouth replies on auto pilot with quick wit as his mind races on “training.” The act of playing for the viewers feels natural for Dean; he drops a few jokes reminiscing about a recent snafu at practice with Billie. The beta softly growls from behind the bright lights. Gabriel shows a quick thumbs up in support.

A memory tumbles through his mind, building strength as Dean attempts to ignore it.

He’s at a crap motel in nowhereville with his dad and Sammy. John’s showing Dean how to sit with his shoulders open, ankle on knee, and arms wide, making his body language scream available. At 13, Dean’s scrawny ass isn’t much, yet his dad keeps repeating one sentence.

“You need to learn this stuff, son, it’s important.”
The sentiment burns behind his charismatic expression. As the questions roll onward, Dean’s heart stutters because he’s realizing his father trained him for years. Totally explains his dad’s name in Hannah’s phone. The vision of a chess board has Dean recalling a conversation with Rowena; John Winchester was an original piece on the board. The game’s been going since he was a kid. He wasn’t chosen by random. Dean was groomed.

Emotions of betrayal tug at his ability to breathe, yet not a single thing changes in his demeanor. If nothing else, John did his job well. Dean can captivate anyone.

“What does family mean to you?” The question appears innocent although it slices across Dean’s chest, leaving nothing but agony.

Taking a second to dazzle the audience with a saucy wink, the omega struggles to reply. “Loyalty, faith, and hope for my,” his gaze sharp, “dreams to come true.”

Castiel will be his family. He’s only conforming to the plan because his true mate made him promise. Dean’s throat tightens at the reminder his Alpha might be watching. An itching burn flares under the fabric; none of the Challenge is about finding a true mate. The omegas are being herded like cattle.

The interview concludes, and Dean’s racing for the thick heavy door. He doesn’t even bang; it’s open in the next breath, permitting the omega admittance without hesitation. Billie’s on his heels. Seconds after the bolt slides into place, he’s jerking the tie free from his neck.

“I can’t breathe,” Dean chokes out as his lungs shrink in size. Tossing the tie, waistcoat, and jacket to Gilda, he urges, “Get me out of this monkey suit, but don’t rip it Andrea worked hard.”

Gilda and Billie strip the omega to his underwear, the only piece of clothing not tainted. Once he’s free, Dean bends over, coughing harshly towards the floor. “Jesus, I’m just a painted whore for Alphas to slap their knots over.” Sliding down the wall, his inhales still ragged, he asks, “How can I keep going?”

“You did good, Winchester.” Billie remains standing, his shoes and pants on her arm. “One might say you were born for it.”

Laughing obnoxiously, the omega shoots her the finger. “Fuck you. I’m done.”

He has an Alpha. A gorgeous trustworthy man with a warm smile and heavenly eyes.

“Dean, please.” Gilda takes a seat next to him on the dusty floor, dirt browning her stunning gown, “What do you need?”

“Answers.” The word’s powerful in his stoic tone. “Not rumors, half-hearted comments, or being told to follow orders. I want the whole fucking story, Gilda, or at the first trial I will sit on my ass.”

She catches Billie’s gaze, both women having an unspoken conversation. Finally, Gilda takes his hand into hers. “Crowley’s off campus prepping for the Challenges. Perhaps when he returns you can have breakfast in his office. An honest chat.”

“With answers or no dice.” The threat’s pretty empty since he promised Meg to behave, yet she never said anything about pushing for the truth inside the Center. He gave a whopper of a performance in front of the cameras and really danced for the crowds. He should get a prize.

Billie reaches out, helping both of them to their feet. “We will try. Now go find something to wear; nobody around here wants to see those bow legs unclothed.”
“Whatever, I’m smokin’ hot.” Dean chuckles, trailing behind them in the tunnel.

As he steps off the elevator, Harry whistles. “Interview must have been a huge hit!”

“Shut up. I had to return the duds to Andrea.”

The lady pops her head from out of the kitchen. “I’m right here. Why are you naked?”

“Hopefully, not to cook lunch,” Garth mutters.

“The whole production is just a smoke screen.” Frustration floods his mind as the omega steps up onto one of the dining room tables. “We are not the ones choosing; WE are the entertainment. I thought, what’s the point of expensive gowns and suits when bare skin is all the Alphas want to see.”

Dean spins around, his voice rising, “We don’t have any power, no real choice, it’s all bullshit so why not give ‘em a good show. Shake what God granted us.” He yanks off his boxers, twirling them above his head. “This entire system sucks, and I am not a puppet!”

A couple catcalls and whistles halt his rant.

“Really man, are you drunk?” Ed asks, “cause if not I see Haldol in your future.”

“We’re all screwed.” Dean hops off the table, catapulting his underwear towards Andrea. “They give us the illusion of control, but we’re still just dolls to them.”

Striding away with confidence, he makes a dash for his room. His world is crashing around him, and Dean can’t even confront anyone without a goddamned appointment. Fuckers.

“Son of a bitch!” He bellows, slamming his bedroom door behind him.

“Here, here,” comes a distant voice from the bathroom.

Following the disembodied sounds of his roommate, Dean finds Ash lounging in the bathtub, fully dressed with a half bottle of bourbon on the porcelain ledge.

“Where the hell did you get liquor?” He goes to snag the bottle when Ash smacks his hand away harshly.

“Sorry, I needed some liquid courage but,” his roommate points at him yet his finger dances about a bit, “you should be sober. I won’t be able to say it twice.”

The serious tone scares Dean a little. He drops to the floor, crossing his legs and giving Ash his undivided attention. “Okay, so lay it on me.”

Nodding, Ash takes a huge swig. “I lied. When I told you what happened in the dreamscape with dark shadow dude. Wasn’t the first time, either; he’s visited before, always with these fucking
images.” Wiping his mouth after another gulp, the other omega continues, “Man, I’m so sorry.” Actual tears are building in those slate-grey eyes, “It could all be bullshit. Who knows what game Mr. Shadow is playing? But after a while I realized you should know and decide for yourself. Swiped some of Devereaux’s stash to help ease the delivery.”

Not wishing to spook Ash’s progress, Dean remains silent.

Eventually, the drunk guy in the tub leans his head against the tile, sighing, “I saw your mom.”

Frozen with fear, Dean can’t even respond, his mouth going dry from shock.

“She made a blood pact with a wickedly creepy guy.” His friend leans in close, Ash’s breath nearly giving Dean a contact high, “Her first-born omega will be the one to save us all.”

Blood pacts are illegal. The magical contract binding for not just the person but anyone in their bloodline. Locking the next generation into horrific bargains. They can only be broken by the original individuals, which makes Dean all kinds of screwed.

Friend or foe, the Shadow Alpha was sending Dean a message: The omega must follow the plan. This explains why his dad took Dean’s training to heart. He had no choice.

Chapter End Notes

Comments, Questions and Concerns are always encouraged.

XOXOXO,
Angie
Snow smothers all sounds, leaving the world tiptoeing forward in a whisper. Dean peeks out the tiny cabin window, observing the gentle fall of white, fluffy snowflakes. The entire forest at peace. He inhales, enjoying the scent of the purest winter wonderland. Circling back to face the little living space, the omega can’t help but grin. Memories are marvelous. Even if Cas bails on him tonight, Dean delights in prancing about the space touching his lips and swaying his hips.

Kicking off his shoes and socks, the omega warms his hands by the roaring fire, watching the flames dance within the confines of the hearth. His heart sinks. Ash was vague on details of the blood pact his Mother took with the stranger. What if it included his future mate? A question for Crowley when the Alpha stops ducking behind arrangements for the Challenges. The man can’t hide forever.

A door in the back blows open as flurries drift over his bare feet. Dean grins as his gaze falls upon a tan trench coat.

“Alpha.” He utters.

Except, Castiel has a unique aura about him. Gone is the sweet, stumbling man of their last interlude. The scent of fury bowls Dean over as blue eyes singe the omega’s soul. Banging the door shut behind him, Cas snatches Dean up in his arms, slamming him into the nearest wall. The cabin creaks from the hit.

Lips crash into his, stealing the omega’s breath. The cinnamon spice is so powerful it infiltrates every inhale, and Dean lets go. He slides his hands through supple dark hair as their tongues skirmish for dominance. Castiel lifts Dean’s left leg to wrap around the Alpha’s waist, lining their cocks up beautifully. Hands ripping the omega’s shirt off while the two men grind against each other, mouths gasping to stay in the rhythmic frottage.

Chuckling, Dean tilts his head back to stare into the enraged expression of his true mate. “Someone watched my interview.”

The pitiful whine from his lover’s throat breaks Dean’s heart. Clearly, there was one person in the world who hated the omega’s performance more than he did. Who would want to watch their true mate beg for the attention of another? At least they are in the same shit boat.

“I’m sorry,” Dean mumbles, laying his forehead on Cas’s shoulder. “It’s not fair.”

Shaking his head Cas tugs on Dean’s chin until they are once again face to face. A tender kiss ghosts over his lips, the spiced orange taste rousing his groin while slick wets the omega’s hole. His alpha says so much without a word. The kiss deepens as Dean’s mind gets lost once again in the passion of Castiel’s touch.

A wondrous thought occurs to Dean as he forces himself to step away from the warmth of those strong, powerful arms. Slowly the omega unbuckles his pants, letting his hips shimmy the fabric to the floor, leaving only his green boxer briefs. A thick erection fights the thin material. His alpha is
viewing the show with a hungry scowl.

“I want you to mate me, Cas.” The statement’s clear even with the hint of fear in Dean’s mind. “Take me as your omega; the claim will remain here and yet will be ours forever.”

“Are you certain?” Castiel’s gruff voice is ringing in the silence of snow.

The bastard is using REM Vocal Control to ensure Dean’s honest answer. Unable to resist, the omega blurts out, “If you are truly mine, then I command it, Castiel Novak.”

Castiel shucks his coat to fall on the weathered navy couch. Tugging seductively, the Alpha removes the blue tie, letting his fingers fiddle with the silk. Each button pops open violently, revealing a deadly collarbone Dean desperately wishes to suckle.

“Stop.” Inching farther away from the Alpha, he lowers his voice to an erotic slither, “I think you need to work for it.” He saunters over to the door, sliding his bare feet into his boots. Cas’s gaze trails behind him, paying attention to his round ass. “You have to catch me first.”

Dean blows through the front door and dashes for the trees. Good thing he can’t get hypothermia in a dreamscape. The cold stings against his exposed flesh, but the noise of feet trailing behind him pushes the omega onward. He loves to run.

Darting between pine trees, the omega sprints to the right, arcing his trail to never lose sight of the house. Exhilaration pumps chaotically through his veins; this is the sole challenge Dean craves. Screw the trials. He’s unable to get a visual on Castiel; however, he can hear the other man gaining on him. Dean might be quick, but the Alpha’s craving for his flesh might win. Which would be awesome.

Twigs and branches scratch his exposed skin, but the thrill of the chase is totally worth the pricks. Dean stops to give himself a few inhales as he listens. The calm sends a shiver over his body. Either Castiel knows exactly where he is, or the Alpha’s found a way to use the hush grounds as an advantage. Peering around the tree, Dean literally yelps when Cas tackles him to a fluffy white mound. The shock of an icy chill has him rethinking the plan.

An intense hold on his wrists pins Dean down with the alpha hovering over him face to face. Both men are gasping for air when Castiel tilts down, kissing Dean ruthlessly. He imagines the heat from their kiss melting the snow because hot damn! It’s messy, chaotic and luscious, full of grunts and roaming tongues.

Loving the caress but not ready for the game to end, Dean rolls them so he’s on top. After a few passes of his tongue the omega sits up rubbing his hole over Castiel’s hard cock. With slick drenching through his boxer briefs, Dean declares, “Too many clothes.”

Not wasting Cas’s focus on his gyrating hips, Dean laughs while leaping to his feet, sprinting off back into the forest.

“Shit!” Cas yells, attempting to chase after him with a swelling knot.

The exclamation seems comical coming from his good, light and loving Alpha, spurring a slew of snickering and halting his escape.

Cas clearly trails the noise, spotting the omega quickly. The Alpha grabs Dean by the hips, a growl reverberating against the trees. In a swoop, with an amazing show of strength, Castiel tosses the omega over his shoulder; a quick smack to his ass leaves him breathless.
Unwilling to care, Dean’s erection builds as he ruts against Castiel’s shoulder. The alpha gives him a few more swats on the butt cheek as the omega’s carried back to the cabin. Instead of heading to the bedroom, Castiel rolls Dean off his shoulder and onto the kitchen table, flipping him so the omega’s stomach is flat on the wood.

“OH MY GOD!” Dean shouts as his lover yanks down his underwear while a tongue laps at his hole. The omega’s hands fly to the opposite side of the table, pursuing any kind of stability. Scuffing noises ring out over Dean’s moans as the table scoots across the old wooden floor. “SON OF A BITCH!”

Dean might lose his vision. His brain explodes with the overwhelming sensation of Castiel’s tongue spearing him harshly; moments later two fingers are added alongside the tongue. The heady scent of arousal thickens until the omega can actually taste the twist of orange, cinnamon and almonds. Giving in to his need, Dean pushes back against the Alpha’s face, encouraging his true mate to go deeper and rougher.

“Yes, yes, yes!” The omega’s mind doesn’t have the brain power to create any other words. “Yes, yes, there, there!”

Slick pours from his hole. A third finger is added, riding with the talented tongue. Dean’s forgotten about the cold breeze blowing in from the open door or the bite of the table against his stomach. His body is astray in the onslaught of emotions driving through him. Castiel’s fingernails digging into his hips will leave marks for days …or not.

The pause of Castiel’s mouth has tears trickling from the omega’s eyes as he knows what happens next. A glorious litany of cloth floating to the floor gives Dean another surge of slick. He cries out when the tip of his Alpha’s dick presses against his entrance. However, it doesn’t fully enter. Rather the cock teases Dean’s hole by dipping in only a bit then pulling out. With each push inward, Dean prays for the erection to slam inside, and when it doesn’t more tears flood his face in frustration.

His fingers closing into tight fists Dean beats them against the wood furiously. “Fuck me! Knot me! Claim me! You asshole!”

In one fluid motion Castiel thrusts into Dean with such gusto the table slams against the kitchen counter. The thumping of the wood against the tile top is muffled by the omega’s screams of ecstasy. already proficient in everything Dean, the fabulous Mr. Novak nails his prostate on the first round. A few more thrusts and Dean can sense the knot tugging against his rim. So, damn close.

Release in sight, Dean sighs, stretching out his hands to find purchase in order to shove back. He’s not a simple bystander. No, this omega will give as good as he gets.

Abruptly, the cock vanishes. Dean wails, “Finish it Alpha or I –”

He can’t complete his threat as muscular hands snatch his thighs, manhandling the omega, flipping him onto his back. Blue eyes are nearly black with lust. Dean doesn’t even have time to inhale before Cas crashes their mouths together as the Alpha’s cock slides into home. Their bodies become a frenzy of tongues, roaming hands, and one hell of a hot swelling dick. The omega’s now the one chasing his desires. Dean reaches down stroking his cock in sync with Castiel’s sharp hips. When the knot finally forms, locking them together, Cas breaks their kiss to stare at Dean, a clear question in his expression.

“You are mine, Cas.”

Castiel’s teeth elongate. A beautiful tongue slides across the sharp incisors; next his true mate drops
several chaste kisses down his neck until the lips reach the perfect spot.

Shutting his eyes, Dean waits for the piercing of teeth slicing his shoulder. In unison the omega and alpha climaxes, driving himself wild as he continues to rub his own dick through the unbelievable release. Castiel’s knot is filling him full of his seed during the man’s second orgasm; the alpha slurps at the blood trickling down Dean’s neck.

Once their gasping breaths relax, Cas wipes Dean’s blood onto his hand.

“Always yours, Omega,” the Alpha rumbles as he places the red hand onto his left shoulder.

The world goes crimson, then white as an explosion of emotion barrels over the omega. His body convulsing from an unseen force.

Dean wakes up, lying on the floor of his bedroom of the Center. He glances at the clock, mumbling, “3:30 fucking a.m., perfect.” Dirt sticks to his cheek as he sits up. “Man, we gotta vacuum.”

Empowered from the claiming, Dean decides he will have answers. Careful not to wake Ash, Dean digs through his dresser drawers till he finds the scrap of paper with a phone number. He’s never reached out to his father since entering the Center. Emails with Sammy and a few calls to the switchboard were enough for the omega. However, his dad may hold the key.

Slipping into the hall, Dean finds the row of small cubbyholes, each one holding an old rotary phone. Normally, there is a line since all the third-years must share. At the late hour the nooks are empty. The omega sits down on the floor circling his finger to place the call.

Oddly, the phone is answered in two rings, “This is John.”

“Dad?” Dean’s voice is cracking from nerves.

“What the hell, Dean? It’s three o’clock in the morning.”

Clearing his throat, the omega can’t turn back now. “What do you know about the blood pact Mom made?”

“Shit. Damn it.” The clinking of glasses has him hoping the answers come before total inebriation. “She never wanted you to be an omega. Prayed through the entire pregnancy for anything else, but right after your birth she paid for the designation test. When the results came back omega, she cried for a week.”

Dean’s patience wanes. “WHAT did she promise in the pact?”

“To follow orders.” He can hear his Dad knocking back his drink, “Every year on your birthday we would receive a letter with what would be expected for the next twelve months. The first few years were just reminders to give you your vitamins and enough packets to last the year.”

“My vitamins? Like Flintstones chewables?” He recalls giving them to Sammy as a child.

“No, these were handmade ground herbs. We put them in your milk, then in your food.”

Suddenly, the omega can picture his dad always being super clear who would eat which burger. “Do you know what they were for?”

A painful pause has Dean wondering if the line died. Then John replies softly, “Your mom said it was fine, but I wasn’t convinced so I took them to a family friend who dabbled in the magical arts.
She said they were altering your chemical make-up. Dark magic making you into something she’d never seen.”

“AND YOU KEPT POISONING ME?”

“We stopped once.” If Dean were guessing, his father might be shedding a tear.

“And?”

“Your mother died in the housefire a week later.”

He places his hand against the wall hoping to halt the spinning of his mind, “Mom’s death was my fault.”

“No! Dean Winchester, you hear me loud and fucking clear. The blood pact was on her and that crappy dad of hers. You had nothing to do with it, Dean. She was scared when I told her about the vitamins. We agreed to stop.”

Sobbing silently, Dean cradles the phone as if a lifeline, “So, you ran.”

“It didn’t matter how far I took you and Sam. The letters always arrived on your birthday with the goddamn packets. I had no choice; the next in line as payment for the blood pact was an Alpha descendant.”

For several minutes Dean doesn’t understand. Who is Mom’s Alpha descendant?

“SAM! If I don’t follow the orders set by these assholes, Sam dies.”

“I lost your mother to disobedience. I will not lose a son.” His father’s words stutter, “I chose to break the rules, convinced Mary. This is on me.”

“The weapons training, the moving around all the time, the flirting lessons.”

John inhales, blowing it out slowly. “All in the letters. Even the number to call when your heat hit. The bastards knew the exact year you would have your first heat. Your entire existence has been mapped out by a stupid symbol.”

“A what?”

“The letters weren’t signed. Instead, a symbol would be at the bottom. The Greek letter for omega with flames rising from it and a dagger.”

“The symbol for the Heat Liberation League?” Dean’s perfectly aware of the organization. Ash and Charlie have been following their work for years. “Aren’t they the good guys?”

“Their endgame may be good; doesn’t mean they have problems getting dirty with the means.” His dad sighs heavily, “Look, Dean, just do what you’re told.”

His hand rubs against the spot Cas bit. Nothing remains but the memory from their dreamscape. If the omega closes his eyes, he can still smell the blending of their personal bouquets. “Did any of the letters mention who I have to mate?”

“No.”

Relief rushes Dean, his lungs unclenching until his Father continues, “But I haven’t received a letter since you left.”
“They just stopped?”

Again, the clinking of glass tells Dean another shot is coming up, “I assumed they’d go to your new guardian at the Center.”

“Crowley.”

Chapter End Notes

Big hugs and lots of love. Remember I adore hearing from you guys.

XOXOXO,
Angie
The standard sorrowful-grey carpet reflects Dean’s mood. He taps out Thunderstruck by AC/DC on his thigh while humming to himself. Anything to keep conscious. The omega’s been awake since three in the morning, and he refuses to miss Crowley. First trials are nearly upon them; there is no way the alpha isn’t visiting his office. Dean parked himself in front of the director’s door a little after four. Nope, if Crowley wants to work in his swank digs, he’s gotta go through the omega first.

Today, he will get answers.

No matter if Dean has to sit on the hard Center floors until his ass goes numb, he won’t move. His dad put a few of the puzzle pieces together; however, the omega’s positive Crowley’s holding the motherlode. He has to find out. Jesus, his chances of mating Castiel and keeping Sam alive are hanging in a perilous balancing act. Without the proper info things could …be disastrous.

Stress mounts on his overworked nerves as Dean inhales, blowing out the air slowly as his fingers still play the familiar tune. Anything to distract his mind. The elevator doors swish open, revealing Frank Devereaux carrying three laptops.

“Little fuckers. I could code circles around most of them.” Muttering to himself, the teacher doesn’t even notice the omega, opening the computer lab. Minutes later several students shuffle in, probably Gaming Challenge Omegas prepping.

“What’s with the sit-in?” Charlie plops down next to him with a coffee in her hand.

Words decline to make an appearance. Dean’s brain simply observes the warmth in her face and the trust on her scent. Pain, fear, and anger well up, washing away any chance of explanation. Tears build in his eyes while he chokes on the silence.

Instantly tender, slim arms pull the omega into a hug. Charlie’s tone is tender as she assures him, “I’m here. You don’t have to explain. You’re not alone.”

Such conviction in her statement has the sobs pummeling them both. His hands grasp her tightly. Dean has no idea how she can help or if Crowley will use it as an excuse to ignore the omega’s need for a clearer picture into the shit show of his impending Hunter challenge.

When he finally pulls himself together, Charlie’s been crying along with him for ten minutes. They are wiping swollen eyes, even smiling as the director stands before them shouting, “It’s too early for this crap.”

Charlie jumps to her feet, sloshing coffee on her Pacman t-shirt. “You will listen to him or I’m releasing computer viruses on ALL the Center devices. Give me a reason, Knothead.”

Another lump in Dean’s throat warns of an additional wailing session. Charlie doesn’t even know what’s happening. The redhead just threatened an Alpha for no other reason than she knew Dean needed to speak with Crowley. She’s a Rockstar.

“Well, the name calling isn’t necessary,” Crowley huffs, unlocking his office. “Come on, it’s not like
I have back to back meetings today.”

“Thank you.” Charlie takes his hand as the two omegas enter the office.

Understanding the serious expression on Dean’s face, Crowley shuts the door, taking a seat behind his overly large desk. “So, speak Winchester.”

Gulping down his fear, Dean finds courage in a pint-sized spitfire next to him. “I have questions about the blood pact my mom made and what you know. Specifically, whether I can mate my Alpha, Castiel.”

Charlie’s eyes triple in size. “Holy info bomb, Batman.”

“I assume Bradbury will not agree to leaving.” Crowley leans back in his chair.

“Umm, you guessed right there, Commander,” Charlie replies, squeezing Dean’s hand.

The Alpha retrieves his iPhone from his suit pocket. He dials a number, holding up a finger to them. “Hello, my Love.”

High-pitched shouting on the other end has Crowley frowning, “Hannah. Dean Winchester is in my office; it’s time. Can you please call the others? Waiting is not an option.”

“Thank you.” Charlie takes a swig of coffee, dropping onto the couch.

Crowley turns on his computer. “I take your threats to our technology seriously, Bradbury. Lest we forget the shutdown last spring,” his sharp gaze cuts to her, “and the punishment.”

“I still deny putting omega on omega porn as the screensaver for all the Center devices.” Her face does a poor rendition of not lying.

Typing into the keyboard, Crowley chuckles, “You were the only one in my office the day before demanding a broader range of special movies to ease Omegas in heat.”

“Variety is important.” She shrugs, hiding her face behind the coffee cup.

Twenty minutes pass before there is a knock at the door. Crowley yells, “Enter.”

Hannah steps through the threshold followed by Rowena, Gilda, and Meg. The scent expert mouths “What the fuck,” as she takes a seat next to Charlie. His best friend is turning a shade darker than her hair at the sight of the Arts teacher. Gilda’s long hair is falling down her back in curls, and she’s wearing a slinky cream nightgown.

Yeah, Dean’s certain Charlie’s set for her next heat.

“Can we please get on with it,” Rowena pulls up a chair, “some of us need our beauty sleep.” The Erotica professor has on a black silk nighty with matching robe.

“Dean, you called the impromptu session. Ask your questions.” Crowley hits a button on the computer. “The room is now soundproof, so it is safe to proceed.”

Shifting from one foot to the other, Dean attempts to decide where to begin. “What do you know about the blood pact between my mom and some Alpha?”

Rowena looks at the floor as she speaks, “The Campbells have been active in the League going back to its inception in 1950. Omegas had the same rights as animals back then. Herded and traded
without consent. For a decade they attempted to work within the system, but eventually the entire family went rogue. Your grandfather Samuel Campbell thought there was a way to make money off the league’s secrets. When your mother was in her twenties, he was caught. Mary was given a choice: Make the pact or watch her father die.”

Explains his Mom but not the pact. Dean pushes, “What does it entail?”

Crowley stands, pacing towards the wide glass window. “Over the years the Heat Liberation League has grown immensely. Some joining to fight the cause, others being coerced or simply born into a founding family.” The Alpha points to Hannah, “my mate’s family being one of them.”

All Dean can think about is the fact Castiel’s own family has created such a terrifying nightmare.

Continuing where her mate left off Hannah adds, “The league has many factions, each group working towards a specific goal within the greater cause. We,” she waves her hand to those in the room, “have been tasked with your care. Preparing you for the road ahead.”

“And Castiel?” Dean doesn’t know what to believe.

Hannah chews her lip. “He was entrusted with keeping your dreamscape safe from strange Alphas and befriending you. Perhaps teaching you how to deal with Alphas in real life once the challenges begin. If other factions discover he’s your true mate, they might take action to remove him from acting on those feelings.”

Dean’s gaze catches Meg. The Rocker Mom’s dark-lined eyes plead with him, shaking her head slightly. Okay, so their little side plan is to remain between them.

“What exactly am I supposed to do?” He paces, the omega’s stomach twisting painfully.

“We only know what the letters tell us,” Gilda shares. “Which is quite little, to be honest.”

Charlie finds her voice, whispering, “You just follow orders blindly without giving a damn about who gets hurt.”

A blush paints the Arts teacher’s cheeks, “According to the seerers in our number, Dean Winchester will bring the final stage to fruition. We obey, and Omegas will be set free from the chains of our heats.”

“Seriously?” Charlie’s face scrunches in confusion.

Slamming his hand against the wall, Dean demands, “Who is the grand puppet master? I deserve to know who’s using my life as a weapon.”

The room goes quiet. All faces turn to Hannah, but it’s Meg’s snarky, “Please, the woman doesn’t keep it a secret.”

“Castiel’s Omega mother,” Hannah supplies, “She inherited the position from her omega mother, who was an amazing seerer. The plan came to Grandmother Novak in a dreamscape from the future.”

His best friend mutters, “Dude, that’s so cool.”

“Castiel’s mom would kill him?” Dean shouts, his voice cracking with hurt.

Shaking her head, Hannah cups his chin in her hands, “No. A few of the factions have grown
outside of her control. Most don’t care who you mate, merely whether you complete the tasks at the Challenges, including my Aunt Naomi. However, the group needed funding.”

“Cash is king, Dean.” Crowley tugs on his suit jacket. “The good and light loving Naomi Novak sold your choice of a future mate out for a hefty sum to keep the league from folding.”

Rage consumes the omega. All this to save everyone but him from a doomed future with an alpha he can never love. “Does Naomi’s mating deal connect to the original blood pact?”

Rowena taps a crimson nail to her lip. “Seems to be a bit of a grey area.”

“GREY AREA!” Dean’s head swirls with red, flames of distrust biting at his mind. “The blood pact can kill my brother? I need to know.”

The only Alpha in the room clears his throat. “You have a choice here, Winchester. I myself would want to leave things in a grey area because down the road it might create a usable loophole. OR you can push us to notify the greater powers, who could close the doors that are currently cracked open.”

A zipper moving has the crew glancing in Meg’s direction. “Sorry, my belly doesn’t exactly fit in leather.” Dean’s stare lingers to catch the scent expert’s hand holding out a pointer finger as it taps her heart.

“Fine, but what about these stupid vitamins.”

Hannah sighs, “I’ve been injecting them into your heat suppressants since you arrived. Unfortunately, those are in the pact and stopping would be …”

“Deadly.”

All heads bounce in confirmation. Alright, it sounds like Dean simply has to do his best at the Challenges, flirt his ass off, and Sam is safe. Meg steps behind the others using her hand to give a cutting the throat gesture. She seems to be the one working towards his happily ever after. Trusting her will either be the best or worst decision he’s ever made.

Ringing from Crowley’s phone has the Alpha sighing, “Are we good now? I need to actually work.”

“We’re good, for now.”

Everyone piles out of the office, Hannah dashing ahead as her pager goes off. The doctor mumbles, “The Arts Omegas need to stop testing spells on each other.”

“Practice makes perfect,” Gilda sing-songs to an eye-roll from Hannah.

Charlie’s pacing herself to stand at the Arts professor’s elbow when Frank opens the computer lab door, bellowing, “Bradbury, you’re late!”

“Frank, shut up!” The redhead yelps in a frantic high pitch. All the teachers glare at her in shock, forcing Charlie’s cheeks to light up. “Sorry …coming.”

Dean’s waiting for an elevator, drowning in information. Nothing he can use to save Sam and his future with Cas, but sometimes simply knowing more helps ease the inner turmoil. Suddenly, there are two ladies sniffing his armpits.

“Excuse you.” He gives them both a shove, stepping onto the lift.
Rowena returns to his shoulder inhaling near his neck, “Do you smell it?"

“Yes.” Gilda drops to the floor, taking a whiff of Dean’s crotch.

“WHOA!” he pushes her head away, “Do you mind?”

Meg pushes a button, remaining oddly quiet. The scent expert rarely stays out of an excellent chance for a bitchy comment.

The Erotica teacher snags his ear, yanking the omega’s head down, “Hmm, it’s not a mating.”

“I think I would know if I were mated.” Dean’s regretting skipping a rinse this morning.

“No, but his personal bouquet has altered,” Gilda answers Rowena, both women ignoring him. “Some properly mixed revealing powder might do the trick.”

The omega huffs wildly, “Jesus, I’ll take a shower. God forbid someone works up a sweat.”

Rolling her eyes dramatically, Rowena pops his forehead, “No, you thick boy. Your true scent has changed, usually signifying a mating or life stage like first heat.” She raises his arm to sniff his wrist. “I’ve never smelled anything like it.”

“You guys really need to get out more,” Dean counters as the teachers each take a hand, dragging him towards the apothecary closet.

Meg trails behind, a concerned expression thinning her lips.

Realizing he’s never going to be released until they test his whatever, the omega hops up on the massage table from before. The scent expert closes the door, making herself scarce in the corner.

“Remove your shirt, please.” Gilda helps him remove the fabric, exposing his chest to the room. “Remember Rowena, the finer the powder the better the results.”

“I’m not a moron,” the erotica teacher jeers, grinding spices in a stone goblet.

Unable to help herself, Meg whispers, “Debatable.”

“Okay, let’s all put on protection.” Gilda passes each person a silk band of material, “tie it around your face.”

Watching carefully, the omega listens because even Meg’s tying the scarf around her face, covering her mouth and nose. The smooth silk has an odd aroma making his eyes water.

He tries scratching when Rowena bats away his hand, “Now, when we spray the mixture over you …DON’T inhale.”

Cautiously, the Arts professor uses a device similar to a turkey baster, pulling the powder within and then POOF, a big dusting spatters over Dean. The stuff burns a bit. His focus shifts as Dean holds his hands to the sides while Gilda sends three more squirts cascading over him. Never once does the uncomfortable itching dissipate.

“Two more times,” Rowena points to his skin, “Nothing’s happening yet.”

As Gilda spritzes him again, Dean sneezes, the wrap falling from his face. On the inhale Dean gets a mouthful of the crappy ass magical dust. The omega erupts in a fit of sneezes from hell.
Gilda begins screaming, no words just screams.

“OH MY GOD, we’ve killed Dean Winchester,” Rowena shouts, her face going paler, quite the accomplishment for a woman whose complexion mirrors a ghost. “We need to get rid of the body.”

Incapable of stopping the onslaught of sneezes, Dean’s head spins.

“Seizures!” Rowena exclaims, “It’s the first stage. Oh dear, how will we get the corpse out of the Center?” She strikes Gilda across the face, cutting off the loud wails. “Woman, we’ve killed the boy; pull yourself together.”

Dean’s crying he’s sneezing so violently as Rowena cries out, “Burning. Where can we find a fire pit?”

Laughter drowns out them all. Meg’s cackling so loudly the rest of the room pauses to watch.

“Why are you laughing we murdered Dean Winchester?” Rowena smacks him in the head.

“Do I …LOOK …DEAD …to you?” Dean sputters through his continued nasal assaults.

Wiping her eyes, Meg spits out, “You forgot the larkspur; it’s not purple so also not deadly. How did you two get your jobs?”

“Still not funny,” Gilda huffs, placing her hands on her hips. “The league would have done things to us.”

“Then don’t be stupid, and just rub him with manifestation oil.” Meg winks at Dean. “You’ll get your answers without possibly killing him.”

Hastily, Dean blows his nose, adding, “I vote for her option.”

“Fine, take the easy way.” Rowena retrieves a silver vial pouring cool oil over his skin. The chilly sensation soothes away the discomfort of the powder.

Immediately after the liquid ghosts over his left shoulder, Meg goes still, shock evident. “Shit, Dean, what did Castiel do?”

“What?” Turning his head, Dean can barely make out a hand print on his shoulder. Exactly where Cas left his bloody mark in the dreamscape. “Umm …is this bad?”

All three women remain motionless for several minutes.

“I need to make a phone call,” Meg utters, sprinting from the room.

Chapter End Notes

Bless you.

XOXOXOXO,
Angie
The cold stings his eyes. A tear trickles down in response to the chill and perhaps a heavy heart. Castiel grips the handle tighter, exhaling as he brings the axe over his head. A crack streaks through the quiet forest as he slices through wood. Setting the next log, the Alpha notices the late hour by the low-hanging sun. He’s been at this for hours. The fresh air blending with the mindless, tedious task of cutting firewood has soothed his constantly present rage. He’s mentally picturing the faces of those who keep him from his true mate on the splitting wood. Dean deserves better of him. The love of his life should never be put in such a difficult position for the betterment of others, yet with the ultimate goal so close he shakes off his doubts. Dropping the axe, Castiel wipes the sweat from his brow, then moisture from his cheeks, and sighs. No point in wallowing; he collects the pieces in his carrying bin. Muscles protest as he hikes back to the tiny cabin.

The crunching of snow under his boots brings a smile. Dean dodging trees, his omega’s gorgeous skin reflecting the moon, is one of his favorite recollections. The lie tugs at his heart. Dean Winchester is not his; no matter what the alpha believes, if things play out according to the grand plan the omega will mate another. A returning wave of hatred swallows him. Dean’s broken voice on the phone knocks the wind from his lungs as Castiel drops his load to a white-covered knoll, barely missing his foot with the sharp tool.

He leans over, placing his head between his knees to calm the ragged inhales. Castiel always knew his role. Mother had him repeat it over and over for years until he was forced into hiding. Using his skills as a dreamweaver in a highly populated area could alert others, the inner beacon of his abilities shining brightly for miles in the dreams of others. He’d be hunted. However, the solitude of the Colorado mountains has done nothing for his mental health.

Another bout of wheezing has the Alpha dropping to his knees. Not following through on his desires to properly mate Dean is difficult; ignoring the pleas of his true mate is excruciating. Shoving his hands into the icy snow shocks his system back into working. He has no freedom. Dean has no choice. Sacrifice has always been a lonely route, according to his mother. Scrubbing frozen hands against his scruffy cheeks, Castiel decides to move onward, grabbing the supplies.

He left his satellite phone back at the house. The thought has him double-timing his steps because perhaps someone from the league has called with information. Dean mentioned a request through Meg, but he still hasn’t heard from his cousin’s mate. Anything related to the world beyond the forest would be a welcome distraction. A whisper of information from his omega can heat his withering soul.

Adding to the stack of firewood next to the porch, Castiel wishes for a break from the silence. Maybe a movie tonight. He glances at the massive dish on top of the roof. The expensive gift from
Hannah and Crowley has been crucial in keeping his sanity. He’s able to watch television from across the country even catching the local Kansas channel broadcasting Dean’s Omega Challenges. Although, viewing his true mate flirting with the camera sent the Alpha into a fury-induced thrashing that broke a kitchen chair and two windows. Someone should be coming with food and new glass any day now.

Banging his boots on the stoop, he steps inside. The small two-bedroom cabin doesn’t have the right aromas. In retrospect, choosing his own home as their sexual Dreamscape rendezvous wasn’t his best idea. Memories can be a blessing and a curse. He tosses a log on the fire, heating his hands against the blaze. The room they shared sits in shadows; Castiel never enters. Dean’s scent mentally chases him throughout the entire house; and yet when the alpha yearns for the roasted almonds and leather, he only receives the stale bite of wilting oranges. A glance at the phone shows no calls.

He clicks on the late 90s television set, flipping to the weather channel. At least it's another voice in the space. Digging through his small pantry, Castiel searches through the canned food for dinner. It's been a month since anyone brought any rations; he ate the last of his fresh vegetables ten days ago. A couple chickens and a slab of beef remain in the outside freezer. He’s too tired for any real cooking, so the Alpha snatches a can of beef stew to heat on the stove.

Finally, he’s warm enough to remove his trench coat and heavy wool sweater. Castiel’s shoulders sag in the emptiness. Total opposition from when his omega fills the atmosphere with brewing life. Dean’s smile, his cheerful green eyes, and contagious laugh always relax a multitude of aches within the alpha.

The antique wooden table sits in the center of the kitchen, taunting him. Castiel strokes the spot where Dean’s blood pooled after he bit the omega’s silky-smooth neck; he can almost scent the omega. Nothing about this is fair. Why must they suffer for the happiness of others? His mind is spinning from the emotional turmoil of flipping between belief and doubt in his mother’s cause. All Omegas should be free. Dean’s shown him the importance of giving all designations the right to live, yet Castiel can only feel the pain of losing his own omega. If Dean has hope in Meg’s secret scheme, then so will the Alpha. The end goal is clear. How they get there should be negotiable.

He stirs the tasteless meal. Darkness has fallen over the cabin, giving an ominous look to the room. The only illumination is from the fire. The kitchen has a bright overhead light, but Castiel has no intention of using it. His mood’s reflected in the battling shadows.

Pouring the stew into a bowl, the Alpha settles at the infamous table to eat. A cup of water completes his solitary meal. Before Dean Winchester, Castiel found peace in the silent house. Now he only discovers new layers of grieving.

A bewitched safety candle sparks, glowing a green flame. Someone has crossed the perimeter of his mountain prison. However, Castiel doesn’t fret; green means family or friend. Red would identify the contrary. From the front window, the Alpha spots headlights traveling up the single-lane road. Hopefully, the visitor brings the required supplies for his dwindling food pantry and new window panes. He boarded up the windows for warmth after the event, but they need replacing. Another task to divert his thoughts.

Beams of light blind him as the black Suburban’s driver parks, cutting its engine. A person climbs down from the SUV, heading to his porch. Castiel takes a few more bites as he waits for his guest to appear at the door. His visitor doesn’t knock just enters with a brisk sweep of wind and snow.

“Castiel, my son.” The woman grins, flipping on the light as she glances at the stew. Her nose wrinkles. “I brought dinner.”
“Good to see you, Mom.” He enjoys visits from her.

The two embrace awkwardly. “God, it smells like a funeral in here.” Her Alpha nose is twitching, “It reeks of fear and self-loathing. Did someone die and I didn’t know?” She chuckles. “Actually, that’s highly unlikely knowing your mother.”

One of the first light and dark pairs, his mother and mom were an arranged mating. His Omega mother, Naomi Novak, devoting her life to the Heat Liberation League’s goal, took on his Alpha mom, Amara, as a sacrifice. Although, he secretly believes they are in love. Oddly, even with the push for heirs, he’s an only child; his Mother seeing after the grand plan and leaving Amara to raise him. His Alpha mom’s darker side might explain Castiel’s questions, doubts and desires to throw it all away for Dean.

Castiel nearly jumps for joy at the salads his Mom brought up the mountain.

The two crunch their vegetables, Amara’s eyes sizing up her son’s behavior. “You know I’ve been thinking about Joshua lately. I wonder what he’s up to?”

“He called me recently, said he was lounging on a beach. Didn’t give me a clue as to which one.” Castiel focuses on the delicious greens, his mouth in heaven.

“I remember driving you two hours one way into the middle of nowhere for your lessons. The man does love his greenery.” She tosses out a few olives.

Joshua is the dreamweaver who trained Castiel as a teenager. The elderly man fell more into a loving grandfather than teacher role, but his lessons were necessary. Without proper schooling, dreamweavers can cause serious damage to themselves and those around them. The gentle alpha spent five years with Castiel before moving to another student. Joshua was a great support system and kept in touch with him; surprisingly the elder alpha knew exactly when Castiel needed his wisdom.

Amara’s gaze bounces about the house, “It’s funny what I remember from those visits,” she taps her chin with the fork, “particularly his intense discussion on a dreamweaver’s soul seal.”

All his muscles freeze. The lump of romaine sticks in his throat, prompting a rather wicked coughing fit. His mom bangs his back until her son can breathe again. Able to speak clearly, Castiel mumbles, “Whatever made you think of that?”

Intensely glaring in his direction, the woman smirks knowingly. “It would seem Rowena and Gilda discovered such a mark on the Winchester Omega.”

“His name is Dean,” Castiel barks.

“I’m aware, my son. Interesting how you leap to his defense in polite conversation.”

Tossing his own utensil to the table, Castiel huffs, “Do we really need to dance around the elephant in the room, Mom? Obviously, someone has informed you of my personal affection for Dean.”

“Meg called me. She felt I would be more sympathetic to your plight versus your mother. She discussed a lot of things, especially how a certain Chosen Omega is, in fact, your true mate.”

“We have both made the declaration.” Castiel crosses his arms over his chest, prepping for a war of words. “I don’t think the success of the plan depends on Dean losing his own freewill.”

Growing up, his Alpha mom would often undermine the league for her own amusement, her talent
for mayhem giving Naomi ulcers. Mother dislikes anyone who doesn’t follow orders. The single solitary exception being the Alpha sitting across the table. His parents are poster children for the saying: Opposites attract.

“Omegas don’t have freewill dear. Locked behind the Center walls, those poor souls are tricked into believing of fake rights to select a mate. You and I both know the games are rigged for wealthy Alphas. Scent experts and matchmakers twist the results for pairings. Void of any choice. So, your point appears moot.” She sips her water, the gravity of her statement left between them. “Him being the last victim to the archaic system would be a victory. Don’t you think?”

An uncontrollable urge to strike his mom forces Castiel to hold tight fists at his side. He grunts through grinding teeth, “Grandmother Novak never declared Dean would have to mate an Alpha of the League’s choosing. I don’t care about Mother’s side deal.”

“Careful, little Alpha, you are playing with the big knots now.” His mom tilts forward, placing her elbows on the table. “Angering Ishim will have consequences.”

“Are you scared for me?” he suggests, scratching his neck.

A devilish grin spreads across the woman’s lips. “Depends. I really would hate to outlive my only child; yet black is my favorite color.”

“My Omega could take down Ishim without my help.” Noticing the playful spark in Amara’s eyes, Castiel counters, “When have you ever turned down a chance to piss off Mother?”

“Goodness, it’s been years since I’ve witnessed a true Naomi tantrum. Screwing with her but not altering the ultimate goal would be entertaining.” She cocks her head to the side, squinting at him, “Kind of tied my hands since we both know the only way to remove a dreamweaver’s soul seal is in person. Until then your precious Dean will become violently ill if touched by an unmated alpha. I recall a warning from old Joshua, only seal a soul you intend to mate.”

Castiel fans out his fingers innocently. “Nobody enjoys being vomited on, regardless of how handsome the omega. Keeps them safe until the specific dreamweaver can meet them in person.”

“Definitely a mood killer.” His mom laughs, throwing her head back. “We could always let the mark remain for a few trials. The mess it would make in the chute would be amazing.”

Worry pings at Castiel’s nerves; he must see Dean in person, touch his true mate, but the idea of hurting his omega is agonizing. “I’m sure such a disaster would derail the plot.”

“Yes, yes. Even I agree with the need to do away with the Challenges.” She scrunches her nose. “It’s annoying when your mother’s right.”

“About liberating all Omegas, not about Dean’s pairing.” Castiel clarifies.

“Oh, I don’t know. I have been known to adhere to traditional values.”

Clearing the dishes, he counters, “Says the Alpha who took her Omega’s family name. People still are scandalized when they discover your original surname was not, in fact, Novak.”

“I love tossing that bit of information out at formal parties. The old geezers go choking on their martini olives.” Amara leans back, smiling.

After a quick cleanup, Castiel leans his hip against the kitchen counter, “Are we staying the night?”
“We could get a good night’s rest and catch the flight out of Denver tomorrow evening, or you could pack and we get on the road. If you drive, I can switch our reservation to Wichita for the red eye first thing in the morning. Totally up to you, Castiel.”

Without a word, he dashes to his closet snatching a suitcase, then says, “I can be ready in 10 minutes.”

He’s hastily tossing toiletries into the bag when Amara enters the bathroom, settling her hand on his shoulder. “Please don’t take this path lightly. The moment you meet Dean for the first time it will change you forever. Love makes you do strange things.”

“Are you trying to tell me you love Mother?” Castiel snickers, turning away to place the bag in his luggage.

Grabbing his arm, Amara twirls him to face her; the woman cups his chin in her hands tenderly, “Mating Naomi was not about love. It was a business decision between our families. We have affection for each other and, hell, let’s be honest, angry sex is spectacular.”

“Oh God, let’s not.” Castiel attempts to jerk away, but Amara’s hands hold tighter.

“Listen to me. Most of my life could be described as a whirlwind of darkness. I had no focus, no joy, but it was not Naomi Novak that brought light and love to my life. She may be from the Novak family tree, but the sunshine that pushed away the grey clouds was not her. It was you.” A faint tear catches in his mom’s eyelashes. “You are my light, the only thing I have ever truly loved. I believe your world will be rocked in ways you can’t even imagine the second you scent your true mate, because it happened for me the first time I held you in my arms. Be ready, and know I’m on your side.”

“Thank you.” It’s the only response he can find in the onslaught of emotions.

“Fucking up your mother’s precious plot is only a side benefit.”

He belts out a cackle, releasing the tension in the room. “Understood.”

Chapter End Notes

All my readers are special to me. I send you light and love.

Angie
Dean’s fingers glide over the shiny, soft material. The glass of his bathroom mirror reflects a confident omega, pumped for the challenges, when inside he’s drowning. With a sharp inhale, the omega throws a charming smile. Probably enough to fool the stupid alphas chasing his ass, but in the end that’s not who’s judging his performance. An unknown individual decides the fate of himself and Sammy. His shaking fingers won’t calm.

Gulping down another wave of worry, Dean straightens the taut jersey tank top. The Hunter uniform leaves little for the imagination. An obvious Crowley design, because who else would select the fabric, completely black, with a single crimson necktie stitched down the front. On the back in the same disturbing color the Center’s ID 80Q3 with WINCHESTER underneath. Matching black snug pants have 80Q3 running down his front right thigh and DEAN on his left. A new pair of grey Nikes finishes his trial ensemble.

“Branded like cattle,” Dean whispers.

“Dude, you are overreacting.” Ash shoves him to the side, combing his hair. “The alphas can’t request you without knowing where you sleep.”

He glances down at his roommate’s outfit. Thank God he’s not in Erotica. Ash has a skin-tight black pair of booty shorts with the red necktie trailing the outline of his cock. On the man’s ass is the Center ID with ASH.

“You’re going to the first trial practically naked?” He can’t hide the shock.

Rolling his eyes, Ash smacks Dean’s shoulder, “Ain’t called Erotica for nothin’ son. In the last two trials they just write the identifying info on our butt cheeks with permanent marker.”

“What do you do for the first one?” Dean’s stomach is turning on the visual his friend left.

“Numero Uno trial is a pole routine with dos being a massage demonstration with another omega.” Ash winks at him. “When is your pick-up time?”

The clock on his nightstand states 9:33 a.m., “Not till four, so I’ve got hours.” He strips off the uniform, hanging it in his closet. Dean hates ironing. “I think I’ll hit the range for a bit, then I’ve got daycare duty during lunch. You?”

“Erotica doesn’t start till late, so my ride doesn’t leave till seven.” Ash pulls him into a hug. It’s slightly awkward given the lack of clothes, but Dean can’t help but squeeze his roommate. The world’s about to go insane; for a second the omega can hold his friend. Ash mutters in his ear, “If you start crying, I’m gonna have to deck you.”

“Shut up.” He pushes the guy away, grabbing a ratty pair of jeans and green t-shirt with matching flannel.
Dean’s strolling down the hall when the scent of omega in heat startles him. Checking the walls, he notices the red light in front of Andrea’s room. Immediately his heart sinks. “Fuck life.”

Knocking on her door, Dean calls out, “Up for some company?”

“I’m decent.”

Although Alpha skin mags would have society believe differently, when an Omega’s in heat they are NOT in a perpetual need of a knot. It’s a rubbish fantasy. Heat runs in a cycle. The desire for a knot builds, orgasm hopefully is achieved, then it’s a good hour maybe two before it begins again. During the lull the person can eat, drink, and is of a clear mind. Now on the rise of the cycle’s yearning it can be intense, yet again Dean’s always kept his shit together.

He opens the door, finding Andrea in a fluffy purple robe sipping on a blue Gatorade. “You need anything?”

The entire point of the light on the outside is for others to check in, bring them necessary supplies.

“Maybe a bagel with butter.” Her gentle voice trembles as a tear drips from her eyes. “The House Omega first trials are over.”

Instead of jumping on the food request, Dean takes a seat next to Andrea. He slides his arm around her fluffy shoulders, permitting her head to drop on his chest. Placing the beverage on the floor, her sobs ring out. They both know the outcome. Andrea will not be allowed to participate in any of the trials for her own safety. There will be no Alpha this year.

“Why?” Her anger slices into the crying. “I’ve never missed a dose of my suppressant.”

“It’s the reason we are stuck in these centers.” Dean ignores the snot running down his shirt. “Suppressants fail. Even when we let ourselves have a heat every four months, all of us have been caught off guard by an unscheduled heat.”

“There has to be a better, stronger drug. I’d take anything right now.”

A swift kiss to her forehead, then Dean leans back against the wall. “And burn your chances of conceiving?”

“This sucks.” She wipes her eyes, curling into his side again.

Her sniffles slow down as the exhausted woman drifts off. Dean doesn’t leave, hoping to be the rock she desperately requires right now. Literally all the omegas he knows have had several surprise heat assaults since arriving at the center, except him. In fact, the only heat that caught him off guard was the first one before he began taking a suppressant.

“Huh?” He ponders the special herb mix he’s been force fed since birth. Shit, he’s gotta find Hannah.

Dashing from Andrea’s room, he nearly bowls over Meg. “Hey! Watch it! The wide load is a tad sensitive to crash landings.”

“Have you seen Hannah?” He’s grasping her arms tightly.

“Not today,” she steps away, giving herself a calming breath. “Doesn’t matter, you have someone waiting for you.” Her nose scrunches on the second inhale. “Damn it. Shower first though. Only a complete dumbass hangs with an omega in heat on a trial day?”
“I felt sorry for her.” The omega’s torn between hunting down Hannah or accepting Meg’s mystery meeting. “Who’s waiting for me?”

“Trust me, Dean-O, you want to follow me,” she shoves him towards his own bedroom, “after you scrub yourself senseless.”

The mischievous blaring grin leads Dean to believe her. “Fine, but I better have fun.”

She cackles all the way down the hall, “Hopefully not too much.”

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Fresh clothes and the first layer of his epidermis removed to Meg’s approval, Dean stands next to the scent expert as they ride down the elevator.

“I’ve got a daycare shift at noon.” He’s been looking forward to some play time with his favorite toddlers.

“Gilda volunteered to cover until you’re free.”

Trailing behind the scent expert, Dean exclaims, “Charlie’s going to shit a brick.”

“I’m a scent expert, and I’m not blind.” Meg guides him down the tunnel towards the staff apartments and the scent-blocking door to the swanky parlor.

Her girth in the front has grown recently. Dean points to her baby bump, “Girl or boy?”

“Gabriel and I never ask. Kid’s still ours however they pop out, and we’ve got so much crap from the previous terrors no real reason to find out.” The scent expert waddles at a fast clip.

“What were the first three?”

She pauses with her hand by the screen Gilda had used to open the massive steel barricade. “Are you planning on adopting them? Dude, my children are little demons on crack with bewitching angelic smiles. Their adorable psychos. We’ve been through like six beta nannies. The last one left our house screaming with singe marks up her back.”

Dean steps away, “What the hell happened?”

“Idiot never learned where we keep the fire extinguisher.” Meg waves off his concern. “Our youngest has a budding career in either pyrotechnics or arson. Time will tell.”

“Remind me to never babysit.”

Nodding towards the massive hatch, Meg sighs, “The schedule is tight so I can only give you thirty minutes.”

“HOLD UP!” His mouth drops in surprise. “You’re not going in with me? I know I’m supposed to schmooze dense alphas, but no way in hell am I going alone.”

“For the love of my slightly off kilter children, you WANT to go in, Dean.”

She pushes her hand to the screen, releasing the door’s locks. Hissing of pistons declares the swing of the metal frame but it’s not his eyes or ears that alert the omega to the lack of a scent seal.

Oranges with cinnamon rushes his senses. The aroma is stronger than in any dreamscape because
he’s completely awake. He feels the spice clouding his mind and entering his pores. Suddenly Dean can’t move.

“Castiel’s real,” Meg announces pushing him towards the entry.

Stumbling through the doorway, Dean’s vision focuses on the man with the tan trench coat. His fingers tingle with the memory of running them through the dark, messy hair. The stubble on the alpha’s chin paints a deliciously cut jawline. Damn, his gaze etches out the neckline following it under the starched, white dress shirt. The omega doesn’t have to imagine what lies beneath.

“Hello, Dean.” If sex had a sound it would be his alpha’s voice grating out his name. Raw, thick, deep, and so low it tantalizes against his balls.

Neither man moves, perhaps frozen in time or simply awed by the others presence. A trickle of sweat rolls down his back as Dean breaks the moment. “Cas, you’re here.” Meaning the words as either a statement or question, he merely drinks in the frame of his dream lover. He stands confident by one of the high-back, blue chairs as the entire room brightens his baby blue gems.

“I will mate you, right now, in this room, if you ask me.” The alpha’s expression is stern yet compassionate with eyes searching for Dean’s truth.

Agony he’s never believed possible rips over Dean’s skin. The desire to be bent over the gold couch, Castiel riding his ass till he leaves the permanent claim on his skin, devouring his will. Licking his lips, the freedom to ultimately decide washes over him before vanishing within seconds.

“I can’t, we can’t.” The breath stings as the answer slips from his mouth.

Stomping closer, yet not touching, Cas exclaims, “You deserve a moment to understand freedom, my Omega. We are locked in a room; no one would be here in time. I will follow your every command, Dean.”

Tears of joy, hurt, and frustration slump his shoulders at the beautiful alpha handing him sheer, untainted independence. Cas isn’t kidding. His stance shows nothing but utter compliance at Dean’s very reply, prepped to obey.

“How can you be real? Alphas don’t relent to omegas; we are the weaker designation.”

Shaking his head, Castiel inches closer, the heat of his body setting Dean’s flesh on fire. “I don’t lose anything by letting you lead; instead, I gain my true mate’s respect and consent.”

“My brother’s life.” Dean mumbles the sentence more to remind himself. If he mates Cas, he’s out of the Challenges. There is no chance such a decision will not break the blood pact, releasing its vengeance on his family once more. “I’m not saying no, just,” simple words shouldn’t hurt yet he battles to discover his voice,” …not right now.”

“You will tell me when your mind changes?” His alpha tilts his head to the side.

“Yeah.” Dean wipes his face, using his clean shirt to rub away the mess. “The message will be clear, I promise you.”

A person clearing their throat nearly has Dean leaping out of his skin, “Son of a BITCH!”

“Sorry, such a lovely moment; I couldn’t fuck it up.” A female alpha with an underlaying scent of orange cranberries against a seedier darker spice claps, killing the tension in the space. “My name’s Amara, Castiel’s Alpha Mom. I hate to hurry things along, but he really needs to release the soul
seal before you’re tossing lunch all over some unsuspecting Alpha.” Shrugging nonchalantly, “even if they might deserve it.”

Confused, the omega squints at Castiel, “Is she talking about the magical handprint?”

“Yes,” Cas ducks his head adorably, “It’s a dreamweaver mark for their intended. The side effects can be dreadful for you, so with your permission I shall remove it.”

His true mate raises his hand; however, Dean takes a step back, “What if I don’t want it removed? I can handle a few measly side effects.”

Amara pipes up from her spot on a loveseat near the back, “Vomiting, violent and in high volume, whenever you are touched even the slightest by another unmated alpha. I vote we keep it. Should make the trials hilariously entertaining.”

“Okay, change of plan,” he moves back into the man’s personal space. “Let’s remove the puke tattoo. Although, can I have one thing before our link dissipates.”

“Of course.” Castiel’s clear sapphire gems blink at him. “I must warn you, while I am here I will not be able to join you in the dreamscape. However, I have a friend watching over you.”

“Explains Grandpa Alpha last night. He spent the entire night teaching me how to prune rose bushes without saying a word.”

A genuinely warm expression crosses his true mate’s face, “Joshua. He’s a wonderful man. Taught me everything I know and will keep other Alphas out of your mind for the duration of my stay. Presently, I believe you had a request?”

Swallowing the anxious lump in his throat, Dean whispers, “Kiss me. I want one kiss to carry in my soul when I enter the trials tonight.”

“I can’t leave because you guys severely require a chaperone but …” she twirls to face the far wall, “this average scenic painting deserves a closer look.”

“Awkward,” Dean mouths.

A grimace stretches across his Alpha’s handsome face. “Unfortunately, it’s the best I can do.”

“For now,” Dean presses his chest against the other man, “After I complete the trials you can whisk me off to a cabin in the mountains …alone.”

Cas’s warm, calloused fingertips ghost over his face, “You are amazing, Dean Winchester.”

The two spend several seconds committing the features of their true mate to memory. Dean lifts his hands, scratching at the alpha’s scruff and wishing he could feel it between his thighs. A glorious burn he’d sense for days. Hunger to kiss the man is staved off by the fear of the moment between them ending. Saying goodbye in the dreamscape was rotten, in person seems impossibly abysmal.

Finally. Their gazes lock. Dean’s overwhelmed with a rich shade of the Caribbean Sea, brimming with an intense desire. Castiel’s cinnamon aroma grows denser, the bouquet weighing heavily in the omega’s nose. Fresh oranges leave serenity in its wake.

Alpha and Omega tilt towards each other in unison, taking the final step as one. There is no dominance, merely a craving to taste. Their lips meet in a tender, chaste kiss. Sliding his hands to the alpha’s back, Dean jerks Cas forward, desperate for any and all connections. Painfully slowly,
Cas’s head tilts to the left as their mouths open, freeing their tongues for the first savory moment.

An explosion pummels Dean’s mind as all his senses dash into the cinnamon-orange blaze. More. Snatching the back of his true mate’s head, the omega latches onto the silky hair, tugging the mouth closer his so his tongue may dance deeper. His cock hardens while slick wets his entrance, waiting for Castiel’s knot. A whimper escapes his throat because the kiss is all he will receive.

Switching his head to the other side, Dean gasps for air before diving into the flavor of his true mate.

A muffled growl erupts from his Alpha. The man’s fingernails slip under his shirt, biting into Dean’s flesh as Cas’s hands scrape up and down his back.

He can’t stop.

His own fingers betray him as they tug on Cas’s dress shirt, buttons flinging open the barrier to liberate more of his Alpha. Events are flying out of control, and Dean can’t find it in himself to care.

He doesn’t want to stop.

Cold water splashes in his face, causing Dean to cough and step away. “Jesus!”

Amara raises a bottle of water, smirking. “I came prepared.”

“Thanks.” Dean almost hugs the woman because without her …. he can’t imagine the consequences. “Seriously …thank you.”

Although, a wet Castiel Novak is NOT helping his arousal issues.

With a double tap to his forehead, Dean suffers the loss of Cas’s soul seal. Odd, losing something he never knew about still hurts.

His true mate grins, wiping his face. “We should be leaving. I need to clean up before your trial later.”

“You’re going to be there?” A wisp of hope is lifting his spirits.

“Yes, I’ll be seated with the other prospective alphas behind the one-way mirror. You won’t see me, but I swear to you, Dean, you are not alone.”

A ringing has Amara checking her phone. “Gabriel’s getting antsy. Time to go.”

Castiel rubs his hands down Dean’s arms. “We are staying with them during the trials. Their connections will be crucial.”

“Just don’t offer to babysit.” The omega chuckles, taking his alpha’s hands in his.

“Absolutely not, it took months for my eyebrows to grow back.”

Chapter End Notes

Comments, Questions, and Concerns are always appreciated and loved.

XOXOXO,
Angie
Vibrations from the airborne CH-47 Chinook helicopter rattle Dean’s bones. The transport vehicle has been refurbished to carry a ton of passengers; two alphas hang out the sides with threatening weapons. Since there are only eight omegas plus Billie, the space appears quite empty. He tightens his seatbelt; God, Dean despises flying of any kind.

The arenas for each of the ten challenges are spread out across Kansas. Every state has their own, and the different districts share since the annual trials last merely two weeks. Hunter Challenge for Kansas is located in a tiny little town called Lebanon in an underground bunker. According to Billie, it’s got the space and land for the outdoor parts. Closing his eyes, Dean prays he and Cas arrive safely. Although, he’d rather be driving with his alpha than tumbling through the sky in a tin can with a spinner.

He’s regretting the extra serving of tacos for lunch as the vile helicopter bounces.

“Mother fucker,” Dean hisses.

Laughter from behind him nearly has the omega turning to punch Bela in her stupid face. Gordon beats him to it as the sound of a slap rings out. Man, he suddenly has new respect for the fourth-year.

“Billie!” Bela shouts, “I’ve been assaulted.”

The beta doesn’t even lift her head, “You disturb my nap to whine again and we’ll leave you on the chopper.”

“I’m notifying my scent expert,” she huffs.

“Please do,” Gordon grumbles over the loud engine, “we both know she can’t stand you.”

Dean smiles the rest of the ride living on the knowledge Bela’s truly screwed. Can’t do shit if your scent expert doesn’t arrange meetings. He can’t help adding, “Guess we’ll see you in next year’s challenges.”

Touchdown is horrid, but he survives, white-knuckling the entire way. On the helipad a small beta wearing a pant suit and thick black glasses meets them.

“I’m your guide, Ambriel.” She unlocks a thick steel barricade, ushering them through a tunnel into the heart of the Hunter bunker. “Please stay together; the hallways can be confusing, and the complex goes six stories down.”

Entering an elevator, Ambriel grins at him, “I got first pick of Centers for your district.”

“Congratulations,” Dean replies, unsure why he should care.

“Ten alphas have sent me gifts, once it was released I’d be escorting the Winchester Omega. A new car,” she whispers low enough for only him to hear,” so thanks.”
“You’re welcome?” It seems bizarre his fucking guide is receiving crap he will never see merely because of his orientation.

Everyone shuffles off to a dark hallway with doors running both sides.

Using a card swinging from her neck, the beta opens a door near the end, “80Q3 green room.”

The space looks like a locker room, dark-cherry wood paneling with lush green carpeting is weird but comforting. Each omega has a cubby with their name on the top. Inside holds a second identical uniform, favorite snacks and personal items from their lists. A wooden bench with a towel sits underneath. Dean can’t help the little dance at the three oranges on top. He needs only one guess as to who sent them.

Ambriel climbs up on a chair, clapping her hands. “Alright, Omegas. You will wait here until I collect you. Billie will be with the two Omegas at the trial. There will be one partaking and a second in the warm-up space; Alphas can view you through the mirrored windows from observation decks at both locations. Once you have completed the trial, you will be escorted to a secluded waiting area. If an Alpha requests a meeting, your scent expert will collect you; if not, you will rest until the entire group is ready for the return flight to your Center.”

Dean’s peeling an orange, failing at not getting an erection from the citrus bouquet when he spots an envelope tucked under the basket. Sam’s chicken scrawl is on the front. A letter from his brother is a Godsend. While snatching Sammy’s envelope, his fingers ghost over a second one. His stomach sinks at the familiar graphic on the outside; a Greek omega with flames and a dagger. Orders.

No doubt placing both letters together was not an accident. A reminder for the Omega of who he loses if he doesn’t play his part as outlined in the bold type. Dean slowly inhales, catching the panic rising in his torso. Do what he’s told, easy.

Peeking side to side, the omega makes sure everyone’s interested in their own locker as he opens the handwritten message.

Dean,

I am so sorry, but Dad decided to head into California. He said the west coast is safest, and you would understand. I punched him in the nose. We should be there supporting you. As your family we have a right to meet any interested Alpha. Stupid ass. Anyways, since we can’t be there, I thought writing you a letter for each of the six trials would have to suffice.

You will do great. Don’t worry, if anyone is a complete jerk you can put them on your “Hell No” list. If you get a chance maybe send me an email, not sure we will be able to catch anything unless you make the National channel. Wouldn’t that be cool?

Keep your head up high.

Sam

The naïve enthusiasm enrages the omega. He punches the wall, enjoying the bite of his knuckles against the paneling. No one even blinks. What a pile of shit. His brother believes Dean will have a choice, will meet his mate and live happily ever after. Perhaps John did the right thing keeping the young Alpha in the dark. Or it’s another decree from on high.

Carefully laying his brother’s letter on the bench, Dean rolls his shoulders, mentally prepping for the second communication. He’s less kind to the paper. Even with crinkles and rips the omega can read his directive for the first trial.
You will behave.

You will perform perfectly.

You will stand out from the other omegas without damaging your ranking.

The goal is to make the National Omega Network News.

Do NOT be lewd.

Refuse ALL private meetings with Alphas.

Thank you.

The commands aren’t terrible. In fact, Dean’s shoulders relax at the no private meetings with strange Alphas. However, this includes Cas, which sucks. Makes sense though, if they want him to be desired, seen as the prize, he needs to be slightly aloof. John taught him well.

Ambriel’s phone chirps as she moves to the door, yelling, “If Mick and Ruby would follow me.”

The Hunter Coach knocks his shoulder on her exit, humming, “Surprise them all.”

A click locks the remaining omegas in the green room. Dean ignores the rest, his mind whirling with ways to stand out that would not be considered lewd. Hell, strolling out in the buff would be memorable. He turns to search through his locker.

“Damn it,” the omega hisses because there is nothing here.

Leaning out of his cubby, Dean notes a table near the end of the room. Seems innocent enough, yet on top lies an array of differing objects: a mini sewing kit, an extra pair of socks, a couple hairbrushes, a red silk tie, a tire iron, a large handheld mirror, several bottles of water, a basket with gum, and a couple boxes of tissues.

Gadreel stumbles out of the bathroom, “Sorry, stress rips the shit out of my stomach.”

“I’m good,” Dean waves.

Arthur rushes in, closes the door, then seconds later runs out shouting, “God. We all have to use the same facilities.”

Ten minutes later, Dean’s pacing up and down the room when Ambriel enters. “Arthur, you’re next.”

Slowly, painfully, the group begins to dwindle until its only him, Gadreel and Bella left. Poor guy makes another mad dash for the toilet.

He’s ripping into his third orange when Bela brushes his shoulder. “I’ve heard a few intriguing rumors about you, Winchester.”

“I don’t care.” He doesn’t. Swimming through piles of terrorizing, life-threatening shit keeps Dean out of those listening to gossip.

Unsurprisingly, the woman continues, “You have a true mate attending the trials.” She knocks his hands, causing the fruit to spiral and splat against the grass-green carpet. “Hope he’s rich.”
“What is it with you and money? I think I’ve made it obvious I don’t care.”

She rounds on him, her voice rising, “You should. Accidents become alphas who don’t have the means to afford what others covet.”

A blaze of rage lashes over him as Dean throws Bela against the wall, his hands shoving her face to the side. He growls into her ear, “What are you talking about?” The mere mention of Cas being in danger has his vision going red.

“Do you know why I left my last Center?”

Squeezing her throat, he leans in, whispering, “Tread lightly. I could snap your neck and not give a fuck.”

“I found my true mate last year. The odds are outrageous, yet in my third year he was there, smiling. God, he was lovely. One scent of his aroma, and I knew there was no one but him for me. I told my scent expert, expecting to be given a meeting. Nothing. I refused to attend the last two trials, stating I found my mate and at the very least I deserved a face-to-face with him. If he didn’t want me, then I would hear it from his own mouth.”

Tears appear, wrecking her face. “I was brought down to the parlor the eve of the final trial. Brimming with excitement, I wore my favorite dress. A yellow one with an elaborate crisscross pattern down the back. When I arrived my director of the time stood before me with his cold, hateful eyes. Azazel was an atrocious human being who enjoyed hurting omegas. I immediately knew something was wrong.”

Dean steps back; a shiver builds from the genuine truth to her words.

“Azazel told me I needed to make him more money. Letting me go in my third year was bad business. I spit in the bastard’s face.” She reaches up, touching a cheek. “He slapped me hard, laughing as he spouted how the alpha I requested didn’t see things my way either. Said I was his true mate and he would go to the media screaming how the Challenges are rigged. I was so proud.”

Pushing herself off the wall, Bela wobbles back to her bench.

Knowing the story wasn’t finished, Dean sits next to the woman. Her tender tone, reminding him of a small child, slice through his emotions. “Alistair tossed a slim black box on the couch and left the room. I thought it was a message from my true mate so I opened it hastily. Inside was a severed knot.”

“Jesus!” Gadreel exclaims, the other man standing in shock. “Maybe it was a fake.”

“No, the scent was his. We’d met a few times in the dreamscape.” Rolling her shoulders back, it’s like Bela puts on a completely different personality. “I beat two teachers bloody, set my room on fire and shot Azazel in the foot. They tried starving me for compliance; I didn’t care. There was nothing left, a week later I was transferred.”

“Why are you still playing their game?” Gadreel questions.

The door swings open, startling all the omegas. Ambriel gives them a quizzical look, “Bela, you’re next.”

Standing, the woman cleans her face up with make-up from her locker. Finally crossing the room, she tosses over her shoulder, “My true mate is dead. Might as well find a living knothead who can pay well. Isn’t that what this is all about? Something pretty for an alpha to play with. If I have to be
a doll, it’s better with diamonds dripping from my neck.”

The mental picture of receiving Cas’s cock in a box has bile rising up his throat. He can’t fuck this up.

Gadreel remains motionless. “I’m in love with Eileen.”

Although he suspected as much, Dean blinks from the announcement.

“It’s our last year in the Challenges. What if an alpha wants her and has the means to take her from me?” The taller omega drags his fingers over the tire iron, “I won’t go down easy.”

“Have you told her?” Dean’s gaze wanders over the differing items on the table.

“No. A silly crush isn’t worth harming her chances.” He glares at Dean. “Don’t tell her.”

One of the items sparks an idea. “Not my story to share,” he mumbles, tightening his grip.

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Omegas scatter across the warm-up area’s many mats. A short track circles the space, so Dean decides to run off his nerves. One entire wall consists of a mirror. No surprise several omegas are striking poses and bending over to tie shoes in front of the reflective glass. A few thumps ring out as he sprints by, but the omega’s aware his alpha would never be so obvious in public.

The mysterious letter informed him to be detached. Dean keeps his head straight and eyes forward, ignoring all. The pounding of his own feet keeps his breaths in rhythm as he waits for his turn. A couple omegas point at him, whispering to each other, yet their glares of disdain don’t deter him. He’s got a mission. The special weapon is held peacefully in his hand.

“Winchester, you’re up!” Billie screams.

She guides him through two sets of double doors to a firing range with 20 lanes. Except, the half walls marking each stall are a clear plastic, evidently not wanting to limit the alphas’ view. The same side of the space has a floor to ceiling mirror. Dean’s led to the aisle closest to the glass.

His coach points to a long buffet of weapons on the back wall. “Choose your three.”

Dean snags a dozen matching small daggers, an axe, and his personal favorite, the Colt. The poetical aspects of his selection haven’t been wasted on him. He places his three choices on the bench at his stall, turning to face Billie.

“Make it tight.” He hands over the red silk tie to the Hunter teacher wishing it were blue.

With his arms pressed together, Dean sees the woman immediately knows what to do, lashing each wrist individually then wrapping between them to perfectly create make-shift handcuffs.

“Give ’em hell.” She winks as he turns back to the three targets.

The first trial is timed, but the clock doesn’t begin until he touches his first weapon. Shots break into the silence as other omegas start. Poor assholes don’t have a chance of being noticed. He almost feels sorry for them.

His right hand quickly positions the gun near his foot and to the right. Hastily, Dean snatches the axe, spinning up to the line marking where they shoot from as he raises the weapon up to his ear and tosses it towards the 12-foot target. Direct hit. Not even inhaling, Dean reaches down and snags the
Colt in a single swoop, the handle naturally conforming to his touch. Two shots vibrate against his palm, marking the human-size target 30 feet away in both the head and heart.

Safety in place he drops the Colt to the floor, the omega snatches three knives throwing them at the roaming target with the three-inch dots. Dean never misses. Using one of the leftover daggers, he twirls to face his own reflection, smirking, a playful energy in those emerald eyes. The wooden shaft slips between his teeth. The razor-sharp edge slashes through his bindings, yet Dean intentionally cuts his own finger.

The blood-colored tie drifts to the floor as he raises his finger, letting the wound bleed down.

A litany of howls, banging, and cries of anger tells Dean he did his job today.

Before leaving the room, the omega proceeds to lick his finger clean with an innocent bat of his eyelashes. Lewd has so many definitions. Sauntering away like he doesn’t have a care in the world, Dean pulls out the orange peel tucked in the inner pocket of his pants, holds it to his nose, and inhales.

Chapter End Notes

Hello my Lovelies,

I hope this finds you well. Comments, concerns, and general love is always appreciated.

XOXO,
\nAngie
Water sprays over his face, breaking up the dried mud. Dean turns the knob. Severe heat intensifies as the omega rotates, attempting to work out a sore shoulder. The showers at the Center are awesome; yet the killer water pressure in the bunker isn’t too shabby. He lathers up the washcloth, dragging the suds over the caked-on dirt. He’s careful around the bleeding wound. Swirls of brown and red circle at his bare feet, washing away the evidence of a rough second trial. The orders he received before he took a hell of a beating are pounding against his psyche. Emotionally and physically, Dean’s struggling.

The omega could ignore the command when he still needed to perform perfectly at the obstacle course; however, with his run completed, he has more to do for the league. Resting his forehead against the cool tiles doesn’t help. Crimson continues to pour.

He would rather take a couple more turns on the brutal course, adding more bruises to the blossoming beauties throughout his body by sloshing through mud, climbing over uneven logs, getting elbows to the face, being pelted with sticks from the other omegas, swinging across plummeting drops with harsh hand-ripping ropes, and sprinting until he felt his knees give way. He doesn’t have a clue where the wickedly bleeding injury came from. The fucker just happened. Instead he must clean up to …meet alphas.

You will agree to meet three alphas. One may be chosen by you.

“Fuck!” Dean slams his hand against the porcelain.

“Well, I’m glad to hear you haven’t lost your colorful expressions.” Hannah’s voice carries over the shower curtain. “Now I need to look at your cut.”

Shutting off the water, the omega sighs. “Can I have something for the pain?” He desperately wants to drown into oblivion.

“A couple Tylenol,” she answers, handing him a towel.

Once the majority of the wet is gone, Hannah leads him to a bench. She has one of those black doctor bags, which she lays down next to him and immediately digs through. Stupid Tylenol will not give him the out-of-body experience he’s hoping for today.

“Maybe something stronger? It hurts.”

Hannah rolls her eyes. “No.”

She wipes away the fresh blood, examining the gash below his left knee. “You will need at least two stitches. I’ll use lidocaine to numb the area, but you have to be lucid for your Alpha greetings.”

“I don’t have anything to wear.” He’s certain a torn, dirty and blood-stained uniform is not appropriate.
“Meg will be by with an outfit.” Hannah works quickly, her eyes never leaving his wound. “Do you have any questions for me?”

“I do.” Dean recalls his revelation about the possible connection between the vitamins and his controlled heats. “You said once that you never were put in a Center.”

“Correct.”

“Were you on the same vitamins from the League as me?” He hisses the last word as she shoves a needle into his skin.

Keeping her focus on his stitches, Hannah responds softly, “Yes and no, mine were altered after they had unwanted side effects.”

“They made you sterile.” Dean watches her shoulders tense. His next question terrifies him, yet he must know, “Can I have kids?”

She pauses to smile at him, “Yes to both. After I became aware of the complications to the herbs, I used my chemistry background to rework the recipe, which kept you from having a similar fate once the suppressants were introduced into your system.”

A weight immediately lifts from his chest; however, he reaches out, patting the doctor’s arm. “I’m sorry someone didn’t have the smarts to fix it sooner.”

“Crowley understands. He always says ‘I chose you.’ Having children wouldn’t mean shit without you, so worrying over it is irrelevant. I chose you with my eyes wide open.” A few tears roll down her cheek. “Not all mates love each other. He considers himself a lucky alpha.”

“Man, for a cocky ass Crowley’s a softie on the inside.” Dean chuckles.

Her hands return to working on his leg as Hannah whispers, “He’s my hero.”

“What are the vitamins doing to me?” He tilts forward to get her attention.

The click of boots has the doctor shaking her head. “Later.”

Meg enters, her eyes gentle, the rocker-mom vibe not jiving with the tender and conflicted expression.

“I’ve got an outfit for you.” Her arms are full of clothes. Meg gives the pile a glare of disdain as if they offended her. She tosses them onto a counter.

Dean huffs, “Can I just wear jeans?”

“No. Dean, my hands are tied here.” Meg wipes at a tear, battling to keep her makeup smudge free. “The relevance of them dressing you up …” her words choke on a sob.

“Like a doll,” he finishes.

Hannah wraps his calf quietly in white bandages, “You are both being overly dramatic. All omegas attempt to look their best when meeting alphas. It’ll be fine.” Although, her voice drops a bit as she repeats, “It’ll be fine.” Almost as if she’s convincing herself, too.

The scent expert slams a pair of shoes against the wall. “I never loved my job. All the shady dealings, but I had enough pull to keep omegas out of abusive or horrific conditions. Gabriel kept me informed as to who would not be a healthy match. But today I resemble a backstreet omega doll
“pimp.”

“Am I supposed to,” he wraps the towel around his waist, stepping up to the sink, “pleasure them?”

“NO!” shouts the doctor.

Meg’s eyes go wide. “Hell no, absolutely not.” Then she chews her fingernail, “what did the letter say?”

“Beguile them. What does that even mean?” He twirls a toothbrush thoughtfully.

Hannah ignores them both, cleaning up her equipment.

“Do I look like a dictionary to you?” Meg yells.

Snapping her black bag shut, Hannah answers, “Be charming. Entice them with a smile and conversation, you are not expected to do anything more.” She stands, “I’m going to go but seriously you two … Dean will be able to handle it.” With her final advice Hannah heads out the door with a quick, “Good luck.”

“Thanks.” Dean’s insides churn as he begins to brush his teeth.

A phone pinging has Meg swiping the screen to check a text. “Okay, if I can arrange it, when would you want to see Castiel?”

“He can visit?!” Dean spits toothpaste all over the poor mirror.

Chewing her nail again, the scent expert glares at her phone. “The letter stated you could choose one. So, the big question is which would be better, first or last?”

Leaning his hip against the counter, the omega’s urge to see his alpha again pushes him to say first and yet if the other two meetings go south Cas could make it all better. “Last.”

She hastily types out a response, mumbling, “Gabe agrees. Maybe take a hit of Cas bouquet for the road.”

“How much do you know about the other two?” His mind is tumbling over the word “beguile.”

“They are both older, rich, and at least one is a pompous jerk. Zachariah’s never interested in mating an omega; he enjoys seeing how much he can get them to do, collecting high-ranking omegas like trading cards.”

Dean’s tugging on the grey slacks, “How is he going to help the cause?”

“Not letting Zachariah meet with you would rouse suspicions. Don’t worry,” she hands him the emerald silk dress shirt, “you have to spend twenty minutes with him, you do NOT have to do anything but be witty and charming.”

“And the other one?” The smooth supple material slides over his flesh.

“Name’s Ishim.” Her eyes dart away as she kicks over his shoes. Clearly bending over is no longer an option. “Don’t piss him off, and try to not mention his scent.”

Spinning to face her Dean exclaims, “What’s wrong with his scent?”

“Remember rotting plum guy?”
“Oh God, I change my mind. I can’t do this.”

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“Zachariah Adler.” The alpha has a confident stride as he enters the meeting space. Meg loiters at the door until the older man shouts, “You may go. Dean and I prefer alone time.”

The guy seems more mouthy dimwit than dangerous, so Dean waves she can go. He’s been given a dark den-styled meeting room all done in wood paneling, dim lamps, dark floors and leather furniture to match. The windowless space makes the omega a bit claustrophobic.

“When do you live, Zachariah?” Dean grins, taking a seat on the black leather couch. Ugh! The man’s aroma is a cross between dead fish and the sting of salt. Why any omega would agree to do anything with the bald alpha is beyond his comprehension.

The alpha plops down extremely close to Dean, his foul breath stinking up the oxygen. “Orlando. I’m an accounting executive for SeaWorld. I’ve been told my personal bouquet reminds omegas of the ocean.”

“I’ve never been.” If the ocean smells of rotting flesh, Dean’s thanking the stars his dad never took them. He can barely flirt over the yearning to yak. “Do you own a boat?”

Unfortunately, Zachypants scoots in closer, whispering into Dean’s ear, “I’ve got a nice big boat for you to ride on, Dean. Name your price. My research tells me you have a younger brother who might want a new car or college tuition fund.”

The Omega’s skin crawls from the dude’s nasty comment. Jerk, went straight for his weakness, dangling things for Sammy out like fine jewelry. Research must be his specialty. Batting his eyelashes, Dean forces a chuckle, “Aren’t you a naughty boy.”

“Yes, Dean, I am. Would you perhaps enjoy punishing me?” Zach places his hand on Dean’s knee. “Please.”

Fifteen minutes later, Zachariah limps out of the meeting room with a huge smile plastered to his face.

Meg shuts the door, grimacing, “What the fuck did you do? Old Captain Fish appears high.”

“Spanking. I need a gallon of sanitizer. Seriously, this is worse than shit on my face.” She hands him a small bottle of Purell. “Can he be on my Hell No list now?”

“Yes.” Meg pops the P, cackling a little.

“Don’t want to talk about it.” He stayed clothed the entire time, but he still feels disgusted.

Raising her hands in defense, Meg checks the clock on her phone, “We have ten minutes till Ishim. Now, he on the other hand will probably get access to you after each trial. He’s on the League’s Yes list. I got the notice yesterday.”

“He’s the alpha they want me to mate.” He pours a Scotch from the mini bar, taking a shot, “It’s why you brought his scent sample to our first meeting. In hopes I would at least appreciate the aroma.”

She kicks the couch with the tip of her boot, “Certainly would have made my job easier. On a hilarious note, it’s one of the reasons Castiel was picked for your dreamscape bodyguard. Ishim’s a
distant relative, and their scents are similar. Who would have guessed you find awkward sexy?"

“Says the Omega who finds a sugar-shocked trickster sexy.”

Her mouth opens to possibly shoot him a witty rebuttal when there is a bang on the door. The alpha doesn’t even wait for a response, just throws open the door, commanding, “Meg get out!”

“Dean’s still got a few minutes down time.”

“You don’t want me to repeat myself, omega.” Ishim points to the door as Meg glances between the two, her expression flooding with anger.

Not wanting to get Meg in trouble, Dean stands, escorting her to the exit. “See you in twenty.”

When they are alone, he lurks by his only means of escape, choosing not to approach the alpha. In contrast to Zachariah, who was gross but harmless, this new guy exudes danger and not the exciting type. Ishim has an impeccably tailored charcoal suit with a gold Rolex watch hanging from his left wrist. Flashy jewelry has never impressed Dean. The man’s cold eyes size Dean up as if he’s on the menu.

“Where do you live, Ishim?” A safe query to get the ball rolling.

“Doesn’t matter, when you’re mine you will learn to appreciate it.” The dominant posturing has Dean’s body screaming to run, his flight instinct on overdrive. “I have several houses. We shall see where I think you will look best. Although, New York has some excellent schools for our children. You will give birth within the year.”

Dean’s completely shocked into silence.

Ishim ignores Dean, opting to make himself a drink and stretch out on the couch. The alpha’s legs are spread wide. “Should we get started? I’d hate to break you in on our mating night.”

Taking a few short breaths because the stench of plums is shredding his senses, Dean leans against the wall, crossing his arms. “I haven’t seen you in action, Alpha. The challenges are designed so both parties have to work for it.” He winks.

“Amusing.” Ishim nods, “We can play your naïve games,” he gulps down his drink, “for a bit.”

Dean would enjoy handing Mr. Money Bags his ass in several pieces, but a voice bubbles from his memories: beguile them. One day the omega will get his revenge. Today he doesn’t get a choice.

“I’m sure a strapping Alpha such as yourself will be able to snag my flag in the chute. Win your time with me, properly.”

A chilling laugh slices through the room. “Oh, racing in the chute is for the younger bunch. I’ll be watching, though, so you never lose sight of who owns you.”

Dean’s teeth grind on - owns. The man believes wealth and power are how to woo an omega; shit, he should introduce Ishim to Bela. Actually, no one deserves such a nasty guy.

Patting the spot next to him, Ishim grins, “Come here. I promise not to bite.”

Unable to come up with an alternative, Dean obeys, choosing to keep a good foot between him and the alpha. Quietly he bats his eyelashes, because his voice is drowning in barely contained rage. Thankfully Rowena taught her students well in the art of scent control.
“Your delectable scent will have to keep me appeased.” Ishim inhales loudly. “The bitch Naomi sent her socially pathetic son to keep me in check. It seems he will be in next to make sure you remain unmated and my strong alpha bouquet doesn’t linger.”

“Oh, I haven’t met him yet.” Gabriel’s a genius. Making Cas a bodyguard of sorts for the League gives him access to Dean and won’t intimidate the other alphas. Although, the omega wishes he could break the bastard’s nose for speaking ill of his true mate. “What’s his name?”

“Castiel.” Ishim cracks his knuckles. “The guy actually chooses to live alone in the mountains.”

A genuine smile slips onto the omega’s face, images of racing through the forest with Cas aiding Dean to find a moment of peace. The conversation rolls on, lots of Alpha chest pounding. Ishim’s got tons of money and seems to lack any manners on not showing it off.

As their time ends Meg knocks, popping her head in. “Ishim, say your goodbyes.”

“I’ll see you after the next trial, Dean.”

The alpha snatches his shirt, yanking him forward. Dean’s able to turn his face just in time so the kiss lands on his cheek. “Looking forward to it.”

“Hey Meg!” Ishim hasn’t released Dean as he yells.

“Yes?”

“I’m glad I chose the green silk, remind me to pick something similar for our next meeting.” The man actually pets Dean’s hair as he heads out the door.

Her fake happy face slides right off when the door is shut and locked. Dean tears the clothes from his back exclaiming, “HE DRESSED ME!”

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry.” Meg’s helping him strip, tossing the offending fabric to the corner of the room. “I’m sorry. I couldn’t say no.” The poor woman opens a bag hanging from her shoulder, retrieving a pair of jeans and a white t-shirt. “Cas should be here soon.”

“I smell him on me.” Dean gags from the notion.

A can of deodorizing spray appears in her hand. “Spin and I’ll spray.”

After several applications of the anti-scent spray, Dean’s dresses in his own clothes. Meg promptly places the offending plum clothes in a plastic bag, sealing it shut. Both omegas dance around the room waving pillows from the couch to help get rid of Ishim’s deplorable stench. Castiel shouldn’t have to smell other alphas.

A quiet knock has Dean dashing to the door throwing it open, “Cas!”

“May I enter? I know you get ten minutes between and it’s only been nine.” His Alpha’s kind eyes appear bashful at the request.

Snatching the familiar blue tie, Dean tugs the man inside for a giant hug. “I love that you asked.”

“It would be rude not to.” Castiel mumbles into the omega’s neck.

Warmth and concern radiate from the alpha. Raising his lips, Dean seeks out the matching pair meant just for him. The kiss has no heat behind it. In this moment the omega needs comfort and love to obscure the horrors of the previous alpha encounters. Intuitively Castiel gives him exactly what he
craves, security in the storm.

When Dean finally releases his true mate, Meg has vanished, leaving them utterly alone. No babysitter tonight. “I’m so happy you’re here.”

“I promised.” Cas leans in, kissing him softly, again. “Gabriel came up with an excuse for my visits which should allow my seeing you daily to go without comment from competing alphas. The public corporation that funnels money into the League has signed a sponsorship deal with Crowley. As a prized omega, it would be prudent you are scent checked frequently by an employee.”

“Sounds good to me.” They saunter over to the couch, but Dean can’t sit down; instead he pushes some chairs around so he and Cas can lounge across an area rug, arms embraced tightly. “How does the whole sponsorship deal work?”

“The company pays Crowley a large sum then gets a percentage of all monies paid towards the Center for the different omegas under the Director’s care. In turn the Center gets more publicity for their top stars. A patch will be added to your uniform before the third trial with the Heavenly Delights logo on it.”

“Heavenly Delights? Wait, the huge, prepackaged-cake company?”

“Yes, we rival Little Debbie for the market. In my spare time on the mountain I work on accounting issues. Gabriel is their spokesperson.”

“A family affair,” Dean chuckles, snuggling into Castiel’s side.

His alpha wraps his trench coat around him, whispering, “You seem upset. Perhaps my scent will settle your woes.”

The brilliant dreamweaver is correct. Immediately the smells of cinnamon and orange waft through Dean’s nose, pores and mind. His soul feels lighter. A kiss to his forehead releases such a rush of emotions. Happy, loved, and safe are among the top contenders.

“I hate Ishim.” Dean’s eyes are shut, but the fingers weaving in and out of his hair pause. Castiel’s sharp inhale shares his own displeasure. Well, the spicy burn of angry cinnamon adds to the opinion. “Meg mentioned he’s a relative.”

Those lovely long fingers return to scratching Dean’s scalp, “A very distant cousin on the Novak side. Ishim’s immense wealth and family connections are how my Mother found him. The man’s love of owning only the best led to his choice to donate a million dollars.”

“He paid a million to have,” Dean’s voice quivers, “me?”

“He invested in the cause.” Cas lifts Dean’s face to stare at him. “The pledge my mother made to Ishim for your mate-ship is an embarrassment to the entire foundation on what the Heat Liberation League stands for; she should apologize for it. However, the money made it possible for us to meet.”

“I think we send Ishim a nice gift basket after you claim me.”

Cas’s loud, rambunctious laugh cracks through the dark space. “I’m not sure that would be wise.”

Chapter End Notes
Happy Love Day to you All!

XOXOXO,
Angie
Insanity drives Dean to throw Castiel against the door the moment he sees him. The omega devours his alpha’s mouth, permitting the orange and cinnamon flavor to flood his tongue with pleasure, igniting a blaze in his groin. Fuck, Cas relents to his will. Dean’s going to touch, taste, and experience his true mate with everything the Lord gave him.

Days off are for relaxing. He can’t imagine a better way to rest and recoup from the first two trials than a little skin on skin with Castiel. Dean’s got two days until he faces the third trial, his first with other alphas. Fear of the unknown has his hands roaming a bit rougher as the omega begins popping the buttons of Cas’s dress shirt.

“Dean.” The alpha catches his wrists, holding them still. “Removing clothes might be tempting fate, my Omega.”

“I won’t be scented for 48 hours by another alpha. Plenty of time to scrub my ass clean,” he puts all his pain and anxiety into his expression, “I need you.”

Hands cup his chin as Castiel brings his mouth in for a scalding, passionate kiss. When their lips separate, the Alpha’s eyes are sizzling with power. “Do you trust me?”

“With my life.” Dean’s not messing around here. Cas is it for him.

Those sapphire gems narrow as the alpha’s aroma thickens with a barrage of emotions. “I will never ask that of you. Whatever the league requests, your survival is important to us both.”

Odd. Dean cards his fingers through Cas’s hair, inspecting his lover closer. The bags under his eyes are dark and heavy, the sparkle dimmer, and the smile seems forced.

“What’s going on Cas?”

“Let’s not spoil our time together. The others will be in soon enough to burst our bubble. I wish to make you feel good.” Cas kisses him again with an edge of desperation.

Understanding their moment is fleeting, Dean flips them so his back is to the wall of the blue and gold parlor of the Center. “Do your best, Alpha.”

“Challenge accepted,” Cas sighs through their swiping tongues.

Suddenly clothes are being yanked from his chest, leaving the omega naked from the waist up. The trench coat is tossed to the side along with the blue tie. Their mouths continue to explore one another as four sets of hands work on removing Castiel’s white dress shirt. Really, can’t the alpha wear a t-shirt for once?

The salaciously sinful drag of skin against his own answers a slew of nightly prayers as the alpha moves up and down, careful to connect in every way possible. Hands massage his back as Castiel’s
mouth works his torso, pausing to lick a nipple. Tingling erupts at each spot. A tidal wave of slick swamps his boxers; the omega’s hips thrust forward, searching for friction. The alpha growls at the sexually enhanced bouquet consuming the air. A tongue wanders over his body with an intentional and playful caress. Dean exhales into bliss.

“Turn around, my Omega,” Cas whispers into his ear.

Loving the sensual plea, Dean obeys, allowing the Alpha to place his hands flat on the wall. Supple lips kiss down his throat and out to his shoulder. His lover’s hand unzips the omega’s fly. Dean’s surprised when Cas slips the omega’s cock out without undoing his button. His curiosity piques as Cas strokes his erection with the right hand while the left slips on a condom.

“I think you got it backwards, Cas;” Dean snickers. His laughter catches as he hears Castiel’s own zipper lowering.

“Our seed can leave the strongest scent claim.” The alpha nibbles on the shell of Dean’s ear. “If we keep it off the other’s skin, then the rest can be washed away.”

Desire builds under the omega’s flesh. He goes to face his alpha when the man gives his cock a nearly painful squeeze, exclaiming, “Dean. If I observe your stunning face in the throes of ecstasy my control will be lost. We can enjoy ourselves, but you must be perceived by others as untouched.”

“I know.” His voice is barely audible because the truth hurts. The omega can belong to Castiel only in the hush of stolen moments.

The noise of another condom wrapper being torn has Dean grinning. Not breaking the rules, the omega keeps his hands on the wall as he pushes back onto the warm, solid chest behind him. A hard cock stabs his ass. Closing his eyes, Dean lets his head fall forward, astray in the mouth working over his lower neck. Castiel’s hand returns to his dick, working both erections.

Dean’s imagination releases him from the confines of the Center to a cabin in the mountains where he and Castiel may spend eternity. He can nearly smell the blaze of the fireplace. There, he is Castiel’s Omega. A future will rise with the sun spreading across the white blanket of snow.

“Cas,” Dean moans, his knees beginning to tremble, “I love you.”

“I love you, I love you, I love you.” Castiel’s words stutter off his tongue, the solid presence of the alpha giving the omega inner strength.

Heavy breathing skitters over his hairline, causing goosebumps to explode. The omega rolls his hips in rhythm with his Alpha’s hand, pumping it harder with each glide. Eleven days. At the close of the Challenges, Dean will finally have his true mate’s claim. A real bite, blood trickling down his chest marking him as taken. It’s the one steadfast light shining against the depressing darkness.

Their aromas blend into a powerful single entity.

“I will always be yours, Dean.” Cas’s haughty, raw, thick voice slams into Dean’s psyche. The man is pure sex on legs. “Come for me.”

Screaming incoherently, the omega’s climax has him plunging to the floor. He looks up towards Castiel as the alpha reaches his own orgasm. The sight is breathtaking. A slight sheen of sweat breaks on the man’s torso as he strokes his dick, an elongated incisor piercing the alpha’s lip. A single teardrop of blood appears. If only he could feel the seed of his lover spraying over his flesh and swallow the crimson treat.
Cas appears slightly embarrassed as he tugs off the condom muttering, “Dean, you will need to clean yourself up. We don’t want me smelling of you.”

“This, sucks.” Dean slams his fists on the floor, emulating one of his toddlers. “You should wear my scent forever.”

Crashing next to him, Castiel tilts in, kissing him tenderly. “Yes, as Gabriel often says this sucks the big one.”

The alpha crawls over to his backpack, retrieving a pack of baby wipes and two zip-lock bags. Cas removes the condom on his own dick, placing it in one of the bags, and scrubs down his groin careful not to touch any of Dean’s cum, then tosses the supplies to the omega.

“I feel wrong washing you away,” he announces, doing the same routine to his body.

Another strange expression flits across his alpha’s face. “It will be okay.”

“Cas, man, what the hell is going on?”

Agony assaults his Alpha’s expression, Castiel gasping for air. When Dean moves to comfort his true mate, Cas halts him with a hand. “We can only move forward.”

“I don’t understand.” Cautiously Dean zips up his jeans and finishes dressing.

A knock at the door has the Alpha croaking out, “Enter,” then slinking to the corner.

Meg strolls in, spraying deodorizer. “Dean, you’re going to have to scrub for an hour tonight.”

“Worth it.” He winks half-heartedly, because Cas won’t look at him. Something’s happening, and it’s got his true mate terrified. “So, what’s the impromptu meeting about?”

Behind the scent expert comes Amara, Crowley, Hannah, Jack, and a woman Dean’s never met. She’s a tall omega with dark brown hair in a bun, blue eyes, and a grey pantsuit.

“Dean, I’m Naomi Novak. Sorry it’s taken me so long to greet you properly.” The woman shakes his hand, her grin cold and rehearsed. “Are you ready for the third trial?”

“Sure.” The omega shrugs, searching the room for an ally. They all stare at the floor, except Jack who has a goofy grin. “Maybe you can enlighten me as to the meaning behind the group pouting?”

A head tilt back has Naomi snickering. “It appears some of them have become dazzled by your charms and are apprehensive of the next step in your quest.”

“A quest, huh?” Man, Charlie would be flipping out right now. She’s always wanted a magnificent quest to save her fairy princess. “Mind sharing?”

Naomi retrieves a familiar envelope from her suit jacket. The Heat Liberation League symbol stamped to the front. “We are here to answer any questions.”

Nodding, Dean steps to the side, tearing the paper to snag the single sheet inside. Somewhere deep inside the omega senses the change in the room as the bouquet turns into a multitude of emotions from fear to rage. Glimpsing over his shoulder, he notices Cas tug on his jacket, staring at the scenic painting on the wall. Not good.

“No time like the present,” he mutters, reading the letter.
You will not miss a trial for any reason.

You will immediately stop taking your suppressants.

You will continue to take your herb mix along with a new pill.

Immediately Dean scans the many faces, “Is the new pill another form of heat suppressant?”

“No,” Hannah replies, stepping forward. “In four to eight days your heat will arrive and last significantly longer than average.”

“You guys are joking,” the omega spins in the room feeling like a stalked animal, “right? The very first command states I can’t miss a trial. What …”

The doctor’s face softens. “You will attend possibly the fourth and, in all probability, the fifth trial in heat.”

Disbelief rocks his world. Dean can’t find the words to express the utter shock of what Hannah said to him. The omega remains motionless, pleading towards her blue eyes for more information or explanation or damn it anything to ease his devastation at what these people are asking him to do.

“Not to worry, Dean, all will be well.” Naomi pats his shoulder. “Have you met Jack?”

He nods, still at a loss, language eludes him.

The young omega steps forward, “I’m the proof you need. When we met in the truck, I was in my second day of heat.”

“Hold on,” Dean definitely recalls the pre-heat no aroma off the guy, “I talked to you, scented you, there was no heat smell at all.”


God, now he’s getting pissed off. “Then what’s with all the fucking cloak and dagger shit? Why not put all omegas on the new pill?”

Squeezing his bicep awkwardly, Naomi adds, “Alphas with power and money have quashed any attempt to release studies and/or press statements about our new wonder drug. The only way to tell the world is to do it when most of the nation is watching.”

“I’M A PUBLICITY STUNT! You are forcing me to walk out in a trial with strange alphas during my heat, pray to God this miracle remedy works, and when I’m not gang raped you guys will do a tell-all about the incident.” Dean’s hating the idea more and more.

The oddly quiet Crowley finally speaks, “Your popularity is hitting celebrity status after the first two trials. The national Omega Challenge Network has spoken to me about running your last three trials live. Dean, no one will listen until we show them. Hannah herself was the original test subject and has been following Jack’s and your progress. You will be safe.”

“Safe? You can’t promise that. The treatment sterilized Hannah and clearly sent Jack into a super young heat. What if I react differently?” He turns to Hannah, begging, “I’ve known you for three years; how could you have kept it a secret? Why not test me before the shit hits the fan to see if it works?”

“The herbs needed to finish altering your scent.” She swallows over a sob. “I’m sorry, I was wrong
to not tell you beforehand. My hope for future omegas clouded my judgement. Dean, I’ve seen way too many horrors from omegas paired with evil alphas who harm them and toss them out with the trash, simply to mate again.”

Castiel steps out from his corner. “What do you mean, altering his scent?”

“The herbs he’s been on since an infant are the same I took, too. They change the DNA in our scenting glands to produce a fuller, more-alluring fragrance to all alphas. After claiming, only our mates will notice the difference. It’s why those alphas in the trial arena go nuts when he passes by. They can’t help but desire him.”

“I’m literally a walking aphrodisiac for anyone with a knot, and you want me to go into heat?” Dean doesn’t miss the sadness in Cas’s eyes. The man might be questioning his own reaction to the omega’s roasted almond bouquet.

Amara whispers into her son’s ear, turning him away from Dean. The omega steps towards them, but Naomi blocks his movement, replying, “Yes. Between your increased personal perfume and being in heat, if no alpha reacts then the league can begin the process to end all Centers across the nation.”

“How? I mean, come on, most of the directors aren’t going to just close up shop.”

“We have several senators who are willing to introduce a bill once the event goes public. Using their pull to change legislation should be the beginning of the end.” Naomi either doesn’t care or is clueless to her child’s distress because she’s not even acknowledged Castiel’s sour, distraught smell. “Anything else?”

As Dean is raising his hand to point at Cas, Meg grabs it, exclaiming, “Remember, we will all be there.” She holds his hand still, giving her head a slight shake. “You just have to finish the trials, and you will fulfill your role with the league. Right, Naomi?”

The scent expert gives an innocent and genuine look at the older omega. Dean wasn’t sure Meg could seem so sweet; it's kind of disturbing. Then it clicks. If Naomi’s the one writing the commands from the league, she can’t know of Castiel and Dean’s mating intentions. The loophole puzzle is starting to take shape.

“Of course.” The woman adjusts the bun in her hair. “The trials should be your number one focus. Don’t forget to keep an eye out for a mate. I’ve heard wonderful things about the crop this year.”

Crowley clears his throat, “Naomi, we have a few things to discuss in private. I believe the goals are understood, so if you would come with me.”

“Yes, yes. It’s not like Dean has a choice in the matter. We shall obey.” She sings, following Crowley out the door.

Shaking fists have fingernails cutting into his palms as Dean twirls back to his Alpha. “I really want to punch your mother in the face.”

“Welcome to my world,” Amara shrugs. “My Omega’s sole motivation since the first day I met her has been the League’s mission. She’s blinded by the task. Hence, why she never noticed the delightful sex stench permeating the oxygen.”

Cas lingers behind his Mom. Dean’s done with the hiding, finally cutting past Amara. “Cas?”

“I’m useless.” The Alpha’s cheeks are wet with tears. “Why am I even here; if we are discovered it
can destroy our chances of being together.”

“Stop. Don’t you ever question why you’re here. I want you. Jesus, Castiel the next few days are going to be the scariest of my life. Please stay, hold my hand and let me regain safety in your arms.” A frightening thought has him asking, “Will you be able to visit with me in heat?”

Ducking his head, Cas blushes. “I started on Alpha suppressant injections this morning. Hannah has assured me they will significantly lower my ability to scent.”

“I’ve heard the side effects are terrible.” Dean would never wish pain and suffering on his alpha.

“Being able to help you in even the smallest way will make the discomfort worth it.”

Grabbing Cas’s trench coat, he yanks the man closer, kissing him. In the next gasp for air, Dean mumbles, “You’re awesome.”

Chapter End Notes

Hope this chapter finds you all well.

XOXOXO, Angie
Everybody wants to Rule the World

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Castiel POV

Little feet thump against wooden floors as the herd approaches. As he swats away the fuzzy unicorn tail tickling his nose, Cas squints with one eye at the clock; 7:08 a.m. Ah, better than five like yesterday. At some point during the night he curled around the overstuffed magical creature. Meg and Gabriel only have one guest room in their home; Amara snagged it with maternal authority, which left Castiel to the rainbow and glitter hurricane of their eldest daughter’s room. The Alpha needs all the rest he can get; Dean’s third trial is upon them.

His borrowed bedroom door bursts open as three children leap to his bed shouting, “Uncle Cassie! Uncle Cassie! You need to come eat breakfast.”

“I’m not your uncle.” He grimaces as the youngest, Jesse, jumps on his chest. “My name is Castiel.”

He blames Gabriel for the awful family nickname.

The three-year-old grins, chewing on the action figure he carries everywhere. The doll wears a trench coat and resembles Castiel. Meg swears it’s a coincidence; Cas is unsure. The melted feet are even further reason for his concern. Jesse squawks, “Cassssie!”

Ava, the oldest at six, giggles, “Mommy said come now or you won’t be ready for your big day. Whatcha doing, Uncle Cassie?”

“Dea-ooo,” screeches Andy. He’s a curious four-year-old who listens to every word and repeats things constantly. His security item is a matchbox blue van with painted polar bears on the side. “Daddy says you gonna visit your Dea-ooo!”

Rubbing his eyes, Castiel battles his way to sitting. The children clamber over him as they discuss what they heard their parents speaking of behind a closed door. Why Gabe doesn’t realize a separation of a single piece of wood does nothing to deter his wild mob is a mystery.

“No! Dea-ooo’s going to play chase.” Ava smacks Jesse’s head. “All the alphas love him. He’s handsome.” Her alpha dominance plots to tame the younger alpha sibling. “But nobody’s going to catch him.”

“Cassssie loves Dea-ooo,” Andy howls. The little omega crashes into Castiel in a wrestling move, or hug, the Alpha can’t decide.

A knock at his door has the crew turning to face Amara. “We talked about keeping people’s feelings a secret.” She places a finger over her lips, “shhhhh.”

“Keep your cool Great Amara,” Ava huffs, sliding off the mattress. “The Big N isn’t around.”
His mom has always had an interesting relationship with Gabe and Meg’s children. In fact, she’s the only person to babysit unscathed. Since, technically Amara is their great aunt, the shortened version gives his mom a laugh, and the kids can’t stand Naomi. It’s an odd bond.

Amara waves the children to her, kneeling down. “Have you guys discussed the proposal; do we have a deal?”

The kids glance at each other, Ava answering, “Yes, the new beta nanny will be safe for two weeks, and you will give us fireworks.”

“Boom.” Jesse’s eyes are swelling with excitement, “Big booms.”

“We have met an accord. No harassing the woman till after the trials.” Amara ruffles Andy’s hair, “Go eat some pancakes, you will need your energy. Remember, keep the flames to a minimum and away from my room.”

“Pray for her,” Jesse counters, following his siblings out the door. The children always move as a single pack; even the bravest child professional doesn’t last long.

“Really, Mom? You are going to lull the poor Nanny into a false sense of security. It’s almost cruel.”

Shrugging, Amara stands to lean against the door. “We need Gabriel and Meg focused on Dean and the Challenges, not worried about house fires.”

Rising to his feet, Castiel stretches, tapping his eyebrows for peace of mind. Quickly changing the conversation because she is correct, his omega needs to be everyone’s sole focus, he asks. “When are we leaving for the Hunter bunker?”

“Meg suggested 8:30. It’s a couple hours' drive, then she and Gabriel have several matches to coordinate for the afternoon. Dean won’t run the chute until late evening. Are you still planning on putting your name in the lottery for his group?”

The question has Castiel pausing. “Unless you can purchase me a slot, only five alphas enter at a time. Three spots are acquired by a bidding system and two are given to lottery winners. I must be in the first grouping in Dean’s bracket.”

Amara frowns. “I’m aware of how the system works. Getting to be one of the first five in will be the trick, alphas don’t like leftovers. My query is whether you want to win the cash bid for a slot or the lottery?”

“Clearly, you’ve rigged it either way.” Cas states, pulling out his suit for the day. A dusting of glitter has a frown building. The gold and silver puffs of color have followed him relentlessly since their arrival.

“No,” she shakes out the long black skirt of her dress, “I’m going to leave my son’s happiness to fate. Please, what’s the point of staying with your mother if it weren’t for the underhanded connections.”

“Loyalty to your mate. Love for your omega. Maybe attempt an answer without sarcasm, Mom, you know I’m terrible with it.” Castiel digs through the luggage for clean socks.

His mom glances at the ceiling, pretending to weigh the options for her response. Eventually, as seriousness wipes the smile from her lips, she declares, “Castiel, I am happy with your Mother. She’s not my true mate or even my best friend, but I can respect her dedication to the cause. Not all
of us can find everything they need in one person.”

“Guess I’m lucky.” Castiel embraces Amara, speaking in a hush, “I have to be in the trials with him. He must never feel alone; the entire group has only the freedom of all omegas in mind, overlooking the person who’s taking the real risk. Mom, I won’t survive without him.”

“Understood. Your future is Dean. I will never let you down, my son.” She kisses his cheek playfully. “Let’s be honest, I’m the best parent ever. Now, for the icky part of your day.”

Amara snags the dark brown leather case from off the dresser. Inside are the individually wrapped needle packets, alcohol wipes and the small bottle of liquid. The alpha suppressant. Castiel takes a seat on the edge of the bed, leaning his head to the side. The drug must be inserted directly into his scenting gland every morning until Castiel is able to claim his omega. With an established connection between him and Dean and their true mate status, this is the safest choice for all involved. Although, extremely painful. The dimming of his scenting ability has thrown his sense of self off balance.

Keeping his eyes shut, Cas listens to Amara perform the process, hissing as the cold alcohol sanitizes the injection spot on his lower neck. Hannah taught his mom how to give the medication and the precise location.

“Sorry,” Amara whispers as she jams the rather long needle into his neck so it will reach the proper gland.

The burning, stinging, horrid sensation builds as the alpha suppressant enters his body. Castiel’s eyes water as he holds back a scream. He would never wish to frighten the children.

“There is no alternative.” Castiel replies to the sorrow in his Mom’s gaze, her hand holding his as the younger alpha writhes in pain. Dean must follow the orders set before him, and Cas will stand united by his side. “His …heat will come,” he observes Amara throwing away the used materials, “I must be ready.”

“You can be angry.” His mom is opening the door for him to converse freely on the subject.

“Not today. Distractions will not help my omega, perhaps tomorrow.”

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The Hunter bunker has several different viewing options for visiting alphas. Currently he and Amara have sequestered a six-person booth in an upscale bar called “The Library.” Filled bookshelves line the walls along with booths and scattered round tables. A white glowing bar circles the center with two bartenders serving. In each corner hangs a large LCD television displaying the trials in real time. A projector shines against the back of the bar with a list of omegas and their order of appearance. An alpha can merely wander across the hall to the observation mezzanine and private rooms when they want to watch.

Castiel’s nursing a scotch and soda. He should switch to water in a bit because he must have his wits about him before entering the chute. Amara’s typing on her phone, an empty glass at her elbow.

Their beta waitress brings their order of cheeseburger sliders, “Can I get you a refill?”

“Yes, more scotch less water.” His mom’s eyes never leave the phone.

“Thank you,” he offers, taking a bite of burger. “Oh God, these are heaven.”
Nodding, Amara mumbles, “I told you.”

For the hundredth time this hour, Cas checks the omega list. Dean’s still in the final bracket. The second they arrived, Castiel added his name to the lottery. He’d be terrified if the Alpha were actually relying on the name draw to obtain entry. The cash bid for Dean’s group is up to ten thousand. Given the early hour, the final price could be closer to fifty by the last call.

Crowley strolls up to the table, yet doesn’t acknowledge them as he passes. However, a small black leather change purse lands on the cherry wood top. Amara slides her hand over the pouch, flicking it across to Castiel. “Don’t lose it.”

Holding the leather delicately, Castiel tucks it into the inner pocket of his suit jacket. His foot taps the blue gym bag on the carpet with his running shorts, t-shirt, and sneakers. Being prepared is important. He will win a proper meeting with Dean.

“CASTIEL! AMARA!” A female voice shouts, “What are you doing here?”

“Mirabel,” Cas answers, scooting over so the alpha can flop down next to him. “I would expect the answer to be obvious.”

His second cousin waves over the waitress, ordering a coffee. “Yes, yes I’m not an idiot. The Winchester Omega runs his third trial today, but why would you come specifically?”

Amara glances between them yet remains passive to the discussion. Mirabel’s Alpha father, Senator Michael Novak, will be executing the legislative part of the plan. His role is vital. The downside to the situation, which makes things a lot more sensitive, is Michael was the one who introduced Ishim to Naomi all those years ago.

Mirabel is three years Castiel’s junior. She has always been kind-hearted and a tad gullible. Nevertheless, if she notices anything suspicious, Ishim could push for more clarity in his arrangement with the Heat Liberation League. Michael sending her might be a second set of eyes on the ground. Not that Mirabel would do anything evil, she’s just always been entirely too open and honest. Hence, why the young female alpha’s information on the plot has been in extremely broad strokes.

“Mother only entrusts myself with the security of Dean Winchester’s virginity.” He swallows the rest of his drink, enjoying the burn of alcohol. “I’ll be closely participating in his trials and scenting him after any meetings with interested alphas.”

Cautiously the Alpha lifts up a prayer for the sincerity in his tone.

“Huh? Can’t Gabe’s cranky Omega handle the purity issues?” Her coffee appears, distracting Mirabel for a moment as she adds five packets of saccharine. “Aren’t members worried you might become attached to the omega? His accented aroma would bewitch even the stone-cold heart of our Cassie.”

Fuck. Castiel’s not one for foul language yet there is no other word which fits; fuck, fuckity, fuck, mother fucker. Also, he finds himself shooting Mirabel the bird under the table because he’s stoic, not cold-hearted. Such an annoying girl.

Putting her phone away, Amara clears her throat. “You’ve known my silly, obsessively controlling omega your entire life, Mirabel. Do you honestly believe Naomi would agree to a non-blood Novak seeing to such a crucial task? She and Meg have never gotten along.”

“Oh my God! You’re right, they hate each other.” She sips her drink, “Remember two years ago at Easter when Ava put the rotten egg in Naomi’s suit pocket. She kept moving around trying to avoid
the stench coming from her own clothing. Hilarious.”

The rest of the afternoon goes smoother as Mirabel trashes his poor mother. Although, near the end, even Amara was tiring of the topic.

Finally, at 4:15 p.m., the two names from the lottery for Dean’s bracket are posted. To ensure no duplicates, the first and last names are displayed along with an eight-digit code. His name is missing. Castiel yanks out the leather satchel to snatch the green lottery slip. Instead of finding the necessary emerald paper, he discovers a letter in Crowley’s handwriting.

Castiel,

You may visit Dean after the trial. However, it will seem odd for you to run the chute for his favor. There will be no discussions.

Forgive me, this was done for the safety of all.

Crowley

With trembling hands, Castiel hands the white sheet of lies to his mom. Amara reads it, her mouth dropping in shock. Clearly, she had no idea of the new twist.

One talent Cas has always appreciated of Amara is her ability to foresee all possible outcomes. The woman stands, heaving her long dress up to her upper thigh. He glances to the table, hissing, “What are you doing?”

The answer comes in a slap to the wood before him. A long, thin clear plastic bag crammed with piles of money appears. “The cash bidding lasts five minutes past the lottery name announcement.” She shoves the bag towards him yelling, “Run! Castiel, my love, don’t leave your future to others.”

“Thank you.” He chokes on the truth and power of those two words. Seizing the bag, he dashes out of The Library, speeding towards the bidding room with his trench coat flapping violently. Castiel knocks several alphas, apologizing as he continues to his destination. The room is cramped as Alphas shout out the recent bids for the three prime spots in Dean’s bracket. Chaos blows over him as Cas ignores them all, his attention on the man holding the gavel. The auctioneer calling out the top bidding numbers.

“Shit!” Cas never collected a bid number; he has no way to place the offer.

A bidding paddle slams into his open palm. Looking up, he sees Gabriel smiling maniacally with a lollipop between his teeth. His cousin shouts over the commotion, “It’s in your name. Meg would deny me sex for a lifetime if I didn’t listen to her. True mates trump everything.”

The digital clock above the auctioneer’s head is counting down and has less than a minute. Glimpsing at the bag he spots the amount written in his Mom’s hand, $120,000. Next, the alpha hears the number 77,000 yelled.

With thirty seconds on the clock Cas raises his arm bellowing, “95 thousand!”

“We have a new bidder at 95. Thank you, Alpha. Do I hear 96?”

A gentleman to the left raises his own paddle, “One hundred thousand!”

The room goes silent because six-digit bids are unheard of, yet Cas isn’t surprised. He simply glances at the last five seconds shrieking, “110,000!”
The auctioneer looks oddly at him, then slams down his gavel as a loud piercing buzzer announces the end of the bidding.

“You bid against yourself, numbnuts,” Gabriel murmurs into his ear. “They take the top three.”

“Oh. I got excited.” A blush paints his cheeks. “Do I owe for both?”

“Nah, overenthusiastic alphas are common around here. Congrats.” Gabe slaps his shoulder. “Get ready, things are about to get fucking ugly.” He frowns, disappearing into the crowd.

The Alpha’s vision goes blurry as he pays for his spot, receiving the gold coin, his fingers clasping it like letting go would be losing the love of his life. His cousin’s final words are sinking in.

Castiel openly rebelled against the Novak mission. However, his brain recalls the letter from Crowley. It was not typed and had no league seal. He will need to show his appreciation to the alpha because he left the door cracked for him to crash through.

Ishim will discover his intentions. There is no way to hide his behavior in the bidding. Ugly doesn’t begin to describe the hell he’s stepping into, but perhaps this was meant to be. Dean will battle for the freedom of all omegas, and Castiel will battle for his omega.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you. I appreciate my readers and am sending you lots of love. Feel free to drop me a comment.

XOXOXO,
Angie
The heat of the room might be boiling Dean from the inside. Sweat soaks his black-and-red uniform, and he hasn’t even started the trial. He and twenty-four other omegas are squashed into a dank, lifeless, rectangular space with harsh, rusty metallic walls, waiting to enter the chute. Dull, buzzing lights illuminate the room in a shadowy haze. Three rows of harsh steel benches are the sole seating option, so he chooses to lean against a wall. Maybe separation from the mass of humanity will be cooler.

All the wilting omegas stare at the circular barricade at one end of the room; the opposite side was where they came in so they are collectively betting that’s where they cross into the third trial. The holding tank has no windows, no food, no water, and two pathetic-looking ceiling fans to blow around the stench of terrified omega. Dean stretches his calves. The movement at least gives his reeling mind a break.

Castiel promised he’d be there. He’s clutching to the thought with his entire soul. The inner heat bomb is ticking underneath his moist flesh. Any day now and Dean Winchester will either be a legend in omega rights or another horror story to frighten little omegas into taking their suppressants. Hannah checked him earlier, assuring him it’s not today.

A small brunette omega on one of the benches tilts over, puking on the floor. Screams of disgust drown out the echoing sound of silence. Two cleaning ladies enter with a mop and soft-spoken encouragement. No one can back out now.

“I heard it’s a swamp theme,” Gadreel mutters while signing for Eileen.

They are the only three of Crowley’s crew in the final lot. Dean nods, he’d also heard the rumors milling about the pack as they hiked down to the bottom dungeon of the Hunter bunker.

Eileen wipes her forehead, signing back, with Gadreel giving her words a voice. “The heat in here means the chute will be even worse. Be careful about losing your grip with wet hands.”

Their spandex fabric does nothing to dry the moisture. Dean murmurs for a fourth time to Gadreel, “Do I smell funny to you?”

“Heard it’s a swamp theme,” Gadreel announces, his hands catching up Eileen. “We all stink of sweat and fear; it's not just you, man.”

He laughs off the odd question, hoping no one digs deeper. Telling anyone about his switch from a heat suppressant to the new drug would be a violation of his league rules. This new gem would be showing up in his list for the third trial letter.

Cas will be there. The mantra is wailing in his head.

A weird, little thin beta stands on an elevated podium in the center right side of the tank. The man has a thick greying beard, calmly picking lint from his completely white suit. “My name is
Asmodeus. I’m the Hunter Trial designer, replacing the previous creator who was seen as too gentle for such an important task.”

The man’s horribly fake accent has Dean snickering, “Anyone feel like chicken?”

Gadreel fights off laughter as he signs to Eileen. The woman hoots uncontrollably because she can’t hear the noise she’s making and doesn’t stop till Gadreel smacks her thigh.

“Giggle all you want, little omegas.” The man’s gaze sweeps over the group. “There have already been twenty omegas to drop entirely from the challenges because the conditions in the chute pushed them to a deadly exhaustion. Remember, Hunter trials aren’t always about finishing, but surviving.”

Dean chews his lip. He has to be at all the Hunter trials, no exceptions. Dropping out due to medical reasons would be a violation of the list given to him by the league. The tension in his stomach loosens as the omega allows himself to accept his only chance of surviving is to finish. No choice.

Tugging at his ridiculous beard, Asmodeus continues, “The hatchway will slide open in five minutes. An alarm will blare in the final thirty seconds. As soon as the door opens you are free to enter for two minutes, then the steel hatch slams shut. If you get caught in the way of the five-hundred-pound barricade,” the asshole chuckles, “let’s just say it will be a red mess. There will be no clean-up crew till the end.”

In a human wave the entire crowd inches towards the door.

“Hold your britches, no one may cross the red line on the floor until the thirty second alarm begins or you will be disqualified. Out for the duration of the entire challenge for those who don’t know the consequences of a DQ.”

Shoving and yelling of where to stand in relation to the damn red mark hits ear piercing levels until Asmodeus whistles over the commotion. Once they settle, he sighs, “No one leaves the chute unless an alpha snags your flag, which should have been sewn to the back of your shirt. You may exit from one of the dozen black, translucent tube doors with the specific alpha or wait until after the trial to discuss the suitor. Otherwise, keep those legs running. If you aren’t lucky enough to be chosen, eventually the barricade will slide open for you to depart alone.” He raises a pocket watch from his jacket. “Getting close, my dears. Now, I do love a good show, so once inside the trial omega-on-omega combat is highly encouraged. Bear in mind alphas who observe or join the Hunter Challenges are hoping for a brilliant, strong, and cunning omega.”

Dean doesn’t need the sign for “fuck” to be interpreted, because he’s thinking the same. This demon in white gave the greenlight for nasty, cutthroat bloodshed. The hours spent knocking each other around in Billie’s lessons make a whole lot more sense. The lack of alphas in the chute is intentional; the five to one ratio bringing out a primal fear of abandonment. Violence will be rampant. He scans the group, assessing dangers. All the faces glaring back at him are strangers. Shit! He should have paid more attention in the previous trials.

A particularly wicked siren wails as two red lights twirl next to the massive hatch. Elbows, fists, and palms shove the party forward pressing them against the huge door measuring a good twelve feet wide. Asmodeus yells something from his perch, but Dean can’t hear. The screams from those being flattened against the walls reach migraine levels.

Dean’s grateful Eileen suggested standing in the center of the pack. It’s keeping them clear of the crush zones. Suddenly, the mammoth circular entryway slowly begins to slide. A piercing light bleeds through the opening; Dean has to hold his hand up to block the rays. Heat rides in, thickening
the air in the room and making it harder to breathe. In moments the barricade has revealed several feet of space, permitting the first omegas to battle their way into the chute. A slew of second thoughts pound the omega’s nerves, because this is pure insanity. People might die from trampling. The large cluster continues its natural progression forward, ignoring the cries of those against the rusty metal. Dean wishes he could stop. The league stole his ability to be a fucking human being; Sammy’s life depends on him participating in all the damn trials.

Finally, Dean steps over a limp body to enter the chute. His feet immediately sink into a muddy lake of stagnant water. Covering his mouth, the omega coughs, hoping his lungs will adjust to the humid air and putrid odor. It reminds him of death.

Scalding heat lamps hang from the top of the cylindrical chute, drilling light and heat onto the omega’s bare shoulders. The space is about thirty feet in diameter arching into the rounding hell. A slap to his face has Dean returning the hit with a punch to the other guy’s jaw, yelling, “What the hell?”

“With you dead the rest of us get a chance to shine.” The female omega in yellow attempts another strike. Dean catches her fist within his palm and twists till he hears the crack of bone.

“I’m not the enemy!” Dean bellows, searching the unfamiliar faces only to see angry, vengeful eyes.

Turning away from the majority, the omega sprints in the opposite direction. A little space between him and the mob might help his survival odds. Mumbling to himself, “Cas is coming.”

Asmodeus was clear. Dean merely has to stay alive until Castiel can snag his white flag then they can disappear into one of the ejection tubes. A look to the left reveals one of the dozen translucent plastic pipes wide enough to hold two grown men. At least his bold orders were easy.

**Participate to your best ability in the third trial. Do not die.**

**Show attraction in an alpha for the cameras. Make others jealous.**

**Receive four alphas post trial. You may pick one.**

**Keep your impending heat a secret from anyone outside of the league.**

The letter commands he express interest in a single alpha, building fascination from those who covet Dean’s ass. Sounds like a plan he can get behind. Now, the omega must not be murdered in the process, which will be the tricky part.

“Don’t die,” he murmurs, trudging through the gross, sticky swamp. “I’m so glad you made it a commandment because it was never a priority.”

Out of nowhere Dean’s plummeting to the bottom his body slamming against a collection of sticks standing up in the knee-high water. Pain shoots across his body as his skin responds to the near impaling.

“Son of a bitch!” he cries, inspecting his wounds.

Nothing more than scratches, but as he scans the new section of the chute, he sees a patchwork of differing twigs creating a slew of stepping stones. Rising to his feet Dean climbs on top of the wood, using the stable footing to race faster. A problem arises when a male omega in sky blue breaks a thinner branch, fashioning a spear. His cold smile reveals shiny white teeth as he lifts the new weapon.
“Seriously?” Dean exclaims as the dude slashes at his gut with the ragged edge.

If you can’t beat them, right? Dean swiftly bends to snag his own sharp spike, thrusting it towards the new foe. The two omegas dance around, hopping from log to log as they stab at each other. The fake sunrays are literally burning into his skin, forcing his inhales to be ragged.

While playing McStabby with the boy in blue, Dean’s desperately searching for a place to hide. Billie promised. It’s a standard part of the third trial; there will be ways to vanish.

Unable to disguise the annoyance in his tone, the omega shouts, “Screw you. I have better things to do,” ramming his stick into the aggressor’s side, cautious to stay clear of any vital organs. “Lie down. You’ll be fine.”

The blood on his hands dries quickly under the bright, harsh lights. He doesn’t have even a second to clean away the crimson patches clinging to his skin. He’s gotta figure out where the secret spots are located.

Sand. Dean’s sneakers slap onto the desert oasis section, his eyes burning from the reflecting beams. His feet drag in the sinking hell. With his eyes squinting against the brutal rays, the omega’s vision can’t see much. Movement becomes difficult the farther he pushes until a rope smacks his cheek.

Reaching towards the sky, Dean slithers out of the sandpit. A second rope hangs a few feet from his current location, and another and another. He can Tarzan his way over. However, the closer he gets to the glaring death rays, the heat nearly takes his breath.

“Too damn hot,” he huffs.

He’s wiggling a bit to the side in order to grab the next line when a moment of inspiration hits him. If he were a twisted bastard who enjoys designing torturous activities for omegas, where would he place a hiding spot?

On a hunch Dean tilts back, fighting the urge to close his eyes as he takes a real look at the chute ceiling. The long rectangular light fixtures have about a three-foot break between them. The cord he’s currently wrapped in sits in the center of the gap. Could it be that easy?

Below him several omegas are wrestling against the swallowing ground. A couple have taken to the ropes course, yet no one’s ventured as high as Dean. Now or never. Inhaling as best he can, the omega forces his body to go higher. His brain is practically screaming “NO!”

His hand slips from sweat, and the omega tumbles a bit. Dean catches the line between his thighs, squeezing tightly. Carefully, he closes his eyes because seeing his skin sizzling in the lights makes the job harder.

Giving up will never be an option.

Man, he’s going to have one hell of a tan. Dean chuckles to himself as he slinks up the quivering rope. Eventually, even with his eyes shut the omega registers the change. The blinding white light lessens. Instantly, the air cools. The omega finds himself shivering from the drastic temperature change. Allowing himself a first look, Dean takes in his surroundings.

A metal perch sits, hanging several feet above the light fixtures and a few below the ceiling. Just enough space for him to sit comfortably. The bar is cold. Dean rubs his forehead, arms, back, neck, and hands along the frigid touch of heaven. His moans could be dubbed into a high-quality porno.
From his newly acquired roost, Dean’s able to watch the chaos. Omegas beating the hell out of each other. Exactly what Asmodeus wanted, a total blood bath. An older alpha with short blonde hair pauses the insanity. The omegas’ preening for the alpha with crimson splatter painting their skin turns his stomach.

Glancing back and forth will give him time to reveal himself to Cas when he passes the spot. While he’s waiting, the omega can’t keep from grimacing at his own caked-on blood. He didn’t want to harm anyone. Why would the Challenge directors urge omegas to physically assault one another? How is that good business?

Dean doesn’t have the luxury of guilt.

He’s trying to wipe away the evidence on his pants when an extremely recognizable, messy, dark head of hair appears. Castiel’s here. Dean rolls off the bar, grasping the rope with both his hands and thighs. Sliding down, he smiles as fierce, determined blue eyes land on him. His happiness lives and dies with the alpha. He continues his descent, his flesh sliding over the gorgeous alpha’s torso, muscles rippling under him. Dean’s bow legs wrap around the waist of his true mate. The warmth radiating from Cas draws him closer even in the muggy environment. Powerful arms hold him in place, so the two men are chest to chest, their faces ghosting against each other.

The rest of the world becomes a blur. Nothing else matters.

“Hello, Dean.”

Those two words give the omega permission to exhale a reply, “Cas.”

“If it pleases my Omega, we may exit through the closest tube.” Castiel tears the flag from his back so harshly it splits the shirt in two.

Winking, Dean teases, “Hey Goose, you big stud. Take me to bed or lose me forever.”

The mop of dark locks tilts to the left while Castiel counters, “I don’t understand that reference.”

“We really need to work on your ’80s movies knowledge, Cas.”

A blood-curdling scream has the alpha’s arms tightening protectively. “Hold on, Dean.”

Draping his arms around Castiel’s neck frees the alpha’s own arms to climb up the rope. The raw alpha strength is giving Dean’s groin a tingle. His true mate uses his delicious hips to rock the line side to side until they are swinging high enough to reach the tube. Cas releases the rope. They don’t quite stick the landing. Stumbling wildly as the omega’s shoulder slams into the plastic tube. The alpha places a gold coin into a slot next to the cylinder and the hiss of fresh cool air is like heroin to his deprived lungs.

Dean leans in to capture his alpha’s lips when Cas pulls back. “Not yet.”

He refuses to release the hold on his true mate as they enter, the door swishing shut and the conduit floor rises out of the desert hell.

Once they have left the bright lights of the makeshift wasteland, Cas whispers, “Now, the moment is ours and ours alone.”

Lips brush lightly at first, exploring the supple skin of each other’s mouths. Then Dean squeezes his thighs lifting his body higher as he delves his tongue into Cas’s mouth. His lover’s tongue is truly rejuvenating his fatigued, sore, and burned body. He lovingly drowns in orange and cinnamon.
Dean’s aware they are moving, but he doesn’t give a shit.

“CASTIEL! DEAN!” Hannah shouts, holding a green glass bottle. “You both have wounds that need to be treated.”

“Later,” Dean huffs, crashing his mouth on Cas’s.

On the next inhale, Castiel adds, “Much later.”

Chapter End Notes

Lots of love to you my friends! Comments are cherished and adored.

XOXOXO,
Angie
Dean glares with disdain at the IV poking out of his arm. The asshole, yet lifesaving, needle has halted his fun times with Cas. Hannah wouldn’t even let the alpha join him in the recovery wing of the bunker. Who cares about dehydration? He can always drink a glass of water next to Castiel.

“Chill with the grumpus face.” Meg mocks him from her seat next to his cot.

“I have to meet with three other alphas, this shit is cutting into my special time with Cas.” Dean flops back on the crisp white sheets huffing, “Ten minutes! Hannah cut us off after only ten measly minutes.”

The scent expert pats her full baby bump, “You passed out, Einstein. Kind of hard to mack on your Castiel while unconscious.”

“Whatever.” His skin itches fiercely as the sweat dries. The dried blood under his nails and on his shredded uniform smells horrid. Actually, he’s just down to his pants since Cas trashed his shirt. “We should have done this somewhere Cas could have joined us.”

“I love you, but your listening skills suck ass. Challenge rules state each alpha who snags a flag during the third trial gets a full 45 minutes with the omega’s consent, barring any medical intervention. You are currently receiving medical care, which means if Castiel waits somewhere else then the clock hasn’t started yet.”

Picking at a chunk of sandy dirt on his arm, Dean shrugs. “How long will this take?”

Getting to his alpha, touching Cas and feeling whole again trumps any logical thought.

“Fifteen more minutes for the banana bag,” Hannah announces while checking on his IV, “after which you need a shower and an application of a salve Gilda sent for your burns. It should cut down your healing time significantly. Only then am I clearing you to meet with ANY alphas.”

Unable to hide the whine in his voice, Dean replies, “Are you kidding? That’s gonna take forever.”

Meg paces behind Hannah, motioning for him to shut the fuck up. Once she re-enters the doctor's line of sight, the scent expert adds, “You did good today.” She’s typing on her phone, “At least fifty alphas have sent in requests for a meeting. The deals for spots in your fourth trial have already started.”

“Cas gets one, right?” Dean can’t imagine facing the shit show without his true mate.

Instead of Meg, Hannah cuts her off answering, “He didn’t follow orders. We shall see what happens. I love my cousin, but he’s playing with fire. His mother might be stepping in to keep Cas in line.”

“What orders?” Dean’s gaze bounces between the two women.
“Crowley sent a few suggestions before the trial. One being that Castiel shouldn’t join the challenges until the fourth one.” Meg crosses her arms over her chest. “Even attempted to sabotage Castiel’s chances by letting him believe he was an automatic win for a lottery slot.”

Feeling completely betrayed, Dean stands in anger. “I thought he was on my side.”

“He is,” Hannah side-eyes Meg, “the point was to keep your connection under wraps. Let everyone think Castiel was a scent guard for Heavenly Delights, but now the entire nation will see the chemistry between you. There is no way your open display of favoritism won’t play on the nightly recap.”

“I was told to pick someone. The commands were to choose an alpha and make others jealous. I did exactly as I was directed. Win, win for everyone.” Dean can’t see why Hannah appears upset. The doctor lowers her head. “And Ishim? You’ve been promised to him. What happens when he tells Aunt Naomi to ban Castiel from all trials? There is literally a movie about a bodyguard falling for his charge. Quit thinking with your hormones and use your brain. ANY alpha you show interest in is going to be restricted or God forbid physically assaulted to keep them from you. Crowley had the perfect cover story in place, and in one moment of weakness Castiel crapped all over it. Ishim has power, money, and connections.”

Reality crashes through Dean’s bubble of hope. Popped with nothing left to hold onto, the omega stands silent, his mouth slack in shock. He could accomplish his mission in the Challenges and still lose Cas. Hannah won’t say it out loud, but Ishim could kill his true mate to clear the path for himself. Dean’s met the jerk; he has no morals. Heartless and cruel seem to be a standard MO.

It’s in moments of duress Dean does his best work. The solution begins small, a mere whisper in the back of his mind, growing strength as his fear blows in with the gust of truth. “I can fix it.”

“How?” Both ladies query.

“Make sure Ishim has no reason to believe Cas is a threat. I’m going to sell him on the idea that Cas is only a toy. An alpha for me to play with,” the next few words sting, “like a doll.”

“Fuck me.” Hannah sighs.

Meg’s brown gaze starts at the cursing doctor. “Well, she’s not wrong. Dean, you will have to run one hell of a con job to curb Ishim’s suspiciousness in you two. But, if you pull it off, Castiel becomes a meager pawn for the Heat Liberation League. It might work.”

Carefully the doctor pats his shoulder, “Ishim considers Castiel to be a pathetic man raised by a female alpha who took her mate’s last name. Perhaps, you could speak to Cas’s weaknesses.”

“He doesn’t have any.” Dean grunts. To save their chances of mating, he’s going to have to bluff one hell of a game. “However, lying to Ishim will be my pleasure.”

“Alright, I’m going to remove the IV, then a shower and you can spend some time with Castiel.” Hannah works on his arm.

Meg snatches the burn ointment from the table. “I’ll take him to the showers.” Her eager behavior has Hannah and Dean giving the scent expert weird looks. “What? Hannah has other patients waiting; I love helping.”

“I’m not sure you’re qualified.” the doctor responds, placing a clean bandage on his needle poke.
“Have you met my children? I’m overly qualified to deal with burns of all kinds. Shit, yesterday Gabriel got a little too close to a burning bear and found himself with an ugly scorch mark on his forearm.”

He can’t stop himself from asking, “Why was there a burning bear?”

“Because Barbies simply melt. Look, the kids have been perfect Angels for the new nanny, and Gabe was letting them blow off some steam in the backyard.” The scent expert shakes the salve jar, “all I’m saying is I can do it, so Hannah, you can head out.”

“Okay. Guess I’ll see you both back at the Center.” Hannah gives Meg a once over before scooting her chair over to a sleeping omega in the next patient space.

Without warning, Meg’s grasping his arm and jostling Dean out the door.

“You seem really excited about rubbing me down.” He lowers his voice, “Should Gabriel be worried?”

“NO! Dumbass, I’ve arranged for someone else to ease your pain.”

They are flying through the bunker halls, taking turns Dean will never recall. “Who?”

The tiny woman smacks his forehead hard. “Earth to Dean. Who do you think?”

She stands waiting for the light bulb to ignite above his head. “HOLY SHIT!” Meg slaps her hand over his mouth, muffling his asking, “Cas?”

“Go find out. You’ve got an hour.” She types a five-digit code into the pad, opening the door to a stunning marble shower room containing an open space with two shower heads and a floor to ceiling mirror. Soft green towels are folded on a long bench. Handing Dean the salve, the scent expert winks. “A perk of alpha suppressants.”

The door shuts behind him as the omega spots his true mate stepping out from behind a dressing curtain. Cas still has on his little running shorts and tattered t-shirt from the trial. The man’s grinning wildly, “How are you feeling? I don’t want to overexert you.”

“Oh, Cas, we are definitely overexerting. Do you hear me?” Concerned Castiel will stress about hurting him, Dean takes charge, collecting the alpha in his arms for a passionate kiss. Their mouths pause only for air and to yank off Cas’s shirt. Skin. His fingers glide over the expansive offering of flesh. Chasing goosebumps might be his favorite new pastime. An urge to find friction has Dean grinding his cock into Castiel’s groin.

Huh? Something’s not right. The omega’s solid erection slides up softness.

Stepping back, Dean’s shocked to see no tent in the alpha’s shorts. “Cas, man. Is there something we need to chat about?”

A beautiful blush splatters across Castiel’s face. “A possible side effect of the alpha suppressant.”

“Limp dick?”

“Yes. I apologize for the inconvenience, yet it does allow us to be together more intimately since I will be unable to mark you with my seed. Hannah and my mom’s alpha specialist have assured me the hindrance will dissipate when I stop taking the drug.” The alpha studies his toes. “If we move to the shower stall, my scent will wash away immediately. Ishim and others will be unaware of our
activities.”

The omega’s torn between really wanting to be the alpha’s new slip-n-slide and guilt over Cas not being able to fully participate in their sexy times. “If you can’t get hard, then you won’t have an orgasm. Seems unfair, I’d be the only one getting to rock the jollies.”

“Dean.” Cas steps closer, his eyes burning into Dean’s. “Watching you reach climax, the moment your pupils spasm from an ecstasy created by my own hand, is highly satisfying. Trust me, I will enjoy pleasuring you.”

“Hot damn.” He might blow his load from the mental image alone. Yet, his soul strains on his skin wishing to mingle with his alpha. He misses the dreamscape. “Cas.”

He raises his wrist, ghosting his fingers around the shell of Castiel’s ear. Following the motion with his tongue, he sighs, “Alpha.”

There is nothing pathetic or weak about his true mate. The realization of the lies he will have to spin in order to save Cas stabs little holes in his heart. He can’t even choose death. Fucking blood pact leaves his brother’s life on the line too; whoever put together this immaculate game of chess was brilliant. Dean can’t make a single move without harming those he loves.

Their lips naturally fall into place. However, the pace is slow and adoring. The two men are worshiping the other because it’s the only piece of Dean’s life he can still choose. He can pick who he loves.

“I love you, Cas.” Dean’s tone is barely audible.

Bending down, the omega carefully helps to remove his lover’s clothes, then a teeny bit louder, “I love you, Cas.”

His knees ache from the abuse of the chute, but Dean stays on the hard marble floor. Castiel understands. The alpha always comprehends the inner workings of his mind. He requires control in a world that has stolen everything from him. Again, his voice rises, “I love you, Cas.”

Still dressed, Dean crawls over to the knobs and adjusts the spray to an acceptable heat, beckoning the alpha to him with one finger. Castiel obeys. He retrieves a green washcloth, adding a squirt of soap. Remaining on his knees, the omega scrubs his alpha’s feet, working his way up. His focus is on the task at hand, releasing the worries of what’s to come.

At Castiel’s thighs the omega can feel the slick trickle down his own leg. When his palm sloshes bubbles over the flaccid knot, Dean tilts in, kissing the supple, silky flesh. “I love you, Cas.”

The washcloth wanders to that gorgeous ass and up his alpha’s spine. At the torso Dean stands stepping so their skin can glide against the other. His words are solid and true, “I love you, Cas.”

A sweet kiss to the lips, to each cheek and dribbling down the alpha’s neck. Using the soapy cloth to wash away his scent behind each kiss. Nothing will remain, except their connection. The dirty used fabric drops to the tile, Dean collecting shampoo from a nearby bottle. With his free hand Dean turns the alpha to face away so he can massage the liquid into Castiel’s scalp.

“No matter what,” Dean’s voice cracks, “I love you, Cas.”

Encouraging the alpha to step into the warm spray, the omega rinses the dark locks clean of any remnants of him. His body trembles. The omega is terrified to speak the next part, but he can’t leave his true mate in the dark.
The truth will set you free. It’s a stupid as fuck belief brought to life by those who’ve never had to free the truth over the agony of a knife to the gut.

“Don’t listen to what others tell you. Don’t believe rumors.” The hot water can’t halt his shaking limbs. His soaked, wretched uniform reflects his inner self. A total mess. “You are mine, Castiel Novak. Only death will part us.”

Immediately, Cas’s hand snatches his chin, lifting his eyes to meet sparkling blue gems. Water runs over the perfect eyelashes of his alpha, “No.”

“What?”

“You will not feel guilt for surviving. I am saying NO.” Castiel flips them shoving Dean into the tiles and devouring his mouth. The water cascading down their bodies, when his alpha speaks there is no waver in the tone. “Do you honestly believe I entered the trial and took you as my own with no awareness of the consequences? No Dean, I will never leave you to carry the weight of the world on your shoulders. We are a team. Ishim can send an army, but no one will keep me from you.”

A sensual whisper tickles the omega’s neck, “I am yours; I will always come when you call.”

Magically, Cas suddenly has a fresh cloth, using it to clean the omega. The motion is purifying him from his guilt. His alpha inspects every inch of his flesh, removing the filth, rebuilding Dean from scratch to a stronger version of himself. Cas isn’t altering him, merely revealing what was already there.

“I love you, Dean.” The alpha is stating a fact. “I did not enter into the arena blind, my Omega. You will have to manipulate other alphas even,” a stutter has Cas inhaling, “seduce them.”

Fingers massage into his strained muscles, the caress kind and adoring.

The man nibbles on the omega’s earlobe, his mystical hands still working his exhausted body. “Do what you must; I will remain yours.”

Twirling to lie his head back on the wall, Dean lets go. Cas is correct, he’s not alone. Small tender kisses work their way down his chest, over his belly button and lower. The omega groans as his alpha’s mouth creeps down his erection.

“Son of a bitch.” Dean moans as Cas takes his cock into the alpha’s mouth.

Pleasure vibrates over his body. The water continues to spray as Castiel’s head thrusts up and down the omega’s shaft. His lover’s tongue flicks underneath shooting off sparks of raw desire. Dean’s hand reaches down, desperate for more, he cards his hands through the wet hair of his alpha. Without warning Cas deep throats and swallows, driving the omega over the edge.

His gaze lowers, catching the sight of his true mate’s face covered in cum for a split second before the water takes his claim away.

Nothing of him lingers. Sorrow drowns the high of his climax as he plummets to be face to face with Castiel. The kiss leans into the realm of desperation with a hint of fear.

“I’m sorry, Cas. The thought of urging another alpha …” he’s unwilling to finish the sentence.

A faint smile from the alpha lessens the heavy mood. “It wouldn’t be called a sacrifice if it were easy. I am proud to be selected as your true mate.” The alpha’s hands stroke Dean’s chin and neck sweetly, his lover’s face turns slightly away as the man mutters to himself, “Ishim must be removed
from the board entirely.”

“Cas? The dude’s a douche, but you going to prison for murder isn’t a solution either.”

Ignoring his comment, Castiel stands and helps Dean to his feet. “Our time is almost up, and you need to meet with the other alphas.” Cas pulls him in, their lips crashing in a burst of hunger. “We can be victorious, Dean; I WILL be your mate.”

“Because you love me,” Dean sing-songs.

“I do.”

Chapter End Notes


XOXOXOXO,
Angie
Dean’s fingers lace between Castiel’s long, lovely digits. The man has hands of a carpenter, muscles flexing under the skin, the alpha strokes his thumb over the omega’s knuckles. The steam from their extended shower hangs heavily in the space, warm and comforting. A blanket of air pleasantly weighs over his shoulders. The two men lounge on the bench, waiting for a knock from Meg. Dean will be forced to leave the safety of Cas’s realm to face …others.

“Do you need help with your tie?” Cas asks pointing to the green silk resting on the omega’s knee.

Incapable of lying to his alpha, Dean’s reply is cold, “Ishim prefers me in green. I’d rather hang the asshole from it than place it around my throat.”

Beautiful hands cautiously gather the supple necktie. Dean’s already dressed in khakis, a white pressed shirt and brown boots, choosing to ignore the emerald noose. Castiel begins at one end dropping chaste kisses across the fabric. Smiles build on their mouths.

“Don’t think of the tie as a demand of a bastard but a reminder of my caress.”

When the alpha hits the opposite end he positions the garment around Dean’s collar. More kisses travel up and down the omega’s neckline dipping below the clavicle. For a moment he can forget. Eventually, the tie is properly secured, but it no longer represents Ishim and his command for Dean to obey.

“Cas.” His mind can’t find the words. Too many emotions and not enough time to explain, he settles on a simple, “My heart belongs to you.”

“I have no doubt, Dean. My faith in us can outlast the worst tempest.”

A gentle tapping on the door slices into the omega’s soul. He closes his eyes, reminding himself: I can do this. Cas rolls his mouth over Dean’s, the sensual motion cascading against his tongue with waves of desire. If he passed in the moment, all would be well.

The door cracks open, Meg’s voice bouncing against the marble. “Dean, I’m sorry, but it’s time.”

Inhaling slowly, Dean rises to his feet, yet his hands won’t release those stunning fingers. He’s scared to let go. Instead he whispers, “The current system isn’t designed for an omega in love. We aren’t built to leave our true alpha behind.” A tear trickles down his right cheek. “I’m dying on the inside, Cas.”

“You are the strongest person I know.” The alpha’s gaze watches their hands intertwine tighter. “One day I will tell the story to our children of how you saved the world. You will laugh and shyly deny your part, but it won’t stop me because they should know they come from greatness.”

“Dude,” he wipes away the moisture under his eyes, “not really helping.”

Meg raps harder on the door. “Fuck my job. We need to go or things will get ugly.”
“Go, don’t be scared. I shall never truly leave you.” Castiel’s perfect digits slip away.

His hands appear so small without the alpha’s. A sense of wrongness wiggles under his skin, poking at the emotional breakdown he’s tiptoeing around. Meg takes his elbow, guiding him from the room and down the hall.

Dean’s not sure he can breathe.

“Ishim chose to go last today.” Meg won’t look at him, her gaze glares at everything else in the hallway. “Therefore, your next Alpha is actually a pretty decent guy.”

There is no reason to remind the scent expert it doesn’t matter because the guy isn’t Cas. She knows. Her little hands twirl circles against his bicep. The pain in her face echoes his own agony.

Giving a short nod, Dean mutters, “What’s his name?”

“Benny Lafitte. He’s a real sweetheart. Owns a handful of Cajun restaurants up and down the west coast. His mate passed a few years ago; he’s looking for a companion. Should be a pretty tame meeting, which is why I agreed to his request.”

“Not another Zachariah?” Dean’s got zero energy for the pompous guy’s antics.

“God, no.” A quirk of her lips nearly reaches a grin, “If it weren’t for Castiel, I think Benny might be a good match for you.”

“Okay.”

Dean’s in the same room as before. All the dark wood and leather doesn’t help to lighten the ache in his heart. Meg’s rambling about her kids. Probably attempting to get Dean to laugh; he’s not listening. He’s not even paying attention until large shoulders block his view of the wall. The omega startles at the new alpha standing next to him. The wrong fingers reaching out to him.

“What?!” Dean should be turning on the charm instead he’s jerking back.

The guy, Benny, takes his empty hand back with a smile. “Seems like you could have used more time in medical, brother.”

“I’m sorry.” He gives himself a shake to push away the funk. “The third trial kicked my ass.”

“Honestly, I was shocked when Meg told me our meeting was still a go. Not to be dirty, but you and the alpha who snagged your flag seemed ready to knot wildly and with enthusiasm. People would have to be blind to miss the intensity between you two. Kind of odd really. I was totally expecting a cancellation, what happened?”

“Shit,” he hisses; he really wishes Hannah and Crowley were wrong. Might as well practice his skills of deception. “My Center director wants me to keep my options open.”

“That ain’t right.” The alpha tugs on his black cap. “Omegas deserve to be done with the trials whenever they want. I swear sometimes the system seems unfair.”

Finally, Dean takes in the alpha. He smells of a warm spicy stew, and it doesn’t turn the omega’s stomach. Meg’s correct, Benny’s a big pussycat. Gesturing to the mini-bar, Dean asks, “Can I get you a drink?”

“Nah, I gave up drinking when I met my Andrea.” A sadness seems to swallow the alpha’s entire
expression. “Promised her I’d never go back when she died.”

“Are you ready for a new mate?” Dean pours them both water as the alpha takes a seat on one of the chairs.

Benny removes his hat, squeezing the rim nervously. “I have a house in Portland where I opened my first restaurant. Fine Cajun dining is a new experience for the west coasters. Huge hit, over the past ten years I opened four more, so money isn’t a problem. I can buy anything I want, yet nothing seems to fill the silence in my home. I need someone. Alphas aren’t designed to live alone. Our souls are lost without the gentle touch of an omega.”

“Why are you in Kansas?” If the alpha’s simply searching for a companion, the long travel is ridiculous.

“Andrea was born in Lindsborg, Kansas, felt the state must be a good luck charm.”

Placing his hands over Benny’s twisting fingers Dean sees the hurt of loss, “I don’t think I’m the omega for you. However, I might have an idea. Someone who also needs to heal.”

Twenty minutes later, Benny exits the room, a genuine smile on his face and a name written on his palm. Everyone deserves happiness.

Meg pops her head in, “How you doin’?” Her Joey impression causes Dean to laugh. “Gabriel has a mild Friends obsession. Anyways, the next Alpha’s name is Alan J. Corbett. Kind of young for you, but he’s got some serious connections.”

“Understood.” Dean gives her a quick salute.

A few seconds later the new alpha enters wearing fatigues with black Converse. An eccentric choice. The baby-faced dude nervously twitches his hands, constantly patting down the camo material.

“Hey Alan, I’m Dean.” He remains in the chair waving for the guy to join him.

“Corbett.” The alpha’s voice is cracking like a teenager’s. “Please, call me Corbett.”

“Alright, Corbett. Where are you from?” He observes the young man pace, not pausing for a second.

Alan eventually halts at the mini bar, picking up a glass tumbler then proceeding to drop it. The shards scatter across the floor. “Shit. Sorry. I’m pretty useless when I’m nervous.”

“Hey, we are just talking, nothing to be worried about.” Dean gets down on his knees next to Corbett, the two cleaning up the mess. “Let’s start somewhere easy. What made you pick me?”

The alpha leans against the wood paneling, watching Dean sweep. “I didn’t. My dad’s a lieutenant general in the Army; he thought wooing a Hunter Omega would help make me a better Alpha. Your time in the second trial really impressed him. He’d love to see me chase you.”

“Chase me? You weren’t in the chute.” His eyes were solely waiting for messy dark hair, “Were you?”

Slapping his mouth with his hand, Corbett exclaims, “Golly. I shouldn’t have said anything. My dad’s going to be really angry.”
Intuition bells begin ringing in the omega’s head. He puts the broken pieces to the side, sitting extra close to the alpha. “You can tell me. Cone of silence, anything you share won’t leave the room ever. Scout’s honor.”

The young man glances at the shut door, then he puffs out a gust of air. “I’m shocked they are bringing it back; maybe omegas should be notified.”

“If you tell me, you might be saving the lives of many omegas,” Dean tilts in, placing his hand on the alpha’s thigh, “our own personal hero.”

Bingo. The baby alpha relents, his face appearing even younger, if it’s at all possible.

“For the first time ever, the sixth trial is going to be a classic mate chase scenario. My dad’s safety officer has been commissioned to oversee everything to lower the number of deaths.” Alan smiles, a huge weight lifts from his chest, “an outdoor ten-mile course under the cover of night. The top tier omegas and three dozen alphas lost in the woods till sunup.”

“Holy shit.” Dean’s breath is short, pure panic rising. “I haven’t heard of a classic chase being done since …”

The alpha finishes his sentence, “…the beginning of Centers. My dad wishes for me to be in the chase for your mate-ship. No offense, but the thought scares the crap out of me. Although saying no to my father might be worse.”

“Sounds like an ass.” The omega wraps up cleaning, and tosses the broken glass in the trash.

His current guest stares at the floor with a sorrowful expression. Dean bends over Corbett, patting his shoulder. “You should pick your omega, not your dad.”

“You smell amazing.” Corbett inhales, standing to move uncomfortably close, his nose drifting into the omega’s space. “I could spend forever drowning in almonds and leather. I’ve never smelled anyone like you.”

Grabbing the alpha’s forehead, Dean holds Corbett’s head in place. “Hey Rambo, let’s respect personal space.”

“Sorry,”

“Don’t worry about it.” His hand snatches the alpha’s nose as the appendage attempts to ghost over his neck, yanking both nostrils harshly, “If you do it again, I’m going to kick your ass.”

“Ow, Ow!” Corbett gasps as Dean gives the nose a twist. “Maybe you can give me a token?”

Really old-school alphas believe in receiving a piece of clothing with an omega’s scent as a token of their interest. Dean huffs, “Fat chance, big guy.”

“I’ll talk you up.” The alpha gingerly rubs his face. “Meg mentioned it would be helpful to chat up your scent and other pleasant qualities. A token would give my stories a ton of believability, don’t you think?”

The kid’s not wrong. If Dean’s supposed to be building interest for a multitude of alphas, this would be the way. With a heavy sigh, the omega searches over his wardrobe. The emerald tie is number one on his list of giveaways; however, Ishim would notice. Suddenly a red handkerchief is thrust into his hand.
“You could mark the material with your aroma. I don’t even have to touch you.” Corbett’s eyes are wide and innocent.

Dean’s shoulders slump inward. “Okay.”

****

Meg hovers by him as Corbett exits, her whiskey eyes searching him. “Did he tell you anything … interesting?”

“The sixth trial will be a classic mate chase.” Dean flops onto the couch, exhausted.

The scent expert perches on a chair, an air of rage simmering. “Motherfucking assholes. The entire Challenge system was created to replace such a disgusting, violent, and Alpha-machoism trial.” An expression of horror paints Meg’s face, “You might be in heat.”

“Thanks, one more reason to be freaking the hell out.”

Classic mate chases were the traditional way for alphas to search out prospective mates. A race course where Omegas are released to hide, then Alphas hunt them down. If two alphas want the same omega, they fight it out. No rules save one; the night isn’t over till sunrise. Which means even if an alpha claims a mate, he also must survive.

“Cas would be in danger.” The realization stings his heart. “With my popularity and increased smell, all the alphas will be shredding any and all competitors.”

His scent expert goes motionless, Meg’s hand frozen over her belly bump. The woman’s voice is quiet, a sense of dread in her tone, “murder is legal in a mate chase.”

“Yes! I get it. Ishim will be able to kill my true mate. No need to spell it out for me, Meg.”

“No, you’re missing the point.” When she looks back at him there is a wicked smirk building, “murder is legal.”

“I underst—”

Meg’s hand stops any further words from leaving Dean’s mouth. She speaks slowly for emphasis, “Ishim will be in the sixth trial. Murder is legal. Play it up, Dean, let the bastard believe he has the upper hand against Castiel. We both know it will be two on one in the end.”

“Oh …My …God!”

A pounding on the door has both sets of eyes flying to the entrance.

Ishim’s obnoxious words blare through the wood, “Open the door, Omegas. I shall visit what’s mine.”

Growling, Dean curses in a hush, “Fucking asshole won’t see the sun.”

“Exactly. You must play your part, Omega.” Meg bats her black, thickly painted eyelashes, “make sure all alphas of any kind of merit join the final trial. If Ishim dies legally, there will be no one to ruin your chances with Castiel. Just make sure he doesn’t see it coming.”

His dear friend opens the door, ushering the rich alpha inside. “Hello, Ishim.”

The jerk ignores Meg, knocking into her shoulder roughly.
Strike one, the alpha has no manners or respect for omegas.

Ishim storms up to Dean, releasing an openhanded slap that rings out in the small room. The violent hit bites into the omega’s flesh. Deciding instantly to perform the role of the weaker designation, he crashes to the floor with a faint whimper. Dumbass pumps up his chest.

“Your behavior in the trials will reflect on me once we have mated. I will not allow such degrading actions. Do you understand me?” Ishim shouts, his voice rising in anger.

Holding his red cheek, Dean raises his gaze to the alpha. “Sir. I was following orders of the League.”

“To be a harlot!”

“No sir, to choose an alpha. The League wishes for me to have someone I can deceive for the cameras.”

A second strike lands perfectly on the first. Pain explodes, Dean’s eyes go blurry. Every muscle in his body screams to return the favor, give the cruel alpha a taste of his own medicine. He remains calm.

Inhaling deeply, the omega reaches up, taking the alpha’s hand, “Please, Ishim. I don’t want you to be the League’s pawn. It could be dangerous, and the thought of you hurt displeases me.”

“Castiel would make an excellent pawn. Such a worthless excuse of an alpha, the pitiful man actually believes omegas are equals.”

Strike two, speaks ill of his true mate.

Forgive me. The words swirl within the omega’s mind as he replies, “I will easily be able to bend him to my will. He checks my scent at the end of every alpha meetings; he’s shown an unrequited love for me. A small and insignificant man.”

A wicked grin rolls over Ishim’s lips. “You would put our sad little Castiel in jeopardy to protect me? Be honest, Omega, I will tell if you lie.”

“Of course, my Alpha.” Dean’s green eyes open, his face lax with the true comfort of honesty. “I know who’s destined to be the greater mate.”

“Good boy.” Ishim helps Dean up, yanking the omega towards him. Regretfully, he allows the alpha to tug him in tight, their chests touching. “You have learned your place in the world.”

Raising his hand, Dean carded his fingers through the alpha’s hair, battling the urge to rip the locks from Ishim’s scalp. He trembles.

In a moment of concern, Ishim takes his free hand. “Don’t be frightened, little one. Continue your charade with Castiel, and I will reward you soon.”

“How, my Alpha?” Dean adds a charismatic curve of his mouth.

“You can watch me kill Castiel Novak.”

His expression never betrays the omega’s fury at Ishim’s words. In place of the violent acts sprinting through his thoughts, Dean’s grin widens. “Oh, yes Alpha. Please make sure I’m standing next to you. It would be a lovely mating gift.”
“Anything for you.”

Strike three, threatens his real Alpha.

You die.

Chapter End Notes

Comments, Concerns and Questions are always loved and appreciated.

Big Hugs and lots of Love,
Angie
Smack.
Duck.
Shuffle.
Repeat.

The crack of his boxing glove connecting with the hanging black heavy bag drums through his mind. He’s choosing to shut out the pressure and pain of his life to solely focus on the gloves hitting the smiley face painted on the bag perfectly. Dean’s brain is placing a pic of Ishim on the spot. The bastard alpha beaten, bloody and dead would be the omega’s preference.

Smack.
Duck.
Shuffle.
Repeat.

Sweat burns in his eyes, yet the omega doesn’t relent. His shoulders and arms are quaking from the abuse because Dean won’t ease up. Each strike must be exact. He’s ignoring the clinging grey t-shirt darkening with moisture; he won’t halt. One day being strong enough to take on Ishim could not only save his own but Castiel’s life too.

The sub-level workout arena of the Center has an eerie silence, the slaps to the punching bag breaking up the stillness. Days off during Challenges are typically used for rest, especially at the ass-crack of dawn when the sun’s still sleeping. Dean can’t indulge in rest. The weight of the world lands directly on his shoulders, pushing him to the ground. The Heat Liberation League owns him, for now. Thank whoever lives on high because the Omega’s never received an official letter instructing him about a mate.

Smack.
Duck.
Shuffle.
Repeat.

A person jogs by the boxing ring. Probably someone wanting to get an early run in on the track. Dean would join them but his hands won’t stop. The Omega’s completely possessed. Honestly, he’s got no clue how long he’s been at it. Last night he took three scalding hot showers and he still felt repulsed by his reflection. The omega in the mirror betrayed the link between all true mates.

Ishim’s hands touched him.
What makes it worse, Dean smiled and allowed the caress to happen.

The single solitary silver lining in the turbulent memory was he wouldn’t let Ishim go too far, reminding the alpha he would be scented by Castiel. His true mate met Dean later not able to hold back the tears when he smelled Ishim’s scent on the omega’s flesh. The image of Cas’s broken face rips him in two. No one deserves such torture.

Smack.

Duck.

Shuffle.

Repeat.

A hand on his shoulder has the omega twirling violently, nearly connecting with the other person’s cheek. Jack drops instantly, narrowly missing a painful strike.

“Dude! Don’t sneak up on people.” Dean’s gasping for air, the pause in his actions finally permits the pain to pound onto his body. “I could have knocked you out.”

The young omega shrugs. “I was prepared.”

Totally drained, Dean plummets to the mat. “Did you need something?”

“You appear to be in distress. I want to help.” Jack sits, crossing his legs. “Would you like to discuss what’s bothering you?”

Irritated by his own life Dean decides to dump a huge helping of asshole on the guy. “Why did your family sell you out to the league?”

“My mother believed in the cause.” The simple answer seems to be enough for Jack.

“She was cool with a lifetime of drugs and false promises.” He works his boxing gloves off.

The innocent expression slips past Dean’s well-rehearsed defenses, “My mother was an Omega whose heat hit during her fourth trial. Even with her pregnant, my Father was able to deny any responsibility due to her natural aroma intoxicating his alpha mind from making a rational choice. Devastated, she took Naomi’s offer to care for her. I know many hate Ms. Naomi, but she gave my mother a home when everyone else shunned her. I was raised in the Novak house.”

“With your mom?” He lies back with his curiosity, letting the bouncy mat catch him.

Jack copies his fall talking to the ceiling, “No. She died in childbirth.”

“I’m sorry.” The pieces are falling together seamlessly. Jack couldn’t save his own mother, but doing his small part might stop her story from happening again. “It must have been hard; Naomi doesn’t appear to be the most maternal of people.”

“She has always been kind to me.” Jack’s hand slides over the mat, taking Dean’s own hand in his, “you need to put these knuckles on ice. The fourth trial is often a test of endurance, swollen hands will hinder your success.”

His new friend’s correct. Dean already feels the agonizing sensation of swelling joints. “What are your heats like under the medication?”
Releasing his hand, Jack folds his arms over his chest. “Muted in all respects. Those who smell me only scent what their minds have told them.”

“That’s why I thought you smelled of a pre-heat omega.” Dean’s not entirely comforted by the information. “Umm, what about the urges?”

“Regrettably, those exist. I found orgasming to be useful in curbing the desire for an Alpha’s knot. On the bright side my mind always remained clear, not the typical foggy heat brain as I’ve read in several studies on omega heats.”

Chuckling nervously, Dean pulls himself up to sitting with a grunt. “So, I’m gonna be horny and my mind will be working enough where I’ll know it, too.”

“Yes.” Jack smiles.

The kid just doesn’t get how being conscious of his action may not be a good thing.

Another odd question bubbles to the surface, “Why did you arrive on the food truck?”

“It was imperative we meet. Hannah felt it would benefit your mental status to discuss issues with me in the safe environment of the Center.”

“Okay, but why not walk in through the front door like the rest of us?” Dean’s tired of the whole cloak and dagger game.

The young omega’s head tilts to the side. Perhaps there’s validity to the nurture theory because it’s identical to Castiel. “Do you honestly believe the Heat Liberation League doesn’t have enemies? Those individuals who would stop at nothing to halt our good work? Hiding me from such groups was for my safety but also hid your whereabouts for a little bit longer.”

“Until I walked out in front of the cameras for the entire country to see.”

“Exactly, your popularity is what’s preserving your security. The American people are invested in you, so any person openly harming you would feel the wrath of mob mentality.” Jack helps Dean to his feet. “Every movement since you were born has been carefully monitored and predicted for heightened success.”

Both omegas stroll towards the elevators, “Why me? I mean I get that Grannie Novak had a dream, but seriously, why me?”

Jack scrunches his face. “I don’t know.”

He leaves the younger omega pondering the recent query to search out ice in the kitchen. A few fellow residents are mingling about the common area making breakfast and watching the local Omega Challenge Network. The house omega challenge is currently playing their fourth trial. Andrea should be there. Her heat will end soon, but his friend’s chances for meeting an alpha are over.

“You’re up early.” Harry pokes Dean’s side as he pours a cup of coffee. “Isn’t it your day off? Dude, after you taking the wicked beating in the third trial, I didn’t think we’d see you for at least 24 hours.”

Flashing his bruising digits Dean mutters, “Ice.”

“Ouch. Thanks for reminding me why I would never do Hunter. Although, as of yesterday, no
deaths yet.” Harry gives a stupid smile, grabbing a bowl. His hallmate places a ton of ice in it before handing it to him. “Twenty minutes on, then a break for twenty. You might stop by Gilda’s office for a healing cream.”

“Appreciate it.” The words are a sigh as Dean takes the bowl to his room.

The sound of water running gives away Ash’s location. He crashes onto his bed inserting his knuckles into the mound of frozen cubes. The chill eases at least his physical discomfort. Sadly, there is no ointment, pill, or remedy for his mental anguish. Resting his head on the wall, the omega shuts his eyes for only a moment.

Warm rays give his flesh new life. Glancing down, Dean wiggles his toes in the water receding back to the sea. Sand pulls under his feet, hoping to follow the wave back to the deepest part of the ocean. He’s wearing blue board shorts, his hands liberated from the abuse in the real world. Turning back, the familiar alpha tips his loudly colored hat as Joshua sips on a pink straw from a coconut.

“Guess I fell asleep after all.” Dean stares up at the cloudless sky, “Have you been waiting for me all night?”

The alpha, stretched out on a wooden lounge chair, lifts his drink with a shrug. A second beach chair sits on the other side of a little table holding a coconut for the omega. Joshua won’t speak. Dean stopped trying to trick him ages ago because unlike Cas this alpha has no soft spot for him.

A dark cloud materializes, blocking Dean’s sunrays. The shade annoys the omega, yet the change intrigues him. He’s learned dreamweavers have control over all their domain. Dean wasn’t creating the world he shared with Castiel, instead his alpha would seek out his desires and match them. Which means one of two things: Joshua thinks a bit of shade necessary or Stormy Alpha has returned.

The answer to his forming question comes quickly as the gray cloud multiplies hastily and a rumble of thunder crosses over the cascading wave. Dean cracks his knuckles, preparing for a fight. He won’t back down even if he’s lacking a sexy true mate at his side.

“Come on Bitch! You don’t scare me!” The omega shouts at the darkening sky.

Glimpsing behind him, Dean notices Joshua seems unaware of the situation as he nonchalantly sips on his adult beverage. The guy has a heavy hand with rum. Could the alpha be drunk?

A black swirl of mist sweeps over the sea towards them. Dean points his middle finger to the heavens, “Fuck you! Pathetic alpha hiding behind a mask of air.”

The charcoal mist picks up speed. The omega’s unsure how one battles a cloud, but hell, he’s been praying for a real person to hit all morning.

Out of nowhere an invisible wall blocks the shadowy fog, the storm flattening against an unseen force. Turning back Dean doesn’t miss the giddy grin on Joshua’s mouth.

“Is it Ishim?” He’s been throwing around possibilities for Mr. Tempest’s identity, Ishim number one on the list.

Shaking his head, the alpha places his drink on the table. A snap of the old man’s fingers has words being written in the sand.

Ishim has no need for the dreamscape. No, this alpha has been sent to destroy your mission by
taking you from the inside.

“Awesome,” Dean utters.

Without the presence of Joshua, the strange alpha might be doing a shanghai of his mind. Driving Dean crazy through horrors of abuse in a dream he can’t leave. He observes the flowing black wisps skate over the clear wall. Each shadowy tentacle is testing for any holes.

“Hey, Josh. Our friend the mist has been attempting to get a dreamscape meet and greet way before I started the Hunter Challenge. Don’t alphas need an image of the omega to track them down?”

The black mass evolves into a translucent spider the size of a 747. Jesus, guess the idea is to scare the crap out of him without actually touching the omega. Dumbass could do his or her research. Spiders aren’t his greatest fear.

He looks over at the friendly dreamweaver, curious why the guy didn’t answer his question. Joshua’s standing, the hat tossed to the sand as his fingernails scratch at a greying beard. The alpha appears lost in thought.

“Josh? What’s up?”

The same script as before scrawls in the sand.

*Your identity was revealed to the alpha before the first trial?*

“Yeah, didn’t Cas tell you? We’ve been dealing with the storm whisperer for a while now.” Dean steps closer to Joshua, trying to get a read on his face. The alpha remains indifferent.

*Be careful, Dean. It seems you have a traitor in the Center.*

Throwing his hands in the air the omega cries out in frustration, “Really?! I can’t have one place of peace from this shit.”

A whirlwind of overwhelming shock knocks Dean’s breath out of him. In the next second, he’s staring at the slate grey eyes of his roommate. The guy’s wet mullet is dripping on his bed sheets.

“Wake up! God, Dean, what the fuck was going on in your dream? You were screaming.”

“Sorry, it’s been a weird morning.” Dean wipes his brow, shaking off the rude awakening. “Do you have a trial today?”

“Nope, but I’ve got an alpha coming to the center for a special meeting.” Ash’s eyes are twinkling with excitement. “What do you think, clothes or naked?”

“Clothes, definitely.”

Ed’s voice shouts through their door as he bangs, “Dean, you’ve got a phone call.”

“Thanks!” Putting on a very serious expression, “Ash, wear clothes, keep it classy.”

“Classy? Oh …I’ll need my jeans without holes.”

Laughing to himself, Dean jogs down the hall to the phone cubbies; Ed’s pointing to the one off the hook, “I’m sure he’ll be okay.”

“What?” Fear has the omega snatching the receiver and shouting, “Hello?”
“Dean.” The panic in Cas’s tone sends a chill up his shoulders. “Are you? Dean …oh my God there was so much blood.”

“Cas?” He hears the heavy breath of his true mate. “What happened?”

The alpha either didn’t hear his reply or can’t find a clear thought, “Dean …we barely made it to the hospital. The backseat of Gabriel’s SUV is soaked in blood.”

“Alpha.” Terror streaks through his mind because whoever’s hurt it’s bad, really bad. “Alpha. Please listen to me.” His next sentence slow and precise, “Who is bleeding?”

“Going out for breakfast was my idea.” Cas’s speech is jumbled. “I felt bad leaving the kids behind, but damn it, Dean, what if they had been there? I did this; she’s dying because of me.” The broken tears are making it hard for Dean to understand the man.

Raising his voice, “Castiel Novak! For fuck’s sake, who is bleeding? What the hell happened?”

“I never saw the gunman.” Cas sobs uncontrollably, “She did. My mom stepped in front and took both bullets meant for me.”

“Holy shit, Cas.” He hates the relief pouring over him. “Amara’s been shot?”

“Yes, she just shoved me through the open car door.” The alpha hiccups, “Then her body slumped against me. My hands are red. What sort of monster openly fires a weapon in public with bystanders around? Meg was only a few feet away.”

Silence. Neither alpha nor omega has an answer. The images are twisting inside Dean’s brain and how much he appreciates Amara. She saved his mate. Quiet crying slices into his soul, listening to Cas in pain and unable to do anything is excruciating.

“Where is Amara now?” Dean waits several distressing beats.

“The doctors took her into surgery. My mom was hit in the shoulder and abdomen.” Castiel’s words lowering in volume, “So much blood, Dean. My coat is drenched in …”

His fingers ache from his own mistreatment, yet Dean wishes he could hold Cas’s long slender digits. “What do you need? Anything, Cas, I’m here.”

“I can’t lose her.” The Alpha’s uttering is low and raw. “Why did she …do that?”

The obvious reply slips from Dean’s lips, “Amara loves you. In her world death is better than a life without you in it.”

He can relate.

“Dean,” Castiel counters in deep sorrow, “no one is safe near me.”

“Stop. Don’t you dare blame yourself, Cas. Everyone knows the stakes, especially Amara; she doesn’t take anything lightly.”

An empty laugh startles the omega as his alpha seems small and lost. “My mom’s always three steps ahead of the game. She chose to take those bullets.”

“If you can’t make the fourth tri—”

A complete turnabout has Castiel’s stern voice booming through the line, “I will be there. Mom
wouldn’t want me to wait around a hospital room; she understands.”

“Amara’s got a serious set of cojones. She’s going to be fine.”

No reply.

The emptiness grows with each ticking second.

Finally, the deep rumble of his true mate comes through the line, “God, I hope so.”

Chapter End Notes

With the recent announcement I know several of you may be questioning some Supernatural authors as to whether or not they will continue. My plan is to follow my heart and write until I have nothing left to say. I should be around for a while my friends because trust me, I have a lot to say.

All the love,
Angie
The IV stretches from his arm to the stand next to his cot. Bright fluorescent lights burn into his retinas, yet Dean doesn’t turn away. He can’t find the energy to blink. The memory of his Alpha’s broken cries over the phone silence the voices around him. If Amara dies, a piece of Cas will go with her; there is no way around the loss of a mother. Dean hopes Castiel won’t join him in the Dead Moms Club. Naomi can’t fill the role.

“Dean.” Crowley claps in front of his face, forcing the omega to acknowledge the man.

Curling his swollen knuckles, Dean smiles at the pain, “What do you want?”

“He speaks!” Rowena announces, taking one of his hands to massage, Gilda mirroring the action with his other one. “We were getting worried. Dean Winchester speechless is a sight to behold.”

Hannah’s missing.

Gilda notices his searching gaze and tilts in. “Our lovely doctor is with her family. Amara made it through surgery and the night. If she remains stable for the next 24 hours, her prognosis is good.”

“Do we know who?” Dean glances up as Crowley flinches.

The Center director crosses his arms over his chest. “We have two possible culprits, hazard a guess on them?”

“A hired hitman from Ishim, or someone who’s trying to stop the Heat Liberation League from succeeding.”

“My bet is on Ishim.” Rowena raises an eyebrow, testing whether Dean or Crowley will deny her theory. “The man has no true belief in the cause; he simply desires to own the omega all of America lusts after. A pretty pet to prove his prowess as an alpha.”

The ministrations on his knuckles is working wonders as the agony calms. Popping his neck to the side, Dean counters, “Thanks for calling me pretty.”

Rolling her eyes, she tosses her red hair back. “Please.”

“It could have been an enemy,” Gilda whispers, her hands never pausing. “Naomi hasn’t been careful in these last few weeks. Anyone wishing to do her harm could choose to attack Castiel or Amara. The fourth hunter trial starts today; soon things will return to normal.”

“Speaking of trials, Hannah tested a new sample of blood; your heat is at least two days away.” Crowley tosses a sheet of results on Dean’s lap. “Her original hypothesis of it arriving for the fifth trial seems correct.”

Looking up to the brutal lights reminds Dean of the third trial and meeting a young alpha in fatigues. “The final trial will be a classic mate chase.”
Gilda and Rowena halt their movements, both women gasping in shock.

“I’m not surprised.” Crowley tugs on his suit jacket. “The trial designer for this year is a psychotic sadist.”

“Asmodeus,” Dean mutters.

His left hand begins to shake in the trembling hold of Rowena. “Those events are barbaric. How could he get such a horror show past the network?”

“Did you miss the bloodbath in the chute? Good ole Colonel Chicken basically encouraged us to go for the jugular or risk never mating.” Dean chides, shaking his arm at the group, “Who can remove this thing?”

“I can.” Gilda rushes to snag a bandage.

The medical unit’s doors swish open as Meg comes storming in. “Everyone out. I need to chat with Dean.”

Once his IVs been removed, they leave him alone, staring at a fuming scent expert. Meg’s chest is rising and falling heavily. “Are you ready for today?”

“Are you?” He stands, taking in the smudged make-up and uncombed hair. “Did you see the shooter?”

“No. I was on the other side of the car. Amara’s hanging on, but last I checked she wasn’t awake. Then I get here early to fly over on the chopper with you only to be told you’re in medical for exhaustion. What the hell?”

“I’m fine.”

“Oh? Really? The trial will be some kind of depraved endurance game. Those trashed fingers are going to have a difficult time tying your shoes much less holding on for dear life. Way to go, Idiot.”

Waving off her comment, Dean responds, “You’re an idiot.”

“You stink.” Meg pinches her nose, “When was the last time you showered?”

“God, I can clean up at the bunker. Pretty sure I’m in the last bracket of the day again.”

Meg bounces her head in affirmation. “Castiel has a guaranteed spot in your grouping since he snagged your flag. But …” Her brown irises start filling with unshed tears.

“He hasn’t left Amara’s side.” Dean expected as much. His Alpha might not make it to the bunker in time. Okay, no biggie. He’s completely fine.

Without a word, the scent expert retrieves two letters from her jacket. Dean decides to read the League’s correspondence first, delicately holding the one with Sammy’s handwriting. The easy bold letters surprise him.

Pick an alpha of your choosing to seduce for the camera.

Do your best.

You will meet with two alphas after the trial. You may choose one.
Regardless of what you have learned, you will participate in all six events.

He glances at Meg, his forehead wrinkling in confusion. “The league’s encouraging me to flirt and choose Cas. Isn’t that dangerous?”

There is no way in hell the author of these letters doesn’t know who Dean will pick. The person who will be near the omega and bring him joy, safety, and love.

“Very.” Meg hugs him, whispering into his ear, “No one can turn back now. You and Cas announced to anyone watching your intentions for each other. Live your truth boldly.”

“How can we keep Cas and your family safe?” Dean’s hand pats Meg’s huge belly. One stray bullet could have taken out an unborn child, for God’s sake.

She steps back, the shield of sass and dark humor falling into place. “Luck.”

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The loud beat of the helicopter blades keeps conversation to a minimum since they have to yell. Meg’s got a book open but hasn’t turned a page since takeoff. The woman’s worried. Dean wishes he could fix her stress, it can’t be good for her pregnancy, but it’s out of his hands. Digging into his pants the omega snatches the unopened letter from Sam. He placed it inside his uniform for safekeeping. “Dean Winchester my Awesome Brother” written on the front. Sammy’s a big dork.

Reading the positive enthusiasm of the youngest Winchester often raises Dean’s hopes for himself and his chances to win … win what? Darkness lurks in any turn he selects. If Ishim has his way, the omega won’t even get a say in how his next will look. Maybe he’ll need a boost of cheerful youth dorkiness after the trial. Dean quickly puts the letter back in his pants.

Glancing over his shoulder, the omega watches Gadreel and Eileen. They’ve got a notebook between them and appear to be writing little notes. Eileen’s giggling as they tussle over the shared pencil. In any other instance he would call them smitten. However, their fate isn’t truly theirs, which is total bullshit.

Dean almost breaks Meg’s hand as they land. Fucking rain storm had the chopper swaying more than usual; however, his breakfast stayed in, which is better than poor Ketch. The group exits the transport vehicle careful of the spinning blades as a now familiar face approaches them.

Ambriel shouts something, yet her voice doesn’t make it to his ears in the storm. She guides them inside, slamming the large barricade shut.

“Welcome back! Billie, if you would escort your charges to the 80Q3 Green Room, I have to show the Winchester Omega to a family room.”

The Hunter teacher begins to move as Meg steps precariously close to Ambriel so her baby bump knocks the beta, “Excuse me. No one meets Dean without my consent.”

“Actually, the visitor can veto your opinion.” Ambriel gives the scent expert a tight faux grin. “Dean, if you will follow me.”

He remains frozen, because Meg’s expression goes ominous. Suddenly Dean understands her being the dark mate. If looks could kill, Ambriel would be flayed into tiny pieces by now.

“I must have misheard you.” Her wicked, cold statement chills the space. “No one sees Dean Winchester without my approval, and I can assure you I’ve yet to clear a single breathing person
today.”

The two women are about equal in height, yet Ambriel appears to lose a foot, her big brown eyes widening in terror. “Except blood Alphas.”

Now it’s Dean’s turn to get in the beta’s personal space, “Who? My blood alphas are in California.”

“I checked his Alpha card twice. Isn’t Sam Winchester your brother?”

“Sammy.” The weight resting on his shoulders lightens slightly. “Sammy’s here?”

The rest becomes a blur as Ambriel leads him to an upper level with windows, where families can greet their competing omegas. Meg’s been silent as she follows.

A door opens, and in seconds Dean knows it’s Sam. The puppy dog look explodes from his baby brother. “Don’t be mad. I ditched Dad.”

He snags his brother into his arms, hugging the sixteen-year-old. Dean can’t bring himself to let go.

“Why?” He leans back, patting those precious cheeks that have lost their baby fat. “How did you get here?”

“I stole one of Dad’s credit cards and caught a flight yesterday. We should be here supporting you, Dean. It’s important.”

There are so many reasons Dean should be pissed. People are dropping like flies around him. However, in the moment the omega only smiles. His brother’s here.

“Thank you, Sam.”

The two brothers settle on a nearby couch as Meg eyes Sam apprehensively, “Why now? Dean’s finished half his trials, what sparked the need to see him?”

“Isn’t he done with the trials? I wanted to be present in order to bear witness to their mating bite.”

Confusion and more questions bombard Meg and Dean, but she beats him to the punch, “Explain, because no, Dean’s not done, and his neck is bite free. Trust me.”

“So get this, two nights ago the National Omega Network ran a segment on the Winchester Omega of Kansas. How he’s broken national records for the highest dollar amount for third trial spots, that his scent has caused fights to break out in the alpha viewing areas, and especially the romantic love story of his bodyguard.”

Now it’s his turn to question Sammy. “What love story?”

“Castiel Novak, the guy who yanked your flag. The segment focused on him and how he was brought here to be your scent guard, but after meeting you he’s chosen to be a competitor. It sounds extremely scandalous. They showed you sliding down his body like a fireman’s pole three times.” The young alpha’s cheeks flush. “Dude, the way you stare at each other makes it pretty obvious. I believe the anchor lady called it eye knotting.”

A twisting in his stomach has Dean’s insides aching. “Shit.” He catches Meg’s gaze, “two nights ago –”

“Would be the night before Amara’s shooting.” Meg finishes.
“Holy crap, somebody’s been shot?”

The panic in Sammy’s eyes hypes up Dean’s requirement to care for his baby brother. “Yes, Cas’s Alpha Mom.” Giving the younger Winchester’s face a jerk, he sternly adds, “You need to go back to California. People are in danger. Please, Sammy. Meg can help you get a flight.”

“No. I’m not leaving with all the crap coming down on you. I won’t, and you can’t make me.” Sam’s jaw tightens in defiance.

Meg’s eyes bounce between the brothers. “Okay. Naomi’s hired an entire security team for my family, Castiel and Amara. I could take him home with me. Seriously, I’d protect him as if he’s one of my kids.”

“I’m more worried about shielding Sam from your pint-sized arson enthusiasts.”

Sam jumps on the bandwagon, “I’m great with children.”

Screaming at them Dean exclaims, “Absolutely no babysitting; he’s a walking fire hazard with his long flammable hair.”

****

Billie leads him and Eileen to a strange new level of the Hunter bunker. They are the only two in the final bracket. It seems Gadreel didn’t earn enough points. The hunter coach hasn’t spoken to either of them since collecting the omegas from the green room. The hallway bends in a circle and appears to go on forever. Silver steel doors with a key pad in the center line the right side about every six feet.

Eventually, Billie halts, typing in a code. Her hands matching the words from her mouth, “Eileen, you’re in here. I’ll be back in a few to explain the rules.”

“We aren’t entering as a group?” Dean’s holding the other omega’s shoulder, waiting for an answer.

“Nope, and no rousing speech from Asmodeus either.” Their coach points to the room, “We are on a clock.”

The female omega gives Dean a timid wave, disappearing into the dark.

Three doors down, his own barricade swings open, Billie lifting an eyebrow towards the entrance to the fourth trial. “Come on, Winchester. I hope you can swim.”

“Swim?” Dean stutters, entering a five by five space. A set of stairs on the opposite end lower into a pool of water. “Shit, I need to send my dad a thank you card.”

The omega spent two months every summer starting at age 8 until he left for the Center taking lessons. It’s been three years but Dean loved the water. Whoever decided to have the omega’s training include swimming gets a gold medal.

His teacher snaps her fingers. “Hey! Pay attention, I only get two minutes to prep you, then I have to do the same for Eileen.”

Dean pantomimes locking his mouth shut and throwing away the key. Billie rolls her eyes, pointing to the slick silver stairs, “When you hear an alarm, go into the water and swim away from the stairs. A glass door will close behind you or block your entrance after one minute, so don’t dawdle.”
“Easy enough.” He’s starting to feel less anxious. The omega’s injured hands won’t be an issue.

Smacking his face, Billie glares, “Do you think it’s just going to be a few laps? See whose got the best breaststroke? Endurance is just the beginning. You will earn points based on how long you remain in the trial compared to the other participants.” She hands him a red piece of cloth cut in a two-foot strip. “Lift the flag into the air with your hand and over your head for a rescue. Understand?”

He has to stay in the top rankings, which means he needs to be the last omega swimming. He wraps the fabric around his wrist, “Yes, Ma’am. What if the flag gets lost?”

“Then you have no chance of rescue in an emergency. You would either drown or be released if you’re the final competitor.” Her normally aloof attitude becomes rigidly focused. “After the alarm cuts off you have five minutes to become familiar with the situation. Next, Alphas will be permitted to enter the field at their leisure. Each alpha will be armed with a waterproof marker. They get points by marking you with their personal color, more marks, more points.”

An interesting tactic forms in Dean’s mind. “If I prefer an Alpha … I could help him?”

“By turning your skin into a single-colored, dot-by-dot masterpiece.” Her smirk returns. “Have fun and don’t panic.” With that she exits the small space, her heels clicking on the metal floor.

“Sure, should be a barrel of laughs.” Dean takes in his outfit, hastily altering the uniform. First, he kicks off his tennis shoes and socks, followed by his tank top. The less wet cloth weighing him down the better. He’s praising the light, thin material they use for pants.

The red flag hangs from his fingers, limp from no air movement. His get out of jail free card.

Sammy’s viewing the event live with Gabriel. Drowning would destroy everyone involved, actually the commands for today simply stated: Do your best and participate.

Bending down, Dean ties the flag around his ankle. A wailing siren startles the omega as he takes several deep breaths. “Piece of cake.”

He steps down the stairs, the warm, inviting water soothing his frazzled nerves. Worried about where the glass wall will fall, Dean swims farther into a narrow clear lane. The channel is maybe three feet wide and sealed shut on top about two feet from his head. It all reminds the omega of an aquarium with a lid. The lack of fresh air bugs his senses. There is nothing to scent, even the water has been sanitized.

Claustrophobia nips at his thoughts as the glass door completes his wet tomb. “Cas, I’m calling for you, big guy. Please be in here.”

Ducking under, he measures the depth at seven feet. He can reach the bottom, but no one will be able to breathe and touch the floor simultaneously. Dean slams his hand against the clear wall, noticing a female omega in another chute like his crying uncontrollably and twisting the red flag an inch below the water. She’s already considering surrender.

There is no reason to pit the omegas against each other in this arena. Each one will have to survive a battle of wills against their own fears, anxiety crushing them from the inside. Asmodeus is psychotic but a genius.

“Might as well check out the joint,” Dean murmurs, kicking his way along the canal.

He follows the enclosure until it takes a sharp turn to the left. That’s when he spots a handful of
alphas standing above the glass looking down. Movement on both sides confirms what Dean’s already suspected; it’s a network of interconnected slim waterways.

They are fucking rats in a maze.

Chapter End Notes

Comments, Questions, and Concerns rock my world.

XOXOXOXOXOXO,
Angie
something wicked this way comes

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Don’t forget to breathe.


Repeat.

Dean’s heart races; his eyes ricochet around the enclosed glass. The omega’s desperate to figure out how to dominate the trial, shit, at this point, how to simply survive. There are fifteen omegas in his grouping, which means he’s got to last longer than at least eleven. The top five omegas get to select an alpha for their fifth trial. Castiel’s best chance is him.

“Time to get in the game Winchester,” the omega mutters, swimming farther into the waterway maze.

Rolling onto his back, Dean chuckles at the light blue ceiling. It could be a serene view with the swirls of white representing clouds, although the real chance of death here keeps his body on high alert. In the center of the faux sky, the fifteen omegas are listed in order of rankings. Dean went in as number one since Cas paid an outrageous amount for his spot. As omegas tag out of the trial, their name will vanish from the list. Gone and possibly forgotten.

A shadow plunges across the water. Dean’s gaze studies the alpha above him with a yellow stick measuring about two and half feet. Upon closer inspection he deciphers it’s not a stick but the weirdest looking marker he’s ever seen. The woman’s deep red hair reminds him of a younger, taller Rowena but the eyes are vacant of the erotic teacher’s charm. The wicked grin devoid of life chills Dean to the bone as she winks.

Rapping his knuckles on the glass, Dean shouts, “What ya going to do?” He flattens his hand against the pane, “Dumbass.”

Clearly not the correct thing to say.

Her smile grows, the alpha’s eyes giggling with a heartless enjoyment of something. Suddenly, she slams the point of the yellow marker down, and magically the instrument penetrates the glass without even a crack. A jolt shocks the crap out of him.

“Son of a bitch!” Dean yanks back his hand diving deeper away from the dual device. A perfect yellow dot remains on his palm the size of a nickel. “Damn it!”

It’s not merely a writing tool; it doubles as an enchanted cattle prod. Every time an alpha makes a mark, they shock the omega. Probably a mystical sting because using true electricity would be deadly. “Asmodeus is a sick fuck.”

Remember the breathing idea.
Dean’s lungs are pissed. He should be pushing to the surface for an inhale, but the red-haired bitch has her weapon ready to strike. Not happening, lady. He shoves off the bottom, but outward not up, sending him several feet from her as he’s rising quickly, gasping for air. She’s there in seconds, but the omega’s anticipating her movement and he’s diving faster than her stupid baton. Dean shoots her the bird for good measure.

She’s screaming at him, her green eyes glowing with fury, but Dean can’t help but laugh.

A second alpha tackles her to the ground, beating her face senseless. Blood splatters over the glass. Dean uses the distraction to pop his head up and inhale. The terms of the trial are falling into place. In the fourth arena, omegas aren’t the ones facing one-on-one combat. Nope, the tables have turned. Alpha versus alpha to poke the omega of their choice. The idea has its merit, almost a tit for tat in the grander scheme. Except, Castiel’s somewhere up there. A target.

Done watching the fray above him, Dean strokes away, nearly smacking his hand against another sharp turn. Each straight stretch of canal becomes shorter the farther he swims. The space to hide is shrinking because those tight angles slow him down enough for a couple of alphas to get a gold and a dark green circle on him. Logically, he should turn around go back to the elongated stretches. There, Dean’s got a fighting chance to avoid the strikes of hell.

His true mate is out here, battling violent alphas for him. Dean won’t stop searching.

Through the glass walls the omega spots others swimming in their own personal fish bowls. One female omega hasn’t fared well as her face is littered with spots. God, the pain must have been unbearable. She’s doggie paddling, which explains the facial assault.

Four names disappear from the sky list.

He’s a little surprised at the lack of interest in him. What happened? Maybe they have to scent him in order to be enamored with the Winchester razzle dazzle. It seems smell plays no part. The maze must be massive, and there seems to be thirty alphas clamoring across the clear flooring.

A wall halts Dean’s roaming. End of the road, which means Cas hasn’t discovered his tank or he didn’t come. Hastily the omega’s fear cranks up.

“Cas, where are you? Please be here. Please be here.”

Locking his hands and feet against the side walls, Dean pushes himself up to get a better view of the alpha play area.

“Holy shit.” A colossal mound of kicking legs, punching fists, and wild elbows explains why he’s not seen many alphas. They are in the biggest brawl he’s ever witnessed. “Cas!”

The violent riot parts like the Red Sea as shoulders he’s all too familiar with rise from the masses. Powerful arms swing, throwing punches, rolling bodies over his shoulder, basically taking down the entire crew. Blood drips down his true mate’s cheek. Dean smiles, he can’t help it. Cas is the coolest badass. At least he knows Castiel made it; he’s here. The alpha’s just a tad too tied up right now to visit.

A cruel sting to his back has Dean turning to see the red-haired stalker yanking back for another hit. Her face is smudged with makeup and blood. Inhaling fast, Dean plunges under to avoid her next attempt. Using both his legs, the omega shoves off the corner, propelling himself to the next turn and catching his shoulder on the edge, severely. That’s going to leave a mark.

He’s zigzagging chaotically to stay clear of the red-haired stalker. Dean’s heart aches as he swims
away from Castiel. All he needs to do is keep playing the game and avoid a ton of dots so Cas won’t have to do too many. Eventually, he’s back to the longer run of waterways, giving him more space to deal with his attacker. The woman is relentless.

The red-haired lady hasn’t paid attention to her surroundings as another alpha with graying hair clotheslines her with his arm, then jumps on top to give Dean's pursuer a clean knock out. Dean might be grateful except the new alpha is none other than: Ishim.

“Don’t move.” Ishim’s words are clear even if Dean can’t hear.

Lifting his dark purple stick, Ishim points to the end and to Dean’s back. The pantomime clear. He’s being asked to remain perfectly still so the alpha can stab the omega multiple times. Unsure of what to do, Dean bobs in the water. A quick glimpse shows him one more name has vanished, leaving ten. If he can’t make it to the top five, then Cas needs to make the most marks on his flesh. Not having his true alpha in every trial brings forth anxiety, slamming Dean with a harsh impact.

“Now.” Ishim twirls his finger.

If this is a test, Dean doesn’t have the freedom to fail. Ishim could retaliate. Send someone with a better aim to take out Castiel. Even if it wasn’t plum guy who originally shot at Castiel’s family, the idea is out there. Nodding slowly, the omega follows the command, rolling over. He places his hands and feet on the side walls, thrusting his back to ghost on the glass ceiling.

Mentally he prepares himself for the onslaught of pain. Ishim’s not going to be gentle. However, after a few moments, nothing’s happened. Dean flips forward, watching in horror as Castiel wraps his beautifully carved arm around Ishim’s throat. Ishim uses his stick to shock his true mate several times. The man he loves doesn’t flinch. Glorious brute force flows from the alpha as he strangles the threat to their mating.

Cas releases Ishim. The bastard’s breathing but unconscious on the glass.

“You came,” Dean yells, even though the sound won’t make it to the other man.

All the time spent in the dreamscape comes in handy because their voices aren’t needed to communicate. Castiel smiles softly, “You called.”

Pointing to the wicked marker, Dean gestures towards his chest. “Fifteen should do it.” He flashes his hand three times so his request is clear.

The alpha’s tongue darts out, wetting his lips, as Cas’s head bounces up and down.

There should be no question about Dean’s acceptance of Castiel’s flesh tokens. Stretching his arms out to hold himself still Dean drifts on his back, his legs floating out, giving his alpha plenty of room to work. His chest is on display.

When he opens his eyes, Cas is poised to strike yet remains motionless above him.
“Castiel …do it.”

Instead of penetrating the clear barricade with the spear, Castiel kneels down. Fear rests in his expression. His full, stunning lips mouthing, “I can’t hurt you.”

Waving at the sea of battling alphas, the omega screams in frustration. “Please! Cas don’t you dare chicken out on me. It doesn’t hurt.”

“Bullshit,” the alpha spits out, raising his arm covered in dark purple dots.

Suddenly, water consumes his view as a giant wave crashes down his canal. Castiel’s thrown out of sight and Dean can’t find air as the water pummels him backwards. Tumbling out of control, the omega prays for oxygen. His back, shoulders, and legs are whacked against corners as Dean’s pulled along the riptide.

As quickly as it started, the world halts and the water calms. Dean erupts from the surface coughing and spitting. Inhaling hurts.

Three names on high fade away.

The tug from his soul to find Castiel is palpable. His brain spins from being tossed around in the harshest wild ride invented. Dean swims back in the direction of his alpha, ignoring the aching muscles because he won’t leave until he’s in the top five. He’s going to sleep for days.

After several turns the omega’s heart rate picks up. No Cas. The straight ways are getting shorter, and he’s yet to spot blue eyes. Popping his head up, he sees the brawling mass appears substantially larger.

The broken system of the Challenges speaks volumes. Alphas are more apt to fight each other than wooing an omega for their own. Violence is a drug.

Finally, he locates Castiel frantically crawling over the glass. The maze of waterways makes it impossible for his alpha to find his personal channel. Cas has never had the problem before. Dean can’t help but laugh at his stupid dirty joke.

His alpha’s about three waterways away. Regrettably, all the commotion blocks those baby blues from seeing Dean’s waving hand. It feels as if an eternity has passed when Castiel’s dark hair slides towards him, the alpha grinning. God, beaten to a pulp his true mate is still the sexiest man alive.

Dean places his forearm up against the pane. This time Cas doesn’t pause; he does three quick jabs, leaving pale blue dots behind. Dean grinds his teeth into a smile, refusing to show the amount of pain involved. These tender taps remind him of bee stings, totally doable.

Two more taps and Cas pauses, checking on the omega. He gives a big thumbs up.

His alpha’s shoulders slump as the man chews on his lower lip. Dean loves him for hating the pain he’s causing. Castiel’s an excellent example of a real alpha.

Someone snatches Cas’s head by the ears, catching the alpha off guard. His true mate’s face bashes against the glass, breaking Castiel’s nose directly above Dean.

Screams explode in the confined space. Crimson swirls with water on the transparent flooring. The omega bangs his fists under the glass shouting, “Cas! Cas! You’re okay! Come on Cas, get up!”

Ishim kicks his true mate in the gut; Castiel’s so out of it he barely responds to the hit.
A dark purple rod penetrates the glass,stabbing Dean’s neck precisely where a mating bite would go.

“Fuckin’ asshole.” Dean’s ready to tear Ishim a new one when he freezes.

The jerk’s got his foot next to Castiel’s face, tapping the nose, which continues to bleed. His command clear. Ishim once again points to his back, raising an eyebrow in question. Every fiber in the omega’s body wants to rebel, swim away or even throw up his red flag so he can climb out and put Ishim’s head to the ground.

With an innocent smile, Dean replies, “Yes, my Alpha.” The words burn in his mouth as the omega rolls over, locking his hands and feet against the sides, lifting his back to the top. Ishim immediately drops his marker onto the omega’s spine. The stick remains on his flesh for several counts. His teeth ache from the extended length of the sting.

A moment later the shock is back for another ten seconds. Ishim’s punishing Dean for his betrayal. A blatant abuse of power. The man with all the money, friends, and connections craves for the omega to suffer.

Again, again, and again. Dean’s lost count. His muscles tremble; if he lets go now the omega might drown from exhaustion. Glancing at the ceiling, he sees there are six names left. Castiel remains motionless next to Ishim. The single consolation is the occasional breath from his alpha. He’s alive.

The dark purple dots are probably one huge blob stretching the length of his spine.

Staring at Castiel’s growing pool of blood doesn’t help, so Dean closes his eyes. The assault on his back has moved to his shoulders.

This is how the world changes, on the backs of those without power.

The thought dances through Dean’s mind. A revelation sparks in his agony. The omega begins, soft his voice merely a whisper, “We have nothing, yet you take more.”

Cameras and microphones are everywhere, someone is listening.

“We have nothing, yet you take more.” His voice cracks when Ishim shoves the rod down deeper, leaving it to rest for longer.

Dean rages at the system for allowing such suffering from those they swore to protect. He shrieks, his words jumbled. Tears pour down his cheeks, dripping into the water.

Six names hover in the heavens.

His fingernails grind into the glass. Dean looks up at Ishim, “You’ve won, Sir.”

A piece of him dies as the omega begs, “Please, don’t.”

The alpha snickers, spearing Dean’s throat. Ishim has the most circles, but he doesn’t stop.

“Why?” Dean mouths, although the query is for all those watching. “Why?”

Ishim shrugs nonchalantly. “I can.”

Falling backwards, the warm bathwater catches him. Dean’s gaze counts the three final names. He did it. Regardless of Ishim’s marks, Castiel will be in the fifth trial. Rolling to the side, Dean sees his lover’s kind blue eyes silently reminding him, “I am yours.”
“Always,” Dean utters, his quaking fingers working the flag off his ankle.

He raises the red material above his head, struggling to stay awake as his body slowly shuts down. Castiel’s hand stretches out to meet Dean’s, their fingers desperate to touch. The glass between them dissipates and the warmth of his true mate’s skin slides into the omega’s palm. On the next inhale two beta guards are yanking him out of the water and towards the exit.

As the thick steel door shuts, Dean can still hear the cries of his alpha.

Chapter End Notes

Who do you hate more my dears?

Questions, Comments, and Concerns are always loved.

XOXOXO,

Angie
Castiel POV

Crack. Castiel’s vision goes white with excruciating pain; his fists tighten, gripping the edge of the hospital gurney. Crack. He refuses to show weakness; instead, he inhales through the agonizing work being done to reset his nose.

“Are you sure you don’t want some morphine?” The Alpha Infirmary doctor smiles softly.

“No,” he checks her name tag, placed flawlessly on the pocket of her blue scrubs, “Lenore. I must remain diligent; Dean might need me.” His eyes water as the woman injects him with a medication to calm the swelling.

Gabriel leans in, his face blurry. “Dude, he’s going to need you functional by the fifth trial. Take the happy high drugs. Rest at our house; we have two days until Dean’s bracket gets called.”

Ignoring his cousin’s opinion, Castiel attempts to stand. Dizziness sets in immediately, forcing the alpha back onto the bed. “When can I see Dean?”

“You can’t even stand.” Lenore rolls her eyes, the beta huffing, “stupid alpha machismo.”

Opening a Hershey kiss, Gabriel shrugs, “Ishim claimed the first meeting slot, so at least an hour. Probably more since he won Dean in the trial.”

The bitter taste of failure burns the alpha’s tongue. “I won’t abuse my omega.”

“Oh, let's all bow down to the honorable competitor who would rather lose than give a few jolts to a pretty fucking hard-ass omega. Dean’s no wimp.” Gabriel throws his trash in Cas’s direction.

Lenore smiles, tending to a few gashes that need stitches, “Leave him be; there are so few noble Alphas left in the world.”

“Those wretched markers were quite painful.” Cas points to the dark purple dots residing on his arm. “You have no idea.”

“Dean seemed perfectly on board with you doing what was necessary to win.” Gabriel shoves Cas’s foot to the side so he can sit on the gurney.

Closing his eyes, the alpha can picture his amazing Omega ready and willing for the multiple strikes of his rod. He regrets nothing, “Omegas deserve better of us. I will never be the cause of Dean’s pain.”

“Then why don’t you mate him?” The voice is young and one Castiel doesn’t recognize.

Gabriel stands, patting the new Alpha on the back, “Cassie, meet Sam Winchester, Dean’s younger brother. He’s going to be staying with us for the duration of the Challenges.”
Pushing off Gabriel’s hand, Sam advances, “He wouldn’t be in this mess if you would mate him. You call Dean your Omega, then permit him to enter such a dangerous and monstrous trial. For what? You aren’t done testing him? Waiting to see if someone better comes along?”

“You know, Lenore, how ’bout you give us some family time.” Gabriel ushers the doctor out of the cubicle.

Once the door is sealed shut, the matchmaker hisses to both men, “You two need to be careful. Dean’s mate-ship isn’t set in stone, or at least that’s what the general public needs to believe. When we don’t play our parts bullets fly at …” his voice drops and an eerie anger fuels the next few words, “my pregnant Omega!”

Rushing to stand toe to toe with Sam, Castiel explodes, “I would give my life for him. You think I wish for my true mate to be in harm’s way? The end goal here is bigger than myself or Dean; has he told you nothing?”

“Clearly, the tyke is pedaling a tricycle; maybe Dean doesn’t want his baby brother graduating to the big boy bikes.” Gabe crosses his arms. The matchmaker isn’t stupid; he’s pushing buttons for a reason.

“I am not a child,” Sam states calmly, his gaze sweeping between them. “Tell me everything.”

Castiel’s cousin leans back, his whimsical nature returning. “Well, we do have some time to kill.”

****

Castiel is pushing Gabriel as he mumbles, “Move faster.”

“I just got the text from Meg. We need to make sure Ishim’s clear before we go in because I don’t want an incident in the hallway.” His cousin pauses, “I’ve never been a violent alpha, but that man makes me rethink my peaceful ways.”

“We don’t know if it was him.” He tugs at his trench coat. The long sleeves cover a majority of the dark purple circles. Lenore assured him they would fade after a day.

Casually, Gabriel sighs, “I’d bet my knot he had something to do with it. The timing is perfect. Ishim would have seen the replay on the National Channel and decided to deal with the competition.”

“Or those who oppose our mission felt taking me out would affect Dean’s ability to be successful.” Cas doesn’t believe the words either. “I should have murdered Ishim in the trial.”

“Dude, don’t be an idiot.” Gabriel turns a corner, his gaze searching for Ishim. “The rules were clear. Any alpha who kills another alpha in the fourth trial would be disqualified. For what it’s worth, Dean’s victory relies partially on you.”

“My Omega would forgive me.”

His cousin halts in front of the door to Dean’s meeting room. “True, but would you forgive yourself? Save it for the final trial. I’m positive the information Corbett gave Winchester is solid. My beautiful Meg is super excited since it makes killing a legitimate consequence of entering the classic chase. She does love a good death scene.” Gabe lowers his tone so only Castiel can hear, “Do me a favor and make it extra bloody? My mate gets all hot and bothered at the sight.”

“I’ll see what I can do.” Cas frowns, he will never understand their relationship.
Meg pops her head out. “Took you guys long enough.” She pats Castiel’s bicep, “he’s waiting for you.”

Slipping inside, Cas’s heart stops at seeing his true mate standing tall and powerful. He doesn’t have the words, so the alpha steps forward, cupping Dean’s chin in his palms and planting a chaste kiss. His omega’s hands slide under his trench coat and suit jacket, heaving them to the floor. Their lips open while their tongues caress in a deeply rooted craving. The pain from his injuries are a distant thought. Castiel untucks Dean’s shirt so his hands can glide over the omega’s flesh.

His true mate’s hands cup his flaccid cock, “Fuck, still on the droopy-pecker meds.”

“Dean it’s for your safety. Any hour now you will go into heat. The new suppressant will keep your scent muted enough to be around other alphas, but we do not know how a true mate will react. Hannah’s never had the chance to test the drug in such a manner.”

A stunning, emerald green stares into the alpha’s soul. “You would never hurt me. My Alpha is one hell of a badass.”

Chuckling, Castiel passionately kisses the other man. They spend enough of their precious few minutes talking, right now the alpha wants to taste almonds on his lover’s tongue. Dean strips him further until alpha and omega are shirtless, grinding their torsos into the other. Desire swirls between them.

A grunt of discomfort has Castiel freezing, “Are you hurt?”

“I cracked a rib when the wave tossed me into a corner.”

Immediately the alpha drops to his knees, cautiously ghosting kisses over the bruising skin. He lays his forehead on Dean’s belly. “Unless your commands from the League differ, I plan to mate you in the final trial.”

Dean meets him on the ground, his Omega’s face hopeful. “Yes. Cas, you know it’s what I truly want.”

“Think about your answer,” Castiel places his palm over the omega’s stomach, “you will be at the end of your heat. You are aware of what might happen?”

“Omegas are fertile during heat. If you mate me, it will require a knotting, which can pretty much guarantee a pregnancy.” Dean places his hand over the alpha’s. “Yes, Alpha, I’m aware.”

Neither one moves as their stare says it all. Castiel and Dean will start their family in front of millions of viewers. Castiel is unsure about exposing such a private matter, but waiting feels wrong. Dean deserves the best he can offer, and announcing their mate-ship to the world seems to be a proper ending to his personal mission.

“You can always change your mind.” Cas refuses to not give his Omega a way out.

Wet, supple lips tenderly brush against Castiel’s. Dean whispers, “Ishim told me I’d be birthing a child within the year. I’d hate to disappoint the bastard.”

“Well if Ishim told you, then we must obey.” The Alpha snickers, dragging his mouth down Dean’s throat.

A few kisses in, Dean tilts back to ask, “how’s your mom?”
A throbbing irritation builds behind Castiel’s eyes, his voice broken, “Alive. She made it through the night, so now we have to wait for her to wake up.” His hold on Dean intensifies. “I can’t lose her.”

“Your mom is strong. Man, she’ll come back just to spite whoever shot her.” His Omega smiles. “Say Hi for me.”

“She believes in us.” Tears begin to blur his vision. “I wish … I hope” Castiel wipes his face, shaking off the overwhelming emotions, “I want my mom to meet our children.”

“At least our kids won’t require a lesson in fire safety.”

Castiel gives himself a moment to laugh, to kiss and to simply be with Dean.

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Hospital décor is all the same. Castiel notes the lack of colors beyond muted greens as he pushes the elevator call button. The last text on his phone from Naomi stated there had been no change in his mom’s status. Perhaps she called the charge nurse. The likelihood of his omega mother visiting her injured mate is completely preposterous. His parents have never outwardly showed concern or love for one another; still, Cas has always hoped.

Stepping into the brown square, he sighs, nodding to two betas in scrubs. As he exits the lift heading towards his mom’s private room, he observes someone leaning on a wall typing on her phone.

“Mirabel?” Castiel queries, “Are you here alone?”

His second cousin holds up a finger as she finishes her thought, “Nope. Daddy flew in a couple hours ago. He’s in with your moms.”

Senator Michael Novak traveled from D.C.; this can’t be good. Trying to remain nonchalant, the alpha replies, “Is he here to meet a potential mate for you?”

“Umm, that would be a no. Daddy’s pissed at Naomi’s handling of the Winchester Omega. Seeing me is an afterthought.” She steps closer, whispering, “I think he’s going to pull the plug on your trial participation.”

“What?” Cas shouts the word louder than appropriate. He attempts a more composed tone, “Why would he care? Dean can fulfill his objective regardless of my pursuits.”

Mirabel smacks his forehead with her phone, barely missing his swollen nose. “I know social etiquette isn’t a strength of yours, but part of the final goal is Dean mated to Ishim, not you. How do you not know that?” her eyes roll as she pops a piece of gum in her mouth, “I even know about the league selling off the Winchester Omega.”

“A terrible chill cascades down Castiel’s spine. His lungs spasm, forcing a rough cough from the alpha’s lips. Naomi will be forced to command Dean to mate Ishim; Cas’s worst nightmare coming to fruition. He’s unable to inhale.

“Seriously, Cassie, you need to pass on this omega regardless of how hot.” Mirabel kindly rubs his shoulder. “Daddy won’t do his part if Naomi ignores her promises.”

Dread pours through his veins as Castiel battles over the lump in his throat. Eventually oxygen hits his lungs, yet it does little to soothe the raging alarm in his brain. Without Michael it will all have been for nothing. The laws must change. All the sacrifice of those around him would be a waste, and Castiel will be blamed.
The woman blows a bubble as if he’s not dying on the inside from her words. “Daddy.”

Senator Novak appears in a stunningly tailored dark suit and a bright yellow tie. “Mirabel.” Michael nodding to him, “Castiel, I’m sorry we won’t get more time to catch up. I have been informed of your plans to return to Colorado in the near future.”

Castiel’s mind goes blank. His mother has agreed to send him away; she will destroy her own son for the sake of the grand scheme. Mirabel and Michael walk away, discussing plans for a late dinner. The alpha’s world has imploded, and his own family couldn’t be bothered.

“Please God.” The alpha presses his cheek to the cool taupe wall. “I want to believe my mother would never hurt me. Please God, let it be a lie.”

Wiping his face Castiel, prepares himself to confront Naomi. He will not go without a fight. His hand reaches out to push the cracked door fully open when he sees his Omega mother crying.

In every memory the alpha can recall, Cas has never seen Naomi truly sob. A properly placed tear, sure, but the omega’s shoulders shake as the weeping increases. His mother holds her mate’s hand to her lips, laying long loving kisses to each knuckle. With her free hand Naomi cards her fingers through Amara’s hair, twirling a lock around her pointer digit. Castiel’s never witnessed such affection.

“You have to wake up, my Alpha.” The words are interrupted with several sobs. “He needs you. Our beautiful baby boy needs you to fix,” Naomi’s head drops to Amara’s shoulder, “my mistake.”

“Mother,” Cas utters, finally stepping into the room.

He would have expected the clean-cut Omega to hide her emotional outburst. Instead, Naomi chokes on a harsh sniffle, “I am so sorry. If I had known Dean Winchester is your true mate, I would have done things differently. I swear, Castiel.”

“I won’t leave.” His chest is rising in defiance.

Sighing softly, his mother straightens Amara’s sheets. “She’s much better at finding the loopholes, breaking the rules without worrying about the consequences. My amazing Amara should be the one to find your way.”

“What did you promise Michael?” Castiel needs to know the agreement.

Naomi’s gaze never leaves her mate. “I agreed you shouldn’t be in the final game. If you disappear before the sixth trial, then Michael will do his part at the close of the Challenges.”

Silence drags on as Castiel attempts to absorb his mother’s newest deal. Words fail him. Dean has no choice; he must be present at all six trials. The younger Winchester’s life depends on his Omega fulfilling all requirements from the league.

The consistent beeping of Amara’s heart monitor allows Castiel to feel the passing of time. Tubes run from her mouth as a pump helps his Mom to stay alive. Dean does the same for him. His true mate preserves his heart, sustains the alpha’s ability to breathe.

Carefully Castiel pulls over a chair to sit on the opposite side, taking his mom’s free hand. “I’ve done everything you have asked, Mother. Your goals have always mirrored my own until I met Dean. I have never let you down.”

“Castiel …” She halts her speech as the Alpha raises his hand.
“I will be in the final trial, or I will die trying.”

“I know.” The resolve in Naomi’s statement has him looking into her distraught face. “What have I done? Is saving an entire designation worth losing my mate, my son?”

Reaching out, the alpha takes his mother’s hand, creating a family circle. “We are not alone. There are those in the league who are sympathetic to my plight. Perhaps, we can make a few calls, come up with alternative ways so you don’t have to choose.”

“Deception and double crosses were always Amara’s talent.” Naomi inhales deeply, releasing her hold on both Alphas. His mother pulls out her purse, collecting makeup to hide the tracks of her tears. Slowly, cautiously, the omega slips into becoming the powerful woman directing a coup to overthrow a system rooted deeply into the American way of life. “However, I’ve been with my Alpha long enough to learn a few things. We have until the opening of the sixth trial to pull off a miracle.”

In awe of Naomi, Castiel kisses his mom’s forehead then turns to his birth Omega, “What are you thinking?”

Yanking out her phone, his Mother types while answering, “There is a reason the League has been pairing light and dark.”

“For dominance in mystical dealings.” Cas has heard the story a billion times over. “Why?”

“My dear boy, we are going to create our own miracle.”

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Chapter End Notes

Love to you all. Comments, Questions and Concerns are cherished forever.

XOXOXO,
Angie
“Hey,” a finger pokes Dean’s cheek, “Hey,” another poke, to the forehead, “Dean I’ve got a bone to pick with you.”

Fluttering his eyes open, the omega glimpses the figure of Harry Spangler bending over his bed.

“Go away,” the omega whines. His skin feels tight and uncomfortable over his bones. In response, Dean tucks deeper into his blankets.

“Fuck you, Winchester.” Harry’s prods become more aggressive as he shoves Dean’s shoulder. “We are having it out, mano-a-mano.”

Without opening his eyes, Dean snatches the other omega’s hand, squeezing harshly. “I’m too tired and cranky for your antics today, Harry. Come back when I’ve had a few more hours.”

Sweat covers him, yet the omega clings tighter in his cocoon.

“You’ve been asleep for 32 hours, maybe more, I’m not sure.”

He cracks an eyelid, “That can’t be right.”

“Umm, it totally is because I had my fifth trial yesterday, and you went to sleep the night before.” Harry suddenly kicks his mattress. “Now we can have it out here or downstairs in the ring. I’m going to kick your ass, Winchester.”

Reluctantly sitting up, Dean rubs the heavy scruff on his chin. “Don’t be stupid.”

The little shit punches Dean’s ear. Actually, it was more like a mild slap, but Harry appears extremely riled up as he bounces on his feet shouting, “I’ve got all day.”

“What, to annoy me into submission?” The omega stretches, rising to his feet. God, his mouth has knitted a wool sweater; he coughs, grabbing a large bottle of water and drinking the entire thing in one gulp. “Is there a reason for your sad attempt at violence?”

“Ed’s being wooed.”

Ignoring his visitor, Dean stumbles to the bathroom to take a whiz and brush his teeth. The toothbrush dangles from his lips as he yells back, “Good for Ed.”

“No!” Harry’s reflection grumbles loudly, “Apparently an alpha has taken an interest in him, and he doesn’t have an alpha sibling for me. Ed may leave me behind. We had a plan, Winchester, and you snubbing Corbett as a suitor led him to find Ed.”

A few puzzle pieces finally fall into place. “Dude, Corbett’s a decent guy. I told him to find an omega who was a better match.”
A severe ache rattles his bones as Dean turns on the cold water for a shower.

“Exactly!” Harry’s arms wave chaotically. “You have pushed Ed into the arms of a stranger. So, I’m going to teach you a lesson, Winchester. Stay the hell out of other people’s love lives.”

Tossing his toothbrush into its spot, Dean answers through a spit, “Should take your own advice, buddy.”

“Ed and I made a plan. We’d only socialize with alphas who had a suitable alpha sibling willing to mate too. You started this, and I’m going to end it now.” Another gnat-strength swat ghosts over Dean’s neck.

Not giving a shit, Dean strips naked, stepping into the icy stream and releasing a guttural moan.

The water mildly appeases his itchy, hot flesh. Harry proceeds to bicker with himself, occasionally banging the shower curtain. Shampooing his hair, Dean wonders if the fourth trial took a serious toll on him. All the sleep and now his deeply seated desire to bash Harry’s face in for merely existing is slightly out of character. Okay, Harry can be an ass in general.

A face sneaks in between the curtain and wall, “Are you listening?”

“Not at all.” Dean shoves it out while cutting the water off.

The curtain is harshly thrown to the side, “You could at least give me the courtesy of paying attention.” Dean snags a towel, drying his hair as Harry adds, “Your scent is funny.”

“Your face is funny.” His retort not one of his finest moments.

His guest continues to buzz about Dean as the omega digs through drawers for his favorite pair of grey sweatpants. Then he picks out his softest t-shirt. An old ratty I <3 NYC Dean picked up when the Winchester trio lived in the Bronx for a few months. The fabric scrapes his sensitive, displeased skin.

Realizing both beds are empty, Dean points, “Where’s Ash?”

“Prepping for his trial tonight. Seriously, you’re going dow—”

The omega steps in to push Dean, who reacts on instinct, flipping the smaller man over his back and tossing his scrawny butt to the floor. “Stop. Ed’s a big boy and can make his own decisions. If you touch me again, I’m going to break your nose. Understand?”

“Asshole,” Harry mutters, rushing from the room while giving Dean the bird over his head.

A case of bottled water rests next to his bed. He’s grateful for whoever dumped it there; the omega’s dying of thirst. He chugs a second bottle within seconds.

Slowly his brain comes online as the omega stares at the wall calendar over Ash’s desk. If his roommate’s fifth trial is tonight, then his will be tomorrow. “Shit, I lost an entire day.”

A knock at his door jars him, “Harry, fuck off.”

The door swings inward, revealing Rowena and Gilda. The erotica teacher grins, “I believe young Spangler took your advice. Now may we enter?”

“I need food.” Dean’s stomach growls for emphasis.
Gilda holds up a basket, “I have muffins.”

He waves them in seizing two blueberry muffins. A chunk of blue takes flight as he asks, “Is there a reason for your visit?”

Rowena’s nose twitches in disgust. “How do alphas find you so damn appealing?”

“I think I’m adorable.” Dean smiles, food definitely stuck in his teeth.

Ignoring them both, Gilda hands him a banana nut option, “We need your help in prepping for a complicated wide-net incantation.”

“Help is a bit strong,” Rowena counters. “However, your assistance is required.”

“A spell for what?” He groans over the freshly baked goods.

The women glance at each other before Gilda replies, “There have been some developments that could be catastrophic towards your hope of mating Castiel. Everyone’s been researching since yesterday morning to find a solution.”

“Define catastrophic.” He snags a fourth muffin, grinning at the scent of cinnamon.

Tossing her red curls behind her shoulder, the erotica teacher crosses her arms, “If Castiel doesn’t leave Kansas before the final trial, Senator Michael Novak will not lead the charge to bring forth freedom for all omegas.”

“Okay, so catastrophic.” An intense weight puts down roots on his chest. “You mentioned a possible solution?”

“A full-body gender glamour enchantment.” Gilda’s expression brightens with excitement, “The goal is for the bewitchment to trick anyone viewing Castiel from both in person and through a camera lens.”

Recalling his years of study in Magical Arts, Dean translates his teacher’s comment, “You want everyone who sees Cas to think he’s a girl?”

“Bloody brilliant,” Rowena shoves him out the door, “wish I’d thought of it first.”

The elevator deposits Rowena, Gilda and Dean on the top floor. A few omegas glance at them as the crew traipses by the computer room on their way to Crowley’s office. Once inside, the sheer number of people in the space surprises the omega.

He expected Hannah and Crowley, but the list includes Chuck, Naomi, Meg, Gabriel, Billie, and …

“Cas.” Dean charges for his Alpha, diving into a warm embrace. Inhaling the orange cinnamon aroma, the omega notices a tingle from his groin. A delicious craving to devour his mate.

Rolling his head to discover supple lips, Dean’s permitted one kiss before Billie snatches his hair, yanking harshly. “I’d say someone’s heat is perking up.”

“Agreed.” Castiel’s pupils darken as his hands go rigid by the alpha’s side. “Do not worry; I just need a moment to adjust. The alpha suppressant dulls things, but I can still smell him.” Cas’s long, sexy digits reach out to pet down Dean’s body from hair to hip.

Crowley pushes them farther apart. “We all must focus on the task at hand. Dean’s heat is on track.”
“How are all of you in the Center?” Dean tosses his head about to clear the lusty thoughts. Nothing will help the heat burning under his flesh. If Cas has the strength to resist, then he shall follow his Alpha’s example. Maybe, just one more hit.

Meg smirks, tapping Dean’s nose, “Helicopter pad on top of the building. As long as we exit the way we came, no one will ever know.”

“A spell of this magnitude requires all our combined forces.” Naomi reaches out to squeeze Dean’s wrist. “I’m trying to make it right, Dean.”

He appreciates all the people battling to help their mate-ship become a reality, yet the omega’s a little fuzzy on the specifics. “I’ve never heard of a gender glamour working through the lens of a camera.”

“We are tweaking it a bit.” Rowena adds, her hands chopping up a black vine.

Crowley’s massive desk has been cleared of his normal office materials and replaced with a silver caldron. Different ingredients lie across the wood, dispersed among several antique spell books. A lit candle resides in each of the four corners. Dean knows for a fact they are holding the spots of east, west, north, and south.

Gabriel and Castiel are by the windows in a heated debate of whispers by themselves. Dean’s body trembles with desire. However, the omega’s aware enough to stamp out the flames and keep a slight distance from his true mate. Soooo not the time nor place.

Chuck seems overly awkward in his tweed jacket. While the others clearly have a role in the spell prep, the Academics professor stands alone, twirling his thumbs.

“What brings you here, Shurley?” Dean cracks his neck to the side, anything to clear his yearning to drop to his knees and present for Cas.

“They needed a light and dark sibling pair.” Chuck holds his gaze, “I’m Amara’s brother.”

Wow, the family tree of the Heat Liberation League twists and turns with the creepiness of an old weeping willow. “Have you been able to visit her in the hospital?”

“I’m not mated.”

“Right, sorry.” Dean fidgets with a random thread on his t-shirt. He really should have put on shoes.

The Academics teacher shrugs, “Amara will be fine. My sister has many malevolent attributes; however, Castiel is her pride and joy. She will see her son mated to you; of that I have no doubt.”

“Faith in the future seems all I’ve got these days.” He watches the dance-like movements of the group as a dark liquid is poured into the silver caldron. Cautiously each ingredient is passed down the line. When Chuck passes it to Dean, he’s got no idea what to do.

Hannah steps forward, “You need to hand the item to Castiel. Make sure your skin touches as you pass.”

“Okay.” He holds the green leaf as his true mate moves to stand opposite of Chuck.

Their shoulders brush and sweat appears under the omega’s collar. A faint caress of flesh has the heat in his belly flaring up again. The next component, Dean observes Chuck pass the item through
both hands, one of which has light brown strands of hair inside. Amara’s.

Tilting into Castiel’s ear, Dean whispers, “What do the pairings mean?”

Keeping his head bowed, his Alpha replies softly, “The element begins or is born into the circle through the hands of light and dark omegas, one having given birth, the other not. Rowena and Gilda. Next it encounters the touch of mates denied the experience; Hannah and Crowley. Onward it moves to mates wealthy in fertility, Gabriel and Meg. Slipping into the hold of light and dark from the same womb, Chuck and Amara. Then our turn. The equality of true mates. We hold within ourselves to tip either way, yet we choose balance.” A tear trickles from Castiel’s, eye wetting the man’s cheek. “My mother has a vial of both her and Amara’s blood. Each item will be dipped in their combined liquid of life from two mates who are dominant sides of light and dark. Finally, Billie will place the ingredient in the bowl to build the elixir.”

“What does Billie represent?” His curiosity piqued.

“Death.”

His response much louder than anticipated, “What does Billie have in common with Death?”

The woman in question holds up a finger to pause the group’s actions. She stares down Dean, her dark brown eyes piercing his soul, “The summer after I turned 8, I drowned in my neighbors’ swimming pool. I was medically dead for several minutes until paramedics were able to revive me. In those lost moments I met Death; we hung out and had a slice of Chicago style pizza.”

“Really? You had a slice with Death?” Dean’s not sure if she’s joking.

“Death’s weird, Winchester.” Billie gestures for the mystical chain gang to continue.

An hour later all the potion’s ingredients have been properly placed in the pot. Gilda and Rowena chant quietly over the brew as the group begins to leave.

“That’s it?” the omega whispers to his true mate.

Cas pulls Dean into a hug, his lips skirting over his neck, “It will take a day for the elixir to be ready for consumption. I will swallow the potion a few hours before the sixth trial and will be seen as a woman by everyone but you for 24 hours.”

Billie appears, yanking a few hairs from the omega’s head. “What did I ever do to you?”

“It’s how you will see past the spell, Winchester.” She hands the strands to Gilda who dips them in the vial of blood from Amara and Naomi then drops them in the caldron. “Or would you rather mate Castiel with breasts?”

“I want Castiel. He could grow wings, and I’d still mate him.” Dean smiles as his gaze rests on the sparkling blue of his dreams. “You are mine.”

The two men kiss until Gabriel throws a cup of water on them.

After a quick lunch, Dean strolls back to his room. Castiel’s orange-cinnamon scent lingers on his flesh, revving up Dean’s heat. He will be in the throes of it by tomorrow. Sadly, he will have to scrub the scent from his skin before the next trial; his mind irrationally feeling a great loss at the thought.

With a heavy sigh the omega opens the door to his room and is nearly knocked on his ass by the
pungent smell of coconut.

“What the fu……” Dean closes the door on instinct his eyes locked on a naked and copiously oiled Ash.

His roommate raises his shiny hands, “Man, I need a little help.”

Wiggling his nose at the stench, “I am not getting the spots you missed.”

“Nah, I got a trial buddy for touch ups.” The normally bold omega bites his lip, “I was practicing for my fifth trial, which in Erotica is a personal exhibition of our choice. My toy got stuck.”

Immediately Dean knows where the object is located, “Seriously! Just get a new set of batteries and it will slide with a good yank. Ash, you’ve got enough coconut oil to slick up the entire Center.”

“Exactly! My hands are too greasy and it’s a glass knot, there aren’t any batteries or a way to deflate the damn thing.”

Dean’s never been one to attempt mounting a fully erected fake knot, but he’s heard of the pros and cons. Right here and now will be the reason he never does. “Why in the hell would anyone want glass shoved where the sun don’t shine?”

“It looks really cool under the stage lights.” Ash grimaces. “However, I got to tell you. It’s starting to get uncomfortable.” His roommate shakes his hips for emphasis.

Closing his eyes, he prays to the Almighty Lord to bring him patience so he doesn’t bat Ash over the head with the glass knot once it’s free. “Get on your bed, hands and knees, butt in the air.”

Clearly Ash is in pain because the omega leaps into position.

“Never, ever, speak to me or any living soul about this.” Dean sees the glass hand grip hanging out about four inches, wet with oil. First, he rubs his hands on the comforter to get them as dry as possible. Next Dean wraps his fingers around the protruding object and gives it a massive heave.

Unfortunately, the knot doesn’t budge. Instead Dean’s hands slip off, smacking himself in the face as Ash howls in agony. Both omegas curse wildly from the failed endeavor.

Once the stars stop spinning around his vision, Dean goes to bathroom and snatches a clean washcloth. He tightly binds the material around the glass. Placing his foot on the edge of the mattress the omega uses all his strength to pull hard.

The toy doesn’t move.

Although, he’s thrown across the room, crashing into his own bed from the force while shouting, “Son of a bitch!”

“Stop!” Tears are in Ash’s eyes as he screams, “No more! I’ll just leave it in.”

“You’ll get an infection and die of sepsis, dumbass,” Dean huffs from his bed, trying to come up with an alternate plan.

“That might be better.” His roommate answers. The dude must be in awful pain because his breathing is ragged.

Scratching his head, the omega counters, “I think you need to go to medical. Hannah’s definitely dealt with unrelenting objects up an Omega’s ass before. Do you want me to call?”
A very timid squeak of “yes” gives him the go ahead.

Hannah appears within five minutes of the call. Biting her lip from laughing, “He’s my third one today. Erotica Fifth Trial strikes again.”

“How? Who wakes up and decides, today …today I’m going to fuck glass for my special talent?”

Ash crawls onto the stretcher, whimpering, “Stupid omegas stole my idea.”

Dean glares at his roommate, exclaiming, “I’m not sure you are in any position,” he waves to the crouching omega, hidden knot, “to be claiming such bright ideas.”

The doctor grins, “Don’t worry, a couple muscle relaxants and all will be fine; except you’ll need a different activity for the exhibition.”

“I’m going to need some rope,” Ash firmly announces as he’s pushed out into the hall.

A touch of panic rings in Dean’s curt reply, “No you don’t! At this rate you’ll hang yourself, moron.”

Chapter End Notes

All the loves with heart sprinkles.

XOXOXOXOXO

Angie
Fingernails scrape down Dean’s arm; the self-inflicted marks set off a profound desire, one where he can somehow peel his skin off. The omega’s free hand thrusts a fake vibrating knot deeper into his channel. “Please…I can’t…take much more.”

The cool marble wall gives his flesh a slight break from the constant misery. The ride to the Hunter bunker and dragging his ass to the shower room took all his strength. Tears of frustration flood his eyes, making it impossible to see. He just needs a release. Yet he’s been pounding his hole for what feels like hours, and nothing. The omega’s body is refusing to be pushed over the edge; instead, he’s been holding in a state of denial. Cruel, unfathomable, agonizing, and the fault is his and his alone.

Wailing with rage, Dean attempts a different angle. Lowering his hand to his cock, he starts stroking it softly building the tension, tightening his grip, teasing the tip. He matches the movements of both hands. A crippling arousal seethes in his groin, mocking him as the sensations taunt with no endgame.

“It’s not working.” He pulls the vibrator out, violently tossing it to the floor. A tragic whimper crawls from his throat, “Meg, I’m gonna die.”

“I know it’s rough, but let’s try something else.” He can hear the scent expert digging through her box of heat aids. “Maybe a longer dildo.”

“Meg.” The omega’s voice is broken and pleading, “I can’t reach climax.” A sob interrupts his rant, “Jack swore things would be better after I blew a load. Everyone promised.”

A tiny hand reaches around the curtain, turning off the water. “No one could have guessed such a unique issue.”

An uncontrollable anger has him ripping the curtain until it lies at his feet. “My body demands Castiel!”

“After the trial we can add his scent to the toys. He can even touch you, which should definitely give you that final shove.” Her eyes remain downcast.

They both are painfully aware Dean will have to remain in his current state for several more hours depending on the trial’s duration.

“I won’t survive.” He grabs her jacket, bringing her up to him, “Please Meg. We can scrub everything down once I’ve gotten off. Please…Cas…” a desperate hiccup halts his words.

“The letter from the league was pretty damn clear, Dean. You must be in your purest form during the next two trials. Even a trace of alpha seed on you could fuck up the plan; we need at least a day to properly sanitize, but not so close to go time. Tests will be done. When the law guys make their move, they will need scientific data to prove you were exposed to dozens of alphas during your heat without an incident. Having Cas’s scent on you could mess with the results.”
Laughing hysterically, Dean releases the woman, crashing to the hard, cold marble. “Pure.” The laughter evolves into a gasping, outrageous cackle, “Why would anyone care if I had some alpha cum up my ass? How is being pure a necessity? Virginity is only valuable to those who see sex as a bargaining tool. A heat is a heat. No, this is payback for ruining their precious side deal.”

“Use your head, Winchester!” She ungracefully eases down to sit next to his sprawling limbs. “A possible excuse could be you smelled mated because of Castiel’s scent mark. We can’t give those who oppose us ammunition. I know it hurts.”

“Hurts?” Dean slams his fists against his thighs, anything to break up the sizzling torture under his flesh. “Meg, snapping my rib in the fourth trial hurt, burning my skin in the third trial hurt, shit, being beaten by other omegas in the second trial hurt. No, my supposed friend, I would not describe this as hurting. I want to strip my skin away so my bones can breathe. I want to drown in a tub of ice till my lips are blue. I want to stab my brain so it will stop the screaming in my head.”

She lifts his head, laying it in her lap. The scent expert’s fingers card through his wet hair. “Have I told you about your brother and my kids?”

“Oh my God, they set his hair on fire!”

“Nope.” Meg leans in so they are face to face. “He’s the best nanny they’ve ever had. My little arsonists haven’t even asked to set something ablaze since we fired the beta and left them with Sam. Your brother is the pied piper of delinquents.” She chuckles, her hands moving to hold his, “last night he read them bedtime stories. I’m not kidding, actual fairytale stories. I’m never letting him leave; he’s tamed my demons.”

Even as she continues her tall tale of taming the mini demons, Dean doesn’t have the ability to remain coherent. He’s writhing on the marble, every caress to his body grating against his oversensitive nerves. Without an orgasm, the omega truly believes he’ll have an aneurism. Poof, no more savior for the world. He woke up in pain; however, Dean’s been unable to give his body what it craves.

Not a toy, not a hand, not scented oils, absolutely nothing will work because his soul has received a taste of heaven and it will take no substitute. No one could have predicted the reaction. In nearly all cases of true mates, they meet and mate; there is no denial. Dean’s been dragged to hell. Each and every nerve ending on him is erupting in brutal torment. In his mind unseen alphas are slicing him open simply to watch the omega bleed.

When he first received the three simple commands from the league Dean was overjoyed.

**Participate.**

**Stay in the trial for as long as physically possible.**

**At the start of the trial be pure in your scent and in your blood.**

An hour after reading the letter, the unconscionable agony began and hasn’t let up. The gauntlet has been set before the omega, and he once again has no choice but to obey, even if it kills him.

A slap to his cheek has Dean glancing into Meg’s brown gaze, “You won’t die. Do you hear me, Dean?” She smacks him again, “Do you want me to try and help?”

Shaking his head, Dean smiles through a scowl, “not my type.”

Instead of a saucy remark, the scent expert bows her head, placing a kiss to his forehead. “For what
it’s worth, you are my hero, Dean Winchester.”

He loses consciousness. At one point he’s listening intently to Meg’s big heartfelt speech and the next second … darkness. The warm corpse can only take so much. No dreams of blue eyes and thick juicy thighs, simply a totally colorless room of nothing except Joshua. The alpha rocks in an old wooden rocking chair, his hands stabbing green and blue yarn with two knitting needles. A tiny little stocking cap develops. Neither man speaks. Dean doesn’t have the strength, and old Josh never does anyway. The clicking of the needles is the single sound, the rhythmic pitter patter oddly calming.

A tug from somewhere far away disturbs his peace. For a bit Dean ignores the call of his name, choosing to focus on needles clicking.

Joshua pauses the work he’s done on the cap; it evaporates into the nothingness. The alpha carefully stands, strolling over to the fallen omega. The gentle dreamweaver kneels down and his rich, warm voice washes over Dean’s distraught soul.

“Your heat will ease with faded memories. Not because the burning has vanished, but rather your brain won’t hear it. Dean, my authority over you won’t last for long. I can only hope it gives you the hush your mind so desperately requires.” Joshua’s hand spreads across Dean’s eyes, covering them. “Don’t be scared, my child of equality, help is on the way. Your heat will ease. Stay immune to the pain, safe in your haven of disorientation. Your heat will ease. You are a warrior, fight the loss of will, my dear boy. Battling in the Hunter trials was never the difficult part; surviving your own path will be your greatest conquest. Your heat will ease. Surrender to the numbness.”

The fog clouding his brain dissipates. Although, Dean notes he’s still lost in a haze surrounding his senses. Everything appears far away as if at the end of a tunnel like a vertigo. A warm voice of authority reminds the omega to let the clouds be, “Clarity is the enemy.”

He’s walking behind Eileen and Billie. Meg must have dressed him in a clean uniform and tied his running shoes. Holding up his hands, Dean’s positive he wouldn’t have the lucidity for such a complicated task. Wait. Something’s about to happen where being clear of mind would be a necessity.

“Where am I?” The question from his lips surprises him and the two ladies.

Billie’s face gets crazy close, her words muffled to his ears, “Fifth trial. You could do this one in your sleep.”

“Perfect.” He nods his head.

The world tumbles in a thick fog. Dean attempts to focus on Billie’s dark curls; his brain incapable of anything complex. Wisps of discomfort tap at his flesh in varying locations, nonetheless the omega carries onward to his fate.

Smacking his lips, Dean utters, “Can I have an orange? I need a snack.”

“No!” Billie exclaims, her feet moving so damn fast. Where are they going in such a hurry?

Eileen glances back at him with worry. He gives the other omega a thumbs up.

The Hunter Coach snaps her fingers in his face, “Rude.”

“Listen up, Buttercup.” Their coach’s fingers are flying as she speaks. “The arena will be in complete darkness. All cameras will be catching the action using high tech night vision. Ten
omegas and twenty-four alphas will enter the trial. With thirty-four participants, there are fifty disks hidden in the space.” She pulls out a yellow, small plastic frisbee-looking object about four inches in diameter. “Each disk is worth one point, the more you collect the better your score. At the end of the predetermined time, anyone without at least one point is immediately disqualified. They are trimming down the numbers before the sixth trial.”

“Shit.” Even stoned, Dean knows snagging at least two disks is essential.

Eileen’s hands fly. Billie observes, intently voicing the omega’s concern, “What happens if only omegas collect all the discs or, God forbid, only alphas?”

“Nice catch, it actually happened in a group earlier. Alphas snagged all the discs, so the people holding multiple ones could give them to their favorite omegas, as many discs to whomever they wish. However, it was done behind closed doors so no one can see who is getting the most discs. This will affect the ranking. Only the top five omegas from each bracket moves on to the finale, which means you can snag a disc and still lose out.”

“Are there any specific rules?” Dean’s worried its going to be a madhouse on steroids.

“No biting, knotting, or killing.” Billie shrugs. “They are saving the best for last.”

Giving his head a sharp shake, he attempts to focus. A mysterious rich voice tells him not to poke at the hazy wall, but fuck, the omega’s about to enter a totally dark game to battle over mini frisbees and find Cas.

His head clears a bit, although on its heels comes an itch he can’t seem to identify.

Billie types a code into a panel as two doors slide open revealing the equivalent of a brass casket.

“Pick a spot and step in. Dean, you will hear an alarm when you’ve got thirty seconds to go; Eileen, you will have a flashing light similar to the fourth trial. The opposite wall will rise when the alarm or light stops; it will remain open for the duration so you can hide if you so desire, but remember, there are no discs in your personal cubby.”

Each omega slides into their hobbit closet. His shoulders brush against the sides. Dean’s heartbeat races with the dread of being trapped in such a tight space, “How long till the thirty second alarm?”

The teacher doesn’t answer; in a blink of an eye the door seals shut.

Black. No air movement. Dean only hears his own breathing. He places his hands on the barrier, which will hopefully open …very …fucking …soon.

After several minutes, sweat trickles down his back, and the omega worries about death by a lack of oxygen. Pretty hard to participate dead. A flash of pain washes over his flesh, causing Dean to gasp loudly. Slick builds between his cheeks. Wiping his face, a burning sizzles in his groin. The panic and fear pokes at the numbness planted in his mind.

“Wait a second.” There’s an important piece of the puzzle he’s missing. Somewhere hidden in the fog of his thoughts there lies a truth.

An alarm blares. The omega counts down to the inevitable.

Silently the door rises, Dean’s only aware as the metal skates up his fingertips. The omega understands the importance of staying under the radar. Others will be coming for him: Alphas hoping to cop a feel under the cover of darkness and fellow omegas wishing to eliminate their competition. They can’t murder him, but one can do a lot of damage while still leaving the person
technically alive.

Mostly dead doesn’t seem a great way to enter the sixth trial.

Inching his foot out of his casket, the omega warily steps out into the room. Fresh air blows over his face, and he inhales, enjoying the oxygen. Suddenly he misjudges a step down losing his balance and plummeting to … a wading pool? He catches himself on hands and knees in a gooey, wet substance with no natural scent.

“Weird,” he murmurs. Lifting his right hand, the substance drizzles down, reminding him of a sticky oil.

His eyes are rubbish in the pitch-black arena. Dean feels for Eileen, who will be down by two senses, yet he recalls Gadreel babbling on about her amazing sense of smell. Maybe he can track down the discs with his nose. Inhaling, the omega shudders at the heavy chlorine stench. The game makers probably use the foul chemical to keep the goo sanitary. Crawling forward, he sashays his hands across the bottom, praying to find a stray disc. A little luck would be awesome.

A bright white light blinds him; the omega covers his face, squinting at the numbers on the ceiling counting down: 1 hour, 56 minutes, and 34 seconds. Ten seconds later the clock vanishes. The flash of white causes his retinas to burn and makes the leftover darkness seem heavier.

“Yahtzee.” Dean mumbles as his fingers stumble over the four-inch treasure. He hastily places the object down his pants, thrilled the material is so tight. It’s an excellent hiding place for his new friend.

Putrid plum travels through the omega’s nostrils, causing him to gag. Ishim’s nearby. Dean would recognize the nauseating B.O. anywhere. He scurries farther into the space, trying to avoid the bubble of vomit plum.

“I can smell you, Dean.” The horrible Alpha’s voice is grating on Dean’s nerves. “You’re going to let me taste the toasted almonds tonight, sweetheart. Lick it straight from the source.”

A quiver of disgust has the omega sliding farther down into the slushy slop. Ishim’s nose doesn’t seem too sharp, so the chlorine might throw him off. His hand skirts over another hand. Both individuals freeze. Clearly the other omega doesn’t want to be found either, so Dean follows the arm upward and gently squeezes the person’s shoulder. They back away slowly.

Rolling over to crab walk for a bit, his digits grasp another disk. He puts the second with the first and continues his snail’s crawl away from Ishim’s scent. The alpha’s grunting and stomping around, yelling his name. Stealth would not be the man’s talent.

Suddenly, his foot bumps against an edge of something. Dean feels multiple stairs going up. Moving forward seems the smarter choice, so he silently ascends the metal steps. Out of nowhere the floor disappears and the omega’s sliding down. He lands in a new pool of goo.

“Who’s there?” A disembodied voice whispers.

Okay, one of the pluses to the game is omegas and alphas can’t properly scent each other over the strong chemical odor. People can’t find him to hurt him. He raises the tone of his voice, “An omega.”

“Good.” The spectral word seems overly stern as a boot kicks him in the face.

“Son of a bitch.” Fucker hit him right in the cheek. The strike knocks on the foggy bits of his mind;
a swirl of ache spins down his body. A bizarre craving to peel his skin away spasms over his thoughts. Dean’s two seconds from beating down the dude when his nose catches a new scent; orange zest with cinnamon. It’s faint but here.

The unseen opponent rises to skirmish; however, the omega doesn’t care. Dean listens for the first inhale, snatching the guy’s mouth and shoving until the back of the head connects with metal. Harsh enough for the other omega to pass out but still follow the rules. A disqualification isn’t an option. He carefully makes sure the person’s sitting up. “Have a nice nap.”

Snapping his fingers, Dean remembers the quest, patting down unconscious jerk, “Sweet.” Three discs are nestled against the man’s junk. Once his new acquisitions are safely stowed, Dean sniffs. Again, the orange cinnamon flavor glides down his throat, enters his pores and overall releases a siren’s call to his body.

Fire, horrible, unbearable pain stabs at his senses. The omega’s pulse sprints beyond what would be considered healthy. He won’t live without the taste. “Cas.”

Chapter End Notes

Comments, Questions and Concerns are always appreciated.

XOXOXOXO,
Angie
The darkness seeps in, weaving a true cluster fuck in Dean’s head. Crawling on his hands and knees, the omega works his way up another set of sharp-edged, metallic stairs. Staying low has allowed him to dart past a dozen alphas. Dumbasses are swinging their arms around screaming for omegas to show themselves. How about a big “hell no,” buddy? Apparently, the chlorine has done its job blocking their ability to scent specific omega locations. Unless they touch Dean, he survives as a ghost.

A wicked itch zings through his flesh. The haze remains in his mind, swirling in tandem with the black, ducking for cover into the warmth of a gentle voice. Dean prickles a bit, although right now the discomfort is manageable.

Orange zest with cinnamon continues to lead him by the nose. Castiel’s in the trial. Having learned from previous mistakes the omega catches himself at the top before he tumbles down the slide. Dean holds his breath as he listens for another person’s presence. Silence. The slop appears to be muting noise too. He bets his right nut the gooey liquid has been enchanted. A hushing spell makes sense. The entire arena seems to deaden the senses of all the players, possibly putting all alphas and omegas on equal footing. Interesting.

Not hearing any movement Dean risks a stretch letting himself rise to his full stature.

Mistake. Huge, God-awful blunder. Spiderwebs or a similar material sticks to the syrup on his body. Dean can’t help the yelp. The stuff is on his face, and in this moment, he’d take poop over the webby nightmare. He’s batting away the impression of eight-legged creatures descending on him, which causes the omega to trip and plummet chaotically.

Unfamiliar arms snare Dean at the bottom. He doesn’t have time to react before wickedly powerful hands are wrenching his neck to the side. The person sniffs, then licks directly over his scenting gland. Dean stows the gut reaction to scream as he slams his elbow into the alphas gut.

“Damn it. You little shit that was my boob,” a feminine voice hisses.

Tossing his weight against her, the woman remains on her feet. Strong, a little scary too.

“You can’t bite me,” Dean shouts. He holds a small hope a second alpha will distract her enough to set the omega free, because her hold is like steel.

A chilling laugh rings out into the nothingness, “Oh. It seems I’ve found what I was looking for, the charming Winchester omega. Crowley’s crown jewel.”

“Screw you.” He cracks his head against her face, dropping into the pool of ick.

The woman kicks and shouts from the pain, “I’m going to pop those pretty green eyes from their sockets. Hang them from my rearview mirror as a trophy.”
“You aren’t allowed to kill me either.” He rolls back narrowly missing her searching fingers. “And eww gross.”

“Good thing you smell of alpha catnip because, Dean, sweetie, God didn’t give you brains.”

Chewing his lip, the omega holds back his sassy retort. Instead, he soundlessly sneaks to the next set of stairs. Dean clambers up, staying as stealthy as humanly possible and listening to the female alpha ramble on about cutting out his tongue. What is her damage?

When he reaches the top step the omega freezes, something she just said comes to the forefront of his thoughts.

“Are you listening little one?” Another cold cackle, “Five years ago the government found a fully powered dreamweaver. Dissected his brain to see how it ticks. Tiny slices of brain displayed for science while the poor corpse is tossed out with the garbage. A little birdie told me there might be a few prancing around. I’d love to observe the autopsies.”

Dean loses his mind to the frenzy of wanting to connect a fist to the alpha’s nose. His feet move on their own accord as he races back to her. She’s laughing, which makes tackling the woman easy. They crash as one into the slime, the weight of his soaked clothes tugging him down, making it difficult to maneuver. Fingers wrap around her throat. She swipes them away, jerking his hair until the omega relents.

As they violently tussle, she whispers low for only him, “I don’t give a shit about being disqualified. My goals are more financially motivated.”

“What?”

Deaths happen in the trials. If she doesn’t care about the rules, then Dean definitely has a serious problem. An arm wraps around his neck as the alpha’s bicep flexes, cutting off his ability to inhale. His hands flail about her person, grabbing at anything within his fingertips. The omega’s hands ghost over a few discs in a hidden pocket. Rolling forward, he throws her over his shoulder while clenching the prize with his hand and slashing the pocket, stealing her stash. Five more.

“Thanks,” he grunts.

The lady’s not giving up. She clotheslines him at the knees, sending Dean sprawling across the steps. His head snaps against the edge. Blood runs into his eyes.

A shift in his mind slots a previously lost piece into place. Either the adrenaline from the battle or the head trauma has knocked Joshua’s gift clear. Dean instantly feels the totality of his heat. Nerve endings rattle back to life, setting a blaze more intense than before as the agonizing torture reignites. The omega barely registers the female alpha lowering herself over his back.

“Now, where were we?” She licks his ear, “I usually don’t play with my prey, but you are such a handsome specimen.”

“Fuck you.” He snatches the arm in front of him, twisting in two different directions until he hears the bone snap.

Hundreds of stings stab into his flesh; nevertheless, her shrieks of pain put a smile on the omega’s face. Dean scrambles up the stairs diving down the slide without preamble his heat stealing any ability to focus. He bowls over several people doing …things. Being in the dark has become a blessing as his hands play slip and slide with entirely too much skin. A blinding white light shines, the omega keeps his gaze elevated as the numbers flash for ten seconds. He’s got exactly one hour
to go. Still unable to see he stumbles over a group accidentally grasping a knot which feels more Anaconda then cock, oh hell no.

A panting baritone chuckles, “We’ve got room for one more.”

“I’m good.” Dean jogs away as a tinier voice giggles, “I’m so empty Alpha.”

All his senses boom in his mind how these alphas are wrong. Not Cas. His body is meant for only one.

“Dude, this isn’t Erotica.” He ascends another staircase colliding with a human at the top.

When the two bodies land in the chlorine goop Dean catches another whiff of oranges and cinnamon. He rises to chase the bouquet when a hand snags the omega’s shirt ripping it. Not really needing the shirt Dean drops it on the other guy.

Need. A desperate yearning has his limbs quaking with arousal.

Castiel’s personal aroma thickens in the omega’s nostrils. A feral desire pounds through his veins as Dean takes the next steps two at a time. He’s about to leap down when a hand grabs his elbow, heaving him to the side.

Who knew there was a small landing next to the slide?

Dean’s back crashes on a squishy soft material. The scent of oranges and cinnamon surround his body as a low sexy voice releases a wave of heat in his groin, “Hello Dean.”

The ache sewn into his bones boils over from the sound.

An erection swells between his legs, bumping against the little discs stored there; the omega can’t stop his hips from grinding into his Alpha. A pathetic sniveling man, Dean’s unable to stop his pleas. “Castiel, I hurt.”

“Take whatever you need.” The statement is beautiful and true. Cas’s hands rub his shoulders, “but remember my … limitations.”

“No, no, no.” His mind is lost to his hormonal surge. “Knot me, cum on me, mark me.”

No response, Cas remains motionless. Even his chest doesn’t rise.

Raising his hands to touch the tears on his Alpha’s face, Dean exclaims, “I’m dying. Alpha, save me.”

“I …” the torture in his lover’s tone floats another level of hell, “I can’t.”

Alpha and Omega sob; broken cries of defeat.

Castiel’s mouth finds Dean’s lips in the dark. The man shoves Dean down farther into the mat, devouring the omega’s tongue.

Blood. Just a delicious single drop of raw orange with cinnamon tickles his throat. Not even the bewitched slop dims the odor’s purity. Dean latches on, ferociously kissing his true mate. The taste feeding his piercing desire. Dean’s groin thrusts harshly against Castiel’s thighs. The alpha locks his limbs, allowing the omega a solid muscle to hump.

A hand slips into Dean’s pants, pushing the discs aside. A single tug on his cock has the omega’s
body exploding into a wicked climax, his pants drenched in cum. Their mouths work diligently to pacify the heat monster. Dirty and rough. The Alpha’s hand doesn’t halt in its ministrations as wave after wave of cum pours from him. Dean attempts to stop the screeching. He fails.

Seconds pass, Dean wails louder in a mix of ecstasy and misery. Tremors rock his body with exhaustion yet the climax persists. Cas’s lips vanish. Without the plug the omega’s shrieks slice through the constant darkness.

An innocent kiss settles against his forehead, one to his temple, next a peck against the tip of his nose, the corner of his lip and finally Castiel’s mouth rests near his ear whispering, “You found me. Fall, my Omega. I will catch you, so you may release all you’ve held within your strong, glorious soul.” His words lowering until even Dean can barely hear them, “my world has been redefined through green eyes. I love you.”

It is finished.

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“Shhhh. Deeeo sweeping.”

“Be quiet, Jesse, if Mommy finds us, we won’t get stories from Sam.”

The mattress shifts as three little bodies move around Dean. He’d open his eyes but his eyelids won’t follow the command. Where is he?

Tiny delicate hands cradle his cheeks, “We guard our Deeeo.”

“Yes, Andy, he’s special.”

A sweet kiss to the omega’s eyebrow, “Pweety.”

The sound of a door creaking open has all parties freezing.

“What in God’s name are you three doing to your Uncle Dean?” The familiar voice of Gabriel soothes something. “Why are there strings all over the floor?”

A bang startles the omega yet his body remains motionless. Several short snaps have Gabriel releasing a high-pitched squeal, “What the fuck?”

“Boom.” A tender giggle, “wittle boom.”

“Daddy,” the lovely girl’s voice adds, “you said Deeeo needs our protecting.”

Meg’s voice rumbles, “Why are you screaming like a baby?”

“They’ve boobytrapped the room.” Another bang has Gabriel shouting, “I don’t know if we should be proud or scared.”

“Hey kiddos, I need you to take down your safety precautions,” Meg deadpans, “the adults need to get to Dean without fearing a loss of limb.”

“Mommy, booms not that big.”

Gabriel mumbles, “big enough. Seriously guys, Uncle Cassie will be back from visiting Great Amara soon. How’s he going to get in bed?”
“We made a map.” The girls voice must be Ava, their eldest. “Only those worthy may cross to our omega.”

“I’m not worthy?” Gabe seems so sad.

“No.” Three small people answer.

“But, I’m your Dad?”

Ava shifts to sit closer to Dean’s shoulder, “We will think about it.”

The conversation becomes muted. Dean’s mind going blank as he falls back into unconsciousness.

Gentle lips sweep over his; the omega can smell his alpha’s personal bouquet. Damn it. Once again, his freakin’ body refuses to listen. Eyes glued shut.

“Rest, Dean.” His Alpha’s throat appears gruffer than usual. “I am here.”

Tears drop onto his face, but Dean’s unable to push them away. The moisture settles in the grooves of his skin. Castiel cries silently. Only the timid jerks of a quiet sob tell the omega the truth. Things must be utter shit if they’ve removed him from the Center. Dean’s never heard of an omega being released before a mating bite was presented to the director.

Did he fail? Anxiety sweeps over his partially awakened mind. Sammy’s in danger. If Dean’s messed everything up so badly, they won’t let him into the sixth trial. He’s killed Sammy.

A knock on the door breaks the omega’s downward spiral. Cas yells, “Come in.”

“Hey Castiel,” The youngest Winchester’s presence calms the rising emotional tides. “He still out?”

“Hannah said it could take 24 hours for Dean’s body to recover from the …release.”

A shoe scuffing the ground breaks the awkward pause. Sammy clears his throat, “Pretty sure the image is permanently burnt into my retinas. I’m scarred for life. Anyway …dinner will be ready in twenty minutes.” Instead of leaving the young alpha’s feet stomp about the space, moving closer. “Are you sure nobody knows he’s gone? People don’t check on them?”

“Each Center is run differently. Yes, if Dean were actually missing someone on the staff would have noticed. Crowley has created a suitable situation to draw out the traitor. Keeping Dean away for the duration is for his safety.”

Sam chuckles, “Oh, I get why he’s not at the Center, but should he be in your bed? The violence my brother has faced lately is beyond cruel. Maybe,” the young alpha cracks his knuckles, sitting on the opposite side of Cas, “maybe he needs a break from all of this, you included.”

A surge of passionate resistance has Dean grumbling, “No.”

“Dean!” Both alphas exclaim.

“No …” he inhales over a painfully raw gullet, “no break from Cas …ever.”

“It was just a suggestion.” Sam leans in, his face slightly blurry, “I’m glad you’re okay.”

The omega pulls his lanky baby brother into a limp embrace, “I’m fine. Now if you don’t want to be scarred further, I suggest you vanishing for about an hour, maybe longer.”
“Dean.” Castiel’s low thunderous register does things to him. “You are here to recuperate. There will be nothing tawdry happening,” those blue eyes are glistening, “tonight anyway.”

Sammy grins, “I promised the munchkins an extra-long bedtime story for giving me a peek at the map.”

The hazy figure of his brother hops around the room from one foot to another eventually reaching the door with a fist pump. “Gabriel can kiss my ass. Said I’d hit a charge, well, I showed him.”

His true mate curls around his side, kissing Dean’s cheek, “How are you? Do you need another … climax?”

“I’m good, for now.” Oddly the statement rings true. The omega does a quick check, verifying the heat is a mild simmer. Dean’s got no doubt the horrendous blaze of need will return. “Stay close though, Alpha, I’m going to need a hit of your flavor soon.”

“Whatever you ask, I shall obey my Omega.” Cas’s fingers trace Dean’s bare neck.

Leaning into the caress, “Crowley’s hunting the Center spy.”

“Abaddon knew your scent. She was able to overcome the impeding senses spell on the synthetic slick to find you. Someone in your home has been selling information. Naomi agreed with me, having the person exposed before the final trial is essential.”

He sees blue, but the features of his lover remain fuzzy, “Who is Abaddon?”

“The alpha who licked you. Sam saw the whole event play out on the television and shared.” Castiel growls. “She seems to have nefarious goals for the trials.”

“Chill. Her touch made me want to toss up my dinner. You’re the only one for me, big guy.”

Kissing his Alpha brings a calm over the growing heat. Dean’s fingers dance under the other man’s shirt, spreading over lovely skin. A hiss has the omega pulling back. Unfortunately, Cas flinches, tugging his shirt down to hide bruises, “We both are recovering.”

“Party pooper.” The words from his true mate trapeze through his mind, “Dude, that’s so damn nasty. We were all rolling around in pools of synthetic slick? Explains the orgy.”

The bright, beautiful sound of Cas’s laugh restores his ailing body. “Asmodeus enjoys his demented twists.”

“The fucker needs a big helping of karma.”

Another sweet kiss to his nose as Cas winks, “I think we can arrange that.”

Chapter End Notes

You are all my little treasures.

XOXOXOXO,
Angie
The teeny bubbles cling to Dean’s hand as the omega swirls the bathwater round and round. Castiel’s scent lingers in his nose. The relief from their recent escapades soothing his heat for a few hours, Dean chose to wash off the tacky mess. Meg’s master bath is a simple black and white with touches of red. Harsh, modern and oddly not the Meg he’s come to know. Soon he’ll be heading back to the Center. A sadness drowns his energy, leaving the omega slightly lackluster as he watches the bubbles pop. If he were any other omega he’d be mated and done; no easy life for Dean-o.

An opening door catches his attention. The little omega Andy peeks inside. “Deeo Ok?”

“Yeah, buddy I’m fine.” He shoots the boy a quick smile.

“We know you hurt.” Andy shuffles into the room, shutting the door behind him. A tiny toy van is clutched in his fingers. “We help.”

Sitting up, Dean cradles his chin on the edge of the tub, “I’ve never seen you alone. Where’s your brother and sister?”

The little guy rolls his eyes like Dean’s being silly. “No Alphas. You’re Uncle Cassie’s omega.”

“I am.” Reaching out, Dean ruffles Andy’s hair, chuckling, “So, what brings you in here?”

Mini brown eyes search the older omega’s face. “I wanna ask …”

Poking the younger omega’s chest Dean replies, “it’s just you and me. Ask anything you want.”

“I’m scared.” Fear seeps into the four-year-old's sweet expression, tugging on his heartstrings. “The whispers are no good.”

“Gotta give me more, big guy.”

Andy kneels, his bright eyes directly in Dean’s gaze. “Mommy, Daddy, Big N, and Uncle Cassie are worried it broke.” A tear drops down the plump baby-fat cheek, “I don’t wanna go to a Center. I don’t wanna leave Ava and Jesse.”

“Whoa …hold on.” Dean grabs a towel and heaves himself from the water. After a quick rubdown, he wraps the towel around his hips, pulling Andy into his lap on the floor. “If we win you won’t have to go to a Center. Ever.”

Slobber wets his chest, “But the fifth bad?”

Wiping away a few tears, the omega gives the little dude a kiss on the temple, “I don’t …” suddenly a rock grows in his belly, “did something happen in the fifth trial?”

The nodding head brings a slew of terrors into Dean’s mind. Hastily he carries the small child as he
bursts into the living room where the adults are talking.

Gabriel is yelling, “The only fix will be an Alpha panel.”

“What happened?” Dean hugs Andy. He’s not sure if he’s consoling the child or just the opposite.

Castiel is immediately at his side, “Dean, you need to rest.”

“I need to know what the hell is happening!” His voice cracks with worry. “Don’t you dare sugarcoat it, Cas.”

His alpha’s mouth hangs open, his eyes wild, but it’s Naomi who answers cool as a cucumber. “It seems Asmodeus may be against us. The fifth trial killed our chances to show in a public arena the new medication you’re on works.”

Turning to face the group he tightens his hold on the child in his arms, “How?”

Meg rubs her stomach nervously, “The impeding senses spell kept alphas from smelling your true scent. Not a single person will believe our claims that it was the pills. Although, Gabe’s got an idea.”

“Absolutely not.” Castiel’s stern statement is accented with a slamming fist to the wall, “I won’t allow it.”

“Not your call, Castiel.” Naomi reaches out to console her son, but Cas steps back in anger.

Dean glares at Gabriel. “I’ve never heard of an alpha panel.”

“Omegas aren’t usually exposed to the panel unless they select the option after their fifth-year challenge. No omega has ever left a panel unmated.” Gabe collects his son from Dean, kissing the boy’s head, “However, technically, there are no rules saying a third-year couldn’t call for one. We could set it up as a ruse to make money for Heavenly Host. Five slots open for auction. Highest bidders get the spots, and you are opposed by each one separately.”

His alpha steps between them, blue eyes on fire, “Please Dean, say no. You’ll be pitting yourself against anyone with money. Older alphas can choose champions to battle in their purchased slot. The League will have little control in this situation, and Asmodeus has proven to be associated with the other side.” Gentle fingers caress the omega’s cheek, “I’m sure your participation in the sixth trial should be enough to establish the results.”

“Cas, how is this any different from a classic mate chase? Or rolling around in synthetic slick with alphas?” He leans into Castiel’s palm.

Inhaling softly, his amazing alpha answers, “It’s one on one. I will get a turn, but you will be alone against the other four. We won’t even know what the activity will be until the panel opens. Asmodeus will have several possibilities in a jar. You will blindly pick one. Having experienced his previous trials, I think we can assume the panel will be …”

“Fucked up,” Dean counters, placing his hands over Castiel’s. Their fingers lace together on his chin as the omega smiles, “Gabriel, do it. Make sure it’s tomorrow so Cas has time to recover before he downs the gender potion.”

A new hand squeezes his bicep. Naomi has a lost expression, “Thank you, Dean. I and Amara will be overjoyed when you join our family.”
“How is your mom?” Dean watches as the tension in his alpha's shoulders increase.

“She’s been taken off the vent but remains asleep.”

The decision made, the room begins to thin out as Meg approaches him and Cas. His scent expert smirks playfully, “We’ll set it up for tomorrow night at midnight, which means you’ve got a couple hours before we have to start scrubbing Cas’s scent off your skin. I’m thinking of taking everyone to visit Amara; Castiel could hang out here,” she bounces her eyebrows, “in an empty house.”

Gabriel covers Andy’s ears, exclaiming, “Anything you touch better be cleaned with bleach.”

“Agreed.” Castiel tugs Dean closer for a chaste kiss full of potential. “Gabriel, you have fifteen minutes to flee.”

The front door slamming shut sends a shiver of anticipation drilling through the omega, “All alone, Alpha. Whatever shall we do?”

“I was hoping you would indulge me,” Cas slips his hand into Dean’s, guiding him to the kitchen, “since we have the luxury of taking our time.”

“How do you want me?”

Castiel removes several items from the long granite island in the center of the kitchen. The alpha taps the smooth surface, “up you go.”

Excitement has Dean moving at an embarrassingly quick pace. The towel is left on the floor. Cas’s eyes drag over his exposed body as the alpha’s fingers roll up the sleeves of his white dress shirt. The blue tie is tossed alongside the towel. Rolling his hips upward, the omega can’t help but to gasp as his alpha’s pointer finger traces up his inner thigh, winding around his groin and dipping into his belly button.

“Cas,” Dean exhales.

“Patience, my love.”

His ever-present heat nips at Dean’s skin, lighting up every nerve. The burn cascading over him throws a delicious desire for Castiel’s knot. He wants to taste. Nevertheless, the omega’s groping fingers only feel a limp dick in his true mate’s pants.

“Don’t whine, my Omega,” Cas whispers into his ear. “Close your eyes.”

Obeying immediately, Dean smells his own slick dripping onto the counter. At least Castiel promised a thorough cleaning, because it’s going to need it. Eager for his lover’s touch, the omega almost peeks. A lighthearted smack to his hip halts the action.

“No, no. The game is no fun if you cheat, Dean.”

Unable to find a place for his hands, the omega runs them up and down his thighs, clinging tightly.

Cold. An extremely cold spot tickles his belly button, the freezing dot ghosts over his abs, drawing pretty circles towards his nipples. The left one hardens as the moist chill plays against the nub. His right nipple reacts with an overwhelming explosion of desire.

Warm. A supple tongue rolls along his belly button, following the chilled path left behind from what Dean suspects was a piece of ice. The wetness laps at his nipple.
“Jesus,” Dean shouts, his groin grinding into the air. His erection desperate. “Cas.”

Orange zest and cinnamon heavy in the air, clogging his nostrils from any other aroma encasing the omega in loving security.

Cold. The ice twirls around his left nipple hurling a livewire of heat against the cool substance. Warm. Castiel’s mouth latches onto his right nipple. The play of cold and warm igniting Dean’s pleas for touch.

“Alpha, I want to cum. God, Cas.”

The other man’s answer is to double down his efforts. Ice and tongue growing rougher against his now sensitive nubs. Dean’s hands ball into fists slamming against the granite. He’s torn between his building need to have someone grab his cock and letting Castiel continue the yummy torture. The omega beats his heels on the counter as he jerks about.

“Please, please, please, please.” Who knew begging would be so amazing? Dean’s body has a mind of its own the omega’s hand reaching for his dick. Hoping for a quick tug. A swat to his knuckles tells him to freeze.

“Settle.” The word is oozing dominance; shit, Cas’s gravel voice makes his cock harder. Slick pools under his ass, causing him to slip about as he attempts to follow the directive. “Not a muscle, Dean.”

Focusing on his breath, Dean feels his chest rise and fall in a slow pattern. His palms are flat to the counter. The itching has spread to every inch of his flesh and seeps into the depths of his body. Instantly the tongue and a fresh piece of ice return, traipsing around his belly button. The ice leads Castiel’s tongue as the two contradicting sensations glide down to the base of his erection.

“Fuck, fuck, fuck.” Dean can’t stay silent as the ice trails up his shaft, dipping into his slit. The amazing chill spins around the top as the omega quivers with shock. Suddenly the tongue tracks the ice’s movement. At the top, lips surround the leaking tip as Castiel’s tongue swipes over the sensitive parts. “Fuck, fuck, fuck.”

His hands are wet with the slick spreading over the island. The alpha’s natural bouquet pours into any open orifice. Dean’s limbs tremble with knowledge of the impending orgasm. He’s not alone. His true mate holds the omega’s gratification within his sole reach. No one can replace his alpha. Cas’s mouth sucks gently on his cock, the tongue twirling, adding to the extreme pleasure. A finger thrusts into his hole.

Dean’s body convulses at the new sensation. His shoulders move upwards as the omega’s head ghosts over the granite.

COLD. A second finger joins the first as they push a chunk of ice deeper inside the omega’s hole. Simultaneously Castiel’s mouth inhales his shaft to the bottom, and it’s game over for Winchester. Eyes flying open, Dean screams till the sound croaks away as he comes into the alpha’s waiting throat.

Lifting his head, Cas’s gaze burns into Dean as he decrees, “Let go; don’t hold back, my Omega.” A dam breaks, and Dean’s shooting a second and third load all over himself and the alpha. Castiel continues to pump his ass and stroke his dick, one hand on each spot. His eyeballs feel as if they will leap from their sockets from the exuding pressure. The release is spectacular.

Although, one thing is missing. The omega snatches Castiel’s shoulder, yanking the man towards
him for a passionate kiss. Oranges drill into his mouth as cinnamon delightfully burns against his
tongue. The taste is addicting. Dean can’t stop the inhales of flavor with each delve into oblivion.

Eventually, Castiel extricates himself from Dean, grabbing a glass of water and handing it to the
omega, “You need to drink. Dehydration during a heat can be dangerous, especially when one is
coming so beautifully.”

The omega wipes some jizz off Castiel’s shirt. “Only you would call such a sticky mess beautiful.”

“Everything you do is stunning to me, Dean.”

****

Snow crunches under Dean’s boots as he quickens the pace of his hike. He knows these woods.
The omega’s fingers glide over the bark of a tree, recalling his dash past such a spot, Castiel in
chase. Regrettably, he’s aware Cas will not find him tonight. When the tree line breaks there is no
cabin waiting for him. Instead Joshua stands next to a raging fire, warming his hands.

He mirrors the alpha’s stance, surprised at the warmth radiating from the blaze.

“Dreamscapes always feel so real,” Dean utters to the quiet gentleman.

Nodding, Joshua points to a black mist blocking the view of the mountain. Shadow alpha has
returned. The two men stand in silence, waiting for their foe to make the first move. Dean’s in no
hurry. The heat’s extreme length and demand on his person has drained him of energy. Even here
his shoulders sink in exhaustion.

A thwack has the omega’s attention back on the mist or person as it has finally taken shape. Thunder
claps above them.

Cracking his neck, Dean sighs, stalking closer to the shadow alpha, “What do you want, asshole?
I’m in no mood for your games.”

Oranges and cinnamon scent drift on the passing wind. Castiel’s not here, but his odor has remained
in Dean. The omega turns to the older dreamweaver, “Josh, you smell that?”

Sniffing the air, Joshua’s eyebrows squint in concern. His head bounces.

A cold breeze whips by the manmade shadow, growls erupting from behind the darkness.

“You smell it too.” The omega grins as the stranger’s body solidifies yet the face remains hidden.

Lightning strikes between Dean and Joshua, setting the ground on fire.

Tossing back his head the omega laughs loudly and obnoxiously. Something about Castiel’s
personal bouquet has pissed off the jerk. “Sucks to get sloppy seconds.” He adds a single finger
salute.

Another strike of lightning rips into Joshua, the man screaming as his clothes ignite.

“Stop. Drop. Roll.” Dean shrieks helping the older man. He’s scooping snow with his hands to
shut down the inferno. “Stop. Drop. Roll. It’s what I teach my two’s class.”

The repulsive stench of burnt skin assaults the omega’s senses, but thank God only smoke drifts from
Joshua’s body. Dean packs more snow to lessen the discomfort.
He leans in, whispering, “If you wake up the pain will stop.”

Skin sizzles as Joshua lifts a scorched hand to hold Dean’s, shaking his head. “I can’t.”

A noise from a few feet away has the omega snatching a stick to wave at the intruder, “Don’t you dare come near him. I will kick your ass!”

Swiftly he puts himself between the fallen dreamweaver and Shadow Alpha. Dean observes in horror as the evil dude snaps his fingers, a third hit striking Joshua directly in the chest. The old man howls in agony. No fire, yet the rising smoke can’t be good.

With no other alternative, the omega lies on top of the screaming man, shoving piles of snow against his charred flesh. Turning to face the sadist, Dean shouts, “Try it again! Come on, scary alpha with a big knot shouldn’t be afraid to burn a wimpy omega.”

Careful what you wish for …his eyes catch the next snap moments before the horrendous pain splashes over his spine. Of course, the mother fucker can do what he wants because they are in a stupid dreamscape. No marks will be left behind.

Joshua stutters softly into his ear, “Together.”

“I’ll follow your lead.” Dean grunts back as another blaze erupts across his lower back.

Their hands interlock as Joshua lifts them towards the enemy.

A deep, low familiar voice whispers on the wind, “I’m here” accompanied by the strong aroma of oranges and cinnamon.

He feels the power of both dreamweavers enter his body as the omega centers himself. A bright white light explodes from their connected hands dissolving the dark mist into nothingness.

Gasping for oxygen Dean rolls off the alpha, “What the hell was that?”

“Someone who needed a spanking.” Joshua groans as he stands.

Not wanting to move, the omega lets the frosty snow soak into his clothes; the chill reminding him of pleasure instead of pain.

Chapter End Notes

Love to all!

Angie
A drowning emptiness fills the room, haunting Dean. The omega steps into the former living quarters of Ed and Harry. It seems so small without their oversized personalities infusing it with life. He twirls slowly taking in the blank white walls, bare mattresses and vacant smells. Lifeless.

“Hey, you’re back.” Charlie leans against the doorframe.

Sitting on the edge of Harry’s old bed, Dean asks, “When did they leave?”

“Last night. Ed’s new mate had a best friend who was willing to take on Harry. You know those two would never survive apart.” She enters farther, her arms crossed, “Dean, you know nearly half of third years mate.”

Sorrow burrows into his heart, “If they had waited …things will be different soon.”

Charlie swats his knee, plopping down to his right. “We hope they will be different, none of this you’re doing is guaranteed. Ed and Harry saw an opportunity and jumped at it. Speaking of …”

Her voice cracking has the omega turning to face his friend. Charlie’s crying.

“Not you too?” Dean couldn’t handle losing Charlie; she’s one of his reasons for fighting.

“Nope,” she gives a sad, small smile, “still stuck with me Winchester.” Charlie slides her arm through his, laying her head on his shoulder. “They announced your alpha panel for tonight. Bidding starts at noon.”

“It’ll be fine.” Even he doesn’t believe the words. “Panels are simply mini trials. Easy.”

His best friend nuzzles her nose into his bicep. “Liar.”

“Maybe,” he’s too tired to argue, not with Charlie anyway. “Dude, no snot on the merchandise. Alphas will pay good money for this.”

“I researched past panels. Dean, they usually require some kind of touching.”

A shiver chills his spine. “Can’t back out now.”

The two omegas let the silence fold over them. Charlie isn’t wrong; the panel will be a different kind of hell. He’s done his own inquiry. Unlike in trials, the omega’s consent is in agreeing to them. After that …well, he’s got to be ready for anything.

A figure in the doorway startles Dean, but neither he nor Charlie move. The Center is safe. Here, the world is set up to bring about a sense of security. Dean’s been learning lately how those beliefs ring false.

Gadreel stumbles in, a bottle of tequila in his hand. “She’s gone.”

The fifth-year crashes onto the opposite mattress, spilling liquor on his stained white t-shirt. “Eileen.”

“You don’t mean –” Dean begins.

“Mated. She showed late last night to pack up her things.” Gadreel waves the bottle around, “Now her room’s empty, mimicking my own heart.” He takes a deep swig. “Fuck.”

Slightly concerned, Charlie tilts forward. “Was she forced …coerced?”

“Not at all. Eileen was smiling and showing off her bite. Thanked me for being such an awesome friend.”

“Ouch,” Dean hisses as Charlie nods her head.

Another lengthy gulp, “I heard the final trial for us might be a classic mate chase.”

“I think so.” Dean points at the bottle, “Mind sharing?”

Gadreel goes to hand him the bottle, but Charlie snags it instead, “Absolutely not, Winchester. You can’t be drunk or recovering.” She tips back, allowing the gold liquid to slip down her throat.

“But you can?”

She gives him a single shoulder shrug, passing the tequila back to Gadreel.

“I love her.” Gadreel talks to the ceiling. “Loved her.”

No one speaks. Dean can’t think of one thing to say to console his heartbroken friend. Castiel’s committed himself to the omega. Glimpsing at Charlie, he sees her face stained with fresh tears. Her lady love is slightly out of reach, too.

The void is swallowing the three omegas.

Eventually, Charlie ponders out loud “What are you going to do?”

A dark smirk grows on the other man’s face. The appearance is frightening and out of character. “It’s my last trial …ever. No prospects in my future, so I’m going to leave a mark.” His eyes sparkling, Gadreel adds, “I’m planning on leaving a lot of marks.”

He can sense Charlie opening her mouth, so he taps her elbow, “Let the man grieve in peace.”

A little after 1 p.m., Dean and Charlie stroll out to the kitchen for lunch, leaving Gadreel snoring on the bare bed. Several of their hallmates are watching the television.

Andrea’s got a BLT in her hands as she yells over a mouthful, “Dean! They’re televising the auction for your alpha panel.”

“Why?” Suddenly he’s not hungry anymore, so he steps closer to the oversized screen.

Ash is on the floor eating popcorn like it’s movie night, “Because it’s only been an hour, and the bids are at fifty grand. The auction runs for four.”
On TV, Dean sees Asmodeus in his obnoxious white suit, perched on an elevated stage, a massive board to his right listing five names and numbers next to each one. The first slot is at $54,000.

"Isn’t there supposed to be yelling? I thought auctions had people screaming out bids.” Dean’s seen a few in movies.

“Alpha Panels are done by silent auction,” Charlie answers. “An interested Alpha receives an iPad with the auction app along with a pseudonym. It allows alphas the freedom to express interest and make offers without embarrassment. Basically, if they lose no one will know they tried. Gotta keep the Alpha pride protected.”

The camera angle shows the backs of several heads, but none are the right shade of brown. A moment later the leader board goes black and the names change with the top bidder at $58,000.

The challenge creator holds a microphone to his lips, “Oh, come now, Alphas. The Winchester Omega of 80Q3 has shown to be extremely,” Asmodeus flashes a full-teeth smile, “talented. Please watch.” His hand gestures to a screen on his left.

The picture flickers to life. At first Dean’s brain doesn’t comprehend what he’s viewing. The image is dark with varying degrees of yellow. Night vision. Immediately his stomach plummets as his personal moment with Castiel in the fifth trial is displayed. Bile rises as he sees his hips grind into Cas’s thighs while he …

“I can’t watch.” Dean dashes to the elevators. Nothing of his life is private. He doesn’t even know if Castiel is winning the silent auction. Except, one name catches his eye as the doors swish shut: Clarence.

A few people are scattered through the sub-basement workout area. Dean ignores them as he takes off for a run. The pounding of his feet on the track usually drowns out his spinning mind. It fails. The omega can’t stop the slew of images from the clip. Castiel’s arms tight on him, lips whispering into his ear. Shaking his head Dean picks up speed praying for it too end soon. He shouldn’t be surprised.

Someone sprints up behind him.

“Not in the mood.” Dean doesn’t care who it is; he needs some me time.

“We are jogging,” Jack answers. “If you weren’t in the mood, why begin?”

He can’t stop from chuckling. The kid’s way of talking is so damn weird. “You’re down here a lot.”

“I seem to,” the smaller omega’s fingers make quotation marks, “freak out my roommate. Down here is quiet, and nobody expects anything of you.”

“True.”

For several laps the men stay in step, Jack just behind Dean.

“The Alpha Panel will be difficult for you.”

Nodding, Dean scratches his nose. “You’ve heard?”

Jack closes the gap so his stride is right with him, “Naomi visited me to ask my opinion on the matter. Being around alphas might be problematic in your condition.”
“I feel fine.” He’s not stupid, but God, the topic is getting on his last nerve.

“It builds slowly. Without the ability to relieve the pressure,” Jack frowns, “well …you know.”

“I do. Don’t worry, I’ve got an afternoon nap scheduled with Joshua for a little help.”

“Good. I’m glad you won’t have to cancel.” Jack seems happy with the information.

However, Dean’s not settled with anything today, “In fact, I don’t get the luxury of saying no, so who the fuck cares.”

The young omega halts, grabbing Dean’s wrist to stop him. “You have a herd of omegas and alphas who give quite a few fucks. This part is hard; you are making an amazing sacrifice, but then Castiel will set you free. What about those left behind?”

“Nobody’s getting left behind.” He’s not following the guy’s train of thought.

“Has anybody considered what happens to the omegas with nowhere to go?” His blue eyes are blazing, “I have no family, no alpha. Yes, tearing down the archaic system is a must, but what then? You will run off into the sunset with your true mate, or at the very least Sam or Gabriel will take you home. Please make sure when they turn off the Center lights they aren’t leaving some of us to rot in the dark.”

All of a sudden Jack’s point hits him in the chest. “Donna would never let that happen. I won’t let that happen.”

“Wake up, Dean. The world we know is about to burn down, and we were the spark.” Jack straightens his shirt. “I don’t want to disappear.”

“Shit, pretty heavy for a kid.”

The other omega begins walking away. “I’m no child.”

“Yeah, but you should be.”

****

Meg’s wringing her hands as she paces the 80Q3 green locker room. Nobody’s here except the two of them. In thirty minutes, Dean’s Alpha Panel will begin, which has both omegas on edge. Dean’s quietly cringing as he watches the clock on the wall count down.

His challenge uniform is the same, yet feels tighter on his skin. Joshua eased his heat for the time being; however, it can all fall to shit any second.

“You have to be ready for anything.” The scent expert mutters to herself, “Once you step into the arena you’ve totally sanctioned the event. There won’t be any red flags to free you.”

“Can I fake passing out?” Dean grins tightly.

She halts in front of him, “You really don’t want to do that. These alphas will be …handsy.”

He shakes his head furiously, not a good image.

“Why are the rules so lacking in Alpha Panels?” At least in the Challenges there is an air of fairness and consent.
Carefully, Meg sits next to him, the weight of her belly giving her some trouble. “They were
designed as a last-ditch effort for omegas who haven’t found a mate.”

“Desperate,” he corrects her. “You mean the system takes advantage of omegas who feel hopeless.”

“Yeah, sums it up just right.”

He observes her rub circles on her perfectly round tummy. “You love being pregnant.”

A tick of her lips shows an almost-there smile, “I love it. My kids might be tiny demons and caring
for them takes more willpower than I have, but damn it. Gabriel and our pack of fire-breathing
dragons is everything to me. The mere idea of separating Andy from them one day is horrifying.
Gabriel is a Novak. He was born into the legion of the league. I volunteered.”

“Why?”

“I met Naomi in my Center. She had seen me in my second year Challenge, Arts thank you very
much. Said I could mate her nephew, felt we would be an excellent match. A week later Gabriel
showed up, and I was gone. He smelled like real happiness. However, he wouldn’t mate me until I
understood what I was getting into with his family.”

Dean’s bouncing knee calms with his intrigue over Meg’s story, “Do you regret your choice?”

“Are you kidding? We are warriors taking down the play spaces for evil alphas. Would you have
turned down the quest if it had been an option? Sam’s life not on the line and such.”

Leaning back on his locker, Dean sighs. Without the blood pact would he have turned down the
League? “Probably not.”

It’s true. Something deep in his genetic makeup screams for Dean to be the hero, to help those in
need. Saving people seems right up his alley.

The door opens as Billie steps in, her dark hair slicked back against her head, wearing all black. A
long black-leather trench coat completes the look. She exudes a screw-you persona. “Time to head
up, Winchester. Meg stays here.”

His scent expert huffs at the Hunter coach, “I know. Okay, Dean, remember Castiel won the fourth
slot. So—”

“Don’t die because it will fuck everything.”

With a grimace, Meg replies, “Pretty much.”

Snapping her fingers, Billie quips, “Now, Dean. Unless you’ve changed your mind?”

“No.”

The Hunter coach heads to the elevator, pushing an orange button that corresponds to a floor deep
inside the complex. Dean finds the quiet appealing. It permits him a second with his own mind,
assessing his heat. Joshua did his spiel, yet nothing should be taken for granted. Skin itching,
check. Tingle in the nether regions, check. Able to keep his shit together, meh …debatable.

After exiting the elevator, they wind down a small dark hallway with dim lighting. At a large steel
door Billie halts, asking, “Do you consent to the Alpha Panel?”

“Sure.” He rolls his tight shoulders.
“Face the camera and give your answer, Winchester.” She points to a small lens built into the wall.

“I, Dean Winchester of 80Q3, consent to the Alpha Panel.”

Immediately the barricade slides open, revealing a huge indoor amphitheater. Billie leads Dean down a set of stairs to the main floor. People are sitting shoulder to shoulder, crammed into the two dozen rows of seating that surround a circular stage. No partitions, no glass, nowhere to hide. If his nose is correct the audience has a single designation: alphas. When they reach the stage, Asmodeus raises his hand and the arena goes silent.

Anticipation saturates the spectators.

Ambriel skips forward holding a bronze bowl.

“Welcome honored Guests to the Winchester Omega’s Alpha Panel.” One of those headset microphones is hanging off the man’s ear. “Now, my dear friends, we must select the game.”

The crowd erupts in shouts of excitement.

Enjoying his power, Asmodeus waits until the noise goes dead. “Each of you placed a potential endeavor for our young omega to attempt in the bowl. I will now choose the winner. If your idea is selected, please see Beta Ambriel for your gold trophy.”

Dean’s eyes sweep over the audience. These blood hungry alphas were the think tank for his panel. Son of a bitch, he’s screwed. Panic roots in the omega’s stomach, twisting it violently. A flash fire stings across his chest.

Swirling his hand around the container Asmodeus winks in his direction. What Dean wouldn’t give to punch the asshole’s face in. Finally, the trial creator lifts a piece of paper and reads it out loud, “Sensory Enhancing Mist Cage Wrestling.”

Billie snatches Dean’s elbow, yanking him out of the way as a glass encasement rises from the floor. The square structure runs about 16X16X16. One corner hisses open for the players to enter.

Pointing a bony finger toward Billie, Asmodeus advises, “You have one minute to confer with the omega.”

His teacher shoves his shoulder forcing Dean to stare into those dark eyes, “Sensory Enhancing Mist will heighten not only your five senses but others you never knew existed. Go beyond our current realm when you need to draw strength. Magic is allowed. Use it. The loser is decided when one of the participants is pinned with both shoulder blades to the floor for a count of ten.”

“Cool, I can just lie down if things get dicey.” He hates to lose, but cranking up his senses will play hell on his heat.

The smack across his cheek knocks Dean quiet. “Idiot. If you fail, the winning alpha has the choice to mate you. Right here, right now.”

“Holy ….” He freezes in shock.

“Castiel is number four. If you’re tired, take a goddamn nap; he will rebuff his mating right.” Billie places her hands on his shoulders squeezing, “but the other four are here to claim victory and collect you as their omega. The glass will hold you both until each round has been decided.”

“If I win?”
She winks, “Simply state, 'give me the next alpha.'”

“No omega has ever won all five rounds? Right?” The spectators are getting restless, their jeering becoming louder by the moment.

Billie’s mouth opens, but a white cloth wraps around her head, covering her ruby lips and silencing the coach. Handcuffs magically click on the teacher’s wrists as an oversized alpha pulls her away.

He’s alone. The storm of individuals on Dean’s side can only lead the Omega so far; now fate lies in his hands.

The architect of Dean’s nightmares claps. “Now for our first competitor. Please remember, all betting ends when I yell go.”

Destiny sucks.

Chapter End Notes

Comments, Questions, and Concerns are loved and cherished like adorable Pugs.

XOXOXO,
Angie
A small woman saunters towards Asmodeus, her black hair in waves by her shoulders with strips of white in the mix. The alpha has a predatory grin as she turns to the masses, waving. All the spectators go wild, shouting, “MATE! KNOT! BLOOD!”

When she halts by Asmodeus, the challenge designer shakes her hand. Then he spins, carefully addressing the ranting audience, “Let us welcome Dagon!”

Dean’s ears ache from the outrageous noise. Dagon removes a black leather jacket, tossing it to another woman in the front row. Observing the chaos, the omega sees cash being passed around to what must be Trial employees dressed all in red, how appropriate. A glowing red headband makes the individuals easy to spot. They are betting on who will win.

A clock on the ceiling counts down from five minutes.

While they wait out the betting period, his opponent stretches and jokes with the other alphas. She even takes a swig from a bottle of whiskey, laughing. Dean closes his eyes, his mind flooding with spells. Gilda may seem a bit flighty, but she takes teaching seriously. Magic is how he will stay unmated. The calming from Joshua remains in place, for now. His heat is simmering serenely under his flesh. A sleeping lion waiting to pounce. The pungent odors of hundreds of alphas create pinprick pokes to the invisible barricade.

He can’t fail. A life mated to a complete stranger would kill him. Inhaling slowly, Dean holds his breath, permitting the air to leave controlled from his lungs. Glancing up he sees forty-five seconds on the clock.

“Participants enter the box!” Asmodeus’s toothy smile makes Dean nauseous.

One final inhale and the omega slips inside the glass, crossing to the opposite side, his back against the clear barrier. Dagon paces in the center, cracking her knuckles. A blaring alarm marks the final ten seconds. The viewers screaming, “Ten, nine, eight, seven …”

“ONE!”

“Let’s GO!” Asmodeus shouts as the entrance seals shut.

Silence. Dean’s brain attempts to adjust to the rambunctious scene outside the cube versus the stillness within.

Dagon crosses her arms. “The others can only watch. What we say in here is between us, little omega. If you didn’t notice, there are no cameras inside an Alpha Panel. How about you lie down and we call it a day?”

“No.” He feels ridiculous being called little by a woman nearly a foot shorter than him. Alphas can be assholes. “I plan to be the first omega to make it to the end unmated.”

She moves to the side; Dean skirts away as he finds his bearings. Even with the size difference the
omega’s not stupid. Alpha strength can be highly deceiving, and Dagon doesn’t seem to be a peace and love kind of girl.

“Breaking in naïve, simple omegas is so much fun.” Dagon bounces her fingers upwards, her eyes flashing black. Extremely powerful individuals in the dark arts channel their mystical power through their eye sockets. Dean might be in trouble. A fireball materializes in the alpha’s palms. Watching her raising her arm, the omega chuckles because Dagon might have just screamed her intentions.

Immediately Dean whispers, “νερό”. Water rushes from his palm seconds before the fireball reaches his skin. He can see the crowd going fucking nuts. Dean winks at the alpha. “Try harder.”

“Arrogant.” Dagon smirks, pulling her hair back into a ponytail. “Your ass will be mine, Omega.”

Shooting his trademark sassy grin, he replies, “Doubtful.”

Grey mist materializes between them, an odd cloud that rolls, twists, and grows, engulging the space. Thick, but not enough to impair the viewers ability to see. Dean coughs as he inhales the foul-tasting fog; instantly a zing flares within his body, detonating an increase of his senses. The omega can count Dagon’s eyelashes, hear her heartbeat, smell the whiskey on her breath along with the choking stench of burnt sage and rosemary thick in his lungs. The taste of the alpha’s odor clings to Dean’s tongue.

Needles prod his resolve to keep the heat in check. His mind is racing with overstimulation, visions he doesn’t comprehend blow through as he takes in more of the enchanted air. Dean assumes he’s intoxicated or something.

He can’t drag out the inevitable. Dean takes quick inhales, hoping to avoid Dagon’s personal reek. His eyes water as he views the alpha’s pulse increase. An opportunity to attack has been presented while the opponent battles to control her supercharged senses.

“Komméni sάrka.” The omega utters, slashing his hand across the air. In the same spot blood erupts from a cut in Dagon’s chest. A penetrating wound causes the alpha to cry out in pain. Her mouth opens to retaliate, but Dean shouts, “Pάgoma.”

The wicked bitch’s lips are frozen mid-breath as the omega stalks forward, “Apopnéo!”

Licking his teeth, Dean enjoys watching Dagon grab her throat as she plummets to her knees. The omega comes in close, his nose an inch from hers, “Do you want to die? No oxygen will reach your lungs unless I command it.”

Hastily, the overconfident alpha shakes her head.

“Lie on your back,” he winks playfully, “it will only take ten seconds.”

Dagon obeys, flopping to her back, her eyes rolling back into her head. Ten seconds later a blinding red light blows between them as the grey mist disappears. The entrance to the enclosure opens as Dean snaps his fingers and observes the alpha shudder to breathe. He can hear the audience booing, cheering and catcalling from outside the glass.

“Good girl.” He snickers then shouts, “Bring me the next Alpha!”

A crew of beta medical personnel dressed in all white remove Dagon on a stretcher. The bystanders spit at her as her limp body travels up the stairs and out of the arena.

No surprise Asmodeus gives him no breaks as the man yells, “Our next competitor please!”
A larger alpha with a scraggly beard emerges with a wide, happy smile. Dean returns the expression, although he’s partly confused by this one.

Stepping into the glass box Dean stands dead center. “Benny?”

“The one and only, Darlin’.” The alpha snickers as he drops down to sit on the floor. “Fancy a chat?”

“What the hell are you doing in here?” Dean keeps his distance, yet his curiosity is brimming.

The glass secures, locking out the world just within sight.

Benny shrugs picking a piece of lint from his black sweatpants. “I’m here as a thank you and an apology.”

“What?”

Cracking his neck, the alpha settles back on his elbows. “My Bela is waiting in an alpha meeting room. The moment I leave here we plan to mate. I wanted to say thank you.”

“You’re welcome?” Dean gave Benny the other omega’s name, told the guy to check her out. He had a feeling the two would hit it off, but that’s surely not all.

“So, the thank you is from both of us. My feisty Omega. She is a ball buster, and I can’t wait to spend my life keeping up with her. However, she owes you an apology.”

Waving off the silly gesture, “It’s fine. We all do stupid shit in the heat of the moment.”

“Awfully kind of you brother. I was positive you’d hold a bit of a grudge with my Bela for selling your information to the angry redhead.”

Now Dean’s sure he spoke to soon, “Selling my information? Exactly what did she give to Abaddon?”

Rubbing his scruff Benny sits up with a sigh, “Thought you’d figured it out. Crowley’s been sniffing around her for a while now. Bela was scared. She’s a fourth-year with only one more challenge to go, and cranky Red promised her a fortune if she handed over a strip of clothing with your scent, your full name and a few other particulars.” The alpha laces his fingers, staring at Dean with gentle eyes, “My Bela is sorry. I’m here to give you a break. Lay on your belly and take a nap, there aren’t any time limits on Alpha Panels. When the time comes, I’ll do the ten seconds and scooch on out, having allowed you one less alpha to wrestle.”

“How much did this cost you?” Dean knows the dollar amount went crazy after the footage from his fifth trial aired.

“I would give anything for my Omega. She needs your forgiveness to clear her conscience. What do ya say?”

He’s seen some terrible shit. These trials are brutal, and Bela’s been wearing battle scars from the system for years. She’s a victim. Dean would never blame her for attempting to wheel and deal her way out of their shared hellhole.

“Tell her, we are even.” The omega stretches out on his stomach cradling his head with his arms, “I just need a moment of peace.”
The grey mist appears, storming through the space, yet Dean just falls asleep dreaming of blue eyes.

An hour later Dean waves goodbye to Benny as the alpha exits. Again, the name calling is vicious, but Benny’s bright smile never dims. He and Bela will be gone by dawn. At least someone is getting their happily ever after.

Through the doorway Asmodeus shouts to the jeering masses, “Our next Alpha is a true patriot. I doubt the Winchester Omega will deny his glorious power.”

None other than the bastard Ishim saunters into the cage.

“Tidings and salutations, my Omega.”

When silence reigns once again, Dean crosses his arms, “You can’t mate me; why waste the dough?”

“Oh, see, after a conference with some important people we decided that the Alpha Panel would be enough to prove the new drug’s potential. No need for your participation in the sixth trail.”

Coldness jolts across the omega’s heart, “My blood pact with the league requires me to be in all the trials.”

“I don’t care.” Ishim flicks away a speck of dirt from his tailored black suit. Who the hell wears a suit to a wrestling match? “The significance of a broken blood pact is inconsequential.”

“MY BROTHER WILL DIE!” Dean’s fists are tightening with rage.

“I do hate repeating myself,” his bland expression speaking volumes, “I don’t care.”

With the advent of the drab cloud, the omega licks his lips. Fury bowls over the safety precautions on his heat. The low simmer has begun to grow. The omega doesn’t give a shit. Ishim has given him an out, and Dean plans on taking it. Blame his disgust towards Ishim on the man’s lack of empathy for the plight of Sammy. Dumbass made it so damn easy.

After two sessions with the grey mist, Dean’s senses acclimate quickly. The stupid alpha’s still coughing when the omega shouts, “Spásei ostá!”

The other man screams as the ring finger on his left hand breaks in two.

“Spásei ostá!” He cries out, giggling as Ishim’s middle finger of the left hand snaps.

Ishim bellows, “Siopí.”

Dean’s throat constricts. He can breathe through his nose, but no noise will leave his mouth. The jerk has silenced him. Panic explodes over the omega because his words need strength through sound to be successful. He’s a sitting duck.

Stalking him, Ishim sidles up to the omega. Dean dashes away, his heart beating wildly with fear. The fog obscures his ability to remain in control. Pain shocks him. He wipes away the sweat burning his eyes as slick emerges from the omega’s hole. No, no, for fuck’s sake, no.

“Mmmmm,” the alpha purrs. “Almonds are such a delicious late-night treat.”

His voice erased, Dean uses his middle finger to reply.

“Min kouniéśai,” Ishim grumbles.
Every bone in the omega’s body goes stiff. He can’t move! Dean feels the alpha brush behind him, Ishim’s hand cupping his right butt cheek, although his eyes are unable to track the movement. 

Fuck.

The mist goes in, the mist goes out and suddenly a vision blossoms in his mind’s eye. Words without voice taking power within his soul. Cautiously Dean focus’s all his mental imagery on one single word, “Ýpnos.” He wishes he could kill the douche, but things are already going down the shitter without executing the money man for the league.

Ýpnos. Ýpnos. Ýpnos. The word spirals in his thoughts like a flame brightening under each repeat.

Ishim comes in close, the alpha’s fingers sliding down the omega’s chest, pausing to fondle a nipple.

Ýpnos. Ýpnos. Ýpnos. The entire thought engulfs in fire, his body trembling from the effort. An agonizing sizzle gives Dean unbearable pain.

Ishim yawns then instantly lounges about the floor, rolling to his back as he falls asleep.

When the glass swings open, the fresh air hits Dean’s face, Ishim’s spell releasing him. He doesn’t have the will to do more than crash to the ground. Quaking wracks his body. Tears trail down the omega’s cheeks, the terror of what might have been taking hold.

The white medical betas collect Ishim.

Dean rolls to his side. No one rushes to his aid, instead he can hear the roar of the crowd enjoying his torment. Asmodeus does his speech, but the omega ignores it. He simply focuses on the next inhale. Only when the scent of oranges and cinnamon rides in on his drag of oxygen does Dean rise to his knees.

Castiel catches his falling body. Warm, strong arms hold the omega tight. He’s safe. Dean places his nose directly on the alpha’s scent gland, the personal bouquet of his mate quenching a darkening thirst.

“I need.” Dean mumbles, his forehead leaning heavily against the other man’s shoulder. The ache of his heat doubles; however, the alpha dragging his fingers through his hair satisfies something deeper. “Cas, I want …” the omega slurs, “private. Tired of the glass houses.”

Its only in that moment Dean realizes Castiel’s got his trusty trench coat. The comforting fabric surrounds him in his one wish: privacy. His true mate removes his arm from inside the coat sleeve, slipping it into the omega’s pants. Hidden from sight. Cas grasps Dean’s cock, giving slow steady strokes. The sensation is a blessing from Heaven.

“Bite me.” Castiel’s gruff command goes deeper as the gray shadow blankets them, the sound licking Dean’s lusty hunger, “Do it, my one true love. Bite me. Below the jacket so no one will see. I will always provide what you need. It’s my duty.”

The mist swarms his senses, powerful waves of desire catch the omega’s breath, keeping him from exhaling. Castiel understands what he so desperately needs. Ducking his head so the coat blocks the view, Dean unbuttons the white dress shirt with his mouth. The omega uses his teeth to rip buttons free. Eventually, he can reach the alpha’s nipple.

Bringing himself up to face Cas nose to nose, Dean warns, “This will hurt; are you sure?”

“Don’t ask stupid questions.” Not a single wobble in his lover’s answer.
Another spasm of gut-wrenching misery shoots over the omega. Beyond the ability to stop himself, Dean snags Castiel’s nipple, biting hard. The alpha cries out. Blood leaks down his throat, flooding the omega with the truest flavor of his chosen mate. Cas’s hand returns to Dean’s dick.

A lengthy gasp has Dean’s body convulsing as he’s overrun with the touch, taste, scent and sight of his alpha. He’s so fucking close. Castiel dips, down the man’s tongue gliding over Dean’s ear as he whispers, “I’m yours.”

Climax jolts from him with a high-pitched scream.

Again, images he’s never seen bombard his mind. They are beautiful. Tears return, but not from pain; no, these are sobs of joy. He sees his stomach swollen, Cas smiling as he plays checkers with Sam. Meg is pacing with an infant. The three arsonists at Sam’s feet are practicing what looks like knitting.

Click, clack, click, clack. The rhythm has Dean releasing his hold on reality as the brilliant laughter of his family brings the omega a moment of peace.

Chapter End Notes

Love to all!

XOXOXOXO,
Angie

Always remember to feed your author with tasty comments.
The alpha feathers his fingers over Dean’s sleeping face. Castiel can’t decide which he believes to be more handsome; his Omega full of life with a gigantic smile on those stunning lips or slack, resting safe in his arms. He’s unable to look upon green irises, yet the childlike innocence in his dreaming form puts a sense of calm over the alpha. He will spend forever in this place.

Inhaling the mystical fog, Castiel’s temptation to use his dreamweaver talents increases. People are waiting for him to slip up. He tiptoes around the bait and instead enjoys the scent of Dean in a happy thought. The crowd outside the glass walls is becoming agitated. They want blood; they wish for violence and Cas gives them nothing. He won’t harm his Omega. In fact, he’s certain he would be incapable of bringing pain to his lover’s gorgeous gaze. Cas drags his finger over each eyebrow tracing the natural creases in Dean’s flesh.

“Amazing.” Castiel murmurs to himself.

Cautiously the alpha corrects Dean’s body to keep the man on his side, double checking that neither shoulder blade touches the floor. The orgasm was intense. His omega’s mind will be clear for several hours, and his love will need it. The next and final alpha will not be kind.

If it were legal for Castiel to slice her throat in the hall, Abaddon would be dead already. The red-headed alpha has no interest in Dean as a mate. No, she has a task. Gabriel has spent the day attempting to track down her true agenda. The woman wants his omega gone in any way possible. The rules of the Trials mean nothing to her, which makes Abaddon extremely dangerous.

Perhaps with the chance to doze Dean will be able to dispose of the woman on his own. Killing an alpha within a Panel is merely frowned upon. There would be no punishment. Actually, just as the omega consents to the outcome of an Alpha Panel before he or she enters, so does an alpha. Their verbal agreement is filmed for legal reasons.

Mother wishes to know who hired Abaddon. She begged Castiel to keep the woman alive until her intentions were revealed. He promised not to touch her. Dean made no such deal.

The mist clouds his mind, releasing the craving. Castiel nips at his lip. Slipping into Dean’s dreamscape would be delicious. It’s been ages since the alpha chased his omega through the gardens of their connected minds. He’s an addict. His true mate’s beautiful thoughts, creative juices, and glorious power over reality are absolutely Cas’s favorite drug. God, just one hit. To ghost his presence within his lover’s castles in the sky.

Castiel’s fingers tap against Dean’s shoulder, temptation lying before him. Lush, tasty fruit with full pouty lips whispering, “Join me Alpha.”
“No. A moment of pleasure could destroy a life with Dean. No.” Cas blinks his eyes, giving his cheek a sharp slap. “Get your shit together Novak.” He smiles, knowing his Omega would say the same.

Cas shakes off the seductive trance of his own mind. Abaddon’s employers would be fools to not have a dreamcatcher nearby, who could set the alarm the instant Castiel wandered into Dean’s dreamscape. No, he won’t play their game. Cas grins with a dream of his own prancing through his brain.

Time seems irrelevant in the glass palace. Only the sound of their combined breathing fills the space. Castiel grazes his fingertips over every inch of his Omega’s exposed skin. Memorizing all the freckles. He plans to count them properly one day.

Eyes of emerald flutter open, “How long was I out?”

“Not a clue.” Castiel leans in kissing his true mate. “How do you feel?”

“I’m good. Ready to take on the final asshole.” Dean winks, sitting up to stretch. The man uttering, “vēpō.” Water gushes from his palm as the Omega sips heavily from the stream.

When Dean’s had his fill, he glances up at Castiel, “Okay, time to lay down.”

The alpha wishes to obey. His mind is clearly giving the command to fall back, allowing his shoulder blades to touch the ground, yet Cas doesn’t move. “I can’t leave.”

“Umm, kind of the way it works, Alpha. Unless you want me to submit,” the omega rubs his neck anxiously, “I guess I can do it.”

“No.” Castiel’s hands jump out on their own accord, snatching Dean’s shoulders harshly. “Abaddon is likely an assassin sent to end the League’s chance by murdering our champion.”

A cocky grin brightens his Omega’s face. “I’m a champion?”

“You know you are, Dean.” His hands remain firmly on his true mate’s shoulders. “If I leave, she will be in and the fight of your life begins. What sort of Alpha walks away from their Omega in danger?”

Placing his forehead on Cas’s, the Omega smiles, “One who knows his Omega’s here to win. It’s okay, Cas, I got this.”

A kiss, another and then their lips open as the flavor of toasted almonds floods Castiel’s mouth. His body and mind swim in the exquisite taste. Suddenly the touch ends far too soon.

The alpha is lying on his back, Dean stands with a dark sorrow in his expression. “Bring me the next Alpha.”

Betas in white drag Castiel from the enclosure and up the stairs. Castiel doesn’t hinder their work, nor does he help. His limbs are flaccid from the raging storm in his mind. Dean will face Abaddon alone. The alpha is useless.

Water splashes against his face as Gabriel’s concerned gaze exclaims, “Hello! Castiel! Come on, man, give me anything.”
“Let him be,” Meg’s voice calls from behind Cas.

“We’ve been trying to rouse him for like,” Gabriel huffs, “an hour.”

The scent expert snickers, “Try ten fucking minutes, moron.”

“You kiss your Alpha with that mouth,” Gabriel taunts, drying Castiel’s skin with a towel.

“Sure do.”

Shoving the white material to the side, Castiel mumbles, “I need to watch the final panel.”

“No can do, little buddy.” His cousin moves to a couch, where Meg sits playing on her phone.

“Once Alphas lose in the Panel they are stricken from reentering. You know the rules.”

“Stupid rules.”

Meg glances up. “All we can do is wait for the results.”

Castiel itches to find purpose while his Omega battles for their future. He searches his hands for some kind of sign, perhaps a hint at what he can do to help, refusing to allow his lover alone to face the horrors of Abaddon. Okay, the alpha can’t be in the Panel but perhaps he can discover the group working against the League. Dismantle them so they are a nonissue for Dean.

Yes. His gifts as a dreamweaver could be used to track down the Shadow Alpha plaguing Dean. Joshua has reported the evil alpha continues to enter his true mate’s sleeping mind.

Reaching out, Cas demands, “I need my phone.”

Gabriel kept the device while Castiel participated in the Alpha Panel. His cousin rolls his eyes, tossing the iPhone across the room. The weight lands perfectly in his hands. Scrolling through his contacts, Cas taps on Joshua.

Two rings in his mentor answers, “Castiel, my son, what do you need?”

“I need to meet you. Preferably several miles from any living soul.” He ignores the questions tossed from Meg and Gabriel.

“I’m staying at your cabin. Your mother could send a helicopter for you; shouldn’t take more than four hours for you to arrive in your front yard.”

Castiel weighs his options. Staying near Dean would make him feel better but do nothing to help his omega. However, traipsing to Colorado might be a poor choice. The need for answers and to help Dean before the sixth trial makes the decision for him.

“Call my mother and set it up. I can be ready in thirty minutes.”

“The chopper will meet you at the bunker landing pad.”

The call ends as Castiel peers into the curious gaze of Meg and Gabriel. Meg shouts, “You’re leaving! What the hell is wrong with you?”

Inhaling slowly, Cas steadies his resolve, “I have to be seen heading back to Colorado. Consider it two birds with one stone.”

“Bad idea, Cassie.” Gabriel stands, pacing with his arms swinging wildly, “Naomi was clear. We
don’t do anything to hinder Dean’s progress or put the League on the enemy’s radar. Seriously, going after their dreamweaver will definitely be like jumping up and down in front of their faces shouting ‘Hey come get me motherfuckers.’"

Meg pats his arm affectionately, “Not to mention the chance you won’t make it back for the sixth trial. You not being there would –”

“Not going to happen. It’s currently,” he checks his watch, “5:32 a.m. I’ll be on the chopper by six, landing at the cabin around ten. Dean’s trial is slated to begin at 11:30 p.m., which means I just have to be back on the helicopter by 6:30 p.m. to make check-in. Easy.”

“And drink the elixir,” Gabe’s pacing intensifies, “go through the gender change and find time to sleep. Cassie, you can’t do this final trial with zero z-time.”

“I’ll rest on the helicopter. Also, we will need to be dreaming for Joshua and I to hunt the dark dreamweaver.” The more he talks, the more Castiel realizes he can totally make it work.

Meg passes him two small vials. “Here’s the elixir with a back-up. Remember, it takes two hours to kick in, and I wouldn’t go through it on the chopper. All kinds of awkward.”

“I’m sure I’ll figure it out.” Cas slips the potion into the inner pocket of his trench coat.

His cousin slaps his back. “May the force be with you.”

“I don’t understand that reference.”

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The helicopter touches down at 9:45 a.m. Castiel smiles because it’s a twenty-minute trek to the cabin from the drop point. No one wants to give away the location. A wondrous scent of snow fills his lungs as the alpha sprints towards his home. He’s winding in between trees to keep his person from being spotted. All precautions need to be taken. After he mates Dean, Castiel hopes the cabin will be their home until things die down.

His heart swells with the thought their first child might be born in these woods. A beautiful thought to grasp with both hands as he rushes towards his own battle.

His cell phone buzzes with a notification of a new text from Meg. Dean’s in the clear. Heading to sleep town. Good Luck!

Banging the door open, Castiel shouts, “Joshua!”

“Here, my son. I have stayed up the night to prepare for our mission.” Joshua leads him to the sitting area where the sofa has been pushed aside, making room for two sleeping bags on the floor. The older man hands him a mug of hot liquid. “The brew will help us to unite and claim our powers in your Omega’s dreamscape. Meg has promised me Dean will be asleep by 10 a.m., resting for the trial tonight.”

Without preamble, Cas chugs the nasty drink. He coughs, attempting to keep it down, “God, that’s awful.”

“Would you rather it work or taste good?” Joshua snips, gulping his own brew.

The two alphas lie next to each other, Castiel reaching out to hold his mentor’s hand. “I want the shadow alpha revealed at any cost. The person’s survival is not of import.”
“Understood.” Joshua responds, squeezing their connected hands.

The potion sends the alpha into a deep sleep hastily. His mind twirls as he snatches in the dark for the correct dreamscape. Suddenly he smells it. Toasted almonds and leather surge into his lungs, and Castiel follows the scent.

Falling … into heaven.

Darkness surrounds the space as the alpha surveys the land. He can hear the ocean behind him as he steps forward to enter the thick green jungle. One of Dean’s favorite spots. The shadow alpha isn’t here, but the tingle behind his ear tells Castiel the bastard is not far. They will show themselves soon.

A hand grabs his shoulder, turning Cas to face Joshua, “Be smart, my son. I will approach your Omega as usual. You must hide until our enemy becomes visible.”

“Yes, sir.” Castiel nods. It takes every ounce of strength to step farther into the dark.

He remains in the tree line, watching as Joshua greets his omega. Dean’s telling a story with his entire body; an entertaining sight for sure. Slinking farther into obscurity, he feels the tingle enraging under his flesh. The Shadow Alpha will arrive soon. As he waits, Castiel smiles, his gaze ghosting over his true mate’s strong shoulders, down his hips, pooling at gorgeous bow legs.

The older dreamweaver taps Dean’s temples, reciting the quelling enchantment that will keep his omega safe from all alpha REM voices. The downside will be Dean’s limitations in conjuring his own spells. If left alone, his true mate could find himself without the aid of magic; however, Castiel plans to spend the length of the incantation at his lover’s side. He will watch over Dean.

Rain pummels him. Castiel wipes away the wet, stripping his trench coat and suit coat. The storm worsens as he glares upward, hoping to locate the dark mist of the shadow alpha. All he can sees is night, stars and more rain.

An intense flash of lightning strikes dangerously close to his Omega. Castiel steels himself, battling against his inner alpha’s need to protect, his teeth grinding. Joshua and Dean pivot to stare down the beach where a hooded grey figure stands, thunder clapping ruthlessly.

Large swells in the ocean crash, adding to the dazzling theatrical entrance. Clearly, the Shadow Alpha requires an audience. Castiel watches as Joshua guides his Omega towards the cloaked person. He darts farther along the beach, maintaining his hidden place behind the foliage until he finds himself behind the Shadow Alpha.

The spirited, wild wind blows into his face, confirming his scent will never reach the small group. Dean’s shouting unheard blows as the alpha creeps closer. He must give his Omega and his mentor credit; neither even glimpses in his direction. Castiel’s clothes are drenched. Yet, he feels not a chill because the anger towards the cloaked person warms the alpha. Once he is a mere foot behind the Shadow Alpha, Castiel does two things simultaneously. One, he grasps Joshua’s hand and two, he snatches the stranger’s neck.

“Apokalýpste ton eaftió sas.” Castiel cries out over the storm.

A bright white light explodes from his connected palm with Joshua, splashing the illumination over the Shadow Alpha. A male alpha shorter than himself materializes. Castiel uses his one free hand to slam the man to the sand screaming, “Who are you and who do you work for?”

Silence.
The storm is gone. A pale sun delivers a fresh new day for the island. Although, Castiel is unamused. He wants answers and he will get them, God damn it.

"Den léne psémata." The words slither from Cas’s tongue, filling the quiet. Again the hand held by Joshua glows, spraying the uncloaked individual. He repeats his query, “Who are you and who do you work for?”

“My name is Ramiel.” The Alpha’s dark eyes enlarge with shock. “I was hired by the Alpha Coalition.”

“Who the fuck is the Alpha Coalition?” Dean exclaims.

Joshua replies, “A group of traditional alphas who will stop at nothing to see omegas in chains forever. They profit from Centers and black-market omega trades.”

Seizing the stranger’s throat, Cas demands, “Den léne psémata.” His grip tightens over the man’s trachea. “What is your purpose in Dean’s dreamscape?”

“I work in tandem with the Alpha Coalition’s assassin. She attacks the Winchester Omega from the real world as I assault him from within his own mind. My mission was to incapacitate the weak omega until he was unable to participate in the trials.”

Castiel knows the answer yet he asks, “How would you accomplish this?”

A glimmer of excitement twinkles from Ramiel’s gaze, “I would lock him in a dreamscape of torture and rape until there wasn’t a shred of sanity left.”

“WHO IS THE ASSASIN?” Blind rage has Castiel trembling.

“Abaddon, the woman who took a shot at you but hit your Alpha Mother instead. Such a shame we missed.” Ramiel laughs, “Fucking bitch couldn’t kill the Winchester Omega in the Alpha Panel due to her broken arm. She will be mystically healed by the final trial. Trust me.”

“Son of a bitch!” Dean shouts as he steps towards the evil alpha.

Joshua shoves his Omega clear of any harm as Castiel lowers his palm to Ramiel’s heart. The beating organ fluttering under his touch while he utters one word into his opponent’s ear, “énkavma.”

Flames erupt within Ramiel’s chest. The evil alpha is shrieking in agony as his skin melts under Cas’s hand. A hole develops as he continues to chant, “énkavma, énkavma, énkavma.” The alpha doesn’t pause his voice growing stronger as he senses the dying man’s terror, “énkavma, énkavma, énkavma.”

Only when his fist makes it through Ramiel’s chest cavity, feeling the ocean breeze on the other side, does he halt. Ripping his arm back through, the corpse plummets to the ground, releasing a warm heart dripping in his hold.

“Well, other than totally gross, what good did that do?” Dean looks between the two dreamweavers, “I mean, he’s going to wake up twice as pissed.”

Castiel is grateful when Joshua counters the information, “With enough power, a dreamweaver’s curse is deadly. Our Shadow Alpha will wake in hell.”

“One down,” Castiel tosses the bloody organ into the ocean, “two to go.”
Chapter End Notes

I’ve been watching a lot of Lost lately, does it show?

XOXOXO, Angie
“Do you think it’s weird to get a hardon watching your future mate melt a guy’s heart? And I’m talking dead as a doornail here?” Dean enquires of Billie as he chews on a bagel.

The hunter coach side-eyes the omega, “Major overshare, Winchester, go finish your snack.”

Deciding he wasn’t going to get an answer from the beta, Dean grabs his bottle of orange juice, chugging it down. The holding tent for the sixth trial is smaller than their locker room in the bunker. A white top and matching plastic walls are only big enough for one long table, three cots and a few scattered folding chairs. Gadreel lies on one of the cots staring at the ceiling.

“Hey,” Dean kicks the leg of the makeshift bed, “there won’t be any food or drinks once the trial begins. Eat something man.”

After a few beats of silence, Dean gives up, strolling back to the food spread on the table. “Oh! Pigs in a blanket, score!”

An amplified voice announces through a speaker in the center of the tent. “Omegas the local time is 10:45pm.”

“Alright boys, anybody need a bathroom break?” Billie rises, glancing at both omegas.

They shake their heads as she slips out the zipper entrance.

An irritating itch rears its ugly head, pissing Dean off. Joshua gave him an extra helping of heat control after Cas left his dreamscape. Maybe the arousal from viewing Castiel’s dominant, badass side is playing havoc with the spell. Damn it.

Dean drags a chair to sit next to Gadreel, “What’s your plan?”

“Massacre. Maim. Make earrings out of their knots.” The taller omega’s gaze never leaves its spot on the billowing tent top. “Don’t stress, I won’t harm the alphas who are obeying the rules and respecting our designation.”

“Wanna take down a wicked redhead for me?”

Gadreel nods. “She’s on my list.”

“Enjoy.” Dean salutes the man with his hot dog.

The entrance ruffles as Meg waddles inside. “Good news! Great Amara is alert and talking.”

“Awesome. I needed something good before the shit hits the fan.”

“My mini demolition experts are currently building booby traps in her hospital room. Sam’s the best nanny we’ve ever had. The singed count is under five, so the hospital staff might survive before they
discharge her.” Meg pops open an apple juice box. “How are you holding up?”

Laughing, Dean shrugs, “Like a million bucks. The second I enter the sixth trial my blood pact with the league is complete, which means Cas can freely mate me. No more torturous heat. I’m thinking we fuck right on the starting line.”

Her normally expressive eyes search a corner of the tent, “You do realize there are only two ways you leave a classic mate chase.”

“Toes up or Sun up.” Gadreel howls.

“I’m aware.” Dean rolls his eyes, “Doesn’t mean we should wait.”

Again, Meg’s expression seems schooled as she drums her fingers on the table. “You better survive, Winchester, my kids would be heartbroken.”

“Sure, blame the minions.” He kisses her forehead. “Now what’s got you all wound up?”

“Me? Wound up?” Her tone rising three octaves.

“Quick and dirty, just tell me.” He carefully holds her chin, bobbing his head to meet her gaze.

One deep inhale the scent expert replies, “Castiel’s chopper hasn’t shown.”

Little bits of hot dog land in Meg’s hair as Dean spews, “Check-in was 10:30? What the hell? Have you tried contacting the helicopter pilot?”

“Naomi had them sign a non-disclosure along with a promise for radio silence for the duration. They won’t answer even if we tried. All we can do is pray.”

The disgruntled omega on the cot calls out, “Check-in is merely a courtesy. An alpha with a saved spot could roll in at 11:29 and no one would care. He’s got time.”

He closes his eyes, trying to quell the looming storm. Castiel promised. “Fuck.”

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The soulless voice declares, “Omegas the local time is 11:20 p.m. All support personnel must leave the field.”

Their hunter coach places a hand on Gadreel and Dean’s shoulder, “Meg and I have to wait in headquarters a couple blocks away. Once you enter the trial you have consented. There is no going back, no red flags to raise, and the cameras are remote. Dead bodies are collected by drones. A beta medic will give you an injection with a tracker under the skin. The boundaries are marked with red painted electronic fences. If you figure out how to get past the fence alive, you will get a bullet.”

Billie points to her temple, “Head shot. At sunrise an alarm will sound marking the end of the trial. Good luck.”

With that the teacher gracefully walks out.

Meg holds up her phone shaking her head. No news. “Be ruthless, be deadly and be smart, leave the hero shit for someone else.”

There isn’t time to respond as a female beta medic enters, exclaiming, “Vans to HQ will leave in one minute. Missing your ride is not advised.”
With a quick wave, the scent expert disappears into the night.

“Right arm, omegas,” the lady barks. She uses an injection gun to stab Dean’s bicep. The omega curses as the tracker hits bone; digging that out will be impossible. “Follow me.”

The late fall wind whips through Dean’s hair as he yanks on his black windbreaker with 80Q3 DEAN on the back. Tonight will be a cold one. Thank God Hannah forced him to pick the fleece-lined jacket. His thin pants are useless.

The medic’s white lab coat almost glows in the moonlight as they quickly weave through several tents. He sees the fence first. A dark crimson color at least ten feet high. The twenty-foot gap is flanked by two sliding gates.

Asmodeus stands on a podium to the left of the entrance, his words amplified by an unseen speaker, “When I call the time of 11:30, all omegas willing to participate in the sixth trial may enter. If you choose not to join the game, please climb into one of the red vans; they will safely drive you back to the bunker. I am thrilled to announce our arena spans two square miles. At 11:40 I shall announce the start of the classic mate chase and the gate will be sealed. Any omega who finds themselves outside the fence or not in a van will die.”

Searching up and down the barricade Dean queries, “Where are the alphas?”

Their guide sternly answers, “They enter from another location.”

Asshole extraordinaire retrieves a pocket watch from his suit coat. “Omegas the local time is 11:30.”

The small herd of omegas shuffles through the opening. A group of a dozen or more dash the opposite directions heading for the red vans. Probably the smarter option. Dean remains with the pack as the omegas clear the fence, turning as one to face Asmodeus.

A horrid stench of fear burns into his nose as Dean leans over to his fellow Center resident. “At least we aren’t pitted against each other.”

“Small favors,” Gadreel scoffs.

“Unless someone wants the alpha who mates you.” A brunette male omega dressed in yellow counters, “Death of the omega frees the alpha for someone else. Danger will drown us till the sun rises.”

“If we live that long,” a small blonde female in purple squeaks.

Asmodeus shouts, “Omegas, the local time is 11:38, last chance.”

No one moves. Everyone made their decision before arriving at the trial. Those who were fleeing are already in the warm security of the vans. A still quiet drifts over the omegas.

“Omegas, the local time is 11:40.” The red gates slide closed, a loud clang marking the end of the choice. Anyone here will remain until a drone carries them out or sunrays liberate them.

Floodlights that were illuminating the entrance shut off, plunging the group in darkness. Dean’s glad it’s a three-quarter moon night as his eyes adjust. At least there will be some light.

A voice in the back exclaims, “Asmodeus can kiss my ass.”

Nervous chuckles break the discomfort.
“If I don’t see you again it was a pleasure, Dean.” Gadreel shakes his hand.

“Same,” he responds to the back of his friend. The other omega is sprinting into the forest.

Glancing at the closed fence, Dean smiles. The blood pact is complete. Relief trickles into his mind slowly because the omega can barely believe his luck. Sam is safe. His chest seems lighter with the realization. However, he would prefer to not catch a ride with the drone.

“Cas,” his lips quirking in a deeper grin, “where ya hiding, Alpha?”

Breaking away from the masses, the omega cautiously hikes into the tree line. A small part of him wishes there was snow crunching under his sneakers. Listening intently, Dean keeps up a quick pace. Other than a few owls and a bird squawking, the world has fallen deaf.

A baritone voice announces itself from behind a tree, “I bet the omegas are over here.”

The sound of feet padding on the dirt gives the omega a warning. Dean hastily scrambles up the closest tree, appreciative of all the time he spent on the ropes. Once he’s hidden elevated in the green foliage, Dean adjusts his spot to get a nice view.

Five alphas are near his location scenting the air. Crap.

“Yum, I do love almonds,” one of the jerks hisses. “The omega smells close.”

None of the alphas have his true mate’s scent. Just as the crew of knotheads has begun to search near his tree a trio of omegas dash by giggling. The entire pack immediately tracks the new treats. God, he’s never been so happy for stupid people.

Plums and cinnamon hits his nostrils next, causing Dean to gag. The omega holds his breath attempting to calm the wave of nausea. Ishim’s close. At least his complete disgust towards the alpha helps to combat his heat. His entire body is clearly rejecting the bastard.

“Dean,” Ishim calls out. “I have played your games long enough. Samuel’s life is no longer in jeopardy; we can mate. Castiel didn’t even have the guts to show. Pathetic man-child always abiding to his Omega mother’s whim. Jesus, what a wimp.”

Puffing out air silently, Dean soothes the building rage in his belly. Cas is not a wimp. Although, the omega’s aware Ishim would have specifically looked for his true mate at the alpha entrance. Two options are possible; first, the gender swap serum worked, or second, Castiel’s chopper didn’t arrive in time.

His brain is still calculating which option happened when a hand snatches his ankle, tossing him to the ground. Dean’s body slams against the cold dirt. The omega’s not given a chance to recover before Ishim’s slinking his body above him, sniffing his neck.

“Hello, my Omega.” Ishim licks up his cheek, “time to take what’s mine.”

The rancid plum odor sends the omega into a coughing fit. “Get off me! I am not yours, asshole; I do not consent to you being my alpha.”

Laughter explodes in the night as Ishim replies, “You consented the moment you crossed the gate, boy. A mate chase means the omega mates whoever is willing and trust me, Dean, I’m willing.”

His hand is forced to press against Ishim’s swelling cock.
“Screw you.” Dean shouts while using his free hand to punch the alpha in the jaw. The crack of bone breaking makes his smile return. “I won’t roll over and take it. My true alpha will work for the prize of my devotion.”

Instantly the other man rolls off, squealing like a pig as he writhes in agony. “Do you honestly believe I would pay a million dollars to Naomi without a blood pact?”

“What?” Dean stands, kicking Ishim in the stomach, “What’s the agreement?”

Winking as he cradles his jaw, the alpha answers, “Naomi promised me the mate-ship of her precious champion omega; in return I would give her a check for a million dollars. The hitch she probably failed to mention will be the death of her own mate if it doesn’t occur.”

Fear jolts over the omega. “Amara.”

Nodding his head, Ishim rubs his dick. “Almost ready to ride, little omega.”

“Did you make the pact yourself?” He paces before his prey. Dean can’t mate a dead man.

“I would never leave such an important contract to anyone else. Castiel nearly lost his Alpha mom; can you imagine if he discovers you’re the reason for her ultimate demise?”

Idiot. Amara would die for her son’s happiness, of that Dean’s a 100% sure. Yes, Cas would mourn, but it would only put a death warrant on Ishim’s head. The jerk has no clue about love.

“No.”

Ishim’s eyes widen in surprise, “I must have heard you wrong.”

“Let me be absolutely clear, you son of a bitch, I will never be your mate.” His words are crisp and precise.

Out of nowhere the alpha surges forward, grabbing Dean’s throat and knocking the omega against the closest tree. Ishim’s fingers tighten, cutting off his ability to breathe. Scratching at the alpha’s wrists, Dean struggles to pull the asshole off him. Unfortunately, between the man’s alpha strength and leverage from his position, nothing’s helping.

“Decision time, Omega. You can die tonight, never to see your brother again, or choose a life with me as your one true alpha.” Ishim throws his weight into the action.

Black dots bounce into his vision. Dean can’t recall the last time he inhaled, but he’s guessing it might have been his last. Suddenly, the pressure lightens enough for him to get one tiny inhale.

Ishim’s breath blows into his ear, “Tick tock, Omega. Knot or die?”

“HIS NAME IS DEAN!” a familiar voice screams from behind the alpha.

The swing of a thick branch nearly decapitates Ishim as the alpha crashes to the ground. Dean slides down the trunk of the tree, gasping violently. Gadreel wields the provisional weapon, using it to beat the alpha relentlessly on the head and torso. Blood sprays over both omegas.

“He said no!” Gadreel cries, his arms continuing the assault. “There will be no rapes tonight, mother fucker!”

Ishim’s face gradually becomes unrecognizable as a human, bringing the image of ground meat to Dean’s mind. The pool of crimson under the body seeps into the dirt, a burgundy mud splashing
against Gadreel’s white tennis shoes.

The alpha’s respiration slows to a crawl, the man’s chest rising less and less. Gadreel doesn’t halt. Dean isn’t inclined to stop his hero. Karma can be swift and brutal. The man was given a chance to move on to another omega. Ishim’s rich and mildly attractive; there are probably several people willing to mate him.

A loud crack alerts Dean to the snapping of the stick. The alpha’s head mirrors the look of a sunken-in football painted red.

Tossing the broken weapon, Gadreel kicks Ishim’s ribs with no response. “My work is done here.”

“Thanks.” Dean wipes the drying blood from his face.

His fellow omega shrugs off the comment, instead pulling down a fresh branch, similar to the first, from Dean’s hiding tree. He gives the new bat a few good swings. “A very respectful lady alpha was asking about you. She called herself Cassie.”

“Where?” He leaps to his feet.

“Unsure, these woods have no real markers.” The taller omega gesture to the corpse. “Well, this spot has one now.”

“The drones will come to collect Ishim.” Dean’s pivoting trying to recall which way Gadreel originally came from, “Can you point me in the general direction?”

The other omega scratches his chin thinking, the movement smearing the spray of red on his face. In the moonlight the sight is downright ghastly. “Over there, maybe.”

Dean hugs Gadreel, “Be safe, man. Not all the alphas will be as stupid as this one.”

“There have to be consequences for their actions.”

“Judge, jury and executioner. Seems like a lot to take on.” Dean steps in the direction Gadreel pointed.

“An entire slew of networks to show our designation being raped, beaten, and murdered by alphas; it’s time the country views what happens to bad apples.”

Giving a quick thumbs up, Dean sprints into the darkness praying for the scent of oranges and cinnamon.

Chapter End Notes

The end is near beautiful people.

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