### All I Have

**Summary**

Dean is an ex-marine trying to get back into normal civilian life. The baggage he carries, however, drives him to an act unspeakable. Sam recognizes that his brother needs more help than he can give, and takes him to see a professional. Castiel, the professional, is a New Age teacher who counsels on his past anger issues and dedicates his life to showing others how to rid themselves of their guilt and anger. When he meets Dean, his calm evaporates and he finds himself allowing unnecessary emotions to flicker in.

AKA my excuse to play with Dean's feelings and emotional instability.

### Notes

Soooo listen. I'm aware that I haven't finished the last two fics I've been working on. I'm aware that I most likely won't be finishing them. But I really do like the idea of Cas being super into mother nature and wearing hemp cloth. So it's possible that this fic won't have too many chapters, but it will be long enough to post. And possibly build upon in a series. So, sit back, and enjoy the crap I wrote at 3 am unbeta'd.

(Still looking for a beta, if anyone's interested.)
See the end of the work for more notes.
Come on, Sam

Castiel wasn’t a hippie, no. He preferred the term ‘New Age’ when in reference to himself.

He found that he had to correct many people when they learned of his lifestyle, but for the most part, he didn’t care. He loved the way he lived his life; the planet was his home! His body his temple, and the sun his god. He dutifully took care of all three the best he could. Hand-made clothes made of hemp cloth, and spun string and yarn. He made it a point to recycle and re-use everything he could. His home was a ‘no-trash-zone,’ as he would say completely unironically to his brother Gabriel, to which the man would snort and occasionally tell him to fuck off. Cas spent most of his life learning how to control his temper and then spent the rest learning how to take care of his mental health.

When he was young, he would rage and throw vases across the room, take hammers to flower pots and punch craters into the plaster walls his father had worked his life away to give Castiel and his brothers. He would lash out and distort his own body in wrath at the feelings that disturbed his conscience. When their father died, Michael had blamed him for all the stress and hardships he put the man through. Ten years later, the only family that still spoke to Cas was Gabriel.

Gabriel had been the jokester of the family, the one who broke the ice, the one that put everyone back together after their father’s death. Gabriel seemed heartless at times when he joked, but he had the best intentions in mind. In fact, he seemed to take their father’s death harder than any of them. He retreated to his room for days, as most of them did, but after he was determined to make things right. Cas took his father’s death hard, and like Michael, blamed himself for the suffering he had caused and set out to make it right. He took anger management classes, learned about his surroundings and the earth that lay almost forgotten under their feet. He made it his life’s mission to take care of the earth.

Cas learned how to garden, how to cook without gasoline, how to minimize the energy he used in his home. He set a limit on how much water he could use per month. He was dedicated. His life revolved around his findings and his care for his plants.

Cas could remember when he first started gardening. His first plant was a tomato plant. When he started, he figured he had messed something up since the seeds weren’t growing. But before he had time to try again, big beautiful vines burst forth from the earth and had nearly cried with joy. Large leaves and small flowers began to bloom, and he was ready to start his new life in his father’s honor.

With his lifestyle came his followers; his community looked up to him. After many years of him learning and adapting, he had a few neighbors come to him for advice about gardening, and how to save money by limiting electricity, etc. Eventually, people came from across the state, then across the country to learn from him. He was more than willing to share his lifestyle with people who were willing to learn.

He taught a variety of classes. But on this particular-Saturday morning, 7 am sharp, he taught meditation. He normally had a class of four. Miss Marie who lived nearby on the lake house, Kevin from across the state, Lyss from a few towns over, and Meg from the state nearby (He only taught the class once a month, so his students could fit him into their schedules) But this time, he had six settling in to the grass carpet of his open property. He eyed the newcomers subtly when he walked lightly to the crowd- two young men, one significantly taller than the other spoke softly, yet firmly to the smaller man. The other did not seem pleased to be where he was and consistently rolled his eyes and kept his mouth in a tight, thin line. He harbored an arm sling, and as Cas grew closer he saw large, purpling bruises plastering the man’s face and slit in the bridge of his nose. Forgetting the
injuries, Cas couldn’t deny that he was unbelievably attractive. Under the bruises, his fair skin was
dusted with freckles. His jawline was probably sharp enough to cut someone. And when he clenched
his jaw, the muscle popped under the pressure and Cas could only imagine the feeling of tasting that
spot under the older man’s ear.

Cas shook himself out of his thoughts when he reached the following. “Hello, everyone.”

The chatter died down and was replaced with a muttering of “Good morning, Castiel” from the class.
He smiled lightly and adorned the two newcomers.

“Welcome, friends. My name is Castiel.” The taller man returned his greeting with a nervous, but
honest smile while the shorter man continued to look constipated at the mere thought of his
surroundings.

“Hi,” the taller man said hesitantly. “Uh, my name is Sam, and this is my brother Dean.” He
motioned meekly at the shorter man. “We heard you were good, so we came to um, learn from you.”

Cas cocked his head in sympathy. “What brings you to search for enlightenment?” He asked kindly.

The shorter man, Dean, scoffed and rolled his eyes before removing himself from the group to a tree
a few feet away. Sam gazed at him with a mixture of frustration and emotion that Cas did not
recognize. He swallowed harshly before speaking again.

“My brother was in an accident. Almost died. Doctors said he wouldn’t last more than a few
months…if he didn’t, you know, re-evaluate his life.” Sam turned to look at Castiel with hope in his
eyes. “I want him to learn how to be at peace with himself.”

“You’ve come to the right place.” Castiel turned to settle his eyes on the man by the tree, waving his
phone around in the air and trying desperately to find a signal.

Cas let his gaze linger a few moments before turning to the class. “I do not believe it would be
healthy for him to fake his experiences here in an attempt to please you, Sam.” Sam nodded
solemnly. “It would best to allow him to watch the class and see the effect for himself before he
chooses to make the right choice.”

Cas cleared his throat and smiled warmly at his followers. “Let us begin.”

Dean couldn’t begin to explain to you, viewer, why exactly he wanted to bang his head into the tree
until his brain damage was irreversible, without going on an hour-long tangent. His baby brother
dragged him halfway across the country to meet…a hippy? I mean, what else would you call a
waste of gas? Dean was fucked up in every physical way imaginable. His shoulder was crushed in
the accident, internal bleeding, heart problems, brain damage, and his pretty face was even thrown in
as collateral. And to force him back into a car for 12 hours…unacceptable.

He made sure to voice his opinion after the mile-long trek to the area, once they had to leave the
Impala behind. And when they finally made it to the spot with a few people already settling in, and
the infamous Castiel approached, Dean groaned so loud it caused the blood rushing through his ears
to fade. The man came out in what looked like a robe made of a burlap sack, and tights. Tights. A
grown ass man, in tights. He looked like some Buddha wannabe.

But the closer he got, Dean could get a better look at him, and the sight made him shut up almost
instantly. Castiel stood there and almost seemed to have a halo of light surrounding him from the
growing sunlight. Hair tousled in every which way, looking as if he had never touched a hairbrush in his life, but somehow made it look sexy. His face was shaped smoothly by a shadow of a beard beginning to grasp, and his nose was small and tipped lightly. And his eyes; God his eyes. They glinted a gorgeous ocean blue in the morning light. Maybe he wouldn’t hate it here after all.

But then the man started talking. God, if he only kept his mouth shut. Dean couldn’t handle it.

When Sam had suggested ‘Better Habits’ for Dean after was released from the hospital, he let his brother play parent in the beginning. Dean went to bed at a certain time, got up at a certain time, ate at designated times of the day, and did his exercises like he was told. But when he put his foot down and came home with a burger from the nearest, greasiest restaurant he could find, Sammy had a bitch fit. They fell into a screaming match that ended in Dean too angry to even think about eating his treasure trove. The next day Sam calmly explained that anger management classes would be good for both of them and found this Castiel dude from a Facebook group. Which led to Dean sitting on his ass by the tree playing a game on his phone while Sam found his ‘inner Chakra’ with the rest of the little earth goblins for an hour.

“May I sit with you a moment?” Dean looked up in surprise at the raspy voice and saw Castiel standing above him. He glanced back at the class; they were all sitting in a circle with their eyes closed, in a trance.

“Aren’t you in the middle of something,” Dean grumbled.

Castiel chuckled and took a seat on the grass by a disturbed Dean. “Yes, well. They are in the middle of enhancing their auras, so it’s best not to interrupt.” He took a small look over Dean’s angry birds. “Try aiming from the left side.”

Dean took the advice and smashed the tower of evil pigs in one hit. “Good one. This doesn’t mean we’re friends though.”

Castiel clasped his hands together against his folded legs and grinned. Dean kept his vision focused on his phone screen to avoid glancing at the gorgeous sight. “I played my fair share when the game was first released. I haven’t indulged in a few years, however.”

“Why’s that?” Dean snorted to himself. “Too busy praising Mother Nature?”

“Yes, in fact.” Castiel looked over his shoulder to see the man scoff and turn his head. “Can I ask you a question, Dean?”

Unless it’s to ask me out, no; Dean thought to himself. “Shoot.”

“Why do you despise my teachings?”

The question caught him off guard. He had no idea how to respond to something like that, who would? And with Castiel’s heavy gaze on him, he realized he couldn’t just opt out of an answer. Feeling the man’s eyes on him, he found that he didn’t completely want to.

“I-I don’t,” He stuttered. “You do you, man. I just… don’t think it’s right for me, ya know? This just isn’t my domain.”

“Hmm.” Castiel hummed and turned to look back at the class. “I think that we should meet again. Outside of my work, I think. I would like to get to know you a little more. Find out what exactly is… your domain. Maybe we can work around it.”

All Dean really comprehended was ‘we should meet again.’ His heart began to speed up as he
thought about a million different things he and Cas could do besides ‘work around it’ and he agreed quickly. “I’m down.”

Castiel smiled. “Good. I will leave your brother with my email.” With that, he hopped up and made his way back to the class, leaving Dean to stare open-mouthed at the movement of the man’s tunic, flipping up just enough and only for a moment to show off his toned ass underneath the tights.

Dean was no longer concerned with the almost-dead cell phone in his hands. He stared intently at the class and strained to hear the teacher’s gruff but soothing voice directing them to the next step. The class ended too soon and Castiel sat with his legs crossed, eyes closed and his palms against the earth when Sam and the others were getting ready to make the trek back to their cars.

Sam walked up to him as Dean was attempting to get himself off the ground by himself, grunting in pain when his bruised ribs were jostled. Sam meekly reached a hand out to help him up, but Dean refused, digging his nails into the tree behind him and pulling himself up with a groan.

“Dean..” Sam started, but he cut him off.

“I’m fine, Sammy.” He claimed and wiped the blood of his fingertips off on his worn jeans. “Let’s get out of here. I’m getting the creeps.”

Castiel sat with his knees crossed under the warm, blanketing sun for an hour or so after his class had long since left his property. He enjoyed moments like this. When all he could feel was the air breezing through his hair and kissing his eyelashes, the sun gazing upon him like the child of the star itself. To allow yourself to be free of worry, of feeling, and release yourself into the feeling of nature overcoming you. That was his favorite feeling in the world.

But today had been different. He rarely ever got a student who had not wanted to participate; it had happened in the past, but he had always somehow gotten through to them. But this time, he felt a bond to the man who showed up looking like he had the devil beaten out of him. Those beautiful green eyes had a darkness to them. They had seen pain, they had witnessed suffering, they had grieved until battle wounds carved themselves into the walls that surrounded his soul and reinforced the brick and mortar with a thick pink scar tissue. He had not expected Dean to join them from the first moment he laid eyes on him. These walls would never allow him to let his soul be bared, much less bare it to a group of people he had never met. If Cas were to begin bulldozing the years of pain and brokenness, he would need to prepare for it to be bloody, and he needed to make himself a safe spot for the gorgeous man to lay his guard to rest. Castiel was more than ready to take on the challenge.

So when he peeked under his lids to watch Dean and Sam walk off, he noticed the taller man hand his brother a slip of paper and watched him slip it into his pocket subtly, without a word.

And when he returned to his home and opened his small and sleek laptop that went regularly unnoticed (he tried not to allow himself to be invested in technology, it was addictive and unhealthy in his eyes, but a necessary evil) he checked his email to find one new message from a Dean Winchester, he was unsurprised yet delighted that the job had already begun.

Dean had tried to convince himself that he wasn’t nervous, which ultimately failed when finding his traitorous fingers shaking as he lit himself up a smoke in the parking lot of the restaurant Castiel had
suggested they meet. Yet another secret he managed to keep from his prying brother. He kept the packs of menthol hidden in his nightstand drawer, and in a hidden compartment of Baby’s trunk. If Sam had noticed the smell, he didn’t comment, and Dean preferred it that way.

The restaurant was part of a complex, so small you could miss it if you weren’t looking for it. The lot was gravel instead of pavement, Dean noticed when he stepped out of his vehicle and crunched into the stones. In a town like this Dean expected it would be run-down in the next year or so. Something so small and inconspicuous wouldn’t last here, as good as it may be.

Dean wasn’t expecting this meeting to turn up anything good, other than being able to look at the man for an hour or so. Just enough to fully form his fantasies with the infamous Castiel Novak for later that night. He was sure Castiel was going to try and pick him apart, but he didn’t care. He wouldn’t get anything out of Dean that Dean wasn’t willing to give out.

Dean took a last clean drag out of his cigarette and flicked it onto the ground before squishing it with his boot. He was glad to have the nicotine in his system before he went through the certain interrogation, he was about to become a victim of. He took a deep breath and checked his watch for the time. They guy had been so adamant about the timing, but he was late? What the hell.

“You know it’s wrong to litter.” A voice appeared out of nowhere, spooking the crap out of Dean. He spun around to be met by Castiel in…normal clothing? He was adorned with a white, long sleeve button-up, matched with a pair of freshly ironed gray khaki work pants and tipped off with a brown faux leather belt. He had his hands shoved in his pockets, but Dean could see the sliver of nice-looking black watch peeking out of the fabric. His hair was just a mussed up as it was the day he met him, and the sight of it all made Dean’s mouth water. “Bad for the environment.”

“It’s bio-degradable.” Dean choked out with a badly timed smirk. Castiel rolled his eyes and stepped forward to reach down and pick up the offending item off the ground, before shoving it into his pocket. Dean felt a pang of guilt for a moment before he snapped himself out of it.

“Where’s your car?” He asked with a tilt of his head. He had not noticed another vehicle enter the parking lot, why he hadn’t noticed Cas sneak up on him.

“I do not have one.” Castiel smiled brushed a piece of hair out of his face. “It was only a couple of miles, so I walked.”

Dean stared.

Castiel laughed at his expression. “It’s good for you.” He offered with a grin.

Dean continued to look him over. Not a single sign of wear or wrinkling, not a perspiration stain anywhere. Did the guy just not sweat? What?

Castiel pulled a hand out of his pocket gestured towards the restaurant with the tips of his fingers. “Shall we go inside?”

Dean nodded, still slightly in awe.

When they entered the building he immediately was overcome by the smell of ginger and lemon. He glanced over the inhabitants and their plates to get an idea of what they served; steaming plates of salmon with a cinnamon glaze, burgers, salads, a very flat and strange looking pizza with bell peppers, whole wheat alfredo pasta, etc. The options were almost endless. The walls were a light brown color with pictures of their patrons scattered around in frames, and a bar was seated in the opposite end of the building.
Castiel walked up to the front counter with a soft smile. “Hello, Ellen. It’s nice to see you again.”

“Well damn, he left his house for once!” The older woman commented warmly and walked around the counter to give him a hug. “And to come see little ole’ me.”

“I’m here with a friend. This is Dean Winchester.”
Dean lifted an arm for a half-wave. The woman nodded her head and led them to a booth out of the way of the other patrons. While Dean plopped into the padded booth ungracefully, only being careful not to knock his sling clad arm into the table, Castiel slid into his spot quietly and unhindered. Ellen was relentless about being the one to take their order, though she was no longer a waitress. Castiel relented easily and allowed her to choose for him (apparently this was a normal occurrence) and when Dean panicked, he just called for a burger. Simple and always delicious.

Castiel smiled at the table as Dean spoke, and he almost choked at the sight of him looking at Dean through his lashes. He managed to get through his order and cleared his throat once Ellen was out of earshot. “Come here often?” He joked.

Castiel shot him a small glance before taking up the silverware provided on the table and unraveling the napkin. “I’ve lived here for 15 years and this restaurant is the closest to my home.” He said matter-of-factly. “I came quite often in the beginning when I didn’t know how to cook, and they catered to my dietary needs. Ellen has been an outstanding employee and became a close friend after a few years.”

“That’s cool,” Dean stated, not really knowing how to respond. “You know, that you’ve lived here so long.”

Castiel nodded with a smile. “I love it here. The open space, clean air. People are so welcoming.”

Dean felt the corners of his lips twinge upwards at the other man’s admittance. Castiel cleared his throat and continued. “So tell me, Dean, what brought you to my class yesterday?”

Right to it then. “I couldn’t tell ya, Cas.” Dean shrugged non-committedly. “My brother has been hell-bent on keeping me on the straight and narrow. He thought your little hippie group could ‘change the way I see things.’” He mocked Sam’s concerned tone with a laugh, only to lose his grin when Castiel’s eyes narrowed. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to offend.”

“Nonsense.” Castiel’s eyes remained darkened. “We’re not hippies, Dean. We prefer to be referenced to as ‘New Age’ since we don’t follow the same paths as our fathers.”

“I’m sorry.”

“No worries. Your brother thought you needed my guidance for a reason, so let’s delve a little deeper, Dean. What do you do for a living?”

It was Dean’s turn to scowl. “I’m not working at the moment, uh. Still recovering from the accident and the injuries I sustained from serving in the military. I probably won’t be able to work again in the next 10-15 years.”

Castiel cocked his head to the side interestedly. “I’m sorry to hear that. I know working does help calm a busy mind. We can try and find you acceptable employment if you would like?”

“No, Cas.” Dean offered a reassuring look to the other man. “I won’t be in shape enough to be looking for employment for a while.”

“I respect that. So, tell me about the accident, if you don’t mind me asking.”
Dean swallowed harshly and pulled his sling-clad arm closer to his chest unconsciously. “I was driving late one night, and an 18-wheeler pulled out in front of me. I almost died.” He regretfully spat those last words out like he had a gut hatred for them, and he did. He hated saying ‘almost.’ He hated doing anything half-assed. It was true, a large carrier truck had crashed into him that night, but he intentionally neglected to tell anyone he had been drinking at the time of the crash, and that he had swerved into the oncoming monster of a vehicle.

“Well, I am glad you are not dead, Dean,” Castiel spoke the words slowly and softly, as if trying not to poke the bear any more than he already had. “I see your brother only had good intentions.”

Dean cleared his throat and offered an unconvincing smile. “So anyway, ‘nuff about me. Tell me hot stuff, how’d you get into all the hippy crap anyway?”

Cas’ face grew into a bright red (in anger or in embarrassment, Dean wasn’t quite sure) and replied quickly. “I am not a hippy, Dean.”

“Oh really?” Dean jumped at the chance to change the subject and direct the attention to the other man. The sight of him flustered, if only a small bit, was exciting. “What’s with the hemp clothes then hmm? And the meditation? And the obsessive-compulsive litter cleaning?”

Cas seemed to take a moment to calm himself, closing his eyes and regaining his composure by smoothing out his expression and clearing his head before he opened them again, the pink flush still staining his cheeks. “I merely do my part in keeping my life clean of wastefulness. That includes unnecessary emotions like frustration and rage. I find that I like myself a lot better this way, as do many others I counsel.”

Dean snorted. “Counsel? Really? Tell me you don’t do yoga.” Cas’ face was all Dean needed to know that he did, indeed, ‘do yoga.’ “You’ve got to be kidding!”

“I don’t believe that my standard teaching would be suitable for your case,” Cas said as he set his elbows parallel to each other on the table and intertwined his fingers together. His voice reached that low octave that border lined rasp, his tone serious and business-like. “You have a history with the military, correct? That means you are accustomed to corporal punishment.” Dean squinted at him in disbelief. “You are a case of temperament issues, denial of mental health, lack of bodily care, and dismissal of outside concern. You lack empathy for your own well-being and cannot be trusted to care for yourself. You are co-dependent on your brother for financial and emotional support, yet you brush off any means of concern and apprehension he makes to build you out of a hole you have dug for yourself. You believe that you are in fact, a lost cause. Is anything I’m saying to you right now sticking?”

Dean sat in stunned silence. Everything the man was saying to him was sticking, everything. The assumptions he made were all correct, thought Dean would rather face the consequences in hell than admit to him that he was right. Denial of mental health? Co-dependent? Who the fuck did he think he was?

“Listen here buddy,” Dean started, but was cut off.

“I’m not interested in your threats, Dean.” Cas waved him off with a flick of his hand, sighing and looking about ready to slam his head into a wall with boredom. “Now, I rarely make this offer to any one of my clients, in fact only once before, but I was denied vehemently. I only offer now because for some ungodly reason I find myself attracted to you, spiritually as well as physically, and this may be a bit selfish, but I would like to become something along the line of friends. However, I also do not believe that my typical line of work could be of use to you in your current state. I think that you would never take it seriously; you don’t believe in meditation or mental stimulation, therefore, the
message would never set. I think that you need that side of yourself to be released to the control of someone else. Someone who can handle it in a healthier way than you ever could. It’s just a matter of allowing that person to have that kind of control. Are you following?”

Dean was speechless. And, maybe a bit angry. His stubbornness kept him from letting Castiel see that anger, since that was all the man could talk about, apparently. Though he was startled at the admittance of his typical teachings not being enough for someone like Dean, he was also incredibly curious as to what the supposed offer was since he had been so forward with being ‘attracted spiritually and physically’ Dean had to internally scoff at the terms he used. Though Castiel seemed completely harmless on the outside, the tone and dominance in the way that he spoke to Dean claimed otherwise. The steady words and the heightened gaze he cast upon Dean lit a small burning flame in his stomach that couldn’t dream of being smothered by the tightening of his bad arm against it. He nodded in response, curiosity gaining the better of him.

Cas laid his arms flat on the table, unconsciously gained more of the shared space and causing Dean to draw into himself just a bit more. “This alternative method would be quite intimate in many ways. It would require the need for a written contract and some researching on your end. I can only explain it to you the way I look at the acts, you must make that decision on your own. I would request a trip to a much quieter area of the state so there are fewer distractions and more time to evaluate. A few days, at most. And there will be rules,” He added, as if the thought had just occurred moments after his speech.

“I’m willing to try.” Dean admitted, after taking a moment to debate with himself. He couldn’t keep putting Sam through the constant emotional rollercoaster that was Dean’s life post-military. 8 years spent doing nothing but following orders, these ‘rules’ should be a piece of cake. As for intimacy, well, if it meant getting close the other man then he was so down.

Castiel’s lips twitched upward hesitantly, as if he had expected a different outcome to his proposal. “Brilliant. I will send you the information you will need beforehand, and I expect you to look through it thoroughly. In the meantime, I will set up the retreat as soon as possible and will message you when it will begin. I look forward to working with you, Mr. Winchester.”

Dean swallowed harshly, not knowing how to respond, but being saved graciously by Ellen coming back with a wide grin and a tray of food.
I’m not gonna lie to ya, I have no set posting schedule. I’m sorry about that. However, it does mean that I will randomly post updates and new chapters sometimes within days of each other, sometimes within months. Please don’t expect anything of me, I’m doing my best. I actually did real-life research for this chapter and I’m excited to be able to use it for future projects... also, real-life projects ;)
I found my new beta!! One of my favorite people in the world: Daddy Timmy (sorry dude ily lol) you can find their lovely blog on tumblr at https://tuastuemonbebe.tumblr.com/ if you feel so inclined, please check them out and give them some love.
Links to the BDSM articles I found will be posted at the end chapter notes. Enjoy the story!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“He said what, now?” Dean couldn’t look Sam in the face, because he knew the younger man was giving him the most incredulous look he could muster. Dean told him, yes, only because he knew Sam would be puzzled on why exactly Castiel had asked him out. Dean was still trying to figure that out himself since it had been a few days after the outing and he still had not heard from the man.

“You heard me.” Dean sat at the kitchen table with a glass of orange juice. It would be at this time that he normally had a beer in his hand and a steaming plate of bacon and eggs in front of him, but Dr. Edlund just had to go and tell Sammy he wasn’t to be consuming alcohol for a good few months. It would mix badly with the handful of medications that sat quietly yet threateningly on the space beside his juice. So, Sam had taken it upon himself to remove any and all alcoholic beverages from their rental home, much to Dean’s dismal pleading to just ‘leave the hard stuff.’

Absently, Dean rubbed his arm with a small pressure from his thumb; the freedom from the sling and cast only came with a nagging yet infuriating need to itch, but he knew if he scratched the soft, damaged skin he would only create bleeding craters in his forearm. Sam knew this as well, shooting a pointed look at his hand that said, ‘you better not.’

Sam continued his constructs in the kitchen, no doubt pulling together a bowl of fruit mixed in disarray with what he had once called very fondly Greek Yogurt. Dean still had no idea what the difference was between that and regular yogurt, but he had given up his search for the answer concluding that the only difference between them was the bitterness that accompanied the curds compared to the sweet creamy taste of commercial yogurt.

“I didn’t know that he was going to suggest something like this,” Sam sighed over his work. “I didn’t read anything in his reviews that said he took on projects. I thought he only did classes.” He paused to look up. “Take your meds!” he exclaimed when he noticed the pills still sitting innocently by the glass of juice already generating a layer of condensation.

Dean grumbled in response, but he made no move to consume the pills. “Honestly, I have no fucking clue what’s going on. He said he’s going to take me on a ‘retreat’ what the hell does that mean?”

“He probably needs to evaluate you a little more so he can decide your treatment.” Sam placed the
bowl of fruit and yogurt in front of Dean with a small clink against the table. “Take. Your. Meds. I’m tired of having this argument every morning.”

“Come on Sam, they never go down right. There’s always some left on my tongue. I hate it,” Dean complained loudly in a failed attempt to avoid eating the bastard things.

“If you don’t take them, Dean, your heart could give out.” Sam sat down beside him and pushed the pills towards him, almost with a vengeance. “Please take them.”

Dean sighed and relented. He took them by 3’s, so he could properly swallow the orange juice around them. By the time he had finished, he felt his phone buzz in his pocket.

Sam gave him a knowing look before starting on his own breakfast. “I just hope you don’t end up kidnapped and sold into slavery,” he joked.

Dean shot him a glare and yanked his phone out of his back pocket. A newer iPhone Sam had insisted he get when he was discharged since his previous flip phone was so ‘outdated’ and this one could have the text enlarged. Dean had scoffed at his younger brother for even suggesting he needed something other than his trusty indestructible flipper, but he had to admit it was so much easier to reach the internet without having to press the same button three times for a single letter. When he had set it up, Sam was audibly struggling to keep his laughter down before he snatched the device out of his hands and began to show him how to do things like add contacts, apps, and add a background picture. He had chosen (at Sammy’s suggestion) the Black Sabbath album artwork ‘Mob Rules;’ flash to the future, that same artwork glared at him suggestively when he clicked the ‘new message’ button blinking in the top bar.

His email pulled up in a blink of an eye and he squinted to adjust his eyes to the color difference. Damn, he’s not getting that old, right?

The screen read: New message from Castiel Novak- he opened it only to find several web links posted in succession. At the end of the email, there was a small message.

Dean,

Please look through the links I have posted above. When you have finished, I would like to hear your thoughts on the subject and at that point I can set up our trip and begin your experience.

Yours,

Castiel

Novak

“So, what does it say?” Sam asked fervently, looking over the mug of coffee he held close to his lips.

“Just a bunch of reading material.” Dean clicked the power button and tossed the device onto the kitchen table, hopefully successfully masking his excitement for the research. Dean? Excited to read? What was happening?

Sam huffed and took a sip of his coffee. “I’m planning on doing some grocery shopping and maybe stopping by to see Uncle Bobby. You feel up to a trip into society?”

Dean waved his hand in dismissal and took a hesitant bite of his breakfast. “Nah, brother,” he said around his mouthful of food. “I’m gonna stay here and try my hand at Grand Theft Auto again.
Maybe I’ll actually finish the first mission this time,” he smirked devilishly at his brother, to which Sam snorted and rolled his eyes.

“Okay man, I’ll tell Bobby you said hey.” Dean nodded thanks in his direction and watched as his brother got up to wash his dish and get ready for his trip out. Dean didn’t really enjoy going out anymore. He consistently received strange looks and whispers behind his back, maybe from the injuries, or maybe from his lack of ability to seem approachable. Either way, it was never enjoyable for him anymore, so his rejection had probably been expected to his brother.

He pushed through the rest of his breakfast under Sam’s watchful eye and handed him the bowl to wash. He heaved himself up and got himself a glass of water to down before placing the cup in the dishwasher, nodding to Sam before limping to the couch and laying horizontally on top of it. Sam bustled around in the kitchen a bit more to finish cleaning breakfast and before he realized it, Dean was left to his own devices in their home.

Dean clicked around through the TV for a while, trying to find something mildly entertaining to watch. To his dismay, the only thing that caught his eye was the National Geographic channel. He watched for maybe five minutes before he gave up and switched off the television in exchange for staring blankly up at the ceiling.

To pass the time, he did some of the breathing exercises his doctor prescribed and checked his pulse. These dumb little repetitive motions were apparently very important to the Doctor, and by proxy, Sam. Dean thought them idiotic when he first tried them, but very quickly found that they took up a lot of energy and concentration, so after a few tries he stopped complaining, and after a month of tries, it became easy again.

He absolutely hated doctor visits when he was younger, and that didn’t change as he grew into an adult. So, when he was discharged, his life was nothing but doctor visits. And when he was finally told he could have a month or two without them, his car wreck set him back to the building blocks of square one. He still remembered the day Sam was notified that he was in the hospital again. Through blurry vision, he could pick out Sam’s tear-streaked face staring motionlessly at the white sheets laid across his broken body. But when Sam noticed his slowly waking movements, his infamous toothy grin had broken out across his face. When Dean asked what happened, Sam filled him in as best he could to help his temporary amnesia caused by the accident. Broken ribs, shattered elbow, slight concussion, and bruising covered his brow bone and nose with spatters of purple and black. The trucker who hit him had been fine but couldn’t confidently recall the night of the accident and was seen to by his company. But he had the kindness to leave Dean a get-well card in his room that Sam, out of frustration, ripped up and tossed out before Dean had woken up.

Dean rubbed a hand across his face, barely noticing the ache that burned through his skin from the healing bruises. The hatred he felt for himself really only began after the hospital bills started showing up at their house. Sam tried not to allow the shock to set into his features when he received the first bill, but Dean knew that even with his discounted military insurance, the bills would be unfathomable. He found Sam often stayed up late at night counting and worrying about how he would pay for all the appointments, surgery costs, prescriptions etc. The real kicker was Dean couldn’t help pay for it himself, being unable to work a normal job in his condition.

Which meant that Sam was solely responsible for all the bills including food and housing. And all Dean could do to repay him was get better.

Dean looked back at the kitchen table keeping his phone hostage. Getting better required him to make an effort. And making an effort required him to read through those stupid links.
Begrudgingly, he eased himself up off the couch and plotted towards the kitchen table, scooping his phone up into the palm of his hand and clicked the power button. The same screen flipped on as when he had pulled up his email, and the blue-tinged weblinks stared him down with an agonizing glare as he plopped down into one of the wooden chairs that surround the oak table. Words shot through his head like bullets, reminding him of his conversations with Castiel at the restaurant. They penetrated his mind like uppercuts, the words *intimate, contract, and rules* raced in front of his eyes as the light from his phone screen graced the blue-ish green bruises blotched across his nose and under his eyes.

*Enough of this Winchester,* he thought to himself, shaking his head in an attempt to release his anxieties. *You’ll never know if you don’t click the damn links.*

He sighed pointedly at himself and forced his hands to move, hitting just above the blue tinted words before hitting it correctly the second time.

The first link brought him to a sketchy looking website, with seemingly unironic comic sans and a black background. The title of the website was centered at the top of the page—BDSM for Therapeutic Uses.

Dean blinked for a moment. He’d heard of BDSM before (he wasn’t gonna lie, mostly in porn) but he’d never seen it used as a coping mechanism. He quickly found himself very interested. He focused his attention on the short text box below.

*BDSM* (which stands for bondage, dominance, submission, and masochism and involves bringing power, pain, and release into a sexual experience) can be therapeutic to many individuals who are dealing with traumatic experiences. Some individuals who’ve experienced sexual assault, discover BDSM as an essential part of the healing process—a means to reclaim their bodily autonomy, rebuild trust, and treat their PTSD in a controlled environment that’s "similar to yogic or meditation-based sessions."

Okay great, he thought to himself. *I’ve never been sexually assaulted.* What is the point of this?

Conscientious practitioners of BDSM are committed to the health and safety of all participants; however, many types of BDSM are risky or even harmful by nature. While it’s unlikely that any BDSM activities will have unintended lasting effects—physical or emotional—a bad experience can leave a person in need of medical attention or psychological care. Without proper aftercare, someone in a submissive or masochistic role might experience sub drop following a BDSM encounter. This state of emotional overwhelm can be described as a “crash” due to extreme vulnerability, the conclusion of a particularly impactful scene, or sudden lack of attention or sexual stimulation.

Dean recalled the one video he had watched that included BDSM in the title and let the images of a young girl screaming as she was flogged cross his mind momentarily. Unconsciously he shuddered. He remembered feeling disgusted at being immensely turned on by the images. Being so sexually attracted to that kind of pain left a deep-seated root of shame planted in his gut. Briefly, he wondered what exactly Castiel had in mind for them.

He left the webpage and clicked on the next article.

*BDSM Contracts*

*It’s a document/agreement within any kind of power exchange or BDSM play.*
More importantly, it’s a useful way to open up the lines of communication and negotiate the terms of play. They can be simple as a handwritten page all the way to a 10-page document complete with legal jargon.

Dean swallowed.

They are meant to establish clear rules, boundaries, limits, punishments etc, they define goals in the relationship, they guide your relationship (whether short or long term), and they create moral authority.

Pausing a moment to take a breath, Dean thought over the information. Rules, boundaries, punishments, they all sounded…thrilling. Eagerly, he continued on with his newfound excitement.

Offering your submission to someone requires an extraordinary amount of trust, not to mention bravery and confidence too. In doing so, you are making a very bold statement, and the implication of it is that you expect that trust not to be abused by the receiver. Accepting someone’s submission is similarly an exercise in trust: you have to acknowledge that they’ve put a lot of faith in you and respect it, because the moment this trust is damaged for any reason or withdrawn, as is the right of the giver. You must also recognize it might be impossible to earn it back.

When you’re on the outside of such a relationship, you might be tempted to think the participants are unequal, particularly in a D/s relationship. But the truth is quite the opposite. Dom and sub are two sides of the same coin, both equally dependent on each other.

The question here was, did Dean trust Castiel to do exactly as the articles expected? He’d only known the guy for a short amount of time. However, the thought that Castiel has probably done this many times before let him release a few of his worries. After all, he was the one to bring the option to light. Why would he suggest such a thing if he wasn’t well versed in the subject, considering he was a ‘teacher’ or whatever. The idea of Castiel looming over him was surprisingly not unpleasant.

The next few links were videos and... that can be left unsaid.

At the end of the list, Dean was shy to say he sat at his kitchen table, almost vibrating with excitement and... need. The examples of the said relationship caused him to become envious, to feel like maybe this was exactly what he wanted. Not to mention, it would be Cas conducting the operations, FUCK yeah. Maybe Dean would get exactly what he wanted in the beginning. He could not wait to make his reply to Castiel’s morning email.

But first, he needed to rush to the restroom to take care of something.

When he got back, he noticed a few hours had gone past since Sam had left, and he probably only had an hour or so to discreetly type out his message and pray to god that he wasn’t interrupted. He began his message three or four times, before he finally gave up and let the rough draft be his final submission.

Hey Cas,

I spent some time looking through your links and it was… not disappointing. Needless to say, I’m totally down. Let me know when you have everything set up.

Dean
Dean released a breath he had not realized he was holding onto so damn hard, and set his phone on the kitchen table. He didn’t expect Castiel to reply right away, so he left his phone where it sat unceremoniously and got up to attempt another shot at videogames. He played dutifully and quickly realized that he fucking hated this stupid game, and anyone named Trever had better stay the hell away from him for the next ten years. But after another hour had gone by, Sam returned home with a loud “I got pie!” And stomps into the kitchen sounding like a damn bomb had gone off. Slowly, two hours pass, and then it was dinner time.

Once Dean had been able to get back onto his feet, Sam never had to step foot near the stove again. One of his favorite things to do in the world was cook, and that never changed after the military. Sam insisted that they include some sort of vegetable, so with a huff Dean threw some butter into a pan to fry them, and without looking, added a dash of olive oil and a few drops of truffle oil. If he was going to be forced to eat vegetables, what was the harm of making them worth eating?

Baked chicken, baked potato slices, and fried asparagus was the meal of the day. He tried not to let his pride overwhelm him as he set the dinner plates on the table in their respective spots, Sam’s greedy eyes pounced on the food the moment it came into view.

“Try not to eye-fuck my cooking,” Dean joked as he went to retrieve silverware.

“Sorry dude, not possible,” Sam smiled his gratefulness towards the shorter man for the fork and dug into his serving.

Dean tried to focus his attention on his food but was ultimately unsuccessful. He ended up picking through his potatoes, eating around his chicken, and didn’t even attempt to look like he was eating the asparagus. Sam frowned at him, but said nothing. Dean glanced over to the end of the table where his phone still sat since that morning, quiet and unperturbed.

After dinner, he dutifully washed the dishes as Sam rambled on about his day with Uncle Bobby. After that, he was forced to prepare for that night’s sleep, though insecurities began to creep their gnawing teeth around his thoughts as he shut off all the lights in the kitchen and living room, anxiety forcing him to double-check the lock on the front door. When he scuffed on up to his room and left his phone on his blanket, uneasiness began to gather around him like a hot fire, holding him hostage in his mind.

He had waited the whole day for a reply from Castiel, to his dismay. He had wasted a day acting like a freaking Katy Perry song, and it pissed him off much more than he had originally thought. Why was he so invested in this stupid... whatever? He didn’t even know what to call it anymore. Counsel? Retreat? Gathering? Whatever the hell it was, he was done wasting his emotional energy on a freaking email.

Begrudgingly, he began to strip down to get ready to sleep. When he pulled his shirt over his head, he felt a sharp tug at his left pec, indicating over-use of the muscle. He gasped audibly and reached to press his hands firmly against the muscle stretched over his heart. *Fuck*, he thought. *Not again.* It had been weeks since the last time he felt pain in that area, and he thought he had finally kicked it with medication. His hands, still holding his chest, noticed an unusual amount of tightness in the muscles surrounding and came to a realization. He had been stressed. So stressed, in fact, that his body had a physical reaction. His shoulders were tight, his jaw clenched, and chest stretched so hard around his ribs that his heart was having adverse reactions. This meeting was the first emotional turmoil that Dean had experienced since the accident, and he couldn’t fucking believe it.

He stood like that for around ten minutes, hunched over his chest like it was going to explode. His body had become a fragile statue, a husk of the strong and determined soldier it once was. Stubborn as he may be though he recognized that his body needed rest and restoration. Once the pain subsided...
enough for him to move again, he sighed hard and ran his hands through his greasy hair. He came to the conclusion that he needed a shower, and he needed a three-day nap.

But the nap needed to come first.

Once Dean was able to force himself to sleep, he was gone like a dead lightbulb. Nothing could wake him from his cocoon of quilts and sheets as he snored softly. Moments like these were blissful. He was safe, he was free of a rigid schedule and back-breaking work. Free of loud and angry leaders, free of beeping red machines and cold air conditioning and thin hospital blankets. He was home. His body finally allowed him to return to a childlike state after years of suffocation and lack of free will, thus his mouth hung open slightly, and his face twitched from time to time. Sleep was the only time he felt peace.

So, when his phone lit up and buzzed brightly, it didn’t come close enough to waking him up. No, it was off by a few notches and went unnoticed by the world around it. The message was from none other than the man Dean had waited all hours of the day to hear from. Castiel.

Castiel had had a day of his own. Teaching, and making plans for new clients, while fitting in time for mental health and emotional healing. But by the time he had finally reached for his laptop, it was later than most in their right mind would be up and about. The feelings he construed through his facial expression went misunderstood when he read the email. Excitement, confusion, concern, and many more passed momentarily through the wrinkles kissing the sides of his eyelids and muddled the understanding of glee through the tipped corners of his mouth. Furrowed brows hung menacingly through the glaring light of the laptop screen as he quickly typed his reply.

Dean,

I am glad to hear your response. Please take some time to process as I prepare, but I will be in touch soon.

Yours,

Castiel Novak

Chapter End Notes

https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/nee9yg/bsdm-can-provide-profound-healing-experiences
https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/bsdm
https://www.lovense.com/bdsm-blog/bdsm-contract
https://www.lelo.com/blog/importance-trust-bdsm/
This chapter will begin the official BDSM relationship between Dean and Cas, slow but steady wins the race y'all. I want to give a special thank you to my lovely assistant http://tuastuemonbebe.tumblr.com for making this possible on such short notice, since I've been working 10 hour shifts since the beginning of this week. I really hope y'all enjoy and I'll see you next Wednesday!

Fun story at my new job!
I was telling my coworkers how I love to write, and that I was working on something currently.
"Oh, what's it about?"
That damn question is going to be the end of me.
"Oh, uh. An ex-marine. Searching for... A non traditional method of therapy."
"Whoah that's so deep!"

Yeah totally not about sex and 2 characters I stole from a soap operaaaaa

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Castiel stood impatiently at the bus stop in rare attire; white dress shirt, tie, and a suit jacket slung over one shoulder, a duffle bag hung heavily on the other. Almost never did he dress in anything other than his eco-friendly made cloth, and sandals he had made of leather and Para rubber. But times like this required him to meet the standards of his client in order to gain his respect.

He checked his reflection in the plastic ad that garnished the wall of the small awning covering the bench in a reminder that he had himself under control. Roughly, he had attempted to fix his mop of dark brown hair, but never was able to get it just right before and now was no exception. Strewn about and wild, his hair grew quickly and with a mind of its own.

He had to admit to himself for a moment that he was just slightly nervous for the plans he had prepared. Of course, it wouldn't be his first time doing these activities, just the first time he had done it since he changed his path in life. Back then, he had done it in sick rage. His ability to inflict pain on the person who trusted him so dearly and enjoy it so much still sickened him to his core. Her name had been Anna.

Anna had been a childhood friend, the woman who watched him grow into a menace. His best friend, his other half, the better half. She trusted him even after the arrests, the juvenile detention centers, the bullying, the fighting, and everything in between. She stood by his side when his father passed away.

Anna was innocent and pure when they met, but slowly he had managed to defile every good part of the loyal woman he could get his selfish hands on. Scene after scene he left her to sob at the pain of every welt and bruise that littered her body, alone and in need of someone to just be by her side. But at the time, he had loved watching her fall apart little by little until her sanity broke. The guilt of his
wrongdoings and the suffering he inflicted caused shame to build slowly and crest across his face. The feeling of the world being in tune to his thoughts and anguish made him look down and hide himself. He curled in and held his arms close to his chest with knees pushed together in a laughable excuse for a fetal position.

His past made him question his decision to offer the contract to Dean. Dean was already so broken, physically and so obviously damaged emotionally Castiel doubted his ability to help when all he had done before was destroy. When he began to reevaluate his own life, he did some research on the subject of proper BDSM etiquette, only to feel more of that burning shame when the community explained what he did wrong.

However, even after he learned from his mistakes, he did away with forming relationships for a long while. Getting close to someone was just not on the menu, and he was okay with that. So, spending several nights in a cabin with a man who had Castiel struggling to hold onto his self-control was probably not the most most genius thing he’d ever done, but he was hoping to learn from this experience and help Dean in the process.

In the midst of his thoughts, Castiel didn’t even notice the bus slow to a screeching stop a few feet in front of him. Only when the driver called out to him over the engine, did Castiel pull himself together long enough to make it onto the bus. Once seated, he was left to his subconscious again. Looking out over the edge of the windowsill, he watched the tall grass fly by, bent in half-moon shapes and shivering in the force of the wind.

By the time the doorbell made its shrill voice heard throughout the cabin, Castiel had managed to settle in and put his things in the corresponding drawers. Scrambling to get to the door, he paused for a moment to fix a strand of hair that managed to find itself a spot sticking straight up out of his head. He swallowed and allowed a calm to settle over his quick-beating heart, before once again rushing to get the door open.

“‘Sup, hotstuff?” A one Dean Winchester grinned heartily at the slightly shorter and seemingly stunned man by the door. Clad in a forest green flannel and thick blue jeans, Dean practically sparkled in the half-light provided by the nearly dissolved sun. Hair slicked up and bruises just about faded across his face, Castiel noticed Dean’s arm was no longer bound by a sling, and he sent a silent thank you to the heavens. “I brought my sleepover bag! I figured since it was your house, you would have the stickers.”

Internally rolling his eyes, Castiel caught sight of the black backpack that hung lowly from Dean’s widest shoulders. “Afternoon, Dean.” He directed his eyes to the other’s. “Come in, please.”

He stepped to the side and held the door open for the man. Dean took a hesitant step inside before surprising Cas in the strangest possible way.

“Uh…” He started, losing his goofy grin. “Do I need to take my shoes off?”

It took all of Cas’ restraint not to snicker, a small and smothered smile snuck onto his chapped lips. “No, Dean. Take them off when you feel comfortable.”

Dean shrugged and lifted his remaining foot through the threshold, leaving Castiel to gently click the door shut behind him. Castiel took a moment to watch Dean take in the small but sturdy building, smiling to himself at his slight slack-jaw moment and resisting the urge to rest a finger below the strong bone and press his lips back together.
It wasn’t a whole lot, but Castiel loved this cabin more than he had loved anything. Once his mother’s, it was passed on to him after his brother’s refused to take it after their parents split and siding with their father. Castiel changed nothing after the building went into his care; the walls were still adorned with picture frames of people he had never met, and of a father he didn’t know. The kitchen was attached to the foyer, decorated with splashes of yellow hand cloths and small antique yellow and orange birds sat quaintly on ledges beside dark oak cabinets and rested neatly on marble counter tops. The walls were painted with several shades of green and brown, and Castiel couldn’t help but love the earthy feel and light colors ornamenting the cabin.

“Nice place,” Dean commented, spinning his face back to aim at the crown of Cas’ head. “Real homey.”

“It was my mothers.” Castiel replied sadly, but kept a warm smile pressed against his lips. “She decorated, it was her own space away from a family of five loud and violent men.” He chuckled light. “Now it’s mine. And it’s my safe space.”

Dean’s nose twitched at the last few words, but thankfully made no comment. Cas didn’t know exactly what he was willing to allow quite yet, and Dean had already made his big mouth apparent with the H word incident.

Cas offered to lead him into the kitchen, glancing at his clock along the way. “Since it’s already almost 7, I say you eat, and I can take your bag up to your room for these few days.” He offered. Dean hesitated before wording his reply. “I don’t mind taking it up on my own.” At Castiel’s offer, Dean sat unceremoniously on a bar stool by the kitchen island and shrugged his backpack off, resting the bag against his feet.

“No problem.” Castiel gave him an understanding smile before turning to the oven. “So, I don’t usually eat meat, but I figured your diet was more of the average middle-aged man,” Dean squinted at the comment. “I tried making a lasagna and… well,” Castiel’s cheery face fell intermittently at his admittance, as Dean tried hard not to bust up in laughter at the almost comical expression. “It did not end well. One of my brother’s was gracious enough to make us a chicken casserole.”

When Dean’s eyes landed on the glass dish, it was all over. Letting a quick and almost seductive fuck, yes slip through his mind (and possibly out of his mouth) he stared at the object between Castiel’s mitted hands like it was going to jump out of existence. Castiel smirked at him, knowingness leaking out of his skin like glowing radiation. Cas wanted to see that face much, much more often.

Dean practically had his hands on the dish before Cas had even set it on the table. Castiel resisted the urge to snicker, as he turned to grab some plates and utensils from the cupboard and set them on the small kitchen island, creating a makeshift dinner table for the two of them to share.

Dean wasted no time grabbing himself a serving and digging into his ‘too hot to eat quite yet’ food. Cas took his time blowing on each bite before tentatively shoveling the food into his mouth. No, Cas preferred not to eat meat, but it wasn’t because he couldn’t stand it. Chicken wasn’t something he put on his grocery list, but it certainly wasn’t off the menu. Dean moaned his satisfaction to the chef, and Cas couldn’t help but burst into fits of giggles, forcing Dean to grin widely and show off his recent bite, and suddenly they were both laughing so hard their stomachs ached. Chortles and snorts sounded off into the evening air and suddenly, their differences were no longer part of the equation. Any and all variances in the two were temporarily gone in the laughter, along with the obstinate first meetings and awkward diner chat, until all that remained were two men in search of something they had and lost.
“So,” Dean started with the last of his food still making a spot behind his teeth. “I’ve been wondering, since we met at the restaurant. How did you get into all of… this,” He waved his arm in Castiel’s direction, causing the man to tilt his head to the side questioningly. “The whole, vegan this and nature that, deal. Living in the middle of nowhere and wearing a literal plant. Since you obviously didn’t get it from your parents, call me curious.”

Castiel leaned over his empty plate with a huff. “It’s true. I wasn’t always like this,” He said with a sigh, bringing his hand up to rub at the frown lines that rested between his caterpillar-like brows. “I used to be weighted by things like anger and emotional baggage, but I saw the error in my ways. I did what I needed in order to make my life mean something.” Castiel lifted his head to meet the quiet gaze of the freckled man across from him. “I believe I have done so accordingly.”

Dean visibly swallowed, looking scrutinized under Castiel’s sharp blue eyes and turning nervously to cough into his elbow. Cas knew exactly the kind of impact he had on Dean and planned on using it to his advantage from this point on. Though Cas didn’t exactly want to scare Dean, he did want make sure Dean knew exactly who had the upper hand.

“Well, hey, that’s good on you.” Dean squirmed restlessly in his seat, glancing everywhere other than at the piercing gaze that rested on him unwaveringly. “Glad you could do that for yourself.”

Cas smiled and rose to his feet. “Thank you. It took a lot of time and effort, but it was worth it.” He gathered Dean’s dishes along with his own and took them to the sink that made its centerpiece in the middle of the kitchen, underneath a window shadowed by sheer yellow curtains. “I hope you enjoyed the casserole. I’ll make sure to tell Gabe you sent your compliments.”

Dean nodded enthusiastically, followed by a barely audible “Can Gabe cater my funeral, cause damn.” Which added a lighthearted smile to Castiel’s lips as he started the dishes.

A few minutes later, he had them stacked in the drying rack and was leading Dean and his ‘sleepover bag’ up the stairs to the guest bedroom. He pointed out the dresser and a small walk-in closet, instructing him to fold his clothes neatly and hang them where appropriate. Dean had objected for a moment, but quickly realizing that Castiel was not going to take no for an answer, so he dutifully began his evening chore while Castiel droned about where the bathroom was, where he could leave his toiletries, and where to leave his shoes. While Castiel was a patient man about literally anything else, his line abruptly stopped on clutter and mess. His guests were to follow the house rules lest they desired a vacuum in their bedrooms at 6 am.

As Castiel finally reached the end of his monotonous speech, he made his way to the doorway of Dean’s temporary room and paused. “And Dean,” His voice was observably smaller than his taller-than-life house rules from moments ago. “The door stays shut during the night. I expect you up and washed at 8 am so we can begin our work and make use of the few days that we have together.” Castiel smiled kindly at the dumbfounded Dean having made his way through half of his items in the black backpack. “Have a wonderful evening Dean. Please do try to get some rest, you will need it.”

Dean spent most of the night tossing and turning, moving pillows and kicking off blankets, and dreading the morning to come. Having only a semblance of an idea of Castiel’s plans for the next day, Dean worried his bottom lip between his teeth in anxiety. He wasn’t sure where they would begin, how far they would go, when they would stop, and Dean had never been more nervous about another person in his life. He wasn’t sure about what Castiel was capable of, and whether or not Dean could exactly handle it. And if he couldn’t, what if he lashed out and hurt Cas? What if this was all leading up to a grave mistake?
Dean pushed the thought out of his head. Though he frequently came back to the idea of hurting or even killing another person, his actions always ended directed towards himself. He could never hurt another human being that way again.

He spent the night restlessly. In that weird state between sleep and awareness, Dean dreamt of emptiness until morning came and his phone shrieked it’s 7 am alarm and startling him into the land of the living. He shut the bastard thing off and forced his hands to his face in order to rub the sleep out of his eyes.

Around forty-five minutes had passed once he had showered, brushed his teeth and taken his meds, and at that time Dean was currently pulling on a pair of worn black jeans alongside a green short sleeve shirt (he thought it brought out his eyes, but no one needed to know that.) He packed up his belongings and stuffed them back into the corresponding drawers. Lazily, he flung the quilted comforter over the sheets in an unenthusiastic attempt at making the bed and settled down to text Sam a good morning and to read the news. At 8 o’clock exactly, he heard a feeble knock on his door. He rose to his feet and shoved his phone into his back pocket, ready to tackle whatever it was that was ready to jump out from the shadows.

Castiel stood on the other side of the door with a clipboard in his hands and a nervous expression plastered onto his face. Dressed as if he was headed to the office in ten minutes, he was seen once again with a white button up that had the sleeves rolled up just to his elbows and the top 2 buttons undone, tucked in to a pair of black khaki pants, tied off with a brown leather belt and black dress shoes that glinted in the light from the window in Dean’s guest room. The sight was mouth-watering. It ripped the breath right out from his lungs, the thought of getting his hands on the collar of that neatly pressed shirt and kissing him right then and there. The want strike him so hard he felt he needed to clench his fists tightly by his side in order to restrain himself.

“Good morning, Dean.” Castiel’s low rumble bellied out through Dean’s ears and into his room. “I brought you some coffee. May I come in?”

Dean scoffed, slowly regaining his normal stand-off-ish attitude the more the coffee woke him. “Have at it.”

Castiel shot him a look, complete with a slight squinting of his eyes, before returning to the clipboard. “Very well. Firstly, since you looked through the information I sent you, I want you to tell me the base of your limits.” Castiel’s professionally monotone voice floated around the stale air as he spoke.
Dean took a moment to clear his throat. “Well, I guess if we’re going in headfirst… I’m not okay with anything involving blood. Nothing really involving any bodily fluids I guess,” He chuckled nervously, avoiding Castiel’s intense stare. “Impact play kind of interests me. But I wouldn’t know for sure unless we tried it.”

Cas nodded and made a note on the clipboard. “And you’re comfortable with the power exchange that this act would require?”

Dean nodded, keeping his head to the side in avoidance. While he knew what he was getting into, and how much he wanted it, he wasn’t ready to give up his hard-headedness.

“Okay,” Castiel smiled gently at him. “My turn. It would make me more comfortable if we had two types of safe words.” Dean looked up at him in questioning. Castiel hurriedly explained. “A safe word is a special word you can use to stop all proceedings. If you feel at all uncomfortable in any situation, whether it be a scene or just us normally, you can use the safe word to let me know that you are uncomfortable. I also like the stop light system. Green for good to go, yellow for slow down, and red for stop everything. Before and during a scene, I will ask you your color to make sure that I’m not pushing you too far.”

Dean took a moment to process. Yes, he liked that a whole lot. It gave him many opportunities to out himself from anything that could possibly set him off. Eventually, he nodded. “Yes, I think I would like that.”

Castiel’s smile grew until he beamed at the other man, taking a few moments again to take more notes, before he spoke again. “Great! Now all we need is a solid safe word. It can be anything you want.”

Dean didn’t skip a beat. “Zeppelin.”

Cas noted this approvingly. “Okay. Sounds good.” He said as he set his clipboard down at his feet, focusing all attention to the man who seemed to shrink into himself, like he was trying to curl in and become one with his coffee mug. “Dean, I would like to set up an example scene now. Are you okay with this?”

Dean nodded but remained silent.

Castiel leveled his voice to be softer, quieter. “Dean, I would like you to stand and set your coffee mug on the nightstand by the bed.”

Dean’s thoughts raced through his head, none of them quite perceptible. His body felt rigid and tight. It told him that if he moved his body would shatter into thousands of sharp pieces. He felt himself begin to sweat profusely, and the remaining bit of coffee splashed in the cup held by shaking fingers.

“Dean, please stand and set your coffee mug on the nightstand by the bed.”

Dean was moving before he realized it. His body moved on autopilot, setting the coffee mug down gently on the nightstand and hung his arms limply as he stood, awaiting the next command.

“Very good. Now, straighten the comforter and tuck the edges under the mattress, then set the pillows in the center at the head rest.”

Dean complied loosely. His normal response would have been, why the hell am I doing chores? But all rationale escaped him completely, neatly tucking in the comforter as he did a thousand times in the marines, making sure to leave the nurse’s corners without a single wrinkle. Once he patted the two pillows straight, he turned back to Castiel.
“Wonderful.” Castiel held a sweet and comforting smile, directed at the taller man. “What is your color?”

This particular thought came swiftly and easily. “Green.”

“Perfect.” Castiel rose, a mere few feet from him, and Dean could feel himself shrinking in again, curling his arms to his chest. Cas walked forward the few steps until he was eye to eye with the trembling man. His next move was so unpredictable, Dean almost gasped at the sudden movement.

Castiel fell to his knees in front of him with a grace he had never seen another man hold in Dean’s entire thirty-five years of life. Cas folded his hands on his lap and lifted his chin to meet Dean’s eyes. “Dean.” His voice commanded. “Please join me on your knees.”

Dean’s trembling became apparent when he pressed his fist against his chest near his heart, hugging his elbow tightly to his ribcage. His head pounded with reluctance and… fear? He swore years ago that he would never bow to anyone again, but here he was, the situation posed to him once more and he was terrified.

Castiel seemed to recognize the emotions that vibrated through him and raised a tentative hand to place it on Dean’s jean-clad calf. “Dean, please.”

Dean collapsed and hit his kneecaps on the carpeted ground with a thud. His head hung waveringly, and his hands never left their tightly kept positions on his chest and elbow.

“Perfect.” Castiel’s voice softly flowed through Dean’s head. “Thank you.”

Castiel kept them in that silent position for what seemed like hours but was likely only somewhere around 7 to 10 minutes. His head only slowed the assault of thoughts and words during these moments, when finally, Castiel gently took Dean’s hands in his own, and rested them in the same folded position he had held previously.

“Beautiful.”

Chapter End Notes

You can find me on tumblr at portionsoflilo.tumblr.com or email me at anxiouslie@gmail.com
You can find my beta at tuastuemonbebe.tumblr.com
Iconic

Chapter Summary

Finally, Cas slightly addresses his attraction to Dean, and they come to an understanding.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is called "Iconic" bc Tim doesn't think that Dean's hair brushing lightly over his eyebrows is ICONIC AND I WILL NOT CHANGE THAT WORD IT'S PERFECT anyway this chapter is slightly wonky and a little different from my normal style. There is a slight mention of the p*nis, and finally we get to the good wholesome relationship stuff and also more of the hard stuff and angsty stuff So ENJOY

No, Castiel had not meant to have him wait this long. He thought he had everything in one spot so that he could gather it all at once, but nothing could ever be that easy, right? Castiel had to hunt down every single one of the items he had wrapped in his arms. Attempting not to drop any of the products, failing a few times while trying to make his way back up the stairs, he tried knocking on the guest room but quickly realized the door was already wide open.

It had only been a few hours since they had begun. Dean had taken to every command beautifully, absorbing the information and mechanically obeying every action that had been described. Castiel couldn’t have asked for a better sub. They hadn’t even done anything over the line yet, and he was already so incredibly proud and grateful for the beautiful man he held in his mother’s cabin. If he had known that he could feel this way as a dom before, he didn’t think he would ever have made the mistakes that crawled through his memories and forced shots of insecurities into his veins.

Castiel took a glance at his array of items before taking a small step into the room. He had gotten the idea when he caught sight of a nasty looking bruise snaking up Dean’s spine and ending at the base of his neck when he leaned over to tie his shoelaces. Fades of purple and green danced in unity, all while staining the fair skin that painted his muscular body. Castiel had thought to himself, *I bet some aloe and Vick’s could make that feel better.* Thus, his genius idea to ease into the intimacy part of his project came to light.

The sight of Dean’s stance on the bed almost startled Cas into dropping the creams onto the floor. Dean had managed to make his body look so small, Castiel didn’t recognize him. But the dirty blonde hair that fell gracefully over his brows was so beautifully iconic, and the way his feet were tucked under his knees in a safety-blanket move, Cas took a deep breath in and tried to get himself back under control. All he wanted to do was to move to comfort him, to hold him and tell him
everything was going to be alright, but Dean would not have taken kindly to being coddled, so Castiel reminded himself that he was creating a safe space by continuing to do what he thought was right. To ease into such an enormous bond was the safe bet, and he needed to consistently remember that.

But Dean looked as if he had fallen so deep into his mind, possibly on the verge of subspace. Cas’ mind reeled at what to do, trying to decide what was more efficient. Trying to decide if this was still a good idea.

“Dean?” He asked softly, settling the items on the desk in the corner of the room. “Color?”

Dean mumbled something under his breath, not quite audible enough to be understood, but enough to notice the small movement form on his lips. Cas moved a bit closer to the bed where Dean sat and kneeled down before him, so that he could be at his height. “Dean, look at me.”

Dean only raised his head just enough to glimpse at him through his eyelashes, and a shot of pain flickered through Cas’ body.

“Can you tell me your color? Please speak loud enough so that I may hear it.”

“Green.” Though his head remained low, his voice was at the same level as Castiel’s. Cas smiled.

“Good. If you need a break from any of this, use your safe word. Dean, what is your safe word?”

Dean rolled his head on his shoulders, physically loosening his arms from their python grasp around his ribs in an attempt to breathe deeper and relax himself. “Zeppelin.”

“Great.” Cas stood up again and made his way back to the items, feeling Dean’s eyes glued to the back of his head. “I brought some things,” he began, picking up the bottle of cool gel and turning to allow Dean to take a look. “Aloe gel, arnica ointment, a heat pack, some pineapple slices…”

“You brought me a pharmacy,” Dean frowned, cocking his head to the side. “But I’m not sick.”

Cas gave him a fond look. “I noticed the bruises on your back when you were cleaning today. They look horrific… I can administer these creams and get the heat pack on you. It’ll help with the healing process!” He picked up the plate of pineapple slices and showed him the fruit. “This will help too, a snack!”

Dean just looked at him in a tense confusion, that look that hovered between wondering if he should laugh or if he should just get up and leave. Cas couldn’t possibly find a valid reason to be genuinely annoyed at the expression, so he ignored it.

“A… snack?” Dean repeated. “Okay. Interesting. But here’s the thing; those bruises hurt like hell.” He explained as he released his arms in an act of defiance, placing both hands behind him and leaning back on his palms against the bed.

“I figured.” Castiel replied. “So, I wanted to see if this could help. If you give it a try, I’ll have Gabriel make us dinner again on the last night.” Okay, so maybe the offer wasn’t entirely a barter, maybe he just wanted an excuse to see the orgasmic expression again that overcame Dean’s demeanor the night before, but Dean didn’t need to know that. Yet.

“You drive a hard bargain, son.” Dean chuckled, and Castiel indulged himself in the feeling that his toothy smile and tiny wrinkles that gathered at the sides of the man’s closed eyes. “Sure, just be careful please,” he added soberly.
Castiel nodded (too eagerly, he thought) and quickly went to excuse himself to the bathroom attached to the guest bedroom to wash his hands and roll his sleeves up to his elbows.

When he came back, Dean was lying almost protectively on his back against the bedspread, eyes shut, and brows furrowed. Castiel cleared his throat to let him know that he had come back, then picked up the arnica ointment.

“Dean, I need you to remove your shirt and lie on your stomach,” he said calmly. He maintained that cool and calm voice, and internally tried to push the same tone onto Dean in order to ease his nerves.

Silently, Dean sat up and pulled his T-shirt over his head before rolling unceremoniously over onto his front. Castiel took this as an invitation.

Uncapping the arnica ointment, he approached Dean as if he was approaching a wounded animal. He didn’t want to frighten him, so he attempted to move as evidently as possible, so that maybe Dean could anticipate his next moves. Pouring a small amount onto his hand, he took a moment to let his eyes wander over the taller man’s muscular body. Dean was certainly not young, but from an outsider’s perspective Castiel could have thought he was only in his late twenties; his back was gorgeously toned, a bit of a tan faded the bruises that tie-dyed his torso with an array of greens, blues, blacks, and purples. His hands rested underneath his chin, the muscles that protected Dean’s shoulder blades were thick and corded with years of hard work and military experience. While Castiel knew that those years had not been kind to the broken man in front of him, he still appreciated the sheer comic beauty that lay on his guest bed, and the fact that Cas was allowed to touch that beauty with his own unworthy fingertips made him tense up even more in fear of the past.

He lay his first touches down with a softness, careful not to disturb the sore sensation the purple contusion was sure to cause. Even so, Dean hissed softly under the feeling. Castiel poured a bit more onto his hand and started again in a place where the discoloration was not so prominent, and Dean’s body relaxed a bit as he began his work. Rubbing the ointment softly into the pale skin Cas sat down lightly by the body underneath him. Every movement was light up as a shout into Castiel’s mind; reminding him that not only were the slight muscle twitches and softly hitching breath a second language that he needed to be extremely fluent in, but also not to allow his own body to react.

Minutes after he began massaging, he trailed into the finer territory of the edges of blue-ish purple colors, feeling Dean tense up once more. But he made sure to keep his touches light, yet firm, to allow the ointment to sink in properly, and not cause harm. Dean kept his face in his arms. With the lack of expression, it led into the over-reading of Castiel’s mind. Slowly, once he reached the middle of the largest contusion, Dean’s breath quickened, and the muscles of his lower back began to quiver. Castiel felt the familiar pooling of warmth in his groin and he desperately tried to push away the feeling. He never wanted to ruin a moment like this, when Dean was so expressive and beautiful, laid out for him to grasp over and over with the palm of his hand and grace with the tips of his fingers. But the growing bulge that definitely cast a damper on the lovely calm cascading around the two men was harder to ignore by the minute. Though, Castiel realized that this was an incredibly intense condition for the man and refused to allow anything to devastate such a moment.

Once Castiel finished the first layer, he moved his hand one last time over the largest of the discolorations and pulled his limb back to his body. However, the most bizarre thing occurred, and it forced him to freeze solid in his tracks.

Dean whimpered.

Castiel quickly shook himself from his shock, albeit a wide-eyed look on his face remained when he spoke. “Dean?” He asked softly, noticing the inhuman stillness take hold of the body in front of him.
“Color?”

Hesitantly, a muffled voice broke from below. “G-green.”

Castiel wasn’t sure. “I’m going to ask you again. Please think about your answer before you say anything, I need you to be honest with me. What is your color?”

The moments flew by like hours before a response was had. “Green, Cas.”

Castiel nodded. “Please tell me what you’re feeling right now. This isn’t an order, you can refuse, but I would genuinely like to know.”

Dean’s head nestled further into his own arms, the muscles around his upper back tensed up again from the relaxed appearance it had taken earlier that hour. Castiel almost wanted to take back his question before Dean interrupted his thought process with a quiet voice.

“Hazy. Fuzz.” Castiel immediately softened his expression at the admittance. “Good. I feel real’ good, Cas.”

Castiel allowed himself a slight chuckle, feeling all of his worries release from his mind and his body relaxed. “I told you.” He said with a smile. “That arnica ointment is a godsend.”

Dean moved his head to the side to look at him. The underside of both of Dean’s eyes was puffy, and his face was red from being pressed so deeply into his own arms. “What the hell is arnica, anyway?”

Castiel wholeheartedly laughed at that. “I don’t know, some kind of fruit?”

They both fell into a fit of giggles.

Suddenly, all the sharpness that had its claws in the two men disappeared completely willingly, leaving them in a gentle state of quiet contentment. Dean relaxed his arms and moved them to cover his head as he smiled, bright teeth peeking out from beneath his dry but full lips, eyes sparkling with the weight of his laughter. Castiel had never felt more content in his life to just sit and stare at that beautiful face of innocence. He couldn’t even imagine doubting his ability to help Dean now, while at the same time, Dean was helping him. When’s the last time he laughed during a conversation anyway?

When was the last time he ever felt comfortable enough with someone to show them a sign of weakness? The last time he worried so carefully but so abundantly about a single person? Castiel had no idea what any of this meant, but he knew that he couldn’t discuss it with Dean just yet. Not until they had accomplished the weekend. Right now, the most important thing in the world was getting Dean to a place where he was no longer afraid, and Castiel was willing to set aside any and all feelings that began to grow for the man until his job was done.

After he had finished with the aloe, Dean was just about ready to pass out. Castiel figured this would happen. No way you can stay that still for that long while someone rubbed your back without falling the fuck asleep. So, Cas didn’t take it personally. Actually, he found himself smiling gently when he heard the first of the soft snores that rose from the man. Castiel found it reasonable to finish the rest of the treatment when Dean woke up and had had something to eat and drink, so he picked up his things and left the room, closing the door behind him with a small snick.

Castiel was going through some emails when Dean had woken up a few hours later. His hair mussed
and eyes blinking sleep out of his vision. Castiel immediately realized that Dean hadn’t put his shirt back on, and he didn’t really know if that was a problem or not, watching him stride into the room on unsteady legs in low-waisted, beautifully fitted jeans.

Castiel stared at him over the edge of his laptop, sitting at the kitchen island with a cup of chamomile tea and a pair of reading glasses slotted against his nose. When Dean noticed his gaze, he gave the other man a sloppy grin.

“Morning,” he practically shouted as he sat down in the stool opposite Cas.

“Correction,” Castiel smiled and checked his watch briefly. “It is now 3:25 in the afternoon. I take it you didn’t sleep all that well last night?”

Dean lost his grin and actually looked a little bashful, turning his head to the side while a slight pink rose to his cheeks. “Yeah, I…” He started. “I didn’t wanna tell you. I was uh… nervous?”

Castiel cocked his head to the side and gave him a soft and understanding look. “Honestly, I was too,” he admitted before he closed his laptop. “I didn’t know exactly what to expect with you. But you have exceeded all expectations of mine with flying colors. I suppose I should thank you.”

The pink on Dean’s cheeks grew to cover his ears and nose, though he still attempted to look down at the counter, at the cabinets, at the stove, anywhere but Castiel. “Why would you thank me?” He said dimly. “You did all the work.”

“But you did everything that I asked you to, even though I was fully aware of how difficult it is for you to release your inhibitions about those tasks. You took to the curriculum so quickly and beautifully; I couldn’t have asked you to do any better. It hasn’t even been a full day and you’ve already jumped so many hurdles. I’m incredibly proud of your progress, Dean.”

Dean looked as though he didn’t believe Cas. But he would, he reminded himself. Just give it time.

“Can we talk about something?” Dean’s eyes finally rose to meet his own, and Castiel nodded vigorously, quickly removing his glasses and putting them in their container in one fluid motion. “I think that we need to talk about what happened earlier.”

Castiel’s expression sank from that quiet smile to confusion. “Was it too much? I know I shouldn’t have gone that far just yet, but when I saw those bruises…”

“No, no that’s not it.” Dean gave him a weak smile that lasted a millisecond, just the twitch of his lips really. “It felt good. Even Sam didn’t think to treat the bruises. They hurt but I didn’t really even think about pain relief.” He looked down at the counter once more, and the pink in his face quickly became a vibrant red. Castiel wondered how someone so strong and stubborn, someone taught to hide any semblance of feeling or emotion, could become so flustered so easily. It was unquestionably adorable. “I um… I guess I. Well, I realize that I may have made some uh, noises that may have made you uncomfortable. I wanted to apologize for that. You went out of your way to help me with something that you weren’t even supposed to do, and I went and made it awkward. I’m really sorry.”

Castiel sat in silence for a moment, processing. Did Dean not even realize how Cas was feeling during that moment? He supposed not, all that Dean noticed was Cas’ fingers against his skin. And suddenly, Cas’ reaction became a snicker, and then a chuckle, and then a wholehearted laugh that had him tearing up and clutching his stomach. Dean looked stunned at the response.

“Well shit. You don’t have to be mean about it,” he mumbled, putting his face in his hands.

“No!” Castiel choked out between gasps. “No, not at all. You must understand, Dean.”
Castiel wiped his eyes on his sleeves and attempted to compose himself. Once he had, he took a deep breath and reached across the island to settle his palm on the marble in front of the other man, as a symbol of peace. “I’m so glad that you brought this up, because I had something that I needed to say to you as well.”

Dean’s brows furrowed together in confusion. “Okay?”

Castiel cleared his throat and continued. “While this type of communion can exist without a romantic relationship, it is fairly common to see a couple involved in BDSM rather than a pair of strangers such as we. Like I said during our meeting, I do have a sort of… attraction, to you. Your reaction to my hands was so beautiful… I want you to know that it was anything but uncomfortable. In fact, I would enjoy it if you tried not to hold that back. Feeling it necessary to keep your body’s natural reactions in check will create difficulties during the process, though I completely understand the mind’s reactions to being so vulnerable, I thoroughly enjoyed every second of it.”

“Is this your way of telling me you like me?” Dean smirked openly, his confident persona flooding through a locked gate as he lifted a hand to circle his index and middle fingers on the skin of Castiel’s hand.

It was Castiel’s turn to be embarrassed, and though he didn’t feel the flush of blood running towards his cheeks, he knew that his skin had turned a pink color, the same as Dean’s was before.

“I suppose you could say it like that,” he admitted, looking down at the counter. He was without words for once in his life. What are you doing? His mind was flooded with angry thoughts coming from his own insecurities. How completely unprofessional to force his feelings onto Dean, a client, who he was asked to help.

Dean continued to softly set assault on the skin of the back of Castiel’s hand. “Well, good. Because I like you too.”

And then his thoughts were flushed away with intense relief. Dean didn’t harbor any negative feelings towards him. He felt his shoulders physically relax from the tension.

But Dean had more to say.

“And as far as the rest of whatever the fuck we’re doing, it’s going to be a while before I can fully accept it. I’ve never done anything like this before in my life. It’s a change that I have to work through, and I’m actually glad that I’m not doing it myself.” Castiel saw the flash of a smile in the confident smirk.

“I’ve never been taken care of in the way that you showed me this morning. I can’t even describe the feeling. I want to keep doing this. I want to push the boundaries. I feel safe, even when I’m doing things that I was never comfortable with before, because I know that you will take your time to stop and check on me. I used to think control was all I had. But now that it’s gone, I feel at liberty, lighter, and I’m able to think clearly without the bitterness that came with holding on to that feeling of control. God, Cas. If I hadn’t been forced to go to your stupid hippie party I probably would have driven into another semi.”

Castiel felt his eyes beginning to tear up during his admission. At the vulnerability that Dean allowed so openly, at the fingers still softly circling his skin, at the finality of I did this he repeated to himself. Not only was Dean the one to come to conclusions during their sessions, but Castiel was finally released from the internalized self-hatred he’d felt for hurting Anna all those years ago. Castiel was a wise man, but he had done horrible things in order to re-align his world views that he thought he could never be able to forgive himself for. And at the end of Dean’s speech, Castiel grinned stupidly,
teeth bared and the tears that threatened to fall eventually made their way down his cheeks.

Castiel couldn’t help it, and he let out what was supposed to be a nervous laugh that ended up being a half-sob. At this, Dean wrapped his hand around Cas’ own and held him securely. They sat like that for a few minutes. Castiel softly crying while Dean held onto him supportively, not saying a word, both terrified to breathe and break the silence.

When Cas was able to pull himself together, Dean smiled softly at him, once again doing the unthinkable. He lifted Cas’ hand in his own and pressed his lips to his fingers, a silent blessing to Castiel’s relief.

“I’m sorry,” Castiel said hoarsely. “I didn’t mean to become emotional.”

Dean smiled at him softly. “We all have things that still break us, from time to time. I know that you weren’t always who you are today.”

Miserably, Cas laughed. “I thought I was supposed to be the teacher.”

“Not all the time.” Dean scooted his stool closer to the counter and joined his other hand with the knot of warm palms pressed against each other. “So, what do you think? Should we get together?”

Castiel shook his head absently. “I think that maybe we should continue what we were supposed to be working on, and then try it out. But who knows what could happen before then?”

Dean seemed to accept this and nodded his head in turn. “I think that’s a good idea.”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my dumb story, I worked so hard on it between my regular job with crazy hours (3 to midnight) so if you liked my story, please tell me! if you find anything hard to swallow or understand, tell me!!! I thrive off of comments!

Special thanks to my beta reader Tim! One of my best friends and they work just as hard on this fic as I do. Please send them some love at https://tuastuemonbebe.tumblr.com/
Chapter Summary

I guess pizza is off the menu for tonight.

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone! I've received wonderful feedback since the last chapter, and I'm just so grateful for everyone that's stuck around this far. I have big plans for this story, and I do have an endgame in sight. So I will not be quitting this story right in the middle like my last few.

This chapter will be the beginning of the romance, my friends, you just have to sit through it! I promise it gets good!

I do have a schedule now. Every Wednesday I will be tossing a new chapter atcha so I hope you guys will enjoy!

As always, I want to thank my amazing beta and wonderful friend, @tuastuemonbebe.tumblr.com/ please look them up and give them some love! Tim is a wonderful editor and has reminded me a few times what I had totally forgotten I put on paper. They also keep me on track with where All I Have is going, and they make sure that my dumbass actually goes to bed at night instead of staying up to keep writing. Trying not to burn myself out on this one, I actually want to finish it.

Anyway, enjoy the new chapter!

Later that day, around 7 pm, Castiel was hit with yet ANOTHER surprise. Though he had managed to fight through the first day of their weekend and the small bumps that occurred, he never would have guessed what would happen next. He had everything planned, down to a T. Why on earth would this be happening at this exact moment? He hadn't spoken to most of his brothers since their father died, and yet as he opened the front door of his mother’s cabin expecting the pizza man, Gabe and Balthazar stood on the steps with wide grins, Gabriel clutching a six-pack in his hand and a brown leather jacket thrown haphazardly over his shoulder.

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” Castiel groaned, wanted to slam the door in his brother’s faces.

“Is that pizza?” Dean’s disembodied voice called from the next room before he pattered his way into the foyer.

“Even better,” Gabe held the six-pack up so that Dean could catch sight of the alcohol.

“Beer.” Dean agreed and a grin that rivaled the shorter man’s grew widely on his freckled face.

Castiel groaned once again, unconsciously bringing his palm to his forehead and opening the front door wide enough for the two men to step inside.
Dean had sat comfortably on the sofa in the living room of the homely cabin, enjoying an episode of *Friends* with Cas when the doorbell rang. Cas had jumped from his spot next to him in one fluid motion, once again annoying the shit Dean with the amount of grace and charm that seemed to radiate from the man. An impatient shout of “I’ll get it!” was all he received after Cas’ body left his line of vision. Smiling to himself, he had continued on with the sitcom in silence, but had followed suit once he heard Cas’ voice groan from the next room. Albeit much slower and clumsier, Dean tossed on his white t-shirt he had thrown carelessly across one of the stools that sat under the kitchen island, and made his way into the foyer to meet the eyes of two men; one smaller with golden blond hair, and one much older with dark hair, gray almost overcoming the original color.

Having suddenly been given the opportunity to drink that night, Dean was so excited he could feel himself vibrating. He didn’t care who they were (though, Cas seemed to be familiar with them based on his reaction) as long as he was guaranteed at least one of those drinks, they could hang out as long as they liked.

So that’s how they all ended up around the kitchen island, the man with the golden hair (Gabriel, as he later found out) had distributed the beers around to everyone other than Cas, who had vehemently refused, telling them about the time Castiel had punched a hole in his bedroom door.

“I’m telling you, man,” he choked out through his bouts of laughter, “No one expected that kind of reaction! Not even our dad. I mean, it was a goldfish! They die! So what if someone fed him twice that day.”

“Jesus,” Dean chuckled and shook his head, taking a sip from the glass bottle he held loosely in his hand. “Sammy, my little brother, had this dog, right? We all told him he couldn’t keep it since our dad moved around so much when we were younger. Military stuff ya know? So, he fucking ran away to live in a shed in the woods.”

Balthazar busted up in turn to join the two. “Man, kids am I right? So attached to little things.”

“Don’t even get me started,” Gabriel shook his head. “All I wanted when I was a teenager was a good porno and some girls. No wonder Cas turned out the way he did. He loves too much.”

Castiel shot him a nasty look from his corner in the kitchen. Just glancing in his direction Dean could have sworn that the lights in that side of the kitchen had gone out, and black steam radiated from the furious man as he angrily scrubbed the dishes in the sink spotless.

“Give him a break,” Dean said kindheartedly, giving him an almost loving look. “He’s built a lot for himself. He’s doing me a hell of a favor right now.”

Gabriel smirked and exchanged a knowing look with Balthazar, and then turned back to a confused Dean. “I’m sure he is.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Dean hadn’t meant for the venom to sneak into his words. It had happened unconsciously. He winced once they left his mouth, and in the corner of his eye, he noticed Cas freeze.

“Oh nothing,” Gabriel covered his ass swiftly. “Just that, if there’s anything I’ve learned about Cassie over the years is that he certainly has a type.”

“Ohay!” Castiel practically teleported to where the three men stood in unison, appearing behind Gabriel with a fire in his eyes. “So, Gabe, since you’re here why don’t you make dinner. Neither of us can cook and there’s a fully stocked fridge for you to have at.” Castiel took hold of the shorter man’s shoulders and steered him towards the refrigerator. “Make yourself useful if you’re going to
bargain in like this.”

Dean swallowed the new information like a too dry brick, and once again took a sip from his bottle only to find that it was empty. At the sight of Gabriel laughing hystically to himself, and Cas struggling to keep him on the right path to the stove, he attempted to make the situation less awkward and maybe make Cas just a bit more comfortable.

“Actually,” Dean spoke up with more luster than he had expected to come from his own mouth. “I can cook pretty well. With my dad gone all the time, I had to cook a lot for Sammy when we were growing up.”

“Is that so?” Balthazar leaned his elbows onto the counter in a relaxed position, meeting Dean’s eyes. “What did your dad do, again?”

“He was a military man,” Dean explained. “I followed suit, as soon as I turned 18.”

“Were you discharged recently?”

“Yeah, actually. A few months ago. Early February.” He suddenly was no longer cool with where the conversation was going, but his only tell was the way he rolled the empty bottle in his fingers. He seemed to have successfully calmed Cas since he was slowly making his way towards his other brother and Dean all while keeping a keen eye on Gabriel to make sure he was working with food and not other people’s emotions.

“Well, that great. Congrats. Welcome back to civilian life, my friend,” Balthazar lifted the rest of his beer as a cheers and downed the rest of it, plinking the empty bottle on the counter and grabbed another one from the pack.

“Yes, congratulations Dean,” Gabriel called from the stove with a wink. “We’re all very happy you’re home safe.”

Even through all the awkwardness, Cas gave him a pleasant smile from across the island and Dean realized that this was a good thing; for him to be home and enjoying moments like this in the real world. Yes, drinking a beer and chatting in a room full of acquaintances, people who cared about him, this was comforting. He felt lighter and yet, so full of an emotion he couldn’t quite process. He was happy? Maybe for the first time since he’d come home to a smiling Sammy with open arms, he felt happy.

Castiel cleared his throat before he spoke. “So, I hear there are new episodes of Gotham. Anyone wanting to binge before dinner?”

Balthazar had been “so down” for it, but Dean wanted to help out in the kitchen where he could. So when Cas and Gabe left to sit in the living room, Dean tried to ignore the knowing look Cas gave him before coming up to Gabriel, who was at the time throwing a package of Brussels sprouts on the stove. Dean had questions, he wasn’t about to ask Cas and he didn’t want to make him uncomfortable if he asked Gabriel in front of him.

Dean took to work on peeling carrots and started boiling some water. Gabriel moved swiftly around him without pause, like he’d done this a million times before. But Dean certainly hadn’t, tripped a few times when heading to the trash can to dispose of the carrot skins when Gabriel zipped past him.

“Sheesh, my guy. Slow down.” Dean muttered incoherently after knocking into him for the fifth time.

Gabriel laughed slowed to a stop by the refrigerator. “If you’ve never worked in a kitchen dude, you
won’t be keeping up with me.”

Dean chewed on that for a few minutes. Once the carrots were boiling, and Gabriel had the chicken in the oven, he decided that now was his time for questioning.

“So, Cas is gay?” He asked without thinking. Now his cheeks lit up with embarrassment from the unnecessary examination of the man who had just admitted that he was just less than three hours before.

Gabriel lifted an eyebrow, letting a smirk form lightly on his face.

“Yes. Since the day he came kicking and screaming out of the womb.” He paused, watching for Dean’s expression. “That doesn’t bother you, does it?” The venom dripped from his words.

The color drained from Dean’s face at the assumption. “Oh, god, no. Not at all. I was…” He stopped to swallow and turned back towards the carrots. “Actually, kind of hoping.”

All malice released from Gabriel’s face and Dean wondered how many times exactly he had had to defend his younger brother with the tone of his voice, maybe even his fists if it got too bad. “Well good. Because I happen to know he’s so into you that the poor kid tried to cook. Almost set the damn cabin on fire. He’s lucky I was in town,” As if it was an afterthought, he paused before saying “And willing to help.”

Dean was too busy to think about the rest of Gabriel’s sentence when he was too occupied by proof that Castiel liked him. The same thought that popped into his head the night before shot behind his eyes of Castiel frantically attempting to make lasagna and setting fire to it in the oven, and Dean smiled to himself. What a thought? Dean had only imagined a quick fuck when he first met Castiel; his gorgeous blue eyes and disheveled hair he could only imagine fraught with ecstasy underneath Dean’s hands and body that first week after meeting the man. But oh so quickly, Dean had changed his mind about several aspects of his and Cas’ relationship, and he wasn’t sure he was bothered by it.

“And it’s really interesting that he brought you to our mom’s old cabin,” Gabriel shrugged absently, and Dean only listened halfway. “He’s got four or five houses all over the world, and he brought you here.”

Wait a minute. Huh?

“I’m sorry, what?” Dean sputtered, nearly dropping a spoon.

Gabriel looked at him with squinted eyes, a confused look plastered on his face. “Uh, yeah. Castiel got most of our dad’s inheritance when he passed away. That included the vacation homes and half of his net worth.”

Dean tried not to let his head spin at the idea. Four or five houses? What the hell was Cas going to do with four or five houses?

“I’m still not quite understanding. What does half of your dad’s net worth mean?”

“Shit, Dean,” Gabriel chuckled, “Kid really didn’t tell you.”

“Tell me what?!” Dean demanded. “That he’s fuckin’ loaded?”

Gabriel whistled and turned back to setting up the island with plates and forks. “I think you might want to ask him yourself.”
Fuck yeah, he was gonna ask him himself. Cas really let Dean believe that he lived so modestly in a tiny shed without a cell phone, and wore hemp clothing and cheap dress shirts and act like he lived off his fuckin’ ‘communion profits’ like some kind of poster child for self-sacrifice while he had bank and different fucking buildings under his own goddamn name. Dean was an adult who lived in a fucking apartment with his brother and didn’t have a damn car but had sold his soul to the military for 10% off at fucking Chili’s. He would be drowning in hospital bills for the rest of his life. The absolute unfairness of it all drove a nail straight into his growing feelings for the guy, and after a moment of contemplation, he excused himself to the restroom to cool off.

Once he found himself in the small of the downstairs restroom, he stared at himself in the mirror. He hardly recognized himself and that wasn’t a surprise to him. He hadn’t recognized himself since he came home. He hadn’t cared enough to cut his hair once he got out of the hospital, and he drug his fingers through the wavy locks to find the scar from the glass of the shattered windshield and pressed sharply. Flashes of broken limbs and destroyed vehicles floated briefly through his mind and he shut his eyes as hard as he could to will the feeling of rage away. Now wasn’t the time, and Cas had taken care of him this far, right? Cas had a reason to hide himself. Maybe he wasn’t even hiding it, maybe Dean had just assumed and hadn’t cared enough to look through the cracks.

He turned the knob on the sink and splashed some water on his face. He’d get through this. He could ask all the questions he wanted once Gabriel and Balthazar left.

Once he left the small room and entered the kitchen again, Gabriel was putting plots of chicken on each plate, and Balthazar was scooping up heaps of boiled carrots and fried Brussels sprouts on a plate. Castiel had made himself busy with cleaning up the dishes and set them in the sink for later when he spotted Dean.

“Hey!” He said, letting a grin settle on his face and Dean was taken aback at how absolutely beautiful he looked. Hair mussed up once more, and the white button-up shirt he had worn that day was crinkled and half-pulled out of his dress pants, his sparkling eyes glinted under the lamp hanging from the kitchen ceiling. He looked so incredibly human. “Where’d you go?”

Dean mumbled something about ‘nature’s call’ before Cas had already moved on to the next thing on his list of busying himself. Cas flitted back and forth from the kitchen to the living room, tidying up almost instinctively. Wiping up the counters and fluffing pillows as he went, by the time he sat down everyone had already started eating.

Castiel thanked Dean and Gabriel graciously for the food, seeming genuinely thankful not to have to eat pizza that night. Internally Dean was grateful too, not just for the beer and the food, but also the company. He was glad to have more insight into Castiel’s life, and he was enjoying the bits of information he picked up. But he would never say it out loud.

“-and olive oil was a nice touch,” Dean zoned back into the conversation quickly, not hearing the beginning of what was said when Gabriel went on about the chicken proudly. “You can really taste the difference with texture since it wasn’t fried in vegetable oil.”

“Whatever you did, little brother, it’s amazing,” Balthazar commented around a mouthful of food and Castiel laughed lightly next to him. Dean was suddenly overwhelmed with homesickness. Home, being Sam, and the meals spent at their dingy kitchen table that sat halfway in the kitchen and halfway in the living room, laughing at nothing and enjoying every moment of quiet content. He hadn’t felt that way since the first year he left for boot camp, and the feeling was an aching pang in his chest.

“I’m glad at least one of us learned how to cook.” Castiel seemed so light when he spoke, like all of his uptight demeanors and commanding words were no longer necessary, like he could be free around his brothers, and Dean was getting to see a part of him that he shouldn’t be allowed to
witness. “Michael would have had a bitch fit before he stepped foot in a kitchen.”

Gabriel chuckled. “Michael has a girl now who cooks for him. Perfect little housewife, just like he wanted. Too bad,” He frowned a bit. “She could do a lot better than him.” At that, both Cas and Balthazar laughed.

“Michael is your brother?” Dean asked, cocking his head the side. “How many of you are there?”

Gabriel snorted. “Michael is the oldest. Bee is second, me third, Uriel fourth, Castiel fifth and Sammandriel, or Sid, sixth.”

“Big family,” Balthazar commented once again behind a mouthful of carrots and chicken.

Dean had to remind himself to close his jaw once Gabriel had finished. Six. Six brothers. And he thought he had a rough time with just Sam.

“We don’t all look alike though.” Castiel cut in. “Uriel was adopted, as was Sid. Our mom was an amazing person. She wanted to give our brothers a home and a family that they never would have had otherwise.” Castiel’s face deepened and Dean could have sworn he saw the glint of unshed tears grow unnoticed by the other men around him.

The three men fell deathly silent after that, contemplating a past that Dean couldn’t understand. His mother had died in a house fire when he was four, he could barely remember her, and Sam had grown up without a mother his whole life. And when they had become teenagers, Sam fourteen and Dean seventeen, they had received the news that their father had died in action. So for Cas to have lost both his mother when he was young, and a father as an adult, he was still in the grieving stage. Cas was still learning to live without both parents and Dean felt for him.

“Well,” Balthazar suddenly spoke up, seemingly unable to stand the heavy silence. “I think it’s time for dessert. We brought pie!”

They spent the rest of the evening trying to forget the mentions of their mother, and Dean did everything in his power to keep the conversation light. Gabriel and Dean washed the dishes while Castiel and Balthazar talked loudly in the living room, at least one of them tipsy. The night ended with smiles and promises to keep in touch, and Dean was left with two new phone numbers to plug into his phone. The gathering had reminded him much of the time before he enrolled in the military. The nights of laughing and drunk teasing, the familial feeling of people who cared for one another.

Before he knew it, only a few hours later he was once again left with a very relaxed and happy Castiel.

Cas threw his arms over his head and yawned largely, no longer feeling it necessary to tuck his shirt into his pants and Dean vaguely wondered when in the night he had removed his belt. When he finished Cas rested his hands loosely by his sides, sporting a seemingly permanent smile that gently lined his full lips.

“Good night?” Dean offered, mirroring the man’s expression comfortingly.

“Yeah,” Cas chuckled, and looked longingly towards the door. “My brothers can be a handful. But they keep me humble.”

Dean rolled his eyes and walked up to stand opposite of Cas’ shorter form. “You’re so lame.” He joked.
Cas looked so completely different now than he had just a few hours ago. So uptight, strung up on a string, like his spine had to be completely straight in order to stand. Now he looked completely free
of that restriction. Slightly hunched over, cuffs unbuttoned and hair every which way, Cas was a totally different type of beautiful.

Cas looked up, his sky-blue eyes meeting Dean’s own and sending a shock down his spine. Dean had never been so completely caught off guard, so breathless in his life. How a single look could take him down so easily was the biggest question mark he ever had the pleasure of laying eyes on. He couldn’t explain exactly why he did what he did next, what brought him to the action that would change their relationship for good. But Dean couldn’t bring himself to care.

Cas opened his mouth to speak again, and Dean’s hands flew up and seized his shoulders. The shock had no time to set in before Dean had caught Cas’ lips with his own.
Stress Position

Chapter Summary

Castiel stood stunned in the corridor of his foyer, still processing what had just happened. His heart thudded wildly in his chest, and he brought his hand to his face to brush his lips lightly in awe. Really, he should invest in some chapstick, or maybe drink more water, but he really didn’t care at that moment. All he cared about was the fact that Dean had finally crossed the unspoken boundary between them.

Chapter Notes

Happy Wednesday everyone! Also, happy Pride month! Since I forgot to say it last week haha. We're finally getting to the good stuff y'all, and what do I do? I have to go have surgery. On my birthday. So I'm sorry but the chapter after the next will probably be a bit late since I'll be drugged up and unable to retrieve things for myself haha. Anyway, special thanks as always to Tim my amazing Beta writer (who apparently VEHEMENTLY hates orange juice pulp) they did a fantastic job of keeping my head in the game for this chapter and I want to make sure they get the credit they deserve for the late night editing and consistent support tuastuemonbebe.tumblr.com. I love you dude! One last thing... I neeeeed comments like I need air to breathe. PLEASE comment and give me your thoughts and opinions on where I should take the story, how you liked the new chapter, how you like the character descriptions. please. I'm begging you. please.

Castiel’s whole being froze in place, feeling Dean’s lips move against his own. Startled like a deer-in-headlights, Castiel briefly evaluated the situation. Dean had kissed him. Completely out of nowhere, totally unprovoked. Physical feelings and emotions buzzed through Castiel’s racing mind as he gently closed his eyes and submitted to the kiss.

Dean’s lips were persistent, as if he was afraid that if he broke away, he would never touch him again. Soft and sweet, fear and longing was injected into the short kiss. Dean’s lips stuttered mechanically before he finally pulled away, a terrified look on his face.

"Shit, Cas," Castiel’s skin warmed at the nickname. “I’m sorry! I didn’t… That wasn’t planned…”

Dean stumbled backward; panic settled firmly over every one of his features. Almost protectively, Castiel noticed the man reach up to grasp the fabric of his shirt where his heart was placed, and fear began to settle into Castiel’s mind as well.

“Dean…” Was all he managed to get out, at a loss for words. He wanted to be comforting. He wanted to be a shoulder to lean on for Dean, but Dean was too far away to even notice the offering.

“No,” Dean muttered, backing up again, hitting his back starkly into the front door that Gabriel and Balthazar had retreated from moments ago. “I’m sorry.”

Before Castiel could say anything (if he could even come up with the right words) Dean had already
grabbed his jacket from off the coat hanger and slipped out the door.

Castiel stood stunned in the corridor of his foyer, still processing what had just happened. His heart thudded wildly in his chest, and he brought his hand to his face to brush his lips lightly in awe. Really, he should invest in some chapstick, or maybe drink more water, but he really didn’t care at that moment. All he cared about was the fact that Dean had finally crossed the unspoken boundary between them.

The next morning, Castiel felt a mess. Part of him had wanted to chase Dean out that door, beg him to come inside so they could talk about it. Beg him to let them start over and do something different. But the other part of him knew that wasn’t what Dean needed. Dean needed to sort himself out, he needed time to establish the reasons and motive behind his action. So Castiel had simply wallowed in his own feelings that night, undressing quietly in the darkness of his room, and laying atop the blankets on his bed and never calming down quite enough to fall asleep. While in the midst of his half-awake half-asleep coma, he heard the front door open and he knew that Dean had not left the property, which gave him enough peace of mind to fall into a death-like sleep. Once the morning came, he knew what he needed to do. He dressed in the same manner as he had undressed the night before, quietly and decisively, this time skipping over the white dress shirt in favor of a light blue button-up and a pair of black jeans. He hadn’t bothered with his hair since ‘uptight’ wasn’t the look he was going for that day. Bright and early, he pulled out a bottle of homemade smoothie he had prepared for the trip in advance and poured himself a glass.

His heart thudded wildly in his chest when he heard the front door close again. It was 7 am, too early for Cas to wake him up for the morning routine, so why was Dean already awake and moving about?

Curiously, Cas padded barefoot to the window by the door to peek outside. There was Dean’s silhouette. He hunched over himself with his head hanging lowly, and a puff of smoke burst from his front after a few moments.

When Castiel had seen Dean crunch his cigarette into the pavements those weeks ago, he felt a fire burn in his chest just as hot. How could he hurt his body that way after everything that it had been through? Everything his body had survived? On top of that, Cas was 100% sure that he shouldn’t be smoking with all of the medications the man took. Or drinking, for that matter. His chest burned once more with that familiar feeling of rage, one that he hadn’t felt in years. Dean struck a chord with him that messed up his entire pathway in life. These unnecessary emotions, these feelings that only caused him pain. Dean was the only one to inspire such sentiments in Castiel.

Before he could think about his actions, Castiel threw the front door open and stepped into the cold morning air. The difference was always astounding, the temperature in the mornings compared to the evenings. It was one of the things that he loved about Georgia, however, at this moment the alteration barely registered in his mind.

“Dean,” Castiel said firmly, almost… threateningly. “What are you doing?”

Dean froze, never taking his eyes off the ground. “I’m having a cigarette. Don’t worry, I’ll trash the butt.”

Castiel stood for a few moments, vaguely at a loss. Technically, Dean was an adult and could do whatever the hell he wanted. But on the other hand, they had a mission to fulfill and that was to put Dean back on the right track through whatever means necessary. After a minute, Castiel sat down in a chair next to Dean on the porch. Again, the silence was infuriating, Castiel’s mind raced at what to
do. He only came to his conclusion when Dean tentatively raised the cigarette to his lips.

Castiel quickly plucked the cancer stick from Dean’s fingers and lifted them to his own. Dean opened his mouth to raise hell, but before he could get a word out Castiel pulled a deep drag from the cigarette so hard you could see the cherry move towards him a few millimeters. Releasing the smoke from his lungs felt like razors to his throat, but Castiel kept a straight face and forced his lungs to breathe again once the offending substance was gone.

“There are very few things that I do not allow,” Castiel spoke dominantly. Pointedly, Dean closed his mouth from the O that it had become. “And I believe it is time for you to learn about the punishment side of BDSM.”

Castiel took another inhale from the cigarette and left it hanging loosely from his nimble fingers. “I believe a stress position might do you some good. Five minutes for bringing a forbidden substance to my home, five minutes for intentionally causing yourself bodily harm, and five minutes for harming the environment.”

“What the hell is that supposed to mean?” Dean asked, his voice rising in recognizable anger.

Castiel straightened up enough to tower over the hunched man, snapped his head to face Dean head-on. “Stand. That is an order.”

Dean looked at him with furrowed brows and frown lines so deep it looked like they were etched into his face at birth. But after a few moments of hesitation, Dean stood up, defiance radiating from every fiber of his being.

Castiel stood as well, laying the cigarette on its side on the arm of the lawn chair, the cherry bit hanging precariously off to the side. He moved quietly toward Dean, his face turned straight forward, looking over Dean’s shoulder. He stood so close to him that he could feel the heave of the other man’s chest against his own. The hair at the back of his neck stood straight up at the sensation, and he turned slightly so that his lips could grace Dean’s earlobe.

“Color?” His voice was barely a whisper, and he felt Dean shiver at the feeling of his shallow breaths against his neck.

“Green.” Dean choked out, and Castiel smiled at the fact that he knew Dean’s heart skipped a beat.

“Good.” Castiel moved away gracefully, skipping around to slip behind Dean’s body. Once he was in place, he slipped his hand lightly onto the small of Dean’s back. His hand formed perfectly over the tense muscles, and Cas felt his anger slowly reel back as he slid it carefully up the man’s spine, slightly bunching the fabric of his loose-fitting black t-shirt. Once his fingers reached the back of Dean’s neck, he shoved him forward into an uncomfortable L position.

Dean gasped and quickly struggled to pull himself upright in failed attempt to keep his balance, but Castiel’s hand was firm and kept him in place. Slowly, Dean gathered himself and managed to stay in position.

“Very good,” Cas murmured quiet praise just loud enough for Dean to notice. Castiel slipped his hands around Dean’s bicep and pulled his right arm out in a wing position, then did the same with other. When he was finished, he took a step back to look at his handiwork. Dean was strung out, his upper body struggling to keep position bent in half with his arms upholding tight fists. Castiel couldn’t see his face, but he knew Dean was gritting his teeth with the strength to keep his body in alignment as well as fight his own internal discrepancies. Castiel tried not to grin at the power he held over the other man.
“Stay just like that,” Castiel commanded, “I’m going to retrieve my stopwatch. Your complete time will be fifteen minutes; if I find that you have moved even an inch, I will be adding another minute. Do you understand?”

“Yes, sir.”

Castiel’s heart throbbed—he hadn’t even asked Dean to call him that. However, before he had a chance to let on that the man’s words affected him entirely, he had slipped back into the house.

It didn’t take him long to grab his watch from his bedside table and come back outside, maybe a minute or so, therefore Castiel timed Dean’s position for 14 minutes just to be reasonable. He hadn’t expected to do a scene quite this early, and he definitely didn’t expect the scene to be a punishment. The rage that encompassed his whole body when he found Dean that morning was unbearable.

He slipped back out and sat down comfortably on the lawn chair, not letting his eyes grace over Dean’s body. He’d be able to see him through peripheral vision if he moved, so he wasn’t too worried about unsettling the man with his eyes. He picked up the cigarette that was still hanging over the edge of his seat and finished it off while waiting for the watch to beep.

The day was beautiful, watching the sun come up fully over the horizon was gorgeous. Castiel decided that he would make it a point to drink his morning tea while basking in the morning glow from now on. It would be good for him, and Dean for that matter. He took his last drag when the cherry finally hit the filter and put out the flame on the concrete beneath their feet, stuffing it in his pocket much like he had that day at the diner. At that moment the small mechanical beeping came from his watch.

Castiel pushed the stop button and stood up, brushing off his shirt and straightening his attire before facing Dean.

Dean had never been more grateful in his life to be in a cabin in the woods. If he had ever been in a more precarious situation in his life, he’d be fucking shocked. His arms hurt something awful, not to mention the muscles in his lower back would be sore for the next week. He hadn’t realized how bad Cas’ reaction would have been to his smoke break. The product of it had been terrifying…and yet so ridiculously hot. Cas had stormed outside within the first few minutes, eyes bright and glinting in rage, though his body so still he looked inhuman.

“What are you doing?” He had snapped. The last time he heard that tone of voice he had been in a bunker in the middle of Japan. Dean stilled, swallowing nervously. He knew he’d be in bigger shit if he stayed quiet, so he forced his words out.

“I’m having a cigarette.” His voice was quiet, “Don’t worry, I’ll trash the butt,” he offered.

When Castiel snatched the offending object from his fingers, Dean’s protests went unheard as he watched the man bring the cigarette to lips and inhale. The way his lips formed a perfect 0 around the filter Dean had just touched, the feeling it insinuated shot straight to his groin. He felt his dick twitch harshly in his boxers and he swallowed again, attempting to move unnoticeably in order to cover his
growing erection. Fuck, was he sixteen again?

‘Stress position’ had never even crossed his mind as a punishment before. But seconds after Castiel’s large yet thin fingers had left his prickling skin, he knew exactly why it was considered as such. Feeling Cas’ eyes glance over his form forced him to keep still despite his struggling muscles. And by the time he heard the subtle beep come from the watch around Cas’ nimble wrist he could feel his own heartbeat in the nearly bursting vein on his neck.

“Release.” He heard Cas before he saw him stand again. Dean stumbled backward with the force of snapping his upper body up into a comfortable position, nearly tripping as his arms fell like heavy weights against his sides. Castiel rushed to pull him forward, gripping him firmly around his waist and pulling the man into him in an embrace. Dean could smell the smoke coming from his warm breath when Cas pressed his face into the crook of his neck.

“Very good,” he spoke into his skin, goosebumps broke out all over Dean’s arms, “You took your punishment very well. I’m proud of you.”

Dean shuddered uncontrollably. He forced his weak arms to slink ungracefully around the other man’s waist and linked them feebly together with his fingers.

They stood like that for several minutes. Dean catching his breath over Cas’ shoulder, and Castiel squeezing him every few seconds to remind him where his anchor was. Dean felt vaguely safe in his arms. The tight grip Cas held around his torso felt as though he was keeping Dean from falling apart at the seams.

Too soon, Castiel pulled back, forcing Dean’s hands to break apart around his waist. Dean wanted to cry at the release.

“Let’s go inside?” Cas offered as a question, as though he wasn’t quite sure of himself. “We have some things we need to talk about. But first, you need something to eat.”

Cas busied himself much like he had the night before, buzzing from place to place to retrieve various items from around the kitchen. Dean found himself with a bottle of orange juice (the good kind, with pulp) a chocolate chip granola bar, and his heart medication sitting within a foot of himself on the island. Somehow the man had found out where he was keeping his meds, knew exactly how much he needed, and had retrieved it all without Dean realizing he had even left the kitchen. Dean was recognizing fairly quickly that Cas was incredibly determined when he felt he needed to be. Therefore, Dean let the man fuss over him after they went back inside the building.

Dean had felt his head swim with the sudden change in Castiel’s demeanor. The stone-cold fierce looks and angry tone had melted away into sweet words of encouragement and gentle touches. Cas had asked him at least four or five times if he was okay within the span of ten minutes, and even though he was drained of energy that morning, Dean found himself chuckling at how Mother Hen Cas could seem.

Dean sat with his shoulders slumped against his sides, still sore and not quite able to force himself to consume what Cas had left in front of him. Obviously, Mother Hen noticed and sat down across from him with a worried look plastered on her face.

“Please drink?” Castiel offered. Dean smiled at him and looked down at the bottle of juice. He wanted to lift his arm up and uncap the bottle, he wanted to drink, but his arms felt like lead and his head spun at the mere thought of moving them even an inch.
“I…” Dean started, furrowing his brows and beginning to laugh at himself. “I can’t.” He grinned wildly at Cas, unsure of why his reaction was so… strange. Cas’ frown only deepened at the hysteries.

Cas sighed and rubbed his hand over his forehead. “Fine.” He got up from his chair, only to walk around the island and sit-down facing Dean. Dean squinted at the action though he never let his grin fall, even when Cas uncapped the bottle and grabbed Dean’s face to turn it towards himself. It only fell when Cas carefully placed the bottle to his lips and lifted it slightly, urging him to drink. Dean’s mind raced once more at the implications of this small act. Tentatively, he swallowed a few mouthfuls while staring at the man inquisitively.

When Cas pulled the bottle away it was half empty and Dean didn’t have words. The whole situation was strange but, endearing in a way? He could feel his blood rushing through his veins, all too aware of the throbbing in his chest from sore muscles.

“Stick your tongue out,” Cas commanded in a stern voice, not even glancing in Dean’s direction as he scooped up the man’s medication into his palm.

“Huh?” Was all Dean could force out before Castiel had his chin gripped in a slender hand, pushing his thumb into Dean’s cheek to force his mouth open and shoved the pills inside.

Cas quickly followed up with another few sips of the juice and Dean gratefully complied, happy to get the bitter taste of pharmaceuticals out of his mouth and replace it with orange pulp. Once he had finished the last of the liquid Castiel capped the empty bottle and began working the granola bar open.

“Why are you doing this?” Dean asked. Even though he was confused and maybe just a tiny bit embarrassed, he certainly wasn’t complaining at the attention.

“Because you can’t.” Cas said simply, lifting the granola bar to Dean’s lips. “Eat.”

Dean took a hesitant bite. He chewed thoroughly and once he swallowed, he spoke up again. “But I made you angry. So why are you being nice to me?”

Castiel regarded the question much like he had regarded the entirety of Dean’s confusion throughout the morning; like he hadn’t said a word. He lifted the granola bar to Dean’s lips once more. Only when Dean took another bite, did he decide to speak again.

“When we do a scene, it’s important for you to be taken care of afterward.” He explains nonchalantly. “It could take a lot out of your mental health and it would put a strain on the trust we’ve built here.”

“So, force-feeding me my medication and making me drink juice is your idea of aftercare?” Dean joked, but the laughter never reached his eyes.

“It’s necessary, Dean,” Castiel looked up at him with a fire in his stare. Dean swallowed roughly around the lump in his throat. “I would like to talk to you about last night.”

All of Dean’s newfound willpower drained at those words, and his head slid forward against the protests of his neck. Oh god, he didn’t want to talk about last night. It was the last thing he wanted to do. His action was stupid and reckless. He half expected Cas to throw him out, and he wouldn’t have blamed him. He practically assaulted the man and now, less than two feet away, he was feeding Dean like he was a child.

“Dean? Look at me, please.”
Dean shifted his eyes so he could see Cas stare down at him. He didn’t seem to express any kind of emotion, at least not one that Dean could read. He just stared at him blankly.

“Yes?” He mumbled.

“Why are you ashamed?”

The question gave him pause. Ashamed? The word hadn’t even crossed his mind. The word he was looking for was afraid. He was afraid to have destroyed the connection they had built, and Dean could hardly function at the thought. He was never afraid. He spits at the feet of approaching combat; he could smack down the very idea of an enemy force. But now the enemy was himself, and the victim was the one person other than Sam that he couldn’t stand to be put in the line of fire.

Cas stared motionlessly, waiting for him to answer. Dean, however, didn’t have the words to vocalize. He didn’t have the slightest idea as to how to respond.

Cas seemed to understand this, because once again after a few moments, lifted the granola bar to Dean’s lips and spoke. “Okay,” he said softly after Dean began to chew. “Then I want you to understand something, Dean.

“I will always take care of you. As long as you are here, in my home, in my life, you are my priority. Your feelings will always matter, and your actions speak louder than words could dream of. I will treat you as you deserve,” He paused, and muttered the rest. “And I will punish you as you deserve. That is my responsibility and not your own, not anymore.”

Dean swallowed. “What if the punishment isn’t enough?”

“That is up to me to decide,” Castiel set the rest of the granola bar down on the counter before lifting his hand to caress the side of Dean’s face, and he leaned into it gratefully. “Let go of it, Dean. All the feelings of self-worth and shame. Let it go and give it to me. I will take care of you.”

Dean melted. Unconsciously releasing all of the tension he held throughout his body, he barely recognized when his shoulders slumped forward, and his tongue fell from the roof of his mouth, along with it the aches and pains that previously shouted loudly at him. Cas’ sentence floated through him like clouds building in his mind. Never in his life had he had those words uttered in his direction. It was always him; the one to take care of Sammy. The one to hold the house down while dad was gone. The fearless of soldiers. The one no one noticed unless he failed at the task at hand. Cas was here, and Dean didn’t have to fear anything anymore. Castiel held him until his brows began to unfurl, and his eyelids closed on their own.

This time, the kiss was not a shock to either one of the men. Castiel pulled Dean’s chin close and pressed his lips softly to his own, slowly. The kiss was not quick, or reckless, or full of fear and denial. It was soft and passionate. Cas kissed him like he didn’t have a care in the world, a time restraint, or a conscience to pull him away. Dean refused to open his eyes or kiss back for fear of losing the closeness. Once his vulnerability was gone, he was afraid of going back to that place of indignity.

When Cas lightly pulled on his lip between his teeth, Dean broke. He jumped from his seat and kissed back eagerly and pulled the shorter man closer to his body with his previously unmovable limbs, so that Dean stood between his legs. Though Dean had the height, Castiel was completely in control, wrapping his arms around Dean’s neck and dragging his fingers through his overgrown mop of hair. Cas begged for entrance and Dean complied easily, opening his mouth to give access to Cas’ keen tongue to swipe lightly against his own. Dean could taste the smoke from his own cigarette that tainted the man’s sweet watermelon flavor, and he couldn’t help but groan at the recognition.
When they finally pulled apart, Dean was breathless and taken aback by Cas wide eyes. Eyes that brushed over every piece of flesh that Dean carried upon bruised muscles and wounded spirit.

Cas’ position was wild, muscles tensing and fists clenched against his knees, and Dean felt a shot of warmth hit his groin at the tiny gasps he emitted.

“How far are you willing to take this, Dean?” Cas spoke uneasily like he was trying to keep his voice under control.

Dean was struck by a sudden intense need to see what Cas had in mind. Truthfully, albeit enthrallingly, he answered with just as much strength spent to keep his voice from a whine, “All the way.”

“My room. Now.”

End Notes

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